



Minot State
UNIVERSITY



2008 Institutional Self-Study Report

to the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Higher Learning Commission

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Members of the Executive Core of the Steering Committee

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INTRODUCTION

Minot State University (MSU) is a full partner in the North Dakota University System (NDUS).^{0.1} Its main campus is located in Minot, N.D. (the “Magic City”),^{0.2} a community of 35,000 which serves as a cultural, educational, research and commercial hub for central and western North Dakota, northeastern Montana, southeastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba. The city is known throughout this region for its safe and attractive neighborhoods, numerous parks and busy commercial districts.

Minot State University and all other state-supported colleges and universities in North Dakota comprise the NDUS. This system is under the general administration and direction of the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE).^{0.3} Prior to 1990, North Dakota’s public higher education institutions operated under a “commissioner” system of governance wherein SBHE and the commissioner of higher education functioned in a way similar to that of a school board and superintendent of schools. In 1990, SBHE took action to form the North Dakota University System, which transformed the board from a coordinating board to a governing body. This change replaced the commissioner of higher education with a system-wide chancellor designated as chief executive officer of the newly formed university system.

MSU is the primary four-year institution in northwestern North Dakota and the only NDUS campus west of the Red River Valley that is authorized to offer a wide spectrum of graduate degree programs. The institution’s historic service area extends over somewhat more than 50,000 square miles. Among other institutions serving this area are five tribal colleges as well as four NDUS two-year institutions, all lying at distances between 75 and 120 miles from Minot. One of these, MSU-Bottineau, is a partner institution and is situated 80 miles northeast of the main campus; MSU-Bottineau is accredited separately by the Higher Learning Commission.

Years of planning and effort by the citizens of Minot and northwestern North Dakota led to passage of 1907 and 1909 legislation establishing a State Normal School at Minot (SNSM). The school opened officially on Sept. 30, 1913, in temporary quarters. In the spring of that academic year, Pioneer Hall dormitory and the “Main Building” (now part of Old Main) were completed and first occupied. The school’s annual, *The Magician*, described the ideal and the spirit of the new institution in this way:

The personality of President A. G. Crane and his consistent upholding of the ideal of ‘Service First’ have been dominant factors in vitalizing the spirit of the school. The progress thus far stands as a monument to the spirit of cooperation which has prevailed among the students and faculty and has been reinforced by the people of the entire northwestern section of the state.

Since its opening in the 1913-1914 academic year, the resulting institution has grown steadily from a facility with 11 faculty members, 99 students, 60 acres and three buildings

0.1 North Dakota University System (NDUS) <http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/>

0.2 Minot, North Dakota <http://web.ci.minot.nd.us/>

0.3 State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) <http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/sbhe/>



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to one of approximately 500 faculty and staff, 3800 students, 102 acres and 21 buildings. The facility now includes five residence halls, two apartment buildings, seven classroom buildings, the student center, an administration building, the Gordon B. Olson Library, a domed athletic facility, a concert hall, two theaters and two art galleries.

In its early years, the State Normal School at Minot prepared teachers to work in rural schools, for which preparation it offered two-year certificates. Its name was changed in 1925 to Minot State Teachers College (MSTC) and in 1964 that institution became known simply as Minot State College (MSC). Full university status was granted by the governing State Board of Higher Education in 1987, following which the institution's name and identity settled gradually into their present form. Through a variety of names over the years, the institution now known as Minot State University has become a comprehensive educational center offering a steadily increasing variety of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in education, the arts and sciences, business and a wide array of social services.

Throughout its first 95 years of existence, MSU has remained steadfastly focused on its original commitment to students, to service and to its place in northwestern North Dakota and the northern Great Plains. The university's ideal of "service first" has continued to invigorate the unique spirit recognized at its founding nearly a century ago.

This spirit of cooperation and the strong support of the people of North Dakota's northwest region remains a firm foundation on which the university will celebrate its centennial in 2013. This foundation and a new mission and strategic plan developed under the guidance of President David Fuller in 2005 and 2006, will help Minot State University to realize a vision for its second 100 years as "one of the premier public, regional universities in the 'great' Great Plains."

Vision and Planning

Over the last several years, MSU has developed a new strategic plan called *Vision 2013: A Vision for the Future of Minot State University*.^{0.4} The plan was presented formally to the campus and the general public in the fall of 2006. *Vision 2013*, aimed toward and beyond the university's 2013 centennial, reflects the thoughts, ideas, concerns and visions gathered over two years from hundreds of people, both on and off the campus. It emerged systematically from written and oral comments, suggestions and ideas compiled through a series of regional "focus group" meetings, campus forums and the tireless editorial work of the president's office, faculty, staff and many others.

To initiate the strategic planning process, an institution-wide Planning and Budgeting Council (PABC)^{0.5} was formed in 2004 with the specific mission of developing a dynamic planning process that would identify goals, objectives and the funding mechanisms to ensure Minot State University's competitive advantage, quality

0.4 Vision 2013: A Vision for the Future of Minot State University
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

0.5 Planning and Budgeting Council
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/comm_01.shtml

and growth. This group included representation from staff, faculty, administration, the Board of Regents and the Alumni Association Board and was charged with the responsibility of connecting university budgeting priorities to planning priorities.

Strategic Planning—The strategic planning process provided multiple opportunities for administrators, faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders to provide input. In 2005, the PABC conducted 18 focus group sessions with a wide range of internal and external constituencies.^{0.6} The council reviewed and compiled the results, working in teams to summarize the focus-group comments and develop preliminary goals and objectives. In October of that year, poster board displays containing the responses from all focus groups were hung in the student union atrium for public viewing and comment. All faculty, staff, students and greater area community members from Minot and the region were invited to come to view the comments and to offer their own suggestions about the future direction of MSU.

Development of *Vision 2013* also relied upon the use of external demographic data, assessments, literature and reports. By combining these resources and data, the PABC was able to initiate the process of aligning the mission of the university with the needs of the state and students through an examination of the current realities.

Vision 2013—The president took information and ideas collected in the above process and summarized them in a “white paper,” offering proposed thoughts for a vision.^{0.7} He discussed the proposals with all interested parties at open forums and initiated a discussion of the document with the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and Student Government Association. A first draft was then disseminated to faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders for comments.

The result of this entire process was publication in 2006 of *Vision 2013*. The document presents seven strategies that faculty, administration and programs will use to achieve the strategic goal of Minot State University becoming “one of the premier public, regional universities in the ‘great’ Great Plains.”^{0.8}

1. Creating a Distinctive Mission Focused on Engagement and Place
2. Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of Students
3. Valuing Faculty and Staff Within an Engaged Community
4. Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate
5. Focusing on Student Success and Future Achievements
6. Creating a Commitment to Civic Engagement, Service and the Common Good
7. Ensuring Future Institutional Viability, Vitality and Growth

This plan has been widely circulated to the campus community, the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and MSU’s state and federal political leaders.

0.6 Planning and Budget Council meeting minutes
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/comm_01.shtml

0.7 “MSU Planning and Vision: A White Paper for Your Consideration,” January 2005, available in evidence room

0.8 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

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0.9 Compiled task force reports are available in the evidence room.

Implementation—During a January 2007 convocation, campus stakeholders were invited to help draft “action plans” for implementing the strategies. In March 2007, task forces consisting of administrators, faculty, staff and students were created for each of the seven strategies and charged with the task of reviewing and revising the suggested priorities and action plans for each. The task forces did so, developing complete action plans that outlined both deadlines and responsible parties for the work. **0.9**

In fall 2007, major units and areas began to develop their own strategic plans to align with *Vision 2013*. Through the work of the PABC, the university will review its basic infrastructure and processes, as well as the pursuit of special initiatives. Budgetary priorities will be determined in accordance with *Vision 2013* (see Criterion 2D). The entire process is intended to develop action plans that will achieve short-term and long-term goals for the institution.

Accreditation History

Minot State University received initial accreditation from the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (NCA) in 1917 (1917-1922). Its accreditation was subsequently renewed for the period 1925-1934 and accreditation has been renewed regularly in 10-year periods through 2007, the most recent NCA Higher Learning Commission site visit having taken place Oct. 20-22, 1997. A Master of Science in elementary education degree was also approved by NCA in 1995 for delivery through the campus at Mayville State University. In 1996, the education specialist degree was approved by NCA following institutional request for such approval. The 1997 site visit resulted in accreditation for another 10-year period, until academic year 2007-2008. **0.10** There was no formal requirement for monitoring or contingency reporting and 10-year accreditation at the specialist degree level was recommended. NCA stipulated, however, that “in three years there be a progress report on assessment, graduate programs and enrollment management.”

0.10 *Self-Study Prepared for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (October 1997)*, available in evidence room

Report of a Visit to Minot State University for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, available in evidence room

Response to 1997 Site Visit Concerns

The 1997 site team stated that MSU “faced a challenging future that needs expedient response.” Among particular concerns in this regard, the site team noted “evidence of declining and shifting patterns of enrollment that provide an opportunity for program and service redefinition that could address resources allocation.” Among specific concerns were the following three:

- 1) MSU's assessment program should be "taken more seriously as not just an accreditation or accountability requirement but also as a tool for improving the future and strengthening student outcomes." It was described as "primarily for instructional programs (excepting general education), uneven in progress, and widely varying in application to program improvement."
- 2) "(T)he growing graduate program needs to be defined with sufficient administrative support and qualified faculty consultation and governance." Specifically, the graduate programs were described as "growing," with "standard practices of quality control, differentiation from undergraduate curricula, and program development...lacking adequate commitment and focus."
- 3) With respect to enrollment, environment and funding were termed "volatile," and it was asserted that "sustaining resources and programs will require a successful enrollment management effort with accurate information and research and a plan that is widely shared." It was further noted that such a plan "must define clearly the target student body and its relation to the university vision, mission and resources."

Evidence submitted in the required 2000 interim report to HLC^{0.11} outlined important progress in all three identified areas of concern. Subsequent development in these areas has also been strongly influenced by both institutional and NDUS system strategic planning efforts.

0.11 Progress Report to North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Dec. 1, 2000), available in evidence room

1. Assessment—Serious university assessment efforts began in 1991. Program assessment was at first driven principally by administrative initiative. Uniform reporting of program assessment processes took the form of a five-column "Annual Program Assessment Report" (see Criterion 3), which was first introduced by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) during the 1997-98 academic year. Initially these reports were sent annually by each academic unit directly to the office of the VPAA. In 2003-04, the VPAA delegated management of assessment data and summary reports to the director of outreach. In that year, the five-column annual assessment reports were directed to that office. In subsequent years, responsibility for program assessment was delegated to college deans, and the annual assessment reports were sent directly to them. During the 2001-02 academic year, a university-wide "Assessment Day" was authorized for each semester. An administratively appointed Assessment Committee was convened for the purposes of planning assessment-related events during this day, selecting invited speakers, and defining assessment-related themes or topics.

In 2005, what had been an administratively appointed committee was finally proposed as a representatively apportioned, faculty-elected, nine-member Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee. This proposal was approved by full faculty vote and the committee structure became a permanent part of Faculty Senate bylaws.

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This committee began effective operation during the 2006-07 academic year, and it is now responsible for hosting Assessment Day each semester.

Each of the three academic colleges now engages in a process of faculty-developed assessment and planning, including definition of student learning outcomes and selection and application of assessment measures. Faculty themselves gather and analyze data, which allows them directly to identify strengths, challenges and action plans for their own programs. Reporting is standardized for the campus, including learning outcomes, assessment measures applied, assessment results, and identification of strengths, challenges and action plans.

Year-end reports have in this way evolved from brief descriptions to thorough and candid discussions undertaken by those actually in a position to implement improvements. Program strategies reflect what faculty themselves believe to be appropriate for their own disciplines. It has become clear that these processes have already improved the quality of MSU's assessment enterprise. Most programs in this way now engage in both formative and summative assessment using multiple measures. Assessment consequently has become a faculty-driven enterprise. All of these processes are addressed in detail below (Criterion 3).

The general education assessment process has been faculty driven and continuously in operation from its inception in 1995. The Faculty Senate and its General Education Committee developed a program-wide five-strand assessment model (see Criterion 4B). Recently, the Academic Assessment Committee has joined forces with the General Education Committee to engage the campus community in discussions about assessment specifically in relation to the general education program.

2. Graduate Program—In 2005, MSU restructured the administration of the Graduate School by establishing a position titled “Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs,” a position focused specifically on graduate programs, graduate enrollment and related research and sponsored efforts. A tenured doctoral-level graduate faculty member also continues to serve as assistant to the dean on a quarter-time basis. In prior years, various college deans had held split positions with the Graduate School, and dual responsibilities did not allow sufficient time or direction for either area. The university felt that sponsored programs and graduate studies would be better aligned, and this strategy appears to have been successful to date. The new position, however, will need to be monitored and evaluated in order to ensure that both areas are given full attention.

The Graduate School is committed to faculty governance of graduate programs. Prior to 1997, the Graduate Council was composed of chairs of units with graduate programs. Following the 1997 NCA visit, a Graduate Program Charter redefined the Graduate Council to include representation from faculty and students. The Graduate Council is currently composed of graduate faculty who represent each graduate program and are elected from their academic colleges, two graduate faculty appointed by the dean

of the Graduate School, and three graduate students. In addition, since 1997 formal approval and discussion of curriculum changes have been routed through the Faculty Senate and its Curriculum Committee.

Through regular meetings and official actions, the Graduate Council responds effectively to relevant ideas and concerns. This group has actively created, reviewed and revised graduate policies and procedures over the past five years, addressing such issues as graduate faculty qualifications, continuing enrollment, leaves of absence, undergraduate student access to graduate courses, and participation in commencement. Each graduate program has an appointed program director or coordinator. These program leaders meet monthly with the dean of the Graduate School to discuss marketing ideas, policies and procedures, and current issues. While this group does not have policy-making authority, it often recommends ideas for Graduate Council discussion and action.

The Graduate School has undertaken strategic planning efforts twice since the 1997 HLC self-study, most recently in fall 2005.^{0.12} Planning sessions have included students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni and community leaders. The efforts have resulted in a working document that aligns practice with the State Board of Higher Education Cornerstone goals (see Roundtable section below). The Graduate School is currently working to align its planning with MSU's *Vision 2013*.

New programs, enhanced marketing, and emphasis on student services highlight recent objectives to increase graduate program visibility. Since the 1997 accreditation visit, program changes and additions include elimination of the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in English, and redefinition of the M.S. in elementary education as an M.Ed. with 10 concentrations spanning the P-12 range. The M.S. in management has been divided into separate programs in management and in information systems. MSU was chosen by the National Job Corps to offer the nation's only master's degree program for Job Corps employees whose career goals are upper management or center director positions across the nation (see Criterion 5D). A knowledge management certificate program has also been added. The Graduate School presently offers 10 programs with a total of 28 options, including participation in a Ph.D. program in criminal justice delivered collaboratively through the University of North Dakota (UND; see Criterion 5C).

Programs are increasingly being offered in alternative delivery modes. For example, the M.Ed. with a concentration in elementary education is offered in a blended mode, with some classes delivered on-site in Fargo and others delivered over the Interactive Video Network (IVN; see Criterion 3C). Several programs offer courses via IVN and/or online, using WebCT. The M.S. in management and the M.S. in information systems are now offered entirely online, in both eight-week and 16-week formats (resulting in an increase of student enrollments from other states as well as internationally). The M.S. in management also offers an accelerated program of blended courses that use online, on-campus and digitally captured classes to accommodate the needs of area professionals and MSU's international management cohort (currently including 15 Chinese students).

0.12 Graduate School Strategic Plan, available in evidence room

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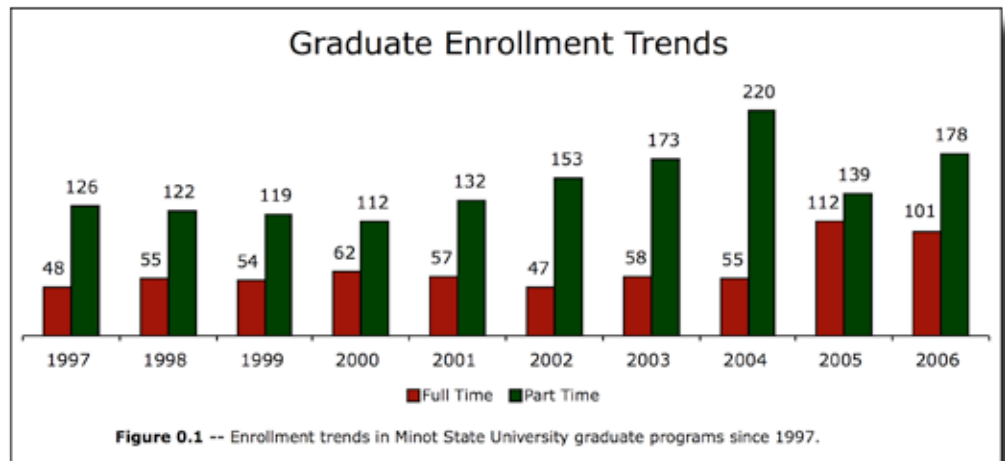
0.13 Graduate School Assessment Plan, available in evidence room

0.14 Graduate Student Toolkit <http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/pdf/toolkit.pdf>

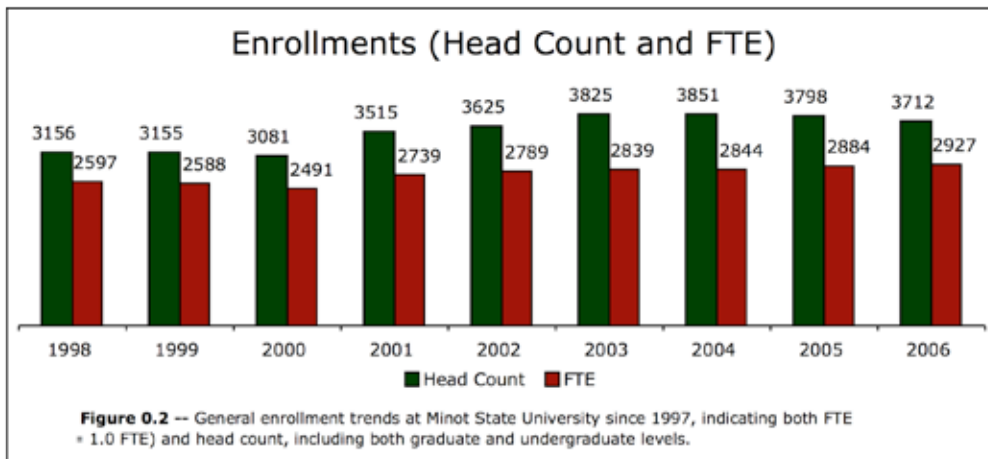
To address quality control issues, graduate programs have increasingly and systematically focused on faculty qualifications and program assessment. The Graduate Council recently updated the qualification requirements for graduate faculty. Departments must now provide clear justification for faculty to teach individual graduate courses when they lack a terminal degree. Faculty without a terminal degree may serve on graduate committees but may not serve as committee chair. Assessment has become a priority for MSU graduate programs, as has clear differentiation from undergraduate curricula (see Criterion 4B). For the majority of programs, accreditation by discipline-specific agencies has been required for many years. The Graduate School formally instituted an assessment plan in 2006.^{0.13} Individual programs regularly review standards for graduation and entrance requirements, and all policy changes must be reviewed by the Graduate Council. The council also monitors quality control issues through the formulation of policy.

The Graduate School emphasizes a mission-driven, students-first approach. For example, the *Graduate Student Toolkit*, a booklet designed specifically for students working at a distance, is sent to all admitted graduate students in order to walk them through such procedures as online registration, library access and completion of graduate paperwork.^{0.14} For easy access, all forms are maintained on the Graduate School Web site. The Graduate School is also pursuing an electronic application process and has instituted an electronic student tracking system.

These collective efforts have lent MSU graduate programs stability and growth. Enrollment in MSU graduate programs continues generally to rise with each term (Figure 0.1), and these programs remain an important growth area for the university.



3. Enrollment—Over the past 10 years, MSU has made a series of concerted efforts to address the reality of declining graduation rates within its traditional student recruitment area. While less than completely successful, early efforts produced useful research results, including a more thorough understanding of how MSU has been perceived in the region and the need to accurately convey the range and quality of four-year and graduate offerings. Recent initiatives include a comprehensive overhaul of MSU’s image, branding and marketing materials, campus appearance and Web presence. Enrollment and recruitment efforts have been consolidated under a new director of enrollment services, who is implementing an increasingly individualized and student-centered recruitment process. Despite demographic challenges and the state’s competitive environment, MSU’s relatively stable enrollment over the past decade (see Figure 0.2) has given MSU an important opportunity to define a more focused approach to recruitment. MSU’s new strategic plan recognizes these challenges and proactively addresses matters of both recruitment and retention.



The 1997 HLC concerns regarding campus enrollment patterns have been validated by population fluctuations in the state of North Dakota. Data from the 2000 census indicate that North Dakota grew by only 0.5 percent between 1990 and 2000, reaching a population base of 642,200.^{0.15} This was the smallest relative growth level in all of the 50 states. From 2000-03, U. S. Census Bureau estimates indicate that North Dakota’s population actually began to decline, reaching 633,051 in 2003. A July 1, 2004, estimate of 636,308 demonstrated slight growth, and during 2005, the population appeared to have grown to 636,677, an increase of just 369.

Native American population levels are the exception to these declines and show recent increases of nearly 10 percent on the Fort Berthold Reservation, 24 percent on the Spirit Lake Reservation, and 17 percent on the Turtle Mountain Reservation (1990 and 2000 census figures), all regions within the traditional MSU recruitment area.

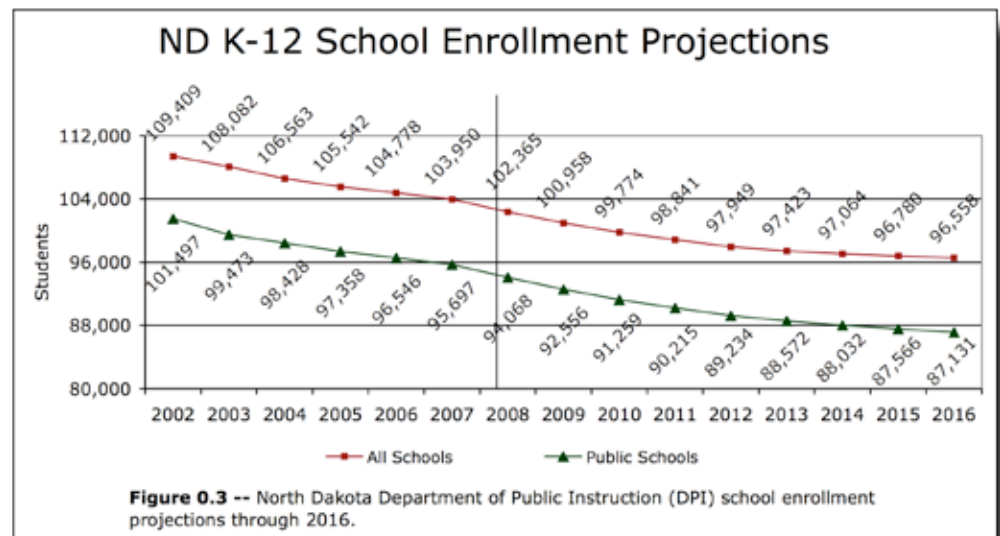
0.15 Population Trends, North Dakota State Data Center <http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc/data/populationtrends.htm>

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0.16 The University of North Dakota Center for Rural Health offers a county-by-county apportionment at http://www.med.und.edu/depts/rural/pdf/fs_demographics.pdf

This trend invites a particular recruitment focus on local American-Indian reservations that also would address the *Vision 2013* call for attention to diversity.

A dramatic decline in high school graduation rates (already under way and expected to reach 30 percent by 2017) poses monumental future stress on recruitment, overall enrollment and student retention for all the higher learning institutions in the state (see Figure 0.3).^{0.16}



Acknowledging these trends, MSU has adopted several different approaches to enrollment management in the last decade. Following the 1997 HLC visit, MSU first supplemented its own resources with funds from the city of Minot. A \$150,000 “MAGIC Fund” contribution allowed the university to expand its recruiting efforts to include marketing strategies based on the combined research of a campus unit called the Bureau of Social and Behavioral Research (BSBR) and DH Research, an affiliate of Odney Advertising Agency of Bismarck. Geographic recruiting ranges were expanded into central Canada, eastern Montana and selected areas in other states.

Stability of enrollment figures over the last decade is due in part to a substantial growth in online student population and MSU’s bold and continuing response to this market. The university’s successful 1997 application for a \$1.3 million Title III grant (entitled “Distance Education...Strengthening MSU by Reaching Rural Communities”) has helped MSU address the demographic shifts described above. This grant offered financial support to provide faculty with technical training necessary for online teaching and to develop the student services necessary to support an online program. MSU far exceeded all targets that were originally included with the grant and online enrollment has continued to grow steadily. Faculty skills and confidence have improved over time, student satisfaction with online courses has been very strong, and demand for new programs and courses continues to grow. A 2005 satisfaction survey of online students

showed that 83 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the MSU online program and 96 percent would recommend MSU online courses to others.^{0.17} This program has provided a significant source of revenue for the university (see Criterion 2B), as well as challenges regarding the incorporation of online offerings into faculty teaching loads and campus governance structures and processes.

In 2000-01, Noel-Levitz, a USA Group company specializing in higher education, recommended moving away from awareness-building activities and increasing attention to one-on-one marketing. While this advice was insightful, MSU lacked the resources to contract with Noel-Levitz for its services and the \$419,000 annually needed to carry out all of the firm's recommendations. Instead, funds were directed to production of the *MSUzine*, an Odney Advertising creation intended to appeal to high school students. The Odney initiative was soon replaced by more effective smaller publications designed to speak directly to the particular interests of prospective students. The university's Marketing Committee was renamed the Enrollment Management Committee, and graduate programs expanded their recruitment activities to include a graduate school home page, television advertising and professional conference displays.

Between 2001 and 2003, limited availability of funds and widespread uncertainty about which marketing efforts were actually working led to increased reliance on "in-house" efforts. This period included redesign of the MSU Web site, generation of a prioritized spending plan based on lessons learned during the first four years of agency-assisted marketing, an effort to concentrate marketing funds on media deemed to be most effective by previous consultants, and use of on-campus talent to develop materials and carry out program goals in ways that would maximize efficient use of budget dollars.

Between May 2003 and November 2004, with the appointment of a new university president, the Enrollment Management Committee once again engaged a marketing consultant. Woychick Design guided development of a new campus identity and image in the form of a brand platform and tag line, "Be Seen. Be Heard." These branding efforts are now highly visible and consistent across marketing media.

In recent years, the university has made a concerted effort to streamline administrative structures and increase funding for enrollment efforts. Since 2002-03, MSU has hired a full-time marketing director and added three recruiting positions, and the MSU Alumni Association and the MSU Board of Regents have actively joined MSU's recruiting efforts. The enrollment services and records offices have been merged into a combined Admissions Office to enhance coordination, replacing the Enrollment Management Committee. The director of enrollment services is no longer simultaneously responsible for career services.

While few of these many efforts over the past decade may be demonstrated to have been causal, as stated above, it is noteworthy that enrollment during this period has remained remarkably consistent (refer back to Figure 0.2). Recent efforts to streamline services and improve MSU's advertising image have clearly had a positive effect.

0.17 Fall 2005 Online Student Satisfaction Survey, available in evidence room

INTRODUCTION

To realize the *Vision 2013* goal of raising academic standards, enrollment services now reports directly to the VPAA and has made recruitment of quality students a primary focus. In addition, the Office of Financial Aid now reports directly to the VPAA, ensuring that its decisions reflect academic priorities. In the past, awards were offered only after a student had selected the university. The recent introduction of the Great Plains Scholar Awards ties recruiting to MSU's goal of raising academic quality. This program will provide four-year renewable tuition awards of 75 percent for students entering with an ACT score of 30 or above, a high school GPA of 3.65, and a demonstrated record of civic engagement. Enrollment management continues to be an area of pressing concern and top priority.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1997

Changes in University Governance

Following assessment information and climate surveys, during 2004 and 2005 several administrative changes have responded to an often-expressed need to improve communication, facilitate shared governance and decision making, and strengthen recruitment and enrollment, marketing, public information, public relations and advancement, and student support. A new president's staff has been established, and a new advisory group called the University Cabinet has been appointed. The Cabinet includes all supervisors and directors, vice presidents and deans, and the presidents of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association; it is chaired by the university president. The primary aim of the University Cabinet is to provide a forum for current issues and topics to be discussed, debated and shared with the members' constituencies. Roles and responsibilities for both groups have been defined and published, and the formation of these new groups has resulted in improved communications and shared decision-making.

Several administrative positions involving divided responsibilities have been separated, resulting in more clearly defined and focused positions for those who head the following areas: student affairs, advancement, the Graduate School, the Center for Extended Learning, and enrollment services.^{0.18} In addition, several key administrative offices have also been streamlined, moved to more logical campus locations, and given additional staff support. These include, for example, the Office of Enrollment Services, which now answers to the Office of Academic Affairs and is centrally located and staffed by additional recruiters.

0.18 2003 through 2007 Organizational Charts, available in evidence room

ND Legislature: Roundtable Discussions

In 1999, the North Dakota Legislative Assembly passed a resolution directing a study that would: (a) address expectations of the NDUS for meeting the state's needs in the 21st century, (b) determine the funding necessary for meeting those needs, and (c) devise an accountability system and reporting methodology for such an endeavor.^{0.19}

An interim committee of 21 legislators and 40 leaders from government, education and the private sector was convened to form the Roundtable, a group that developed the recommendations contained in its May 2000 report titled "A North Dakota University System for the 21st Century."^{0.20} Proponents of the Roundtable hoped to underscore the importance of public higher education to the state, and to persuade the Legislature to allow a greater degree of financial autonomy and flexibility in making some decisions.

The Roundtable recognized that a new relationship and culture were needed within higher education and among key stakeholders – a relationship built on trust and common purpose. The goal established by the Roundtable was to enhance the economic vitality of North Dakota and the quality of life of its citizens through a high-quality, more responsive, equitable, flexible, accessible, entrepreneurial and accountable university system.^{0.21}

The report presented nearly 100 recommendations that were subsequently assigned to the SBHE, both executive and legislative branches of North Dakota government, the NDUS and its campuses, and the private sector. In the 2001 legislative session, the SBHE devoted a major portion of its agenda to the Roundtable recommendations, and campus presidents all reviewed recommendations assigned to their campuses. The Roundtable and its accompanying six Cornerstones (see Criterion 1D and 2A) have served since 2001 as the foundation of strategic planning for the entire university system.

0.19 Tentative Agenda of the Higher Education Committee/Higher Education Roundtable, September 28-29, 1999, available in evidence room

0.20 A North Dakota University System for the 21st Century <http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/reports/details.asp?id=332>

0.21 Report of the Roundtable on Higher Education: Overview & Summary, 2003, provides a brief overview of the Roundtable. It is available at <http://www.ndus.edu/reports/details.asp?id=696>. The complete 2000 Roundtable report, "A North Dakota University System for the 21st Century," is available at <http://www.ndus.edu/reports/details.asp?id=332>.

Technology Initiatives and Advances

MSU has devoted major efforts in the last decade to building and updating technology infrastructure on campus. These changes have included upgrading the existing campus backbone (see Criterion 2B), the NDUS recent and difficult move to Oracle's PeopleSoft (a Web-based application for all administrative functions of the university; see Criterion 2B), major investments of equipment and human resources for instructional technology (see Criterion 3B), continual improvement of student technology services (see Criterion 3D), and the establishment of ongoing support for quality online course delivery (see Criterion 4A).

Building and Grounds Initiatives

The campus has undergone a host of major changes and extensive renovations to its physical plant since 1997. Under the leadership of the prior president, several particularly large-scale projects included the complete renovation of three academic buildings: Memorial Hall, Moore Hall and Old Main (including the 900-seat McFarland Auditorium, now renamed Ann Nicole Nelson Hall). This self-study examines MSU's physical plant as a resource (see Criterion 2B), the educational impact of these updates (see Criterion 3C), and community use of these facilities (see Criterion 5B).

Campus Master Plan

In 2005, the university hired a consulting firm, the Clark Enersen Partners, to assist in the development of a campus master plan for infrastructure. A Campus Master Planning Committee, composed of staff, faculty, administration and community members, was convened to work with the consultants and make recommendations on what elements needed to be in the master plan. City planners also worked with the consultants to plan how the campus and the city could integrate the interests of both. Surveys of campus use and needs were collected, and the consultants developed several possible scenarios for the campus to review.

The consultants submitted three different versions of a plan for campus review. Faculty, staff, students and interested community members then attended presentations and dialogues, during which the plans were scrutinized and suggestions made. Representatives of the firm then produced a draft plan for buildings and grounds.^{0.22} The plan bases its conceptual framework on “integrity of place,” an idea central to *Vision 2013*, and it includes new directions for campus entrances, signage, buildings, themes, student spaces, use of the north side of campus, and a host of other short- and long-term considerations. The proposals are intended to reflect the natural and cultural history of the area in the environment of the campus; one suggestion, for example, is to create earth berms along pedestrian commons to reflect the housing forms used by both Native Americans and the early settlers.

This campus master plan ultimately provides needed infrastructure to support implementation of *Vision 2013*. The plan will also provide guidance for a major capital campaign to support the goal of becoming one of the premier institutions of the “great” Great Plains. In January 2007, the consultants submitted a recommended list of deadlines for a three-phase implementation of their plan. Campus signage was identified as the first initiative to be undertaken, and that endeavor began in the summer of 2007.

0.22 Minot State University Campus Master Plan goals and draft, March 20, 2006, available in evidence room

Diversity Initiatives

In 2006, MSU and the NDUS Diversity Council engaged the Rankin and Associates Group to survey MSU's campus climate, particularly in relation to diversity.^{0.23} The NDUS Campus Climate Assessment Project Final Report^{0.24} presents results not only for MSU but for the entire university system. Findings included the fact that a majority of both students and employees at MSU felt that their workplace and classrooms were welcoming to members of underrepresented groups, although employees and students of color, as well as women and lesbians, gays and bisexuals felt this far less frequently than did their majority counterparts. This sort of information will continue to help MSU address the issue of diversity intelligently.

Given the current realities of increasing diversity and globalization, MSU recognizes its obligation to expand experiences with and ensure sensitivity toward diverse peoples, predispositions and cultures. *Vision 2013* emphasizes the importance of a direct connection to place, defined inclusively as the campus, the northwest region of the state and the larger global environment. The resulting board-approved mission statement makes an explicit commitment to “the dignity and rights of diverse individuals,” and “the success of all students.”^{0.25}

In 2006, the Faculty Senate approved the following definition of diversity for MSU:

Minot State University embraces a broad concept of diversity, which can be seen as variances in ethnicity, age, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation and geographic area. MSU also believes that diversity is an evolving concept that engages viewpoints, perspectives, values, religious beliefs and backgrounds of the global community. The MSU community values a spirit of inclusivity.^{0.26}

MSU's current diversity efforts include the addition of a new six-credit diversity requirement to the undergraduate curriculum (see Criterion 4C) and a new Multicultural Center, opened during the summer of 2006 to ensure a supportive, safe and comfortable environment for the university's increasingly diverse student population. The Diversity Committee has used this new center, along with the well-established Native American Cultural Center, to host a wide variety of diversity-related programs and events, such as ethnic food celebrations and programs highlighting Hispanic, Native American, Asian and African-American cultures; a “Featured Faiths” series designed to offer exposure to diverse faiths (sponsored with United Campus Ministries); multiple Heritage Month celebrations; and the Annual Honors Dance and Spring Celebration (Honor Dance) (see Criterion 5A). MSU has also recently signed formal partnership agreements with two area tribal colleges (see Criterion 5C).

0.23 Rankin and Associates Climate Assessment Survey http://www.minotstateu.edu/diversity/climate/Minot_Final_Report_Appendix_B_Survey.pdf

0.24 The NDUS Campus Climate Assessment Project Final Report http://www.minotstateu.edu/diversity/climate/Minot_Final_Report_Narrative.pdf

0.25 Vision 2013 http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

0.26 Faculty Senate Minutes 2 February 2006 http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/minutes_05_06.shtml

INTRODUCTION

0.27 Diversity Initiatives
http://www.minotstateu.edu/diversity/pdf/strategy_4.pdf

Strategy four of *Vision 2013*, “Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate,” addresses four priorities for the future: (1) using the Rankin Survey to identify strengths and weaknesses, (2) strengthening MSU’s relationship with Native American colleges, (3) internationalizing the campus, and (4) nurturing a campus climate of inclusiveness. A *Vision 2013* Strategy Four Task Force accordingly has identified a number of potential initiatives, including creating a Native American Studies major; enhancing community-global connectivity; developing recruitment strategies for increasing faculty, staff and student diversity; and promoting increased study of foreign languages. ^{0.27}

Self-Study Process

The MSU self-study process has been open and inclusive at all stages, modeled in part on the recent university-wide strategic planning process (described above). In December 2005, a self-study coordinator was appointed. Five faculty members, all of whom had attended two HLC-related conferences in Minneapolis and Chicago (2005), were appointed to serve as the core (the Editorial Committee) of a larger Steering Committee. This Steering Committee was apportioned carefully for a broad representation of perspectives on the institution, both from within and outside the campus community. A separate task force was then convened for each of the five Criteria for Accreditation. Each task force was composed of several Steering Committee members and other campus constituents (including students) who had appropriate backgrounds. A member of the Editorial Committee served on each task force and acted as liaison to the Steering Committee.

The job of these task force groups was (1) to formulate responses to the five Criteria for Accreditation (stated positions) and (2) to locate evidence that would support each position. Groups were encouraged to exercise analysis as well as description in their responses. For each core component, the response was to consist in three explicit declarations: (1) how MSU meets the criterion, (2) how MSU has arrived at that status since 1997, and (3) what work remains to be done in order to achieve the university’s aspirations (per *Vision 2013*).

Each group submitted its findings to the Steering Committee at large in a series of working papers. Rough drafts were compiled for review by the Steering Committee and its task force groups (Spring 2007). During the summer of 2007, pairs of Editorial and Steering Committee members revised individual chapters. The self-study coordinator and a full-time editor took the individual chapters and constructed a unified document. Additional faculty and support staff formatted and drafted the initial document layout for campus review. The resulting document was presented to the entire campus community during the fall 2007 convocation and finally to all of the university’s remaining stakeholders (late fall 2007). These initial drafts openly invited expansion

and criticism (see appendix for self-study timeline). The document continued to be revised through fall 2007 by the Editorial Committee.

This self-study and the recent *Vision 2013* strategic planning initiative have corroboratively led to widely shared knowledge of the university's history and an honest understanding of its present status, true mission, principal strengths and many challenges—both internal and external. The result is a broadly shared new vision for MSU's future as a globally engaged and increasingly diverse community of learners and teaching scholars. A central and honest purpose has been to provide all who have a stake in the institution with authentic means for assessing their roles, not only in relation to the five HLC criteria for accreditation, but as a way to chart a healthy course well beyond the 2008 HLC site team visit and the 2013 centennial celebration.



CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

Minot State University operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff and students.

History of Mission

As detailed in the introduction, MSU is currently undertaking mission change and extensive strategic planning. Prior to 1997, MSU's mission statement, approved by the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) in 1993, was somewhat ambiguous and encompassed the following broad principles: It drew on a normal school tradition and sought to offer student-oriented programs that emphasized a liberal arts foundation and the primacy of learning. This mission stressed the fact that MSU was an interactive university committed to forming productive alliances with business enterprises and organizations. The university sought to serve its varied constituents through public service, research and curricular offerings, as well as arts and cultural programming. MSU's mission statement was published in a variety of locations, including the 1996-98 Undergraduate Catalog, Faculty Handbook, university strategic planning documents, and MSU Web site.^{1.1}

1.1 1996-1997 MSU Faculty Handbook & strategic planning documents, available in evidence room

In 1997, partially in response to the North Central Association's site visit report, and partially in an attempt to frame a mission that was less ambiguous and more focused, MSU made sweeping changes to its mission statement. That new mission statement was clear and concise: "Minot State University advances knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and the vitality of community and cultures."^{1.2} The campus worked with an outside consultant, Schwahn Leadership Associates, to connect the mission with a set of beliefs and core values, tailored to the needs of constituents. Ensuing mission, beliefs and values were initiated through short, intensive planning sessions with the outside consultants and were subsequently executed through a series of endeavors involving the campus community, initiated and managed by the administration. This was a fairly top-down and reactive process. The result was that MSU put forth five beliefs, encompassing learning, teaching, campus life, research and service.^{1.3} These beliefs have, in fact, shaped MSU's activities and commitments, and resulted in what might be called a de facto mission statement of "students first," which MSU faculty and administration seem to genuinely embrace, and MSU students seem to genuinely appreciate.

1.2, 1.3 1998 through 2006 MSU Undergraduate Catalogs, available in evidence room.

In 1999, North Dakota's Roundtable on Higher Education developed a common vision and set of expectations for higher education in the state (see introduction). The Roundtable plan presented six Cornerstones and also defined NDUS governance in terms of beliefs and core values.^{1.4} Each of the 11 NDUS institutions was charged with

1.4 NDUS Cornerstones <http://www.ndus.edu/reports/default.asp?ID=355>

developing its own mission statement, the basis of which would be key components defined by the Roundtable and Cornerstones. MSU's institutional mission, however, was not revised again until 2005, when MSU undertook comprehensive strategic planning.

The principles behind MSU's 1997 mission, beliefs and core values became the driving force behind a substantial annualized assessment process (see Criterion 3A). The 1997 approach to mission, however, still lacked an accompanying approach to holistic institutional planning. In addition, although the 1997 mission had encouraged independent activities, programs and excellence, there was still no campus consensus regarding a common identity. This uncertainty was confirmed during the 2005 strategic planning process, when the media focus group discussion revealed that many community members could not identify MSU's mission.^{1.5} MSU has addressed this problem, as detailed below.

1.5 Media focus group summary, available in evidence room

Core Component 1A

Minot State University's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the university's commitments.

Development of New Mission

MSU's new mission statement, published in *Vision 2013*, is a major departure from the 1997 approach: it begins with identity and encourages holistic planning to achieve that identity.^{1.6} The new mission sets a distinctively new course for the university, focused on a sense of place in the northern Great Plains, and on engagement, diversity and an increasingly global level of enterprise. Its additional focus on service to the common good reflects both a strong institutional heritage and a promising future identity and direction. This new perspective has been enthusiastically embraced by MSU constituencies throughout its development. The new mission helps set the stage for rational planning and will help the campus set goals and assign resources more logically (see Criterion 2D). It is, in other words, future-focused.

1.6 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

Current Mission Statement

Minot State University is a regional, public institution located in the northwest region of North Dakota, serving students from Minot, the region, state, nation and other countries. Undergraduate and graduate courses and programs are offered on campus and at a distance, through face-to-face, online and alternative modes of delivery. Non-credit and professional training and experiences are offered to students and community members.

Committed to high academic standards and professional support for students, the university is dedicated to student success, engaged and lifelong learning, advancement of

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

knowledge, effective student service, and development of students of character. These commitments are grounded in effective and motivated teaching and learning, scholarship and service. General studies and a variety of programs are offered in the arts and sciences, business, and education and health sciences. A wide range of student support services is provided to on-campus and off-campus students.

The university values critical and creative thinking, vitality of communities and cultures, stewardship of place, and the multicultural and global environment. The university honors and supports the dignity and rights of diverse individuals, freedom of expression, academic freedom, ethical and moral behavior, integrity, fairness and honesty.

Minot State University is first and foremost dedicated to the success of all students: their growth and development as educated citizens, their confidence, and their lifelong devotion to the common good and the welfare of others.

Dissemination of Mission

The university's new mission statement, approved in January 2007 by the SBHE, has been widely circulated, discussed and promoted both on and off campus.^{1.7} The mission statement has been distributed to such agencies as North Dakota's U.S. congressional delegation, state governor and legislators, local high school counselors, Canadian school officials, Minot Air Force Base personnel, regional city mayors and other officials, regional attorneys, service clubs, civic organizations, and all pertinent news media. In the 2007-08 academic year Minot State University's mission statement was published through the MSU Web site as well as through all previous hard-copy venues, including the MSU *Faculty Handbook*, *Student Handbook*, *Undergraduate Catalog*, and *Graduate Catalog*.^{1.8} The mission statement, core values, and statement of the core purpose in *Vision 2013* have been displayed prominently in each building on campus, and the individual academic colleges have also drafted and published mission statements in keeping with *Vision 2013* (see Criterion 1C).^{1.9} Currently, the Graduate Council is reviewing and revising the Graduate School's mission and vision to align with *Vision 2013*. Both internal and external stakeholders will continue to be active in the development and realization of the mission as detailed in *Vision 2013*.

1.7 SBHE approval of MSU mission statement <http://www.ndus.edu/uploads/document-library/1324/MINUTES-FOR-THE-WEB-01-18-07.PDF>

1.8 Mission statement locations <http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/mission.shtml>

http://www.minotstateu.edu/faculty_handbook.pdf, http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_handbook.pdf

http://www.minotstateu.edu/catalog_u/

<http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/catalog/>

1.9 College of Arts and Sciences <http://www.minotstateu.edu/artsnsci/>
College of Business www.minotstateu.edu/business/mission.shtml
College of Education and Health Sciences <http://www.minotstateu.edu/cehs/mission.shtml>
Graduate School <http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/mission.shtml>

Findings

- The MSU mission has evolved significantly over the course of a decade and is now clearer, more specific and more purposeful than before.
- The process of mission development has become widely inclusive.
- The new mission emphasizes student success and dedication to the common good.
- The new mission has been shared with all constituencies.

Core Component 1B

In its mission documents, Minot State University recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies and the greater society it serves.

