Assurance Argument

Minot State University - ND

Review date: 4/11/2022

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1

Minot State University (MSU) developed its mission and vision in 2015-2016 through a campus-wide process. At the same time, MSU's strategic plan, *Empowering Generations*, was developed and continues to be refined and updated. Faculty, staff, students, the Board of Regents, and community leaders shared in creating the mission, vision and strategic plan through participation in a Project Council, subcommittees, focus groups, surveys, and SWOT analysis. The administration scheduled open forums for the campus at large to share information and gather feedback. Campus newsletters conveyed updates of the process to the campus and beyond.

The new mission, vision, and goals were presented and distributed to the MSU community at the August 2016 Convocation. The North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) approved *Empowering Generations* on September 29, 2016.

During Fall 2016, the Project Council Chair attended meetings of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association to discuss next steps and to seek volunteers to develop action items for the *Empowering Generations* goals. Ninety faculty, staff, and students volunteered to serve on the goal committees. Beginning in November 2016, the campus developed implementation plans with milestones, actionable items, deadlines, responsible people, and resources. The implementation plans and updates on the progress of the strategic plan's action items were presented to the campus for discussion in an open forum in February 2017. Through February and March of that year the plans were refined and again announced to campus. The new strategic plan, *Empowering Generations*, was finalized with action items and released on MSU's website in May 2017, then

announced to campus at Fall Convocation.

Continuing the collaborative approach appropriate to MSU, the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC) met throughout 2017-2018 to refine and prioritize action items under each major goal. On May 2-3, 2018, the action items SPBC rated as high priority were shared with the campus at a forum. To reduce the large number of action items, the VPAA asked a sub-group of SPBC members to streamline and focus objectives and action items under each goal without compromising their general intent. This work was completed during summer and early fall of 2018. Revised goals, objectives, and action items, as well as progress and accomplishments, were shared at campus forums on November 26-27, 2018.

During 2018-2019, MSU's revised budget planning process required units to tie requests to strategic plan goals. This requirement was noted in policy, budget process and timeline, and budget workbooks. Since 2017 MSU has used a collaborative process to steadily refine the strategic plans' focus, while also using its broad goals to guide important decisions, topics discussed in depth in Criterion 5.

1.A.2

MSU's mission emphasizes educational and campus experiences, scholarship, creative work, and community engagement: "Minot State University is a public university dedicated to excellence in education, scholarship, and community engagement achieved through rigorous academic experiences, active learning environments, commitment to public service, and a vibrant campus life."

MSU's mission, vision, and the six main goals of the strategic plan are current and identify the institution's key activities. The strategic plan and its goals serve as a guide for campus decision makers as MSU addresses changing trends in higher education, including enrollment, state funding formulas, and adjustments to operations during COVID-19.

Excellence in Education

MSU promotes excellence in education through high-quality, rigorous academic experiences. First-year students are required to participate in First-Year Experience (FYE) Learning Communities to support their transition to university life and academic expectations. As students near graduation, most are required to participate in a culminating experience within their major to synthesize, demonstrate, and apply their knowledge. MSU students explore general education courses and experiences designed to impart and develop skills that will allow them to flourish and make life-long contributions to their professional, civic, and social world regardless of discipline, major, or career path. Co-curricular activities outside the classroom complement learning that happens inside the classroom. The institution's 2020 NSSE results indicate MSU does better than its peers on some measures of engagement, but MSU still has work to do in other areas. These areas have been noted and included in the draft of the next strategic plan.

MSU's academic programs are rigorous and approved following North Dakota University System (NDUS) policy and specific professional accreditors and license boards, a topic discussed in detail in Criterion 4. MSU's primary focus is on teaching and as such, it places great value on instruction. Faculty Handbook (pp. 32-33) specifies teaching responsibilities of tenured or tenure-track faculty normally include 12 credits of teaching per semester, or its equivalent, and other professional effort including student advising. Special contract faculty normally teach 15 credits per semester. Faculty are expected to consider student feedback, maintain currency in their disciplines and teaching

methods, and participate in peer review activities each year as evidence of their teaching effectiveness as part of the annual evaluation process, discussed in detail in Criterion 3.

Active Learning Environments & Clinical and Hands-on Experiences

Student learning at MSU incorporates significant active learning to prepare students for the twenty-first century world of work, including clinical, hands-on, and capstone-level experiences. The required FYE Learning Communities include collaborative, applied experiences that stress community engagement. Education students take multiple clinical courses set in area classrooms, culminating in student teaching. Communication Sciences and Disorders students observe and practice applied skills in the Communication Disorders Clinic. Nursing students build proficiency in a state-of-the-art nursing simulation center as well as in supervised settings at area healthcare sites. Biology and other students have hands-on experience in MSU's cadaver lab, Music students' concerts, recitals, and juried performances all use MSU's music performance venues, and internships coordinated through Severson Entrepreneurship Academy are just a few of the examples of active learning.

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) is a federally funded University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) which is part of a national network. It provides opportunities for MSU students to serve as peer mentors in the ASTEP Program, an inclusive college program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The study abroad program, while on hiatus during the pandemic, rescheduled a service-learning opportunity in Costa Rica for May 2022 only to have it canceled. A trip to Central Europe is now planned for 2023.

Scholarship

MSU's mission embraces scholarly activity and research, and its faculty work closely with students to support collaborative and undergraduate research. Scholarship is expected of all tenure-track and tenured faculty members and is built into the annual faculty evaluation process. During 2020-2021, scholarly activity was more difficult to complete, share, and disseminate due to the pandemic, but even so, many faculty presented virtually as professional organizations adapted. All faculty can apply for small research grants organized by the Faculty Research Committee and supported by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The Office of Sponsored Programs supports faculty and staff with grant applications. Each academic unit has funds to support professional development, including travel to present or conduct scholarly activity. Undergraduate research opportunities are regularly included in faculty small grant awards, which require faculty to identify how the research will enhance teaching and include students, as well as in faculty labs such as Chemistry, Biology, and Geoscience.

Students, faculty, and staff present and publish at the local, state, national, and international levels. University Communications showcases a number of feature stories about faculty and student accomplishments on their News and Events page, the *Inside* newsletter, and *Connections* magazine. A student tour fee supports the travel of current undergraduate and graduate students who are doing one of the following: a) presenting research or creative activities at conferences and professional meetings, b) traveling to participate in an academic competitions, or c) traveling to participate in other academic-related events. Student and faculty research are highlighted each spring at the MSU Research Poster Session. These sessions were not held during 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, but are resuming Spring, 2022.

Community Engagement and Public Service

Meaningful community engagement and a commitment to public service are cornerstones of MSU's mission. These experiences are expected, and most students, faculty, and staff participate. The [Engagement Honor Roll](#) is an opportunity for MSU students to document this work and to receive recognition through distinction on their transcripts for their community engagement. MSU has an [Honors Program in Engagement and Scholarship (HOPES)](#), as well as the [Looyenga Leadership Center](#), which houses the emerging scholars' program.

First-year students engage with the community through FYE learning communities and [Welcome Weekend](#). MSU has been [repeatedly recognized](#) for its volunteer work with the Roosevelt Park Zoo as part of these events. MSU student-athletes volunteer in the community, and Athletics has defined engagement as one of its core values: "We are committed to involvement of our student athletes and staff within the campus and community. Supporting the values of our campus and community is of utmost importance."

MSU groups regularly organize service events for community, regional, and international benefit. Within the College of Education and Health Sciences, Communication Sciences and Disorders operates free speech-language pathology services to the Minot community and region at their [Communication Disorders Clinic](#) and also hosts [Miles for Smiles](#) every year to raise money for Operation Smile, an international medical nonprofit that provides free, safe surgeries to individuals born with cleft lips/cleft palates. Nursing has assisted throughout the pandemic by performing community COVID-19 testing and immunization services. The College of Business provides free tax services to those in need through the [VITA program](#). The College of Arts and Sciences is also highly engaged with the community, sponsoring a number of events that enrich the community, including [music events](#), [art exhibits and activities](#), [theatrical performances](#), [Democracy Café](#), the [Lookout Podcast](#), and [Campus and Community Dialogues](#). The [Northwest Arts Center](#) encourages and promotes artistic and multi-cultural expression with education and outreach through an interdisciplinary regional arts center.

Vibrant Campus Life

The many activities that realize the central components of MSU's mission create a vibrant campus community. Dynamic courses, presentations, active learning, clinical experiences, undergraduate research talks, community projects, and public service projects provide a steady stream of activity on and around the campus. MSU's campus is rich with opportunities that extend classroom learning and assist students in understanding the world from a variety of perspectives. Some of these events include the following:

- [Alumni Speaker Series](#) which brings accomplished alumni to campus
- [Presidential Speaker Series](#)
- Athletic events
- The MSU [Diversity Council](#), and Native American Cultural Center sponsor several events including the annual spring [Honor Dance and Pow Wow](#).
- [Veteran's celebrations](#) organized by the Military Resource Center (Veterans Center)
- Traditional Fall Homecoming weekend
- [NOTSTOCK](#) offers an annual three-day arts celebration organized by MSU faculty featuring artists from across the nation who share their talents with the campus and community in an interactive hands-on format.
- The College of Arts and Sciences events noted in the section directly above.

For more on this topic, see 1.B.1.

1.A.3

Nature of MSU's Offerings

MSU's mission, vision, and related statements, as presented in its strategic plan, indicate that its offerings will be high quality, flexible, rigorous, relevant, include active learning, and inspire scholarship and creative activity.

Scope of MSU's Offerings

The scope of MSU's offerings is defined broadly as intending to "deliver high-quality education where, when, and how it is needed to a diverse, multi-generational student population, and we will combine professional expertise with broad-based education to prepare graduates for the world's evolving social and technological changes and to support their varied careers and lives."

As a Carnegie Master's level institution, MSU's programs are broad in scope. It offers 64 Undergraduate majors, 57 minors, 53 concentrations, 15 pre-professional programs, seven certificate programs and one post baccalaureate program. It also offers seven master's degrees and seven graduate certificates, as well as one educational specialist degree. MSU has aligned its academic offerings and student support services with its stated mission and related statements as well as with the needs of its constituents. Academic programs at the university have expanded on its original mission of preparing teachers and currently serve the needs of local, state, region, and international communities with high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs as well as major and minor areas of study, certificates, concentrations, and pre-professional programs including the fine and performing arts, the humanities, education and the human service professions, sciences, technology, and business (see the MSU Catalog). See 3.A.3 for additional discussion of academic offerings.

Intended Constituents

The intended constituents of MSU's offerings and services include undergraduate and graduate students, the local and regional communities, P-12 partner schools, Minot Air Force Base (MAFB), other higher education partner institutions, alumni, and all those who hire MSU's graduates. MSU is a member of the North Dakota University System, and as such, has an obligation to provide an educated workforce for the state.

MSU is committed to meeting the needs of its diverse constituencies through its wide array of programs. To meet the needs of today's learners, courses are offered online, in hybrid format, in-person, and at a distance in Bismarck and Fargo and at MAFB. Active-duty MAFB students and their spouses and dependents who wish to complete their degrees can take courses on MAFB and through distance formats. Fifteen baccalaureate degrees are offered online along with one associate degree, two certificate programs, 13 minors, and 10 concentrations. Six graduate programs and 7 graduate certificates are also offered online. The Military Resource Center identifies evolving needs of veteran students, and programs are developed as needs are identified. The institution also has a comprehensive portfolio of articulation agreements and memoranda of understanding as well as dual credit/dual enrollment programming in place to serve constituents' needs for opportunity and access. Students can also access MSU as both early entry or dual credit students or collaborative students through the NDUS Collaborative Student Program.

1.A.4

Academic Offerings

Academic programs at MSU have built on the original mission of teacher education and have expanded to serve the needs of the region, state, country, and world. Through three colleges and a graduate school, programs span the humanities, fine and performing arts, education, social and natural sciences, human services, and business. Many programs must also meet additional external accreditation requirements. Course and program offerings are online, in-person, hybrid, and at a distance to meet the needs of today's varied learners. Opportunities exist at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and, as noted above, credentials range from concentrations to a specialist degree. See 3.A.3 for detailed information related to academic offerings.

Student Support Services

The evolution of student support services is a priority at MSU. During September 2019, academic support services were centralized at the lower level of the Gordon B. Olson Library for ease of access as well as for collaboration for the success of students. The Academic Support Center houses several programs that prepare students for workplace success, including the Career Center, Access Services, and the POWER Student Support Center. The Career Center provides career exploration, employment opportunities, job-search skills, and Career Fairs throughout the academic year. The Military Resource Center offers similar support for veterans, active-duty military personnel and their spouses and dependents.

First-year students participate in the First-Year Experience. This is a powerful learning experience designed to facilitate students' transitions to university life and learning through community experiences with peers, faculty and staff, and peer mentors. This year, through the combined efforts of Residence Life and the Looyenga Leadership Center, a Leadership Living Learning Community is being offered.

MSU's Wellness Center promotes a holistic approach to wellness and healthy living and offers a place for students to learn about pillars of wellness, engage in exercise and fun, and relax with yoga and other programming. The Counseling Center advocates for and empowers students' personal and educational development through short-term counseling and educational outreach. Services are designed to promote growth through a variety of tools which are available on their website. Personnel at Lutheran Campus Ministries are also available to lend a listening ear and help students build community.

Support services are in place to provide extra assistance to international students, Native Americans, students with disabilities, veterans, active military, students from low-income families, and those who are first generation. The Diversity Council, Athletics, and various clubs promote diversity and support students through these efforts. See 1.C for additional discussion.

MSU is one of the most affordable institutions in the country. Financial aid support and scholarship opportunities enhance access: in 2019-2020 74% of all undergraduates received scholarship or grant aid and 24% received Pell grants. Among full-time, first-time degree seeking students, 89% received some form of grant aid: federal grants (62%), Pell grants (27%), state/local grants (36%), and institutional grants (79%). In addition, 52% received federal loans. (IPEDs data Winter 2020-21, p. 5) For more information on financial support for MSU students see 4.C.3.

Enrollment Profile

MSU's enrollment profile is consistent with its mission and related documents. The Fall [2020 Student Profile](#) shows 2920 enrolled students with the majority (65%) hailing from North Dakota. Most students are of traditional college age (67%), undergraduates (91%), women (63%), and attending full time (67%). Incoming first-year students averaged a 3.42 high school GPA and an ACT of 21. International students composed 10% of MSU's [Fall 2020 student body](#). Canadians alone composed 6%. The ethnic composition of MSU students selecting only one category in [2020-2021](#) was 68% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 4% African American, 2% Native American, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. Veterans and active-duty military are approximately 9% of the student body.

See 4.C.1 and 4.C.2 as well as the [MSU Factbook](#) for more information on enrolled students.

1.A.5

MSU articulates its mission to the university community and general public by sharing its mission, vision, and strategic plan in public documents, posted in major campus buildings, and online. MSU considers its [university website](#) a primary source of information about the campus, its programs, and its policies. Undergraduate ([2020](#), [2021](#)) and graduate catalogs ([2020](#), [2021](#)) include MSU's mission and vision statements. The [Strategic Plan website](#) is the repository for all documents related to the mission, vision, and strategic plan as well as Strategic Planning and Budget Council documentation. reports and presentations to campus, unit accomplishments, goals, reallocations, reductions, and budget requests in relation to university goals and priorities.

The [Office of the President's website](#) contains the President's report; the mission, vision, and goals; and the President's news columns written for the *Minot Daily News*. The [VPAA's website](#) presents policy, operational practices, achievements, and access to data related to both academics and [assessment](#). The [student affairs website](#) provides information for students and parents and the [Student Government Association website](#) provides additional information for students related to university affairs.

University Communications regularly posts news on the university website and shares press releases and news stories with local and regional media. To reach alumni, the *Connections* magazine ([Fall 2020](#), [Fall 2021](#)) is published and distributed three times a year. The *[Inside](#)* newsletter, for employees and friends of MSU is published each month. *Campus Announcements* go out daily to faculty and staff and weekly to students via email. The *[Red and Green](#)* is the student newspaper which is published in print and online bi-weekly. MSU's marketing office and organizations across the University maintain active, [official](#) social media accounts. Each of these publications notifies the campus and community of important institutional events and priorities.

All units within the university complete [assessment reports](#) related to student learning and other measurable outcomes. These reports also highlight program goals and accomplishments. Unit budget presentations are public, [transparent](#), and tied to priorities articulated in the Strategic Plan. This process is discussed in detail in Criterion 5.

Sources

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- Bachelor-of-Individualized-Studies-Webpage
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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1

MSU provides affordable, quality educational opportunities and programs designed to connect students to the community at large doing important work that makes a difference in the lives of others. Students at MSU regularly engage in this work through internships and externships, clinical experiences, and student teaching. In this way students gain real-world experience and networking opportunities; employers and agencies observe the latest knowledge and practices; and the public receives the benefits of the services provided. Some examples are below.

- Speech-language pathology graduate students assist community members with Parkinson's Disease (PD) through the Speaking with Intent program delivered within the free [Communication Disorders Clinic](#).
- As a part of their public health rotation, nursing students hold the [Adult Health Maintenance Promotion and Wellness Clinic](#) at Henry Towers, a subsidized housing development in Minot. The clinic offers education on medications, nutrition, and immunizations as well as blood pressure screenings and foot assessment and care.
- Faculty, staff, students, and the [Native American Cultural Center](#) partner to develop a community garden featuring native North Dakota plants including those used traditionally by the Ojibwe.
- Student athletes, several student organizations, honors students, and leadership students participate in projects that provide important services to the Minot community as a part of their curriculum or organizational requirements.
- Senior history faculty facilitated two virtual meetings for the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program on "COVID-19 and Minot" for visiting professionals from [Japan, Ethiopia, Brazil, Lebanon](#), and [Indonesia](#). These visitors met with the mayor, council members, and state and local public health officials to discuss pandemic response and public mitigation measures.
- The local Taube Museum of Art regularly hosts MSU faculty and student shows for the community, most recently ["The Sky is Universal" and "Window Shopping."](#)
- MSU gives back to the community by hosting many annual activities including a [Homecoming Community Block Party](#), [Earth Day](#), Flag Day, the [Spring Honor Dance and Pow Wow](#), [International Mother Language Day](#), [Black History Month](#), [Deaflympics, Special Olympics](#),

and NOTSTOCK.