As made evident by *Vision 2013*, MSU is devoted to student success and personal growth, and to development of educated citizens with a lifelong devotion to the common good and the welfare of all. These goals are conceived in a global reality. As global society becomes more interdependent, MSU recognizes that it will need to expand opportunities for experience with and sensitivity toward diverse peoples, predispositions and cultures. The new mission includes an explicit commitment to placing high value on “the vitality of communities and cultures,” “the multicultural and global environment” and “the dignity and rights of diverse individuals.”^{1.10} Recent diversity-related initiatives on campus, such as the Faculty Senate approval of a six-credit diversity requirement (see Criterion 4C) have developed hand in hand with this new mission. Strategy Four of *Vision 2013*, “Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate,” details four concrete priorities for new direction and shows that the institution is poised for further growth in this area. (Criterion 3D discusses academic support services for diverse learners.)

By the time of MSU’s centennial, decision-making processes relating to mission and purpose will include increasingly more diverse constituencies at all levels, particularly in light of steadily increasing strategic attention to diversity within the student body and to international exchange initiatives.

1.10 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

Findings

- MSU’s new mission makes explicit commitments to honor and cultivate diversity.

Core Component 1C

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade Minot State University.

Campus Involvement in Mission Creation

As mentioned in the introduction, MSU’s new mission statement was developed over two academic years (2004-2006), through an inclusive process involving continuous dialogue with the entire campus community, the citizens of Minot and its region, and the university’s alumni, Board of Regents, and Foundation Board. All of these

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constituencies were kept regularly abreast of developments throughout the process. The president met repeatedly with faculty, staff and student senates during this time to discuss and formulate each aspect of the developing mission and strategic plan. Additional feedback was solicited at faculty and staff convocations in 2005 via response cards and a survey which asked respondents to rate their agreement with the following statements:

1. At MSU, there is a “pervasive attitude that all students can succeed, reinforced by a wider culture that is not content to rest on past success.”
2. At MSU, there is “a sense of inclusiveness on the part of all members of the campus community frequently characterized as a ‘family.’ ”
3. At MSU, there is “a strongly held sense of institutional mission that recognizes the campus as ‘distinctive’ or ‘special.’ ”

1.11 Three-Question Survey Results,
available in evidence room

**1.12 Minutes of the Planning and
Budgeting Council, December 8, 2005**
[http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/
plan/pab_minutes_12_08_06.pdf](http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/plan/pab_minutes_12_08_06.pdf)

The first question drew the strongest agreement, while the third question regarding mission and distinctiveness drew the weakest.^{1.11} A Web-based survey was also given, asking students, faculty and staff to identify three adjectives that would describe the most desired qualities in MSU graduates. Responses were compiled by the Planning and Budgeting Council (PABC) in December 2005 and included words such as confident, learned, insightful, engaged, caring and ethical.^{1.12}

Of the 18 focus group sessions conducted in spring 2005, eight were devoted to internal campus constituencies: administrators, faculty (full time and part time), staff (professional and support), students (including distance and non-traditional students), and the Board of Regents. Once a draft of the mission and strategic plan was available, considerable time was spent at the August 2006 and January 2007 faculty/staff convocations reviewing hard-copy versions of the document and soliciting feedback. The goal of all these efforts has been to ensure that the rationale, mission, strategic plan and implementation strategies are uniformly understood and adopted by all parties. As part of this process, on Feb. 2, 2006, the Faculty Senate endorsed establishing high expectations for graduates, developing a culture to support student success, and cultivating stewardship of place and civic engagement. These ideas became the centerpiece of *Vision 2013*. Additionally, the Student Government Association endorsed the final version of the strategic plan.

Planning and Budgeting Council: Communication and Coordination

1.13 Planning and Budgeting Council
[http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/
comm_01.shtml](http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/comm_01.shtml)

The Planning and Budgeting Council^{1.13} facilitated the collaborative origination of the new mission, and it remains the principal agent behind the seven strategic planning initiatives outlined in *Vision 2013* (see Criterion 2D). Advancing and implementing the

Vision 2013 plan, including alignment of all units on campus with strategic priorities and the relationship of that alignment to NDUS and Roundtable goals will require talented review and revision, assessment and measurement, budgeting and financing (see Criterion 2B and 2D), and most importantly, communication across all realms of the institution. The PABC will continue to move this process forward on all fronts.

College Missions

Recently reformulated missions within the three colleges have been derived from themes apparent in the new mission. Beyond the specialized focus represented by these academic areas, the missions emphasize student success, high academic standards, student character and MSU's engagement with the community.

The College of Arts and Sciences mission (2007) highlights advanced teaching and scholarship, as well as skills students will need to navigate a global society:

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a comprehensive, holistic and interdisciplinary education at Minot State University. College faculty integrate excellent teaching with scholarly and creative activity, thereby preparing undergraduate and graduate students with the knowledge, values and skills needed in our diverse world.

The College of Business emphasizes ethics, lifelong learning, and partnerships with the community:

At the Minot State University College of Business, we develop, enhance and implement programs that foster people's understanding of global markets, economic planning, productivity and professional business practice. While expanding principles of ethical professional practice, we also strive to enhance societal well-being and the lifelong learning of our faculty, students, alumni and community members—qualities we believe are essential to meeting the needs of our stakeholders in an evolving professional business environment. The College of Business will continue to serve as a catalyst for economic development.

The College of Education and Health Sciences demonstrates its commitment to excellence in teaching, community-building and preparing professionals for an evolving global society:

The College of Education and Health Sciences serves the mission of Minot State University: first, by providing challenging and effective instruction through educational programs, activities and partnerships; second, by advancing knowledge that facilitates

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learning, strong communities and healthy lifestyles; and third, by preparing quality professionals for the rapidly changing global society.

Further discussion of college goals and strategic planning is found in Criterion 2D.

Findings

- The 2004-06 process of university mission development successfully sought full participation and feedback from all campus constituencies, including administration, faculty, staff and students.
- Faculty and student governance bodies support *Vision 2013*.
- The PABC has facilitated all aspects of the development of the MSU mission and will coordinate implementation of the strategic plan.
- College missions align with the new MSU mission.

Core Component 1D

Minot State University's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the university to fulfill its mission.

SBHE Policy

State Board of Higher Education policy has long supported MSU's mission by articulating the need for "high quality, innovative learning opportunities tailored to the needs of students." When MSU's 1997 mission, for example, asserted the primacy of learning, it was fully supported by the SBHE assertion of a "university system where students have opportunity to receive the education necessary to be professionally and personally successful." The SBHE promotes effective leadership on an ongoing basis, through its charge to approve university missions, set higher education policies, and appoint highly-qualified university presidents. The SBHE recently provided two major tools to help assist campus administration. The Roundtable on Higher Education (see introduction) will improve communication between higher education and government, and will ultimately encourage a greater degree of autonomy in strategic decision-making for each campus. The SBHE also recently implemented Connect ND as a collaboration between the NDUS and state government. This project implemented the new PeopleSoft software that was meant to facilitate NDUS academic, financial and human resource computer functions, as well as those of state government.^{1.14} While this transition has been problematic for many units across the state, the SBHE has demonstrated a laudable intention to update services and facilitate communication.

1.14 ConnectND <http://www.nodak.edu/connectnd/index.php>

NDUS

MSU is by law a full partner in the NDUS, the constitutionally empowered system of higher education in North Dakota, and has sought a significant number of cooperative agreements with other NDUS institutions. SBHE policy states that an NDUS institution should “maintain good relations and effective communication with other ND institutions and cooperate with the institutions to improve academic offerings, access to higher education, promote faculty development, reduce unnecessary duplication and enhance efficiency.” MSU partners with other NDUS institutions most extensively through its graduate degree and distance education offerings and through course transfer agreements, described in detail in Criterion 5C.

Minot State University is an integral part of the region it serves, and its mission and purposes have, since its founding, been linked inextricably to the needs, aspirations and commonwealth of the people of North Dakota. SBHE policy asserts that NDUS institutions should maintain sound relationships with their communities. Today, MSU’s mission is based upon its status as an interactive university that shares alliances with organizations and businesses throughout the community (see Criterion 5C and 5D).

MSU Administrative Qualifications and Responsibilities

MSU provides effective leadership through the hiring of highly qualified administrators.^{1.15} The SBHE is ultimately responsible for approving the hiring of all NDUS university presidents. The current president of MSU has B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in English. He came to MSU with 26 years of professional experience and has served as professor, director, dean and vice president in past academic and administrative positions. Generally accepted practices of competitive search processes have long been in place at MSU to ensure the hiring of well-qualified employees at all levels below that of president.

Among other senior administrators, the MSU VPAA has a master’s degree in criminology and corrections and a Ph.D. in criminology. The Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) has an Ed.D. in student personnel with a minor in educational administration and a master’s degree in counseling and guidance with a minor in personnel administration. The Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF) has a bachelor’s degree in business administration/accounting and a master’s degree in management. The Vice President for Advancement (VPA) has a 25-year background in fund raising and many years of working with community organizations, and he has been directly involved in several capital campaigns. The Athletic Director has a master’s degree in educational leadership.

Administrative responsibilities have been delegated to meet more fully the needs of the institution (see introduction). A full-time human resources director has been

1.15 Position Descriptions and Governance document, available in evidence room

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in place at MSU since 1997. Assistance from this office has resulted in a number of improvements to campus human resources management through guidance on searches, provision of timely salary and benefits information, development of appropriate policies and procedures, and assistance in personnel issues. Another improvement is the recent development and delivery of a series of supervisory training workshops.

Campus Governance Structures

MSU promotes leadership and collaboration through its interconnected Faculty Senate and administrative governance structures; administration, faculty, staff and students are all included in governance processes.

The faculty of the university consists in three colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the College of Business (COB), and the College of Education and Health Sciences (CEHS). Deans of these colleges report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The dean of the Graduate School and research and sponsored programs likewise reports to the VPAA and is similarly responsible for policies and procedures related to graduate study and grant activity across all of the colleges. Within colleges, programs are associated with governance branches termed either departments (when they represent unitary disciplines) or divisions (when they include more than one related discipline). Each of these has a chairperson elected from among its faculty or, in some cases, appointed by the dean of the college. Department or division chairpersons report to their respective college deans.

The Faculty Senate at MSU serves as the center of faculty governance and is responsible for university policy relating to undergraduate and graduate curriculum, faculty welfare and promotion, changes in faculty organization, and other matters as indicated in the *Faculty Handbook*.^{1.16} Ultimate authority for university policy rests with the SBHE, state Legislature and university officers, but a wide variety of decisions, particularly those concerning curriculum (see below), are made on campus by the Faculty Senate and its committees. Faculty Senate committees demonstrate carefully apportioned and inclusive representation, as established in faculty-approved bylaws. For example, the following personnel constitute the General Education Committee: the VPAA, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, two students, four faculty members from CAS, and one faculty member each from COB and CEHS. In the case of this committee, the faculty are appointed by their senate president, and the students by the president of the Student Government Association.

A healthy system of checks and balances is in place. Actions taken by the Faculty Senate can be overruled by the president of the university, who must provide written explanation. The Faculty Senate may appeal such a decision to the NDUS chancellor. The faculty, by one-third vote, may require its senate to reconsider any action and may overrule the Faculty Senate with a majority vote. Any faculty member may bring issues

1.16 MSU Faculty Senate
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/>

MSU Faculty Handbook http://www.minotstateu.edu/faculty_handbook.pdf

to Faculty Senate simply by notifying its president of an issue to be placed on the agenda.

A number of institutional and administrative councils, including several recently established groups (see introduction), operate parallel to the organizational chain of command, primarily as mechanisms for deliberation and planning. These councils, as well as committees of the university's Faculty Senate, are all listed on the university's Web site under Academic Affairs.^{1.17} Central among these have been the following: President's Staff, University Cabinet, Academic Affairs Council, Deans' Council, Chairs' Council and Graduate Council.

The Staff Senate was established in 1992 through encouragement of the university president in order to represent the university's classified employees, historically called the staff.^{1.18} This senate promotes communication between university administration and all of the university's classified staff.

Student participation in campus governance takes two forms. The Student Government Association (SGA) consists of all students who have paid activity fees to the university and are currently registered for classes. Officers of the SGA include a president, a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. The SGA is the governance body that advocates for students in financial matters involving student activity fees. The SGA delegates powers to officers and internal committees for that purpose. Membership is carefully apportioned to include representatives from all the colleges, all elected officers of the SGA, first-year students, graduate students, students living in the residence halls, and two delegates to the Faculty Senate.

Faculty Authority over Curriculum

Ownership of the curriculum, regardless of the mode of delivery, rests unambiguously with the faculty. SBHE and MSU policies regarding academic freedom (see Criterion 4) protect faculty research and teaching. Faculty are hired primarily because of their discipline-specific expertise, and are the people who understand their fields, know the recent scholarship, and have experience in its application. They are therefore best situated to make informed decisions regarding curriculum and related policy matters.

Thoughtful campus procedures for approval of curricular change help align programmatic efforts across the campus. After first clearing the responsible academic unit, any curricular changes or new courses must pass through a series of committees to ensure that larger issues are considered.^{1.19} For example, an education-related proposal must be cleared first by the Teacher Education Administrative Committee and/or the Graduate Council. Then, like all course requests, it proceeds to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and finally to the Faculty Senate for approval. The VPAA provides final approval on proposals, and the Office of the Registrar keeps the final

1.17 Academic Affairs, Policy-forming Councils <http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/comm.shtml>

1.18 Minot State University Staff Senate <http://www.minotstateu.edu/stfsenat/index.shtml>

1.19 Curriculum Committee <http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/com07.shtml>

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and official copies of curriculum documents. Faculty at Minot State University take faculty governance of the curriculum seriously. Over the last several years, the Faculty Senate and its committees have dealt with a number of significant curricular issues that demonstrate this fact (see Criteria 4B and 4C).

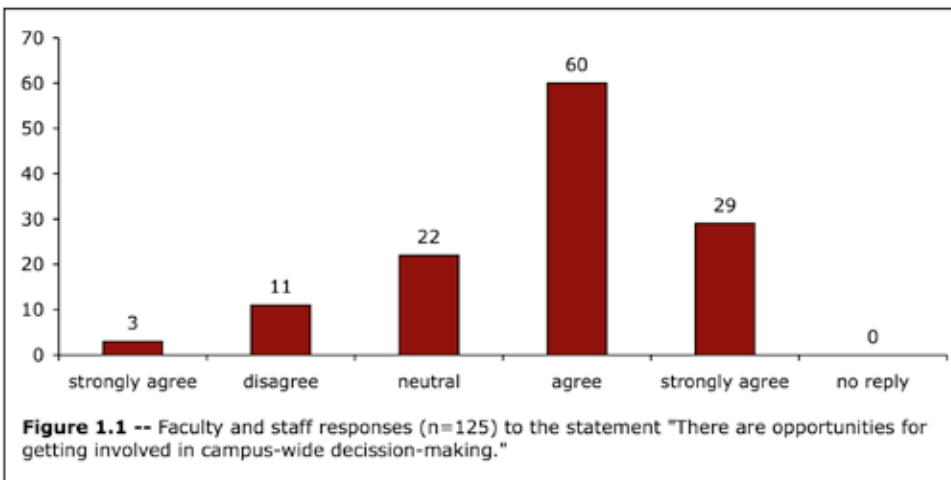
Communication and Shared Decision-Making

MSU has become better at communicating clearly with all constituencies, making all university processes transparent and understood by all. The president's initiative of hosting regular campus-wide forums and informal breakfast gatherings is one example. Probably the most noteworthy example of this more open communication and governance has been the new approach to strategic planning and consequent budgeting processes via the Planning and Budgeting Council (see introduction and Criterion 2D). Regular communications among administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni include:

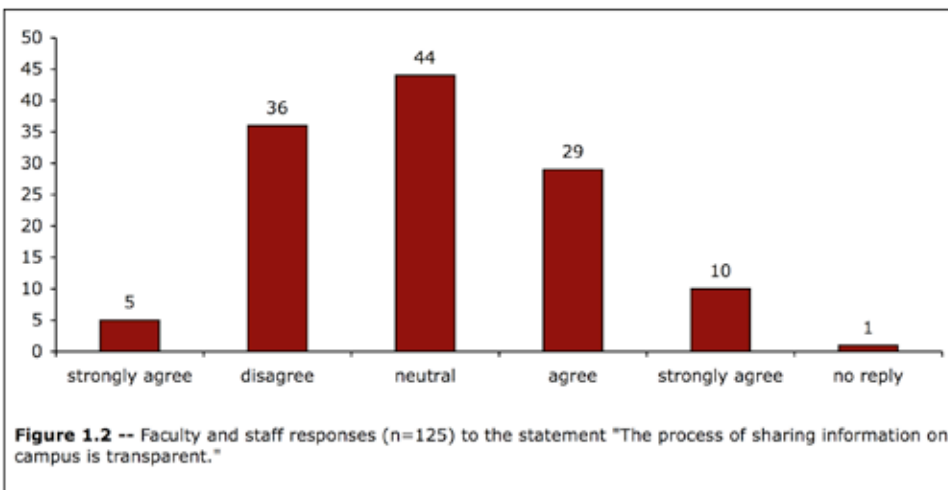
- *Connections* (alumni magazine)
- *Red and Green* (student newspaper)
- *Inside MSU* (campus newsletter)
- *Calendar of Events* (distributed every semester)
- "In the Know" information sessions
- College advisory councils
- Department, college, and HLC self-study newsletters
- Campus-wide e-mail system for intra campus announcements and notifications
- Focus groups convened during strategic planning initiative
- "Breakfast with the President"
- All-university convocations at the beginning of each term
- *Monthly President's Report to Faculty, Staff and Student Senates*
- Presidential forums
- New Student Orientation and Mentoring Program
- *Student Handbook*
- *Residence Hall Handbook*
- *Faculty Handbook*
- *Undergraduate Catalog*
- *Graduate Catalog*
- *Graduate Student Toolkit*
- University Web site
- Campus employment listings

Both *Vision 2013* and campus master planning processes have been built upon a foundation of clear and effective communication among stakeholders. Nevertheless, a history of campus skepticism regarding claims to participatory governance leads some faculty and staff to feel hesitant about this progress. A certain ambivalence was evident in results of a survey conducted during fall semester 2006.

For the purpose of evaluating campus perceptions about MSU’s governance structures and processes, a sample of staff and faculty (n=125) was asked to identify level of agreement with five statements. One of these, “There are opportunities for getting involved in the campus-wide decision-making,” produced agreement or strong agreement in more than 70 percent of those surveyed (Figure 1.1).



Another statement, “The relationship between students, faculty, staff and administration is supportive,” produced an agreement level of approximately 60 percent. On the other hand, for the statement “The process of sharing information on campus is transparent,” scarcely more than 31 percent agreed or strongly agreed (Figure 1.2).

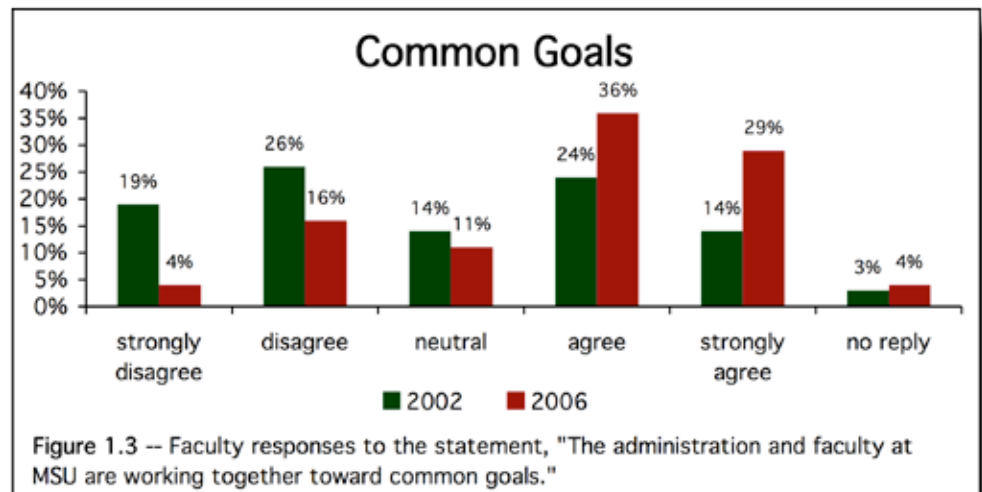


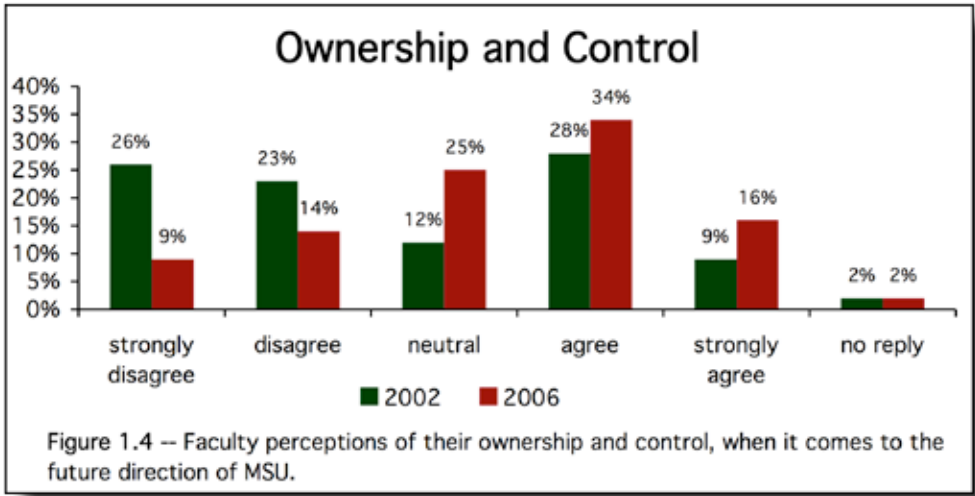
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These results are somewhat difficult to interpret, in part because the campus is in the midst of implementing a new planning model (see introduction and Criterion 2). The positive indications about governance show a system of shared decision-making that is working, while the results about transparency of information may simply be an artifact of the recent electronic information explosion, which brings more daily “shared” information than anyone could intelligently digest. Perceptions may also simply lag behind realities. In part, respondents may have in mind pragmatic problems associated with the system-wide switch to PeopleSoft, or respondents may be also adjusting to considerable recent administrative turnover (president, vice president, deans, major officers). Major restructuring of administrative offices in recent years, designed to improve student services, recruitment, alumni relations may have also complicated communication.

Effective collaboration and transparent communication are also reflected in faculty satisfaction surveys, administered independently by the Faculty Senate. These surveys show a marked increase between 2002 and 2006 in satisfaction with collaborative governance with administration. ^{1.20}

1.20 The complete Faculty Satisfaction Survey results are available at <http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/survey.shtml>





MSU has definitively become more public and more transparent over the course of the past decade, as strategic efforts have evolved from the four-tier mechanism that was prevalent during the 1997 HLC visit, through the Schwahn Leadership Associates initiative of 1999-2000, to present efforts related to *Vision 2013*. MSU is clearly moving in a direction that places high value on open communication.

Findings

- Shared governance structures are firmly in place.
- Faculty direct curricular developments through rigorous processes designed to maintain high academic standards and preserve curricular coherence.
- Communication and shared decision-making have improved greatly in recent years, though a perception of full transparency has not yet been achieved.
- Processes need to be further streamlined and duplications eliminated, as resource challenges push faculty and staff to do more with less.

Core Component 1E

Minot State University upholds and protects its integrity.

Financial Integrity

MSU demonstrates financial integrity through compliance with SBHE policy, NDUS financial review, audits, compliance with local, state and federal law, and fair dealings with external constituents. MSU's governance structure is constitutionally and legally imbedded in, driven by, and accountable to the SBHE governance structure and its auditing mechanisms.^{1.21} Budgets must be submitted annually to and approved by the SBHE. MSU's chief fiscal officer (the VPAF) must meet with and explain budget parameters to each individual within the university who has been authorized to expend university funds. No significant aspect of this governance picture has changed since 1997, nor or is any expected to change in the foreseeable future.

1.21 SBHE Policy, section 802.6
<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2510>

1.22 "NDUS Financial Review, Fiscal Year Ending 2006," available in the president's office.

1.23 "NDUS Audit Report for the year ending June 30, 2006," available in the president's office.

The recent NDUS "Financial Review, Fiscal Year Ending 2006" (with trends since fiscal year 2003), found that MSU's overall financial condition is sound.^{1.22} Further evidence of fiscally honest operating policies is demonstrated by the NDUS "Audit Report for the Year Ending June 30, 2006."^{1.23}

To keep abreast of changes in federal, state and local laws and regulations, the university's faculty and staff regularly attend meetings and workshops in which these mandates are discussed. Compliance with these mandates is periodically reinforced by audits performed by the regulatory entities concerned. No significant changes in the way federal, state and local laws and regulations function or are monitored by the university have occurred since 1997 or are anticipated through 2013. MSU has established policies and procedures for handling external grants. The Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs is responsible for overseeing compliance with state and federal reporting regulations.

1.24 SBHE Policy, Introduction
<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/index.asp?id=2482>

1.25 SBHE Policy, section 803.1
<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2255>,
SBHE Policy, section 840
<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2293>

SBHE policies ensure fair dealing with external constituents.^{1.24} MSU abides by all SBHE policies that govern purchasing and contracts with external constituents.^{1.25} From time to time, the Legislature will review public/private competition to ensure that opportunity is being fairly managed. For example, student residence halls do not compete with local hotels or motels. The university's printing services and food service provider are not permitted to compete with local businesses, but must limit their services to campus-based functions. Other examples include a preference for local purchasing wherever that is possible and mandatory competitive bid-letting on major projects and purchases. With a proportionate decrease in state support for higher education (see Criterion 2B), more pressure will no doubt be placed on the campus to support itself, which in the future may raise questions regarding competition with the private sector.

Campus Policies

Mechanisms are firmly in place on campus to ensure fair and timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly in the case of students. Undergraduate and graduate Student Rights Committees exist for the purpose of addressing student grade appeals, for example.^{1.26} These committees meet monthly throughout the academic year. The Student Welfare and University Affairs Committee, which meets as needed, is the channel through which student discipline appeals are normally addressed.^{1.27}

A student complaint log also exists to maintain an up-to-date record of student complaints and actions taken to address the issues.^{1.28} These processes have been continuously in place since 1997. A general grievance policy for students was instituted in summer 2007 and can be found in the *Student Handbook*.^{1.29}

MSU implements and enforces university and NDUS policies regarding rights and responsibilities of administrators, faculty, staff and students, first by making them known to those involved, through regularly updated publications such as the *Student Handbook*, *Residence Hall Handbook*, *Faculty Handbook*, and the *MSU Human Resource Policy Manual*.^{1.30} Increasingly, the Internet has become the conduit for communicating guidelines and expectations regarding how administrators, faculty, staff and students should conduct themselves. MSU implements NDUS policies on computer and network use.^{1.31} Specific staff have assigned responsibilities for the enforcement of certain policies. The VPSA oversees the student conduct code. Academic honesty policies are addressed in Criterion 4D.

The university encourages involvement in co-curricular and auxiliary activities. These activities must be conducted in a manner that upholds the integrity of the institution. For that reason, groups conducting co-curricular activities all must do so under the guidance of a supervising university department. Student organizations also are required to abide by all bylaws or constitutions that have been drafted and approved for that purpose. The VPSA oversees all student activities in this context. Auxiliary activities are subject to annual audits as part of university function, and are thus governed by SBHE policy.

The Loss Control Committee reviews all incident reports. It is not uncommon for an incident on the campus or within the system to initiate review of any relevant policy. One such recently evolved policy requires anyone operating an extended van to take a class and pass a driving test. Insurance and risk management practices will likely dictate further refinement of such policies in the future.

1.26 Student Rights Committee
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/com16.shtml>

1.27 Student Welfare and University Affairs Committee
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/com24.shtml>

1.28 Student Complaint Log, available in the president's office

1.29 MSU Student Handbook
http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_handbook.pdf

1.30 MSU Residence Hall Handbook
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/life/pdf/handbook.pdf>

MSU Faculty Handbook
http://www.minotstateu.edu/faculty_handbook.pdf

MSU Human Resource Policy Manual
http://www.minotstateu.edu/hr/policy_manual.shtml

1.31 NDUS Computer and Network Usage policy <http://www.ndus.edu/policies/ndus-policies/subpolicy.asp?ref=2551>

CRITERION ONE:
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Accuracy of Information and Image

MSU cares about the accuracy of information disseminated to campus, to its alumni and to the public. The Public Information Office is the principal campus link with both internal and external communities. MSU publishes news releases, magazines, newsletters, calendars of events, recruitment materials and correspondence with all constituents. Keeping these audiences accurately informed about campus events, policies and plans is a high priority in all university offices.

In line with its new strategic plan, MSU recently formed a marketing committee and has employed a full-time marketing director in efforts to market and represent the campus in an accurate and consistent manner. Recent consultation with Woychick Design has resulted in a “brand” platform (with the tag line “Be seen. Be heard.”) and a new *Graphic Standards Manual* that guides publication of all institutional documents. All publications must now adhere to a uniform code of presentation.^{1.32} This makes all official university publications immediately recognizable and lends consistency of image to the university, although it has raised concerns that individual campus units cannot capitalize on their distinctive attributes.

MSU also cares about its institutional memory and has discovered through its self-study process that institutional archiving has to date been unstructured, unstaffed and unmonitored for accuracy and consistency. Turnover of administrative, faculty and staff employees has exacerbated the problem. MSU needs to establish and organize a central repository (both paper and electronic) for important institutional records, documents, meeting minutes, etc.

1.32 Graphic Standards Manual
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/identity/>

Findings

- MSU upholds fiscal integrity through SBHE policy and best practice.
- The institution provides and executes solid grievance policies and procedures.
- MSU cares about accuracy of information and the success and consistency of its image.
- A consistent campus archiving process needs to be established.



Strengths, Challenges and Actions related to Criterion 1

Strengths

- The past decade has been marked by steady gravitation toward authentic involvement of all constituencies in mission assessment and strategic planning; this openness promotes commitment and shared integrity.
- The *Vision 2013* planning process ensured consistent articulation and communication of vision, mission, goals and strategies to faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders. The new mission prioritizes institutional identity and suggests clear strategic planning directions; it has been enthusiastically embraced by MSU constituencies.
- Mission documents now clearly emphasize the importance of global perspectives. Minot State University values cultural diversity and the richness that diversity brings to its campus. The new mission's renewed commitment to diversity has encouraged discussion regarding foreign language requirements and expansion of study abroad and exchange opportunities.
- The university has established a Planning and Budgeting Council, with the responsibility for aligning operation of all units on campus with strategic priorities for efficiently reaching decisions on the distribution of financial resources, personnel and facilities (see Criterion 2D).
- The university exercises strong financial integrity.

Challenges and Proposed Actions

- **Challenge:** Never before has MSU so carefully and inclusively constructed a mission. Likewise, never before has commitment to its mission been so strongly emphasized at MSU. It will be a challenge for everyone—administrators, faculty, staff and students—to prioritize activities around the new mission.

Proposed actions:

- Continue the broad dissemination and honest discussion of MSU's new mission. It is crucial that all stakeholders be well-informed and feel that they have a voice in the immense changes under way (see Strategy Three in *Vision 2013*).

**CRITERION ONE:
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- Use the new mission to focus on student achievement. While building a “premier public, regional university,” MSU must not forget its de facto mission of “students first” and must continue to provide topnotch educational opportunities for all who attend MSU (see Strategy Five of *Vision 2013*).
- Seek out and allocate resources properly. Sweeping changes in mission will likely require increases in resources, and MSU must be canny in its acquisition of these resources, pursuing every avenue open to it (see Strategy Seven of *Vision 2013*).
- **Challenge:** MSU has successfully educated students for nearly 100 years. Its history is replete with innovative programs and professors, provocative and challenging learning opportunities, and social and cultural interactions. MSU must continue to build upon what it has long done so well.

Proposed actions:

- Maintain viability of strong programs. In the rush to align with its new mission, MSU must be careful not to ignore programs (both intramural and extramural) that are already successful and important to the university and the community.
- Maintain faculty authority over curriculum. This is crucial to the quality of education at any institution. Faculty at MSU handle curricular issues very well and must continue to do so.
- Continue to improve communications among various campus entities. As MSU’s new mission is disseminated and implemented, clear, concise and timely communication among administrators, faculty, staff and students is essential.



CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Minot State University's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Component 2A

Minot State University realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

A 2005 American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) report, “Student Success in State Colleges and Universities,” examined 12 state institutions known for their favorable retention and graduation rates. The study aimed to determine why those institutions enjoyed such a high level of student success. Teams of evaluators visited those campuses and found that “student success at these institutions is more a product of an overarching shared culture than it is a result of a more narrowly conceived, deliberate ‘retention effort.’”^{2.1} The report noted that while there was a remarkable diversity of campuses studied, three characteristics in their cultures were distinguishable:

1. There was a “pervasive attitude that all students can succeed, reinforced by a wider culture that is not content to rest on past success.”
2. There was “a sense of inclusiveness on the part of all members of the campus community frequently characterized as a ‘family.’”
3. There was “a strongly held sense of institutional mission that recognized the campus as ‘distinctive’ or ‘special.’”

With MSU’s long history of student-centered mission and its continued interest in supporting students and improving retention, the results of this study provided relevant grounding for the *Vision 2013* strategic planning process (see introduction). MSU clearly supports a pervasive attitude that all students can succeed, a belief that the campus should embrace inclusivity, and a will to define a distinctive mission that reflects the deliberations of all constituencies.

2.1 Student Success in State Colleges and Universities (Executive Summary)
<http://publichigheredinfo.blogspot.com/2005/10/graduation-rate-outcomes-student.html>

CRITERION TWO:
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Demographics, Financial Constraints and Consumerism

In establishing *Vision 2013*, Minot State University has considered declining local population, unpredictable state financial support, and rising student debt levels. The state faces a potential 30 percent reduction in high school graduation rates by 2017 (see introduction), and that fact has figured strongly in institutional planning. Continued tuition hikes, designed to offset declines in enrollments and in state and federal support (see Criterion 2B), are not, in this context, viable or responsible options. Student debt loads have also escalated in recent years, pressuring students to find employment even while attending college.

The financial advantages of earning a college degree are well-documented and provide prospective students a compelling reason to go to college. Given these facts, it is not surprising that many students shop for and attend colleges guided by a growing consumer perspective—find the best deal, with the best quality, at the best price, with the most convenience. Unfortunately, that consumer perspective fosters an expectation of an easier and less demanding route to a diploma. That expectation also puts further pressures on colleges and universities to compete in a market in which other institutions are offering accelerated and shortened degree paths. MSU has responded to this trend in *Vision 2013* by reaffirming the importance of high academic standards and rigorous programming (see Strategy Two of *Vision 2013*), and by uniting those high standards with a bold new emphasis on engagement.

2.2 NDUS Preschool to College (P-12) Initiative <http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/reports/default.asp?ID=388>

Questions are increasingly raised at the national level about the effectiveness of P-12 education in preparing students for college.^{2.2} In this light, MSU will need to plan carefully to ensure that all of its students gain the necessary foundational tools and knowledge to equip them for these higher university-level standards. Attention to the first-year experience is therefore also a high priority in Strategy Two of *Vision 2013*, and is evidenced by participation in the Foundations of Excellence Program.

A significant increase in the number of online offerings and in the number of accelerated degree programs across the nation has provided educational consumers with better deals. These programs and offerings demand less time, offer more convenience, and result in fewer costs, compared to traditional college experiences that require living on campus, traveling to campus, and taking time away from job and family. Online courses provide a convenient and often effective alternative learning format for students. MSU currently strives to find a balance between online and on-campus offerings, as its online program provides not only a needed student service but also an invaluable financial asset (see Criterion 2B). As the institution juggles these priorities, Strategy Seven of *Vision 2013* emphasizes the clear need to “ensure future institutional viability, vitality and growth.”^{2.3} At the same time, MSU holds its online students to the same academic standards expected on campus, and it continues to explore new pedagogies and technological tools to enhance the sense of student engagement in this learning

2.3 Vision 2013 http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

environment (see Criterion 3B and 3C). These technology developments and consumer pressures are fully acknowledged in *Vision 2013* and will continue to prompt change in the way MSU operates.

Accountability

An initial draft report of the National Commission on Higher Education concluded that federal funding of programs needs to be overhauled and that colleges and universities should reduce their expenditures.^{2.4} In characteristically consumer-like language, the report identified a need for colleges and universities to “improve their productivity” and to do a better job of measuring what students learn. North Dakota, like all states, must respond to concerns that students are not learning what they should. These sentiments affect how state lawmakers think of higher education and provide its financial support.

Increased pressure for accountability from accreditation agencies, state certification boards, and state and federal lawmakers has forced NDUS institutions to prove that students are getting what they have paid for. In response to these pressures, MSU has made great strides since 1997 in establishing viable assessment processes. Perhaps most importantly, assessment on the MSU campus has become learning-focused, rather than purely compliance-oriented (see introduction and Criterion 3A). In addition, the North Dakota Legislature is concerned that the state earn a return on its investment in higher education. Every year, MSU demonstrates its economic impact in its NDUS Roundtable Cornerstone report (see Criterion 2C).

2.4 A Test of Leadership (Spellings Report) <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>

Civic Engagement and Global Perspective

Despite these challenges, MSU recognizes many positive signs and opportunities. Large numbers of students are enrolling in colleges and universities nationally, including a growing number of students from low-income and culturally diverse backgrounds. Opportunities abound for attracting international students and for U.S. students to study abroad. MSU recently hired a full-time director of international programs to address Strategy Four of *Vision 2013*, “Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate.” Enhanced cultural diversity and multicultural awareness on the MSU campus will create a rich atmosphere in which students can appreciate and honor different cultures, backgrounds and ideas.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities and other educational organizations have been instrumental in encouraging and supporting the engagement of colleges and universities in civic welfare. Research and scholarship regarding engaged learning have helped colleges and universities do a better job responding to individual learning needs. Increased attention is paid to the value of engagement, active learning,

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2.5 *Vision 2013*

http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

participation, hands-on activities and other methods connecting theory and practice. Becoming a good citizen, contributing meaningfully to society, and leading a purposeful and satisfying life remain high and realistic ideals for education. Strategies One, Two, Four, and Six of the *Vision 2013* initiative address this directly with initiatives for “creating a distinctive mission focused on engagement and place,” “fostering engaged learning and place for the benefit of students,” “building a diverse and multicultural university climate,” and “creating a commitment to civic engagement, service and the common good.” Recent service learning initiatives at MSU demonstrate clear growth in this area (see Criterion 4C).^{2.5}

Renewed Purpose for Higher Education

Many believe that consumerist and corporate models are seriously affecting the quality of higher education. MSU is committed to ensuring that education is not viewed merely as a necessary inconvenience in the path to receiving a diploma and getting a job; rather, it functions to provide students with new knowledge, the best of culture and valuable skills. As students face the culture of heightened consumerism and myriad appeals, a university education is especially essential for providing the skills necessary for making good judgments, for acting morally and ethically, for being able to recognize and avoid manipulation, and for understanding how to see beyond the prevalent call for material goods. Strategies Three and Five of *Vision 2013* address this need by prioritizing “high standards and expectations for the work of faculty and staff and their contributions to student success” and focusing on “student success and future achievements.”^{2.6}

2.6 *Vision 2013*

http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

Planning and Scanning

Evidence of future-centered scanning and planning at MSU is best found in the recent *Vision 2013* strategic planning process and in the Campus Master Plan process currently under way (see introduction). Evidence of a future focus can also be seen in additional campus and NDUS initiatives since 1997.

In 2000, with the help of Schwahn Leadership Associates, MSU redefined its mission and vision statements, along with a set of articulated core beliefs and values (see Criterion 1). These guided the university in developing new initiatives and included an alignment process so that goals of individuals and programs would be assessed in terms of the mission and vision of the university.^{2.7} Short-range planning was accomplished through the compilation of personal staff goals within individual units across the campus. These sets of goals were used for planning within the units, but sometimes led to efforts coordinated beyond that level. Campus administrators reviewed these goals and identified a number of them as items to be included in the new strategic

2.7 2000-2006 Minot State University master planning desktop tri-fold, available in evidence room

long-range planning. The work of MSU's Assessment Task Force and subsequent overall design of the assessment process (see Criterion 3A) demonstrated MSU's commitment at this time to the ongoing review of its performance.

The MSU strategic planning process from 2000-2006 was paralleled by an ensuing North Dakota legislative initiative, the Roundtable on Higher Education (see introduction), that identified Cornerstone goals for the entire NDUS system. The Roundtable placed immediate emphasis upon primacy of the NDUS as the economic engine for the state of North Dakota, and established 92 accountability measures covering six Cornerstones: education excellence, economic development connection, accessible system, flexible and responsive system, funding and rewards, and sustaining the vision.^{2.8} This list has since been revised and reduced to 31 measures; timelines for reporting have been established system wide.

The results of these accountability measures provide each institution with data concerning such areas as economic development, student performance and satisfaction, satisfaction of employers of graduates, and employee satisfaction. Some data in the annual NDUS report are specific to MSU, while some are general to the state system. The compiled data, which include comparison to national norms and/or peer institutions, enable MSU to evaluate and assess its effectiveness as a member of the state system through self-reflection and comparison with other institutions within the NDUS. The report also provides important information pertaining to the funding of higher education within the system. Various individuals at MSU have used these data for specific decisions, but critical analysis and a useful, institution-wide employment of the data have often been lacking (see Criterion 3C for discussion of recent improvements to relevant campus processes).^{2.9}

From 2000-05, the mandated NDUS alignment process largely became the focus of MSU planning efforts. MSU annually identified targets relative to each of the Roundtable goals, and then submitted a report to the SBHE that measured performance on those targets. The mission, vision, beliefs and core values developed in the Schwahn Leadership Associates planning process continued to guide MSU as efforts on campus also focused on meeting the Roundtable goals of the state.

In addition, MSU has made significant progress since 1997 in planning further development for the Graduate School. In 2005, subsequent to the establishment of the new position of Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs (see introduction), MSU developed a strategic plan for the Graduate School which includes the following goals:

- Create a student-centered Graduate School, accessible to all individuals, regardless of location or socioeconomic level.
- Increase the enrollment of students in graduate programs to 1,000 by 2013.

2.8 The initial report and list of these accountability measures appears in the *1st Annual Accountability Measures Report, December 2001*. An updated list appears in the index of the *4th Annual Accountability Measures Report, December 2004* (pp. 69-71), which is available in the evidence room.

2.9 Performance on the NDUS accountability measures is reported annually by the SBHE. The most recent report is the *2006 Accountability Measures Report*, which is available in the evidence room.

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**2.10 Graduate School Strategic Plan,
available in evidence room**

- Increase the visibility of graduate programs on campus, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Recognize and encourage the professional expertise of graduate faculty.^{2.10}

Progress has been especially strong in the areas of increased visibility, the shift to electronic filing of paperwork, and “Plan Your Future” events to help current students make key decisions. The Graduate School recognizes that future efforts will require resources sufficient to provide for graduate assistantships, graduate faculty development initiatives, long-term faculty hiring, and better summer faculty remuneration.

MSU has also made significant progress in the development of effective collaborative partnerships with educational institutions both within and outside the NDUS (see Criterion 5C). Both undergraduate and graduate programs have benefited, and the MSU Center for Extended Learning (CEL) has facilitated these partnerships through the employment of up-to-date technologies, administrative support, and substantive program development (see Criterion 4A).

Findings

- MSU’s recent strategic plan, *Vision 2013*, which was developed in collaboration with all university constituencies, provides an institutional response to multiple significant social and economic trends, including demographic shifts, increasing consumerism, threats to academic standards, increasing accountability pressures, and the need for civic engagement and global perspective.
- In its ongoing responses to Roundtable accountability measures, MSU holds itself to standards adopted by the North Dakota Legislature, the primary funding agency for MSU.
- Recent formulation of the Graduate School Strategic Plan and MSU’s growing number of collaborative educational partnerships demonstrate a future-centered approach to planning.

Core Component 2B

Minot State University's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

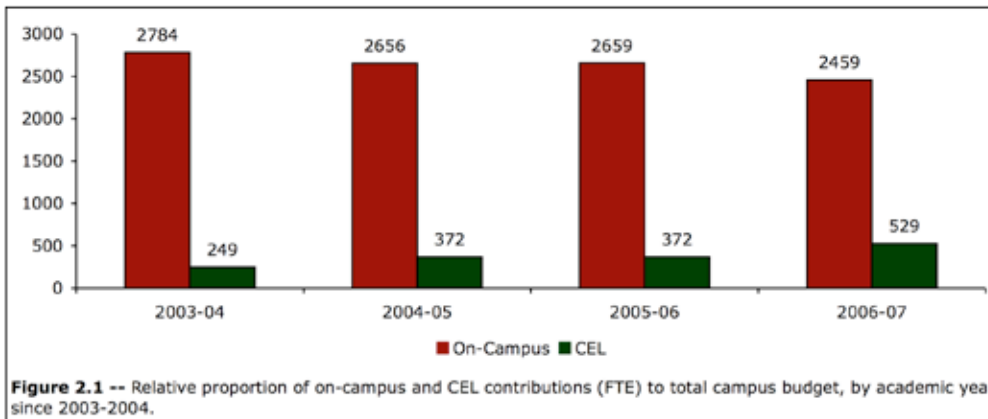
Contexts for Resources

Over the past 14 years, MSU's portion of NDUS budgetary allocations has remained remarkably consistent (Table 2.1).

State Biennium	North Dakota University System	Total State General Fund Approp.	Minot State's General Fund Approp.	Minot State's Share of NDUS Approp.
1997-99	302.24	1,489.24	24.677	8.16%
1999-01	327.41	1,594.04	26.155	7.99%
2001-03	366.95	1,746.98	26.532	7.23%
2003-05	362.89	1,803.67	26.382	7.27%
2005-07	388.51	1,989.45	27.893	7.18%
2007-09	471.65	2,456.97	38.267	8.11%

In this context, MSU's ability to maintain relatively level enrollment figures and avoid large-scale budgetary crises has been largely attributable to two factors: steadily increasing tuition and fees, and expansion of distance-learning programs administered by the Center for Extended Learning. The expansion of online learning opportunities far beyond original Title III grant projections (see introduction) has cultivated a thriving market and helped offset the decline in appropriated dollars. This reality was plainly stated to the campus in a fall 2006 presentation by the VPAF.^{2.11}

2.11 2006 budget presentation by VPAF, available in evidence room



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Concerns have arisen that growth of online offerings in particular may be a contributing factor in declining on-campus enrollments. The PeopleSoft system does not indicate the delivery mode for a class, so accurate analysis of the situation is a challenge, and therefore it is not possible to identify students taking both online and on-campus coursework. In addition to individual courses, MSU currently offers the following complete programs online: eight undergraduate degrees, two graduate degrees and four certificate programs.

Budgeting Process

Resource allocation designed to achieve educational quality at MSU divides generally into three categories: faculty and staffing resources, allocations for operating expenses, and equipment allocations. This section outlines campus procedures for allocating operating expenses, while the following section will approach compensation issues. Equipment is discussed later in this component as well.

2.12 1987 NCA response to visit report, p. 29, available in evidence room

Two decades ago, the 1987 NCA Commission report indicated that MSU's planning "appear[ed] to be irregular, projective, additive and facilities-centered, rather than ongoing, strategic, prioritizing and program-centered."^{2.12} MSU has undergone three distinct strategic planning initiatives since 1987, but budgetary processes have remained largely static since 1987—based essentially upon credit-hour production and demonstrating only minor sporadic adjustments to that principle. For example, an operating budget worksheet from 2000-01 identified the following for each campus unit: credit-hour production, operating budget, and a calculation of the percentage of the total MSU operating budget. The final field of the worksheet indicated proposals to change the operating budgets based on the reported credit-hour production.

MSU has recognized that allocating operating budgets solely based upon credit-hour production is fraught with limitation and pitfalls. Across all campuses, there are always revenue-generating programs that cost relatively little to operate; conversely, there are other programs that generate little student interest as measured by credit-hour production, yet due to specialized equipment, space and operating needs, are expensive to operate. MSU's VPAF has worked since 2005 to change to a budgeting model in which credit-hour production will be only one of many factors. For example, he has held budget hearings with all the fiscal managers. This opportunity has allowed academic deans and other directors within academic affairs to address fiscal challenges and needs. Budget modifications have occurred as a result. For example, the Office of the Registrar has been allowed to reallocate admission application fee funds to Enrollment Services and other offices that can encumber expenses to that fund.

Some MSU budget reports prior to 2005 mention cost-control measures that responded to shifting program enrollments by decreasing or consolidating faculty and staff positions. These have largely been opportunistic changes and have not occurred

after a broad campus-wide review. Recently, MSU has begun to make efforts to review program viability and eliminate programs that are not vital to the mission or are not viable due to student enrollment. Program reviews are required by the SBHE on a structured recurring basis (see Criterion 3A). These reviews typically involve a review of curriculum, instructional staff, resources, assessment and program viability. To this end, the campus recognizes the need to address low-enrollment programs for sustainability. In NCA's response to MSU's last self-study, consultant-evaluators also recognized the need for the campus to review program viability and the fact that MSU could not continue to be all things to all people. Since the last visit, MSU has eliminated the audiology program and placed the French major and the economics major on inactive status under SBHE policy 403.1.3, as approved by the NDUS system on May 8, 2006.

MSU will soon implement a prioritization process to ensure that resources necessary for its key programs are in place. In the summer of 2006, the deans and the VPAA held a retreat to consider the prioritization process outlined by Robert C. Dickeson in his book *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance*. This process will use *Vision 2013* as a basis for the prioritization of programs on campus; following Dickeson's outlined process will involve all members of the university community to focus on the best allocation of existing resources to support our mission. This is likely to be a painful but necessary process for the university.

As programs, academic units and colleges proceed to accord their missions, language, curricula and assessment practices with the planning strategies of *Vision 2013*, annual assessment reports will reveal emerging curricular needs. Through the Planning and Budgeting Council, these needs will present agenda issues, inform discussions and guide budgetary recommendations (see Criterion 2D for details).

Compensation

Compensation has been an ongoing source of concern at MSU. Salaries and wages have lagged behind national and regional norms. In large part, this is a reflection of state general fund appropriations support, as compared with the benchmark averages from SBHE-approved peer institutions for each of the NDUS institutions. The percentage of the benchmark ranges from 41 percent to 87 percent across the NDUS; MSU is supported at a level of 66 percent of that of its benchmark institutions. **2.13**

Until recently, attention has been focused on the issue of faculty salaries, with the intent of encouraging retention, program stability and educational quality. Historically, the faculty salary administration process involved 1) obtaining legislative and SBHE funding and instructions; 2) using the funds according to instructions; and 3) using the remaining funds and any internal reallocation of funds for discretionary reasons including promotion, merit and equity. The Legislature passes a pay bill each session for state employees; however, MSU's salaries and wages are included in the appropriations

2.13 2006 Accountability Measures Report, p. 45, available in evidence room

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bill for the NDUS. In the past, after instructions were heeded, the legislative funds not spoken for were combined with other internal funds (when available) and a pro-rated sum was provided to the college deans for discretionary use. The deans used various approaches to determine the use of the discretionary funds with input from the chairs, evaluations or scoring mechanisms. These decisions were then reviewed by the VPAA and the VPAF. While vice-presidential decisions were not a rubber stamp, the vast majority of decisions made by the deans passed vice-presidential review.

Various sources of market data have been used, including American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), but in recent years MSU has used College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) data as they provide information not only by academic rank but also by academic discipline. Efforts are ongoing to maintain the validity of the information. For the past five years, the deans have been provided with listings of market rates and salaries affecting their faculty members to use for comparisons in making decisions. For FY2007, this did not happen because of an across-the-board cost of living adjustment (COLA). Some discretionary funds were used, but not on the scale of previous years.

Table 2.2 -- Average Faculty Salaries by Rank 1998-99 to 2006-07

Academic Year	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	All Listed Ranks	Change
1998-99	\$55,762	\$42,449	\$37,708	\$32,487	\$42,162	8.30%
1999-00	\$57,680	\$44,230	\$38,453	\$32,403	\$43,192	2.40%
2000-01	\$56,964	\$45,414	\$39,777	\$34,698	\$43,784	1.40%
2001-02	\$57,072	\$46,162	\$40,460	\$36,713	\$44,975	2.70%
2002-03	\$57,576	\$47,860	\$41,837	\$37,635	\$46,046	2.30%
2003-04	\$58,190	\$48,077	\$42,238	\$37,231	\$46,479	0.93%
2004-05	\$61,576	\$48,727	\$43,423	\$39,608	\$48,334	4.00%
2005-06	\$63,351	\$51,518	\$44,503	\$37,786	\$49,254	0.20%
2006-07	\$64,871	\$51,888	\$45,812	\$34,368	\$47,756	-0.03%

In 2005, the president of MSU assembled a Compensation Task Force (CTF) to examine issues surrounding the salaries of both the faculty and staff. The CTF was led by the director of human resources. Its charge was to examine current salaries, to compare salaries to those of peer institutions, to study compensation packages, and to examine the current processes for making and communicating decisions on salary increases. Finally, the task force was asked to devise a five-year plan and set salary goals for the institution. Following inaugural lessons in salary administration and academic job classifications, the director of human resources provided the CTF with the necessary information to examine MSU's salary structure. The CTF provided the campus opportunities to learn about the progress through open forums held at various intervals throughout the year. The president began using the preliminary task force proposals for the 2006-07 academic year.^{2.14}

2.14 May 11, 2006 Memo from President David Fuller, available in evidence room

After a year of committee work, the director of human resources drafted the final report with committee approval. With the North Dakota State Legislature additional funding for higher education approved for the 2007-08 academic year, the goals established by the CTF for the year became attainable and should put MSU on track to meet the salary goals established by the CTF over its five-year plan.^{2.15} The CTF recommended that market rates for faculty use 93.5 percent of the reported CUPA-HR national market data, to reflect the national market results by rank and discipline and the cost of living factor for Minot. It also recommended that market rates for staff use market data for mid-level and administrative professionals from CUPA-HR salary surveys (specifically based upon comparable institutions). For positions not included in either of these surveys, the market rates are based on statewide data from Job Service North Dakota. The recommendations were approved by the Faculty Senate and the Staff Senate in fall 2006.

2.15 Compensation Task Force Report and Five Year Salary Plan Summary (Feb. 21, 2007).

The CTF recommended three approaches to salary administration over the next five years, including COLA, equity and discretionary funds, in efforts to achieve the salary goals. First, the COLA will be applied across the campus based on the previous year's rate of inflation. Second, equity will be addressed incrementally across the campus based on salary comparisons to market data and stated guidelines. Third, discretionary funds will be provided the deans for merit or internal equity. These actions will require an increase of appropriated salary funds by approximately five percent for each of the next five years. Also, while promotion increases were historically handled from the discretionary funds, the current model is to provide these increases through internal reallocation outside of the primary funds identified for salary administration.

Faculty and Staff Development

MSU funds a number of faculty development programs designed to support excellence in teaching (see Criterion 3B) and scholarship (see Criterion 4A). MSU provides financial resources to current faculty for the continued pursuit of professional education and the completion of terminal degrees. Tuition waivers are also available for all employees and their children (see Criterion 4A).

External Grant Funding

For many years, external funding received by MSU was limited to a few faculty members and two centers, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) and the Rural Crime and Justice Center (RCJC). No centralized oversight was available, other than the VPAA as the authorized representative of the university. In 1999, the VPAA requested that NDCPD, MSU's most successful grant and contract funded recipient, oversee the pre-grant process, including assisting in grant proposal

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preparation and submission. NDCPD maintained this role until May 2005. During this time, their efforts focused on organizing a more streamlined grant and contract internal submission process.

In May 2005, MSU created a campus administrative unit headed by a new Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs. In this capacity, the new dean took over NDCPD’s role in pre-grant oversight and became the university’s authorized representative. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs provides assistance in seeking grant opportunities, reviewing RFPs, preparing and submitting grant applications, presenting training workshops, maintaining federal and state compliance information, and, most recently, preparing employment contracts and overseeing all grant funding expenditures. The office also communicates with MSU’s lobbying group in Washington, D. C. on federal appropriations and related funding opportunities. Grant-seeking activity has increased to include more faculty, independent of the grant-sponsored centers (NDCPD and RCJC).

Table 2.3 -- MSU Grants and Contracts Fiscal Year 1997/98 through 2004/05			
Fiscal Year	Private	State/Federal	Total
1997-98	\$359,344	\$1,740,190	\$2,099,534
1998-99	\$302,828	\$1,967,057	\$2,269,855
1999-00	\$464,637	\$2,155,558	\$2,620,195
2000-01	\$397,128	\$2,327,182	\$2,724,310
2001-02	\$210,432	\$3,168,837	\$3,379,269
2002-03	\$266,766	\$3,829,069	\$4,095,862
2003-04	\$102,901	\$7,648,922	\$7,751,823
2004-05	\$195,667	\$6,222,835	\$6,418,502
2005-06	\$209,161	\$6,119,386	\$6,418,502

Staff Support

In order to manage funds and accomplish the mission of the institution, an organization must use its human resources effectively. The current MSU staff to faculty ratio is 1.3 :1; however, with exclusion of the auxiliary units (North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities and the Rural Crime and Justice Center) the ratio changes to 1.1 :1. For the NDUS, this ratio is approximately 2.5 :1, indicating that Minot State University does more with less in the context of support staff personnel. While this productivity provides some benefits to the institution, in the long run it is likely to result in staff burnout, inadequate coverage of assigned responsibilities, or both. In recognition of this, MSU has added new staff positions to critical areas in recent years in order to better align its human resources and funds to meet the mission of the institution (see introduction, section on key developments). MSU has strengthened marketing, recruiting, advancement and international programs, in particular.

Physical Facilities

MSU has undertaken extensive renovation of its physical facilities over the last decade.^{2.16} All major projects involving academic buildings in the NDUS are presented to the SBHE in biennial facilities planning documents compiled by each institution.^{2.17} The SBHE then prioritizes requests from all NDUS institutions and recommends projects and funding levels to the N.D. Legislature.

Campus highlights since 1997 include:

- conjoining of the Administration Building and Student Union, including new convention space (1998)
- restoration of the Dome roof, floor and sound system (1996-1998)
- total renovation of science building, Cyril Moore Hall (1998)
- total renovation of Old Main, including the addition of 16,000 square feet and renovation of the 900-seat Ann Nicole Nelson Hall (2003)
- renovation of residence hall, CP Lura Manor (2002)
- renovation of Hartnett Hall (2003)
- ADA compliance updates for residence hall, Dakota Hall (2006)
- renovation of ballroom in the Student Union, now a student center (2006)
- total renovation of residence hall, Crane Hall (2006)
- replacement of Dome track (2007)
- total renovation of Swain Hall (currently underway)

Renovation of academic spaces has focused on tailoring teaching space to current and developing pedagogical practices, including providing the technological support necessary for smart classrooms (see Criterion 3C and 3D). Renovation of service-oriented buildings has also sought to make them more attractive to students and others who use the MSU campus. In all buildings, updating in order to meet safety codes and achieve ADA compliance was also an essential goal. Implementation of the Campus Master Plan will guide future renovation and construction efforts.

Equipment

A necessary part of adequately funding academic programs at any institution of higher education is allocation of equipment funds to academic units. Minot State University institutional records dating back to 2000-2001 indicate that in the past allocation of equipment resources was loosely aligned with credit-hour production by division and department. In recent years, however, academic units have been asked to submit equipment budget requests through a needs-based budgeting process. Academic units are asked to rank their equipment needs, then these lists are compiled by the

2.16 Substantial Physical Plant Improvements, 1996-2006, available in evidence room

2.17 Minot State University Campus Master Plan, 2000-2008, available in evidence room

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college deans and submitted to the VPAA, who then compiles the lists and meets with the Deans' Council to review the priority list and allocate equipment funds.

In 2001-2002, student technology fee revenue became available for distribution, with the sole purpose of improving instructional technology infrastructure on campus (see Information Technology section below). These funds have typically been used to support digital classroom projectors, student computer labs, Smartboards and other classroom technology.

The revenue for academic equipment remains essentially the same as five years ago, with only minor fluctuations. In 2005-2006, \$249,975 in appropriated funds was distributed to support equipment demands, and \$63,469 was allocated in student technology fee funds. The academic equipment percentage of the total institutional equipment budget also remained stable (56 percent in 2001-02, for example) until last year, when academic units received all of the appropriated equipment funding.

Information Technology

Information technology has become an increasingly important component of the instructional and learning experience and is an integral part of the university's dedication to research, teaching and learning. MSU dedicates resources to provide attractive and user-oriented facilities designed to engage students in career and life-skill activities and challenge students academically both on campus and online (see Criterion 3D).

Since 1997, information technology (IT) has become a strategic necessity for university operation. In the late 1990s, part of the ongoing network infrastructure planning process included a decision to upgrade the existing campus backbone from Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI) to ethernet. The migration from a 100 Mbps dual-ring fiber backbone began in 2001 and was completed in phases over the subsequent four years. Prior to the upgrade, FDDI edge switches provided 10 Mbps desktop connections to campus labs, residence halls, and faculty and administrative offices. Today, the campus gigabit backbone supports 10/100/1000 Mbps to the desktop supporting access to the latest voice, data and video technology. Secure wireless Internet access helps meet the needs of an increasingly mobile campus community.

Information technology has thus become an increasingly important component of the learning experience and an integral aspect of research in all programs. The university presently supports more than 350 individual computers in 12 general access and teaching laboratories on the campus and at the Minot Air Force Base Education Center. Numerous niche labs also exist to support specialized training for students in the arts, sciences, humanities, nursing, education and business. Internet-capable learning spaces and kiosks are now strategically located across the campus to informally engage students. Computer systems equipped with assistive technologies including Jaws, ZoomText, 21-inch monitors, monitor lifts, etc., are available in open-access computer labs for persons with disabilities.

Since 1997, electronic mail, the Internet, the World Wide Web and multimedia have become increasingly common components of the instructional enterprise. For both full- and part-time students, whether living on campus or commuting, technology is available for communication, personal development and collaboration. Collaborative teaching tools provide a new dimension of interaction for both faculty members and their students (see Criterion 3B).

After many years of working with an antiquated and primarily text-based mainframe system, NDUS moved in 2004 to PeopleSoft, a Web-based application for handling all administrative functions including payroll, student records, advisement and the like. Although the system was initially understaffed and underfunded by the N.D. Legislature and is still experiencing troublesome growing pains, students clearly value being able to complete transactions and view records online.

Future planning initiatives are significantly security-focused. Identity management including single sign-on, crisis communication, and access control and monitoring are priority issues. Infrastructure sustainability is critical to support mobile learning, Voice over IP (VoIP), and enhanced IP videoconferencing including high definition. Partnerships to promote quality research activity and access to a high-speed link (Internet2) will provide opportunities for collaboration to develop networking and advanced applications for learning and research. The university-supported Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) will play an integral part in project oversight and overall melding with strategic planning. Funding for information technology could be an issue in the future, based on demographic changes, student enrollments and compliance requirements.

Endowment

Endowment and alumni giving have been historically low at MSU, as Tables 2.4 and 2.5 illustrate. With recent creation of a separate position of VPA and hiring of additional Advancement Office staff, MSU is poised to grow significantly in this area. Alumni giving has already increased since these staffing changes were made.

Table 2.4 -- Combined Endowment Assets of Minot State University and the MSU Development Foundation 1999-2005		
Fiscal Year	Amount	% Change
1999	\$9,218,091	---
2000	\$9,728,650	5.50%
2001	\$9,561,561	-1.70%
2002	\$9,279,462	-3.00%
2003	\$10,949,429	18%
2004	\$11,509,272	5.10%
2005	\$12,151,411	5.60%

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Table 2.5 -- Alumni Giving		
Fiscal Year	Number of Donors	Percentage of Alumni Donating
2002-2003	917	Not available
2003-2004	856	Not available
2004-2005	769	1.19%
2005-2006	933	3.14%
2006-2007	1177	4.41%

Findings

- While the North Dakota general fund has fluctuated over the past decade, allocations by the State Legislature to the NDUS and MSU remain relatively stable.
- As traditional enrollment has declined, MSU has compensated through tuition increases and the expansion of distance education offerings.
- MSU needs to seek additional funding from further external sources such as grants, endowments and private donors.
- The relationship between online and on-campus enrollments needs to be better understood. Limitations of the recordkeeping software (PeopleSoft) have inhibited these efforts.
- MSU is currently moving from a budgeting model based solely on credit-hour production to improved processes that will link operating budgets to strategic plans.
- MSU is currently exploring the prioritization and viability of individual programs, as it finds ways to link programs to specific strategies within *Vision 2013*.
- Through the work of the 2006-07 Compensation Task Force, MSU has made significant efforts to improve consistency and market equity in faculty and staff salaries, which currently lag behind national norms. The success of the CTF five-year plan depends upon a five percent legislative increase in salary/wage monies each year.
- MSU has made excellent use of its resources to support good teaching, research and grant-writing, as well as equipment needs and technology initiatives. However, in order to achieve growth, additional funding will be needed.

Core Component 2C

Minot State University's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Minot State University participates in multiple measures of ongoing evaluation and assessment, both internal and external. From the institutional level to the course level, faculty, staff and administrators are involved with data collection, analysis and dissemination of results. This information is then used in the process of revising programs and courses. Funding for internal assessment is provided through the institution itself for program reviews and through the NDUS for the required surveys and data collection methods. The *Vision 2013* strategic planning process, led by the Planning and Budgeting Council (see introduction) has been, however, by far the most comprehensive evaluative process MSU has undertaken to date, and it has provided excellent feedback across both internal and external constituencies.

NDUS Accountability

As a member of the NDUS, Minot State University assesses itself annually via the accountability measures developed by the Roundtable (see introduction and Criterion 1D, 2A). The measures provide the state, the university system and the institution with data to inform constituents regarding the institution's educational quality and its services. Some of the data provide the institution with peer institution benchmarks and national norms against which to measure itself. MSU therefore collects and shares a significant amount of data with the NDUS.

Data for the Roundtable Cornerstone called Educational Excellence are gathered through the MSU Academic Projects and Research Office. The office is responsible for survey administration of students, faculty and staff. These surveys and years in which they were administered include:

- The National Survey on Student Engagement—2005 and 2007
- The Student Satisfaction Inventory—2002, 2004, 2006, 2008
- The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement—2005 (by MSU) and 2007 (by the state)
- Retention Management Survey—College Student Inventory—annually to all new first-time students
- Employer satisfaction survey with preparations of recently employed graduates of the institution—biennial
- Alumni survey of satisfaction of preparation in major

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- Employee satisfaction survey—biennial administration to all faculty and staff, 2002, 2004, 2006
- ACT Withdrawing/Non-returning Student Survey—results are sent to ACT for computing on an annual basis

The PABC also used many of these survey results to inform *Vision 2013*.

The remaining Roundtable accountability measures provide information that is of concern to all institutions in North Dakota and is not exclusive to the MSU campus; all are published in MSU's annual summary, *Creating a University System for the 21st Century*.^{2.18} Minot State University's regular use of these data has been primarily at the higher levels of administration, with some filtering to the faculty through the department/division chairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shares important findings with the chairs and the Deans' Council.^{2.19}

2.18 Copies of these documents are available in the Academic Projects and Research Office.

2.19 Chairs/Deans' Council minutes, 2002-2005, available in evidence room

Performance Reviews

MSU faculty complete annual self-evaluations that review performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service, and they identify goals for the next year in each of these areas. Department/division chairs review these self-evaluations and other data (such as student evaluations), speak with the faculty, and write up a formal evaluation document. The college dean receives the evaluation from the chair and sends a letter of response. The Vice President for Academic Affairs receives a final draft of the evaluation. The evaluations are archived in the academic department/division.^{2.20}

2.20 The deadlines are outlined at <http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/calendar.shtml>.

Performance evaluations of Minot State University staff are also completed annually. Staff are asked to write a review of their job performance in light of their job description. The performance evaluation is then discussed with the supervisor and put on record in the Human Resources Office. In 2007, members of the staff were asked to write their performance reviews in view of strategies presented in *Vision 2013*.

Program Reviews

Internal program reviews are completed campus-wide on a regular, ongoing basis, and include the visit of an external evaluator. External reviews mandated by numerous accreditation agencies are also completed as needed, and external student examinations are conducted in several departments (see Criterion 3A for details regarding these processes).

General Education Assessment

Since 1997, MSU's general education courses have followed a common model for course design and learning outcomes informally called the five strand system (see Criterion 4B). These courses are reviewed every four years for recertification. Recent and lively campus discussions, as well as two key surveys of faculty and students, have indicated a need for re-evaluating the institutional approach to general education and its assessment (see Criterion 4B for all details regarding the general education program).

Vision 2013

Recent strategic planning efforts have led MSU to evaluate its situation and plan a course for improvement (see introduction). The PABC began its strategic planning initiative by researching external environments through myriad external demographic data, assessments, literature and reports. Focus groups, open forums, surveys and a variety of reports and internal data provided basic information about the university's internal environment. Eighteen diverse focus-group sessions were conducted in spring 2005 by PABC teams, who then carefully documented, transcribed and compiled the results. The PABC also gathered feedback during a series of campus forums in October 2005, at which all flip-chart pages from the focus group sessions were displayed to students, faculty, staff and community members. Hundreds of additional responses were collected and summarized at that time. Summaries of the results and the planning processes were published in the *Red and Green* (MSU's student newspaper) and the *Minot Daily News*. All responses finally were compiled, sorted, discussed and analyzed by the Planning and Budgeting Council. The following is a concise summarization of those findings:



- Minot State University is perceived as supportive, safe, caring, flexible and interested in individuals, not just numbers. It is also perceived as contributing to the larger community, particularly in the arts. Referred to as “one of the best walking campuses in the state,” the campus is respected as non-intimidating, especially to rural students.
- The university's mission is not well understood or easily articulated by those outside the institution. For example, local media personnel admitted that they were unclear as to the mission of the university. However, there were many suggestions about what the mission should entail. A prevalent suggestion was emphasis on strong critical thinking skills and the ability to exercise discernment.
- Participants noted the quality, quantity and flexibility of course offerings and programs. Dedicated faculty were seen as knowledgeable, approachable, committed to students and willing to participate in the community.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

- Concern was repeatedly expressed that students feel disconnected from the campus. Staff, administrators and faculty likewise described the university as closed, inflexible, and inaccessible. A lack of marketing was also cited as a weakness. Parents, students and part-time faculty in particular noted a paucity of scheduled activities on the campus, particularly on weekends. Faculty noted that the lack of campus involvement is often due to job and family conflicts.
- Focus-group participants offered many recommendations to improve campus infrastructure, marketing and communication, student service and support, recruitment and retention. Concern was expressed about the need to improve the university identity, and there was a call for change in status. There were recommendations to dedicate more resources to marketing and to increasing the visibility and prominence of Minot State University's image.
- Participants identified two notable threats to MSU, one dealing with internal issues, and the other with funding and legislative support. The internal issues referred to attitude: apathy, lack of pride, lack of team playing, resistance to change, and lack of campus focus. Inadequate financial support from the state Legislature, rising tuition, low faculty salaries, and restrictive budgets were often cited as significant threats. More nebulous external threats, such as declining population, lack of well salaried jobs, "rural-ness," slumping economy, rising energy prices, and the possibility of Minot Air Force Base closure were also noted.
- Asked what they thought the university would look like in 2013, focus group participants employed such descriptions as "a center of culture," "a repository of history" and "a greater interaction with other schools in the region and the community at large." Imagined improvements on the campus included a child-care center, a wellness center and better access to all facilities for persons with disabilities.

Minot State University has used these results to plan for its future (see introduction and Criterion 2D regarding implementation).

Findings

- An annual report on the NDUS accountability measures provides useful and public data for regular institutional evaluation; the implementation of those data for campus change is, however, uneven.
- Annual performance reviews of faculty and staff provide regular evaluation mechanisms.

- Internal and external program reviews are conducted on a regular basis.
- The general education program reviews its courses regularly via a common approach to course design and learning outcomes (five strands model).
- The *Vision 2013* strategic planning process included comprehensive and effective scanning of internal and external constituents and helped the institution plan for improvement.

Core Component 2D

All levels of planning align with Minot State University's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Minot State University is involved with multiple levels of planning, and works to coordinate and align each of these levels with the institution's mission. Efforts through the 2000-06 Schwahn Leadership Associates strategic plan and the Roundtable Cornerstones provided integrated planning models. *Vision 2013* represents the most comprehensive and inclusive attempt at alignment, and will generate a biennial planning process.

Annual and Strategic Planning Prior to Vision 2013

The 2000-06 MSU strategic planning model, originally developed with the help of Schwahn Leadership Associates, was used to update the strategic plan each year. Minot State University used its mission statement, beliefs and core values to provide direction in setting long- and short-term institutional and educational goals. Each college was charged with developing its own strategic plan to support the university plan and mission, and those college strategic plans were regularly reviewed and updated. Similarly, departments and divisions were expected to create individual strategic plans that would nest within the college and university plans. Non-academic areas also developed similar strategic plans, aligned with the university mission and strategic plan.^{2.21}

Each annual planning document listed accomplished initiatives and long- and short-term goals. Through this tiered planning model, the strategic plan was reviewed on an annual basis, and goals and initiatives were thus established and carried forward.^{2.22}

MSU has also routinely aligned its efforts with the Cornerstone goals established by the Roundtable, determining on an annual basis which strategies to adopt or to continue on the basis of alignment with the Cornerstone goals. This deliberate alignment with NDUS goals filtered down to the college level as well; in 2006, for example, the College of Arts and Sciences made Cornerstone alignment explicit in its four initiatives.^{2.23}

Campus activities that aligned with the Cornerstones were regularly reported in NDUS publications.^{2.24}

2.21 See for example Gordon B. Olson Library collection development policy http://www.minotstateu.edu/library/collection_dev.shtml#lm

2.22 Minot State University Self Study 1997, pp. 48, 49, 145-146

2.23 College of Arts and Sciences NDUS Cornerstone alignment http://www.minotstateu.edu/artsnsci/mission_college.shtml

2.24 Minot State University (MSU) Roundtable Cornerstone Goals, 2005-2006 academic year.

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Vision 2013 Action Plans

The *Vision 2013* action plans have been drafted through the work of seven teams, each consisting of an administrator, faculty, staff and students. Working with feedback from MSU stakeholders, these teams identified priority initiatives for each of the seven *Vision 2013* strategies. Action teams will continue to review these on an annual basis. The identified priority initiatives will be carefully aligned with Cornerstone goals in order to provide a clear link between the university's plan and the Roundtable initiative.

Within university governance structure, each unit has begun setting its own goals, identifying action plans, and coordinating recruitment criteria and evaluation rubrics in concordance with the institutional vision. Supervisors, directors and administrators are responsible for seeing that a mission and specific purposes for each unit have been defined and shared within the unit. Annual goals and action plans for each unit will demonstrate alignment with the institutional vision and mission. Annual reports and annual evaluations will include specific documentation showing the extent to which the goals and plans have been accomplished.

The campus community has also begun reviewing the university's basic infrastructure and administrative processes for recruitment, professional development, compensation and evaluation. This review is being conducted 1) to ensure alignment between university hiring and personnel evaluation processes and *Vision 2013*, and 2) to link student recruitment and university marketing to the plan.

In addition, the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, University Cabinet, Alumni Board, and Board of Regents have been asked to identify specific action plans related to key initiatives in *Vision 2013* that are relevant to their constituencies. (The senates have also been asked to nominate individuals to serve on the above-mentioned priority action teams.) The Planning and Budgeting Council, the campus entity responsible for connecting budgeting priorities to planning priorities, continues to coordinate all of these processes, communicating with the campus, seeking reports on progress, monitoring progress on the plan and publicizing results.

Biennial Review Cycle

In future years, strategic planning and implementation will operate on a biennial cycle, coordinated by the Planning and Budgeting Council. In the first year of each cycle, MSU will define action plans, each of which will include a list of specific tasks to be completed, a specified timeline and completion date, an individual or group assigned to complete the task, and specific indicators to show completion. The second year will be devoted to review of results and revision of the campus strategic plan. Revisions will lead to publication and distribution of findings and new initiatives.

Each biennium, specific action plans within the strategic plan will also be identified that fulfill each of the six Cornerstone goals: economic development, education excellence, flexible and responsive system, accessible system, funding and rewards, and sustaining the vision. A schedule of this process has been defined through the year of the expected 2017-2018 HLC re-accreditation visit.

The process is designed to provide the campus with a rationale and a specific direction for fundraising, grant writing, financial decisions, allocations and legislative budget proposals. The university's Advancement Office and Alumni Services will be using the strategic plan as their primary document for annual fund-raising and for a major comprehensive capital campaign focused on the university's centennial in 2013. It is expected that key initiatives of the strategic plan and the campus master plan will provide strong cases for major contributions to the campaign. Campus open forums will continue to be held regularly in order to discuss how the strategic plan and funding priorities are being aligned.

Findings

- Past processes demonstrated improvement and organization in planning but lacked a central institutional model for progress. Faithful efforts have been made to coordinate MSU efforts with Roundtable Cornerstone goals.
- *Vision 2013* action teams have identified priority initiatives for each of seven strategies.
- Planning and implementation will be structured in a biennial process parallel to that of the N.D. Legislature and guided by the Planning and Budgeting Council.
- Clear communication of this new process, continued inclusive dialogue and adequate planning time given to campus units will facilitate successful implementation.
- Care should be taken throughout the process to allow campus units to maintain their distinct identities and to continue promoting their best capabilities and expertise.



Summary of Strengths, Challenges and Actions relating to Criterion Two



Strengths:

- Minot State University has entered into a planning process that promises to be the first step toward a thorough reconceptualization of what the institution ought to be. By drawing upon all the stakeholders both on and off campus, MSU has already gained enormous investment in *Vision 2013*. The goal that “Minot State University will achieve national distinction as one of the premier public, regional universities in the ‘great’ Great Plains” is clear, distinctive and memorable.
- MSU has maintained relative stability despite a declining proportion of funding from the N.D. Legislature.
- Distance education programs have bolstered the university budget and provided a valuable service to the rural community and to non-traditional students.
- MSU has developed a host of state-of-the-art buildings on campus, through concerted efforts at renovation.
- MSU has been a leader within the NDUS in utilizing and improving technology for the purpose of education.

Challenges and Proposed Actions:

- **Challenge:** Institutional data that provide feedback on the quality of MSU’s programs can be used to greater potential.

Proposed Action—Present data to faculty and interested parties in order to complete the feedback loop and use the data for positive institutional change and development.

- **Challenge:** Minot State University’s emphasis upon and growing enrollment within distance education does not necessarily align with the sense of place that is central to *Vision 2013*.

Proposed action—Within the continuing process of developing and implementation of *Vision 2013*, conduct focused discussion on the topic of how distance education aligns with the mission.

- **Challenge:** Minot State University needs to prepare itself explicitly for the demographic realities of North Dakota, and for expected declining numbers of high school graduates in northwest North Dakota, its traditional market.

Proposed actions:

- Continue to develop an MSU marketing strategy and presence across the state.
 - Find ways to further increase the number of recruitment officers in Enrollment Services.
 - Focus increased effort on recruiting beyond North Dakota's borders, particularly in western states that do not have places on their campuses for all their high school graduates.
 - Continue efforts such as the Great Plains Scholars award program (see introduction) to attract quality students.
- **Challenge:** There is little reason to believe that state government support for MSU will increase markedly in the near future. Recently, students have been asked to make up some of the difference through ongoing and sometimes substantial tuition increases. Many plans, including those intended to increase compensation and faculty/staff retention, are dependent upon securing additional resources.

Proposed actions:

- Develop strategies that effectively increase alumni giving and the university's endowment.
 - Step up pursuit of external grant funding and consider hiring a dedicated grant investigator and providing additional institutional support.
 - Abandon the "do more with less" mentality, and begin to align planning with budgeting by making the difficult decisions to prioritize the programs which will receive support from finite financial resources.
- **Challenge:** Minot State University has pursued several planning efforts over the last few years; an ongoing challenge is to thoroughly align all levels of planning with *Vision 2013*.

Proposed actions:

- Re-cast previous efforts to align units across the campus in light of *Vision 2013*.
- Support and reward the investment of faculty and staff time in this process.
- In the ongoing process of developing and implementing *Vision 2013*, continue to make connections with the NDUS Cornerstone goals.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Minot State University provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Overview

Over the last decade, Minot State University has made significant strides in connecting student learning and the “students first” aspects of its mission to assessment of its educational operations. Although the institutional mission has evolved since 1997, the spirit of “students first” remains embedded in the new mission’s explicit and primary commitment to student success. These connections reflect purposeful efforts dating from the early 1990s to address assessment. Since 1997, MSU has worked to implement an articulated assessment model: Academic programs operate with clearly identified learning objectives and outcomes, prepare annual reflective assessments and proposed actions, and conduct external program reviews on a seven-year cycle. General education has operated with an integrated, theme-driven model that was designed by the MSU faculty in 1995-96 and has been approved and supervised by the General Education Committee and the Faculty Senate since 1996-97 (see Criterion 4B for complete discussion of general education).^{3.1} In addition, requirements for programs accredited by discipline-specific agencies have diffused the rhetoric and practice of assessment, goals, outcomes and testing across campus. Collectively, the past decade has seen a complex culture of assessment emerge at Minot State University.

This gradual institutional shift in perspective is perhaps best illustrated by the 2006 appointment of an ad hoc Faculty Senate committee (colloquially known as the “Committee on Everything”).^{3.2} This committee was charged with the task of examining a number of challenging and pressing issues across the curriculum, such as student writing skills, critical thinking, diversity awareness, foreign language skills, civic engagement and service learning. Faculty Senate intended this effort to help coordinate the approaches of key committees to these issues. The group was broadly apportioned: several members of Faculty Senate at large joined members of the Curriculum, General Education, Diversity and Academic Policies Committees, as well as key administrators. This group met every two weeks for four months. The findings and final report of this committee offered extensive recommendations to the administration, the Faculty Senate and the faculty, and resulted in several concrete actions (including establishment of a campus definition of diversity and the subsequent six-credit diversity requirement

3.1 General Education Program Matrix, available in evidence room; Program outcomes by discipline
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GenEdUmbrellaGoalsandStrandDefinitions1997.pdf>;
Program implementation memo
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GenEdReport97.pdf>

3.2 Charter and final report of ad hoc “Committee on Everything,” available in evidence room

discussed in Criterion 4C). The activities of this committee set the tone for campus-wide assessment considerations in 2006-07.

A review of assessment activities over the past decade reveals that, while the modes and practices vary to reflect particular programmatic needs and have evolved over time, these efforts have served to improve student learning (see Criterion 4B). This focus reflects MSU's ongoing mission commitment to placing the education of its students first.

History of Assessment

Beginning in fall 1991, MSU set up a Task Force on Assessment in response to North Central Association's then emerging emphasis on assessment. Initial work revealed considerable assessment activity already in place, but little organizational structure and few review mechanisms through which to coordinate these activities. This committee's early efforts laid the groundwork for MSU's current assessment model, adopted in the mid 1990s.^{3.3} The Faculty Senate designed the university's current general education model in 1995-1996 and has continuously overseen its implementation (see Criterion 4B).^{3.4} The following year, the VPAA introduced and began a centralized administration of major-program assessment, in which each program designed a formal mission, defined learning outcomes and wrote a plan for annual program evaluation of these outcomes. Over time, the administrative oversight and record-keeping responsibility for this system was delegated by the VPAA to the director of outreach, and, since 2004-05 has resided with the dean of each college.^{3.5} These changes contributed to inconsistent production of annual university summaries and, until recently, ambiguities regarding recordkeeping of annual assessment reports.

The current system, in which academic deans summarize annual findings for the VPAA and house their college's respective reports, is now clearer and more effective, and it establishes greater accountability. A higher rate of participation is evident, and deans specifically review both positive and negative results with departmental and divisional chairs.

Assessment at MSU has been steadily transforming into a faculty-orchestrated and ongoing process. The university affirms that a faculty-driven process helps to guarantee that programs will cooperate with updating their assessment plans, gathering data efficiently and following through on programmatic changes. To this end, the university submitted a proposal in 1999 to the Bush Foundation to support a Learning Communities Program (LCP).^{3.6} The subsequently funded LCP encouraged faculty involvement in assessment by providing mini-grants to collaborative groups of faculty to undertake curriculum modifications based on assessment results. In 2002, the grant was renewed for another three years; many programs were revised based on newly written learning outcomes.

3.3 1994-1995 Assessment Task Force folder, available in evidence room.

3.4 Sample course approval packets and general education committee final reports are available in the evidence room.

3.5 Major program assessment and general education chronology, available in evidence room

3.6 Bush LCP grant application, available in evidence room

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The Faculty Senate recently approved formulation of an Academic Assessment Committee designed to shift responsibility for assessment from a “top-down” administrative model to a more faculty-driven approach. During its first year of operation, the committee hosted Assessment Day workshops and held active discussions about general education, academic quality and the best way to encourage broad review of annual assessment plans and findings. The committee began to review and discuss campus-wide assessment results in 2007-08. MSU could do more to diffuse assessment results to the wider campus community. Two improvements would be to allocate administrative resources to produce a synthesis of all campus reports, as was done through 2002, and to create a common Web site through which each unit could post its results and actions for all constituents to view.

Core Component 3A

Minot State University's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

As part of its assessment strategy, each degree program identifies goals and learning outcomes. (See Criterion 4B for examples of learning outcomes and a discussion of summative evaluation mechanisms such as capstone courses, theses, etc.) These outcomes are designed and written by the faculty of each program, who then prepare a reflective annual report based on a variety of assessment instruments, discussion, and reporting of results, as well as suggested actions to improve student learning (see below, Annual Program Assessment Cycle). As of fall 2007, 100 percent of active degree programs at MSU have formulated and published learning outcomes.^{3.7}

3.7 Active major program outcomes, available in evidence room

Departments determine revisions to program goals and learning outcomes and communicate these changes in annual assessment reports. Programs holding national accreditation within their discipline show the longest history of assessment planning and reporting; some programs, however, have not developed plans until recent years. Because programs answer to differing national accreditation agencies, approaches to learning outcomes across campus have shown some variance. Units associated with external accreditors such as NCATE and ASHA have often set a large number of very specific outcomes, while departments in other areas, such as arts and sciences, tend to have a shorter list of broader outcomes. Analysis of highly prescriptive and tracked programs, such as chemistry, psychology, social work and some education programs reveals tight connections between detailed outcomes and specific courses in which those goals are to be achieved. Less tracked disciplines, particularly those offering choices in upper-level coursework, such as English or history, have designed goals and outcomes

that are evaluated through portfolios of student work and other broad-based measures.

Assessment workshops and feedback from the VPAA, from the director of outreach (2003-04), and since 2004-05, from the academic deans, have helped departments formulate and improve their stated outcomes. Each chair, for example, has been given the book, *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*, to help better clarify the components of a good assessment strategy.^{3.8} In addition, the committee structure at MSU encourages new courses to include clearly written student outcomes.

After a great amount of discussion within departments, finalized program missions, goals and learning outcomes are submitted and published in the *Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs*.^{3.9} For example, the goals and outcomes for the mathematics B.A. are detailed in Table 3.1.^{3.10}

3.8 Allen, Mary J. 2003. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

3.9 *Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, 2006-08*
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/current.html>

3.10 Outcomes of other programs are listed in print versions of the 2006-2008 *Undergraduate Catalog*.

Table 3.1 -- Mathematics Program Goals and Outcomes	
Mathematics Program Goals	
The goals of the B. A. in mathematics are as follows:	
* To provide a foundation in principles of mathematics.	
* To provide experiences communicating mathematical ideas so the student can read, write, listen and speak effectively about mathematics.	
* To provide experiences using calculators and other technologies in appropriate mathematical contexts.	
* To develop the student's higher order and critical thinking skills through the mathematical reasoning process.	
* To enable students to relate mathematics to the real world through problem-solving situations.	
* To foster an appreciation of the beauty, elegance, utility and power of mathematics.	
* To provide broad mathematical training so the student can successfully go for further study in mathematics or other disciplines.	
* To prepare the student for employment in government, business and industry where a strong mathematics foundation is needed.	
Mathematics Program Outcomes	
Graduates of the B. A. program in mathematics will be able to do the following:	
* Demonstrate competency in the foundation areas of calculus and linear algebra and in at least two of the more specialized areas of algebra, analysis, classical applied mathematics and/or probability and statistics.	
* Apply for graduate school in mathematics and get accepted.	
* Get a job in industry where a strong mathematics background is needed.	
* Use mathematics and calculator/technology to solve real world problems.	
* Communicate abstract mathematical concepts through proofs and problem solving.	
* Articulate the value of mathematics in their lives and in society.	

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In the case of graduate programs, the Graduate School also receives copies of updated goals and learning outcomes, reviewed by the dean and assistant dean of the Graduate School for informational purposes. A sample of graduate goals and learning outcomes is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 -- Communication Disorders Program Goals	
Academic Goals	
* To provide course offerings which reflect pertinent and current information within historical perspective of the topic being covered.	
* To create intellectual excitement, curiosity and student involvement in research activities.	
* To ensure each student has mastery of course content related to his/her professional area.	
* To offer courses which provide appropriate content leading to professional competence.	
* To provide information on multicultural, ethnic and social issues relevant to the study and understanding of these factors in relation to audiology and speech-language pathology.	
* To provide information in the basic sciences and in areas of normal development to complement the study of hearing, speech and language development and disorders and to ensure students understand development across the life span.	
Clinical Outcomes	
Students completing a Master of Science in speech-language pathology at Minot State University should attain the following clinical outcomes:	
* Demonstrate excellent clinical skills with minimal need for direct or prescriptive instruction to perform effectively.	
* Demonstrate excellent ability to apply previous course work and experiences to all clinical assignments.	
* Take initiative in providing therapy to individuals with communication disorders and make changes when appropriate.	
* Demonstrate excellent professional skills including honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, sensitivity to cultural differences, and maintenance of all ethical standards.	
* Use appropriate verbal language skills with clients, supervisors, family members and other professionals.	
* Conduct effective conferences.	
* Demonstrate excellent assessment skills including collecting, analyzing and synthesizing relevant data; observing nontarget behaviors; and making ongoing clinical judgments.	
* Demonstrate self-assessment skills to facilitate self-supervision and independence.	
* Develop appropriate programming for most clients at an independent level.	
* Demonstrate effective intervention skills including selecting appropriate materials, maintaining on-task behavior, giving clear instructions and feedback, flexibility and counseling appropriately.	
* Use effective written language skills in all professional writing.	
* Apply academic, clinical, ethical, multicultural and professional knowledge with multicultural, diverse and special needs populations.	

One additional factor in the steady improvement of articulated student learning outcomes has been campus preparation for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) site visits in 2004 and 2006. Programs with any connection to the College of Education and Health Sciences have consequently updated and revitalized aspects of their assessment. Of particular note is a new comprehensive database system that pulls together core data on education student performance in

courses across many different parts of the campus, so that the Interstate New Teacher and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards adopted by the Teacher Education Unit can be assessed in a comprehensive fashion.^{3.11} Moreover, students in these programs have direct access to all information regarding their progress through the program.

Annual Program Assessment Cycle

Assessment of major programs at MSU follows an annual cycle in conjunction with seven-year program reviews mandated by the SBHE.^{3.12} For all programs, the heart of the assessment process is the annual assessment report produced each year.^{3.13} The report format is standard for the campus and has been consistent since the beginning. The report includes student learning outcomes, assessment measures applied, results and reflection (strengths, challenges and action plans). These reports represent an important opportunity for active faculty discussion of a unit's strengths and challenges, as well as programmatic or instructional actions to improve the program and student learning. These discussions, often carried out as one part of the fall-semester assessment day, also provide an opportunity for faculty to revise learning outcomes and assessment tools, with the result that over time these annual program assessment reports have become the most up-to-date statement of each program's learning outcomes, challenges and new directions. To encourage preparation for discussions, the Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee has formalized Oct. 15 as the official due date for all reports from the previous academic year.^{3.14}

One desired result of the process is to communicate the expectations of each degree program directly to students in the course catalog by listing the specific mission, objectives and learning outcomes.