- Aleshire Theater, Ann Nicole Nelson Hall, and the MSU Amphitheater support public events, including the Minot Symphony Orchestra season, summer theater productions (2020, 2021) with community casts, Western Plains Opera productions, the Northwest Music Festival and the Magic City Jazz Festival.
- The MSU Dome hosts annual high school basketball tournaments, Special Olympics, Pow Wow, COVID-19 testing, and Futurepalooza. The Herb Parker Football Stadium is used by area Class B football teams and Class AA soccer teams. It is also used much of the summer for athletic camps. Every winter, area teams, clubs, and community organizations hold outdoor activities in the warm, protected environment of the air-supported dome over Herb Parker.
- University spaces, including the Slaaten Boardroom and the Student Union Conference Center regularly host community groups for meetings and larger events. Science hosts an annual open house for elementary school children in Cyril Moore Science Center, promoting experience in and exposure to science. The university also houses the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, discussed in 1.B.3.
- Beginning in 2021-2022, MSU partnered with Magic City Daycare to provide on-campus child care for both the community and MSU faculty, staff, and students.

1.B.2

MSU is committed to accountability and transparency in serving the public and providing educational opportunities marked by quality, affordability, and accessibility. MSU is a public, not-for-profit, state-assisted institution; as such, MSU does not generate financial returns for investors or contribute to a parent organization. It supports no external interests.

The University's superordinate entities are the North Dakota University System (NDUS) and the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE). The NDUS is a unified system of higher education institutions organized in 1990 and governed by the SBHE. It is led by the chancellor and supports the SBHE's mission to enhance the quality of life for all those served by the NDUS as well as the economic and social vitality of North Dakota. The SBHE is the policy-setting and advocacy body for the NDUS. It entrusts the day-to-day operation and management of the University to the President.

MSU's operating expenditures demonstrate the primacy of the university's commitment to its educational responsibilities. Educational activities (instruction, academic support, student services, and institutional support) constituted 65.2% operating expenses in FY2020 and 67.2% in FY2021.

MSU uses all funds, including any carry-over, in accordance with North Dakota rules and statutes, which are designed to ensure public monies are used for the institution's mission. MSU has a comprehensive program of internal auditing supported by the Business Office. Findings and actions are reviewed by the Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Assistant Vice President for Business Services/Controller, and the program involved. In compliance with NDUS policies, MSU completes annual external compliance and fiscal audits. The MSU Development Foundation operates as a 501c3 organization distinct from the University. It follows similar processes of internal and external auditing and makes its audit reports and IRS 990s publicly available.

MSU's budget processes and their alignment with the institution's strategic plan, educational mission, and assessment findings are discussed in detail in Criterion 5.

1.B.3

In accordance with its mission and within its capacity, MSU responds to the needs of its regional citizens and local community members. Some examples of the University's local and regional outreach services include:

- The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) has been in existence for more than 30 years. Its mission is to serve as a resource in the areas of education, research and service to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities across North Dakota. The center was authorized by the Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and funded through the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Currently NDCPD runs more than 30 programs in service of the people of North Dakota. Several faculty hold appointments in the Center and several more work as researchers for various projects.
- Recognizing the critical shortage of special educators across North Dakota, the Department of Special Education developed a Para-to-Teacher Program in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. This program provides an online bachelor's degree program for certification in special education to working paraprofessionals.
- The Severson Entrepreneurship Academy and Entrepreneurship Club sponsor teams of students to partner with area residents to form start-up businesses. The students work with the start-up from conception through the first year of business. Their most recent project was working with a restaurant/bakery on a plan; this business plan came to fruition with the opening of Prairie Sky Breads in February 2020.
- MSU's TV and radio station, KMSU Channel 19, broadcasts to the university campus and 20,000 households in the Minot Area. In addition to a weekly TV campus news program, 24/7 music, and MSU sports coverage, KMSU provides free public service announcements to the community.
- The MSU Communication Disorders Clinic provides free screenings, assessments, therapy, and group intervention to the region. It is well known for its service to people with Parkinson's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, phonological disorders, pediatric language delays, stuttering, cluttering, and all types of speech and language disorders.
- The Teacher Education Unit sponsors a spring and summer reading clinic for area children with reading disorders.
- Business faculty offer community tax preparation assistance every year through the VITA program.
- Exercise Science and Rehabilitation students work with area athletes to both avoid injury and rehabilitate safely after an injury. This includes work with concussion protocols.
- Kinesiology students in ESR 227 provide personal training to area residents, who benefit from diet and exercise programs to build and re-gain strength.
- The Athletic Department sponsors several summer camps for area youth to develop their skill and abilities in various sports.

Sources

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1

MSU encourages curricular and co-curricular activities that prepare students to live as global citizens and to succeed in the workplace. General Education and major program requirements incorporate required components and experiences that foster informed citizenship and cultural awareness. All students must complete PSR (personal and social responsibility) credits as part of General Education. The PSR requirement helps students develop an understanding of different value systems and to participate in service activities which respond to community needs. MSU's General Education Interconnecting Perspectives (IP) courses require students to study, reflect upon, and apply diverse global and domestic perspectives in the classroom and in a broader community setting. In addition, the Foundational Content portion of General Education requires six credits of humanities to "demonstrate knowledge of human cultures and cultural products—the arts and letters—and of how to study, compare, and critique diverse cultural perspectives and aesthetics." See 3.B.1 and 3.B.3 for further discussion of General Education requirements.

The university also encourages informed citizenship and workplace success through co-curricular activities and services.

- The University Diversity Council is an institutional committee of faculty, staff, and students whose mission is to promote and build a diverse and inclusive university climate by extending diversity and inclusion awareness throughout the campus community. See section 1.C.2
- Democracy Café, sponsored by MSU's Division of Social Science and its Political Science program, is a discussion series designed to help students and the public become informed citizens. Held in an off-campus community venue, the Café offers open conversation time in which students, faculty, staff, and the public voice their concerns about a societal or civic issue. Guests have included a prominent North Dakota public radio news host, a representative from ND Human Rights Coalition and the North Dakota Native Vote, and the MSU president. Interrupted by COVID-19 in Spring 2020, the program resumed Spring 2021.
- Lutheran Campus Ministries celebrates diversity, supports interfaith and ecumenical partnerships, advocates for justice, and engages in service as a lifelong practice. It sponsors worship, soup days, community service activities, and open discussion about issues of social justice.
- Other student-run groups on campus promote an informed life including Active Minds,

Campus Pride, College Democrats, CRU, the International Student Club, the League of Social Sciences, MSU Equality, MSU Student Life, the Native American Cultural Club, Sign On, Special Olympics, Student Council for Exceptional Children, Student Social Work Organization, and the Veteran's Club.

- Leadership opportunities are provided through MSU's Leadership Studies Program, the Honor's Program, Residence Life, Student Government Association, and related student clubs. The student chapter of the North Dakota Speech-Language-Hearing Association develops leadership skills by organizing a yearly international speech conference. The Social Work Organization's sponsorship of *Take Back the Night,* in conjunction with the Title IX Office, provides similar leadership opportunities.
- MSU's Engagement Honor Roll documents activity related to public good on student transcripts and in yearly press releases, 2019, 2020.

1.C.2

MSU's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. The following units specifically promote this:

- Faculty Senate Diversity Statement: The MSU Faculty Senate approved the following diversity statement on February 2, 2006: "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."
- The Minot State University Diversity Council is an institutional committee of faculty, staff, and students appointed by the President. Its mission is to promote and build a diverse and inclusive university climate by extending diversity and inclusion awareness throughout the campus community. It meets regularly and sponsors diversity events throughout the year, provides resources for university constituents, and advocates for inclusivity. To extend these efforts, the council's 2020-2021 report recommended hiring a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement: MSU publicizes its non-discrimination policy through Title IX training, in the catalog, and in the master syllabus template to ensure it is included on all syllabi.
- Title IX Office: The Title IX Office educates faculty, staff, and students regarding sexual harassment and discrimination and ensures that all federal, state, and local civil rights laws are followed. It provides prevention education and support measures to assist in making the MSU campus safe.
- MSU Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Council: This council was recently created by Athletics independently of the University Diversity Council and held its first meeting in September 2021. The council's objective is to assist the athletics department to value the uniqueness represented by the student-athlete and campus community.
- Access Services: "Access Services promotes self-awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy, while ensuring individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities as all others. Students are assisted in making reasonable accommodations and/or adjustments to meet their individual needs."
- The Office of International Programs: The Office of International Programs sponsors international events to promote an understanding of the cultures of international students attending MSU. Members from the International Programs Office sit on the Diversity Council.

- **The Native American Cultural Center:** The Center sponsors campus and community events to promote awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Native American people and their cultures.
- **Campus Pride:** Campus Pride is a student organization that fosters awareness, understanding, and appreciation of LBGTQ people. It sponsors PRIDE week and on September 22, 2020 organized MSU's first official Pride Flag ceremony.
- **Lutheran Campus Ministries:** Lutheran Campus Ministries is located on campus and fosters an open, inviting community that seeks to celebrate diversity, cares about interfaith and ecumenical partnerships, advocates for justice, and engages service as a lifelong practice. Its website says "All are welcome. Always!"
- **North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities:** NDCPD is a federally funded center dedicated to assisting people with disabilities to live their best life.
- **The Military Resource Center** is dedicated to assisting veterans, active-duty military personnel and their spouses and dependents. In collaboration with university departments and community organizations, the MRC provides coordinated services and resources in a one-stop location to ensure that all veterans and service members are afforded the greatest opportunities for success.
- **POWER Student Support Center**: Renewed in 2020 with a $523,776 grant, this Federal TRIO program has supported first generation, low income, and students with disabilities for the past 11 years.
- **Northwest Arts Center:** Located in the MSU library, the NAC is an interdisciplinary arts gallery that promotes artistic and multicultural expression through education and outreach.

1.C.3

With its broad and inclusive approach to diversity, MSU focuses on awareness, education, and inclusivity through activities, social events, lectures, films, and programs. In addition to examples discussed in 1.C.1 and 1.C.2, campus programming includes:

- A Presidential Lecture Series. In its second year, the lectures focus on diversity through thought-provoking speakers including Elizabeth Smart and Joseph Flynn Jr., author of White Fatigue: "Protests Aren't Parades: Moving from Resistance, to Ally, to Accomplice."
- The Diversity Council, in conjunction with other program and clubs across the university, sponsors several activities throughout the year. Events during 2020-2021 included Latino Heritage Celebration Discussion Panel, International Mother Language Day, PRIDE week, Black Heritage Month, MLK Day of Service, Her Voice Resounds MSU Choir Concert and Women's Art Exhibition, International Cultural Celebration, Religious Celebrations Across the World, Juneteenth events, International Deaflympics Presentation, and the MTNA Diversity Library and Diversity Library Showcase Concert. In 2021-2022 the Council is coordinating an anti-racism program, Stand Up 101, offered to any interested community member.
- The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities sponsors an annual Power Up Conference featuring guest speakers with disabilities from around the country. It also provides monthly professional development lectures through Project SCOPE to build understanding and care capacity for people impacted by neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), trauma, or related exposure.
- MSU also hosts the ASTEP (Advancing Students Toward Education and Employment) program in collaboration with Dakota College Bottineau. This program is one of three in the state. ASTEP is an inclusive post-secondary opportunity for students with intellectual disabilities and other developmental disabilities to attend college with their peers earning either a typical certificate or degree or a specialized certificate in College and Career

Preparation.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

As a Carnegie Master's-level public institution of higher education, MSU is committed to its mission, vision, and strategic plan, *Empowering Generations*. These documents guide MSU's institutional operations and are articulated publicly on the website, in its catalogs, and on the walls of all campus buildings. The mission directs the campus to provide excellent educational opportunities to twenty-first century students, when, where, and how they need them.

MSU's mission calls for rigorous and active academic opportunities for students, which empowers faculty to continually review courses and programs to ensure teaching and learning is meaningful, real, and designed to help students deal with today's complex issues. It also drives the university's commitment to provide research opportunities to its graduate and undergraduate students and enables faculty to ask difficult questions and advance knowledge in creative ways. Collectively, all these activities support a campus that advances the public good and supports the community at large.

Finally, MSU provides a vibrant campus life that embraces the diversity of its members and the wider world. In the past year MSU, under the leadership of the MSU Diversity Council, extended its long record of diversity-related events by hosting public talks on racism, offering anti-racism training, and drafting a formal land acknowledgment for the campus.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1

Minot State University (MSU) is governed by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) as part of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). Authority and responsibility of the SBHE and institutions within the NDUS is set forth in the SBHE Policy Manual, specifically Policy 100.6. All mission statements within the NDUS are developed by institutions and approved by the SBHE as required by Policy 100.7. MSU's revised mission was approved by the SBHE in 2016.

2.A.2

Policy and procedures for fair and ethical behavior are governed by SBHE policy and developed by the institution within the scope of those policies. MSU's policies are based on the principles of integrity, accountability, and good stewardship of public resources. Policies and procedures related to conduct issues are articulated in the MSU Faculty and Staff Code of Conduct. Policies and procedures for faculty and staff are described in the Faculty Handbook and Staff Handbook.

Financial

MSU is transparent about its financial affairs and follows systematic practices to ensure ethical and responsible use of state resources. Established practices govern financial activities. The NDUS requires annual fraud and internal control training for all employees. Completion of this training is monitored by MSU's Assistant Vice President for Business Services/Controller and the NDUS Compliance Officer through an electronic system in Blackboard. Expenditures follow clear processes that require review and multiple signatures. For major purchases, MSU adheres to the NDUS Policy on procurement, which in turn follows the state mandated procurement process. The MSU Development Foundation's investment policy follows sound investment practices.

The NDUS annual financial report reviews the finances of all eleven public institutions in the state and is inspected by the state auditor. The NDUS and State Auditor follow a regular schedule of external audits of all MSU business activities, revenues, and expenditures. MSU's budget, including faculty and staff salaries, is published yearly and publicly available in the Gordon B. Olson Library.

MSU presents costs to students on the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, and Enrollment Services website pages and in its net-price tuition calculator. Housing and meal plans offer a variety of options, and costs are clearly presented on the website.

The annual budget is appropriated by the state legislature in two-year increments, as North Dakota's legislature meets biennially. MSU's biennial budget request is prepared in accordance with NDUS and state requirements. Following legislative decisions each session, the NDUS and MSU allocate resources accordingly. MSU documents its budget, reserves, and financial status in regular reports to the NDUS office as noted in the Annual Financial Report. Per SBHE policy, MSU has a minimum amount of funds that it is required to keep in its financial reserves. MSU's administration has achieved a financial reserve of 14% of the appropriated/tuition budget as of fiscal year 2020. This is a significant increase from the 5% reserve in 2016-17, the time of MSU's last HLC full review. MSU has made a concerted effort to increase its reserves to mitigate unforeseen downturns in tuition revenues and/or state funding.

MSU has a clear and transparent budget timeline and process. Budget requests are made to the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC), and all minutes and proceedings are accessible via the website. All budget presentations are held publicly, and all steps of the process are thoroughly documented on the website. Budget presentation information is also specifically listed on the website. At the conclusion of these presentations, the SPBC makes recommendations to President's Staff. Since MSU's last HLC report, three complete budget cycles have been completed for requests slated for academic years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. The request cycle for 2022-2023 is in process and will be completed during spring 2022. The budget process is discussed in more detail in Criterion 5.

With respect to salaries, the Budget and Salary Committee, consisting of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), the Vice President of Administration and Finance (VPAF), the Director of Human Resources, and five faculty, receives faculty input and disseminates information regarding salary and budgetary processes. In Spring 2021, Faculty Senate approved a revised salary administration policy recommended for adoption by the MSU administration. Administration and Faculty Senate are working to resolve issues with the policy before faculty vote on it for inclusion in the Bylaws.

Academics

MSU exhibits fair, systematic, and transparent application of policies in relation to academics, including admission requirements, academic credit, transfer credit, graduation requirements, student welfare, student rights, data integrity and confidentiality, assessment, and co-curricular activities.

Requirements for admission to MSU, for both graduate and undergraduate programs, are provided on the website as well as in respective catalogs. Admission requirements are presented separately for first-year students, transfer students, international students, and graduate students.

Beginning with the Registrar's Office, MSU seeks fair and systematic application of policies on graduate and undergraduate transfer credit, academic credit, and graduation requirements. These policies are articulated in the MSU online undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Degree requirements are set by the faculty, implemented through the Registrar's Office, and managed through Campus Connection software. To ensure continuity, transparency, and accurate record-keeping of course and program requirements, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee includes a representative from the Registrar's Office. Curriculum software (CourseLeaf) tracks course and program proposals and

changes and ensures review at each level, from initial proposal to final VPAA approval. Students and advisors can check student progress toward graduation through the Academic Requirements Report within Campus Connection (also known as Degree Audit).

Graduate Student Rights and Student Rights committees meet as needed and follow specific guidelines for addressing student appeals, which include grade changes and approval of exceptional course withdrawals for medical or other circumstances. The Student Welfare and University Affairs Committee (SWUAC) deals with issues affecting student life, including serving as an appeals committee depending upon the circumstance. The Student Rights Committee, referenced above, hears grade appeals and also appeals of rulings coming from the SWUAC.

To ensure integrity of student data, faculty, staff, and adjunct faculty who require access to student records are required to undergo training in FERPA guidelines; employees are not allowed access to Campus Connection or Starfish until they complete this training.

The North Dakota University System and MSU's IT Central systematically audit MSU's computer servers to ensure security of confidential data. These audits are provided in a public report at a broad level and specific information is available to NDUS security team members and shared with campuses so that they can make needed changes.

All NDUS employees are governed by the NDUS Computer and Network Usage Policy, and MSU students, faculty, and staff are responsible for reviewing IT Policies available on the MSU website. MSU began using DUO Multifactor authentication in 2017 for employees and in 2018 for students. DUO Multifactor adds a second layer of security, keeping system accounts secure even if a password is compromised. Users are verified using a mobile phone app, hardware key, phone call, or text message, and they are alerted immediately on their phone if someone is trying to log into their account.

MSU assessment practices are embedded, ongoing, and transparent. All programs have established Student Learning Goals (SLGs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which are published in the catalog and on the website. The campus has refined the annual assessment processes for academic unit annual reports, General Education program reports, and co-curricular reports. The Director of Institutional Assessment (DIA) reviews the yearly academic program assessment reports submitted by departments/divisions each fall. The assessment of courses in the General Education program is under the purview of the General Education Committee. A Co-Curricular Committee was instituted in Spring 2019 to oversee the development, planning, and implementation of MSU's five-year co-curricular plan. Each committee presents to the campus in February during Assessment Day, keeping faculty and staff abreast of the state of assessment at MSU. The DIA also serves on the General Education committee and Co-Curricular committee, and those committees review those reports as well. MSU's assessment practices are discussed thoroughly in Criterion 4.

MSU's adoption of Simple Syllabus, beginning in the Fall of 2020, has resulted in a much more public, consistent, and ongoing review system, which is guided by policies developed collaboratively by the DIA, faculty, and administration. These policies are detailed in the procedures outlined in the Syllabus Integrity Review. Chairs and the Academic Assessment Committee regularly review syllabi to ensure that comparable information and assignments are contained in each and that the content of the same course taught across different modes and schedules is consistent. Directions for completing these reviews are public and clear. Compressed format courses are limited to 8 weeks or longer following a Faculty Senate vote on October 3, 2019. Currently, compressed course reviews are conducted in Simple Syllabus, which automatically forwards any syllabus shorter than sixteen weeks

to the Academic Assessment Committee for approval. Compressed courses are compared to their 16-week counterparts in Simple Syllabus. To ensure integrity of courses across modality, comprehensive modality reviews are conducted by departments/divisions annually each spring to ensure that courses taught in different modalities have comparable content and objectives. The adoption and use of Simple Syllabus have resulted in richer, more consistent syllabi across campus.

Human Resources

University hiring, evaluation, and personnel policies and practices also reflect the institution's commitment to integrity. The university operates under the auspices of the NDUS and follows SBHE policies in all matters, including those related to personnel. Guided by the MSU Director of Human Resources, MSU administrators and supervisors adhere to the NDUS Human Resource Policy Manual and MSU Human Resource policies, all of which are displayed publicly. Faculty (full time and adjunct) and staff handbooks are readily accessible on the web.

MSU's Office of Human Resources (HR) also provides guidance for faculty and staff searches. In October 2020, HR replaced AppliTrack with Recruiting Solutions, which is part of the PeopleSoft system already in use by MSU, resulting in an online applicant tracking tool to streamline MSU's application and review processes. All faculty (including adjunct faculty) and staff apply through this system. The HR office and VPAA also assist with employee onboarding for faculty, adjunct faculty, and staff to ensure proper compliance with Veterans' Preference, position advertisements, EEO wording and process, formal and clear employee grievance procedures, Title IX procedures, and drug and alcohol policies.

The VPAA manages faculty affairs and evaluations, including publishing a clear evaluation schedule and timeline. The VPAA works with the Faculty Senate in overseeing faculty evaluation (pp. 25-29), pre-tenure (pp. 36-37), tenure (pp. 30-40), and promotion policies (pp. 41-48). MSU staff also participate in an annual performance development review (p. 16). In the spring of 2021, Faculty Senate approved a policy for the evaluation of adjunct faculty that was developed by the Committee for Evaluation of Teaching. Faculty will vote on the adjunct faculty evaluation policy and process during spring 2022. Faculty credentials were audited in the Fall of 2021 by the VPAA, including those of adjuncts and dual credit faculty. Although dual credit faculty face a 2023 deadline for meeting HLC guidelines, affected departments have plans in place for or discontinued hiring certain faculty to ensure compliance by 2023.

With respect to grievance and dispute resolution for faculty, the Faculty Rights Committee is charged with dispute resolution, primarily stemming from faculty non-renewal. SBHE policy 605.4 clearly articulates the steps for requesting a hearing and submitting an appeal while policy 605.5 lays out the mediation process. MSU specific guidelines are found on pages 19-20 of the Faculty Handbook.

MSU employs a full-time Title IX Coordinator who oversees campus Title IX policies and procedures. Additionally, MSU has appointed three Deputy Title IX Coordinators in the areas of student affairs, security, and institutional research. An extensive Title IX Policy Manual is available on the MSU website. This policy manual seeks to combine and implement the legal, regulatory, and policy requirements regarding sexual discrimination contained within both federal and state legislation and the NDUS policies. Steps for reporting cases of harassment are outlined in the policy. A multitude of resources are available via the office, and flyers are posted around campus, making it difficult to not be aware of available resources. In addition, the Title IX office conducts mandatory yearly training for all employees and students provided by EverFi Foundry.

Auxiliary Functions

MSU's auxiliary services include the bookstore (Barnes & Noble), food services (Sodexo), student housing, student health and counseling, and security. The bookstore reports to and meets regularly with the VPAF to review contract status and to ensure that MSU's academic needs are being served. Additionally, the bookstore surveys students (2019, 2021) and explores emerging resources, including open educational resources and materials. Food Services and Residence Life report to the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). Food services regularly surveys students, faculty, and staff to assess needs and dining interests. The results inform the dining services audit process. Residence Life regularly surveys and meets with students via the Residence Hall Association to assess needs and interests of students living on campus. Residence Life is also engaged in professional associations to help identify emerging trends in residence life and housing. Residence Life expenditures have been reduced to offset shortfalls due to decreased occupancy and a decrease in meal plans. To combat COVID-19, MSU implemented extensive policies for the residence halls during 2020-2021. During the 2021-2022 school year, MSU has been able to return to normal residence hall operations.

MSU's Student Health Clinic provides both mental health and physical health services to students. During 2020-2021 it coordinated COVID-19 services for students, including testing, contact tracing, and eventually vaccinations. The clinic conducted virtual appointments for mental health issues and have retained that appointment mode as an option. In addition to ongoing services, the staff at the Student Health Clinic also provide educational programming during Welcome Weekend and throughout the year. Student Health regularly surveys students in relation to clinic functions as well as counseling functions.

The MSU Safety and Security office has an extensive presence on campus. Following an adjusted budget in August 2018, MSU was able to offer 24/7 coverage, eliminating the need to contract with an outside company. In addition to six full-time and four part-time officers, MSU has a Blue Light system at 27 locations across campus, with direct links to both the MSU Security emergency line and Minot central dispatch. MSU Safety and Security offers many programs ranging from fingerprint services to Safe Walk.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

MSU clearly and completely discloses information to multiple audiences through its comprehensive website, print media, and social media platforms. MSU's website templates are managed by a Web Graphic Designer in IT Central (ITC) and made available to the campus through the Cascade CMS. Many groups across campus use the CMS directly to update content for their departments. Support for the departments in relation to photography, video, and content writing are provided through the Marketing Office, University Communications, and ITC. Print and social media are managed by the Director of Marketing, who works closely with ITC, Design Services, and University Communications to ensure message and brand consistency. MSU uses the website, internal and external print and electronic newsletters, email, and social media tools to share the university's achievements, announcements, and activities with students, staff, faculty, and community members. Marketing employs a social media specialist to maintain MSU's official Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram feeds.

2.B.1

As noted in the strategic plan, MSU's mission statement clearly identifies MSU as a comprehensive public university in the NDUS. Externally, the NDUS also identifies MSU as part of the state system of public universities, while the North Dakota Century Code recognizes MSU as one of four normal schools serving the state. The VPAA website relays academic policies and institutional committees to the public. The VPSA website describes the variety of services and resources provided through the student affairs arm of MSU. All MSU students are directed to the MSU Student Handbook for guidance on MSU policies, student conduct code, and various academic and support services.

Organizational structure at MSU is clear and up to date on the website. Governance structure is outlined in the bylaws of Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association. The SBHE, MSU administration, and the campus governing bodies work together, through the frame of shared governance, to provide leadership and support that allow MSU to fulfill its mission.

MSU's website homepage provides direction to constituents depending on their relationship to MSU and their informational needs. About Us directs constituents to websites for Enrollment Services, Faculty and Staff Directory, Student Consumer Information, Strategic Plan, Accreditation, current Student Profile, news stories, and other information. Academics provides information about academic programs, academic advising, General Education, and links to distance education offerings, for example. Most links from the homepage are connected to the Graduate and Undergraduate catalogs

as well. Additionally, the MSU homepage provides constituents quick access to Student Support Services, including campus resources such as housing, bookstore, business office, and academic services. Admissions, athletics, and alumni and donor relations also have links on the homepage. The site is internally searchable via an embedded Google custom search.

Information for Prospective, Incoming, and Enrolled Students

Prospective and incoming students have access to printed literature available for public distribution including an introductory prospective mailer, a viewbook, a transfer guide, and a roadmap. Enrollment Services has a presence on social media with public Facebook and Instagram accounts. New and prospective students and parents can access admissions requirements, degree offerings, residence hall information, costs, and other student resources on the Enrollment Services menu page, through program sheets given to prospective students, and in the prospective mailer, the viewbook, and transfer guide mentioned above. The graduate and undergraduate online catalogs outline institutional requirements, including General Education and detailed academic program information and requirements. Catalogs from previous years are also archived for easy access. Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs provide an overview for each department/division, including its mission and vision, and the academic programs housed within the department/division. Each academic program lists student learning goals and outcomes, curriculum requirements, and external discipline specific accreditation, if applicable. Course descriptions and faculty credentials are also provided in each catalog.

Faculty and staff offices, emails, and phone numbers are listed in the MSU directory, which is printed annually and available on the website. In addition, academic units maintain profiles of faculty on their web pages. As noted above, academic credentials of MSU faculty are listed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. The MSU Fact Book provides a comprehensive look at majors and degrees, faculty and staff, information resources, and retention and graduation statistics.

Availability of Financial Information

Current MSU tuition and fees, housing, and board costs are provided on the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, and Enrollment Services web pages. Costs for graduate school in addition to other pertinent financial resources, are also readily available online. The net price calculator provides prospective students estimates of the cost of attendance and also of the amount of financial aid they may receive. Housing costs and meal plan costs are publicly available. The Financial Aid office's Student Consumer Information section provides constituents detailed information on student financial assistance, federal loan education, intercollegiate athletic programs, campus security, student outcomes, and general information.

Accreditation Status and Relationships

MSU's Higher Learning Commission accreditation status is publicly documented on its website, as are discipline-specific national accreditations. The VPAA's office also manages the program review process for programs without specialized accreditors. Accreditation reports are discussed in detail in Criterion 4, and the results are maintained on the VPAA website, via the Assessment page.

2.B.2

MSU provides an enriched educational environment for its constituents through both curricular and co-curricular programming suited to the institution's mission as a public university dedicated to

excellence in education, scholarship, and community engagement. MSU achieves this mission through rigorous academic experiences, active learning environments, a commitment to public service and a vibrant campus life. In addition, MSU contributes to the economic development of the region and the state as documented in the report *Economic Impact of the North Dakota University System.*

Student Engagement Opportunities on Campus

MSU offers a wide variety of opportunities for engagement on campus through student government, student athletics, student clubs and organizations, study abroad as well as more specific opportunities focused on the arts. MSU's Student Government Association, composed of elected members representing the student body, meets twice monthly to consider issues that impact the student body. MSU has over 60 student clubs and organizations which span a variety of interests including academics (e.g., English Club), athletics (e.g., Women's Club Hockey), professional organizations (e.g., Nursing Student Association), special interests (e.g., Social Dance Club and Gaming Club), and those dedicated to social justice and diversity (e.g., Campus Pride and Native American Cultural Awareness Club). Study Abroad has a rich history at MSU, although it was understandably interrupted by the pandemic. A new study abroad opportunity in Costa Rica was scheduled for May of 2022 and has since been canceled. A trip to Central Europe is being planned for May 2023. The Lookout Podcast series interviews students, faculty, and others, yielding about four episodes per semester. KMSU provides 24/7 broadcasting on Midcontinent Communications Channel 19 and the radio. The campus newspaper, the Red and Green, is published approximately every two weeks and has recently added an online presence including standing sections titled "Begin the Conversation: Race," and "Mental Health Awareness."

The pandemic caused some fall 2020 sports to be canceled while other teams played an abbreviated schedule, and still others were moved to spring 2021. Additional precautions included holding female and male basketball teams home games on alternating weekends. Beginning fall 2021, a full slate of fall sports resumed. COVID-19 did highlight the utility of video streaming of home games via the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference website.

MSU offers many opportunities for students to participate in performing groups in theatre and music that serve the campus, the Minot community, and the region. These opportunities are open to majors and non-majors alike. Theatre Arts offers ample opportunities for any interested student to appear on stage in one of MSU's three physical venues: Harold G. Aleshire Theatre, Black Box Theatre, and Summer Theatre.

Prior to the pandemic, the theater arts program staged a play each semester, and Campus Players, the oldest student organization on campus, produced a student-run play each December and hosted a 24-Hour Play Festival every fall. Summer Theatre is a staple of Minot's summers, drawing in large audiences and large casts comprised of students, staff, and community members, producing 4-5 popular musicals each season. During the pandemic, only remote performances were held, but live performances resumed during summer 2021. The music program is one of the most vibrant elements of campus, with performances that highlight students and faculty throughout the semester. Many students and faculty are members of the Minot Symphony Orchestra, currently in its 95th season, which holds its rehearsals and concerts in MSU's Ann Nicole Nelson Hall. Music performances continued during the pandemic as live streaming options with only limited in-person attendance. Restrictions have been removed this year but the benefits of live-streaming have been retained, with live-streaming tickets now permanently available. Theatre and classical music come together every

year via the Western Plains Opera Company's winter performance of a particular opera on MSU's campus. As with the symphony and summer theatre, the cast and orchestra of the opera are comprised of students, faculty, staff and community members. In December 2021, they performed Amahl and the Night Visitors.

MSU offers a variety of arts-related events for the campus and the Minot community at large. NOTSTOCK, a popular 3-day event each fall centered on artistic creativity and hands-on experiences, draws high school students from around the state. While NOTSTOCK 2020 was canceled due to COVID-19, it returned in fall 2021. Despite NOTSTOCK's cancellation in 2020, NOTSTOCK organizers still partnered with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to sponsor a juried "Visions of Justice" exhibit exploring issues of judgement, fairness, history, and identity. The exhibit received 30 pieces of art and 10 written submissions touching a multitude of themes from criminal justice reform. The exhibit toured several locations outside of Minot. Its success encouraged a similar project this year, entitled "QuaranTIME: Lockdown with COVID" again featured literary and visual art from ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation residents.

Other events, such as gallery openings at the Northwest Arts Center, which hosts 12-18 exhibits per year, the Flat Tail Press Gallery, and a Campus and Community Dialogue Series touching a range of topics, maintained their presence during COVID-19 by transitioning to live-streaming for the year. During fall 2021, all of these events returned to in-person gatherings, often with remote attendance options. The annual Spring Honor Dance and Pow Wow, hosted by the Native American Cultural Center, has been a spring feature at MSU for 31 years. Although the event was cancelled in spring 2020, it was back in spring 2021. The Honor Dance and Powwow is well-attended by many individuals from around the state as well as the MSU community.

Co-curricular Opportunities

MSU has defined co-curricular learning as "ungraded learning that happens outside the classroom, which complements learning that happens inside the classroom." Co-curricular opportunities at MSU are centered around four co-curricular areas, each with its own goals and outcomes; these include leadership, wellness, self-awareness, and career and professional development. Co-curricular activities have been identified with connections to one of these four areas, and MSU's co-curricular five-year plan outlined a phased approach to assessment of activities in these areas. The five-year plan was initiated in fall 2019, following the recommendations of an ad-hoc co-curricular committee. MSU's co-curricular plan was designed to focus on areas beyond academic departments, to train personnel to effectively accomplish assessment, to connect efforts to broader institutional goals, and to implement a continuous improvement cycle.

During the first year of this plan, the offices at the core of co-curricular activities (i.e. Academic Support, Wellness Center, Career Services, Student Activities) began a co-curricular assessment cycle. During years 2-4 co-curricular learning is being extended to additional offices and programs, and the model is being refined to focus resources on institutionally effective collaboration that explicitly improves university vision, mission, and strategic planning. The newly-formed Co-Curricular Assessment Committee maintains this blueprint, reviews assessment plans and yearly reports, and communicates results to the campus at large. The committee has laid out an annual co-curricular assessment calendar as well as a timeline for staged introduction of assessment by units offering co-curricular options. This committee will guide MSU through the final stage of the plan, years 3-5, which will focus on model and process coherence, improvement, and maturation of procedures and practices for both co-curricular activities and assessment. Co-curricular assessment is

discussed in detail in Criterion 4.

Addressing the Common Good Through Service

MSU is dedicated to community engagement through commitment to public service. Incoming students are involved in engaged learning and service through their First-Year Experience Learning Communities (FYE), where they complete some type of engagement activity (volunteer, community service, service learning, or community problem solving activity). During Welcome Weekend, students participate in service activities that support the community and foster community among incoming students. Students who complete 50 hours of engagement, civic, or community activities are recognized on MSU's Engagement Honor Roll. The Honor Roll is released publicly to the community and the achievement is formally documented on student transcripts.

Programs at MSU also provide opportunities for engaged learning and service. Students in Communication Sciences and Disorders experience engaged learning and service in the Communication Disorders Clinic. Undergraduate and graduate students perform evaluation and treatment of speech and hearing problems under the supervision of clinical supervisors certified by the American Speech Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and licensed by the State of North Dakota. Elementary Education students participate in the Reading Clinic and the Early Literacy Camp. Both exist to serve the community by providing intervention services to struggling readers in the region while also providing clinical opportunities for teacher candidates pursuing a Title I endorsement in reading and for clinical opportunities for early childhood and elementary education majors.

In the Severson Entrepreneurship Academy students gain authentic experience in beginning their own business ventures. MSU's Entrepreneurship Club is affiliated with the national Collegiate Entrepreneurship Organization, and student members develop business startup plans. The best projects receive funding from a donor-sponsored seed money fund. Students also participate in the Finance Club, which manages the seed money fund and distributes proceeds to the Entrepreneurship Club. The Roger and Ann Looyenga Leadership Center is dedicated to both the leadership development and personal growth of MSU students. Skills and competencies are developed through courses, engagement with community partners, and workshops offered each semester. A goal of the Honors Program in Engagement and Scholarship (HOPES) is to instill a commitment to community awareness, involvement, and service.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

MSU belongs to the North Dakota University System (NDUS), which is governed by the State Board of Higher Education(SBHE) composed of seven citizen members appointed to four-year terms by the governor and one student appointed by the governor to serve a one-year term. The Council of College Faculties selects the board's non-voting faculty advisor, and the NDUS Staff Senate selects the board's non-voting staff advisor. The SBHE has articulated principles and core values that guide decision-making in relationship to the eleven institutions that compose the NDUS. Officers for the SBHE are elected following a clearly outlined process. Their responsibilities are outlined in SBHE policy, including a clause devoted to autonomous decision-making: "...Represent the people of North Dakota and be an advocate for the NDUS without special regard to a particular institution, interest, political affiliation, community, or constituency."