3.11 Teacher education unit assessment system overview, available in evidence room

3.12 Recent program reviews are on file in the evidence room. The program review cycle may be viewed at http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/pdf/Reviewcycle_New_FEB2007.pdf

3.13 Annual Program Assessment Reports 1997-2006 are available in the evidence room and VPAA office.

3.14 Minutes of Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee 2006-2007, available in evidence room

MSU Program Assessment Cycle

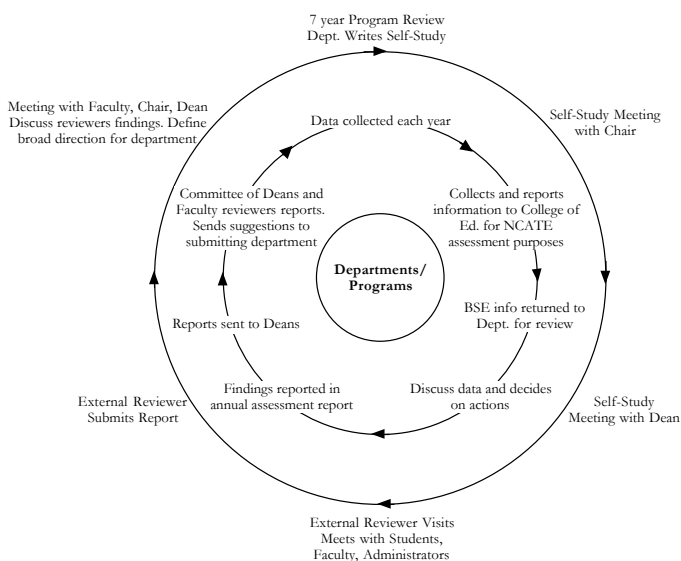


Figure 3.1 - MSU program assessment cycle, showing routing and lines of responsibility.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

3.15 Assessment instruments used are listed for each program in its annual report. See columns headed: "Assessment Instruments Used; Results Obtained" for department-specific examples.

3.16 Annual Program Assessment Reports 1997-2006 are available in the evidence room and VPAA office.

3.17 Assessment day reports submitted by chairs and coordinators to the VPAA, fall 2006, available in evidence room

3.18 IACBE Annual Reports, 2005-2006 Academic Year, available in evidence room; for an outline of reporting requirements, see http://www.iacbe.org/html/annual_report.html

These annual reports have moved from brief descriptions of how the programs measured student outcomes to a more formal and thorough set of discussions. It has become clear that implementation of these processes over the years has improved the quality of MSU's assessment efforts. Most programs engage in both formative and summative assessment, using multiple measures. Common measures include direct methods (test scores, written assignments with rubrics, self-rated and faculty-rated portfolios, senior presentations, oral and written exams) and indirect methods (surveys, faculty observations, capstone experiences, focus groups).^{3.15} Art, music, and writing-intensive disciplines have designed creative portfolio and jury-based models to assess qualitative work, while the sciences employ nationally normed exams to study student learning in courses such as biochemistry. Faculty have enjoyed considerable latitude in this process, and the resulting strategies reflect what faculty feel is appropriate for each discipline. While not mandated across campus, many programs include a senior seminar presentation, capstone course or similar performance-based component as a required undergraduate experience (see Criterion 4B).^{3.16}

Closing the Loop

Each college handles the submission and review of annual assessment report results slightly differently, but all deans submit a summary to the VPAA. In the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the dean selects a small group of CAS faculty members, a chair and a student. This group reviews all assessment reports with the dean and provides comments. The dean then sends a feedback letter to the submitting department with suggestions regarding the methods of assessment used. To date, these summaries have focused primarily on the design of the assessment tools employed, but have offered little comment on findings related to personnel needs, class size or resources. Individual departments often meet with majors during the year, most typically on Assessment Day, to conduct focus groups, share findings and solicit input regarding different aspects of their programs.^{3.17}

In the College of Business, assessment is administered by the Chairs' Council (three department chairs). Assessment results are gathered throughout the academic year; however, departments typically focus on data collected near the end of spring semester. Chairs are responsible for preparing the assessment reports and sharing those results with departments and students, typically during fall Assessment Day. The focus of this discussion is how assessment results inform potential curricular change to better meet goals and learning outcomes. In addition, the College of Business' new accrediting agency, the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), requires submission of annual departmental assessment reports.^{3.18}

College of Education and Health Sciences chairs are responsible for gathering and analyzing data and reporting assessment results. Faculty and students usually review teacher education assessment results in August, while other units share their results during fall Assessment Day. Reports are submitted to the dean.

Review of the quantity and quality of the submitted reports reveals faculty commitment to assessment, a steadily growing number of departments participating in the process, and a marked improvement in the caliber of measures used and in the depth of analysis, reflection and actions proposed. Most departments now employ a combination of direct and indirect measures. It should be noted that active programs with no graduating majors, and programs that are officially inactive (not admitting new majors), cannot annually generate sufficient assessment data to evaluate student learning and teaching effectiveness.

MSU's Bachelor of General Studies (B.G.S.) is a unique composite degree held over for many years as a service to community members and students with incongruent coursework and life experiences. In fall 2007 the president charged the College of Arts and Science with assessing the B.G.S., and with evaluating the purpose and possibilities for this synthetic degree within *Vision 2013*.

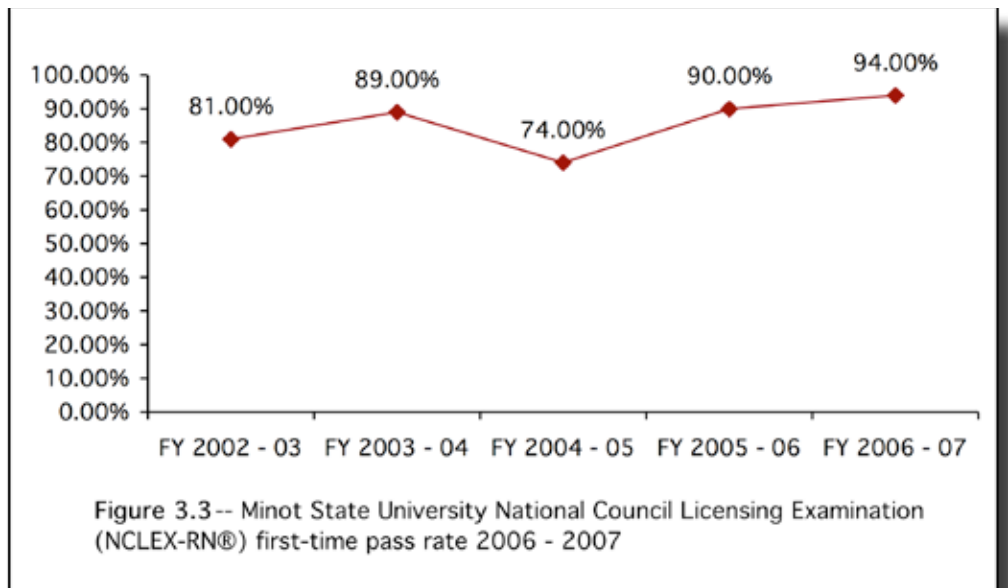
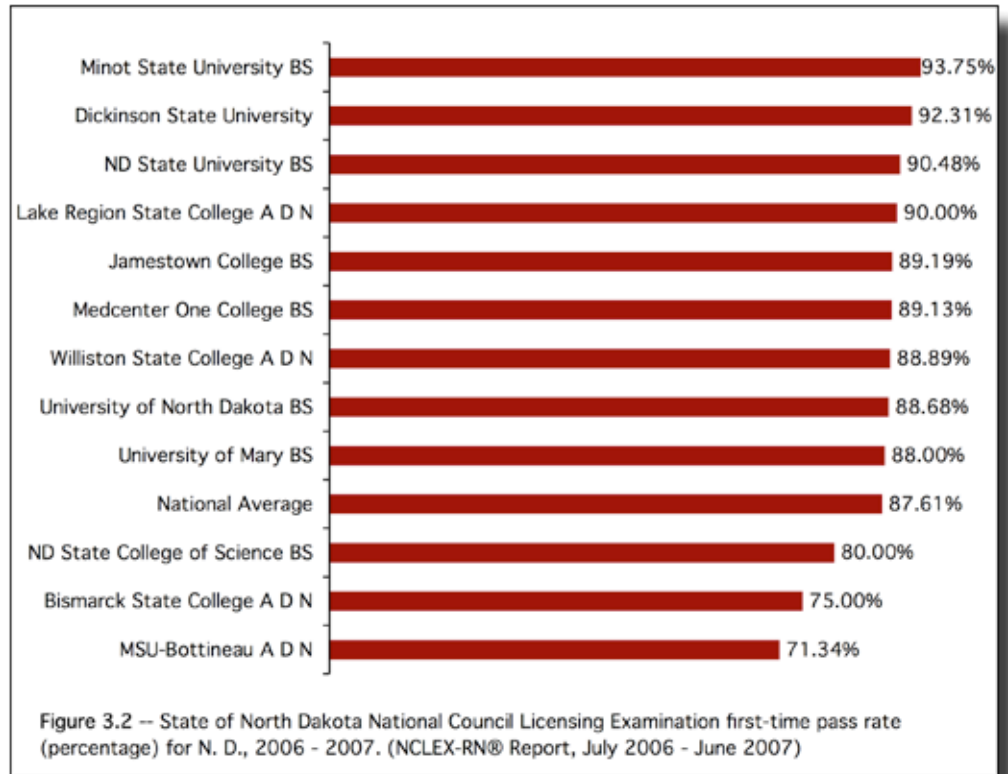
Evidence of Student Learning

MSU's departments and divisions produce a wide variety of evidence that students learn. Findings that demonstrate this are collected in the annual program assessment reports and in other measures such as external exam results. What follows is a representative cross-section of program results that testify to achievement of stated goals for learning.

Nursing—In spring 2006, the Department of Nursing completed a thorough and successful reaccreditation study with both the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, and the North Dakota Boards of Nursing. The nursing program's active tracking of a wide variety of learning outcomes has ensured the success of its students as they take the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX-RN®). Results from annual assessment data and curricular revisions have helped the nursing faculty build a successful program, which had the highest pass rate in the state for first-time takers of the exam in 2006-07.



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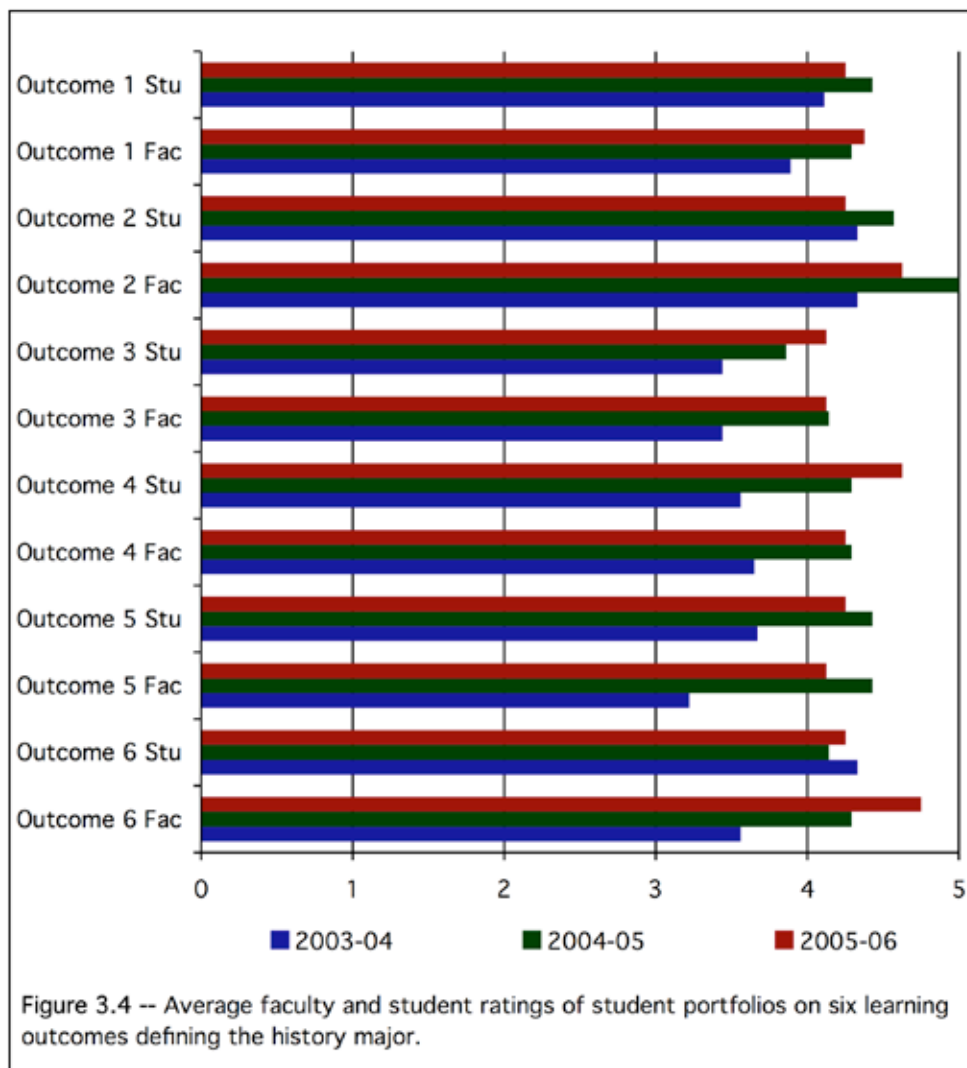
English—The Department of English implements an assessment model for the major in which faculty evaluate senior seminar essays for evidence that each graduate has achieved the department’s formally stated learning outcomes. Using five standards, each year English department faculty score each essay, compile the scores, discuss areas in need of attention, and adjust the program accordingly. For example, to address a dip in scores reported from 2002-03, the first-year data were collected using this model, and in subsequent years, the faculty agreed to adopt core common elements for all faculty teaching senior seminar classes. Following this change, results from annual assessment have shown improvement and more consistency across each of the five outcomes examined in senior seminar essays.

Table 3.3 -- Faculty/Staff Apporttionment (2006 and 2007), English assessment reports in CAS dean's office. Range of Rubric/Outcomes Results (1=lowest, 4=highest)

Year	Lowest of Five Measures	Highest of Five Measures
2003-2004	2.69	3.19
2004-2005	2.83	2.96
2005-2006	2.80	3.03

History—The history program assesses its program goals and student learning outcomes with a portfolio composed of student work from sophomore, junior and senior level classes and a capstone essay. Each graduate assesses both numerically (five-point scale) and in prose how his or her portfolio meets each of six learning outcomes that shape the history major. Faculty then re-rate each portfolio. Over the past six years, the combined information has allowed the department to identify broad areas in need of improvement. For example, when faculty identified outcome three, which focuses on the ability to advance critical historical arguments, and outcome five on remaining current through monographs, journals and reviews, as weak areas, the department increased its emphasis on writing drafts, the use of primary source evidence, and library research sessions. Figure 3.4 reveals improvement in both areas in subsequent years. Overall, this assessment model assures the department that its majors graduate with measurable competency in the core areas that define history as an academic discipline.

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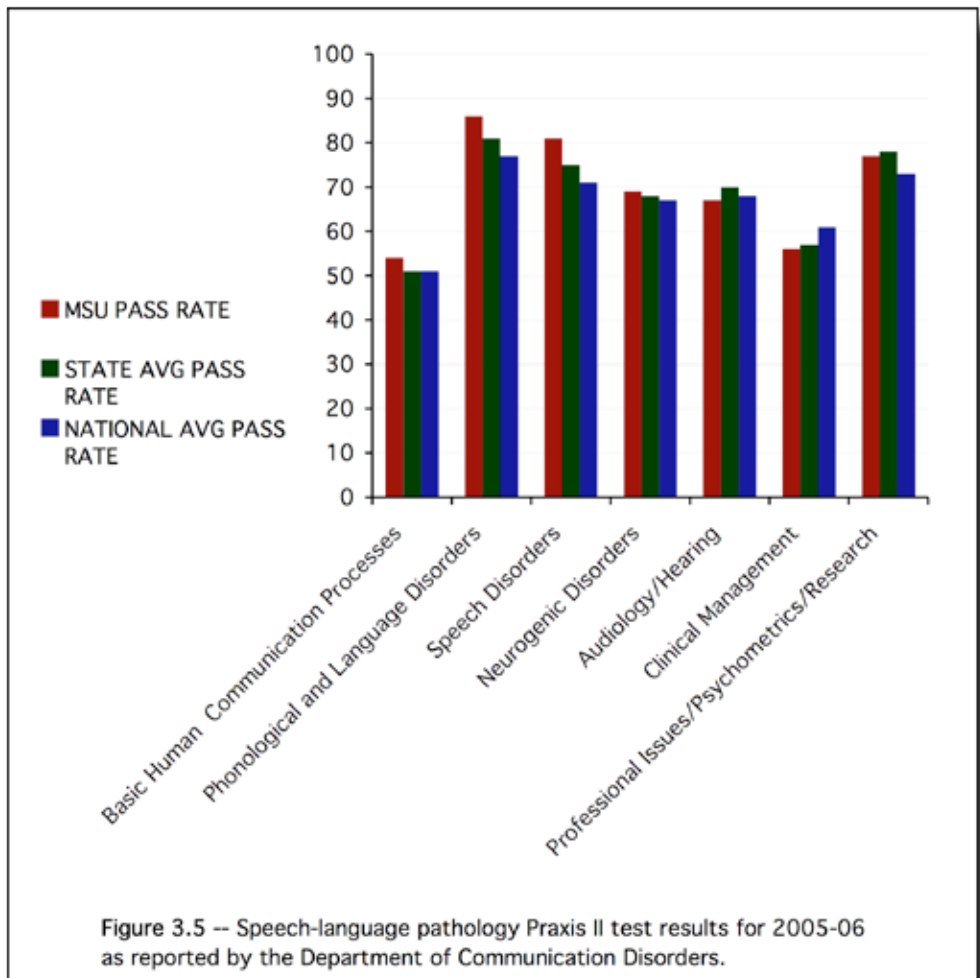


Biology—Over a four-year period (2003-2006), 24.4 percent of graduates from MSU’s biology program have successfully entered post-baccalaureate study in their field. While this rate is lower than NSF’s average of 35 percent, acceptance for further graduate work provides a strong external indicator that this program is achieving its student learning outcomes. In addition, at least 22 percent of MSU biology graduates during this period reported achieving employment in a field related to their major. This compares favorably with an NSF survey for 2001-2002, which found 22.5 percent of all biology majors entered a related field.

Chemistry—As part of its overall assessment model, the chemistry program administers nationally normed standardized exams in general chemistry and five advanced chemistry courses. In 2005-06, the performance on exams taken in General Chemistry, Instrumental Analysis, and Physical Chemistry I courses show students performing at or near the national averages. For example, in General Chemistry approximately one-third of the scores exceeded the 70th percentile and approximately

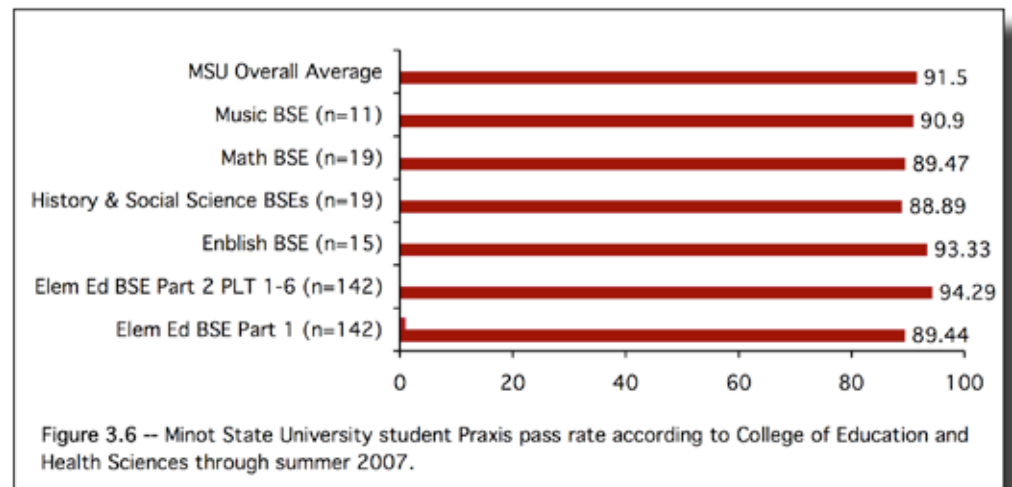
50 percent of the scores fell in the 50th percentile. Results from exams in which students have not met national norms (such as in biochemistry), or in which some performed extremely well while others in the same class did not, have led the chemistry program to examine the sequencing of its courses. For example, to ensure student learning in biochemistry meets national norms the program began offering this course as a two-semester sequence in 2006-2007.

Speech Pathology Graduate Program—For the 2005-06 reporting cycle, MSU graduate students scored exceptionally well on the national Praxis II examination in speech pathology. All 14 students passed the exam on the first trial, averaging over 700 compared to the national average of 660. Of the seven categories specifically tested, MSU graduate students scored higher in five than the national average. Compared with the state average, MSU graduate students scored higher in four of the seven categories, and were within one to three points on the other three categories.

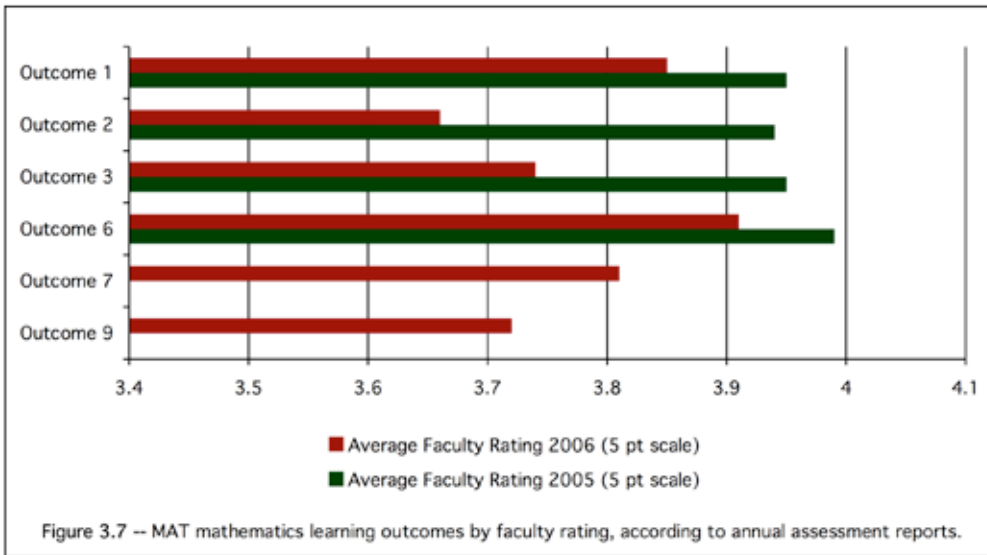


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Education Students Praxis II Exam Scores—In response to federal education requirements, North Dakota teachers have been required since July 2006 to pass the national Praxis II exam in their field of study. Preliminary results from MSU students indicate a high level of preparation across all MSU B.S.E. programs. In addition to the areas detailed in Figure 3.6, 100 percent of candidates (nine total) in art, biology, chemistry, and foreign languages passed their respective Praxis II exams.

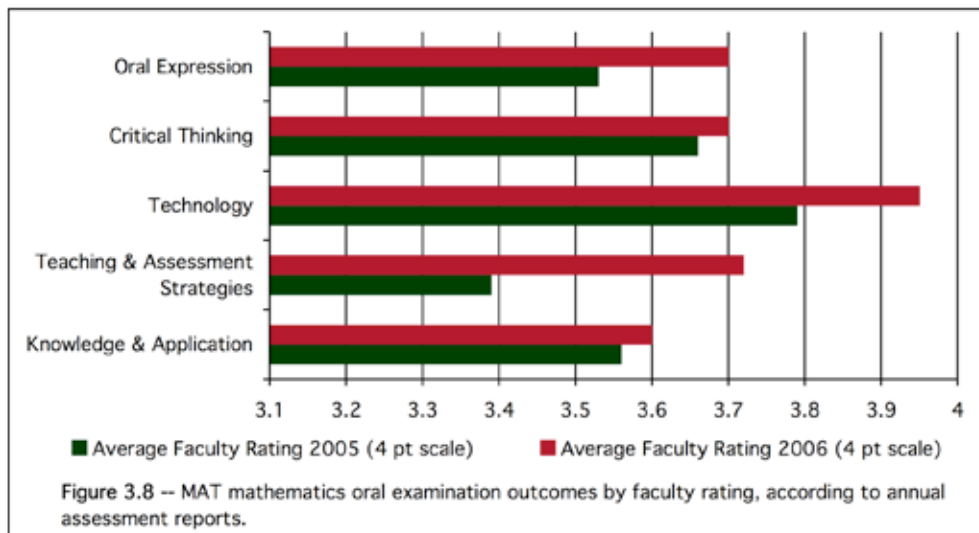


Job Corps Executive Management Graduate Degree and M.S.M. Degree—The nation’s only Job Corps Executive Management (JCEMP) graduate degree program, since its inception in 2001, has prepared junior-level Job Corps personnel for senior-level positions. The program has served 84 fellows from 36 states, who come from across the nation to undertake a customized course of study at MSU resulting in a Master of Science in Management degree. The JCEMP program is assessed as part of the College of Business Master of Science—Management program. After four years of relying on outside reviewer summaries of student opinions, in 2003 the new College of Business IACBE accreditation initiative designed new assessment measures implemented in 2005 and 2006. These include a student satisfaction survey, capstone assessment (written and oral), and a focus group. Early results show student satisfaction ranging from 4.6 to 3.8 on a 5.0-point scale. Faculty evaluations of capstone projects confirm student perceptions of high levels of student learning. The capstone project requires that the students respond to a request for proposal seeking federal funding to create a new Job Corps Center. The results of the written and oral assessments show 4.0 on a four-point scale, validating the score on the student survey. Faculty in the JCEMP are very pleased with these results, according to the JCEMP director.



Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.)—M.A.T. mathematics program students are assessed on content knowledge, networking capabilities and opportunities, state and national standards, knowledge and use of technology, student and classroom management, and diversity issues. Individual faculty members have contact with students in different areas and assess their respective areas accordingly. These aggregated faculty ratings are presented in Figure 3.7. Full details and explanations of outcomes are in the annual assessment report.

A second method of assessment in the M.A.T. mathematics program is an oral examination of each candidate to confirm learning outcome ratings; findings from these oral exams are presented in the chart below.



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Faculty members who teach in the M.A.T. mathematics program meet several times during the year to discuss the program. Students also interact with faculty to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. As a result of discussion of these meetings, discussions and assessment findings, changes have been made to benefit student learning. For example, faculty decided that content and assessment relative to the needs of a diverse student population should be added to the course titled Trends in Math Education (Math 511). Faculty made this need a part of the program's student learning outcomes (outcome nine) and implemented the changes in spring 2006.

Employer satisfaction surveys provide an overall indication of the quality and preparation of MSU's graduates. Surveys conducted in 2004 and 2006 showed that on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 not at all, 5 extremely) the overall level of satisfaction by employers with MSU graduates was consistently above 4 (very satisfied) for questions related to "knowledge and understanding of major field" and to "general knowledge and understanding."^{3.19}

3.19 Noel Levitz Employer Satisfaction Surveys, available in evidence room

Online Assessment

Assessment for online courses is conducted in a manner similar to that of on-campus courses, with identical expectations and learning outcomes (though sometimes the assessment mechanisms differ slightly). All departments offering online instruction report on online classes as well as on-campus classes, and the distribution of assessment results follows the same process. MSU pays particular attention to online learning by sharing assessment results and course evaluations with the department chair, the appropriate college dean, the Dean of the CEL and the VPAA.

In May 2007, CEL initiated a conversation about student achievement in online courses and how departments conducted comparative assessment of student achievement across different modes of delivery. Initial responses reveal that in addition to annual program assessment reporting, departments employ a variety of strategies.^{3.20}

3.20 Note from Dean of CEL, available in evidence room

- The Department of Special Education stated that for all undergraduate level classes, students must take a criterion-referenced exam each semester, regardless of delivery platform.
- In teacher education, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires disaggregation of distance learning data in order to ensure equivalence.
- In the humanities, recorded speeches in online Fundamentals of Public Speaking classes provide a fixed artifact that allows assessment essentially equivalent to that in a face-to-face setting. All online English classes are assessed annually.

- In psychology, each class includes outcomes dictated by the specific faculty member as well as by program accreditation or assessment demands. The psychology program has therefore developed a matrix indicating which classes cover which outcomes.

A number of factors make challenging the direct comparison of the online student achievement with that of traditional students. While HLC distinguishes between delivery modes, MSU’s assessment reports do not uniformly identify courses by delivery mode. Since the inception of online instruction, MSU has operated under the paradigm that “a course is a course.” Existing courses could be taught in multiple modes without separate Faculty Senate approval, because the expectation was that departments would assess all courses regardless of delivery mode. As MSU’s online course offerings continue to expand, the university recognizes that comparative assessment will be an important part of assessment activities.

External and Board-mandated Program Reviews

Undergraduate programs that are not reviewed by national accrediting associations undergo review on a seven-year cycle, following SBHE Policy 403.1.2.^{3.21} College of Arts and Sciences programs that offer B.A. and B.S.E. content specializations must also comply with state program review requirements, annual B.A. assessment, and required reporting for external accrediting associations. A list of undergraduate and graduate programs and review dates is available on the MSU Web site.^{3.22} Program reviews are multi-purpose and provide benefits to students, faculty, administrators, the institution and external stakeholders. The review process is guided by a formal rubric, supplied by the VPAA.^{3.23} Through the program review, the self-study teams conduct analysis of assessment plans and findings, gather demographic data on students and faculty, examine FTE production, program effectiveness, scholarship of faculty, and the volume of faculty advising. Additionally, these self-studies examine emerging trends (discipline specific, technology, globalization and opportunities for interdisciplinary ventures). In most cases, an outside consultant is brought in to read the self-study, review program records, meet with faculty, staff and students, and write a brief report. Copies of the program reviews and program-level accreditation documents are kept within the college and are provided to the VPAA.^{3.24}

Minot State University offers programs accredited by a number of outside agencies. These include the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the National Association of Schools of Music, the Council for Education of the Deaf, the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, the Council on Social Work Education, the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, the National Association of School Psychologists and the International Assembly for Collegiate Business. Accreditation is current in all cases.

3.21 SBHE Policy 403.1.2
<http://www.ndus.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2371>

3.22 Program review cycle http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/pdf/Reviewcycle_New_FEB2007.pdf

3.23 Academic Program Review Process http://www.minotstateu.edu/academic/pdf/Academic_Review_Process_6_04.pdf

3.24 Recent program reviews are on file in the evidence room.

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MSU has an excellent record of preparing units for external review. Reviewers consistently observe the vitality and efficacy of established programs, praising the undergraduate learning experiences documented and observed. Deans have begun to acknowledge the time required for faculty to prepare these studies, and modest course release is becoming more common. The university at present concludes major reviews with a summary meeting including unit faculty, the dean, and on occasion, the VPAA.

To ensure institutional credibility and the meaningfulness of these reviews to faculty, the university should develop formal criteria and reward units that are recognized for excellence and academic success in external reviews with additional faculty lines, teaching space and other resources. The university would do well to explore ways to connect major review findings with the decisions and allocation of resources accomplished by the recently established Planning and Budgeting Council (see introduction).

Highlights from recent reviews include:

- Teacher education has been continuously accredited by NCATE since 1964. Following a joint visit by the state and NCATE in 2004, MSU experienced a call for a focused visit that was completed in the fall of 2006; in April the university was informed that all standards had been met with no areas for improvement noted. The next NCATE visit is scheduled for 2010.
- The Department of Communication Disorders is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (ASHA) and has held continuous accreditation since 1965; the next visit is scheduled for 2011. The communication disorders facility was updated in 1996 and is considered “one of the best academic and clinical teaching facilities in the country.”
- Nursing Review (state and national levels): In 2006, the nursing program was reviewed by both the National League for Nursing Accreditation and the North Dakota State Board of Nursing. “You and your faculty have demonstrated your commitment to the highest standards of nursing education. Your successful accreditation shows that your school does indeed meet their high standards.” The nursing program has been nationally accredited since 1981, and its next visit is set for 2014.
- History program review: “I am very favorably impressed with the Minot State history program and consider it to be among the best in the state, surpassing the two research universities in many ways, especially in undergraduate teaching and advising...I commend this faculty for their highly productive commitment to students, to the university and to the history profession.”^{3.25}

3.25 Review of the Minot State University history program, Nov. 7, 2006, available in evidence room.

Assessment Culture

Assessment culture at MSU is the product of conversations and discussions, both formal and informal, related to changes designed to improve student learning. Faculty are regularly offered opportunities to improve their familiarity with techniques related to improving student learning and its assessment. “Assessment Day,” held twice each year, reinforces a culture of assessment and offers a variety of speakers and workshops. These forums invite the entire faculty to meet, discuss, and learn about assessment. These days are divided in half, whereby faculty attend a university-wide training seminar, presentation or discussions in the morning, and then meet with their individual programs in the afternoon. Formats range from round-table presentations by MSU faculty to presentations by outside authorities on assessment issues. ^{3.26}

3.26 List of assessment topics and activities, available in evidence room

Assessment Day activities show a positive progression for MSU over the past decade. Early topics focused on getting started with program assessments, educating faculty on the need for measures of student learning beyond classic grading, and design of suitable outcomes and assessment instruments. Topics then shifted to tuning assessment strategies and then to issues that have been raised on many campuses, including ways to encourage student engagement, active learning and critical thinking. The most recent years extend this trend by drawing on group discussions of faculty assessment findings regarding general education and the need for greater emphasis on student quality, writing and problem solving (fully explored by the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee described in the above overview section). Recent activities have also sought to draw students more directly into the discussion. In 2005-2006, for example, administrators and faculty watched and discussed the film *Declining by Degrees*, debated the meaning of results from MSU’s NSSE and student satisfaction surveys, and discussed essential questions about student retention, preparedness and engagement.

In the process of this self-study, it has become evident that several things are needed to maintain the vitality of assessment culture at MSU. Faculty report that the continual collection and analysis of data has become extremely time-consuming. While manageable for programs with four or more faculty, this effort is difficult to sustain for programs with fewer permanent faculty or large numbers of adjunct faculty. Additionally, to ensure the sustainability of MSU’s current assessment efforts, the administration will need to provide additional support for recordkeeping, release time for major assessment efforts, more thorough annual institutional summaries and better dissemination of broad findings to the Academic Assessment Committee and the MSU community.

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Findings

- MSU provides evidence of student learning that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.
- MSU values the academic experience of its students and works systematically to collect assessment data, review this information and improve programs accordingly.
- MSU's academic programs list clear goals and learning outcomes, and these are communicated to the campus in the MSU course catalogs; revised or newly defined program outcomes established after catalog publication are found in annual assessment reports.
- The efficacy of MSU's faculty-driven approach to assessment and improvement of student learning is largely validated by successful external reviews.
- Over the past decade, the faculty has diligently pursued a common model of program assessment that has seen participation grow to include nearly all major programs.
- MSU's evolving assessment culture is increasingly leading faculty to act on assessment information in its decision-making (see Criterion 3C). This is evident in annual reports as well as in a campus culture that is using broad assessment findings about student learning to ask direct and difficult questions. This effort was reflected in the work of the Faculty Senate's 2006 ad hoc committee devoted to cross-curricular issues.
- MSU must engage in a concerted effort to determine whether students in online and on-campus courses achieve learning objectives in comparable fashion.
- The confluence of layered and multiple assessment and reporting requirements presents considerable time and resource challenges.

Core Component 3B

Minot State University values and supports effective teaching.

MSU has always valued good teaching, and this is reflected in the university's current statements of vision, beliefs and values and in *Vision 2013*. As a master's-level institution, the university recognizes that its most critical mission is teaching and learning. The academic and teaching credentials of the faculty, their professional development, recognition of teaching success and faculty governance of the curriculum collectively reflect MSU's fundamental commitment to effective teaching and to providing students with excellent learning opportunities. More recently, the university's

emphasis has shifted to understanding and encouraging student engagement in the learning process, as *Vision 2013* places a high priority on experiential learning as a way to reach the goal of becoming a premier university in the Great Plains.

Teaching is Essential

For the majority of faculty at MSU, teaching is a primary responsibility. MSU shows that it values teaching by specifying teaching excellence as a central component of its hiring, review, tenure and promotion processes. It examines teaching at all phases of a faculty member's career, uses traditional evaluations plus an innovative peer review and advising model (the Committee of Twelve), emphasizes teaching in both the tenure and the promotion process, and continues faculty evaluation on an annual basis for tenured faculty.^{3.27}

MSU actively recruits well qualified faculty, ideally those with experience and a terminal degree. In 2006, 77 percent of tenured or tenure-track faculty (109 of 141) held terminal degrees. MSU has demonstrated commitment in this area, as the proportion of faculty holding terminal degrees has steadily increased from 71 percent (2002) to 75 percent (2004) to 77 percent in 2006.^{3.28} New hires are expected to bring expertise in their area of specialization and a commitment to excel in a high-contact undergraduate teaching environment. Position notices specify teaching experience, and job candidates are expected to conduct a demonstration class and meet with students during interview.^{3.29} Feedback from students and committee members is considered as an essential factor in the hiring process.

MSU reviews and evaluates teaching effectiveness at multiple points in a faculty member's career. The *MSU Faculty Handbook* specifies that "(b)oth probationary and non-probationary employees are evaluated annually by the chairperson or supervisor of the unit in which they work." These annual evaluations are defined by the Faculty Senate bylaws as including examination of teaching, scholarship and service: "[It is the]...responsibility of evaluators to methodically accumulate information that permits intelligent and objective judgment concerning a faculty member's performance in the areas of teaching, service and research, with respect to goals set by the faculty member, the department/division, the college and the university." Faculty participate in setting annual goals, but the majority of contracts specify a 12 credit-hour load, with overall obligations divided 80 percent teaching, 10 percent scholarship and 10 percent research, which is in keeping with MSU's emphasis on teaching. First-year faculty receive orientation, mentoring and classroom visits from department chairs. Untenured faculty (adjunct, lecturer, instructor or probationary tenure track) are required to evaluate every course taught, and these evaluations become a permanent part of the faculty dossier. Tenured faculty must evaluate a minimum of two courses each year, although to build a convincing record for promotion most faculty evaluate additional courses. MSU uses a

3.27 MSU Faculty Handbook
http://www.minotstateu.edu/faculty_handbook.pdf

3.28 MSU Undergraduate Catalogs,
available in evidence room

3.29 The Office of Human Resources
retains copies of all position notices
and advertisements.

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3.30 Blank copies of evaluation forms are available in the evidence room.

3.31 Article V, Section 1 MSU Faculty Senate bylaws
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/bylaws.pdf>

3.32 Article VI, Section 3 MSU Faculty Senate bylaws
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/bylaws.pdf>

standard student evaluation form designed and approved by the Faculty Senate to gather responses from students regarding the instructor's efficacy, the value of the course and related questions.^{3.30} An electronic version of this form is used to assess online courses. Quantitative summaries and comments are provided to the unit chair for evaluation purposes and to the faculty member for his or her tenure and promotion dossier.

Tenure and promotion at MSU both require evidence of excellent teaching, and because these functions are governed by two separate Faculty Senate committees, each candidate is effectively screened twice. Candidates must include all teaching evaluations (numerical summaries and written comments) as part of this process, as well as a descriptive narrative to demonstrate a continuous record of effective teaching during the probationary period. The Faculty Senate Tenure Committee has articulated teaching as a central requirement: "Tenure assures academic freedom and enhances economic security for faculty members who show promise of sustained contributions in teaching, service and scholarship."^{3.31} Similarly, the Faculty Senate Promotion Committee specifically requires evidence of excellent teaching for successful promotion in rank.^{3.32}

In 2005-06, the Faculty Senate established a Committee of Twelve (composed of elected senior faculty) to provide peer evaluation and constructive suggestions to probationary faculty members who intend to apply for promotion in rank. Article III, Section 3f of the Faculty Senate bylaws indicates: "All probationary faculty must be evaluated by the Committee of Twelve at least once during each three-year period, typically the second and fourth year of employment. It is the probationary faculty member's responsibility to request that evaluation at least once in each three-year period." The Committee of Twelve focuses on assessments of teaching skills not covered by the course evaluation instrument. The Committee of Twelve makes observations of classroom instruction, interviews students and assesses faculty preparations for teaching. Reports from the committee provide formative data for the instructor and also form the basis of summative decisions related to promotion.

Teaching is Recognized

MSU expects teaching to be a faculty member's central function, yet it also makes important efforts to recognize particular successes. Given MSU's limited resources, it acknowledges teaching excellence in meaningful ways, with both small reminders and tangible lifetime awards.

- *MSU Inside* and college newsletters regularly report kudos that include student successes and the faculty associated with the projects.
- The president sends faculty personal congratulations to recognize notable achievements, particularly those that involve engaging students in community learning projects.

- In at least two colleges (CAS and CEHS), faculty who receive particularly strong evaluations and student comments receive commendation letters each semester from the dean of the college. Conversely, low evaluations, particularly when accompanied by comments and/or direct student complaints to a unit chair, are followed up by a formal action plan to improve teaching effectiveness.
- The MSU Board of Regents recognizes one faculty member each year for excellent teaching. Faculty can only receive this award once in their tenure at MSU, so it connotes a particularly high level commitment to teaching innovation and excellence. This award is presented at MSU's annual all-campus recognition luncheon and carries a \$1,000 honorarium.^{3.33}

3.33 MSU Board of Regents Faculty Achievement Award list, available in evidence room

Faculty indicate some sentiment, however, that teaching receives less recognition than it deserves, particularly in areas such as merit pay increases and salary equity across campus (see Criterion 2B for discussion of Compensation Task Force).

Teaching is Supported

The university's support for faculty development has been significant, particularly in the area of developing teaching techniques, exploring technology-based tools and supporting scholarly development (see Criterion 4A).

One aspect of the 1999 Bush Foundation grant (mentioned above regarding the LCP program) was an initiative called Partners in Learning (PIL). The purpose of the PIL program was to provide professional development in the improvement of instruction. Pairs of faculty members conferred with each other on a regular basis, observed each other's teaching and interviewed students about the effectiveness of the teaching in each other's classes. PIL partners also attended monthly meetings of other participants in their cohort, at which they would discuss various pedagogical and instructional challenges, situations and solutions. In a typical year, 24 to 30 faculty participated, with many faculty participating for more than one year. Faculty members were paid a stipend for engaging in the PIL program and submitted reports at the close of each semester of involvement. The PIL program was externally evaluated with very favorable results.^{3.34} In fact, the Bush Foundation officer in charge said that this was one of the most effective faculty development programs he had ever encountered, and he encouraged MSU to tell other universities about this program. As a consequence, the program was presented at the Collaboration Conference in Bloomington, Minn. Funding was set aside by the VPAA during 2006 to continue the PIL program as an institutionalized program, and the program was officially revived in fall 2007.

3.34 Bush Foundation final grant project reports, available in evidence room

Two faculty development resources offered at MSU that indirectly but significantly improve teaching are: the Small Grant Program for faculty research, and an administrative funding program that permits pursuit of additional professional

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3.35 For evaluation sheet, see http://www.minotstateu.edu/rsp/pdf/2007_grant_eval_sheet.pdf. For a full list of the awards given and project titles from 2003-04 to 2007-08, see http://www.minotstateu.edu/rsp/small_r_grants.shtml. Copies of both are available in the evidence room.

3.36 NITOP report, available in evidence room

education. Both programs are fully discussed in Criterion 4A. The Faculty Development and Research Committee's evaluation rubric for the Small Grant Program specifically includes "potential to improve teaching and learning at MSU" as a formal criterion.^{3.35}

As a strategy to extend the professional development and pedagogical activities established by the Bush Foundation grant, the College of Education and Health Sciences in 2004 set aside \$50,000 to support faculty in advanced training to develop a skill needed to obtain increased or additional competence in an area within the mission of their department. This funding was not to be used for individual content-specific development, but to encourage pedagogical growth related to a particular discipline. Psychology program faculty, for example, were approved to attend the National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP). This was a unique experience in that this was the first time the faculty in the program had collectively examined issues of teaching. The conference included such diverse topics as "Teaching Psychology Around the World: An International Forum" and "Teaching and Enriching Abnormal Psychology Online." This experience allowed faculty to learn pedagogical approaches from other college professors, and also opened a dialogue within the group. After the conference, weekly meetings were held to discuss ideas garnered from NITOP; these discussions led to changes in the methods by which a variety of courses were taught, including Introduction to Psychology. Feedback from department faculty indicated overwhelming support for continuing to attend NITOP. For the past two years, the department has funded one faculty member to attend this conference and return to share information with the group. Faculty believe that this development project has helped to improve teaching across the psychology curriculum.^{3.36}

In 1997, with assistance from the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, the university received a major federal grant to develop faculty skills in delivering coursework in the online environment (see introduction). The program provided faculty with financial support as they learned instructional skills in this medium, and it included assistance in developing course syllabi and the actual design of Web-based courses. Ninety-seven faculty participated in this professional development effort, and 87 completed courses resulted, positioning MSU well for online instructional delivery in the long term. Online course authors currently continue to receive a stipend for course development, and potential courses undergo testing and review for ADA compliance. Before a course is offered online, the content is reviewed and approved by the relevant department chair. The skills developed as faculty learned to teach in the online environment have transferred to on-campus classes, and a number of faculty make use of a "blended course shell" to complement their campus classes. This grant has imparted important technology skills and the capacity for MSU to deliver online courses.