2.C.1

The SBHE, discussed above, sets system policy and direction. The SBHE meets monthly, either face-to-face or online and publishes agendas, minutes, and a recording of its meetings. SBHE responsibilities, as outlined in the policy manual, provide for ongoing professional development and evaluation of the Board, the system Chancellor, and institution presidents.

For the past five years, the NDUS Strategic Plan, carried out by the SBHE and NDUS institutions, has encouraged all campuses to deliver high-value degrees and programs, provide programs people want, equip students for success, maximize the strengths of the unified system, and support research excellence and innovation. The SBHE recognizes each campus has its own mission and its own unique set of programs that can be beneficial for the campuses and their communities. Sharing services and utilizing collaboration among institutions provides additional advantages to each institution. The SBHE is working on the adoption and implementation of an updated Strategic Plan. The SBHE considered input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders when the 2015-2020 plan was developed, gathering input from over 100 individual and group interviews covering internal and external constituents.

The SBHE sets policy and direction for the NDUS system and assumes control, oversight, and administration of the institutions in the system. The SBHE delegates control and authority to the NDUS Chancellor and the presidents of each campus. Responsibilities and authority of the SBHE and individual campuses are detailed in SBHE policy 100.6.

2.C.2

The SBHE works to preserve and enhance all institutions in the NDUS through provision of shared services, support of specific budget requests made to the state legislature, and institutional oversight through the evaluation of the institution presidents. The NDUS provides many shared services to the institutions of higher education in North Dakota including Campus Connect, Hobsons, MSU's Learning Management System (Blackboard), and some survey tools used by the MSU Institutional Research office. The NDUS has supported MSU's requests for GEERF and HEERF money as well as major renovation projects such as the renovation of Hartnett Hall. See Criterion 5 for more.

2.C.3

The SBHE is composed of community members selected from diverse professions and regions of North Dakota and approved by the Governor. It also includes a voting student member, a non-voting faculty adviser, and a non-voting staff adviser. The board seeks the input of its constituents, as well as that of the Chancellor and University Presidents.

The Council of College Faculties (CCF) consists of faculty from across North Dakota's 11 public institutions who meet regularly to identify and share interests relevant to teaching, research, and service. CCF communicates with the SBHE regarding issues of consensus and of matters of concern, which the SBHE takes into consideration. The SBHE also seeks the input of North Dakota State Staff Senate, North Dakota Student Association, and NDUS Councils.

2.C.4

The SBHE has explicit policy governing conflicts of interest and undue influence on Board members. This policy is outlined in SBHE Policy Manual 308.4 and requires all Board members, NDUS Chancellor and vice-chancellors, and institution presidents to complete a conflict of interest disclosure each year.

2.C.5

The SBHE sets policy and direction for the NDUS system and assumes control, oversight, and administration of the institutions in the system. The SBHE delegates control and authority to the NDUS Chancellor and the presidents of each campus. Responsibilities and authority of the SBHE and individual campuses are detailed in SBHE policy 100.6. In this policy, the governing board delegates significant authority to the institution president regarding the day-to-day operation of the campus, its goals, and its administrative structure. SBHE policy on Academic Freedom 401.1 affirms that faculty have the freedom to pursue research, publication, and teaching in their subject or field of competence: "Cognizant of their responsibilities to their profession and to their institution, faculty accept certain obligations; they should attempt to be accurate, to exercise sound judgment and respect the rights of others to express opinions. They must make clear that their actions, their statements and their memberships do not necessarily represent views of the academic community. If there are controls to be exercised over faculty members, they are the controls of personal integrity and the judgment of their colleagues."

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

MSU's Institutional Learning Goals reflect a commitment to engagement with diverse people, civic engagement to promote the common good, and curiosity, in addition to more academic university goals. MSU is committed to free and open pursuit of truth in all aspects of its life as an institution.

Academic freedom for faculty is recognized in the MSU Faculty Senate Constitution, and defined as an "unhampered opportunity to seek the truth in any field." Tenure appointments are granted by the SBHE annually and reflect the rights of faculty to continuous academic employment, and both tenured and probationary faculty complete annual evaluations. MSU's Faculty Senate Tenure committee (p. 24) oversees the pre-tenure and tenure processes while the NDUS regulates academic freedom and tenure throughout the university system.

The pursuit of truth in educational settings goes far beyond academic freedom and tenure. MSU aims to foster a culture in which genuine disagreement is explored in a civil manner and open and free conversation is acknowledged as the foundation of teaching and learning. The following are examples of these kinds of conversations on campus:

- The Faculty Senate discussed diversity issues on campus in October of 2021.
- The Faculty Senate discussed and approved a land acknowledgement in November of 2021.
- Following a divisive conversation about flying the Pride flag at the Minot City Council, MSU raised the Pride flag on campus for the first time on September 22, 2020 (Red and Green, October 1, p. 3).
- Campus and Community Dialogues have addressed controversial issues, starting in October of 2018, with one event held each semester. The streamlining option present from the beginning became essential with the rise of the pandemic. The panel discussion on legalizing marijuana was attended by 2,000 people in person and over the livestream.
- The Gordon B. Olson Library follows the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and has a clear statement on censorship as well as a procedure for consideration of requests for removal of library material.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1

MSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for creating and implementing policies and procedures for protection of research with human subjects. These policies and procedures comply with regulations for research involving human subjects established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46. MSU subscribes to Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for IRB workshops. Faculty and students conducting research with human subjects are required to complete the Social/Behavioral Research for Investigators and Key Personnel training module.

The North Dakota University System (NDUS) policy 410.0 requires institutions receiving any external funding or support for research to adopt a policy that requires Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) training for all undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral researchers participating in sponsored research activities. MSU's policy aligns with the NDUS policy.

MSU updated its Intellectual Property policy in 2019. This, along with other policies such as Research with Human Subjects and Responsible Conduct in Research, (pp. 94-104) are outlined in Section F of MSU's Faculty Handbook. These areas fall under the oversight of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

2.E.2

MSU realized an important strategic plan objective to better aid students, faculty, and staff to seek and secure external funding by reinstating the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) with the hiring of a half-time director in July of 2019. The Director of OSP facilitates the procurement of external support through grants, fellowships, contracts, royalties, licensing agreements, and technical assistance agreements. The office assists faculty and staff in seeking and identifying external funding opportunities, reviewing requests for proposals or notice of funding opportunities, contacting funding agencies, and assisting with the preparation and submission of grant proposals. MSU's Grants and Accounting Analyst supports these efforts through the review of all grant proposal budgets and financial oversight support of funded projects. MSU's research protocol continues to be overseen by the IRB and the VPAA. Ongoing faculty scholarship is supported through department and college

funding, small research grants, the sabbatical program, and external grants and by the OSP.

2.E.3

The MSU Student Handbook promotes academic honesty reminding students that MSU is committed to academic integrity. The student conduct policy outlines MSU's expectations of its students. The Starfish program is a communication tool which readily links faculty with advisors and other support staff to help students achieve their academic potential. In 2018, Faculty Senate instituted the use of Starfish to raise an academic honesty flag. Faculty can "flag" a student for concerns related to academic honesty and that flag is used to initiate a process of communication and follow up by appropriate faculty and staff members. Students are provided guidance regarding academic integrity and honesty in English 120, a required course in the General Education core, in history survey courses, which make up one component of the General Education Foundational Content requirement, and in the developmental content in General Education under CCS4: Information Literacy These requirements ensure that students will receive instruction in at least two, and likely more than two, courses in which research methods, source citation, and plagiarism are discussed by faculty. Simple Syllabus specifically guarantees inclusion of the campus academic honesty policy on all syllabi.

2.E.4

MSU expects students to demonstrate academic honesty and integrity in all matters. The MSU Catalog clearly addresses academic honesty, with specific attention to plagiarism and academic integrity. To assist in identifying plagiarism, faculty have the option of requiring Safe Assign through Blackboard for any format of course, online or face-to-face, since all courses have Blackboard shells created at the start of each term. Concerns about plagiarism and academic honesty are first handled by faculty according to policy listed in syllabi and in the MSU Catalog. This policy lets faculty document plagiarism, determine penalties, and file documentation with academic chairs. In addition, faculty and chairs have the option of referring serious issues related to plagiarism or academic honesty to the Office of Student Affairs to be considered under the student conduct policy for Academic Honesty. In addition to these expectations, MSU faculty recognize that in the Internet age, the need for educators to examine and address academic honesty, given the increasing numbers of web-based opportunities to flout the requirements. Discussion of these concerns occurred throughout the various colleges on campus. Ultimately, the issue was taken up by the Academic Policies Committee, and Faculty Senate approved reporting mechanisms in February 2018. This protocol allows Faculty to flag a student in Starfish for serious incidents of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty to document and discourage such activity.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

As a member of the North Dakota University System, MSU is governed by the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) and follows policies and procedures set at the system level to ensure fair and ethical behavior across all campus financial, academic, hiring, and auxiliary activities. Policies are in place related to key university functions such as conflict of interest, intellectual property, academic honesty, academic freedom, Title IX, nepotism, undue influence, and data protection. Handbooks for faculty, staff, and student behavior and expectations are all publicly posted, regularly updated, and followed. The campus presents its constituents, both prospective and current, with transparent and public information regarding costs, admission requirements, graduation requirements and grievance procedures.

The responsible pursuit of knowledge is central to MSU's mission. Research is guided by appropriate and established SHBE policies and guidelines provided by the Office of Sponsored Programs and regulated by institutional IRB policies based on national standards. Academic honesty is expected and woven into the campus culture for all members of the MSU community, with clear guidance provided through the General Education program, on faculty syllabi, in MSU catalogs, in discipline-specific courses, and in Human Resources policies.

Academic freedom is valued and respected at MSU. Faculty and students are free to pursue knowledge and questions across wide-ranging, complex, and controversial topics. The broad variety of academic research topics and public discussions on the MSU campus every year underscore the institution's commitment to the encouragement of intellectual inquiry from diverse perspectives as essential to campus life.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1

Since 1913 Minot State University (MSU) has been dedicated to helping students become highly educated. This is reflected in MSU's mission statement: "Minot State University is a public university dedicated to excellence in education, scholarship, and community engagement achieved through rigorous academic experiences, active learning environments, commitment to public service and a vibrant campus life." Excellence, and hence rigor, in education has been, and continues to be important—it is the first goal in the MSU Strategic Plan, *Empowering Generations*.

The university offers a wide variety of options to meet students' educational and vocational needs through multiple degree levels and disciplines. At the undergraduate level, MSU offers one associate degree, nine types of bachelor's degrees, minors, concentrations, certificates, and one certificate of completion. At the graduate level, there is one educational specialist (Masters+) degree, two types of master's degrees, and certificate programs. Academic programs are regularly modified to adjust to student needs, assessment data, program evaluations, and available resources. Some programs offer multiple options or tracks, adding to the variety available to students. The number of bachelor's degrees/majors has remained rather constant (decreased by one), but there have been some changes in recent years; the small net change was the result of 11 additions and 12 deletions as programs adjusted to opportunities, needs, and resources. In relation to options and tracks, the number has grown from 88 to 97. Similar growth has occurred in the numbers of minors and concentrations. While the number of graduate programs available has decreased somewhat, the number of undergraduate programs has grown, reflecting a commitment to providing as many options for students as possible with available resources.

Courses and programs are kept updated through the curriculum process. For example, during the 2020-2021 academic year, 214 catalog changes were approved. These consisted of 59 course changes, 68 program changes, 50 course deactivations, 3 program deactivations, 22 new courses, and 12 new

programs.

MSU ensures programs are current and require appropriate levels of student performance through oversight and engagement at a variety of levels and through specific procedures and requirements. These include NDUS and MSU policies and approval processes for curriculum changes, credit policies, and program evaluations.

Curricular changes are governed by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) policies and North Dakota University System (NDUS) procedures, and through MSU procedures. The SBHE approves the various types of academic programs that can be offered by each institution, and the basic requirements that must be met for each type of offering (SBHE Policy 409; NDUS Procedure 409). These requirements are reflected in the MSU requirements listed in the catalog for each program type. Approval by the SBHE is required for new degree programs, minors, and certificates, program deactivations and activations, and program terminations according to Policy and Procedures 421. These changes, and any others that result in changes to programs or courses in the MSU catalogs, must also be approved through MSU procedures. Because MSU strongly believes that the curriculum is owned by the faculty, program faculty initiate and vote on these changes. After the chairperson signs to denote department division approval, the requests are directed through a series of steps that involve, at a minimum, the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). In some cases, specific approval steps involving Teacher Education Administrative Council and/or Graduate Council are included. The submission and routing through the approval process is handled through an online workflow in CourseLeaf software that ensures approved changes are tracked, documented, and included in the next catalog.

Ensuring appropriate rigor at the course level is an essential part of ensuring appropriate student performance in academic programs. For reasons of consistency, and to conform to federal guidelines, MSU recently revised and clarified its policies and definition of what constitutes a credit. In the 2021-2022 undergraduate catalog, MSU's Faculty Senate defined one "undergraduate credit hour as a minimum of 750 minutes of direct instructional time combined with a minimum of 1,800 minutes out-of-class student work per semester." Thus, for every hour of instruction, students are expected to complete 2 hours of study and preparation to successfully complete a course. Additional efforts to ensure consistency among course offerings are detailed later in section 3.A.3. Regular evaluation of academic programs also ensures that they are current and appropriate for the discipline. Program review and MSU's academic assessment process are detailed in Criterion 4.

3.A.2

MSU emphasizes uniformity in the articulation and evaluation of student learning goals (SLGs) and outcomes (SLOs) (discussed in detail in 3.A.3). SLGs and SLOs for all academic majors and degree programs are included in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Major-specific student learning outcomes are also included in course syllabi and each chairperson, in consultation with the faculty, is responsible for adding program SLOs to the syllabi of courses to indicate which SLOs are addressed in each course. All syllabi also include course learning objectives and the use of Simple Syllabus ensures that these course learning objectives are identical in all sections of a specific course. Thus, syllabi provide the connections between individual courses (and their learning objectives) and program-level SLOs and SLGs. Finally, SLGs and SLOs provide the framework for all annual program assessments.

Some disciplines, such as Nursing, use the learning goals of their respective professional organizations. The discipline's faculty are responsible for articulating their program's goals, and for

explaining which goals are met in particular courses. The academic review processes described earlier provide external evaluation of program learning goals and outcomes, ensuring that the SLGs and SLOs are appropriate for the level of program.

An example of differentiated program SLGs and SLOs can be found in Disability Human Services—the only area in which MSU offers an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, and a graduate degree. The Associate of Science degree prepares individuals to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The Bachelor of Science degree prepares an individual for the responsibilities of a Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QIDP). The Master of Science in Disability Human Services degree is designed to prepare leaders to serve in disability human services organizations. As an example, all three programs include an SLG related to use of formal and informal assessment practices, but the SLOs reflect differing degrees of preparation and responsibility. In the AS program, students learn to assist with assessment processes. In the BS program, students learn to coordinate and effectively communicate summaries of assessment processes. In the MS program, students learn to design and implement assessment protocols and critically analyze assessment data to make recommendations for program improvement.

3.A.3

MSU offers most of its courses on the MSU campus but also operates remote sites and distance learning modes including synchronous and asynchronous online courses. Faculty, scheduling, and curricular standards for all courses are decided by academic departments/divisions, with the Center for Extended Learning (CEL) supporting asynchronous online development and technical compliance. MSU offers a variety of courses at the Minot Air Force Base (MAFB), while specifically providing courses in Addiction Studies, Criminal Justice, and Social Work at Bismarck State College (BSC). MSU also teaches Social Work courses at North Dakota State University (NDSU) as part of a collaborative program. Offerings also include Early Entry (dual credit) high school/college courses and independent study courses, with CEL assisting in the coordination of dual credit. MSU offers graduate and undergraduate courses in distance formats that include face-to-face synchronous online and online asynchronous. Fifteen bachelor's degree programs, one associate of science degree, and two undergraduate certificate programs can be completed entirely through online courses. Finally, courses are offered in 16- and 8-week formats.

Several procedures ensure consistency within academic programs. Creation and modification of programs and learning goals resides with faculty at the department/division level. Program SLGs are consistent, regardless of the mode, location, or term length of the courses involved. Approval of instructors, regardless of location or mode, starts at the department/division level. For consistency with face-to-face courses, online course development and content is handled by departments/divisions, regardless of the instructor, while adhering to guidelines set by CEL. The same is true of Early Entry courses, except that these have also been guided by a separate policy manual.

MSU's 2020 HLC focused visit report (pp. 12-14) demonstrated the institution's progress and commitment to verifying comparability between courses of different modes and lengths. The university has continued to consistently monitor learning outcomes across all its programs in all modalities and locations. The campus systematically refines its assessment processes to emphasize and clarify institutional organization and review, to add key components, and to incorporate programs and faculty. Details regarding these initial refinements include clarifying terminology and forms; hiring a Director of Assessment; identifying connections between program student learning

goals, student learning outcomes, and courses; syllabi reviews; and modality reviews. After initial work in these areas was completed, MSU established sustainable procedures through Simple Syllabus for compressed course reviews as well as SLO and course objective consistency, the Program Assessment Liaisons initiative, and modality reviews. In Spring 2020, the modality and location review was repeated on Assessment Day following approval of a revised review form by Faculty Senate. Following the same procedures used in 2021 (Social Science Division example), faculty are currently in the process of conducting the Spring 2022 modality review.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1

MSU's current General Education curriculum was developed and approved by the faculty and has been in use since fall 2014. The model aligns with the updated mission and vision (approved by the SBHE in 2016) as it strives to "prepare students and the institution for the evolving social and technological challenges of the world, and empowers graduates with a distinctive combination of professional expertise and broad-based education to support varied careers and productive lives."

The MSU Undergraduate Catalog describes student learning outcomes for General Education and MSU articulates an overall goal for General Education and specific student learning outcomes for each area. The General Education Committee web page provides a clear discussion for students and resources for faculty about the requirements and purpose of the program. Assessment rubrics are articulated in the General Education Course Application forms, which faculty use to apply for approval of a course to count toward one or more developmental categories in the general education curriculum. See Criterion 4 for additional discussion of General Education assessment.

3.B.2

The current General Education curriculum was designed to meet the NDUS General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement (GERTA) while also embedding the curriculum in a framework that emphasizes a common rationale and set of expectations for the MSU graduate. This framework reflects the MSU faculty's desire that students master essential content-related material across the curriculum (Core and Foundational Content, which includes the NDUS required core) and that they demonstrate the skills essential to life-long contributions to civic society and the workplace (Critical Capacities and Skills-CCS). Additionally, it requires students to develop a sense of personal and social responsibility as individuals and within the community (Personal and Social Responsibility-

PSR), and to examine complex social issues through coursework and through applied experiences (Interconnected Perspectives-IP). MSU faculty incorporated the specified Developmental Content within existing courses, thereby providing students many opportunities to meet the requirements without adding additional courses. A complete listing of courses approved to meet the General Education curriculum is available on the MSU website and the MSU Undergraduate Catalog.

Notable within Developmental Content are the Personal and Social Responsibility (PSR) requirements. In completing PSR1, students demonstrate the ability to recognize their relationships to communities, and to evaluate different value systems associated with community issues. In completing PSR2, students are engaged in meaningful community activities. Notable in the General Education requirements is UNIV 110: First-Year Seminar, which is part of a First-Year Experience (FYE) learning community linking UNIV 110 to one or two other courses. Goals of UNIV 110 and learning communities include enhancing student competency in information literacy, critical reading, critical thinking, quantitative literacy, problem solving, and written and oral communication. These goals represent critical skills and capacities emphasized in the General Education program. In relation to developmental content, the UNIV 110 course is connected to PSR2.

The mastery of modes of inquiry or creative work in baccalaureate programs is typically demonstrated through a capstone experience that often involves presentation of student research or an exhibit or performance of student creative works. Every MSU graduate degree program engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information, and in mastering modes of inquiry through course work as well as a required capstone course, internship, project, or thesis. All programs provide information regarding capstone experiences within their respective section of the appropriate Undergraduate or Graduate Catalog.

3.B.3

The General Education curriculum incorporates diversity through PSR and IP requirements in the developmental content. The PSR1 requirement asks students to demonstrate the ability to evaluate different value systems associated with community issues. The IP1 and IP2 requirements ask students to demonstrate knowledge of cultural self-awareness and cultural worldview frameworks, curiosity about other cultures, empathy and recognition of intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview, and openness in their interactions with other cultures.

The MSU Faculty Senate recently approved a set of institutional level goals and created a committee focused on institution level assessment of those goals, the Student Learning Assessment Committee (pp. 24-25). These efforts reflect institutional commitment to human and cultural diversity. Goal 3 (Graduates collaborate with and productively lead diverse groups to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes), and Goal 5 (Graduates are curious about the world and the perspectives of others) are most directly related to concepts of diversity and lifelong skills focused on interacting with others in productive and respectful ways. This committee commenced its work during spring 2022.

The appreciation of the centrality of human diversity to experiences, as well as the skills needed to function in a truly multicultural world are visible in the General Education program, some major specific coursework, and co-curricular activities. The focus on diversity is further enhanced through the work of a variety of entities on campus:

- The MSU Diversity Council works to create a more visible and coherent variety of campus programs in diversity awareness and inclusivity. The MSU Diversity Council is an institutional committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students whose mission is to promote and build a

diverse and inclusive university climate by extending diversity and inclusion awareness throughout the campus community.

- The Office of International Programs administers study abroad opportunities for MSU students, manages cooperative agreements with international colleges and universities (six, as of spring 2021) and supports international students attending MSU. During 2017-2021, four to seven students per year were engaged in international experiences through outside organizations. Students share their study abroad experiences in campus newsletters, encouraging other students to participate in future opportunities. MSU faculty-led international courses with study tours engaged six students in a trip to London, Edinburgh, and Dublin (summer 2017), nine students in a trip to Ecuador (spring 2018), nine students in a trip to Thailand (fall 2018), and twenty-one students in a trip to Norway (spring 2019). During the last four years (2017-2020) an average of 279 international students attended MSU; this number reflects approximately 9% of the overall student population.
- The Native American Cultural Center provides counseling, advising, and academic student transitional assistance to Native American/American Indian students enrolled at MSU. These students comprised approximately 2% of the overall 2020-2021 student population.
- The POWER Center at MSU offers a variety of support services to students through a TRIO Student Support Services grant and another TRIO grant in support of students with disabilities. POWER Center programs help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education, and in doing so help to increase the diversity of the student population at MSU. Eligibility rules for POWER include socio-economic status, disability status, and/or first-generation college student status.
- The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) is a University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Services. In addition to numerous projects involving research and service, grant-supported projects increase campus diversity by bringing students with intellectual disabilities to MSU (Adult Student Transition Education Program, ASTEP) and enhance diversity by engaging MSU students in mentoring relationships with students that have intellectual disabilities. NDCPD personnel also assist in university instruction by providing ongoing support and technical assistance to MSU faculty regarding meeting the needs of people with disabilities so that our MSU students are more disability proficient as they earn their degrees and enter the workforce.
- Athletics started a Diversity & Inclusion Council to spearhead and showcase the department's dedication to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity.

Understanding of diversity for MSU students is further enhanced through particular degree programs that include coursework dealing with diverse people and cultures. Examples include Art, English, Native American Studies, History, Sociology, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Special Education, Social Work, and Gender/Women's Studies.

Other efforts on campus also work to enhance diversity at MSU. For example, the Campus and Community Dialogues series provides an opportunity for campus and community members to civilly discuss controversial topics (e.g., the value of religion in the 21st century, gun control, the legalization of marijuana). Each installment features a moderator and two or more faculty or community members who give their initial ideas about the topic before opening participation from the audience. Since spring 2018, seven such events have occurred.

Recently, the Diversity Council recommended the hiring of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director. A formal 2022-23 Budget Request was submitted to the Strategic Planning and Budget Council for funds to support the director position. Budget decisions will be made before the end of

spring semester.

3.B.4

MSU's mission, vision, and goals articulate its dedication to scholarship and creative activity by its students and faculty. A portion of the contracted effort of probationary tenure-track and tenured faculty members is dedicated to scholarship and service. The annual faculty evaluation process, tenure criteria, and promotion criteria recognize faculty members have a continuing responsibility to do scholarly and/or creative work in their specialty. Faculty are evaluated on their scholarly contributions in the annual evaluation process.

Scholarship and creative work, by both students and faculty, are supported in a variety of ways:

- The MSU Faculty Small Research Grants Program provides modest funds, on a competitive basis, to support faculty research. The Faculty Research Committee oversees this program, and typically funds about 10 projects per year. Many of the research projects are student-faculty collaborations.
- The MSU Faculty Sabbatical Program offers opportunities for faculty members to take a paid one-semester sabbatical (or half-release for a full academic year) to advance their scholarly work. During 2017-2020, 1 to 2 sabbaticals were funded each year, with the exception of 2018-2019, when there were no funds.
- The office of the VPAA has hosted a number of professional development opportunities through the Conversations with Colleagues about Teaching series, where faculty shared their teaching expertise to improve student learning.

MSU maintains an Institutional Review Board and subscribes to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) in support of student and faculty research efforts. As part of MSU's General Education program, students receive guidance and instruction in research and information resources in two requirements: ENGL 120: College Composition II, and their choice of a course that meets the information literacy requirement (CCS2).

One of MSU's strengths is the faculty's commitment to engaging undergraduate students in scholarship and creative activity. Many undergraduate academic programs have built such experiences into their curriculum, typically culminating in a capstone experience. Specific examples of courses that teach and use research methods include: BADM 421, BIOL 492, CHEM 494, CJ 480, ENGL 270, ENGL 391/491, GEOL 494, HIST 280, HIST 401, HON 450H, HON 451H, HUM 210, MATH 294, MATH 494, NURS 363, PSY 242, PSY 494, SCI 240, SOC 278, and SWK 442. Examples of creative and scholarly capstones include science, English, and art.

Student works are disseminated through venues such as the annual MSU Research Poster Session, Nursing Scholarship Day and several additional discipline-specific presentations: Math Research, INBRE Research, Student Directed Plays, Honors Program thesis presentations, senior art exhibits, music recitals, and state, regional, and national conferences and venues (e.g., Posters on the Hill).

Graduate programs prepare students for advanced scholarship and support professional presentation of student work in various venues. Graduate committees and program directors mentor graduate students in effective use of research and information sources. Most graduate programs include one or more courses which include research methods: ED 501, ED 502, BIT 510, BADM 550, CD 503, PSY 512, SPED 503. Most also include a final experience that includes research. Through graduate research, students are introduced to MSU's IRB, conducting research involving human subjects, and

misconduct in research.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1

As discussed in 1.C.2, MSU's Strategic Plan strives to "promote and support a vibrant and inclusive campus community." MSU realizes this goal in policy, through Title IX and anti-racism training, and through use of the NDUS system's hiring software. The HR office supports compliance with all federal and state non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders and regulations.

MSU's full-time equivalent staff was 39% male and 61% female in 2021-2022. This distribution remains similar when instructional (faculty) and non-instructional staff are considered separately. Gender distribution of MSU staff closely mirrors that of its students. The undergraduate population was 36% male and 64% female; graduate students consisted of 27% male and 73% female. Comparisons by ethnicity show the composition of MSU's staff (instructional and non-instructional) to be less diverse than that of the overall student population; the majority of faculty (93%) and students (77%) are Caucasian. These demographics also reflect those of the Minot community as well as the population of North Dakota. For additional discussion of diversity and MSU's work on inclusion and awareness see 1.C.2.

3.C.2

Based on total students and faculty (total faculty determined as full-time plus those teaching at least 1/3 part-time), the 2020-2021 MSU's student-to-faculty ratio was 11 to 1. Faculty represent a range of years of service that ensures continuity and an effective mixture of new ideas and institutional

memory to carry out instruction, assessment, and verification of credentials of instructional staff. 19% of faculty members have been at MSU for 5-9 years, 10% for 10-14 years, and 35% for 15 years or longer. During 2020-2021, 51% of the faculty were tenured (74/146), holding ranks of professor (36), associate professor (26), and assistant professor (12); during 2021-2022, 48% of the faculty are tenured (71/149), holding ranks of professor (33), associate professor (25), and assistant professor (13).

All tenured and tenure-track faculty members are held to the same expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service. Through teaching and service expectations, all are involved in curriculum oversight and setting expectations for and assessing student learning. Faculty expectations for teaching are outlined in the Faculty Handbook Section B II General Responsibilities and the Online Faculty Handbook. These responsibilities include providing syllabi, describing grading procedures, and setting student learning outcomes and student expectations for courses.

In addition to setting and assessing learning expectations in their courses, faculty govern, oversee, and assess MSU's curriculum. Curricular change proposals begin with faculty members at the program level and proceed through a rigorous "checks and balances" process of vetting by multiple faculty committees. This includes review by committees including General Education Committee, Academic Assessment Committee, Curriculum Committee, Teacher Education Administrative Council, and Graduate Council. All faculty are expected to participate in each semester's Assessment Day activities. The Academic Assessment Committee defines and coordinates MSU's formative and aggregate assessment program for all academic programs in coordination with the Director of Institutional Assessment and sets the agenda for Assessment Day. The General Education Committee is responsible for assessment of the general education program.

Faculty members are involved in decisions about academic credentials and expertise during a search for a new faculty member. These decisions are based on the needs of the academic program or department. The Faculty Recruitment and Selection Guide provides consistent procedures for the faculty recruitment and hiring process. MSU policy requires all faculty to have completed, at a minimum, 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline in which they teach or the equivalent. Appropriate qualifications are ensured by the procedures that govern faculty searches, which apply to all types of positions.

3.C.3

A recent audit of faculty credentials indicates full-time instructional faculty at MSU currently hold the following degrees: 2 full-time faculty hold a Bachelor's degree (one of these two is currently enrolled in a master's degree program; both are special contract faculty); 95 full-time faculty hold a doctorate; and 52 full-time faculty hold a Master's degree. 64% of MSUs full-time instructional faculty hold terminal degrees.

Searches for probationary tenure-track and adjunct faculty members typically require an appropriate terminal degree. Faculty members, along with their chairperson at the program/department level, are responsible for setting expertise requirements that meet the needs of the program. Hiring of adjunct instructors is carried out by the academic unit responsible for the course and the HR office. This process ensures that adjunct instructors, including those hired for online and dual-credit courses, are appropriately qualified.

The Faculty Recruitment and Selection Guide, revised spring 2022, includes information on digital recruiting and hiring, faculty hiring action steps, justification for the position, minimum

qualifications, recruitment authorization, EEO statement, search committee information, initial screening, first interviews, recommendation of candidates, criminal background checks, offers and negotiations, notifications of candidates not selected, and failed searches.

MSU adheres to the Higher Learning Commission's statement on Assumed Practices regarding faculty roles and qualifications. All instructors (excluding teaching assistants who are enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) must possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program. Those faculty members teaching undergraduate courses who hold a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than the one in which he/she is teaching should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach or have equivalent experience. If not, they must demonstrate they have equivalent experience. Equivalent experience is documented and evaluated by their chair or program director using the Faculty Teaching Qualifications form. At least two types of evidence must be applied toward the faculty member's teaching credentials for consideration as equivalent qualifications. The types of evidence that are considered include: relevant graduate coursework (less than 18 credits), professional experience, license or certification, publications/research/scholarly activity, teaching experience, honors/awards, continuing education/professional development, and other relevant experience that can be documented. The chair or the program director must submit a Faculty Teaching Qualifications form to the VPAA for all newly hired faculty members teaching undergraduate courses. Final decisions rest with the VPAA. An audit of faculty qualifications was recently completed by the VPAA.

3.C.4

Faculty members are evaluated annually based on performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. General evaluation criteria and procedures are defined in the MSU Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article IV (see pp. 27-31). Within these guidelines, each academic unit (College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, and College of Education and Health Sciences) develops discipline-specific performance criteria. The specific dates for the various steps of the evaluation process are detailed in the Academic Calendar published each year by the VPAA.

The evaluation process begins with faculty member's submission of a self-evaluation document that summarizes activities for the year and outlines goals for the future. Regarding teaching effectiveness, faculty members are required to submit at least one item in each of three areas: currency, peer review, and student feedback. The self-evaluation is reviewed and assessed by the unit chair and the VPAA. First-year faculty go through an annual review. Second-year faculty have two evaluations. Third-year faculty complete a pre-tenure review with the Tenure Committee, in addition to the annual self-evaluation and chair's review. After the third year, all probationary faculty complete a review annually, as do all other full-time faculty.

Faculty are regularly evaluated in terms of teaching through electronically administered student course evaluations, called the Student Perceptions of Learning (SPL). All SPLs are distributed to faculty and the chairs according to the schedule posted by Institutional Research. Faculty must include SPL information in annual evaluations. In December 2020, Faculty Senate approved a temporary modification to annual evaluations to encourage department/division chairs to take into account COVID-19-related difficulties when considering SPL forms. The motion was approved, and the Faculty Senate secretary informed department/division chairs. In Spring 2021 all academic units

were required to develop procedures delineating the selection process for course evaluations, which are included in the annual faculty evaluation process, to keep procedures in line with Faculty Senate Bylaws.

In November 2021, Faculty Senate approved a new teaching evaluation process and form for adjunct faculty. This proposed process provides for evaluation of adjunct instructors following their first term, and then at the end of each calendar year by the academic unit chair to which they are assigned. New adjunct instructors would also be required to have a full-time faculty member or chair observe their teaching (campus or online synchronous) or review their online course shell (asynchronous) during their first term. Faculty still need to ratify this process before it is placed in the Faculty Bylaws.

3.C.5

Faculty must address currency in teaching in their annual self-evaluation and goals, using modes specified in the Faculty Bylaws. MSU supports the professional development of its faculty members to stay current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching and advising roles.

Faculty new to MSU engage in a nine-month orientation, beginning two full days prior to the annual Fall Convocation. They meet their new colleagues and learn about MSU policies, procedures, and events. All MSU faculty and staff are encouraged to attend the annual Convocation and mini-sessions at the start of Fall on topics related to teaching, technology, advising, wellness programs, and training on software programs.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) supports professional development related to the FYE and Experiential Education and has sent faculty to FYE and NSEE conferences. The ASC also provides a library of materials on engaged teaching.

Faculty and staff are eligible to apply for Advanced Study Grants through the Academic Affairs Office. This program provides financial assistance to faculty and staff members pursuing course work for degree programs or in skill areas deemed critical to MSU. The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) provides continuous training opportunities through workshops and one-on-one instruction for all faculty teaching online courses. Academic units, at the discretion of the chairperson, provides support for professional development with funds for travel to conduct research and to attend professional conferences.

The MSU Faculty Small Research Grants Program provides modest funds on a competitive basis for approximately 8-10 faculty projects per year. The Faculty Research Committee also hosts an Annual Research Poster Session encouraging faculty and students to share their research and have their abstract published.

The MSU Faculty Sabbatical Program offers faculty an opportunity to advance their scholarly work. The sabbatical provides one semester release with full salary, or for a full year release with half-salary. In the past three years 1 to 2 sabbaticals positions have been funded each year.

3.C.6

At a minimum, instructors are expected to be accessible for student inquiry outside of class in-person or remotely during office hours, which are listed automatically on all syllabi. Being accessible is also built into the MSU Code of Conduct, which expects prompt communication. MSU provides office

phones, email, Zoom, and Blackboard as convenient means for students to contact faculty, pose questions, access grades, and share resources. Additionally, some faculty use Starfish to allow students to sign up for appointments.

In accordance with CDC guidelines regarding COVID-19, many faculty utilized Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to hold virtual advising appointments and office hours. Many faculty continue to use these options.

3.C.7

The North Dakota University System uses a Broadband Job Classification system to categorize job positions. Each specific job classification has a description of the scope of work, examples of duties, and minimum qualifications, which includes the educational background required: examples include the Advising Mentoring Coordinator position and the Director of Financial Aid. Training required for staff members varies with position and is handled on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate supervisor. In addition, staff training and professional development opportunities include NDUS fraud training, FERPA training, Title IX training, as well as technology workshops and profession-specific training on background check protocol.