Increases in the number of and demand for online course offerings have compounded faculty load issues. Some colleges have begun incorporating online courses into faculty loads, but in many instances MSU faculty teach several online courses as

overload beyond their regular contracts. The university has begun to review the way that related load issues affect teaching quality.

MSU's Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) originally grew out of the technology support needs of the Title III grant program. This office emphasizes tools that are essential for effective teaching in the online environment, but with the end of the grant, the office has gradually been recast to support educational technology for the entire MSU campus. OIT offers annual instructional development workshops that focus on the online learning environment, but many of the principles and practices carry over into face-to-face instruction. Faculty seeking specialized technological solutions have had success with pilot projects jointly sponsored by OIT and Information Technology Central (ITC, see Criterion 3C). These projects help create distinctive learning environments.

Teaching is Current

MSU faculty engage in scholarly activity because they know that diligent scholarship translates to cutting-edge teaching in the classroom and improved learning resources for students. Moreover, the current generation of faculty has been trained in an environment that emphasizes close connections between scholarly activity and teaching. MSU endorses and supports this approach with a growing emphasis on undergraduate research and collaborative projects (see Criterion 4A). Because promotion at MSU places a high premium on peer-review assessment of scholarly activity, the connection between teaching and scholarly activity can also be seen in the proportion of faculty who have advanced to the ranks of associate professor and professor. Currently, 56 percent of faculty members hold the rank of associate professor or professor. In addition, 91 percent of faculty members hold membership in professional societies appropriate to their areas of expertise, while 21 percent of faculty members serve official roles in these societies.

Academic units financially support professional development for faculty by covering some travel expenses for conferences and seminars. Participation in professional organizations helps faculty to maintain current and effective scholarship. In 2006, 32 percent of tenure-track faculty gave presentations at regional, national or international venues appropriate to their areas of expertise, as compared to 15 percent in 1998 and 27 percent in 2002.^{3.37} MSU faculty members serve as role models to their students, showing them how to be professionally engaged. It also makes faculty aware of additional resources to which they can direct their students. University departments support involvement in professional organizations and conference attendance with financial assistance that varies from partial support to full coverage of travel costs and conference fees. Many departments elect to allocate budgeted resources sufficient to allow each tenure-track faculty member to present a paper at one scholarly conference each year.

3.37 MSU Fact Books, available in evidence room

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Findings

- MSU has well-qualified instructors and places a focus on teaching quality, reinforced by annual assessments of teaching that include an innovative peer review and advising model (the Committee of Twelve).
- MSU specifies teaching excellence as a central component of its faculty hiring, review, tenure and promotion processes.
- Control of the curriculum is unambiguously vested in the MSU faculty and its representative committees (see also Criterion 1D).
- Recognition of teaching success includes a number of small but important symbolic measures including commendation letters. In addition, MSU celebrates success every year with a recognition luncheon and presentation of the Board of Regents teaching award.
- Quality teaching could be more consistently linked to merit pay.
- Effective teaching in the 21st century requires faculty to remain current in their fields, to model research for undergraduate learners, to share and improve pedagogical strategies, and to make effective use of technology. Within the limits of its resources, MSU does a commendable job of supporting these endeavors.
- The resources provided by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) provide development and support resources that are crucial to supporting the faculty who teach MSU's online courses. This office is increasingly encouraging new uses of educational technology by all MSU faculty.

Core Component 3C

Minot State University creates effective learning environments.

Assessment Prompts Improvement

A culture of applied assessment at MSU has awakened slowly over the past decade. Originating in an administratively driven demand for collection of assessment data, this approach has, with the advent of serious strategic planning, evolved steadily into serious effort to use those data to make informed decisions about program delivery, assessment and improvement. Formal evaluations derived from the annual program assessment cycle (see Figure 3.1) have informed specific decisions related to curriculum, program and service improvements. The last column of the annual program assessment report is titled Actions Taken, directly encouraging campus units to make concrete assessment-based improvements. The following are just some of the many campus efforts to respond to data collected:

- The social work program routinely ties its actions to assessment data, course-based outcomes and learning goals. **3.38**
- Nursing faculty responded to low pass rates on the national NCLEX-RN® exam by revising the nursing curriculum extensively. Scores have dramatically improved as a result, and the program is now one of the strongest in the state. **3.39**
- Business faculty recently used assessment results to revise criteria that guide the M.S. in management program, an entirely online degree. **3.40**
- When the history program noted weakness in student portfolios related to analysis of primary sources, it responded by asking faculty to increase emphasis on this area, raising performance in subsequent years. Similarly, based on its assessment findings, the program raised its emphasis on writing truly argument-based, analytic essays.
- The psychology program used data from a standardized national psychology exam to address underperformance in critical thinking. Now the program places increased emphasis on case studies, and recent data show that critical thinking scores are improving.
- In the chemistry program, results of newly applied nationally standardized exams are now being used to determine whether specific topics (presentation styles) need to be changed for courses within the major. During the 2006-07 academic year, the program reviewed use of such a standardized examination for the two-semester biochemistry sequence. Similarly, assessment results have been used to add a new curricular option to the chemistry B.A. program, in order to better suit students who wish to pursue medical or dental school, laboratory work, forensic science or chemical business, rather than graduate work in chemistry.

3.38 Social work program “Closing the Loop” document and annual assessment actions (2004-05 and 2005-06 assessment reports), all available in evidence room

3.39 Memo from Neil Nordquist, available in evidence room

3.40 Memo from Gary Ross, COB, detailing recent discussions of the MSM, available in evidence room

Highly Interactive Academic Environments

MSU demonstrates not only a responsive and dedicated faculty but also positive academic environments characterized by physical surroundings that support collaborative student learning, classes small enough to allow personal interaction with instructors, Honors Program seminar options, innovative applications of interactive technologies, a rich variety of experiential learning opportunities and study abroad options.

The recent redesign of Cyril Moore Science Center had a tremendous impact on the way students learn science at MSU. Faculty members worked with the architect to design a building that focused on students becoming researchers alongside their mentoring faculty. Teaching laboratories are now adjacent to the instructors’ offices, and each instructor also has a lab as part of the office space, where students can engage directly

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with the instructor's research. This redesign of the building has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of science students involved in publications and presentations, and students report very positive experiences in this setting.

Faculty likewise had input in the complete renovation of Old Main and the associated concert hall (Ann Nicole Nelson Hall), contributing their expertise as the architect redesigned spaces to facilitate interactive learning. Spacious new faculty music studios, soundproofed practice rooms, and versatile classrooms and rehearsal spaces have provided a much-improved setting for collaborative student learning. Traditional classrooms in Old Main have been equipped with the latest technology and also redesigned as flexible learning spaces, to accommodate group discussions and formats other than the traditional lecture.

MSU is very fortunate to have a low (14:1) student/faculty ratio, and most of its classes are small enough to allow students ready access to their instructors. Moreover, nearly all MSU classes, from freshman to senior level, are taught directly by experienced faculty rather than by teaching assistants. MSU also limits section enrollments in such courses as English Composition, illustrating the priority placed on frequent formative assessment of learning outcomes. In fact, a high proportion of MSU courses (63 percent) limit class size to 24 students or fewer. In addition to small class sizes, many faculty (38 percent) engage their students in research learning opportunities that culminate in presentation at regional, national, or even international venues (see Criterion 4A). The number of faculty doing so is increasing (12 percent in 1998, 24 percent in 2002 and 38 percent in 2006).^{3.41}

**3.41 Data from Office of Research
and Sponsored Programs**

Through the Honors Program, MSU provides its most accomplished and highly motivated students (maintaining a university GPA of 3.30+) with a learning environment that is devoted to seminar discussion, critical thinking, personal attention and supported independent research opportunities. Honors students follow a program of study that includes seminar-style classes taught by faculty from such program areas as history, philosophy, biology, English, sociology and mathematics, plus core great works courses taught by the honors director, in sum amounting to an academic concentration. Additionally, honors students complete a thesis project and public presentation to students and faculty. Honors students receive extra academic advisement and benefit most particularly from sharing upper level coursework with students from outside their majors. In 2006-07, 27 majors were represented among participants in the program, and enrollment grew to 76 students in fall 2007. Plans are under way to further align the Honors Program with *Vision 2013* goals, by increasing coursework related to global issues, requiring more foreign language credits and encouraging study abroad. Under the new model, the Honors Program would constitute an academic minor.

Across the campus, technological innovation is transforming student learning environments. MSU is a leader within the state in making use of new technologies; infrastructure and campus needs are supported by Information Technology Central (ITC), and Internet-based instructional tools are provided by the Office of Instructional

Technology (OIT). Electronic mail, the Internet, the World Wide Web, and multimedia presentations have become increasingly common components of the instructional experience, as MSU students join a large community of people devoted to creating and sharing information. Classrooms are increasingly outfitted with more advanced technologies, such as video projection systems that allow faculty to access a richer variety of learning resources in their teaching. These technologies, whether permanently installed or delivered upon demand, are available in all academic buildings. All building and classroom renovations are accompanied by the installation of appropriate, up-to-date technology. MSU is currently exploring Video over the Internet as an avenue to provide videoconferencing capability from every classroom, and is testing PVX videoconferencing software as a desktop collaboration alternative. Teaching tools like this encourage collaboration and provide a lively, interactive and engaged learning environment for faculty and students.

WebCT, recently purchased by BlackBoard, is one of the largest and most complex commercial packages of its type, supplying MSU online courses with tools such as quizzes, discussion boards, e-mail, chat and course content options. Online courses can employ the Tegrity system to record and replay course information online, on iPods, Smartphones and other portable devices. Some faculty use WebCT to support campus courses, but others prefer tools that are more discipline-specific, less complex and more reliable. This flexibility has allowed individual faculty and departments to deploy technology selectively, creating effective learning environments particularly suited to disciplinary needs.

The Division of Social Science, for example, has used open-source Wiki server software and wireless notebooks for more than six years, enabling students to collaborate, prepare presentations and access course materials. College of Business courses make use of SharePoint software to allow faculty and students to engage in document collaboration, information sharing and team-based learning. The graphic arts program is served by a state-of-the-art facility with industry-standard software and hardware. Maple T.A. complements WebCT by providing Web-based testing and assessment specifically for mathematics, science or any courses requiring mathematics.

The English program offers blended on-campus courses that encourage writing, peer editing and peer review within WebCT/Blackboard. Students use WebCT to access teacher lessons, activities and links, as well as to carry on productive asynchronous discussions with peers. In some classes, students create Web logs to serve as research journals for their papers. Real-time “chat” is used for both in-class dialogue and electronic interviews with published writers and other guest speakers, especially in creative writing classes. Other instructors employ a separate secure Web site (“Comment,” by Bedford St. Martins) for similar purposes. Students in some English classes are also trained in Web page construction, building their own composition pages and uploading them to the MSU server for others to read. A projector connected with the instructor’s computer allows demonstration of such skills as proper editing, citation and research methodology.

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A recent pilot study specifically leveraged technology as a means to increase access to learning. Face-to-face, Web-based, and blended courses explored the use of SmartBoards, Personal Response System (PRS), Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) and iPod/Podcasting. At the end of the semester, 88 percent of participating students reported that the technology tool helped them understand the course material, and 89 percent reported that the tool helped them learn more in the course. Faculty were also surveyed and reported that, although there was a significant front-end time investment required, resulting student excitement in the classroom was worth the investment. Due to success of the pilot, a second phase continued in fall 2006 and spring 2007, to assist faculty in determining learning outcomes from the adoption of these classroom technologies.

Older forms of technology continue to operate on campus as well. The North Dakota Interactive Video Network (IVN) is a statewide videoconferencing communication tool that provides distance education opportunities throughout the state. Five MSU classrooms now have videoconferencing capability, up from just two IVN studios in 1999. A full-time IVN coordinator provides scheduling and daily support for all video-enabled classrooms, while ITC staff register and certify the required wiring and equipment. MSU's social work program has recently added distance programs that rely upon IVN for delivery. Other programs, frequently offered through collaborative efforts with other NDUS institutions, range from two-year degrees in medical assistance and marketing to master's degrees in education. All IVN courses are assessed at the department level, in conformity with on-campus procedures.

Many academic programs at MSU have long employed experiential learning as an integral aspect of their curricula. These highly interactive learning environments include such experiences as teaching practica, nursing clinics, speech and hearing screenings, internships in museums, work with community groups and business partnerships. (Service learning initiatives are specifically discussed in Criterion 4D and 5B.) All of these approaches engage MSU students and challenge them to apply their learning as they hone their professional skills. Given its experience in experiential learning, MSU is well positioned to realize the *Vision 2013* emphasis on student engagement. At present, only a few programs require such experiences for all majors, and those that do have developed significant staffing and other resources to track, manage and facilitate each placement. The university's challenge will be to allocate sufficient time to faculty to manage any significant expansion in number and supervision of these authentic experiences. Field-based research, practica, internships, student teaching and study abroad all represent current experiential learning opportunities on campus.

Field-based research is deemed central to the *Vision 2013* concepts of engagement and place. Both faculty and students in the Division of Science have been involved in monitoring local environmental measures for many years. This has included such long-term enterprises as inventory and monitoring of wildlife populations in national wildlife refuges, state and national park units, and national grasslands throughout the

state. (See, for example, *Atlas of North Dakota Butterflies, Cerambycidae of North Dakota*).^{3.42} Moreover, since declaration of the undergraduate science initiative in 1999, field-based research has expanded to include a remarkable variety of both short- and long-term faculty-led projects, involving undergraduate researchers in study of such diverse projects as examining fly ash collected from regional power plants to test feasibility of use in concrete manufacture, examining area water and soil for trace levels of cadmium and arsenic, and taking samples from methamphetamine “cook and dump” sites for chemical analysis. Projects such as petrologic study of Mt. Bachelor lavas in Oregon and metamorphic rocks in Connecticut, paleontology studies of Eocene sandstones of southwestern North Dakota, and provenance studies of those sandstones have engaged 12 students in the geosciences since 1999. In other areas of the university, principally at the graduate level, field-based research projects have included such diverse topics as the effect of morale on retention among United States Air Force military police (criminal justice), effects of the Alert program on behavior in children with ADHD (special education), and use of music and movement to enhance learning (teacher education).

Students in education, special education, physical education, social work, communication disorders and nursing all engage in practicum experiences to enhance the educational experience. The Department of Communication Disorders, for example, operates a speech and hearing clinic for the public that serves more than 1,000 clients each year. Here, under the direction of fully licensed faculty, students learn how to diagnose and treat speech and hearing disabilities (see Criterion 5D). The nursing program offers a variety of required experiences in clinical settings; these range from working in medical surgical wards at local hospitals to assisting in free screenings at the MSU Honor Dance. Nursing students also serve regional communities by compiling research reports on community health issues; the reports are then shared with community leaders. The College of Business recently launched a series of professional aspirations seminars to help students learn directly from business practitioners.

MSU also facilitates internships in the community, and the Division of Social Sciences has been particularly active in encouraging student placement. In 2006, for example, two history students interned in the field of public history with the local Eastwood Park Association, as part of the association’s grant-supported project to celebrate its centennial. These interns researched and prepared a historical database on structures within that neighborhood, and then prepared materials for signs and a walking tour brochure. The program in history also places a major as an intern with the Ward County Historical Society each summer. Community internships are available in ever increasing numbers, and MSU’s office of Career Services assists students in finding those placements.

Study abroad opportunities provide students with environments of academic, cultural and personal challenge. The Office of International Programs has participated in the International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP) organization for many

3.42 Atlas of North Dakota Butterflies
<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/insects/bflynd/index.htm>

Cerambycidae of North Dakota
<http://cmssc.minotstateu.edu/museum/Cerambycidae.html>

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3.43 MSU 2005-06 “Open Doors Data Collection” report for the Institute of International Education and Vision 2013, Strategy Four, p. 14, both available in evidence room

years. Currently, a faculty-instituted program called Horizons Unlimited coordinates international study tours and experiential learning opportunities. Although the numbers of MSU students seeking study abroad opportunities has historically been low (only nine students in 2005-06, and 15 in 2006-07), the university’s new strategic plan prioritizes international study and specifically seeks to increase study abroad and study tour opportunities.^{3.43} Study abroad is currently required for foreign language majors. MSU has recently received J-1 designation through the U. S. Department of State, which facilitates the recruitment of international researchers, scholars and temporary faculty members and contribute to the diversification of classroom experiences on campus.

Highly Supportive Learning Environments

MSU invests significant efforts in introducing students to college life in ways that will help them adapt and excel in a university academic environment (see Criterion 5C). To ease this important adjustment from high school, the university has developed special academic support programs to help students make the transition to campus life.

Academic advisement for new freshmen and transfer students takes several forms on campus, from course advisement at registration to ongoing full departmental advisement throughout a student’s university career. Student Satisfaction Inventory results for 2006 would indicate that advising is an area of strength for MSU. Students’ expectation that advisors are accessible by telephone and e-mail are close to being met, as are expectations that academic advisors are approachable and concerned with academic success. Anecdotal evidence might suggest, however, that academic advising is uneven across the campus, and that better communication is needed so that students may use this resource more effectively. Despite student perceptions that the system works well, MSU acknowledges that there are issues with uneven advising loads, varied approaches by department, advisor training, time allocation, and institutional recognition for exemplary advisement. Attention to advising is a fundamental aspect of the Foundations of Excellence initiative MSU has begun in 2007-08 (see Criterion 5C).

For students pursuing a degree at a distance, MSU provides a full-time online advisor as well as on-site advisors and student services coordinators in Bismarck and at the MAFB. Once matriculated, distance students work with their appropriate departmental faculty advisors. Graduate students, both on the campus and at a distance, are directed toward the Graduate School for one-on-one assistance with application and admission questions. Each graduate student is assigned a faculty committee and a faculty advisor to assist with the designated program of study and graduation requirements. Individualized support continues throughout the student’s graduate career.

MSU recently established a mentoring program for incoming freshmen, which gives students an optional resource for resolving academic and nonacademic issues and challenges during their first year (see Criterion 5C). The university also provides

specialized supports for the following populations: international students (including counseling about enrollment, financial and immigration issues), minority students (academic and nonacademic advising and referrals that are delivered through campus “Multicultural Support Services”) and, perhaps most impressively, students with disabilities.

The MSU Student Development Center (SDC), established in 1989, serves students with documented disabilities, providing accommodations and resources that give all students equal access to coursework. Through significant allocation of financial resources, MSU has demonstrated its commitment to creating a meaningful academic experience for students with diverse learning needs. Services provided include note-takers, real-time captioning, taped texts, reading of tests, scribes, extended time for tests, enlarging of printed text and removal of physical barriers. Recent collaboration with Utah State University produced a handbook that the disability services portion of the SDC provides to instructors who need further information about students with disabilities. This handbook is also available on the MSU Web site.^{3.44} The center provides workshops for the campus at events such as faculty orientation and Web CT/IVN training sessions. Accommodations and alternative format print materials (large print, audio, disk or Braille) are available. MSU was recently awarded a \$12,500 grant to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students through contracted interpreter services out of Minnesota; the interpreting services were relayed over the IVN system.

3.44 Handbook for Disability Support Services http://www.minotstateu.edu/disability_services/handbook_000.shtml

Findings

- MSU creates outstanding learning environments to enhance instruction, including physical spaces that enhance collaborative learning, small classes, employment of innovative classroom technologies and a multitude of experiential learning options.
- Small class size is a strength of the university, especially in light of the *Vision 2013* emphasis on attention to student success.
- Faculty enjoy good support for new teaching strategies, particularly in areas related to learning technologies and distance education.
- MSU provides a number of specialized student support services that recognize diverse needs and enhance learning. The Student Development Center, in particular, provides excellent academic support services for students with disabilities.



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Core Component 3D

Minot State University's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Academic Support

MSU offers concrete support for student learning through its tutoring programs, the Writing Center, the on-campus Testing Center, and bookstore services. The MSU Peer Tutoring Program has offered individual and group tutoring for more than 20 years. Tutoring clinics are held in math, accounting, psychology, foreign language and composition. Tutoring clinic staff are supervised and trained by relevant department faculty, and individual peer tutors are students who have been recommended by faculty teaching the course. Data from Student Satisfaction Inventories (SSI) conducted in 2002, 2004 and 2006 show that, over a four-year period, full-time students reported an increase in their satisfaction with the availability of tutoring, while part-time students reported a slight decrease in their satisfaction.^{3.45} Funding to hire tutors has not kept up with the demand for services.

3.45, 3.46 Student Satisfaction Inventory Summary, available in evidence room

The MSU Writing Center offers MSU students free face-to-face and e-mail tutoring for the various stages of the writing process and for all disciplines, at academic levels freshman through graduate. The center has seen a steady increase in the number of students served since it began tracking services in 2004. Since 2005, the number of students served has risen from 183 to more than 404 for 2007. Increased publicity, plus a relocation of the center to the lower level of the Gordon Olson Library, has created higher visibility and added more space, and may have led to the surge of students seeking assistance. The Writing Center generally employs six to eight student tutors, all of whom must take the credit-bearing course English 318 (Writing Tutor Training) and observe tutoring sessions before they actually begin tutoring. Center services are limited by the number of students it can recruit. The center is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m. A new service added in spring 2007 was special instruction in the application of APA, MLA and Chicago style citation. Real-time online tutoring is being considered as well. Students and faculty report positively on their interaction with the Writing Center. One online English student commended a tutor for “going above and beyond her duties” in responding to his questions, while another student continued to consult the center for multiple classes after benefiting from Writing Center services in a composition class.^{3.46}

SmarThinking is a virtual learning assistance center to which MSU subscribes. SmarThinking provides tutoring 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students connect to professional tutors via the Internet and can also receive writing critiques. This service is free to all students and includes assistance in the areas of math, writing, grammar,

statistics, accounting, economics, chemistry, biology and physics. Both campus and distance education students use SmarThinking, which has proven to be a cost-effective way to offer a variety of support services to all MSU students, regardless of the mode of instruction. In 2007, 303 campus students and 41 online students consulted SmarThinking and received 1,052 hours of tutoring. This program was adopted initially to serve distance education students, but has since been expanded to the entire campus. There has been no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of this tutorial program. While some faculty clearly value the services provided to students by this program, others have expressed concern that the Internet-based and remote nature of SmarThinking's assistance may improve student assignments without the desired level of engagement on the part of the student.

Minot State University provides a variety of convenient testing options for students. SDC provides pencil and paper based national tests including the ACT, the Praxis series, the National League of Nursing-Accelerated Challenge Exam, the Law School Admission Test, Miller Analogies and the subject exam for the Graduate Record Exam. The Disability Support Services office (part of SDC) also administers more than 300 exams per year to students with disabilities taking course tests and students requiring proctors for correspondence course examinations.

MSU is also home to an ACT Testing Center, which delivers computer-based exams for discipline-specific areas including Association of Social Work board examinations, nuclear medicine technicians exam, American Dietetics Exam, NATA BOC exam for athletic trainers and the Automotive Services Excellence Exam. MSU's Center for Extended Learning also offers CLEP, COMPASS, Performance Assessment Network and federal TSA exams. Testing at MSU is available to both current and prospective students as well as community members. Operations of the Minot State University Bookstore have recently been outsourced to Barnes and Noble College Booksellers. The bookstore supplies textbooks (new and used) listed on the student's syllabus, general merchandise, school supplies and dormitory accessories. In addition, the bookstore manages the textbook portion of financial aid awards. This partnership with Barnes and Noble is a new venture that should improve student academic success by offering better online ordering of textbooks (an important service for all students) and timely access to a larger pool of new course books as well as to one of the nation's largest sources of used textbooks. This agreement guarantees the university a minimum of \$175,000 annually, which will be used to improve the Student Union and student learning spaces.^{3.47} As a private firm, Barnes and Noble will assess its own internal operations. The Business Office will supervise this contract and annually examine the quality of services provided to students.

3.47 Barnes and Noble contract, on file in the Office of the VP for Administration and Finance.

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Gordon B. Olson Library

In the past decade, the Gordon B. Olson Library has provided MSU with essential and superb learning support services and has kept pace with technological advances in librarianship in order to serve the needs of a 21st century campus. Books, journals (both online and in hard-copy), article databases, and interlibrary loan support student learning in vital ways. The library’s membership in ODIN, a state-wide library consortium, and in MINITEX, a regional consortium, allows access to resources for even the most specialized disciplines. Information literacy instruction sessions, integrated into course work through collaboration between librarians and faculty, support student learning.^{3.48}

3.48 Bibliographic instruction session statistics, available in evidence room

Table 3.4 -- Total number of titles and volumes added to Gordon B. Olson Library, 1996-2007		
Year	Number of Titles Added	Number of Volumes Added
2006/2007	3535	4454
2005/2006	2994	3544
2004/2005	3278	3918
2003/2004	4041	3525
2002/2003	1690	2168
2001/2002	2752	3515
2000/2001	2682	3581
1999/2000	3512	4689
1998/1999	2737	3949
1997/1998	3229	4730
1996/1997	4308	6035

The library subscribes to 700 journals and has access to the text of many more journal articles via subscriptions to full-text databases such as J-STOR and Academic Search Premier. The library systematically builds its monograph collection to reflect the suggestions and needs of faculty and students. The library meets the needs of students working at a distance whether they are enrolled in online courses or in remote face-to-face classes throughout North Dakota. A web-accessible Electronic Reserves program (ERES) boasts 172% more account holders since its 1998 inception, and student access to online databases has increased 450% in the past decade. The library maintains a specific website link for distance students, providing them with instructions on how to get the most from online services; a link offering online research tools is maintained by the library instruction team. The library is currently developing an “information commons” composed of digital reference tools, library staff, small-group discussion spaces, and comfortable furniture that will encourage students, classes, and faculty to view the physical library as an essential center for learning, gathering, and information

exchange. Student Satisfaction Inventory data from 2002, 2004, and 2006 reveal that students consistently report high satisfaction with the helpfulness and approachability of library staff, as well as with library services and resources.

Technology Assistance and Equipment Modernization

Technology resources for students at MSU are current, appropriate and carefully planned. While technology budgets can never be large enough, ITC provides students with a high level of technology support, both in the visible areas such as the help desk, classrooms, kiosks, library, dormitories and student union, as well as the invisible areas including servers, network equipment, e-mail and Internet2 capability. All MSU students are automatically given a campus e-mail address to provide access to the campus network and the new PeopleSoft registration and administration program. Students in this way receive official campus communications regarding add/drop deadlines, registration information, financial aid, campus events and emergency notices.^{3.49} ITC manages a help desk six days each week to provide students hardware and software installation and troubleshooting, checkout of equipment such as laptops, desktops, digital cameras, projectors and mini hubs, removal of spyware and viruses, remote file storage, Web set up and configuration, secure access to e-mail and licensed software downloads.

ITC maintains over 1,200 active data ports and 50 wireless access points. All major academic buildings, classrooms and dormitories enjoy high-speed network access.^{3.50} MSU currently supports more than 350 computers in 12 general access and teaching labs on campus and at the Minot Air Force Base Education Center. Numerous niche labs exist in support of specialized training for students (arts, sciences, humanities, nursing, education, business, etc.). Internet-capable learning spaces and kiosks are strategically located across campus to informally engage students in learning opportunities, and computer systems equipped with assistive technologies for persons with disabilities are available in open-access computer labs (Jaws, ZoomText, 21-inch monitors, monitor lifts, etc.). Student Satisfaction Inventory results from 2002, 2004 and 2006 report student perception of campus computer resources as fully adequate and accessible.

MSU employs state-of-the-art equipment on campus to enhance research and student learning. Some examples include:

- Cyril Moore Science Center: New equipment includes an X-ray diffractometer, a gas chromatograph, a scanning electron microscope, an inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy capability, and other specialized equipment. Faculty members are consistent in their assessment that “these renovations and equipment upgrades have had a significant impact on the quality education offered by the Division of Science and Department of Biology.”^{3.51}

3.49 “Technology at Minot State University: Past, Present, Future,” available in evidence room

3.50 “Student Guide to Information Technology on Campus” (including public access computing map), available in evidence room

3.51 “Lab Space in the Sciences” document and biology department memorandum, both available in evidence room

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- Old Main and Ann Nicole Nelson Hall: The renovated facility now includes new recording, sound and lighting equipment, a complete backstage scene, an orchestra pit and two Steinway concert grand pianos, a midi/computer music technology lab, a piano teaching laboratory and a practice pipe organ. In 2004, MSU dedicated its restored 1932 Kimball organ, renovated by the Reuter Organ Company. These facilities have allowed music faculty to host world-class master classes, to prepare students for national careers in opera, brass and string music, and to offer students and the MSU community a superb learning environment.
- Memorial Hall: The Communication Disorders Department has one of the largest speech and hearing clinics in the Midwest. This clinic houses videostroboscopy equipment (the only equipment of its kind in north-central N.D.), audiology facilities for assessment of hearing impaired patients, a fluency laboratory in which computer technology is used to assess and treat stuttering disorders, Telehealth, a computer technology used to provide speech services via the Internet, and a speech laboratory in which computer technology is used to analyze speech patterns. This clinic was recognized by ASHA reviewers as one of the best academic and clinical teaching facilities in the nation.

Financial Aid

Financial aid funding for students attending MSU has increased by 37 percent over the past five years. In 2001-2002 the total amount of funding students received was \$15,122,251 and in 2005-2006 the total amount of funding for students increased to \$20,730,872. During this same period, the amount of institutional funds available for students increased by 164.6 percent. In 2001-02, the total amount of institutional funding available for students was \$568,814, and in 2005-06 the amount increased to \$1,505,227.

The MSU Development Foundation worked hard during this same period to increase the number of endowed scholarship funds by more than 48 percent, from 134 to 199. The endowed scholarship funding available for students increased by 90 percent, from \$258,872 in 2001-02 to \$492,082 in 2005-06. The increase in funding for students was also a result of policy changes by SBHE that allowed institutions to promote diversity, international and recruitment objectives of the university. Various tuition discount programs were therefore initiated to promote diversity and academic achievement on campus.

Declining federal aid programs and high loan default rates undermine many of these gains. (From 2001-02 to 2005-06, federal student aid programs show a decrease of eight percent in funding available for students. The federal Pell Grant and federal SEOG programs decreased from \$3,202,057 to \$2,937,495. The federal Work Study and federal Perkins Loan programs also decreased in funding available to students by 17 percent.

(The available funds decreased from \$718,125 to \$594,311.) Students responding to Student Satisfaction Inventory surveys in 2002, 2004 and 2006 thought that financial aid was inadequate. Findings also indicated that aid awards were not announced to students in time to be helpful in their college planning. MSU faces ongoing external challenges that make it difficult to provide enough grant and loan aid to allow students to focus on their studies without also feeling obliged to work significant hours at non-academic jobs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that informal advising helps students to better find the appropriate balance between hours worked and credits attempted. The high numbers of hours students feel obliged to work, and the heavy credit loads attempted each semester indicate that MSU can do more to educate students about debt.

Findings

- Academic support services are suitable and accessible, and have become essential in serving a student population that appears unevenly prepared in many areas. Rapid increase in demand for the MSU Writing Center demonstrates success but also very real staffing and resource limitations.
- Creative supplemental services such as SmarThinking provide essential online tutoring and have become an important tool supporting on-campus students.
- Library resources are exceptional for a campus this size and are well positioned to support the *Vision 2013* model of engaged and authentic student learning.
- Technology resources are carefully planned for, broadly deployed and forward-looking, and support learning and teaching in comprehensive and creative fashion.
- Financial aid resources have increased at MSU through purposeful effort and supportive SBHE policy, despite significant decreases in funding for federal aid programs. MSU should continue to improve communication with students about the appropriate balance between work and study.

Strengths, Challenges and Actions Related to Criterion 3

Strengths

- A rich culture of assessment at MSU encourages faculty to examine programs and student learning data carefully to improve the academic environment and learning opportunities for MSU's students. Clearly stated goals and learning outcomes for MSU's programs, in conjunction with routine annual program assessment reports, make effective assessment possible. It is a system run by

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and for the faculty and is supported by an extensive program of Assessment Day education. The faculty have demonstrated a willingness to use findings to address large and small issues within the curriculum.

- MSU values effective teaching. Its processes for hiring and review identify teaching excellence as a primary and desired attribute. Clear structures exist to evaluate faculty teaching, and the university's system of traditional evaluation, mentoring, dual review through the Tenure and Promotion committees, its innovative Committee of Twelve requirement, and NDUS emphasis on annual faculty review all reinforce teaching as central to MSU.
- Working within its existing resources, MSU has made faculty development a priority, through research and professional study grants, support for the PIL program and conference attendance, and staff and technology resources that assist with development of innovative learning environments.
- Renovated physical facilities, improved technology resources, and the Gordon B. Olson Library are exceptional for a campus of this size and demonstrate that the campus uses its planning and fiscal resources to support the creation of creative, effective, and flexible learning environments.

Challenges and Proposed Actions:

- **Challenge:** Assessment culture in the 21st century requires labor-intensive data gathering and analysis at the program and university level to make effective actions possible. Providing adequate support for this effort will help MSU maintain and increase recent high levels of faculty assessment participation and further its fundamental institutional goal of connecting decision making to student learning data.

Proposed actions:

- Employ broader, more centralized recordkeeping.
- Allocate resources to support the preservation of institutional memory to keep assessment from overwhelming crucial and primary faculty obligations in teaching and scholarship.

- **Challenge:** Extend meaningful faculty development opportunities.

Proposed action:

- Continue such services as the PIL program and the Learning Communities Program, which were funded by Bush Foundation grants.
 - Identify and allocate funding for developmental leave and sabbatical programs.
- **Challenge:** MSU has not yet systematically explored whether online and on-campus courses produce comparable results in terms of the achievement of student learning outcomes. This issue needs to be addressed, especially in light of the rapid expansion of online offerings in recent years.

Proposed action:

- Expand online assessment to include comparison with results from assessment of traditional on-campus classes.
- **Challenge:** A challenge for the campus is to protect the time MSU faculty require to deliver excellent teaching, engagement activities and scholarship. MSU needs to actively address the balance between tenure-track faculty's 12-hour load and the overload assignments that have made online and other activities possible. Simultaneous growth in administrative duties, including the overlapping assessment and review demands of multiple accreditors, MSU initiatives, bureaucratic tasks and PeopleSoft training, all threaten to reduce faculty time for the critical activities of teaching and scholarship.

Proposed actions:

- Revise campus-wide requirements for teaching load.
- Provide sufficient time for faculty to review program goals and learning outcomes in light of *Vision 2013*.
- Allocate administrative resources to design and create an archive, both electronic and hard copy, for all campus reports. This archive should be available and accessible to all campus constituents.

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Minot State University promotes a life of learning for its faculty administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Overview

Minot State University's new mission, presented in *Vision 2013*, affirms a strong commitment to lifelong learning and "critical and creative thinking," sustained by a collective dedication to the "common good."^{4.1} The institution envisions future graduates of insight and erudition, characterized by "compassion, tolerance, character [and] sound judgment."^{4.2}

4.1, 4.2, 4.3 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

MSU's new "vision of place and engagement" requires tangible linkage between theory and practice. By design, this perspective therefore promotes a general respect for the learning process, the application of critical thinking skills to real-world issues, and a continuous consideration of the individual's responsibilities as a learned citizen. As *Vision 2013* states explicitly, "connecting knowledge, theory, practice and place to the realities of human existence, problem solving and life remains a compelling reason to foster...engagement in learning."^{4.3} MSU fulfills this mission and vision. A multitude of current and ongoing undergraduate, graduate and faculty research initiatives on campus attest to the fact that MSU has grown over the last 20 years, from a college "teaching" institution to a full "teaching and research" university. The Graduate School provides invaluable opportunities for regional professionals and has made significant strides since 1997 in establishing long-term structures, policies and plans that will support its development (see introduction).

A strong commitment to academic freedom of inquiry and expression is a necessary precondition to accomplishing the goals of *Vision 2013*. State Board of Higher Education Policy 401.1, "Academic Freedom," adopted in 1984, states that faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and publication of results as well as they are entitled to freedom in the free dissemination of information in their field of competence.^{4.4} Additional SBHE Policies in Series 605 address "Academic Freedom and Tenure," "Academic Appointments" (605.1), the "Standing Committee on Faculty Rights" (605.2) and "Hearings and Appeals" (605.4)^{4.5}

4.4 SBHE Policy 401.1, Academic Freedom <http://www.ndus.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2355>

4.5 SBHE Policy 600 series <http://www.ndus.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/index.asp?id=2313>

MSU affirms these SBHE policies in Section 1, Article V of its Constitution:

Academic freedom is unhampered opportunity to seek the truth in any field. Minot State University recognizes that true education takes place only if academic freedom is the inviolable right of both students and faculty. The University, therefore, shall enjoin all of its members to promote and to practice academic freedom.^{4.6}

4.6 MSU Constitution, Article V
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/constitution.shtml>

The institution's new mission also specifically commits to honoring "freedom of expression, academic freedom, ethical and moral behavior, integrity, fairness and honesty."^{4.7} MSU upholds all these principles in practice through the functions of its Special Review Committee, Faculty Rights Committee and Student Rights Committee.

4.7 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

Core Component 4A

Minot State University demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

Research and Professional Development

MSU recognizes the importance of research and continued study for faculty, students, administrators and staff. The institution provides significant financial support for research grants, advanced study and professional development opportunities, tuition waivers, research poster sessions and conference presentations. Research efforts at MSU are celebrated routinely in university publications such as the alumni magazine, *Connections*, *Inside MSU* and college newsletters, and are acknowledged by the president in monthly reports. MSU also recognizes the creative work of its faculty and students by publicly advertising and promoting numerous musical performances, theatre events and art shows. One recent development regarding research has been a renewed campus discussion about faculty sabbatical, which is not currently an option at MSU. The establishment and funding of a sabbatical program would greatly enhance opportunities for research and creative activity.

Financial support for faculty research, originally housed in the three colleges, was consolidated in 2003 under a new Faculty Development and Research Committee. This elected committee replaced college-level grants with a single competitive grant application tied to the campus mission. The campus Office of Research and Sponsored Programs solicits research proposals and offers workshops on grant preparation. Many faculty build collaborative undergraduate research components into these proposals. The six-member Faculty Development and Research Committee reviews all applications and awards the grants. Awards are competitive and are based on the grant's potential to enhance MSU's reputation for academic excellence, its potential to improve teaching and

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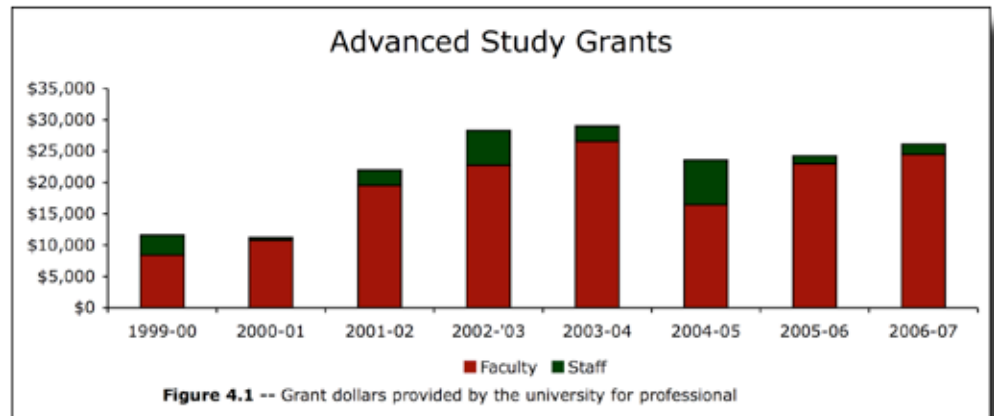
4.8 Research and Small Grants
http://www.minotstateu.edu/rsp/small_r_grants.shtml

4.9 Further details are available through the Office of Academic Projects and Research.

4.10 Faculty and staff tuition benefits and waivers http://www.minotstateu.edu/hr/benefits_01.shtml and http://www.minotstateu.edu/hr/benefits_02.shtml

learning at MSU, its potential to produce scholarly work, the quality of the proposed project, the researcher’s qualifications, and the budget for the project. Forty-six grants have been funded in the four years this committee has been in existence, varying from \$500 to \$4,500, with an average of \$1,430 in the last funding cycle. Each year, the total grant budget has increased, from approximately \$22,000 in the first year to over \$33,000 in the 2006-07 fiscal year.^{4.8} While these funds support faculty development in important ways, it should be noted that the grants do not support summer salary or buy faculty release time.

Minot State University began providing professional development funding in the early 1990s. In 1993, the SBHE mandated that 1.5 percent of the annual budget be allocated to professional development for faculty, staff and administrators. Advanced study grants to faculty and staff are available through the academic affairs office, based on the needs of the person and the needs of the institution. Support for pursuit of terminal degrees has particularly encouraged academic excellence in high-demand disciplines such as nursing and education. In the past eight years, 41 faculty members have received grants totaling \$152,060 to pursue advanced degrees. During that same time period, 35 staff members received grants totaling \$27,836.^{4.9}



To encourage faculty and staff to continue their education, MSU since 1993 has offered tuition waivers so that faculty and staff may take up to three credits each semester. Spouses and dependent children of faculty and staff receive tuition waivers, as well.^{4.10}

MSU supports research efforts on campus by hosting poster sessions each spring semester to encourage faculty and students to demonstrate their research results. Recipients of funding from the Research and Small Grants program (described above) are specifically invited to take part, and in many cases faculty choose to include student collaboration. Faculty from every college have participated, and the 2005 session included such projects as:

- *Alcohol Expectancy and Spatial Memory* (addiction studies)
- *The Effects of Light Cycle on Metamorphosis in Salamanders* (biology)
- *Developing a Cooperative GIS at Minot State University* (business information technology)
- *The Spoken Word: Middle English Sound Recordings* (English)
- *The Slave Trade: A South Atlantic Perspective* (history)
- *Antipsychotic and Antidepressants* (nursing)
- *Training Effects of Three Exercise Programs* (teacher education and human performance)^{4.11}

4.11 Campus poster session rosters and announcements, available in evidence room

In addition, MSU has recently sponsored several juried student research poster sessions, including a session celebrating Women’s Heritage Month.

MSU supports student attendance at professional conferences, and has hosted a number of important regional and national conferences on campus. Since Cyril Moore Hall was renovated and the declaration in 1999 of a university undergraduate science initiative, more than 80 students have presented their research findings at regional or national conference.^{4.12} A separate research track has been identified within the undergraduate biology major, and a majority of students in that program, and many in chemistry and the geosciences, have presented their findings at annual conferences. These events have contemporaneously been attended by mentoring faculty, and in many cases by other undergraduate students who were not presenters. Although the sciences have focused specifically on such experiences, examples of undergraduate attendance at regional and national conferences may be found within many other areas of study across the campus. Students in the MSU Honors program, for example, have recently presented at the National Collegiate Honors Conference on topics as diverse as autism in the classroom, “No-Shame Theatre” and wind energy in North Dakota.

4.12 Details available through MSU INBRE Office, Cyril Moore Science Center

As mentioned in Criterion 3B, campus units assist faculty to attend professional conferences through internal funds and external granting sources. One striking example has been the 2007 attendance of a multi-disciplinary group of 18 MSU faculty at the “Learning and the Brain Conferences” sponsored by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and other major research entities. The end result of that association is a new MSU initiative called the Collaborative for the Applied Study of Cognition and Learning Sciences (CASCLS). Modeled after the interdisciplinary Mind, Brain, and Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the collaborative is designed to prepare teachers and school leaders who are master’s-degreed specialists in the application of mind/brain science in educational settings. Faculty, undergraduate and graduate students have continuing opportunity to learn, apply and test research from cognitive development, cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, as these areas of research apply to teaching and learning in authentic classroom settings. The faculty members who attended these conferences have continued to meet on an ongoing basis, to incorporate conference wisdom into their MSU work and to design subsequent

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presentations for a regional January inservice (which serves 900 area teachers), and the regional Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) spring banquet. A two-day “Mind/Brain Myth-busters Seminar” was held Sept. 14-15, 2007, through collaboration with Phi Delta Kappa and other stakeholders.

MSU has hosted a variety of conferences on campus. The MSU chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association hosts an annual regional conference on campus, primarily for professional speech-language pathologists. The conference is administrated entirely by students in the MSU Communication Disorders Department, and approximately 100 conference attendees come each year from all across North Dakota and southern Canada. The Humanities Division has hosted several conferences, including the 2004 NDUS Arts and Humanities Summit, the Northern Plains Early British Literature Conference (2004) and the Linguistic Circle of Manitoba and North Dakota (2005). The North Dakota Academy of Science commonly holds its annual conference at the home institution of its annually elected president. In these circumstances, MSU has hosted numerous annual meetings over the past 50 years, most recently those in 1998, 2003 and 2007. Supported in part by a grant from the MSU Intellectual Climate Committee, the Department of Biology hosted a symposium, “The Flying Dinosaurs Around Us,” in 2002.

An International Behavioral Development Symposium was held in May 1995 with the aim of promoting scientific understanding of the contribution of biological factors to sexual orientation and sex differences in behavior. The symposium brought together many leading researchers in this area of study from around the world. Under joint support of the Eugene Garfield Foundation of Philadelphia and MSU, second and third International Behavioral Development Symposia were held in 2000 and 2005.

MSU is proud of the nationally recognized excellence of its faculty research and creativity, much of which includes undergraduate students. Exemplary areas of study include: the effects of alcohol and caffeine on motor response and hand-eye coordination (Department of Addiction Studies, Psychology and Social Work), detection of heavy metals in natural systems (Departments of Biology and Chemistry), early behavioral indicators of sexual orientation (Division of Social Science), the role of small mammal fossils in aging Eocene sandstones (Department of Geoscience), development of a predictive GIS model for locating rock art (Department of Art), the history of slave and illegal trade between the West Indies and mainland Europe (Division of Social Science), collaborative presentation of J. S. Bach’s *St. John Passion* (Division of Music), and publication of five plays (leading to off-Broadway production of some) by a member of the Theatre Department (Division of Humanities).^{4.13}

4.13 Please see archive of faculty credentials in the evidence room.

Computer science faculty members carry out research and development activities for off-campus clients and with colleagues on campus. Examples of partnerships with off-campus clients include recent work with Killdeer Mountain Manufacturing of Killdeer, N.D. on the development of a telemetry system and current work with SEO Precision Optics of Crosby, N.D. on software support for SEO’s laser steering mirror. Examples

of partnerships on campus include development of closed-captioning software for NDCPD and development of laboratory software for researchers in the Department of Addiction Studies, Psychology and Social Work.

Collaborative and federal grant-funded research efforts on campus have expanded remarkably in the course of the last decade. MSU is in its fourth year of a \$3.12 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant project funded through the IDeA Network for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program, which supports projects specifically designed to include active participation of undergraduate researchers. Students gain cutting-edge research experience, attend national scientific meetings, present posters and papers, and publish their own research results. Current faculty project leaders are working on research involving: antifungal agents for combating opportunistic fungal infections in patients with compromised immune systems; identification of molecular interactions of DNA with cellular proteins; functional genomics of endocrine disruption in salamanders (relevant to human environmental health policy); and control of genes associated with auxin control of leaf cell expansion in the plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*. A pilot heavy metals project has also been initiated in 2007, adding more investigators who are providing students with similar research opportunities. As of summer 2007, 62 students from biology and chemistry programs have been actively involved in the project.

In response to the need for law enforcement domestic violence policy in North Dakota, the Rural Crime and Justice Center (RCJC) on campus has formed a partnership with the North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services (NDCAWS). The purpose of the project is to chart the nature of intimate partner violence and criminal justice/law enforcement response in N.D., and the goal is to assist in the development of a statewide data collection and analysis system. The collaboration also includes the University of North Dakota's Tribal Judicial Institute (TJI), and a multidisciplinary advisory committee to 1) develop a model law enforcement domestic violence policy for North Dakota, 2) utilize the assistance of RCJC and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) to develop a train-the-trainer curriculum on local policy, and 3) create a pool of trained officers who can provide technical assistance and training resources for local law enforcement agencies and community response teams. This initiative is funded by the 2004 Department of Justice "Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program."^{4.14}

The MSU Department of History received two NEH grants totaling \$322,148 to fund summer institutes in 2003 and 2005, called "Contexts and Legacies of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." The institutes welcomed high school teachers from across the nation as they participated in scholarly and experiential learning about the Lewis and Clark voyage of discovery, the Upper Great Plains Region and development of the American West. Nationally renowned scholars presented in their areas of expertise, and the participants engaged in both primary and secondary research, including exploration of artifacts and reconstructed sites located in western North Dakota, at the Lewis and

4.14 Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program
http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/arrest_grant_desc.htm

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Clark Interpretive Center, the North Dakota Heritage Center, Double Ditch Indian Village (archaeological site), Fort Abraham Lincoln Park, Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, Knife River Indian Villages and Fort Mandan. At the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, participants studied cultural practices that reveal some of the long-term legacies of cross-cultural contact. At the end of these sessions, the participants constructed lesson plans and units which were then distributed nationally as a pedagogical resource.

Research initiatives demand an extraordinary amount of faculty time, largely unavailable during the academic year at MSU due to high teaching loads (12 credits/semester). In 2004, the matter of a policy regarding faculty sabbaticals was raised in Faculty Senate, and an ad hoc Committee on Faculty Sabbaticals was authorized to begin work, with a target of March 2005 for completion of its charge. The resulting committee met throughout ensuing months, on one occasion with the university president. Among other matters, it investigated extant SBHE policy relating to “developmental leave,” as well as the formal policy on sabbaticals of the University of North Dakota and several other institutions. A final report was submitted to the Faculty Senate on March 5, 2005, amended by the senate, and forwarded to the president. The report included a prototype application procedure, suggestions for makeup of a permanent sabbatical committee (similar to existing promotion and tenure committees), and an outline of responses to the various assignments originally given the ad hoc committee. The principal difficulty encountered is funding; at one point the committee considered the idea of a dedicated “pool” of accumulated funds derived from unfilled tenure-track positions over time. A final report was approved by the Faculty Senate on May 5, 2005; however, the matter of faculty sabbaticals has not been given serious consideration since that time.^{4.15}

4.15 Report appended to Faculty Senate minutes of May 5, 2005
http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/min_04_05/fs_o_05_05_05.pdf

MSU conducts self-assessment and evaluation primarily through the Academic Projects and Research office. This office compiles data from various sources to develop an annual institutional *Fact Book*, conducts a variety of institutional surveys in compliance with NDUS accountability measures and completes various national surveys on MSU (see Criterion 2C). The information gathered is regularly disseminated, but has not been consistently acted upon. The collection, analysis, interpretation and implementation of these data require expertise, time and independence, particularly as this material is used to inform strategic planning efforts and document preparation (as, for example, this self-study report). To effectively accomplish that aim in the long term, MSU needs an office exclusively dedicated to institutional research.

Continuing Education through Graduate Programs

The MSU Graduate School makes special effort to serve the continuing education needs of full-time working teachers, through the scheduling of summer courses and through participation in state and federally funded programs that provide financial

assistance to students. The MSU Graduate School serves regional constituents by working with the colleges to offer nine master-degree programs on campus and/or online, as well as a specialist degree in school psychology. Furthermore, the Graduate School collaborates with the University of North Dakota to offer its Ph.D. program in criminal justice at MSU. The Graduate School enrolled 284 students in 2007.

MSU is the home of the Northern Plains Writers Project (NPWP), one of more than 200 federal, state, and university funded programs under the umbrella of the National Writing Project. NPWP's goal is to help improve teaching, learning and writing through its pedagogical model of "teachers teaching teachers," and each year it holds seminars, workshops and mini-institutes dedicated to a variety of different educational objectives. At the center of NPWP's activity are its summer institutes, attended by approximately 20 state teachers nominated by their peers and interviewed by an NPWP planning team. Each institute participant receives free tuition for six graduate credits per institute toward an M.Ed. degree for its participants (virtually half the cost of the degree). Current annual funding levels exceed \$130,000 and are expected to rise.

From 2003 to the present, MSU has received U.S. Department of Education (Title II) grants in the areas of both mathematics and science. During the 2007 fiscal year, these grants provided comprehensive tuition support and stipends to math and science teachers from all P-12 levels, during a series of summer offerings designed to help them achieve North Dakota "highly qualified" status under of the federal Education for Economic Security Act (EESA/"No Child Left Behind").^{4.16} Funding for these grant projects together has exceeded \$700,000. MSU has received federal Department of Education teacher preparation grants for special education programs, including the Rural Special Education Strategist Project (RSES) and the Preparing Interdisciplinary Early Interventionists for Rural States (PIERS) program. These provide funding to support more than 40 practicing teachers, allowing them to pursue graduate work at MSU to obtain enhanced licensure and enabling them to teach more special needs students. Although enrollment has been variable in both science and math graduate programs, and largely dependent upon external support, both continue to provide important graduate opportunities for teachers in fields of long-standing shortage. Graduates of these programs also prove highly successful; for example, eight of the 27 members of the recent North Dakota Mathematics Content and Achievement Standards Writing Team are graduates of MSU's M.A.T. program in mathematics.

4.16 Applications and reports for both math and science summer programs are available in the evidence room.

Continuing Education through the Center for Extended Learning (CEL)

MSU's Center for Extended Learning (CEL), one of the largest distance education programs in the NDUS, assists the university in its mission of providing flexible and lifelong learning opportunities.^{4.17} This campus unit grew out of the original MSU

4.17 Center for Extended Learning
<http://www.misu.nodak.edu/cel/>

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Continuing Education Department, housed within the Office of the Registrar in 1959 to serve the needs of Minot Air Force Base students. Flexibility in course delivery is accomplished by offering courses online, through correspondence and IVN (Interactive Video Network, see Criterion 3C), and at off-campus locations such as the Minot Air Force Base and Bismarck State College. The CEL also facilitates collaborative options for MSU students and offers dual credit options for qualifying high school juniors and seniors, course work for driver education teachers, non-credit driver's license recertification courses, teacher education and professional development workshops, College for Kids courses for children ages six to 15, a yearly Municipal Finance Officers' Institute (see Criterion 5D) and Microsoft Office Specialist certification in eight different areas.

Over the years, and as CEL activities have grown, the leadership for the unit has evolved. Originally, a director for continuing education supervised Minot Air Force Base, IVN and non-credit activities. With the introduction of online courses in 2001 and the growth of MSU Online, a director of outreach position was created. In 2005, the director of outreach position was expanded to include supervision of the university's enrollment services and admissions processes. In 2007, the key leadership position in CEL was rewritten to streamline functions (divesting the enrollment services responsibilities) and to reflect the increasing need to integrate distance learning more effectively into the university's academic structure. In 2007, MSU established the position of Dean of the Center for Extended Learning. The CEL dean is responsible for working with academic departments and colleges to facilitate presentation of academic offerings in nontraditional formats.

While CEL continues to provide administrative and technical support, the individual colleges own the courses and programs. College ownership preserves the quality of instruction and the coherence of the curriculum. Program development is initiated within each academic unit. When requested, CEL provides college faculty with instructional design support to develop the course for the online or IVN environment. The individual college provides faculty through its current faculty pool or through the hiring of a qualified adjunct instructor. The practice has been for CEL to use the course tuition to pay the instructor; however, some academic units have begun to integrate online teaching as part of regular course load. Assessment of the course and program is retained by the individual college and department in all cases.

Findings

- By mandate of the SBHE, MSU supports its faculty with full freedom in research and publication.
- The Faculty and Development Research Committee effectively reviews research proposals and disburses numerous small grants to faculty.

- MSU provides financial assistance for faculty advanced study, staff professional development and faculty/staff tuition waivers.
- Faculty and student research and creative efforts receive good visibility through university publications and campus poster sessions.
- Support is given for faculty and students to attend and present at academic conferences; recent student participation has been particularly impressive in the sciences. Strong faculty follow-up to conferences is evident in the emerging multi-disciplinary campus effort to establish a Collaborative for the Applied Study of Cognition and Learning Sciences (CASCLS).
- MSU has hosted a number of notable academic conferences since 1997.
- Faculty research is exemplary and is recognized at the national level, as recent major federal grants attest.
- Graduate programs provide many opportunities for continuing education, especially for area teachers.
- The Center for Extended Learning provides outstanding opportunities for lifelong learning, serving a wide variety of age groups and constituencies.

Core Component 4B

Minot State University demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

General Education

The foundation of all undergraduate learning at MSU is the general education program.

At Minot State University, the principal role of general education is to foster the broad repertoire of intellectual, social, and cultural skills needed to function in the world. General education equips students to understand and influence their own milieu. General education develops the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information and to use it in solving problems. The general education curriculum therefore emphasizes 1) mastery of linguistic skills, 2) a broad historical and cultural perspective, 3) literacy in the social, natural, and mathematical sciences, 4) understanding and appreciation of the arts such as music, literature, painting, and sculpture, and 5) commitment to contributing one's talents to advancement of the common good. It develops an ability to think and live creatively, critically, intuitively, and rationally, using the full range of abilities inherent in the mind and body. It offers the potential to create in every student a sense of personal, historical, and cultural identity, leading to a breadth of understanding that offers possibilities in all phases of life.^{4.18}

4.18 Faculty Senate General Education Committee:
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/>

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The current program was redesigned in 1996-97 to promote independent, interdisciplinary inquiry and understanding among students, and to promote a uniform assessment mechanism for general education across all disciplines. The program was based on the conviction that a strong emphasis on the liberal arts is fundamental to the development of educated people. The general education program was consistent with the institution's 1996-97 mission to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry, and now will align well with the *Vision 2013* commitment to "high academic standards," "student success" and "engaged and lifelong learning," as well as the high value placed on "critical and creative thinking."

General education has become the topic of much debate, both at the national level and at MSU. Should general education offerings be expanded or contracted? How should general education requirements be balanced with the requirements for majors? To what extent should general education courses respond to the increasing need to incorporate writing and cultural diversity content? How should the "usefulness" of general education be defined and evaluated?

The current general education model at MSU, in place since 1997, conforms with SBHE policy. A minimum of 38 credits are necessary to complete the MSU General Education Requirement (GER), and these credits must be distributed throughout the curriculum in the following manner: communications—9 credits; history—3 credits; humanities—6 credits; wellness/personal development—2 credits; mathematics—4 credits; laboratory-based natural science—8 credits; and social science—6 credits. Students may satisfy the GER requirements in any of the following ways:

- successfully complete the 38-credit GER as specified above
- successfully pass AP/CLEP tests for some of the courses in the above inventory
- successfully complete approved, letter-graded correspondence or online courses offered through the Center for Extended Learning (a maximum of 16 correspondence credits may be applied toward the degree)
- successfully complete the GER of another institution under the terms of the NDUS General Education Transfer Agreement (GERTA—see Criterion 5C for details).

4.19 Faculty Senate General Education Committee:
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/>

4.20 Categorized Overview of Departmental/Divisional Goals Statements Pertaining to the General Education Program
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GenEdUmbrellaGoalsandStrandDefinitions1997.pdf>

4.21 General Education Committee charge
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/SenateChargeGenEd1997.pdf>

The MSU general education program has been assessed using a five-strand model for more than a decade. These strands—critical, factual, historical, cultural and aesthetic—link disciplines and guide course design and outcomes assessment for all general education courses. Because there is no department of general education, the Faculty Senate's General Education Committee is responsible for oversight of the resulting program. The committee includes six faculty members, along with the VPAA and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. When the five-strand model was established, the General Education Committee also instituted a four-year revolving

schedule for recertification of general education courses. Committee recertification of the courses requires departments and divisions to provide supporting materials from department chairs and faculty responsible for delivering the courses.^{4.22} (Records pertaining to each general education course are archived in the registrar's office.) The General Education Committee reviews these documents, and discusses course content with faculty as a prerequisite to recertification. The General Education Committee expects that over the course of four years departments must consider and archive evidence that all five strands are helping to guide assessment of their general education courses.

The 1997 detailed review of MSU's general education program was originated within the disciplines themselves. This resulted in a comprehensive, categorical overview of departmental/divisional "goals statements" or "outcomes" pertaining to the general education program. Endorsed by the Faculty Senate, these "umbrella goals" comprehensively described the knowledge expected of all students who complete the program. Clear outcomes were articulated for each of the five strands (critical, historical, factual, cultural and aesthetic).^{4.23} Using the critical strand as an example, one would fairly expect MSU students to express the following capabilities upon completion of the general education program:

- *In humanities*—Honor their own intuitions; test, defend and modify those in discussion; and develop, refine, and support them with research drawn from appropriate sources.
- *In history*—Demonstrate ability to analyze historical events, trends and periods in terms of their contexts and influences, to organize and evaluate causal and explanatory evidence derived from that analysis, and to answer critical questions about those events and trends.
- *In the social sciences*—Demonstrate ability to analyze social phenomena in terms of major social science concepts, to organize and evaluate evidence derived from that analysis, and to answer critical questions about those concepts.
- *In the natural sciences*—Demonstrate understanding of how a natural scientist asks questions, collects data, designs experiments, analyzes data and draws conclusions.
- *In mathematics*—Demonstrate how mathematical methods can be used to analyze and solve problems in a variety of fields; recognize problems to which such methods are applicable.
- *In communications*—Ask and answer questions about specific rhetorical acts: what act was created, who created it, and when and where was it created and for what purpose; make effective choices in planning and revising, attending to audience and matters of conventional usage and mechanics; act as effective critics of their own writing and speaking; find and use a wide variety of sources effectively and appropriately in developing and testing their own ideas.

4.22 Instructions for general education course recertification application http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GE_Recert_12_06.pdf

4.23 Categorized Overview of Departmental/Divisional Goals Statements Pertaining to the General Education Program <http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GenEdUmbrellaGoalsandStrandDefinitions1997.pdf>

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4.24 Categorized Overview of Departmental/Divisional Goals Statements Pertaining to the General Education Program <http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GenEdUmbrellaGoalsandStrandDefinitions1997.pdf>

4.25 Faculty Senate General Education Committee <http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/>

4.26 General Education Student Survey, available in evidence room

- *In personal wellness*—Demonstrate an understanding of ways in which certain aspects of wellness are related to behavioral decisions a person makes throughout life.

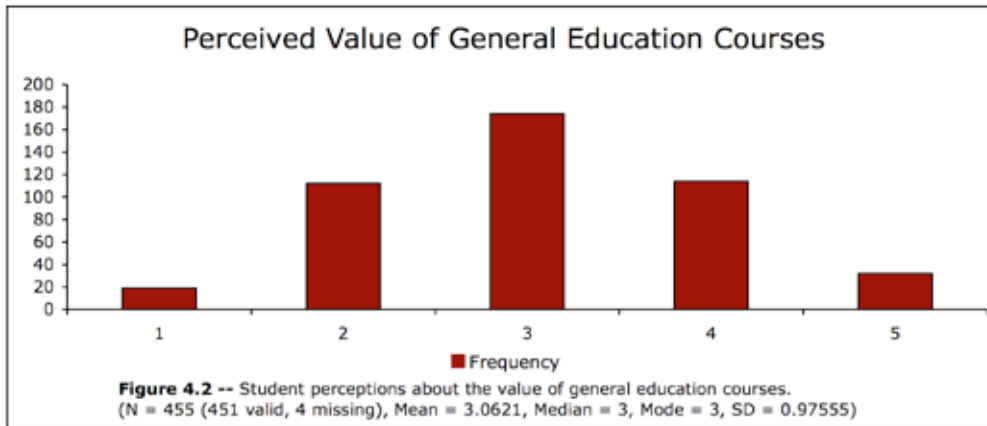
This example articulates outcomes for the critical strand only; full descriptions of all the strands and outcomes are available on the general education Web site.^{4.24} It should be noted that since 2003, English composition, communication arts, mathematics and wellness have been granted Faculty Senate permission to assess their course outcomes primarily on the basis of skills development, but the five-strand model remains the structural underpinning of all other general education courses.

Recent findings from debates, discussions and surveys suggest that general education at MSU suffers from an overall image problem, and from a related lack of agreement among faculty and students concerning the merit, value and rigor of general education courses. In a 2006 public, Cambridge-style student debate over the value of general education, some students suggested that general education courses were “boring,” lacking in pertinence to their career fields, and sometimes poorly taught. An audience vote concluded that general education does have significant value, but that some of the courses should be more rigorous. Debate proceedings were posted that semester on the MSU Web site.

The General Education Committee is addressing such matters. To increase visibility of the program and improve communication, the committee developed a Web site for general education in 2006.^{4.25} This site includes information such as an overview of the mission and vision of general education at MSU, the status of general education courses, forms needed for recertification, amendments and changes to relevant courses and policies and the like.

The committee is also seeking to elevate the level of dialogue concerning the means, goals and merits of general education as understood by faculty. To this end, the committee joined forces with the Assessment Committee to cosponsor the university’s spring 2007 Assessment Day, which focused exclusively on general education. To prepare for this significant undertaking, a task force of faculty members from the two committees attended AAC and U’s conference “General Education and Assessment: Engaging Critical Questions, Fostering Critical Learning.” During Assessment Day, each task force participant presented lessons learned.

As part of the preparation for Assessment Day, a six-question survey focusing on student perceptions about general education was administered to students in class, on two specific afternoons (March 2007).^{4.26} A total of 455 surveys had been completed and returned at the time of analysis. On the question, “Of what value are general education courses in your chosen program of study?” (Likert scale of 1-5 used, with 1 being Not Valuable and 5 being Very Valuable), responses were more positive than negative.



Likewise, a 16-question Faculty Opinion Survey on general education, which was conducted in the same month, revealed that faculty are especially concerned that meaningful general education go beyond the state-wide minimums defined in the NDUS GERTA policy.^{4.27} The general education discussion during Assessment Day focused on the results of both surveys and the overall need to make general education courses more meaningful and challenging for students.

4.27 General Education Faculty Survey, available in evidence room

The General Education Committee actively uses the recertification process to encourage rigorous assessment, using the five-strand model, of each general education course. The committee requires faculty members to collect and present evidence that the five strands are being measured in course assessment. Evidence used for assessment with the five strands, such as student exams, essays, creative works or assessment exercises, must now be part of the evidence presented for course recertification.^{4.28} In addition, each department indicates in its annual assessment report the tools it employs to assess general education courses. Recently the General Education Committee also refined its review process so that it can choose one of the following approaches for a given course: recertify for four years; delay recertification for one year; or withhold recertification, or place a course on probation.^{4.29}

4.28 Instructions for general education course recertification application
http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/GE_Recert_12_06.pdf

4.29 General Education Program recertification status spreadsheet
http://www.minotstateu.edu/ge/pdf/ge_course_recert.xls

Although individual courses are reviewed every four years, there is no formal comprehensive outcome assessment in place at MSU for the entire general education program. The assumption since 1997 has been that if individual courses are assessed according to the five strands, within the expertise of their originating disciplines, the aggregate result will be comprehensive general education assessment.

MSU is currently in the midst of a complicated and ongoing debate about what general education should look like. The 2007-08 General Education Committee and Faculty Senate will engage campus constituents in discussions that address the relationship between general education courses and university and departmental reputations. Discussions will also focus on alignment of the general education program with *Vision 2013* and the goal of strengthening MSU's national reputation for academic

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excellence. The following difficult and broad questions will be raised: Is five-strand assessment still relevant, or should MSU completely restructure general education? Does the current categorization of general education courses achieve desired results, or should these be reconfigured in some way? The *Vision 2013* clear focus on engagement will provide a helpful new context in which to frame the issue and to guide potential reform of the general education program.

Undergraduate Education

Prior to the formulation of *Vision 2013*, faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) were already examining how MSU might increase the rigor of its graduation requirements for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree. The menu of B.A. options seemed confusing to students, and the structure utilizing “concentrations” (small clusters of related courses) appeared not to be serving its originally intended purposes.

In the fall of 2000, six faculty members were invited by the dean of CAS to prepare concrete recommendations for reform. “B.A. Committee” members consisted of five faculty from a range of arts and sciences disciplines and one from the psychology program in the College of Education and Health Sciences, which also offers a B.A. degree. The committee prepared a report in spring 2001 that called for an additional 20-23 semester hours beyond the extant 38 general education credits, including eight semester hours of a foreign language. The report also called for re-categorizing discipline-centered degrees as Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees, thereby giving students a choice between a true liberal arts degree and a degree with greater vocational focus. Those recommendations were never implemented, however, due to the retirement of the dean in 2001. The project lay dormant until fall 2006.

In light of *Vision 2013*'s Strategy Two (“Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of Students”) and Strategy Five (“Focusing on Student Success and Future Achievements”), the faculty recently renewed efforts to proceed with this initiative to reinvigorate the degree. A new dean reconstituted the B.A. committee in 2006, enlarging it as a B.A. Action Team. This new group included four from the original committee plus 10 additional faculty members. Following an initial campus meeting, the action team consulted a the NEH study *Fifty Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students*, and prepared a purpose statement for the B.A. degree, and outlined a number of options for changing MSU's B.A. requirements.^{4.30} The resulting proposal, reflecting input from a wide spectrum of faculty, would do several things. Perhaps foremost, the new B.A. would enhance rigor in B.A. course work by adding another layer of requirements on top of general education requirements for students seeking a B.A. These B.A. foundational courses would ensure 16 credits of foreign language, 3 credits of fine or performing arts, 6 credits of “communication-intensive courses,” 9 credits of social

4.30 B.A. Degree Statement of Purpose, available in evidence room

sciences, 9 credits of humanities, and 9 credits of history. Secondly, the new B.A. would eliminate requirements for minors and concentrations as they currently exist, and instead allow individual departments to determine minor/concentration requirements. And thirdly, the new B.A. would allow for a clear and meaningful distinction between a B.A. and a B.S. The B.A. Action Team completed its work in spring semester 2007, presented recommendations to assembled faculty at fall 2007 convocation, and was followed by a faculty vote which approved proceeding to a “stage one” proposal to SBHE in spring 2008. If the new B.A. is eventually approved, academic departments will have an option to upgrade existing B.A. degree programs or to redefine them as B.S. degree programs.

All undergraduate programs at MSU build on the general education foundation by establishing mission statements, goals and objectives to set standards and learning outcomes for their graduates. These are indicated in the undergraduate catalog.^{4.31} Many mission statements reveal a spirit of inquiry and a passion for lifelong learning. Illustrative learning outcomes include the following:

4.31 MSU 2006-08 Undergraduate Catalog, available in evidence room

- Criminal justice graduates are aware of the ethical issues and situations in the criminal justice field (p. 33).
- Art graduates are aware of diverse cultures, different art styles and the periods of their production (p. 36).
- Communication arts graduates have developed skills and attitudes which promote free inquiry, critical listening, receptiveness toward divergent view points and willingness to support unpopular ideas (p. 56).
- Management information systems graduates have discussed issues surrounding ethics, security and global management as they relate to management information systems (p. 140).
- Biology graduates are prepared to articulate the fundamental importance of biology in their lives and in society (p. 77).
- Social work graduates can apply critical thinking within the context of professional social work education and practice (p. 150).
- Nursing graduates have integrated knowledge for safe, effective care environments, health promotion and maintenance, psychosocial integrity and physiological integrity (p. 159)

The assessment practices fully outlined in Criterion 3 demonstrate that departments and divisions continue to be actively engaged in finding ways to improve actual student outcomes. Also detailed in Criterion 3C are the many experiential learning opportunities provided for MSU undergraduates; these also build on the general education foundation by helping students apply their knowledge base in the “real world” (see below for service learning initiatives).

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Graduate Education

MSU graduate-level programs ensure that graduates are well-prepared in their fields through rigorous internal assessment procedures, execution of external accreditation standards and performance on national licensure exams. Graduate program directors at Minot State University are charged with the responsibility of engaging in formative and summative assessment of their students throughout their programs (see Criterion 3A). In addition, graduate faculty committees, such as the Master of Education Committee, constantly assess the curricular offerings, the standards, and the research requirements of students in order to be certain that students are adequately prepared for earning their degrees. Students in graduate programs must maintain a 3.0 (B) GPA in order to remain in Graduate School at MSU.

Each graduate program has clear objectives, which form the basis for all assessment.^{4.32} Graduate programs at MSU engage in assessment as required by various accreditation agencies:

4.32 Graduate Program Outcomes
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/catalog/programs.shtml>

- Education: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- Communication disorders: the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- School psychology: NCATE and Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP)
- Business: International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE)
- Music: National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)

All other programs use an external evaluation component in their assessment plans. MSU has a regular schedule of program review for all graduate programs (see Criterion 3A).

Graduate level learning outcomes also demonstrate effective preparation for a life of continued learning. Examples from the *Graduate Catalog* include the following:

- Mathematics graduates are prepared to call upon a network of mathematics teachers for assistance and encouragement in teaching mathematics (p. 27).
- Education graduates are prepared to formulate plans for changes in professional practice, based on experience, professional literature and research, and then reflect on and evaluate those changes in relation to student learning (p. 32).
- Communication disorders graduates have demonstrated self-assessment skills to facilitate self-supervision and independence (p. 37).
- Management graduates are prepared to evaluate knowledge creation and transfer (p. 43)

- Special education graduates are prepared to engage in and facilitate appropriate communication and collaborative partnerships (p. 44).

Graduate students in the communication disorders program illustrate MSU's success in preparing students. In the profession of speech-language pathology, a minimum standard of competency is required before a master's degree is conferred upon a student. National standards set by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) require that both knowledge and clinical standards be demonstrated by graduate students in order to meet accreditation standards. To ensure compliance, the Department of Communication Disorders has developed two separate publications, listing all standards that the student must complete prior to graduation. Each standard is checked off upon successful completion per semester.

Both employment rates and results from national licensure exams demonstrate MSU's success in meeting the nationally accepted knowledge and clinical standards in this field. Summary reports of past graduating classes indicate 100 percent employment rates for MSU graduates in speech pathology. Employer feedback in 2006 rated the MSU graduates between 4 and 5 (5 being highest). Results of the national PRAXIS examination taken by graduate students upon graduation show that, in the past two years, the average score for MSU communication disorders cohorts has been over 700, compared to the national average of 660 (see Criterion 3A). Furthermore, MSU graduates have passed the exam on the first trial at nearly a 100 percent rate.

Independent Research and Capstone Experiences

MSU programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels encourage students to engage in independent research and measure student progress through some kind of summative assessment mechanism. Students are generally expected to demonstrate not only a solid knowledge base within the major, but also the skills they have developed through a broad general education (rhetorical, analytical and critical thinking skills, in particular). At the undergraduate level, these summative assessments generally take the form of either a "capstone" experience (Senior Science Seminar, Senior Music Recital, Senior Honors Essay), a comprehensive examination (e.g., "Mock GRE" in biology), or a summative licensing examination (PRAXIS II in teacher education or National League for Nursing Comprehensive Examination in nursing). Each program has its own rubric or benchmark level for defining success. In the Division of Science, for example, every senior seminar paper is formally read and refereed by two designated faculty members, and its public presentation is evaluated by all attending science faculty members according to a rubric that assesses not only the scientific knowledge and contribution of the presenter, but such factors as degree of originality in the work, presentation skill and use of media, rhetorical effectiveness and audience-appropriateness of presentation. ^{4.33}

4.33 Science Senior Seminar Evaluation Form, available in evidence room

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The table below offers a sampling of undergraduate majors and their summative assessment methods.

Table 4.1 -- Sampling of principal undergraduate majors and summative assessment methods	
Arts and Sciences	Means of Summative Outcomes Assessment
Art	Senior Exhibition, Exit Interview, PRAXIS II for BSE, Thesis Project for BFA
Biology	"Mock GRE," PRAXIS II for BSE
Chemistry	Senior Seminar, PRAXIS II for BSE
Communication Arts	Senior Project, PRAXIS II for BSE
Criminal Justice	Field Experience, Senior Seminar
English	Senior Seminar, PRAXIS II for BSE
Foreign Languages	Senior Capstone Project, PRAXIS II for BSE
Geoscience	Senior Seminar, PRAXIS II for BSE
History	Historiography Course, Senior Seminar, Portfolio, PRAXIS II for BSE
Mathematics	PRAXIS II for BSE
Computer Science	4 SH Capstone Project
Music	Senior Recital, PRAXIS II for BSE
Physics	Senior Seminar, PRAXIS II for BSE
Sociology	Senior Research Project, Practicum/Internship
Theatre	Senior Project
Business	
Accounting	Controllership Experience Capstone
M. I. S.	Information Plan Capstone
Management	Business Management Plan Capstone
Education and Health Sciences	
Psychology	Senior Seminar, Practicum, Field Exam
Addiction Studies	Senior Seminar, Practicum, Licensing Examination
Social Work	Field Experience, Practicum, Licensing Examination
Communication Disorders	Clinical Practicum, PRAXIS II Graduate Level
Nursing	Practicum, NCLEX-RN® Comprehensive Examination
Special Education	Comprehensive Progress Examination, Field Experience, PRAXIS II for BSE
Elementary Education	PRAXIS II (for BSE), Student Teaching Assessments, Post Graduation Survey

MSU requires graduate students to conduct research, produce scholarship or take written comprehensive exams. Master's degree students conduct research through capstone or culminating experiences to develop theses and project papers, to find solutions to business problems, and to engage in internships in various fields. Some examples of recent research conducted by graduate students include: ascertaining effectiveness of the use of journals in a second-grade math class, examining the guardian *ad litem* system in North Dakota, and determining the efficacy of a blended pedagogy (both face-to-face and online) in teaching college students. Graduate theses are permanently archived in the Gordon B. Olson Library.^{4.34}

4.34 Copies of graduate project and thesis documents are available in the Gordon B. Olson Library. A list is available in the evidence room.

Findings

- In the last decade, MSU has refined a solid, faculty-governed general education program that values the importance of broad-based knowledge, transferable skills and intellectual inquiry.
- The general education five-strand assessment model and associated four-year recertification process have provided consistently applied practices for MSU's general education coursework. MSU is actively debating the merits of holistic general education assessment.

- Undergraduate and graduate-level programs delineate clear student learning outcomes and measure solid student achievement through summative assessments such as capstone coursework, licensure exams, senior projects, independent research and theses. (See Criterion 3A for additional evidence of student learning.)
- Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences have recently explored possible reform of the graduation requirements for a B.A. degree, with the aim of increasing rigor and requiring foreign language skills.

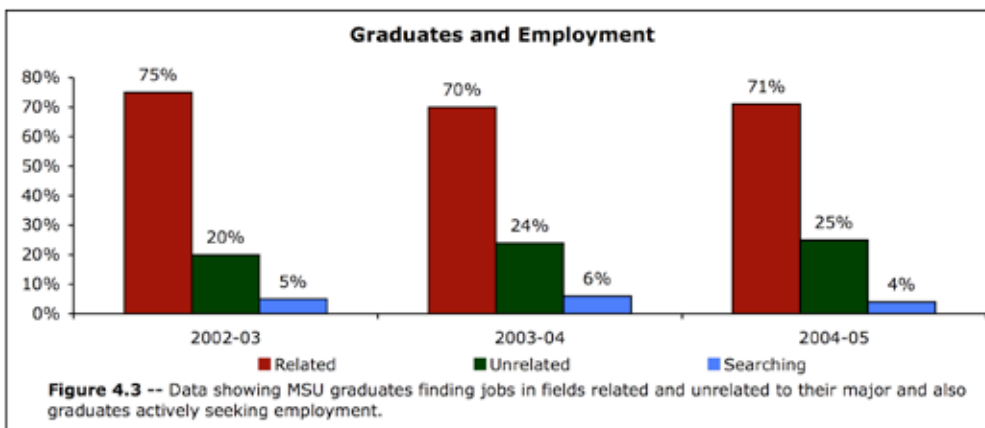
Core Component 4C

Minot State University assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Overview

The ongoing, faculty-guided curriculum development process at MSU is pragmatic, flexible and responsive to student needs. Recent initiatives at MSU in the areas of diversity, innovation and technological proficiency all indicate a campus that listens carefully to its constituents and responds proactively to change. The success of MSU graduates in securing employment within their disciplines attests to the usefulness of their programs. Data are collected by the Career Services Office, and recent placements results are very positive.^{4.35}

4.35 Career Services Placement Report
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/careers/placement.shtml>



MSU graduates have secured placements in many valued community and industry positions. Two graduates from MSU’s Math and Computer Science Department, for example, are the director of information technology and the network manager for the state of North Dakota, while yet another has developed software essential to SEO Precision Optics’ laser steering mirror, a product marketed to such customers as Boeing.

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Diversity Curriculum Requirement

Perhaps the most striking campus curricular development in recent years has been the 2006-07 institution by Faculty Senate of a six-credit diversity requirement for undergraduate students. The Faculty Senate, responding to an increased need to foster diversity awareness among its largely rural and homogeneous student body, also concurrently established a Curricular Diversity and Campus Climate Committee (CDCC) to give proper oversight to diversity course certification. Only courses reviewed by the CDCC will be accepted as meeting the new diversity requirement. The requirement consists of three credits from general education and three credits within non-general education coursework. Certified courses will demonstrate a substantial and pervasive emphasis on issues, topics and perspectives on race, ethnicity, sex, socio-economic class, gender, sexuality, age, (dis)abilities, language, nationality or religion that have traditionally been underrepresented and/or marginalized in programs of study. Critical analysis of human diversity will be central and essential to the course content and course goals. Every course that is certified as meeting the MSU diversity requirements will be assessed using learning outcomes and a pre-test and post-test method developed by the CDCC.

The CDCC has approved learning outcomes that include the following:

After successfully completing the required diversity classes, students will:

- *Appreciate the value, dignity, and worth of each individual, understanding that cultural differences will be manifested in multiple cultural expressions and differing points of view.*
- *Recognize the historical and current status of relations between minority-majority populations in order to appreciate the effects of socioeconomic status, gender, ethnic category, racial identification, and cultural aspect in the past, present, and into the future.*
- *Understand the components of effective citizenship as it relates to diversity, including global and multicultural perspectives, gaining awareness of socially just and equitable concepts in society as a whole as well as in specific cultures or subcultures.*

All MSU graduates will be required to meet this diversity requirement. The CDCC is approving courses in 2007-08 and the requirement will be included in the 2008-10 catalog.



Responsive Program and Course Initiatives

Response to societal trends may be seen in many areas of the university curriculum, in all colleges. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, for example, interdisciplinary programs have been or are being developed in such areas as gender and women's studies; forensic chemistry; public history, memory, and digital media; and Native American studies. One outstanding example of programmatic innovation is the budding Studies in Community and Environment (SCE) program, now in stage two of the NDUS approval process. Initial interest in an environmental studies program came from the Division of Science, but was quickly taken up by a variety of disciplines and a more far-ranging, broad-based and interdisciplinary degree was envisioned. The SCE curriculum will eventually include coursework in the sciences, humanities, social sciences and experiential learning. The purpose of SCE is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human interactions with the environment, and to foster understanding of the causes for current community and environmental problems (including our personal roles in causing these problems), and to empower students to change their own behavior and take leadership roles in addressing community and environmental issues. Given MSU's new vision and mission with its focus on identity, sense of place and engagement, the SCE program is ideally situated to meet the university's goals as well as the needs of students, campus, community and planet.

Various departments on campus make particular effort in curricular planning to listen to the concerns and wishes of their constituents. The Department of Teacher Education and Human Performance holds a retreat each semester to examine and assess its programs, inviting a variety of stakeholders to join in faculty deliberations: alumni from teacher education programs, superintendents, local teachers, and current graduate and undergraduate students. These constituents help assess the currency of the curriculum and its application in the world of teaching, and they make suggestions for curricular change and implementation. In addition, the Northwest Area School Leaders, an association of regional school superintendents, holds its initial annual meeting on the MSU campus each year. This organization has publicly praised MSU for the responsiveness of its teacher education program to the needs of the public schools (see also Criterion 5C). The Department of Accounting and Finance likewise utilizes an advisory board, composed of local business leaders, to ensure its curriculum remains current and relevant. Feedback from a recent board meeting, for example, resulted in the curricular adoption of a new software application. The Department of Communication Disorders recently created a new class, CD 540 (Supervision and Professional Issues) in speech-language pathology, as the result of feedback from professionals in the field who have requested such a course for years.

Enhanced attention to diversity is now routinely shown in a large number of individual classes on campus. For example, the music education curriculum includes

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a focus on literature about diversity. Undergraduate teacher education majors must take the course “Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in America” as well as satisfy a diversity requirement within pre-service practica; teacher candidates are typically required to create and respond to a diversity profile of their students. The course Globalization and Diversity in Education is now required of M.A.T. graduates in the natural sciences.

In acknowledgement of the many ways that technology is transforming student lives, the College of Business now offers a general education class, BIT 123 “Technology for Personal Development.” This class addresses both the positive and negative aspects of living in the “knowledge era” and includes issues such as identity theft. The approval of this class within the MSU general education program (after some campus debate) challenges traditional notions about how the generally educated person in the 21st century will need to be equipped.

Social Responsibility Initiatives

Two recent campus initiatives have reflected a will on the part of all campus constituencies to exercise and impart principles of social responsibility:

(1) a collaborative effort to promote service learning at MSU, and (2) the successful student-led effort to make MSU a smoke-free campus.

Individual courses at MSU have often united the goals of student learning with service to the community. Students in Social Work Methods III (SWK 247) complete a Social Action/Community Change Project, and in doing so serve the community in many innovative ways. Student projects have included working with the American Red Cross to implement an emergency call center for Hurricane Katrina relief, serving as a volunteer coordinator for a local food pantry, and coordinating an athletic event between the Minot State University baseball team and the Minot Dream Catchers, a softball team for youth with physical challenges. The course Service Learning in Guatemala (SWK 299) takes groups of students and community leaders to Guatemala, where they help build houses and do other volunteer work to meet the needs of the community. The trip is preceded by a semester spent studying theories and contexts regarding the culture and social issues participants will encounter; students also receive practical preparation for international travel. A new Honors Program class, called Global Citizenship and Service, helps students connect global and local social justice issues, to better understand their own potential leadership in effecting change (see Criterion 5C for further individual service learning initiatives on campus).

Vision 2013 Strategy Six (“Creating a Commitment to Civic Engagement, Service and the Common Good”) calls upon the institution to “[help] students understand the value of providing meaningful service for the welfare of others,” and it specifically recommends “support to promote and stimulate civic learning and service learning.”^{4.36} In 2005, MSU sent a group of interested administrators, faculty and staff to a

4.36 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

conference in Indianapolis to learn more about the possibilities of institutionalizing service learning on campus. That conference attendance inspired a year of volunteer research, grant investigation and community focus group activity designed to explore what resources would be needed to fully incorporate service learning into the MSU curriculum, and what approaches to joint faculty/community development would help enhance such an effort. These efforts culminated in the planning and execution of a 2007 two-day regional conference at MSU called “Great Plains Connections: Linking Education and Community through Service.” Three nationally known experts gave a variety of perspectives on service learning, and participants were invited to offer presentations about initiatives their classes, organizations and institutions have undertaken in this area. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Intellectual Climate Committee (see Criterion 5B), the Office of the VPAA, the Office of the President, the CEL, all three colleges, the Graduate School, the Minot Convention and Visitors Bureau and area hotels. MSU faculty and students were invited to participate free of charge. This effort was highly successful, but in the future MSU will need to find or provide substantial funding for the support of continued progress in the service learning arena.

An organization named “Tobacco-Free MSU” was first formed in fall 2003, through informal partnership between the Department of Nursing, Healthy Communities International (HCI), MSU Student Health, First District Health Unit and students. Tobacco Free MSU reviewed the American Colleges Health Association (ACHA) recommendations for a tobacco-free campus and developed a potential plan for the campus, based upon current tobacco use and existing policies at MSU. A proposal for a tobacco-free campus policy was submitted to the previous president and the MSU President’s Council on March 24, 2004. Coalition members met informally with the current president in July 2004, who recommended that an online survey open to all students, staff and faculty first be conducted in order to assess support for the concept. Healthy Communities International subsequently conducted a survey in April and May 2005 and developed a formal report.^{4.37}

4.37 Smoke-Free Policy documents, available in evidence room

In fall 2005, as part of an MSU class, community health nursing students conducted a community assessment on tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke within the college-age population, focusing on MSU and incorporating results of the HCI survey. Nursing students subsequently recommended a campus policy to the MSU president, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Student Government Association and the University Cabinet with favorable response. Healthy Communities International developed draft policy language and provided it to the Office of the President. The president met with all of the above committees and requested formal votes; the policy was approved with recommended edits and became effective on June 1, 2006. Nursing students subsequently developed and led an extensive media effort during spring semester 2006 that included a focus group of smokers, a policy education campaign, a cessation education program and a “social norming” campaign.

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Findings

- A high rate of graduate placement, the development of the new six-credit diversity graduation requirement, the creation of up-to-date interdisciplinary programs, attention given to the needs of industry, and the specific efforts of individual courses to acknowledge social and technological change all demonstrate the utility and responsiveness of MSU's faculty-led curriculum to changing societal needs.
- Service learning efforts have been ongoing across campus in individual courses, and progress has been made in raising awareness regarding these pedagogies.
- Effective student-led effort has resulted in MSU's new smoke-free policy. While not all campus constituents agree with the policy, it clearly demonstrates the concrete results of student activism and concern for social issues.

Core Component 4D

Minot State University provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Undergraduate Policies

MSU publishes the following academic honesty statement for undergraduate students in its printed and online course catalog:

Honesty and integrity are central to academic life at Minot State University. They create a trust necessary in a community of scholars. When that trust is violated by cheating in any form, the atmosphere of academic freedom is threatened. Cheating may affect the student in accordance with the faculty member's grading policy, and/or it may result in student disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy (available in the Office of Student Affairs).^{4.38}

4.38 MSU Undergraduate Catalog,
p. 22, available in evidence room

4.39 MSU Student Handbook, p. 28
[http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_](http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_handbook.pdf)
[handbook.pdf](http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_)

4.40 MSU Student Handbook, p. 46
http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_
[handbook.pdf](http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_)

Furthermore, the *Student Handbook* indicates, under "Standards of Conduct," "Notwithstanding actions taken by civil authorities, the VPSA or his/her designate may initiate disciplinary proceedings as outlined in Section IV against a student who...engages in any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own."^{4.39} The *Student Handbook* also states that "[u]se of NDUS computing facilities to commit acts of academic dishonesty will be handled through existing campus procedures which address allegations of academic dishonesty."^{4.40}

Maintenance of the academic honesty policy is generally given over to individual instructors, and in cases of infraction the faculty is expected to document carefully any

instances of cheating. If accused, the student is expected to appeal first to the instructor. If the situation remains unresolved, the instructor files an incident report with the VPSA, and the student conduct process described in the *Student Handbook* (p. 37-38) is followed. Students can ultimately appeal to the Student Rights Committee.