Staff members may apply for Advanced Study Awards through the Academic Affairs Office to pursue course work for degree programs or in skill areas deemed critical to MSU. All MSU employees are eligible for tuition waivers and release time to further their education by taking MSU courses.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D.1

MSU is committed to supporting student learning through a variety of resources. A major change to academic support services took place prior to the fall 2019 semester when academic assistance programs were relocated to the lower level of the Gordon B. Olson Library, providing a one-stop location for support at what is now the Academic Support Center (ASC). ASC programs support the learning of all MSU students, as well as additional resources such as Access Services (formerly Disability Services) and the POWER Center for particular student populations. Students are introduced to available support programs during New Student and Transfer Student Orientation, Welcome Weekend, and the First-Year Experience learning communities. Support programs are also detailed the Student Handbook, and easily accessed online.

Advising at MSU is provided by program-specific advisors in many units. Professional advisors serve other disciplines as well as undeclared and General Studies students. The ASC provides advising resources to campus in partnership with the Academic Advising Council. See also 3.D.3.

Starfish is a communication tool that connects students with instructors and academic advisors. Instructors can use it to post praise or raise concerns about a student's academic performance; posted items are also sent to academic advisors. Concern flags encourage students to seek assistance from appropriate resources. Starfish can also be used by students to make appointments with advisors. See also Core Component 3.D.3.

The ASC offers academic peer support through drop-in peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI) for high-risk courses, and the Writing Center. Available to all students, but especially important to MSU's online populations, Smarthinking provides on-demand individual instruction and support from expert online tutors across a wide variety of subjects.

Access Services (formerly Disability Services) educates faculty about common accommodations and coordinates requests to ensure a comprehensive, accessible university experience for individuals with documented disabilities.

Multicultural Support Services is comprised of the Office of International Programs and the Native American Cultural Center. The former assists international students with visa regulations, health insurance and academic and cultural adjustment. The latter office provides counseling, advising, and academic student transitional assistance for Native American students at MSU.

Students eligible for services through MSU's federally funded TRIO program, the POWER Center, receive one-on-one tutoring, academic advising, career exploration, financial aid and budgeting education, as well as seminars and workshops on study skills and avoiding test anxiety.

3.D.2

MSU follows NDUS admission standards, which require completion of core high school curriculum. Admission also requires meeting minimum combinations of high school GPA and ACT or SAT scores. Students below these standards may be admitted provisionally and receive enhanced advising and tracking with an Academic Success Plan. Provisional status is removed after students have met a GPA of 2.0 (minimum) for two consecutive semesters. MSU revised its admission process as a result of the pandemic and is currently using test-optional admissions while the NDUS and SBHE discuss changes (see AAC agenda item 20) to the admission processes at all NDUS institutions that will permit test-optional admissions.

All incoming students participate in an advising orientation where faculty and professional advisors assess any prior courses taken and plan a schedule for the first semester. Incoming students are placed into appropriate English and mathematics courses using NDUS-mandated ACT, SAT, or Accuplacer scores. Advising during orientation sessions identifies students who need preparatory instruction and places them in developmental Academic Skills courses (College Writing Preparation, Beginning Algebra) or in a college-level class with a required additional instruction lab, such as Math 103L, College Algebra Lab.

Students entering with fewer than 24 university credits are required to enroll in a First-Year Experience learning community which provides a cohort experience to facilitate adjustment to the academic and non-academic demands of college. The FYE program is currently undergoing revision, with new student learning goals and outcomes approved by Faculty Senate, and additional changes currently under discussion.

3.D.3

Academic advising at MSU is defined as "a personalized, interactive, and intentional process in which the advisor helps the student set and achieve academic, career, and personal goals." All students who have declared a major are assigned an academic advisor in their program. Students who have not declared a major or who are pursuing a General Studies degree are advised through the Academic Support Center. The Academic Support Center provides advising resources for both advisors and students. The Academic Requirements tool easily reveals student progress in the major, in general education, and toward graduation.

Advisor and student responsibilities are clearly articulated to students and most units use advising holds to ensure, at a minimum, that students meet for advising before registration each term. The Academic Advising Council (AAC) reviews academic advising services, makes recommendations for enhancing advising, and provides an advising handbook, newsletters, and advisor workshops to support student success and communicate university policies.

MSU advisors have used the Starfish system since 2015 to connect students, faculty, advisors, coaches, and support staff to ensure student retention and success. Faculty can give students a "heads-up" regarding attendance, academic, or general concerns and "kudos" for their outstanding classroom performance. Once a flag is received, the message remains active in the system until it is removed by the advisor or support person who addresses the concern with the student, thereby closing the loop, indicating the student has been contacted about the issue. Permanent "flag" notifications document significant concerns, such as academic honesty.

3.D.4

Technological infrastructure and resources are managed by Information Technology Central (ITC) and include MSU's computers, software, wired and wireless networks, phones, classroom technology, and computer labs. ITC provides computer check-out for students and support in person, and through a FAQ and technology Help Desk.

The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) provides instructional and technical support for distance education courses. OIT assists faculty with online course design, equipment loan, and ADA accessibility, and Self Help Tutorials. OIT training for HyFlex instruction facilitated the smooth functioning of classes during the pandemic. While OIT mainly focuses on traditional online instruction, many faculty draw on their resources to support face-to-face courses.

The Gordon B. Olson Library provides information infrastructure and supports student and faculty scholarship through library instruction on ethical and effective searches and use of information, through in-person and remote assistance, and through the library's diverse collection, which includes:

- Over 180,000 volumes to support the curriculum
- Print and online journals
- Digital access to full-text and abstracts databases
- Children's books
- Multimedia materials
- Special Collections on North Dakota history and MSU archival materials
- State and federal government documents

MSU's teaching spaces support its academic programs effectively. A recent survey of chairpersons demonstrated adequate access to general teaching spaces and equipment/supplies for most programs. In addition, approximately 60 dedicated teaching spaces serve the unique program needs, along with significant amounts of specialized equipment and instrumentation. Beyond teaching, labs, studios and performance spaces also support student and faculty production of research and creative works.

Examples of such spaces include:

- Communication Disorders Clinic
- Swain Hall Pedagogy Lab and Kinesiology Facility
- Biology Cadaver Lab
- Social Science Public History & GIS lab and active teaching classrooms
- Ann Nicole Nelson Hall and Music Complex
- Nursing Clinical Simulation Center
- Professional Communications KMSU TV Station
- The Northwest Arts Center - Walter Piehl Gallery and Native American Collection

- Flat Tail Press educational studio and gallery
- Hartnett Hall student-run gallery and studio

In addition, renovation of the outdoor Summer Theater is underway, and Hartnett Hall, including the Black Box and Aleshire Theaters and spaces for Broadcasting, Art, and Humanities, has been funded for full renovation during 2022-2023. See Criterion 5.

The Cyril Moore Science Center houses MSU's science programs. The building was renovated in 1999 to address safety concerns, to increase the space used for laboratories, and to create dedicated space for sophisticated Chemistry instrumentation, Biology genetics research, and the Geosciences program.

The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science is housed in Model Hall, which hosts two computer labs for CS and Cybersecurity instruction and active learning classrooms for robotics projects and math education.

The Slaaten Learning Center features formal and informal learning spaces for business students, including a trading lab with a stock ticker board providing immediate access to financial data and reports. The Slaaten Board Room contains a complete video conferencing system. Additionally, the Slaaten Learning Center includes a dedicated meeting space for student organizations, and a student lab for individual and team learning.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

MSU serves the public good through distinctive undergraduate and graduate programs taught by experienced, qualified faculty in small-class settings. Its offerings are rigorous and accessible, with expected learning outcomes clearly stated to the public in the catalog and syllabi and with courses offered in consistent, comparable forms across in-person, hybrid, and remote modalities. MSU's First-Year Experience and General Education programs emphasize developmental skills, capacities, and experiences to prepare graduates to be life-long learners in a culturally diverse and technologically complex world. MSU supports these activities with exceptional facilities to support curricular and co-curricular learning, including a state-of-the-art Nursing simulation clinic, a beautifully renovated building housing Kinesiology and Education, a student-focused Wellness Center and athletic complex, and one of the state's premier concert halls. Technology upgrades for HyFlex and hybrid teaching during the pandemic to nearly all MSU's classrooms have endowed the campus with exceptional capacity to deliver on its mission of offering courses to students when, where, and how they need them. Finally, a $25 million project starting in Summer 2022 will renovate Hartnett Hall to provide an additional recital hall and dedicated studios and teaching facilities for Art, Music, Theater, Broadcasting, Professional Communications, and World Languages.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

4.A.1

Program Review Cycle

Minot State University (MSU) reviews its graduate and undergraduate programs following schedules set by external accreditors and by the [North Dakota State Board of Higher Education](#) (SBHE), which requires undergraduate programs without external accreditation to be reviewed at least every seven years and graduate programs at least every 10 years. MSU follows North Dakota University System (NDUS) guidelines in its program review policy and process. The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) coordinates the timing of self-studies, funds external reviewers, and works with programs to review and act upon reviewer suggestions. The VPAA's website lists [MSU's policy](#), a [review status spreadsheet](#), and an [archive of self-studies, reviews, and follow-up documents](#). Degree programs without external accreditors complete a self-study and arrange for an expert in their discipline to conduct an external program review. Selection and payment of external reviewers are discussed with and approved by the VPAA. The external reviewer's report is shared with the program, its academic department/division, and the VPAA. Program faculty review that report,

reflect on its findings and recommendations, and, in consultation with the VPAA, create a plan designed to continue to support and improve student learning. The current VPAA, who assumed her role in 2016, has coordinated a regular schedule of self-studies, funding of external reviews, and follow-up meetings to evaluate and act on each review's findings. These practices continue and extend those described in detail in MSU's 2020 focused visit report, p. 20.

MSU currently offers a small number of certificates, primarily in Special Education and in Business, and they are composed of existing courses drawn from programs covered by the well-established program-review practices. Although the number of completers has been very low, an average of only 4 undergraduate and 19 grad certificates awarded yearly from 2017-2021, MSU recognizes certificates as a potential growth area. At the recommendation of the MSU Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate has charged the Academic Policies Committee (APC) with examining the composition of certificates and related policies.

Program Review Findings and Actions Taken

MSU's programs document their program review self-study findings and the findings of external reviewers and use those findings to develop and implement recommendations to improve programs and student learning. Thirty-five academic programs that do not have external accreditation have completed this academic review process since 2014, with six additional programs set to begin this process one year after granting the first degrees in their program. Examples of programs that have recently completed academic reviews using MSU's internal process include:

- World language programs in the Division of World Languages and Cultural Studies (review completed 2019)
- Chemistry programs in the Division of Science (review completed 2020)
- Art programs in the Division of Art and Professional Communication (review completed 2021)

Foreign Language faculty reviewed the language B.A. program and hosted an external reviewer in 2019. That reviewer recommended that the program continue the processes of defining its vision and goals that had begun with hiring a new full-time faculty member. The reviewer also recommended that the program redefine itself as "World Languages" and emphasize its strength in linguistics. In response, the program adopted these recommendations in an action plan completed in 2019. In that plan, the program formalized renaming itself "World Languages and Linguistics" to better reflect its courses and its faculty's expertise, deactivated a seldom-used degree program in "Foreign Language – Spanish" in favor of the current BA in World Languages, created a clear three-year rotation of courses, and implemented new marketing and recruitment efforts.

The Division of Science completed a self-study of the Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry and the Bachelor of Science in Education in Chemistry programs in 2017. This study recounted these programs' history, mission, and goals; detailed their personnel, facilities, and instruments; and compared MSU's programs to both American Chemical Society (ACS) standards and chemistry programs at comparable institutions. It also summarized assessment results derived from students' performance on ACS standardized examinations in the major areas of chemistry, undergraduate research as part of the programs' capstone course, and the results of the Diagnostic Undergraduate Chemical Knowledge exam given during the capstone course. These programs' external review then was completed in 2020. The external reviewer complemented the program's strengths in disciplinary expertise, laboratory facilities, a "quite impressive" record of student research and research presentations, and its ratio of graduates to number of majors, which the reviewer characterized as "better than other programs of similar size." The reviewer recommended converting one of the BA

Chemistry major options to a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degree, a change the department identified as an operational goal in its [annual assessment report](#) and then completed as part of its program review [action plan](#). This action plan also affirmed the reviewer's call for additional institutional support for the program and reduction in high teaching loads. Some of these needs have been partially addressed through grant funding for instrumentation, and the change from offering only a BA to also offering a BS in Chemistry was [approved by the Curriculum Committee](#) on February 1, 2022 and by the [SBHE](#) on February 15, 2022.

The Department of Art reviewed its degree programs in 2019, including the Bachelor of Arts in Art, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art, Bachelor of Science in Arts Administration, Bachelor of Science in Multimedia Studies, and Bachelor of Science in Education with a major in Art. The department's [self-study](#) includes the program's history and mission and the student learning goals (SLGs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each degree program. This self-study drew on the program's established and well-refined assessment instruments, including reflections, interviews, surveys, and critiques of student achievement and art production. The study also identified the necessary improvements to facilities and the health and safety training that the program is undertaking with the goal of applying for external accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art & Design. The Art programs' [external review](#), completed fall 2020, praised the program's "impressive array of equipment, facilities, and courses" and its "diligent and effective assessment methods." The program faculty and the VPAA met in fall 2021 to discuss the self-study and external review, and the program responded with an [action plan](#). Key art needs shaped MSU's state-level request to renovate the program's building, Hartnett Hall, which the state legislature approved in 2021-2022 as a [complete renovation](#) ($25,000,000) that will allow Art to realize key facilities-related goals in its action plan.

4.A.2

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for documenting all graduate and undergraduate credits that MSU transcripts for its students. [Course credits](#) are processed at the conclusion of each semester on the dates publicly listed on their calendar. Common courses from other accredited institutions are processed by the registrar and those without clear equivalents or with any academic disciplinary questions are referred to the chair of the appropriate academic unit for evaluation. These policies comply with SBHE Policy and NDUS Procedure 402.4 and are overseen by MSU's Registrar's Office, which maintains the [official transfer policies](#) in MSU's [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) catalogs. In addition, the College of Business has piloted validation of credit for prior learning through a faculty-guided student portfolio process. This model for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit was [approved by MSU's Faculty Senate](#) in April of 2021, and the policy will be published in the 2022-2023 catalog.

4.A.3

MSU's [policies and the procedures for transfer credits](#) are publicly shared in the catalog and on the university web site. MSU participates in North Dakota's General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement ([GERTA](#)) to ensure General Education courses taken at [another NDUS institution with the same prefix and course number are equivalent](#). The Registrar's Office clearly specifies policies in the MSU Catalog for [acceptance of credits](#) on standardized national examinations including Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB). Transfer course equivalencies are established by academic departments/divisions and maintained by the Registrar's Office in its [Transfer Evaluation System](#). International transcripts require course-by-course evaluation by World Education Services (WES), Education Credential Evaluators (ECE), or

American Education Research Corporation (AERC). Credit for prior learning is established both through examinations that validate credit earned at non-accredited and non-degreed institutions and through department/division proficiency examinations, following NDUS policy. For further discussion of transfer course equivalencies and international transcript evaluations, see 4.A.2.

4.A.4

MSU faculty maintain and exercise authority over its curriculum. Faculty within each program are responsible for determining the appropriate prerequisite course(s) and ensuring the prerequisite is attached to the necessary course. Prerequisites are validated through the MSU curriculum process, approved by Faculty Senate as curriculum changes, and recorded in the curriculum management software, CourseLeaf, as described in 3.A.1.

Faculty within departments and divisions are responsible for establishing course content and establishing appropriate rigor at the course level. Courses are approved only after submission to, evaluation by, and recommendation of the MSU Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, after which they are submitted to and reviewed and approved by the full Faculty Senate. Changes to courses that are part of teacher education programs are additionally reviewed and approved by the Teacher Education Administrative Council before being sent to the full Faculty Senate for approval. Similarly, graduate courses are reviewed and approved by Graduate Council before being sent to the full Faculty Senate for approval.

Academic program faculty develop and conduct assessment (as discussed in 4.B) through a process that includes establishing and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as part of maintaining and continuously improving the relevance and currency of the program's scope, content, and pedagogy. These SLOs are associated with the academic program's Student Learning Goals (SLGs), and those SLOs are mapped to specific courses within the program. SLGs and SLOs are published by each degree-granting academic program in MSU's undergraduate and graduate catalogs and associated SLOs are added to the syllabi of all courses that have them by the Simple Syllabus course syllabus management software.

MSU's Syllabus Integrity Review process ensures that program faculty annually review all courses taught at different locations and in modalities different than the sixteen-week, face-to-face modality. These reviews ensure that faculty and chairs verify that courses offered in all locations and modalities, including dual credit courses, are comparable and aligned with the department and division practices for course content, rigor, and assessment. Modality reviews are tracked, with corrective actions documented as needed. Additionally, Early Entry (dual credit) course faculty adhere to the policies and procedures in the Early Entry manual provided by the Center for Extended Learning (CEL).

MSU maintains authority and access to the learning resources that support its courses, including the Gordon B. Olson Library, Instructional Technology (IT), Online Instructional Technology (OIT), and Academic Support Center (ASC). The Library, OIT, and Academic Support Center are under the direct supervision of the VPAA, while IT is under the direct supervision of the VPAF. Faculty have full discretion to select books and course materials for their courses. Related learning resources and activities are also discussed in 2.B.2 and 3.D.4.

Faculty Qualifications

Faculty hiring and qualifications are documented in search advertisements and delineated clearly in

tenure and promotion bylaws (pp. 32-50, MSU Bylaws). Credentials of full-time and adjunct faculty are documented in the VPAA's official files. To confirm faculty credentials, the VPAA's office audited faculty credentials in fall 2021. Although dual credit faculty have until 2023 to demonstrate sufficient graduate training, academic chairs in areas with dual credit programs have audited their dual credit faculty to ensure a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the subject area and have developmental programs of study for those not meeting the minimum to ensure they will be completed by 2023. Faculty hiring and credentials are also discussed in 3.C.3, 3.C.4, and 3.C.5.

4.A.5

Specialized accreditations cover MSU's programs in Nursing, Communication Sciences and Disorders, School Psychology, Addiction Studies, Special Education, Education, Business, and Music. These programs are reviewed on multi-year cycles by discipline-specific agencies other than the Higher Learning Commission. Each of these agencies requires the institution to prepare a detailed self-study as prescribed by the agency followed by an on-campus review led by an individual or team assigned by the agency. The agency's final report, which outlines findings, weaknesses that need to be addressed, and reaccreditation status is sent to the program according to the agency's protocol.