Recognizing the increasing problem of Internet-inspired plagiarism, the Faculty Senate in 2005 determined that MSU needed to improve the clarity of its academic honesty policy, because, as the minutes indicate, “infractions and consequences are at present vague. A guideline on plagiarism needs to be written.”^{4.41} The Faculty Senate Executive Board on Sept. 15, 2005, thus formally charged the Academic Policies Committee with production of a new policy on academic honesty (“including both preventative and punitive measures”) and with presenting prospective language to the senate. The committee reported to the Faculty Senate in December that it recommended the following: (1) an academic honesty link should be provided on the Minot State Web site, and (2) an academic honesty policy should be included in all campus syllabi. The committee believed such policy to be meant more for students than for faculty. A motion was passed by the Faculty Senate to accept the recommendations presented, and the committee was charged with making changes in language for the Faculty Senate to review at its next meeting. It was also proposed that entering students should receive not only the policy itself but examples of what proper citation ought to look like. The policy was again returned to committee in January for added language, and an official new Academic Honesty Policy was finally approved on Feb. 2, 2006:

4.41 Faculty Senate minutes of Sept. 1, 2005 http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/min_05_06/fs_o_09_01_05.pdf

Minot State University is committed to academic integrity. Incidents of academic dishonesty may be documented by the faculty member with a copy of the documentation maintained by the department/division chair. A letter of explanation will be sent to the student. Cheating may affect the student in accordance with the faculty member's grading policy. The student may appeal the faculty member's penalty to the department chair. Student disciplinary action may result in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy. Academic dishonesty would include, but is not limited to, the following types of behaviors:

1. *Misrepresenting another individual's work as one's own, e.g. plagiarism from hard copy or the Internet.*
2. *Copying from another student during an exam.*
3. *Altering one's exam after grading for the purpose of enhancing one's grade.*
4. *Submitting the same paper to more than one class without the prior approval of the instructors.*
5. *Use of any material or device not approved by the instructor during an exam.*
6. *Turning in reports which are intended to be based on field collection data but, in fact, are not.*

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4.42 Faculty Senate Minutes, Feb. 2, 2006 http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/min_05_06/fs_o_02_02_06.pdf

7. *Failure to respect the confidentiality of persons served or studied and to maintain the professional standards for ethical conduct as set forth in The Handbook of School Psychology published by the National Association of School Psychologists.*^{4.42}

This policy appears in the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook*.

This policy is of particular importance, as students need clear guidelines, and faculty members, while increasingly encountering plagiarism in the classroom, do not clearly understand methods of institutional recourse. It supports the strong emphasis on integrity and strength of character found in *Vision 2013*.

MSU follows up when clear infractions of the Academic Honesty Policy occur. For example, eight students in one education class responded to an assignment by presenting substantial segments of obviously plagiarized material, some under the name of more than one student. A meeting was called by the Teacher Education and Human Performance Department chairperson for all faculty and practicum students. For each student named on plagiarized lesson plans (whether alone or in partnership), a copy of the standard “inappropriate dispositions” reporting form was forwarded to the academic advisor. All students were referred to the MSU *Student Handbook* policy and to policies on other campuses relating to academic dishonesty. A formal declaration was made that detection of any further cases that term would result in failure of any course involved. The faculty chose to view this event as an opportunity for all teacher education candidates to understand plagiarism as a legal and ethical matter, and to recognize that true teaching is not simply borrowing ideas from others. In this and other instances reported by faculty, MSU administration has strongly backed implementation of its plagiarism policies.

Graduate Policies

A relatively clear Policy on Academic Honesty has also been listed in the MSU *Graduate Catalog*:

Each department has established policies on academic honesty. Should a student become involved in circumstances which breach a program’s policy, that policy will be adhered to in resolving the honesty issue. The department chairperson will inform the Dean of the Graduate School and the student in writing of any changes in the student’s standing in the department as a result of the academic honesty policy and of specific honesty infraction. The Dean of the Graduate School will officially inform the student by letter of any changes in graduate status.^{4.43}

4.43 MSU 2006-2008 *Graduate Catalog*, p. 21, available in evidence room

The catalog then details an appeal for academic honesty process which can occur at four progressive levels: individual faculty, relevant department, Graduate School

and Graduate Student Rights Committee, which makes final decisions and notifies all parties. This procedure appears on the Graduate School Web site as well, although the original honesty policy did not at the time this self-study was written. The new electronic document, the *Graduate Student Toolkit*, indicates an additional statement under Academic Honesty: “Graduate students are expected to submit work that is their own. In the event that your academic honesty is questioned, you should consult the Appeal Policy for Academic Honesty outlined in the *Graduate Catalog*.” Honesty policies and procedures therefore are to be communicated even more clearly to MSU graduate students than to undergraduates.

Faculty Policies

Minot State University has research, patent and copyright policies as defined and discussed in the *Faculty Handbook*. The faculty is bound by statements concerning allegations of misconduct in research, defined as “...fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other practices that deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting or reporting research.” The patent policy requires that any invention developed by faculty, students, employees and associates through the use of MSU’s facilities, time or materials must be reported to the Faculty Development and Research Committee. Profits from such inventions shall be shared by the inventors, MSU and any other involved parties. The copyright policy states that ownership of written work rests with the individual faculty member. If MSU supports the production of the work, the university will be reimbursed out of the royalties. In recent years, no disciplinary action has been required in relation to these policies.^{4.44}

4.44 MSU Faculty Handbook, p. 93-94, available in evidence room

IRB and IACUC

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is overseen by the MSU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. The IRB reviews and approves faculty, graduate, undergraduate and institutional research involving human subjects to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed to protect those subjects from harm. The assistant to the Dean of the Graduate School chairs the committee. The majority of reviewed protocols come under the exempt category, and over the past six years no protocols have been denied. The most frequent reason for requiring resubmission of protocols has been due to corrections or additions needed on informed consent letters. Protocols are archived for up to seven years and then destroyed. During the six years from 2001-06, the following numbers of people had their research protocols approved by MSU’s IRB:

- 2001: 47 students, 7 faculty and staff
- 2002: 47 students, 10 faculty and staff

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- 2003: 54 students, 21 faculty and staff
- 2004: 31 students, 16 faculty and staff
- 2005: 28 students, 15 faculty and staff
- 2006: 29 students, 15 faculty and staff

In the context of the INBRE program in the sciences (see Criterion 4A), under the National Academy of Sciences Guidelines for the Care and Use of Mammals in Neuroscience and Behavioral Research (IACUC), three cases have been reviewed since MSU's assurance became effective in March 2005; all were approved. One project has since been completed, and two remain in progress.

Support for Responsible Discovery and Application of Knowledge

The Gordon B. Olson Library plays an integral part in providing Minot State University's students, faculty and staff with skills and resources necessary for the responsible use of knowledge. Instruction librarians introduce new students to the library during the new student orientation program. MSU's librarians collaborate with faculty to tailor instruction to student assignments in all levels of classes, so that students are challenged to develop increasingly sophisticated information literacy skills and are instructed and encouraged in the ethical use of such skills as they proceed through their programs.

In addition, the library at Minot State University subscribes to two services through the Copyright Clearance Center that help members of the MSU community use information ethically. The Transaction Reporting Service assists the library in convenient payment of royalties to publishers for journal articles obtained for students and faculty through interlibrary loan. Electronic Course Content Services also allow the library to pay royalties to publishers for materials placed on electronic reserve by professors for students to use. The Gordon B. Olson Library, with its seating for 900 students, room for more than 500,000 volumes, fully equipped computer laboratories, 151,000 books, 1,000 periodical titles, 98,000 maps and 575,000 pieces of microfilm, continues to play a fundamental role in ethical research conducted by faculty and students at MSU.

The MSU Writing Center offers instruction on the mechanics of citation and documentation. ITC educates all campus users on responsible use of technology, copyright infringement, software piracy and illegal music sharing. The Office of the Registrar conducts regular and ongoing training of all MSU faculty on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In addition, MSU participates in NDUS initiatives offering training courses on copyright and fair use. (See Criterion 3D for further detail on academic support services.)

Findings

- MSU has exercised a longstanding undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy that is well-publicized and consistently enforced. Students have appeal recourse through the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Rights Committee.
- Academic honesty policies for graduate students are clear and communicate appeal procedures effectively. All forms of campus research follow IRB protocols.
- Faculty are bound to clear guidelines concerning academic integrity and intellectual property, as published in the *Faculty Handbook*.
- The Gordon B. Olson Library offers valuable services which strengthen student and faculty research integrity.

Strengths, Challenges and Actions Relating to Criterion Four

Strengths

- MSU supports high-quality, nationally acknowledged faculty and student research efforts, through policy, financial resources and public recognition of achievements
- MSU supports a multitude of continuing education opportunities for constituencies of all ages, through the Graduate School and the Center for Extended Learning
- Since 1997, MSU has undertaken the thoughtful institution and reliable execution of a five-strand general education assessment model. The campus shows a willingness to consider seriously how best to deliver broad-based education, evident in MSU's recent scanning efforts regarding general education, the open debate about its future, and a concerted effort within the College of Arts and Sciences to raise the standards for the B.A. degree.
- Student learning outcomes are clearly defined and communicated for MSU programs, and potential graduates demonstrate both their proficiency within the discipline and their critical thinking/rhetorical skills through required capstone classes, independent research projects and theses.
- Implementation of a new, thoughtfully crafted six-credit diversity requirement for graduation reflects MSU's ongoing commitment to the inclusion of diversity issues within its curriculum.
- The Gordon B. Olson Library provides extensive information literacy and research integrity education for students and follows best practice regarding copyright.

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Challenges and Proposed Actions

- **Challenge:** MSU should identify and acquire resources that will further support first-rate research and teaching.

Proposed action: Find the necessary resources to:

- implement a faculty sabbatical policy.
 - provide adequate staff and administrative support for the Academic Projects and Research Office.
 - create a central campus clearinghouse for service learning initiatives.
- **Challenge:** The rapid growth of online and distance learning has created market-driven pressure for course and program development. While progress has been made in restructuring and realigning CEL with academic units, the university must continue to balance response to the growing market with thoughtful, faculty-driven, strategic programming.

Proposed action:

- continue to improve communication between CEL and campus units, streamline processes and align goals.
 - define the role of distance education courses within *Vision 2013*.
- **Challenge:** Campus sentiment calls for a redesign of general education to increase rigor and encourage student engagement within the context of *Vision 2013*, while retaining the strengths of the existing program.

Proposed actions:

- conduct serious campus-wide reconsideration of the current model.
- consider summative program assessment for general education.



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As called for by its mission, Minot State University identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Overview

Minot State University engages with many internal and external constituencies through educational programs, co-curricular activities, university and community service, and many other activities and events. Students, both undergraduate and graduate, comprise the primary internal constituency, but faculty, staff, administration and alumni are part of the internal constituency as well. MSU's external constituency is both varied and large. It includes community members and organizations, K-12 educators and students, outside economic agencies and others. Individuals, units and cohorts across the campus and throughout the community showed great pride in sharing information about their efforts in this area. MSU has every reason to assert confidently its historic and current strong commitment to engagement and service.

Core Component 5A

Minot State University learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Mission, Scanning and Planning

MSU's extensive engagement with internal and external constituencies springs from two sources. The first is the university's mission documents; the second is the remarkable individual sense of responsibility and commitment to engagement and service which guides faculty, students, staff, administrators, alumni and other community members to initiate specific projects and take particular actions. MSU's new mission, published in *Vision 2013*, not only calls for service and engagement, but makes these aspects a clear part of institutional identity. A grounding in service, and a concern for the "vitality of communities and cultures" and "stewardship of place" are central priorities in the new mission. The *Vision 2013* strategic plan also proposes that resources be allocated with evident alignment to this mission.

MSU's efforts at scanning and planning have been well documented earlier in this report (see Introduction, Criterion 1A and 1C, and Criterion 2A). Recent inclusive

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5.1 CAS Community Advisory Board: CAS^{IQ} newsletters
<http://www.minotstateu.edu/artsnsci/news.shtml>

5.2 CEL Roundtable on Higher Education Report, April 21, 2005, available in evidence room

5.3 Faculty Senate minutes of 2 Feb. 2006 http://www.minotstateu.edu/senate/minutes_05_06.shtml

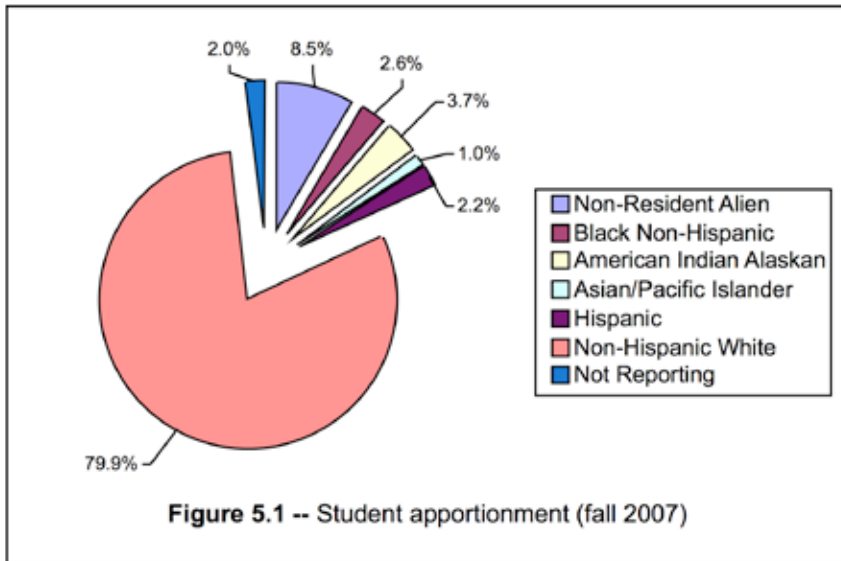
5.4 Vision 2013, Strategy Four
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

processes such as strategic planning and formulation of a Campus Master Plan have employed extensive scanning, and MSU regularly conducts surveys and gathers data in response to NDUS accountability measures (see Criterion 2C). Individuals and campus units also frequently respond to the needs and suggestions of constituencies in substantial ways, though these efforts are not always documented or documentable (see Criterion 4C for curricular responsiveness).

There are many means through which campus units at Minot State University learn about the needs and expectations of their external constituencies. For example, many academic units have advisory committees that include community members in relevant specialties. The advisory committees not only provide guidance concerning the university's curricula and programs but also help these departments learn about ways to better serve their constituencies.^{5.1} Some scanning efforts, such as the 2004 MSU-CEL Continuing Education Survey, have revealed that area constituents were largely satisfied with the university's offerings.^{5.2} Many campus units also rely on the contacts faculty and staff maintain through their professional associations, consulting agreements and participation in civic and nonprofit organizations in Minot and the region. The use of personal contacts by faculty and staff, together with the ongoing relationships afforded by advisory committees, enables the university to identify and respond to emerging needs in the future. The institution of the Planning and Budgeting Council, with its now-established regular cycle of review and planning, and its capacity to align campus priorities with budgeting processes (see Criterion 2D), shows MSU has moved to a more regular planning and scanning process.

Attention to Diversity

MSU demonstrates attention to the diversity of its constituents through campus assessments, the current curriculum, diversity-related committees, a wide array of student resources and special campus events, and diversity-related student organizations. The recent Faculty Senate-approved campus definition of diversity establishes authoritatively that "the MSU community values a spirit of inclusivity."^{5.3} While the campus population is, for the most part, ethnically and culturally homogenous, particular attention and resources at MSU are currently devoted to Native American students and issues, international students, and the challenges faced by students with disabilities. Building campus attention to diversity is an integral part of *Vision 2013* and constitutes Strategy Four of the plan.^{5.4}



Responses to the 2006 National Student Satisfaction Survey seemed to indicate that student expectations for a strong commitment to racial harmony at MSU are close to being met.^{5.5} In the interest of exploring this issue more fully, however, MSU recently participated in the NDUS Diversity Council’s Campus Climate Survey (see introduction). MSU was the only NDUS participating institution to invite the consultant to campus to present the results at two public forums. (The session PowerPoint and audio were also subsequently made available on the MSU Web site.)^{5.6} The results of the survey indicate that, while a majority of students and employees find the MSU workplace welcoming for underrepresented groups, survey participants from those groups are significantly less convinced. MSU still needs to devote significant effort to building a campus environment that is comfortable for all.

Efforts to assess diversity among faculty and students, and plans to recruit and retain a more diverse campus population, originated with a 16-member task force associated with the 1997 HLC self-study. That group’s three-part *MSU Diversity Plan* included a demographic outline of student and staff diversity, an assessment of the commitment of various constituencies to the fostering of diversity, and an action plan for recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students.^{5.7} The plan called for the development of a “network of contacts,” a “climate that is accepting of a diverse faculty” and committees to identify qualified diverse candidates. For students, it recommended mentoring, sensitivity training and a comfortable campus environment.

In 1999, the Office of Institutional Planning presented a report titled *Multiculturalism and Diversity at Minot State University: An Assessment*.^{5.8} This document addressed (1) background information on the “contemporary debate” about multiculturalism and diversity, (2) the perspective of freshmen and transfer students, currently enrolled students and alumni on diversity issues, and (3) a compendium of beliefs among student organization members and university administrators about multiculturalism

5.5 NSSE 2005 and 2007 survey results, available in evidence room

5.6 University Diversity: 2007 Climate Assessment PowerPoint
http://www.minotstateu.edu/diversity/2007_climate_survey.shtml

5.7 Minot State University Diversity Plan: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Faculty and Student Body 1997-2000, available in evidence room

5.8 Multiculturalism and Diversity at Minot State University: An Assessment, available in evidence room

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5.9 *An Ongoing Study of Human Relations and Diversity*, available in evidence room

5.10 NCATE diversity documents, available in evidence room

5.11 MSU Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Policy and Harassment Policy documents, available in evidence room

and its relevance to education at MSU. This report highlights perceptions, levels of understanding and recommendations from these constituencies. Finally, the report summarizes responses to such questions as “What does it mean to live in a multicultural society?” and “How might a multicultural curriculum be made relevant for students from different ethnic backgrounds?” It ends, however, with eight slightly vague recommendations for the campus.

An Ongoing Study of Human Relations and Diversity,^{5.9} compiled by a single faculty member in 2003, again outlined demographics of student enrollment by ethnicity, age, gender, geographic distribution and disability, and of faculty/staff in terms of employment role, gender and ethnicity. It also provided a “qualitative discussion” about “opportunities at MSU that promote, encourage and enhance diversity experiences.”

Further explorations since 2003 were evident in a series of MSU reports to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), some of which speak directly to the diversity-related concerns first expressed by that accreditation body in 1997, and later fully (and satisfactorily) addressed in follow-up reports.^{5.10} These documents approximately chronicle progress the university has made since the last HLC accreditation visit in assessing its attention to diversity issues. However, they do not make significant mention of important strategic developments described below, such as the Native American Cultural Center, the Multicultural Center, the Office of International Programs, the Faculty Senate Curricular Diversity and Campus Climate Committee, or the strong diversity components of the *Vision 2013* initiative, all of which may be traced in one way or another to initiatives introduced or suggested by these documents.

Diversity-related elements of the current MSU curriculum since 1997 include a new foreign language program study abroad requirement, new minor-level programs in Native American studies and international business, a new program in gender and women’s studies, and Honors Program and social work program service learning initiatives. Increasingly, social science, history and humanities components of the general education curriculum include such perspectives as globalism, multiculturalism, gender and ethnicity. The new six-credit diversity requirement for graduation (see Criterion 4C) will result in a further clarified array of courses devoted to diversity issues.

MSU promotes diversity awareness through the work of its Diversity Committee, formed in 1996, which collaborates with the administration to host a wide variety of events, such as the annual Diversity Week celebrations and recent monthly awareness activities highlighting Hispanic, Native American, African-American, and Asian cultures. The committee also assists in the development of diversity-related policies (such as equal opportunity and harassment policies), develops and supports international initiatives, assists in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff and students, and participates in statewide diversity assessments (such as the NDUS Diversity Climate Survey described above).^{5.11} This committee will play a key role in encouraging the implementation of *Vision 2013* Strategy Four (“Build a diverse and multicultural climate”).

Other campus committees devoted to related concerns include: the Curricular Diversity and Campus Climate Committee (CDCC), the Native American Task Force, the International Initiative Task Force and a CAS Diversity Action Team. Additional diversity-related activities have included the CAS sponsorship of a 2005 Diversity Training Workshop for faculty and staff, featuring presenter Carlo Cortéz. In recent years, MSU has also collaborated with the Minot YWCA and the Minot Air Force Base Diversity Program to host an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

Diversity-related Student Resources

In response to the needs articulated by its students, MSU offers specific services devoted to often underrepresented groups within the student body. These services help equip the institution with the support infrastructure needed for increased recruitment of these students.

Staffed by a full-time director, the Native American Center on campus provides academic and social support services to address the particular concerns of Native American students (see Criterion 3C regarding academic support). In 1996, MSU engaged in a cooperative partnership with the Burdick Job Corps Center to link Native American Job Corps Construction Program students with MSU plant services staff to build the center. Initially called a “multicultural center,” the name was changed soon thereafter when it became clear that the center was used primarily by Native American students. The center also facilitates Native American Week (fall semester) and Honor Dance (honor dance and spring celebration) that has been a campus tradition every spring for the past 18 years. The Honor Dance draws large-scale participation from campus and across the region, including Native American participants from the Spirit Lake tribe, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Three Affiliated Tribes and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, as well as from all across North Dakota, Montana, South Dakota, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Tribal college, elementary and secondary students also attend educational activities as well as the two-day Honor Dance.

Responding to concerns about inclusiveness, the campus has more recently established an additional multicultural center (fall 2006), which is designed to serve international students, students of all minority groups and other underrepresented students including gays and lesbians. In addition to support services and provision of a safe and comfortable environment, the center’s educational mission is to better prepare the general student population for entry into a diverse society upon graduation. For example, the center partnered with United Campus Ministries in 2006 to present “Featured Faiths,” a six-week series of informal lunchtime presentations by people of different faiths (Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist, Baha’i, Taoist and Native American). The center partners with the Diversity Committee to host many of the events mentioned above. The Multicultural Center is seen as an important resource in the future development of international programs at MSU.

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**5.12 2004 Institutional Report
Prepared for NCATE, available in
evidence room**

The Office of International Programs (OIP) recruits international students to campus and provides advisement and support services once they arrive (see Criterion 3C). For example, OIP gives pragmatic support to Canadian students in the form of financial aid, tax, car insurance, health and work assistance. Now staffed with two full-time professionals, the office stands poised to support significant growth in MSU's international student population. Other campus efforts have helped raise an increasing global awareness among MSU students: the Horizons Unlimited program (which has taken student groups to Greece, Peru, Tanzania and Guatemala), and the university's longstanding collaborative relationship with the Minot Area Council for International Visitors (MACIV), a member of the U. S. Department of State's "National Council for International Visitors program, [which] provides [students] the opportunity to interact with visiting professionals from many countries, including Uzbekistan, Angola, Japan and Tibet, among others."^{5.12} (For additional international partnerships see Criterion 5C.)

As described fully in Criterion 3C, MSU supports the needs of its students with disabilities through the resources and counseling available at the Student Development Center. The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities has also exercised invaluable leadership in encouraging campus efforts in this area.

MSU draws attention to the achievements and struggles of women and supports its female students. During the month of March 2007, MSU hosted its first annual series of events celebrating Women's Heritage Month. Students helped plan the series, which included a variety of well-attended activities designed to showcase woman-centered experiences and expressions: public lectures, book talks, art shows, video screenings, community workshops and a research poster session. MSU's gender/women's studies program also recently formalized a partnership with the Minot YWCA. MSU students compile databases of potential resources for the YWCA's constituents, while the YWCA sponsors interns, provides service learning opportunities and funds Women's Heritage Month activities on campus. The MSU theatre department has mounted a performance of *The Vagina Monologues* every year since 2003, with an all-female cast and production crew. MSU is the only venue in the state to have performed the play four years in a row. In that time, more than 1,000 audience members have seen the play and participated in discussion sessions following performances. As directed by the production rights, 90 percent of the income generated is donated to local organizations that address violence against women—in MSU's case, the Minot Domestic Violence Center. The remaining 10 percent is given to a related national project chosen each year.

**5.13 MSU 2006 Fact Book, p. 24,
available in evidence room**

In 2006-07, MSU served 1,089 students over the age of 25.^{5.13} Few campus efforts are devoted specifically to this population, however. Such students are given preferential housing arrangements, and a small, inexpensive preschool is offered most semesters through a practicum for pre-service teachers. Child care is often an issue for older-than-average students, and, though several feasibility studies have been conducted regarding a campus daycare center, no action has been taken. MSU needs to direct further attention and resources to supporting these students.

MSU likewise serves a significant population of exclusively online students. These students could be better integrated at MSU, although some progress has been made in this area. Online students have participated in successful collaborative research with faculty, received virtual orientation and online tutorials, and even experimented in the last four years with an online “Bistro,” a forum for student idea exchange, sale of textbooks and mutual aid. The Office of Instructional Technology adheres strictly to ADA guidelines in ensuring disability compliance and resources for online courses. The university does not, however, offer its diversity waiver or diversity scholarships to online students. These students are not well integrated into campus governance and remain largely uninvolved in student affairs.

Finally, MSU sponsors multiple student organizations which support students of diverse backgrounds. These include, but are not limited to:

- Asian Student Association
- Black Student Union
- French Club
- German Club
- International Business Club
- International Club
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Supporters
- Honors Society
- Lutheran Student Movement
- National Collegiate Scholars at MSU
- National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association
- Native American Cultural Awareness Club
- Psychology Club and Addiction Studies
- Spanish Club
- Student Council for Exceptional Children
- Student Educators of the Hardhearing/Deaf (SEHHD)
- Student Social Work Organization
- United Campus Christian Fellowship



Outreach Programs

In accordance with its mission, the university offers an abundance of outreach activities, projects and programs that not only aid its constituencies but also broaden institutional horizons, strengthen community relations, build networks of clients and colleagues, and improve the overall institutional reputation. Several of these outreach programs clearly recognize and capitalize on the university’s rural setting, satisfying an implicit obligation to provide needed services to the region. MSU’s outreach programs therefore change the landscape in very positive ways.

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Minot State University has been providing classes on the Minot Air Force Base for more than 45 years. These classes are primarily directed toward active duty military students; however, they are also attended by military dependents and civilians. Through a memorandum of understanding, MSU offers the following at the MAFB: a broad array of general education classes, a B.S. in criminal justice, a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) in management, a B.A.S. in business information technology, and a B. G. S. Despite increasing competition from other universities present on base, MSU online courses and programs also remain popular, as they permit relocated or deployed students to finish their degrees. Demand for evening and summer science courses such as Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology continues to be strong among MSU nursing students and Williston State College students completing similar programs in the Minot community.

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD), an NDUS Center of Excellence at MSU, provides extensive research, education and service to North Dakotans living in rural communities. For example, its Community Staff Training Program provides on-site training for direct support providers who serve rural North Dakota adults with moderate to severe disabilities. Similarly, NDCPD's Infant Development Program staff provide weekly visits to every baby born in the rural northwest quadrant of the state who is at risk for developmental disabilities. Research conducted at NDCPD over the past eight years has helped develop software, technology and information systems that allow extraordinary accommodations for youth with disabilities attending rural schools. NDCPD's realtime remote captioning system is currently being used in many rural communities to provide accommodations to students with hearing impairments. Likewise, NDCPD's tele-speech/language therapy uses desktop conferencing systems to provide realtime language therapy in some of North Dakota's most remote and isolated communities.

The Rural Crime and Justice Center (RCJC), another Center for Excellence at MSU since 2002, has in recent years undertaken a major Rural Methamphetamine Education Project (RMEP). The main goal of the project is to develop and deliver a public awareness and education campaign to public officials, business leaders, teachers, children, parents, schools and communities. The campaign produces and disseminates materials regarding methamphetamine directly to schools, victims, former users and treatment counselors, and it provides presentations free of charge. Topics covered in these presentations include the effects of methamphetamine, who is using methamphetamine and why, methamphetamine's impact on others, and what people can do to help prevent methamphetamine from destroying their communities. At these sessions, RMEP also presents educational literature and brochures, a pseudo-methamphetamine laboratory and pseudo-methamphetamine. Since Oct. 28, 2003, the RMEP team has made over 700 presentations to over 65,000 people.

Findings

- MSU has engaged in recent concerted efforts to seek feedback from its constituencies and the institution is making scanning a more habitual and regular practice.
- Since 1997, MSU has clearly improved its diversity profile and its attention to diversity-related issues, through assessments, academic initiatives, training, campus committee work, multicultural events, minority student centers, international student support, various related services and student organizations. *Vision 2013* will continue to provide needed direction, as the institution seeks to heighten multicultural awareness and global sensibilities.
- The university continues to offer its long-standing educational services to Air Force personnel, with recent expansion in online courses and in the number of degrees offered at Minot Air Force Base.
- MSU offers outstanding outreach to its rural community through two of its Centers of Excellence, NDCPD and RCJC.

Core Component 5B

Minot State University has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

MSU's 1913 mission was predicated on an ideal of "service first." Today, the university's mission has grown to include its dedication to the "success of all students" and their "lifelong devotion to the common good and the welfare of others."^{5.14} MSU demonstrates this commitment through deployment of its physical, financial, and human resources; through its responsiveness to student needs; and through solid connections with external constituencies. Co-curricular activities across the campus reveal a strong bond between university and community, and a healthy interdependence through which the needs of both are met.

5.14 Office of the President Web site
<http://www.misu.nodak.edu/president/mission.shtml>

Resources for Engagement and Service

As stated earlier in the report, MSU has undertaken major renovations to its physical plant in the past decade. Many of these facilities are regularly used by community organizations and also host events attended by many community members. Ann Nicole Nelson Hall, the newly renovated 956-seat auditorium in Old Main, hosts university and community concerts, ceremonies, speakers, Student Association events, theatre, opera and dance productions, and multiple local, regional and state music festivals for students of all ages each year. Approximately 4,500 events have been held in the hall since 1997.

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The 215-seat Aleshire Theatre in Hartnett Hall provides space for regular university mainstage productions, the Northwest Art Center lecture series, Marketplace for Kids (a community career day for children), large-scale regional speech and one-act play contests, MSU Student Association movie nights, various entertainers, Minot Area Council on the Arts workshops and campus meetings.

The newly renovated Cyril Moore Hall, MSU's science facility, is showcased each year during regional Science Olympiad contests and through open houses that draw approximately 1,000 grade school children (grades 3-6) for hands-on lab activities.

The Student Union Conference Center is a multi-purpose facility and is offered free of charge to the Minot Public Schools, which hosts several events per month. The facility is also used for campus conferences and is rented for private events such as wedding receptions. The pool is offered free of charge for use by the Minot Air Force Base, Job Corps Center, Boy Scouts, area churches and various other community organizations, and is frequently rented to the Minot Swim Club and Adventure Divers.

University athletic facilities provide perhaps the most striking example of physical resources devoted to engagement and service. The Dome, MSU's central indoor athletic facility (which seats up to 10,000), hosts many regional and state tournaments in partnership with the North Dakota High School Activities Association—for example, state volleyball, regional and state boys and girls basketball and state wrestling. Average attendance at the boys state basketball tournament is generally 8,000 to 9,000. MSU's Herb Parker Stadium (with its recently repaired track) and Swain Hall also host regional track and field meets, state Special Olympics and the state Prairie Rose Games (a summer Olympics for amateur athletes); these facilities are used by the Minot Recreation Commission basketball league (every Sunday during the winter) and traveling team tournaments for youth. MSU's athletic facilities are also made available (often free of charge) to community organizations for events such as the city-wide Halloween party, walk-a-thons for charity (approximately six each year), the state amateur basketball tournament, YMCA youth and adult football and Minot High School commencement. The Minot Air Force Base and the N.D. State Highway Patrol both use the track for training and testing. In addition, up to 200 members of the community at large use the Dome each day free of charge for walking and jogging. MSU, in partnership with the city of Minot, Minot Public Schools and Bishop Ryan High School, is exploring how to renovate and expand Herb Parker Stadium into a community bowl that will serve multiple constituents.

Beyond use of its physical facilities, MSU supports engagement and service initiatives with solid financial resources, funding faculty development opportunities in the area of engagement, collaborative efforts with the Minot Public Schools and an annual budget for the Intellectual Climate Committee (ICC). Established in 2001 and jointly funded by units from across the campus, this broadly representative committee continues to fund public events and projects that “enhance the intellectual climate at Minot State University by

encouraging a wide range of cultural activities that complement classroom instruction.” The ICC has distributed more than \$97,000 to sponsor some 60 public events since 2000.^{5.15} Administrative funds are also provided for relevant conference attendance. For example, five people who attended the 2006 International Partnership for Service Learning conference initiated MSU’s 2007 Great Plains Connections conference to explore service learning in the region.

Student fees specifically help finance activities that bring students and community members together and provide community entertainment, such as multicultural center events like the Honor Dance, music and theatre activities that result in public performances, art gallery shows and athletic programs popular with the community, such as men’s and women’s hockey. Student activity fees also support the Health Center and the Office of Career Services, which helps to facilitate community job placements and provides mentoring and advising for new students. MSU also participates in the federal work study program, through which seven percent of funds support jobs in local community nonprofit organizations, such as Companions for Children.

The university’s contribution of resources to the community is invaluable. According to a recent NDUS report, MSU’s economic impact upon its region was \$136 million in fiscal year 2005.^{5.16} In addition, MSU commits vast human resources to community engagement and service, as detailed in the activities below and in the list of community associations presented in Criterion 5D.

5.15 Intellectual Climate Committee Table of Funded Projects 2000-07, available in evidence room

5.16 President’s report to faculty et al., March 21, 2007
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/report/presidents_report_03_21_07.pdf

Responsiveness to Students

Students are MSU’s most important constituency, and the university responds to their needs not only through careful cultivation of its academic programs but also through careful consideration of student concerns. MSU faculty, for example, listen to the scheduling concerns of students, offering departmental classes at the most convenient times for relevant campus constituencies. In addition to student support services already described in Criterion 3C and 3D, MSU also supports a full-time student activities coordinator. This person advises the Student Government Association, coordinates the activities of all student organizations, works with the Student Activities Committee to plan campus events, encourages involvement of faculty and staff in student activities and co-coordinates the Student Ambassadors program (which facilitates freshman orientation and campus tours). MSU surveys its students who live in campus residence halls, and the Office of Student Life and Housing regularly responds to concerns expressed (even down to “the laundry room looks ugly”). When students recently indicated concern about safety issues and lighting on campus, plant services personnel invited students to help survey the campus, then added strategic spotlights to buildings, removed trees in dark areas and installed new streetlights along University Avenue.

MSU also responded to students in 2006 by redesigning and renovating the Student Union Ballroom, now transformed from an old-style multi-purpose space to an

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attractive and thriving Beaver Dam lounge, complete with music, coffee and sandwich bar, casual seating, carpet, computer access, big screen TV, music and pool tables. The offices of the Student Government Association are now prominently located at the entrance to the lounge, raising visibility of student activities and contributing to the overall atmosphere of vitality. This popular space has seen consistent and high levels of use since its construction.

Community Engagement



MSU engages with the community through academically centered service-learning initiatives and a rich variety of co-curricular activities. In addition to the service learning approaches detailed in Criterion 4C, several specific projects stand out for their close partnerships with the Minot community. For example, every spring during an Accounting Internship (ACCT 497), students are trained to take part in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, assisting low-income and aging individuals, and families with tax preparation. Students process between 300 and 400 income tax returns each year under the instructor's supervision. In a similar mutually beneficial project with community members, the elementary education and special education programs at Minot State University regularly conduct community clinics for struggling readers during the spring and summer semesters. This program offers one-on-one instructional interventions designed by graduate and undergraduate students. The program enjoys an outstanding reputation in the community and surrounding area and typically assists about 50 students a year, with up to an additional 100 students on a waiting list.

MSU serves many local and regional constituencies through its ongoing abundance of co-curricular activities. Those specific groups include youth, children, adults, community performers, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged people and those in crisis, members of the business community, creative and performing arts audiences and athletic event attendees.

Outreach to secondary school-aged youth is a particular strength at MSU and tends to reflect a North Dakota penchant for friendly competition. The athletic department is very involved with the community and the surrounding region and offers both summer and school year camps for youth in basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, track and field and football. Each year the MSU athletic department, coaches and student athletes participate in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character program, which sponsors community service activities. The Division of Science hosts Science Olympiads and local science fairs each year, while the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science has hosted a Math Track Meet competition for grade 7-12 across the region since 1976. More than 1,800 students come to the MSU campus to participate in the Math Track Meet each spring. The MSU Division of Music has a strong history of involvement with the Minot community and often provides

faculty adjudicators, festival coordination, and facilities for both Class A and Class B music festivals. Each fall, the Division of Music also sponsors the Northwest Festival, a two-day band and choir festival open to students by audition only; the week-long Dakota Chamber Music institute for strings and piano is now in its eleventh year. The English program sponsors a Celebration of Language Arts (COLA) Olympiad that brings students from across the state to participate in various literature and language events, while the MSU history program facilitates History Day events in conjunction with area schools. Since 2000, the Department of Business Information Technology has sponsored an annual Tech Day. This competitive event for high school business students is organized, promoted and staffed by MSU business education majors and minors who are enrolled in the Business Education Coordinating Techniques course.

MSU supports area children by offering numerous activities geared to their needs and interests. Three such activities have been the annual summer College for Kids program (see Criterion 4A), Marketplace for Kids and the recent Class of 2013 project associated with MSU's coming centennial celebration. Marketplace for Kids is held in 10 different locations throughout North Dakota and invites elementary and middle school students to share their inventions and attend classes about career choices, health and wellness, cultural diversity, money management and entrepreneurship. MSU departments and individual faculty provide many of the classes and related activities. These opportunities for children show that the university is clearly future-focused, not only in terms of opening the doors for potential students but in demonstrating its concern for the general education and cultural welfare of its youngest external constituents. Area children work with MSU student athletes when they attend summer athletic camps, improve their reading skills through the Read with the Beavers program, or participate in Minot Public School Character Counts initiatives. Students from the MSU Division of Humanities offer touring puppet and live action theatre performances in area schools. Children can also receive sophisticated developmental and vision screenings on campus.

Adults in the community benefit from health-related campus projects. For example, the Nursing Student Association participates actively in the Minot Heart Walk and Alzheimer's Walk, and these students also provide community service projects for local and rural communities. In addition, they conduct blood pressure clinics and assist with annual blood drives.

Several MSU organizations provide performance opportunities for community actors and musicians that would not otherwise be available. University students work alongside both children and adults from the community in performances put together by the MSU Summer Theatre (housed in an outdoor amphitheatre on campus). The Minot Symphony Orchestra and MSU have partnered since 1924, with MSU providing the symphony conductor, as well as its rehearsal and performance space. Music students from the university receive credit for their participation and provide a large and talented pool of musicians, while community members offer their experience and expertise. Western Plains Opera also partners with MSU in similar fashion.



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University activities show a care for disadvantaged people and those in crisis. Students in the MSU Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) sponsor an annual Freezin' for a Reason food drive, in recognition of National Homelessness and Hunger Awareness Week. University athletes have also been active in gathering donations for local food pantries. Many people affiliated with the university have worked for the Red Cross national call center in Minot, and for American Red Cross and United Way fundraisers. The Angel Tree project on campus benefits the Minot Domestic Violence Center through provision of Christmas gifts for children and women who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence.

MSU has a strong history of assisting disabled persons in the community, and university personnel have been deeply involved with Special Olympics and the Dream Catchers. The MSU Cleft Palate Clinic and Disability Clinic assist local and regional families with screening and treatment (see Criterion 5D). In addition, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, discussed above in Criterion 5A, provides a myriad of services for rural constituents.

The Minot Business Community also benefits from university initiatives, developing business systems for ARINC Engineering Services, LLC (Iowa), Support Services of Bismarck, Turtle Mountain Office of Motor Vehicles (Belcourt, N.D.), and GeekyMoms (Minot). Business students have also been involved with technology analysis for Bitz Communications (Minot), and an NDGIS analysis used to determine methamphetamine locations for the state of N.D. (See Criterion 5D for further discussion of business partnerships.)

MSU offers valuable information, cultural events and entertainment to regional constituents, who respond with interest. KMSU Channel 19 systematically broadcasts original programming, namely MSU Inside; in addition, it operates 24 hours a day and publicizes what is happening on campus (sporting events are regularly broadcast as well). Audiences appreciate student concerts given by the Division of Music ensembles Concert Band, Concert Choir, Women's Choir, String Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Jazz Combo and Opera Scenes. The MSU theatre program regularly stages major plays for the public throughout the year and offers a student-led Christmas production as well. As of the summer of 2007, the very popular MSU Summer Theatre will be entering its 42nd year. Several art galleries on campus provide distinguished shows and gallery openings for the art-loving public, and the Northwest Arts Center sponsors public lectures throughout the year (see Criterion 5D). Lastly, enthusiastic community members attend MSU athletic events in droves (see Criterion 5D).

Findings

- The campus routinely offers its excellent physical facilities for a wide variety of community uses, often free of charge.
- MSU funds many activities that support community engagement and service to students. This is represented, for example, by its ongoing funding of the Intellectual Climate Committee.
- The university makes good efforts to listen to the concerns of its students and to address them. The Student Association is visible, active and influential in campus decision-making, and the new Beaver Dam (designed with student input) has developed into an attractive gathering place for students.
- MSU engages directly with community members through many individual service learning initiatives. These efforts are fully reciprocal and benefit all involved.
- The many co-curricular activities available at MSU reveal a very strong institution-wide commitment to Minot and its surrounding regions. The university reaches out to a variety of constituents, and serves area youth with particular effectiveness.

Core Component 5C

Minot State University demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Consistent with the *Vision 2013* emphasis on making connections “between the local and global,” MSU demonstrates its attention to the following constituencies who depend upon its services: freshmen, transfer and distance learning students; NDUS partners; P-12 educators; the Native American community; and institutional partners around the globe.^{5.17}

5.17 Vision 2013
http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

Freshmen, Transfer and Distance Learning Students

New students at MSU depend on the university for a successful launch into the college experience. MSU has consistently offered optional freshman orientation sessions, and the university operated a successful “University 101” credit-bearing orientation for a few years under a grant from the Bush Foundation. When the grant expired, however, that orientation program ended. General freshman orientation did not become a requirement until fall of 2006. This improved orientation experience now includes a variety of sessions for parents as well as students, to assist both parties in the transition. Parents and students learn about services available on campus, such as

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5.18 Mentoring Program <http://www.minotstateu.edu/mentoring/>

financial aid, food, housing and career services, and have a chance to meet with faculty and administrators. (A virtual orientation is required of students who have compelling reasons not to attend.) In spring of 2007, the orientation model was further revised to bring in smaller groups of students throughout the summer and to have students register for classes at those times as well. This more personal approach seems to have been welcomed by students and parents alike. For the past four years MSU faculty and staff have assisted at “Move-In Day,” orienting families and students to the campus as they assist unloading into MSU dormitories. As of fall 2007, all freshmen are now required to live on campus, as part of a new initiative that values the diverse, multiple and serendipitous learning experiences which residential life can provide.

A student services advisor was hired in 2006 to research, develop and implement a mentoring program for campus freshmen.^{5.18} After reviewing best practices at other four-year institutions, the student services advisor developed a program for MSU; it was implemented in fall of that year with 145 students and 42 mentors. These mentors, who are MSU faculty and staff, receive training and serve as a one-stop resource for students during their first year, with the goal of making the transition to university life as smooth as possible. Students in the program are asked to meet with their mentor three times per semester, meet with their academic advisor once per semester, and attend two life skills workshops per semester. The life skills workshops were developed for mentoring program students but they are open to all MSU students and cover topics such as time and money management, financial aid and study skills. Two of these workshops are also available online.

Most importantly, Minot State University has been selected to participate in the 2007-08 cohort for the Foundations of Excellence™ In the First Year of College. This project is directed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and started with participation of 323 universities from across the U. S. to study successful program and policies which supported first-year students. The Policy Center synthesizes this information into nine inspirational dimensions resting on the assumptions that:

- The academic mission of an institution is preeminent.
- The first year of college is central to the achievement of an institution’s mission and lays the foundation on which undergraduate education is built.
- Systemic evidence provides validation of the dimensions.
- Collectively, the dimensions constitute an ideal for improving not only the first college year, but also the entire undergraduate experience.^{5.19}

5.19 Foundations of Excellence™ <http://www.fyfoundations.org/doc.aspx?f=pdf&id=17>

Through the Foundations of Excellence™ self-study process, institutions are asked to gauge their support of first-year students across nine dimensions. These are: philosophy, organization, learning, faculty, transitions, all students, diversity, roles and purposes and improvement. At MSU, faculty and student surveys will be administered in the fall of 2007 and data will be collected across several critical performance indicators identified

by the Policy Center. These data will be reviewed by nine dimensions committees that will complete a self-study report on how MSU measures up against these dimensions. The second year of the project will involve developing priority campus initiatives to implement, so MSU can better serve first-year students.

MSU transfer policies and in-state articulation agreements are largely dictated by SBHE policy. NDUS has recently made an effort to improve and monitor 2+2 programs among the state colleges and universities. The NDUS General Education Requirements Transfer Agreement (GERTA) was also developed to assist students who transfer among the 11 NDUS campuses.^{5.20} Students who have completed the lower division general education requirements (GER) at one campus are deemed to have completed them at another. Students who have not completed the GER prior to transfer will find that their general education course work taken at one NDUS campus will be acceptable as general education course work at another, although some redistribution of courses may result. From an assessment point of view, GERTA is troubling, as MSU is not able to assess the outcomes of other programs. Students sometimes enter MSU ill-prepared to master necessary course material, due to substandard preparation. Campus departments, in addition, often feel constrained to offer coursework that complies with GERTA, regardless of its particular usefulness to their programs and objectives. These issues need to be addressed in the future. From a student point of view, the GERTA agreement certainly increases convenience and the portability of class work that they have already undertaken.

In recent years, MSU has worked to serve transfer students more effectively, devoting staff attention to personal visits with prospective students, introducing a specific track at orientation/registration for transfer students and their concerns, and providing needed advisement. The university supports a position in the Office of the Registrar, entitled transfer specialist; this person is exclusively devoted to the needs of transfer students and is qualified to review transcripts from a variety of institutions across the region, including colleges from Canada.

MSU reaches beyond its immediate community to support distance learners, who depend on MSU for coursework that they often could not otherwise complete, due to geographic, programmatic, economic, time and/or family-related constraints. The Center for Extended Learning responds to their needs and facilitates their experience by assisting with registration, providing technology support services, giving virtual orientations, providing online tutoring through SmarThinking (see Criterion 3D) and maintaining a high level of technological integrity. MSU surveys online students each year (beyond course evaluations) to measure satisfaction with online registration, student services, course offerings and other general programmatic concerns. CEL uses this information to improve its services, and all department chairs and college deans receive a report of the feedback collected.