The Nursing program submitted a full review in 2020 for its current accreditor, CCNE, and was successfully accredited. The program was previously accredited by ACEN (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc.), with its final ACEN review in 2014 and institutional response in 2016. In addition, Nursing has been accredited continuously by the North Dakota Board of Nursing, with its status reaffirmed in 2011, 2016, and 2021. MSU's program in Communication Disorders (recently renamed as Communication Sciences and Disorders), was successfully reviewed following a full-program site visit in 2019 by the Council on Academic Accreditation for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA). MSU's School Psychology program was reviewed in 2016, with NASP approval in 2018, and in 2019 Addiction Studies received renewal for seven years from the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission. MSU's Social Work program was reviewed and reaccredited in 2020-2021. MSU's programs in Teacher Education are reviewed by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and North Dakota Educational Standards and Practices Board. MSU submitted a self-study, completed a full site visit, and received accreditation from CAEP in 2019.

Bachelor of Science degrees with majors in Accounting, Finance, International Business, Management, Marketing, and Management Information Systems, as well as Master of Science degrees in Management and Management Information Systems are accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). The accreditation review cycle is every seven years with a midterm report every fourth year. Program accreditation was reaffirmed in 2015 and a midterm report submitted in 2018. The College of Business submitted the 2020-2021 self-study in January 2022 and will host a site visit in March 2022. The 2020-2021 self-study added a BS in Entrepreneurship and an MS in Sports Management.

Finally, the Music program submitted its NASM accreditation self-study and hosted a site visit in fall 2021. Music faculty submitted a response to the review comments in October 2021 and as of December 2021 the NASM Commission continued MSU's membership with required action items for completion in Fall 2022.

These examples demonstrate MSU's ongoing attention to program review for programs that are reviewed and approved by external accreditors. Copies of these and other recent external

accreditation self-studies, team reports, and accreditation letters are available on the Academic Affairs SharePoint site.

4.A.6

MSU evaluates the success of its graduates by collecting graduate job placement data and through professional licensure examination results such as the Eligibility for Licensure and Praxis II scores for Teacher Education, and the NCLEX for Nursing. Internship, clinical practice, and student teaching placements are coordinated by faculty within each program. MSU's Teacher Education program, along with other North Dakota teacher education programs in the North Dakota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (NDACTE), supports a common survey of student teachers, graduates in their first year of teaching, and supervisors of first-year teachers. Since 2015, data from all three surveys has been collected and compiled, and results have been shared from individual institutions to NDACTE and then back from NDACTE to individual institutions with both aggregated and disaggregated information. Results from these surveys appear on the MSU Teacher Education Unit's (TEU's) page documenting program impact as required by CAEP, the TEU's accrediting body. MSU's Career Services office conducts a Graduation Survey and maintains a Graduation Survey Report (most recently completed for 2017-2018) to study employment and continuing education by MSU graduates according to degrees earned.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

4.B.1

Since 2018, MSU has thoughtfully and thoroughly revised its processes for assessment of student learning in its academic and co-curricular offerings, continuing a process that began with changes to the collection and reporting of assessment data for its General Education program during the 2017–2018 academic year. This revision has involved development and implementation of new procedures and methods that have resulted in substantial improvements to MSU's assessment practices. Important steps toward this goal include the following:

- The creation and hiring in 2018 of the position of Director of Academic Assessment (DAA) as a senior staff member in the office of the VPAA. In August 2021, this role was retitled Director of Institutional Assessment (DIA) to emphasize involvement with assessment of academic programs, General Education, co-curricular offerings, and other areas of university operations.
- The formation of a group of Program Assessment Liaisons (PALs), faculty members from each program who met monthly from Fall 2018–Spring 2020 and in Spring 2021 with the DAA and the chair of the Academic Assessment Committee to learn about, discuss, and raise questions and receive answers about academic assessment.
- The creation of policies, procedures, and common forms used by academic and co-curricular units for assessment reporting. These include standardized terminology and a standardized template for Yearly Program Assessment (YPA) Reports and Plans.
- Extensive training by the DAA and PALs of academic program faculty in assessment processes and methodologies.
- Establishment in the fall of 2018 of an institutional Co-Curricular Committee to define "co-curricular" in the context of MSU's programs and offerings and develop policies and methods for assessing co-curricular offerings. This has included creation of formal documents covering co-curricular Purpose, Policy and Procedure; selection of co-curricular assessment terminology; and development of a co-curricular assessment rubric and template.
- Establishment, by academic programs and the Co-Curricular Committee, of SLGs and SLOs for academic degree and certificate programs and co-curricular offerings, including mapping SLOs to academic courses and co-curricular program offerings: Academic programs' initial SLGs, SLOs, and course mapping; Executive Summary of Co-Curricular Assessment including SLGs, SLOs, and programs implementing assessment plans for 2019–2020.

- Linking of assessment of student learning to budgeting and planning through programs' use of the YPA Report and Plan to inform budget requests and presentations to the Strategic Planning and Budget Council. See Criterion 5 for additional discussion.
- Formation in the fall of 2020 of the ad hoc Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC) composed of the DAA/DIA and members of the Faculty Senate Academic Assessment and General Education Committees and the Co-Curricular Committee.
- Articulation, in spring 2021, of University Student Learning Goals to coordinate all areas of assessment at MSU: May 6, 2021 report of the committee; Distilled University Student Learning Goals; University Student Learning Goals to Program SLG mapping example.

Academic programs and co-curricular programs and offices collect data on students' achievement of SLOs in mapped academic courses and co-curricular offerings during the previous academic year. Academic programs then meet at the beginning of the current academic year to "close the loop" by discussing and analyzing those data. This occurs during Fall Assessment Day of the subsequent academic year, typically during September. Programs compare assessment results with the goals established in their previous year's assessment plan. From these meetings, programs establish the current year's goals for students' achievement of SLOs, decide what they will do in the courses and offerings connected to those SLOs to improve student learning, and record their analysis and planning in a YPA Report and Plan. The report and plan document is transmitted to the DAA/DIA, who evaluates each program's submission, provides feedback and recommendations to that program, and files all reports, plans, and responses in the appropriate directories on VPAA's SharePoint site.

Co-curricular programs write their reports in the summer or early fall and submit them directly to the DAA/DIA who reviews them and then brings them to the institutional co-curricular committee. The DAA/DIA in consultation with the committee then writes an executive summary of results and future actions to be taken.

Beginning in the spring of 2021, an executive summary of academic assessment is created from the DAA/DIA's feedback and presented to faculty and staff during the Spring Assessment Day meeting, along with reports from co-curricular and general education assessment. That report was created by the chair of the Academic Assessment Committee in the spring of 2021 and will be written by the DAA/DIA going forward. The DAA/DIA also created an executive summary of co-curricular assessment in May 2020, a process that will be retained going forward.

General Education Assessment

MSU's General Education program also conducts assessment according to the process refined in the fall of 2018. General Education is designed to ensure that students learn a common set of academic skills and capacities, display personal and social responsibility, and understand the interconnecting perspectives that shape domestic and global issues. Courses in the General Education program are identified with SLOs which are linked to specific critical capacities. Each of those courses has a specific assignment through which a specific SLO is assessed. Faculty teaching that course assesses that assignment using a rubric adapted from AAC&U's LEAP VALUE rubrics and approved by the Faculty Senate; that rubric is designed to assess the extent to which students have acquired the skills, capacities, experiences, and perspectives specified.

Faculty apply the rubric and record the results using a Google form that identifies the SLO, the course and section, the credit classification level of the student, and the results of the student's performance on the SLO, measured according to the rubric. These data are recorded for each student in the course, up to 30 students. Because of the number of courses involved in this process, they are

assessed on a three-semester rotation as described on the General Education Assessment site, which includes a spreadsheet detailing courses to be assessed each term and links to rubrics and associated forms for each developmental content area. Results from each rubric are collected and collated in one database managed by the VPAA's office.

The annual Spring Assessment Day event includes faculty discussion of trends and feedback and recommendations to the Academic Assessment and General Education Committees. Until the spring of 2019, the Academic Assessment Committee analyzed these General Education data and reported results to the faculty on Assessment Day. Beginning with the 2019–2020 academic year, the Faculty Senate transferred responsibility for analyzing and reporting these data to the General Education Committee. The General Education Committee collects and discusses, reports, and makes recommendations based on these data. That report is presented to faculty teaching general education courses as part of the Spring Assessment Day meeting and posted on the General Education Assessment page. Results from each three-semester data-collection cycle are archived. The data can be accessed through a public dashboard (see 4.B.2), and the reports are publicly available on the General Education Assessment page, as are the reports from the Academic Assessment Committee, and, as of 2019-2020, those of the General Education Committee.

The methods and processes for assessment of student learning described here are complementary and well established. Identification of direct and indirect measures of learning, establishment of common terminology, creation and refinement of reporting and planning instruments, and training designed to assist faculty and staff understand, implement, and incorporate results from assessment into program planning have been important focuses. The fundamental goal of these efforts has been the creation, incorporation, and continuous improvement within MSU's academic, co-curricular, and General Education programs of assessment practices that enable them to understand how well students are learning and to design and implement effective interventions to improve that learning.

4.B.2

The assessment processes described above are designed to lead academic, co-curricular, and General Education programs to use information gained from assessment data to improve student learning. Academic assessment using YPAs, as discussed above, are reviewed by the DAA/DIA who provides feedback to departments on improving student learning and tuning the details of each program assessment. In addition, in Spring 2021 the Academic Assessment Committee provided the campus with an executive summary surveying overall results for 2020-2021.

The Bachelor of Arts in Art program demonstrates how this process works in an academic department to improve student learning. In their 2019-2020 YPA Report and Plan for 2020–2021, the Bachelor of Arts in Art program details that it used a department-designed exam, sophomore reviews, post-capstone experience reviews, and faculty's rubric-based assessment of student assignments to assess student learning. This 2019–2020 YPA Report included extensive reflection by the faculty involved on the course context in which the assessment method was used, data collection, and recommended program changes. This was the first year that a department-designed exam was administered to assess learning for SLO 4.1, "Students will gain substantive competencies in foundational disciplines," so the program planned to continue to record and analyze that data to determine the proper target for that SLO, and it established targets for its other SLOs as part of its plan. The DAA's feedback on the program's 2019-2020 YPA Report and 2020–2021 YPA Plan suggested using proficiency ratings rather than percentages for some assessment tools while noting that the program explicitly links those tools to SLOs and appears to provide objective indications of student learning even with tools that are too new to have provided much data yet. The program's

2020–2021 YPA Report and Plan for 2021–2022 reported that students are meeting many SLOs but identified the low number of completers of the department-designed exam and ongoing challenges of completing some assignments under pandemic conditions as likely having affected the assessment of student learning. The program planned to continue with its current SLGs and SLOs and their current success targets and assessment tools, and as operational goals identified increasing "virtual" recruitment while also continuing to maintain studio and face-to-face courses.

Co-curricular assessment continues to follow the multi-year plan outlined above and detailed in MSU's 2020 focused visit report (pp. 20-23). In year one, 2019-2020, five areas implemented co-curricular assessment plans; additional units were added in 2020-2021. Units reported their findings and related adjustments in individual reports to the co-curricular assessment committee. Observations on the learning objectives measured and goals achieved are summarized in the co-curricular Committee's executive summary of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

Co-curricular examples from year one 2019-2020 include Career Services, which listed direct and indirect measurements and provided a detailed narrative report and interpretation of the results. The DAA's feedback noted that quantitative data were not recorded in the report because of newness of the tools, difficulties related to the pandemic, and the unwieldy nature of some tools once put into practice. These issues were addressed in the unit's report and plan, and one new project was reasonably tagged as being benchmarked in the coming year. The Academic Support Center focused on growth among peer mentors, with positive initial results on the co-curricular goals measured as well as plans for improvement. Year two results (2020-2021) included a Residential Life project with Resident Assistants to host student conversations to encourage retention and the Looyenga Leadership Center's positive results on student confidence and leadership ability.

General Education Assessment

In fall 2021, MSU completed the most recent of three complete assessment cycles of its General Education program. Each cycle spans three terms to capture a rubric-derived measure of student performance on each of the program's developmental categories. The General Education Committee reports results to campus on its university web site, in annual reports and on Assessment Day, as discussed in detail in 4.B.1. To assist in drawing conclusions from this large data set, in 2021-2022 the DIA implemented a web-based dashboard to allow faculty to easily compare performance in each developmental category of different student populations.

As with academic and co-curricular programs and their assessment, the General Education Committee has focused on adjusting assessment measures, instruments, and reporting while making data-based recommendations to faculty teaching general education classes to improve student learning. The committee reported significant growth in 2020-2021 in students' meeting learning goals over the course of the degree programs in all but three Critical Capacities and Skills (CCS): "Quantitative Literacy (CCS4)," "Oral/Written Communication (CCS5)," and Personal and Social Responsibility (PSR): "Individual Well-Being (PSR3)." To address areas of concern, the General Education Committee recommended holding convocation discussions to explore why targets (defined as "a significant difference between freshmen and seniors with $\alpha = 0.05$") were not met on CCS4, CCS5, and PSR3. The committee also initiated a pilot proficiency-based assessment of responses to non-class-specific prompts to evaluate the category of Personal and Social Responsibility and Interconnecting Perspectives. The committee presented its initial findings at Spring 2022 Assessment Day, resulting in a robust discussion of training and evaluating faculty to ensure interrater reliability.

4.B.3

MSU's assessment methods and processes are based in and informed by established good practice. Academic assessment is clearly explained and derived from resources available on the VPAA's [Academic Assessment](#) page, many of which were discussed with Program Assessment Liaisons (PALs) and faculty during construction of the current YPA process. The [Co-curricular Committee's November 2019 white paper](#) drew on best practices to design the model described in 4.B.1. Academic and co-curricular assessment share common template forms, terminology, and approaches to assess student learning. MSU's General Education model allows the institution to ascertain student performance on critical capacities and skills; the General Education Committee continues to refine its statistical analysis of these resulting data. As the above discussion of 4.B.1 and 4.B.2 indicate, the development of MSU's assessment methods and processes has depended at each step on involvement by the faculty and staff who are performing assessment of student learning and closing the loop through discussion and analysis. These practices are reinforced by Assessment Days set aside each term to complete reporting and conduct modality reviews (see 4.A.4). Spring Assessment Day focuses on an executive summary of academic assessment reports for the previous year and plans for the current year, reports on General Education and co-curricular assessment, a report by the Student Learning Assessment Committee, and discussion and feedback related to all areas of assessment.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1

MSU's goals for student retention, persistence, and completion are addressed in its current strategic plan *Empowering Generations*, approved by the SBHE in September 2016. Its goals were established in the context of the average six-year graduation rate (38%) and retention rate (68%) of MSU during 2010-2015. *Empowering Generations* set goals of a 50% six-year graduation rate and an 80% retention rate, to be achieved by 2023. As reported to IPEDS in May 2021, MSU's six-year graduation rate had risen to 55%, which exceeded the 2023 goal, and its retention rate had increased to 71%, which demonstrated marked progress toward the 2023 goal. This demonstrates that the university has over time improved student retention and graduation rates and can continue to meet its graduation rate goal and plausibly attain its retention rate goal, especially given its initiatives to improve student retention and completion that are discussed in 4.C.3 below.

4.C.2

In 2015, to provide a more nuanced look at various student cohorts from enrollment to graduation, MSU organized the Data Metrics team, comprised of the Director of Institutional Research (DIR), the Registrar, the Director of Enrollment Services, the Online Program Coordinator in the Center for Extended Learning, and the Director of Financial Aid. Each summer, following graduation, this team compiles and reports to the President's Staff the number and percentage of students who graduated from MSU, graduated from another institution, are still enrolled at MSU, are still enrolled but at a different institution, have stopped out, have stopped out and returned, have transferred, or who are deceased. MSU also collects information on graduation and retention rates from Student Achievement Measures (SAM) reporting to understand its transfer student population. This provides decision-makers with detailed information as a supplement to official IPEDS reporting.

MSU's federally funded TRIO program, the POWER Center, also collects data on student persistence

and graduation as part of their grant reporting. As part of its 2015–2020 plan, POWER established goals for a student persistence rate of 75% and a six-year graduation of 45%. In its 2019–2020 Annual Performance Report, POWER reported a 70% persistence rate among traditional students and a 71% persistence rate among students with disabilities. The six-year graduation rate was 47% for traditional students; the rate for students with disabilities will not be calculated until six years after that specific grant's commencement.

Other data related to student retention, persistence, and completion used at MSU include the Common Data Set (CDS), which is made up of data from publishers College Board, Peterson's Guide, U.S. News & World Report, and Wintergreen/Orchard House. Campus groups such as the Retain and Graduate Committee and Strategic Planning and Budget Council also make use of information drawn from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report (done in 2020 and 2022), the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI, done in 2017 and 2019), and the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL, done in 2017 and 2019). These and many other reports are maintained by the Director of Institutional Research.

4.C.3

Goal 2 of MSU's *Empowering Generations* strategic plan states that the University will "Recruit, retain, and value well-qualified students, faculty, and staff." Programs that support MSU's retention and graduation efforts including its First-Year Experience Learning Communities and peer mentor program, peer tutoring and supplemental instruction, Residence Life activities, POWER Center, and the Starfish Early Alert System.

MSU's institutional Retain and Graduate (formerly Retention) Committee (RGC) is made up of the Looyenga Leadership Center Director, the Academic Support Center and POWER Center Director, the Financial Aid Director, the Director of Institutional Research, the Advising Coordinator, the Registrar, the Director of Residence Life, two faculty members and two students. This committee develops, implements, assesses, and propagates retention strategies and practices that address and improve retention and completion rates and student learning at MSU. The RGC has analyzed and communicated retention data and effective practices across campus every semester, beginning spring 2018, and it has recommended the implementation of programs for identifiable sub-populations including lower-division students, transfer students, adult-learners, graduate students, first-generation, and other groups with identifiable student success gaps. This committee also evaluates institutional policies, practices, and procedures as they pertain to retention of students. RGC focuses on key areas to improve retention, including advising, financial literacy, the First-Year Experience (FYE), residential life, and the transition to sophomore year.

4.C.4

The Director of Institutional Research (DIR) coordinates and integrates data and provides analytical support to the VPAA and MSU as a whole. The DIR collects, analyzes, and reports data about MSU's student retention, persistence, and completion rates as discussed in 4.C.2. Campus units, including the VPAA's office, President's Staff, Strategic Planning and Budget Council, and the Retain and Graduate Committee, in turn analyze and make use of those data as they develop activities and programs designed to increase those rates. For example, the DIR supported the data collection and analysis for the research presented in the 2019 and 2021 strategic planning retreats. She also supported the Director of the ASC in the survey of students in the first-year experience and its resulting data analysis. The DIR produces an annual Fact Book that includes retention and graduation rates along with other institutional data required for state and federal reporting.