5.20 NDUS Transfer Agreement
<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/students/ccn/gerta/>

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NDUS Partners

5.21 SBHE Policy 305.1
[http://www.ndus.edu/policies/
sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2400](http://www.ndus.edu/policies/sbhe-policies/policy.asp?ref=2400)

Seeking partnerships with other NDUS institutions is part of the published mission of MSU and is supported by the SBHE policy 305.1.^{5.21} MSU maintains a longstanding partnership with MSU-Bottineau. Founded in 1907 as the North Dakota State School of Forestry (NDSSF), and later affiliated (1968) with North Dakota State University (NDSU), MSU-Bottineau obtained its current affiliation with Minot State University and its present name through SBHE action in 1996. MSU-Bottineau presently offers 32 vocational-technical programs or options leading to certificates, diplomas or Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees. It also offers comprehensive university parallel/transfer coursework leading to Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees. Accredited separately by HLC, MSU-Bottineau shares its presidency with MSU, and the latter provides a liaison office in its Administration building.

MSU's relationships with many of its partners are facilitated by CEL. These partnerships operate in similar fashion to MSU online offerings, in that each college retains ownership of the program in terms of assessment, faculty approval and delivery of the information, while CEL functions to provide support. The Department of Criminal Justice at MSU partners with its corresponding department at UND to provide courses for students in the Ph.D. criminal justice degree offered through UND. This partnership was established in 2001 and has provided assistance to students residing on both campuses, in terms of access to the courses needed for degree completion. Faculty from both campuses provide course instruction, graduate committee leadership and advisement, as well as participate in student selection and curricular decisions.

Over the past 12 years, the MSU Department of Teacher Education and Human Performance has delivered a Master of Education program to teachers in the Fargo area with support from some Mayville State University faculty. The department has continued to offer a new cohort of the M.Ed. (with an elementary education concentration) every two years since 1997, onsite in Fargo/West Fargo. Over the past 10 years, approximately 135 Fargo area educators have pursued this degree. Faculty from MSU generally travel to Fargo to teach in the program, but IVN has occasionally also been used (see Criterion 3C) to supplement face-to-face course delivery.

MSU maintains an office on the Bismarck State College (BSC) campus and currently offers completion programs for a B.S. in management (since 1994), a B.A.S. in management (since 2002), a B.A.S. in business information technology (since 2002), a B.S. in criminal justice (since 1984), and a B.S. in social work (since 2005). Several other NDUS institutions are also represented on the BSC campus. These programs are articulated with the two-year degree programs offered at BSC. (MSU pays a tuition split to BSC that covers office space, telephone service, classroom space, etc.) MSU offers similar collaborative undergraduate programs in social work and nursing with Williston State College. MSU online and correspondence courses are frequently taken by students

who desire alternative modes of course delivery. Courses offered at these sites are assessed using the same methods employed on the MSU campus, with results given to the instructors, department chairs and the dean of CEL.

MSU is considering adding an addiction studies major at BSC. Additionally, efforts are being made to encourage students completing their two-year degrees at BSC to complete their four-year degrees through MSU, on the BSC campus. MSU Enrollment Services is currently working with the BSC program coordinator to offer ES staff time on site. In addition, an MSU Day at BSC is held annually to show students how they can complete a four-year degree with MSU, without leaving the Bismarck area.

NDUS collaborations extend beyond traditional degree offerings, and include the following: grant partnerships (such as INBRE, discussed in Criterion 4A); collaborative conferences such as the biennial NDUS Arts and Humanities Summit (hosted at MSU in 2004) and Wellness Conference at UND; and a variety of consortia such as the NDUS Diversity Council, the N.D. Higher Education Consortium for Substance Abuse Prevention and CONNECT ND.

Educators

MSU has a long history of partnering with P-12 schools in the area, which involves 100-150 student-teacher placements each year, funding support for graduate-level study and services for low-functioning schools as established in the “No Child Left Behind” Act. MSU’s Graduate School provides leadership in professional development activities for P-12 teachers and administrators. The graduate dean is MSU’s representative in the Mid-Dakota Education Council (MDEC), a consortium of 10 school districts in the Minot area. MSU is a collaborating partner with three such consortia: the MDEC, the North-Central Education Cooperative (NCEC) and the Northeast Education Service Cooperative (NESC). Partnering with each of these groups allows MSU’s Graduate School to maintain contact with area education professionals and remain at the forefront of professional development opportunities for teachers. In addition, MSU cooperates with North Dakota State University and the University of North Dakota to pool resources to offer professional development workshops to the state’s P-12 educators.

Native American Students

MSU has responded to the needs of the regional Native American population through the recent formal establishment of Tribal College Partnerships (as well as devoted student services on campus, discussed above in Criterion 5A). MSU has signed a three-year partnership agreement with Turtle Mountain Community College (Belcourt), and similar arrangements have been reached with Fort Berthold Community



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5.22 CAS^Q newsletters <http://www.minotstateu.edu/artsnsci/news.shtml>

College (New Town) and United Tribes Technical College (Bismarck). These agreements are intended to ease the process for those who begin their education at the community colleges and wish to complete it at MSU. In addition to making MSU's programs more easily accessible to tribal residents, the expected increase of Native American students on the MSU campus will contribute to greater general awareness and understanding of cultural diversity. The INBRE program (mentioned above) reaches beyond NDUS to partner with tribal colleges as well.^{5.22} Each summer MSU biologists and chemists supervise about a dozen American Indian students in their research, and MSU faculty also travel to the reservations routinely as part of this program.

Global Community

Another initiative of the university is development of exchange programs and international partnerships with universities in Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. A central goal of these agreements, within the context of *Vision 2013*, is to increase the engagement of MSU's students with other cultures from around the globe, both by sending MSU students to other campuses, and by bringing students from those campuses to MSU.

In 2006-07, MSU enrolled 262 international students from 18 different countries. Of these, 242 were Canadian students. MSU has long been a member of the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), and between 1997 and 2006 five articulation agreements were signed with international universities.

The new director of the Office of International Programs has been instrumental in facilitating MSU's most recent memoranda of agreement with the following institutions abroad: Kristianstad University in Sweden, Kadir Has University in Turkey, SIAS International University in China, Aalborg University in Denmark, and Telemark University Campus in Norway. Discussions are under way concerning a partnership with The University of the West Indies in Trinidad.

In the summer of 2007, MSU organized a trip for 45 university and community members to SIAS University. Concerted follow-up has suggested a model for MSU to pursue with all its partnerships. Fifteen Chinese students from SIAS University arrived on campus the same year to participate in a new intercultural graduate management cohort. MSU has also established a new orientation for international students to provide better transitional assistance to these students.

MSU is beginning to strengthen support services for international students. Though much progress has been made in recent years, the university must develop a comprehensive plan for international student support services that includes offering courses in English as a second language. MSU also needs to provide more formal and concrete support for its international faculty, who struggle individually with visa and immigration issues. Finally, articulation agreements need more active follow-up and institutional support.



Findings

- Entering freshmen depend upon MSU for transitional help, which is offered through required orientation (serving parents as well as students), a new optional mentoring program, a new first-year residence requirement, and a “Move-in Day” welcome students receive when they arrive on campus.
- Transfer students can shift readily between NDUS institutions, thanks to the GERTA agreement that permits mobility of general education courses. This agreement, however, has raised campus concerns about quality control and about limitations on course and program development.
- An MSU staff member in the Office of the Registrar is devoted to assisting the transcript needs of transfer students, and new approaches to orientation will help those students integrate in to campus structures with greater ease.
- MSU cooperates with a variety of NDUS institutions to offer distance degree programs and professional development opportunities for teachers.
- In response to positive demographic shifts, and an institutional will to improve cultural relations and collaboration with Native American partners, MSU has recently signed formal articulation agreements with three area tribal colleges.
- MSU has historically worked in close and highly successful collaboration with area P-12 schools, through student teacher placements, funding for advanced study and assistance with new federal and state licensure requirements.
- Efforts to establish international partnerships recently took a giant step forward with the hiring of a director for the Office of International Programs on campus. New articulation agreements will depend upon further strengthening institutional infrastructure and support services for international students.



Core Component 5D

Internal and external constituencies value the services Minot State University provides.

Economic and Work Force Development

The growth and longevity of MSU’s many community partnerships attest to the high value placed on these associations. The College of Business has been particularly active in the area of economic and work force development, as the survival of N.D. communities will increasingly depend upon these efforts. In 2002, the College of Business developed *A Guide to Strategic Economic Development Planning for Minot and Regional NW North Dakota Communities*. The aim was to aid Minot stakeholders in creating a vision for the future; identify obstacles and pinpoint opportunities to move forward; and help Minot citizens decide what actions are needed to make the vision a reality.

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The business community as represented by the Minot Area Chamber of Commerce and Minot Area Development Corporation (MADC), views economic and work force development activities as integral to the growth of the city. In March 2006, the MADC credited MSU for providing foundational data needed to proceed with a plan for area development. The execution of this plan has now successfully brought new businesses to Minot and formed the basis for land purchases that will develop industrial parks near the city. The partnership with MADC, as well as InfoTech-MTC and SRT Communications, has also resulted in recent application for a new campus Center of Excellence called The Great Plains Data and Knowledge Center, which will encompass business and technology research.

MSU has been a key player in either providing actual work force training for new companies located in the Minot area, or the work force training component of “incentive packages” assembled to recruit businesses to the Minot area. In 1999, a mailing list from the Chamber of Commerce was used to survey existing area businesses about their training needs. In August 2000, MSU responded to the needs of a new business, ING-ReliaStar, by training its charter group of employees. ING is a Fortune 500 company that currently employs over 800 people in Minot. MSU continues to provide valuable services to select area businesses; for example, CEL delivers the recommended training and test preparation for MSO and IC3 Certification Exams, as well as the BISK CPA Review Course. In addition, CEL hosts a three-day institute for the North Dakota Municipal Finance Officers Association (NDMFO), which is attended by 40 to 50 city auditors from around the state each year. This institute provides expertise, needed continuing education credits (CEU’s), and excellent networking opportunities for participants.

5.23 Job Corps Executive Management Program http://www.minotstateu.edu/business/jc_00.shtml

The U.S. Department of Labor has provided continued funding for the Job Corps Executive Management (JCEMP) graduate degree program at MSU.^{5.23} Since its inception in 2001, the JCEMP has prepared junior-level Job Corps personnel for senior-level positions. The program has served 84 fellows from 36 states who take a customized course of study at MSU resulting in the M.S. degree in management. Once students have completed residency courses on campus, they take the rest of their courses online. All participating students complete an applied research project related to Job Corps activities and present their projects during a virtual conference.

Community Response

At present, it is clear that external and internal constituents appreciate the collaborative ventures and community services that MSU supplies. A variety of comments received verbally attest to that appreciation. For example, feedback was most positive at community forums sponsored by the president in 2006-07, and also offered solid constructive suggestions for improvement. Comments from members of the Greater Expectations for Minot Committee (GEM) have also been most encouraging.

For many organizations in Minot, the university provides invaluable support and opportunities. The committee from Minot Area Council for International Visitors has said that without MSU, it “would be difficult to impossible” to meet its mission. Minot’s Quality of Life Committee has stated that it “needs MSU’s support for growing the quality of life for the area.”

The Communication Disorders Clinic on campus is an excellent example of a frequently utilized service that is deeply appreciated by the community. The clinic, which serves clients from Minot, Minot Air Force Base, area communities, Montana and Canada is staffed by 10 speech-language pathologists and one audiologist, all of whom are nationally certified and licensed by the state of North Dakota. The clinic provides diagnostic evaluations and intervention services in the areas of language, articulation, voice, neurological, fluency, hearing, dysphagia, and assistive-alternative communication. In 2006, the Clinic provided 741 screenings to consumers, and services to 217 diagnostic clients and 142 therapy clients for a total of 1,100 public contacts.

MSU is an indispensable resource and partner for the arts in Minot. For example, the Minot Symphony Orchestra and the Western Plains Opera Company stress that they cannot exist without MSU. Both rely extensively on MSU for facilities, funding and faculty participation. Summer Theatre, for example, has drawn approximately 225,000 audience patrons from the university and community through its 42-year history. During the 2005-07 seasons, 349 artists, lecturers and musicians shared their talents with the people of northwest and north-central North Dakota through programs of the Northwest Art Center. All exhibitions and lectures are free and open to the public. Two campus art galleries document visitor numbers through voluntary guest book signatures, and from July 2005 through February 2007, there were at least 1,934 campus and community visitors to art exhibitions. Attendance at Northwest Art Center lectures during the 2005-07 seasons averaged 65, with a total of 24 lectures scheduled. When the Intellectual Climate Committee considers grant applications, activities open to the public have historically received priority consideration; more than 2,375 faculty, students and community members attended ICC events in the academic year 2004-05 alone.

The Minot community actively supports university athletic events. Up to 1,500 fans attend each game and approximately 600 season tickets are sold each year for MSU athletic events. Community members attend hundreds of academic, athletic, artistic, business and service events on campus each year.

Individual Engagement with Community

Finally, all internal constituents at MSU—faculty, staff, administration and students— contribute a truly amazing amount of their time and talent to community engagement. They make a difference at local, regional, national and international levels in a variety of venues including cultural, entrepreneurial, social, political and educational. MSU faculty and staff serve as board members and officers, committee members,

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

5.24 List of faculty community service involvements, available in evidence room

organizers, facilitators, adjudicators, judges, consultants and even members of City Council and the N.D. State Legislature.^{5.24}

Findings

- The MSU College of Business collaborates with the Minot business community extensively, playing a vital role in the economic vitality and growth of Minot and its surrounding communities.
- The Job Corps Executive Management Program provides a national service and prepares executives for senior leadership.
- Minot area organizations appreciate and value the services MSU provides, as evidenced by frequent positive feedback and high event attendance figures.
- MSU students, faculty, staff and administrators have long cherished and exercised a high level of community engagement. This culture of engagement and service is exemplary.

Strengths, Challenges, and Actions Related to Criterion 5

Strengths

- MSU's current planning and scanning activities purposefully involve the community and campus.
- MSU has dramatically increased its attention to diversity since 1997, and *Vision 2013* will continue to provide needed direction in this area.
- Consideration of student concerns and suggestions informs campus improvements to services and facilities.
- MSU is an essential community asset, providing well received cultural, educational, athletic and social activities for a large population of internal and external constituents.
- MSU strengthens economic development in the region and cultivates effective partnerships with the business community.
- Refined university orientations, a new mentoring program, the work of a dedicated student services advisor, and participation in the Foundations of Excellence™ program all show improved attention to the first-year experience and to student involvement on campus.

- Collaborative partnerships with other NDUS institutions, often facilitated through the Center for Extended Learning, have proved beneficial for MSU students.
- Creation of a dedicated Office of International Programs and expansion of staffing in this area supports MSU's global partnerships and international programming.
- Many individual MSU students, faculty, staff and administrators care deeply about community engagement, setting the stage for an institutionalization of that principle.

Challenges and Proposed Actions

- **Challenge:** Campus units and individuals need time and resources to integrate the community service and engagement aspects of *Vision 2013* with existing university activities. Burnout is a real danger; the financial and human toll on participants and organizers is considerable.

Proposed actions

- Since both campus and community members find outreach activities and events crucial to the health and vitality of the institution, MSU must:
 1. Analyze, recognize and redefine academic loads to accommodate time-intensive engagement activities.
 2. Give colleges, divisions and departments adequate time and resources to work toward alignment with *Vision 2013*.
- The institution should provide dedicated resources for support and centralization of ongoing service learning initiatives.
- **Challenge:** As campus units align with *Vision 2013* they also need to be able to maintain their distinct identities and continue to promote their best capabilities and expertise.

Proposed action

- Ensure that implementation of *Vision 2013* does not disrupt already successful programs and activities.

**CRITERION FIVE:
ENGAGEMENT
AND SERVICE**

- **Challenge:** MSU must further explore how to incorporate distance learning, in particular online instruction, into the *Vision 2013* concept of engagement and place.

Proposed actions

- Discuss and develop an institutional plan for integrating distance learning into campus structures while recognizing the diverse needs of students on campus and those at a distance.
 - Define what is meant by engagement and place in the context of distance learning.
- **Challenge:** MSU needs a comprehensive plan for international student and faculty support services and articulation agreements need more active follow-up.

Proposed actions

- Develop a strategic plan for support of international faculty and students.
- Allocate resources to establish a formal English as a Second Language (ESL) program.



CONCLUSION

Minot State University—Grounded and Visionary

As it nears its centennial, MSU has set a distinctive new path for itself, which it has called *Vision 2013*. The university has redefined its mission upon that foundation as “first and foremost dedicated to the success of all students: their growth and development as educated citizens, their confidence, and their lifelong devotion to the common good and the welfare of others.” With widespread support, MSU is implementing *Vision 2013*, and the university has begun a systematic effort to align budgeting with planning for its second century.

This summary section looks briefly at the Higher Learning Commission’s four cross-cutting themes as a way of drawing some of the self-study findings together from a slightly different perspective. In discussing each of these four themes, the following text reviews some of the more noteworthy strengths outlined above. In that process it also recognizes some of the opportunities for improvement that were discovered during the course of the self-study.

Minot State University is a Future-Focused Organization

The past decade has been marked by steady movement toward true strategic planning. The *Vision 2013* process has addressed and articulated vision, mission, goals and planning strategies together at the same time, perhaps for the first time in the university’s history. The new mission determines clear strategic planning directions, especially emphasizing the importance of engagement, place and global perspective. Within a global context, MSU’s substantial commitment to diversity is evidenced by initiatives in such areas as curricular requirements, student support services, international opportunities, multicultural centers and community events. The university has for the first time endowed a Planning and Budgeting Council with responsibility for aligning campus operation with strategic priorities. All of these efforts seek to define and then to materialize what the institution and its many constituencies believe MSU ought to be. This goal has been explicitly summarized in the *Vision 2013* document: “Minot State University will achieve national distinction as one of the premier public, regional universities in the ‘great’ Great Plains.”

Meanwhile, a rich assessment culture encourages faculty continuously to examine extant programs and student outcome data in order to improve curriculum and provide

CONCLUSION

new learning opportunities. Clearly stated goals and learning outcomes for MSU's degree programs make this possible. MSU has also made faculty development a high priority. MSU creates effective and flexible learning environments and opportunities through purposeful application of technology and renovation of physical facilities on the campus itself. Establishment of an Office of International Programs has resulted in an increasing number of international partnerships, and these are expected to continue growing in both number and extent. Students, faculty, staff and administration are clearly committed to civic engagement, both locally and globally, preparing MSU to institutionalize that principle as a foundation for future growth in many of the university's programs.

MSU's commitment to its constituents and to *Vision 2013* has led the institution to an authentic future-focused perspective. At a time when all institutions in the state face shifting demographics, MSU's mission, identity and purpose create a highly desired learning environment for students. *Vision 2013* will continue to provide direction for the university well beyond its centennial in 2013.

Minot State University is a Learning-Focused Organization

MSU's highly qualified faculty, a pervasive culture of assessment and faculty control of curriculum clearly demonstrate that student learning is the centerpiece of academic endeavors in the university. Structures that support good teaching, including the university's systems for faculty mentoring and dual review through Tenure and Promotion Committees, along with the unique Committee of Twelve system for evaluation and guidance of probationary faculty, emphasize the centrality of good teaching and student achievement in MSU's fundamental conception of itself as a learning-focused organization.

Over the past decade, MSU has made instructional development a high priority through professional study grants, support for programs such as Partners in Learning (PIL), pedagogically related conference attendance, and provision of cutting-edge technological resources for developing innovative learning environments. All of these efforts likewise demonstrate the university's central emphasis on helping students to attain program learning outcomes. Similarly, a decade of renovating physical facilities clearly demonstrates that the university values and protects its fundamental infrastructure as the basis for creating modern, effective and flexible learning environments.

Minot State University is a Connected Organization

Because it is a public institution of higher learning, MSU has always been aware of its essential role of serving the people of North Dakota and the northern Great Plains. From its beginnings as a state normal school to its present-day internships, community outreach and service learning projects, the institution has always held the common good as a central objective in its mission. The dramatic accent of *Vision 2013* upon engagement and place only reinforces this position, for in it one of the university's stated core values is "supporting the values of community and place." PICTURE This already takes concrete form in many ways. Hundreds of MSU students are involved in practica and research projects in surrounding communities each semester. MSU's faculty, staff and students provide the backbone of artistic and cultural events in the Minot community. The university's proposal for a multi-million dollar Center of Excellence project (Great Plains Knowledge and Data Center) has fostered collaboration among a local company, SRT Communications, Inc., New York-based *InfoTech* MTC, and Minot State University in software development and application. Such cooperative learning endeavors exemplify an entrenched commitment to connectivity beyond the campus.

In addition to connection with constituencies outside the campus, MSU strives to sustain productive connections within the institution itself. In addition to continuous electronic campus network connectivity, numerous committee meetings, open forums and interdepartmental publications are underlain by a formal system of truly shared governance in which students, staff and faculty are regularly both seen and heard. It is noteworthy that in findings of a fall 2006 survey by the Office of Academic Projects and Research, more than 70 percent of faculty and staff agreed or strongly agreed that "there are opportunities for getting involved in campus decision making."

Minot State University is a Distinctive Organization

Minot State University is the only public Carnegie Classification Master's I institution within the NDUS. From its beginnings as a teacher's college, the university has grown steadily toward distinction as an institution dedicated principally to public service, through many programs besides those in teacher education – nursing, communication disorders, speech and language pathology, criminal justice and business information technology, are examples. *Vision 2013* has added a new dimension to this distinction, bringing a focus on *engagement* and *place* into the university's conception of itself and increasingly into the public conception of the university. As the rationale for this new perspective declares, "this vision rests on the assumption that the university will

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provide an extraordinary connection between academic subjects and the reality of life on the Great Plains, between theory and practice, and between the local and the global.”

MSU’s guiding principle has long been “students first,” and has led the university to respond directly to student needs. This distinctive approach is reflected in small class size and research opportunities for undergraduates; renovations to physical facilities such as the Student Center and Crane Hall; and, most recently, improved focus on first-year students with on-campus living requirements for freshmen, a freshman mentoring program, and the Foundations of Excellence program for first-year students.

Minot State University’s distinctive new vision thus focuses “intentionally and unwaveringly on service to its people, its community, and its special place and location.” That focus includes high expectations for learning and institutional performance. It depends upon a demand for rigorous study and scholarship, and on good judgment based on strong ethical and moral principles.

Conclusion

Minot State University is proud of its many accomplishments during its first 95 years of existence, and in increasingly challenging times both locally and globally, it remains optimistic about its future. The campus community recognizes that achieving the vision it has set for itself will take studied, deliberate, and at times painful work, and this study shows that MSU is ready for that work. The remarkable openness of the self-study process has given solid evidence of the strong sense of mission shared by the MSU campus community. It has also afforded everyone an opportunity to look at his or her own role, both objectively and critically, and in the process, to reaffirm a shared commitment to the work already begun by *Vision 2013*. Throughout the self-study process, the Steering Committee has guided the most inclusive, open and honest self-assessment of the university in its history, as a result producing a comprehensive, frank and accurate assessment of the institution. The Steering Committee and the dozens of individuals who have contributed to this self-study, both directly and indirectly, believe that Minot State University clearly meets all five HLC Criteria for Accreditation and is therefore worthy of continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.

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APPENDIX A.

An alphabetical list of acronyms used in this report and their definitions

- AASCU**—American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- AAUP**—American Association of University Professors
- AAU**—Association of American Universities
- ACHA**—American Colleges Health Association
- ACT**—American College Testing
- ADA**—Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADHD**—Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- ARC**—Accreditation Review Council
- ASHA**—Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (American Speech-Language Hearing Association)
- ATE**—Association of Teacher Educators
- BA**—Bachelor of Arts
- BAS**—Bachelor of Applied Science
- BGS**—Bachelor of General Studies
- BSBR**—Bureau of Social and Behavioral Research
- BS**—Bachelor of Science
- BSE**—Bachelor of Science in Education
- BSN**—Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- CAO**—chief academic officer
- CAS**—College of Arts and Sciences
- CASCLS**—Collaborative for the Applied Study of Cognition and Learning Sciences
- CDCC**—Curricular Diversity and Campus Climate
- CEHS**—College of Education and Health Science
- CEL**—Center for Extended Learning
- CEO**—chief executive officer
- CEU**—continuing education unit
- CGS**—Council of Graduate Schools
- CHEA**—Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- CIHE**—Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (the old name for HLC)
- COB**—College of Business
- COLA**—cost of living adjustment (also Celebration of Language Arts Olympiad in English Department)
- COS**—Commission on Schools (old name for the other NCA commission besides HLC)
- CTF**—Compensation Task Force

APPENDIX A

CUPA-HR—College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
DOE—Department of Education (also called USDE)
EESA—Education for Economic Security Act (aka “No Child Left Behind”)
ETS—Educational Testing Service
FERPA—Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FDDI—Fiber Distributed Data Interface
FLETC—Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
FTE—Full Time Equivalent
GEM—Greater Expectations for Minot
GERTA—General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement
HCI—Healthy Communities International
HGSE—Harvard Graduate School of Education
HLC—Higher Learning Commission (the higher education arm of NCA)
IACBE—International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education
INTASC—Interstate New Teacher and Support Consortium
IPEDS—Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
IRB—Institutional Review Board
ISEP—International Student Exchange Program
IT—information technology
ITAC—Information Technology Advisory Committee
ITC—Information Technology Central
IVN—Interactive Video Network
JCEMP—Job Corps Executive Management Program
LCP—Learning Communities Program
MADC—Minot Area Development Corporation
MAFB—Minot Air Force Base
MAT—Master of Arts in Teaching (includes MATM for math and MATS for science)
MDEC—Mid-Dakota Education Council
MED—Master of Education
MHEC—Midwestern Higher Education Commission
MSA—Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
MSC—Minot State College
MSM—Master of Science in Management
MSTC—Minot State Teacher’s College
MSU—Minot State University
NAIA—National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NAICU—National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
NASC—Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
NASM—National Association of Schools of Music
NASULGC—National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
NCA—North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

NCATE—National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCEC—North Central Education Cooperative
NCLEX-RN—National Council Licensing Examination (for nurses)
NDCPD—North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities
NDMFO—North Dakota Municipal Finance Officers Association
NDSU—North Dakota State University
NDUS—North Dakota University System
NESC—Northeast Education Service Cooperation
NITOP—National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology
NEASC—New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NLNAC—National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission
NPWP—Northern Plains Writers Project
OIT—Office of Information Technology
OP—Organizational Profile
PABC—Planning and Budgeting Council
PDA—Personal Digital Assistant
PEAQ—Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality
PIERS—Preparing Interdisciplinary Early Interventionists for Rural States
PIL—Partners in Learning
PRS—Personal Response system
RCJC—Rural Crime and Justice Center
RFP—request for proposal
RMEP—Rural Methamphetamine Education Project
RSES—Rural Support Education Strategies Project
SACS—Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SASP—Student Affiliates in School Psychology
SCE—Studies in Community and Environment (an MSU program in development)
SDC—Student Development Center
SGA—Student Government Association
SNSM—State Normal School at Minot
SBHE—State Board of Higher Education
SSI—Student Satisfaction Inventory
SSWO—Student Social Work Organization
TJI—Tribal Judicial Institute
UND—University of North Dakota
USDE—United States Department of Education (also called DOE)
VPAA—Vice President for Academic Affairs
VPAF—Vice President for Administration and Finance
VPSA—Vice President for Student Affairs
WASC—Western Association of Schools and Colleges
WICHE—Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

APPENDIX B.

A Timeline of the Minot State University Re-accreditation Self-Study Process

Overview by Semesters—The Big Picture

- Spring 2006—Organization and planning
- Summer 2006—Initial data gathering by Criterion-based Task Forces, “working papers”
- Fall 2006—Editorial Committee research, further data collection, preliminary drafting
- Spring 2007—Committee draft report segments disseminated for comment
- Summer 2007—Revised/final draft of self-study report completed
- Fall 2007—Self-study report final draft printed and disseminated
- Spring 2008—Report submitted to HLC, campus visit

The Timeline in Detail

DATE/DEADLINE	EVENT
January 2006	Self-Study Coordinator Named
January 2006	Steering Committee Formed
February–April, 2006	Self-Study Design Established
February–March, 2006	Committee Structure Established
March 2006	Task Force groups assigned “working papers”
April 2006	Attendance—HLC Annual Meeting
April 2006	Self-Study Goals & Timeline Established
April–May, 2006	Initial Task Force Meetings
June 2006	Development of Communication Plan
June 2006	Development of Web Template
June 2006	Task Force Work
July 2006	Task Force Work
August 2006	Task Force Work
August, 2006	HLC Update at Convocation
September, 2006	Self-Study Newsletter established

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October 2006	HLC Staff Liaison Established
October 2006	HLC Archiving Task Force Established
September–December, 2006	Chapter Drafts Developed by Editorial Committee
September–December, 2006	Compilation of Resources for Exhibit Room/Website
January–March, 2007	Campus Begins Review of Editorial Committee Drafts
January–April, 2007	Continued Expansion Exhibit Room/Website
March–April, 2007	MSU Delegation Attends an Assessment Conference
March–April, 2007	Editorial Committee Drafts Revised
March–April, 2007	Initial Assembly of the Entire Self-Study Report
April 2007	Attendance—HLC Annual Meeting
May, 2007	Final Task Force Project Reports Submitted
May–July, 2007	Entire Draft of Self-Study Report Completed
July, 2007	Steering Committee Retreat
July–August 2007	Self-Study Report Submitted to Outside Copy Editor
June–August, 2007	Focused Expansion of holdings in Exhibit Room/Website
August–September, 2007	Final (Copy-edited) Draft of Self-Study Report to Steering Committee & Task Force units
August–September, 2007	HLC Campus Convocation Luncheon Briefing
September 2007	SC Core Develops Checklist for Visit Logistics
September–December 2007	Continued Expansion of Exhibit Room/Website

October 2007	Final Draft Self-Study Report Distributed to campus, community, alumni, board members for comment
November–December, 2007	Final Revisions; Printing of Self-Study Report
January–April 2008	Final Polishing of Exhibit Room/Website
December 2007–January 2008	Public Notice of Visit and Third-party Comment on Notifications are Published
February 2008	Submission of Self-Study Document to Visiting Team Members/HLC
February–April, 2008	Finalize Campus Visit Preparations
March 2008	Campus Briefing Sessions on HLC Visit
31 March–02 April 2008	HLC Visit

APPENDIX C.

Steering Committee Membership

Editorial/Executive Committee

Bethany Andreasen, Associate Professor of History and President of the Faculty Senate

Stephen Hayton, Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Patricia Hubel, Director of Academic Projects and Research

Daniel Ringrose, Associate Professor of History

Ronald Royer, Professor of Science and Self-Study Coordinator

Lynne Rumney, Director of the Honors Program

ShaunAnne Tangney, Associate Professor of English

Academic Affairs Liaison

Margaret Coxwell, Associate Professor of Education and Chair of the Institutional Review Board

Linda M. Cresap, Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs

Conrad Davidson, Professor of Communication Arts and Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Yueh-Ting Lee, Past Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Thomas Linares, Associate Professor and Chair of Communication Disorders and Special Education

Selmer Moen, Professor of Computer Science

Thomas J. Seymour, Professor of Business Information Technology

Membership At Large

Kathy Aas, Member of the Board of Regents

Lynda Bertsch, Director of Career Services

Jared Edwards, Director of Plant Services

Morgan Grundstad, Undergraduate Student in the Department of Biology

Warren Gamas, Associate Professor of Education

Wylie Hammond, Director of Multicultural Support Services and Native American Cultural Center

Cathy Horvath, Director of Information Technology

Richard R. Jenkins, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Darwin Langseth, MSU Alumni Association

Jane laPlante, Reference Librarian in the Gordon B. Olson Library

Nancy Lawson, Graduate Student and Title 1 Educator in the Minot Public Schools

APPENDIX C

Gary Rabe, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Donald M. Burke, Professor of Psychology and Chair of Psychology, Addiction Studies, and Social Work

Gary Ross, Professor of Business Administration

John Girard, Associate Professor of Business Information Technology and Director of Enrollment Services

Billy Boyeff, Accreditation Assessment Coordinator

Lori Willoughby, Professor of Business Information Technology

Kris Warmoth, Dean of the Center for Extended Learning

Jenny Castro, Undergraduate Student and Past Vice President of the Student Association

Administrative Support

Ron Dorn, Vice President for Administration and Finance

David Fuller, President of the University

Rick Hedberg, Athletic Director

JoAnn Linrud, Dean of the College of Business

Neil Nordquist, Dean of the College of Education and Health Sciences

APPENDIX D.

Criterion-based Task Force Units

Criterion One—Mission and Integrity

Editorial Committee Liaison

Ronald Royer, Professor of Science and Self-Study Coordinator

From the Steering Committee

Yueh-Ting Lee, Past Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Darwin Langseth, MSU Alumni Association

Richard R. Jenkins, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Wylie Hammond, Director of Multicultural Support Services and Native American Cultural Center

Nancy Lawson, Graduate Student and Title 1 Educator in the Minot Public Schools

Other Members

Deanna Klein, Assistant Professor and Chair of Business Information Technology

Margaret Spain, Middle School Teacher in the Minot Public Schools

Deb Jensen, Associate Professor and Chair of Teacher Education and Human Performance

Ron Dorn, Vice President for Administration and Finance

Altis Lee Ellis, Professor of Sociology

Criterion Two—Preparing for the Future

Editorial Liaison

Patricia Hubel, Director of Academic Projects and Research

From the Steering Committee

Thomas J. Seymour, Professor of Business Information Technology

Gary Rabe, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Jared Edwards, Director of Plant Services

Other Members

Ron Dorn, Vice President for Administration and Finance

Criterion Three—Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Editorial Liaison

Daniel Ringrose, Associate Professor of History

From the Steering Committee

Linda Cresap, Dean of the Graduate School and Research and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX D

Donald Burke, Professor of Psychology and Chair of Psychology, Addiction Studies,
and Social Work

Gary Ross, Professor of Business Administration

Other Members

Kris Warmoth, Dean of the Center for Extended Learning

Criterion Four—Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Editorial Liaison

Stephen Hayton,

From the Steering Committee

Margaret Coxwell, Associate Professor of Education and Chair of the Institutional
Review Board

Jane laPlante, Reference Librarian in the Gordon B. Olson Library

Cathy Horvath, Director of Information Technology

Warren Gamas, Associate Professor of Education

Kris Warmoth, Dean of the Center for Extended Learning

Other Members

Criterion Five—Engagement and Service

Editorial Liaison

ShaunAnne Tangney, Associate Professor of English

From the Steering Committee

Thomas Linares, Associate Professor and Chair of Communication Disorders
and Special Education

Kathy Aas, Member of the Board of Regents

Lynda Bertsch, Director of Career Services

John Girard, Associate Professor of Business Information Technology
and Director of Enrollment Services

Lynne Rumney, Director of the Honors Program

Other Members

Brekka Kramer,

Randy Burckhard

Conrad Davidson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Ann Rivera, Student Activities Coordinator

APPENDIX E.

Supplement to Self-Study— Federal Compliance

Policy 1.C.7—Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Credits

Minot State University operates on a 16-week semester system with courses being offered annually in the fall, spring and summer. Course offerings within the fall and spring semesters include: full-term (16-weeks), first-half (eight weeks of the term), and second-half (final eight weeks of the term). Summer courses are eight weeks in length. Arranged courses such as independent study and capstone courses are considered to be full-term unless otherwise specified by the course schedule.

Program Length

Minot State University's undergraduate degree programs require a minimum of 128 semester hours to earn a Bachelor of Science degree. This requirement includes a minimum of 38 credit hours of general education coursework (p. 28-30). Minot State's 2006-2008 undergraduate catalog provides specific information on general requirements for a degree (p. 26-27). The undergraduate catalog is available at http://www.minotstateu.edu/catalog_u/colleges.shtml.

Specific information on degree requirements can be obtained in the undergraduate catalog on pages 33-171.

Minot State University's master's degree programs require students to earn the number of credits required by the chosen academic program. Minot State University's 2006-2008 *Graduate Catalog* provides the general and specific requirements for the master's degree programs. Specific information is found on pages 25-48 of the *Graduate Catalog*. The online version of the graduate catalog with specific graduate requirements can be found at <http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/catalog>.

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Master's Program Minimum Semester Hour Credits Required	
Education Specialist in School Psychology	70
Master of Arts in Teaching: Mathematics	32
Master of Arts in Teaching: Science	32
Master of Education	30
Master of Music Education	30
Master of Science in Communication Disorders	53
Master of Science in Criminal Justice	30
Master of Science in Information Systems	30
Master of Science in Management	30
Master of Science in Special Education (5 different specializations)	31-52 depending on specialization

Tuition

Under the guidelines of the tuition cap established by the North Dakota State Legislature, Minot State University proposes a tuition rate from the State Board of Higher Education. Tuition rates are approved by the board. There are currently four categories for graduate and four for undergraduate tuition. Table 1 at the end of this section provides the tuition for the 2007-08 academic year (fall through summer) for graduate and undergraduate students. This document is available online at http://www.minotstateu.edu/busoffic/student_pdf/feesch0810.pdf.

Tuition for distance education courses is slightly higher than for traditional delivery. The credit-hour cost for distance education matches the on-campus tuition cost (\$165.84/undergraduate credit hour and \$219.34/graduate credit hour). The exception to the tuition costs is for dual-credit courses, which charge \$134.33/credit hour. A list of the tuition rates and fees for the distance education programs (IVN, online, offsite locations, correspondence, etc) for graduate and undergraduates is available online at http://www.minotstateu.edu/cel/pdf/gradandundergradtuition08_000.xls.

Table 1

	Resident	Contiguous	MHEC, WUE, Non- Resident Alumni	Non- Resident	Minnesota
Undergraduate	\$3,980	\$4,973	\$5,967	\$10,622	\$4,237
Graduate	\$5,264	\$7,896	\$7,896	\$14,053	\$6,549

Three undergraduate majors charge an additional fee for their programs. These programs are noted in table 2.

Table 2

Program	Fee
Nursing	Program fee of \$12.50 course. Maxes out at 12 credits. See page 159 of the undergraduate catalog.
Clinical Lab Sciences	Flat fee - \$1000/semester for 5 semesters. The fee covers additional tuition costs for collaboration with the University of North Dakota for this program.
Out-of-area student teaching supervisor fee	The fee is based upon per visit and mileage charges according to the area.

Policy 1.A.5—Organizational Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act

The following documents related to Title IV funding are available in Minot State University’s Financial Aid Office:

- Minot State University Title IV Program Participation Agreement. Minot State University received recertification on February 2, 2007.
- Eligibility and certification Approval Report (ECAR) and the approval letter.

The 2005-06 Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) for funds for 2007-2008 federal campus-based programs, consisting of Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants and Federal Work-Study are available in MSU’s Financial Aid Office and may be viewed there by members of the Higher Learning Commission self-study team. FISAP Reports for previous years are also stored in the financial aid office.

Minot State University also participates in the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) for Stafford Loans. Information is available to the HLC team in the MSU Financial Aid Office.

APPENDIX E

Consolidated financial statements for fiscal years 2004 through 2006 are available in the institution's business office.

Federal Stafford Loan Default Rates for Minot State University compared to the national rates are presented in table 3.

Table 3

Fiscal Year	Minot State University	National
2005	3.4	3.0
2004	6.4	3.5
2003	4.4	3.3

Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act

In compliance with the Student Right-to-Know and Cleary (Campus Security) Act of 1990, Minot State University discloses information to the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics. There is not a central location for submission of the information. The Registrar's Office provides IPEDS with data for graduation rates. The financial aid office submits information on financial aid. Until recently, the director of the institution's physical plant collected and submitted information to IPEDS concerning crime statistics. This responsibility shifted to the Vice President of Student Affairs in fall 2007.

Information required by the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security act is published and available through both printed and electronic means. Electronic copies of the catalogs and handbooks with information on these items can be found at the following appropriate links:

- Graduate Catalog:
http://www.minotstateu.edu/graduate/catalog/06_08_grad_catalog.pdf
- Undergraduate Catalog:
http://www.minotstateu.edu/catalog_u/pdf/ug06_08.pdf
- Student Handbook:
http://www.minotstateu.edu/student_handbook.pdf

Refund Policy. MSU's refund and repayment policies are printed in both the graduate (p. 67) and undergraduate (p. 224, 226) catalogs. Information is also available in the Minot State University 2007-08 Student Handbook (p. 21).

Withdrawal Procedures. Procedures for withdrawal from both courses and the university are provided in the graduate catalog (p. 20, 68), undergraduate catalog (18-19, 224, 226, 240, 244) and in the student handbook (p. 21 and 24). Electronic versions of the graduate and undergraduate catalogs include information pertaining to withdrawals. Additionally, the procedures are outlined on the web on the financial aid link at <http://www.minotstateu.edu/finaid/withdrawl.shtml>

Financial Aid. Information regarding financial aid, including scholarships requirements, is available through the Financial Aid Office and through the graduate (p. 67) and undergraduate (p. 225 -239, 261) catalogs. Information is also presented in the student handbook (p. 8). The Financial Aid Office maintains a web site with pertinent information at <http://www.minotstateu.edu/finaid>.

Disability Services. Minot State University provides students with information on disability services through a variety of modes including the undergraduate catalog (p. 243), student handbook (p. 7, 21-22), and the MSU website http://www.minotstateu.edu/disability_services.

Degrees, Curriculum, Educational Opportunities, Course Descriptions

Information regarding the institution curriculum, degrees, and other educational opportunities is also made available through various mediums. The undergraduate catalog provides students with curriculum requirements for undergraduate degrees, minors, and specializations. Information on general education requirements and major requirements are provided on pages 28-32. Specific curriculum, requirements for majors and minors, and course descriptions fill the undergraduate catalog (p. 33-224). Additional data is found on the MSU website by referencing the specific program.

The MSU graduate catalog provides students with the specifics for the master's level programs and the educational specialist certificate. This information is also available on the web.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The undergraduate catalog highlights information on FERPA on pages 24-25. The graduate catalog highlights the information on page 79. The MSU Student Handbook provides students with another source of information (p. 32).

Crimes on Campus. In compliance with the Campus Security Act of 1990, MSU tracks and provides statistics. The data are reported to IPEDS and disclosed to the campus through various means. Prior to the fall 2007 term, the data was maintained by the director of plant operations. Brochures with data are published and provided to individuals who will have contact with incoming students (first-year and transfers)

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so they can provide the students with the information. Data is published in the institution's annual fact book as well. The following

	2004	2005	2006
Murder	None	None	None
Negligent manslaughter	NA	NA	NA
Forcible sex offenses	None	None	None
Robbery	None	None	None
Aggravated assault	None	None	None
Burglary/theft	2	6	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	None	2	None
Arson	NA	NA	None

Arrests for the following crimes occurring on campus, on property belonging to university affiliated organizations or affecting university sanctioned events.

Liquor law violations	63	36	86
Drug abuse violations	6	2	None
Weapons Possession	1	2	None

Policy III.A.1 Professional Accreditation

Minot State University does not hold dual accreditation with any other federally funded recognized institutional accrediting body at the institutional level. The university is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minot State University is accredited by the following organizations for specific programs:

- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
2010 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 500, Washington DC 20036-1023
- National Association for Schools of Music
11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190-5248
- Council on Education of the Deaf
Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242-0001
- Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852-3279

- Council on Social Work Education—Baccalaureate level
1600 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3421
- International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education
P.O. Box 25217, Overland Park, Kansas 66225, (913) 631-3009
- National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.
Broadway 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10006
- National Association of School Psychologists
PO Box 791089, Baltimore, MD 21279-1089
- North Dakota Board of Nursing
919 7th Street, Suite 504, Bismarck, ND 58504-5881

Policy IV.B.4 Organizational Records of Student Complaints

Minot State University has a formal student complaint policy. The form to submit a complaint and policy can be reviewed online at http://www.minotstateu.edu/disability_services/handbook_006.shtml.

The policy states that the student will take the complaint through proper chain. If a complaint cannot be resolved at a lower level, it is elevated to the appropriate vice president (Student Affairs or Academic Affairs). The institution maintains a secure database of current and previous student complaints. The database is managed by the Information Technology Central staff members.

All institution administrators and deans have access to record student complaints. The complaint log contains the following: complaint summary, received date, posted date, student name & ID (optional), complaint explanation, resolution, end date, resolution posted, and where the records pertaining to the complaint are located.

Policy 1.C.2 Federal Compliance Visits to Off-Campus Locations

While Minot State University utilizes off-campus facilities (Minot Air Force Base and Bismarck State College), students attending these facilities cannot complete their degree program without the supplementation of some type of distance education (IVN, on-line, correspondence) or on-campus courses at Minot State University. Minot Air Force Base courses are primarily categorized as general education courses. Course offerings

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at the Bismarck State College outreach campus are designed primarily for social work and criminal justice majors; however, students must supplement with other modes of delivery or at the Minot State University campus to complete their studies.

Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Minot State University adheres to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) guidelines regarding advertising and recruitment. The catalogs, student handbook, and website provide readers with accurate information regarding Minot State University's programs and policies that affect students. When Minot State references the HLC, it conforms to the guidelines established by HLC.

IV. A.8. Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

Minot State University's Public Information Office is charged with providing the public with the opportunity to comment on MSU for its re-accreditation.

Notifications were presented in the following publications prior to the campus visit:

- The *Red & Green* (campus paper)
- *Connections* (campus alumni magazine)
- *MSU Inside* (campus electronic bi-weekly update)
- The *Minot Daily News* (local newspaper)
- The Minot Air Force Base *Northern Sentry* (AFB newspaper)
- The *Bottineau Courant* (local paper)
- The *Bismarck Tribune* (newspaper for capital city)

Notifications were placed during first week of December, January, and February immediately prior to the March visit. Local press releases were also made during the first week of January and February. Documentation of these notifications is available to the team in the Evidence Room and archived in the Gordon B. Olson Library.