Sources

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

MSU follows established assessment processes that are robust and cover program reviews, yearly assessment of academic and co-curricular learning by faculty and staff, and student performance on developmental general education skills and capacities. Faculty review courses systematically to ensure comparability across modalities and locations, a set of processes that served the campus particularly well during the pandemic to ensure continuity of instruction during rapid expansion of various types of remote instruction. Feedback on each type of assessment drives improvement in student learning through curricular change, provides justification for budget requests, and shapes adjustments to courses and programs. General education assessment, with three full cycles (4.5 years total) of data collection and university-wide discussion, now allows detailed understanding of student proficiency across a wide range of developmental criteria and has raised awareness of areas needing attention and those with consistently high achievement. At the same time, it has become evident that managing and explaining this complex model requires significant resources and faculty time. In 2021-2022 Faculty Senate committees are actively exploring simplifying the current model or potentially replacing it with something less complex.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1

Minot State University's (MSU) leadership is committed to thorough, inclusive, and effective shared governance planning processes and an [organizational chart](#) that enables the institution to fulfill its mission. Shared governance is well-established at MSU through [Faculty Senate](#), [Staff Senate](#), and the [Student Government Association](#) (SGA). Each group elected representatives of their specific constituents. Faculty Senate includes the MSU President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), two nonvoting representatives from the SGA, and one nonvoting representative from the Staff Senate. Additionally, [Faculty Senate and Institutional Committees](#) include representatives from both SGA and Staff Senate. As needed, the Faculty Senate charges ad hoc committees whose members represent faculty and other relevant constituents. The composition of Faculty Senate was revised in academic year 2020-2021 to include one representative from each department/division to increase collaboration across all disciplines on campus.

The [MSU Board of Regents](#) (BOR) participates in MSU's shared governance by attending campus meetings each [fall and spring](#), where they are updated on campus initiatives and invited to contribute ideas and suggestions for MSU development. The BOR annually recognizes outstanding MSU staff and faculty members with the [Board of Regents Faculty and Staff Recognition Awards](#).

The North Dakota [State Board of Higher Education](#) (SBHE) is the governing board for MSU. The SBHE is comprised of seven North Dakota citizens appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Additionally, a student attending one of North Dakota's eleven public institutions of higher education is appointed by the governor for a one-year term. The [Council of College Faculties](#), a statewide organization representing NDUS faculty, selects a non-voting faculty advisor; and the

NDUS Staff Senate selects the board's non-voting staff member. The SBHE sets policy for the 11 public institutions and advocates for the North Dakota University System (NDUS). The SBHE is discussed in detail in 2.C.1.

Shared governance with the SBHE occurs not only through faculty and student representation on the Board, but also through administrative level advisory groups. Within the state system, campuses share governance on issues related to system-wide decisions and policies through NDUS councils.

5.A.2

MSU's administration engages in data-driven decision-making to support use of resources, evaluation of performance, and assess outcomes in all academic, co-curricular, and administrative programs. The following examples demonstrate ways data are used for these decisions:

- Each fall, the Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF) initiates the Annual Budget Request Process by preparing Electronic Budget Request workbooks and metrics reports and sending them to university vice presidents and department/division heads. Using the data and information contained in the budget workbook, plus assessment data, VPs and department heads request funding for faculty lines, operating budgets, one-time purchases, and facility upgrades. The budget books are then reviewed by the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC). The SPBC reviews the requests and recommends funding expenditures to President's Staff. President's Staff then assesses the recommendations and supporting data to determine campus funding for the next academic year.
- The Office of Institutional Research (IR) provides data about MSU on the IR websites. MSU's Common Data Set and IPEDS Data Feedback Report are used by administrators, directors, department heads, and various committees for institutional comparisons and benchmarking.
- The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Graduate School (AVP) and the Marketing Department use the Registrar's Office Enrollment Report to review enrollment trends and Enrollment Services Weekly Progression Report (example from Fall 2020) to analyze application trends. The Marketing Office social media specialist develops a digital summary of digital and social campaign performance from data obtained through exports from Google ads and social media platforms MSU utilizes for advertising. MSU's web content specialist analyzes data pulled from Google Analytics to create web KPIs (2019-2021).
- The Recruit and Enroll Team is co-chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) and a faculty member. In 2020-2021, in response to declining enrollment trends, the committee analyzed external and internal data and key performance indicators for academic departments/divisions, seeking higher education trends and anticipated outlook for academic programs. The committee met with each academic department/division and shared the results. Department/division faculty used the information to set enrollment targets, identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative degree and delivery options, and determine action steps to improve their recruiting and enrollment.
- The NSSE, FSSE, and SSI are administered biannually to collect data about first-year and senior student participation and activities that support their learning and personal development. These data, along with Starfish Statistics, are examined by the Retain and Graduate Committee. Led by the director of the Looyenga Leadership Center, this committee addresses action items in MSU's Strategic Plan Goal 3: Retain and Graduate. Examples of midterm report and minutes from 2020-2021 are here.
- Results of the NSSE, FSSE, and SSI data were included in the research summary presented at the April 2021 strategic planning retreat. Actions items in the draft of the new strategic plan

are based on the results of those surveys.

- The MSU Fact Book provides institutional trend data and is used by administration and the campus as a whole to guide planning efforts on campus.
- The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report includes Clery Crime Statistics (p. 12) for a two-year period. These data, as well as information within the report, support requests for additional security staff and safety equipment such as blue lights. Data in a recent energy efficiency audit supported the need for new windows in several campus buildings and new energy efficient lighting across campus.
- The annual Faculty Satisfaction Surveys and Staff Satisfaction Survey reports reveal pressing issues to be addressed by the respective groups as well as the campus leadership. When the 2019-2020 Faculty Satisfaction survey indicated concerns with compensation, workload inequalities, and academic administrative organization, Faculty Senate initiated discussions regarding MSU's Salary Administration Policy and created an Ad Hoc committee to study and propose changes to MSU's academic structure and organization. Possible solutions to both issues are currently under discussion.

5.A.3

Collaboration among administrators, faculty, staff, and students is well-established at MSU. These efforts are best shown through examples:

- The Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws describe purposes of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Committees, illustrating campus-wide collaboration in recommending policy to the administration. The Academic Policies Committee (APC) (Faculty Senate Bylaws, p. 13) examines current academic policies and makes policy update recommendations to the Faculty Senate. Members include faculty, a voting SGA representative, and non-voting VPAA and AVP.
- Duties, policies, and procedures of the Curriculum Committee (Faculty Senate Bylaws p. 16) include approval or disapproval of curriculum proposals. Members include faculty and three voting SGA representatives.
- Information from administration is also shared with faculty and staff by means such as the annual fall convocation and mini-sessions. University Communications sends daily campus announcements and the monthly newsletter, *Inside*. The annual budget open forum provides campus constituents information about the upcoming budget year.
- Collaboration is exemplified in two of MSU's most inclusive planning processes: Strategic Planning (see 1.A.1) and the Annual Budget Request Process (5.C.1). Each process includes administration, staff, faculty, and students.
- University Chairs Council meets monthly with the VPAA to facilitate detailed discussion of the nuances of implementing MSU policy and initiatives in each department.
- MSU's SGA is active in leading collaborative efforts to improve the student experience. During spring 2020, SGA presented a resolution to Faculty Senate, proposing Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grading for Spring 2020 due to the pandemic and courses unexpectedly moving to online. This proposal, with amendments, was approved by the Faculty Senate and endorsed by the VPAA as an option for the Spring 2020 semester and for the 2020-2021 academic year.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1

MSU's operational staff encompass all areas common to an institution of our size. Each operational area maintains a public website providing information describing its services, key personnel, upcoming events, responsibilities, and contact information.

NDUS policy guides the hiring process at MSU. The NDUS Human Resource Policy Manual Sections 2-4 outlines policies for appointment, qualifications, and probationary periods for staff. MSU uses the NDUS state-provided software, Recruiting Solutions, to attract applicants, aid them in submitting applications, and assist those who are reviewing candidates. Open jobs appear first in Recruiting Solutions, then are automatically posted on the MSU website, HigherEdJobs.com, Indeed.com, and Job Service of North Dakota. Final hiring decisions rest with the appropriate supervisor, vice president or athletic director, and the president.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) provides guidance to administration, faculty, and staff. The HR director assists in campus hiring, training, retirement negotiations, and salary benchmarking to ensure that MSU recruits and retains highly qualified individuals. The OHR maintains a comprehensive website with links to information as well as policies and procedures. The MSU Staff Handbook, published in 2020-2021, is available on the OHR website.

Staff training opportunities are offered by MSU as well as affiliated offices. Typically, MSU hosts monthly campus speakers; however, due to the pandemic, campus guests were limited in 2020-2021. The OHR provides a gateway to numerous retirement webinars. Annual training on Fraud, the Clery Act, and Title IX, mandated by the SBHE and MSU, is provided online for all employees. MSU staff are evaluated annually through the Performance Development Review process (SBHE 604.2 and NDUS HR 17). Staff complete a self-evaluation and set goals for the upcoming year then meet with their supervisor and discuss ways they can improve as well as ways the university can better support them.

MSU has 104 formal learning spaces located throughout campus buildings. The spaces include specialty labs for art, science, and nursing; general and lecture classrooms; computer labs and interactive video network rooms; rehearsal rooms; and theaters. Conference rooms are used for

instruction and meetings. The conference center in the Student Center is available for larger campus gatherings. Most faculty have private office space. Learning spaces include appropriate technology for their intended use. Student study spaces are numerous and are incorporated into most campus buildings. The Gordon B. Olson Library, for example, provides individual and group study rooms and a limited number of graduate student/faculty carrels for research. The lower floor of the library was renovated in 2018-2019 and is now home to Academic Support Services. MSU offers housing in residence halls and student apartments.

The MSU Dome, Wellness Center, Student Center, Swain Hall, and Herb Parker Stadium house athletic facilities and public-accessible wellness opportunities, such as the walking path in the Dome and the swimming pool in the Student Center. The Student Center is home to dining services and the bookstore. The Student Center is connected to the Administration Building, giving students and faculty easy access to administrative services such as Financial Aid, the Business Office, the Registrar's Office, the Graduate Office, and the Center for Extended Learning.

Current and upcoming campus renovations include remodeling of the lower level of the Student Center, revitalization of the MSU Summer Theatre, and the renovation of Hartnett Hall (North Dakota SB2003). Additionally, several buildings' roofs and heating/cooling systems have been updated. Rooms and academic areas in Memorial Hall have been refreshed and upgraded for optimal clinical practices and training in Communication Sciences and Disorders and Nursing. This past summer, MSU realized a long-time plan for a campus daycare center when it repurposed the lower level of a residence hall and partnered with a locate daycare provider.

5.B.2

As noted in 1.A.1 and 5.C.3, MSU has had the same mission and vision since 2016, one set of goals from 2016-2018, and a revised set of goals from 2018 until the present. Those goals have objectives and action items which were reorganized and revised in 2018 when the goals were modified.

The strategic plan was modified in 2018 because the previous version unrealistically identified goals that attempted to serve too many groups. In addition, the plan needed reorganization; too many similar ideas were spread out over more than one goal. The updated strategic plan is more realistic and better organized, and the abbreviated names of the goals makes their focus clearer and easier to remember.

Some action items are more aspirational than others. One example is Goal 6, Objective 3: Empower faculty and staff to seek and secure external funding. This goal includes three action items:

1. Reinstate the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP).
2. Implement incentive program for faculty and staff to secure external funding.
3. Establish a Minot State Research Center.

Action items 1 and 2 are realistic. In 2019, the OSP was reinstated under the leadership of a half-time director. Action item 2 has not been met, but the director of the OSP has provided informational sessions with departments/divisions to assist faculty and staff in finding and writing for grants. The director has also supported them in this work individually and on the Faculty Research Committee which calls for small grant proposals each year. Action item 3 has not been accomplished, and based on current, past, and future resources, such a center is not realistic and won't be included in the next strategic plan, which is expected to implemented in fall 2022.

Campus forums were held November 26-27, 2018 to share the updated strategic plan; to provide a progress report on the strategic plan; to announce the first strategic planning retreat; and to answer questions and gather feedback. The progress report identified the many action items under each goal that were accomplished, in progress, as well as those on which there was not yet any progress.

Following the 2018 update, two strategic planning retreats were used to gather feedback to update and focus the strategic plan in 2019 and 2021. The retreat in 2019 resulted in a campus focus on enrollment and the goals related to it, Goal 2: Recruit and Enroll and Goal 3: Retain and Graduate. The retreat in 2021 had participants note completed action items and consider the impact of the pandemic on future planning. The results of that retreat are included in a draft of the strategic plan that will be shared with the campus along with a 2022 draft of a strategic plan progress report, both of which were recently shared with Strategic Planning and Budget Council. The recent progress report indicates most action items were met to some degree, and those that were not but are realistic and still relevant will be included in the next strategic plan, while the rest will be removed.

5.B.3

Monitoring finances is a critical function for maintaining the fiscal health of MSU, which must take advantage of mission enhancement opportunities, ensure a realistic budget, and avoid financial crises. The MSU administration continuously monitors budgets and finances with particular focus during reporting and annual budget development. The budget monitoring and development processes ensure that MSU's finances remain sustainable, and that resources are allocated equitably and advantageously to advance the quality of offerings and services.

Revenue projections help ensure adequate resources will be available to meet budgeted and unexpected expenditures. MSU monitors new admittance applications and enrollment (2020) data and uses that data in conjunction with historical data and trends (see Fall 2019 and Fall 2018) to project tuition revenues. State legislative funding is more difficult to project since it is dependent upon legislative appropriations. Funding for the next biennium is largely based on weighted, completed credit hours in the prior biennium. Using historical weighted credits generated, MSU projects large fluctuations in the portion of the NDUS funding formula that is driven by those prior biennium credits. Auxiliary and local fund data are also tracked to project revenues.

Expenditures are also closely monitored to ensure budget compliance. MSU's Business Office maintains purchasing and expenditure controls that prevent department/division expenditures from going over budget unless the system is overridden or a budget transfer from another source allows the expenditure to go forward. The system generates a budget exception report to flag departmental expenditures over budget.

Every benefitted personnel position is budgeted as a separate line item in the position control system. MSU's position control in the Peoplesoft Financial system integrates those position control numbers with the HR system. Changes to expected expenditures for any position are tracked and projected for impact to university budgets.

The administration tracks, projects and regularly reviews the overall budget picture by component area through the Projected FY 22 & FY 23 Appropriated Table. Highlights of MSU's appropriated funding through Fall 2021 include:

- Fiscal year 2015-2016 (FY16) is the first benchmark year. In that year, the state asked for mid-year budget reductions. FY21 is the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2021 and is of primary

importance in monitoring FY22 finances.
- FY22 projected tuition revenues are coming in better than budgeted.
- Salary expenditures are coming in less than budgeted.
- MSU is projecting a net appropriated operating surplus for FY22. Administration anticipates using some of the excess funds to meet one-time budget requests that will not increase future base operating expense budgets.
- The projected FY23 operating budget will occur during the second half of the state's biennial budget and can be determined with some reasonable accuracy. MSU is projecting a net operating surplus for that fiscal year.
- FY24 and FY25 will be more challenging since MSU is expecting reductions in base state support due to previous declines in enrollment, which will impact the funding formula.
- The FY23 budget (under development as of this writing) will be impacted by the look-ahead to the reduction in state funding for FY24 and FY25.

During the budget development cycle each year, the University projects future budgets (typically for two years) based on its own tracking data as well as available information about possible legislative actions. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. MSU is dedicated to excellence in education, as defined by the mission statement. MSU ensures that its fiscal allocations are geared toward this through a budget process that includes linking budget requests to the Strategic Plan (see details in 5.C.1).

University reserves are an important resource and are carefully monitored and projected. Those reserves are routinely used for one-time MSU expenditures and to help address downturns in revenue or emergencies. The North Dakota University System policy 810.1 Appropriated Funds Reserve requires five to seven percent of university-appropriated revenues be maintained as "undesignated" appropriated reserves at all times. MSU is in compliance with this requirement.

MSU also closely monitors other available reserves. Additional appropriated and local reserves include local indirect cost reserves and local interest earning reserves. MSU's reserves are healthy despite reductions in the last few years. The $2.2 million in unrestricted reserves was used strategically to reduce auxiliary debt in early FY22 through bond defeasance. However, the use of local fund reserves over the last three years will not be sustainable. That issue is a significant FY23 budget development consideration that will be extensively considered during the budget development process.

In addition to revenues, expenditure, reserves, and budgets, MSU also monitors its fiscal health using Composite Financial Index scores and ratio analysis. Much of that information is required as annual reporting to the SBHE. MSU's fiscal health remains sound despite some reduction in the quality of the ratios over the last several years. MSU also closely tracks and projects bond coverage ratios from auxiliary operations and contains costs when necessary to maintain bond covenants.

Evidence showing the MSU's careful management of university finances can be found in the administration's analysis and restructuring of debt service that saw completion in early FY22. After several years of declining occupancy and enrollment, the University was struggling to meet the 1.15 coverage requirements in the University's auxiliary revenue bond covenants. Compounding the problem, student fees were no longer fully funding the Wellness Center bonds' debt service. Further, the bond covenants' coverage requirements were restricting the University's ability to pursue options to meaningfully address the quality of campus housing. The Administration was able to use some of the unrestricted reserves to defease its 2015 housing bonds. That action allowed the University to maintain its "A" rating from S&P Global so that it could refund its 2010 Wellness Center bonds and

take advantage of lower interest rates. Between the two actions of refunding the Wellness Center bonds and defeasance of the residence hall bonds, the University reduced its auxiliary debt service requirements. Those actions greatly increased available auxiliary cash and reserves, which will create a more secure financial environment for the auxiliary functions and allow for planning of improvements to student housing options.

When reviewing the institution's processes for maintaining the health of its finances, it should also be noted that the North Dakota University System monitors the fiscal health of all institutions in the university system. In addition to audits, required annual financial statements, CPI scores, and reserves, MSU reports to the SBHE Budget and Finance Committee on a semi-annual basis if there is a variance of +/- $100,000 or two percent or more, whichever is greater, in any fund or revenue item.

The institution's detailed, inclusive budget development process and subsequent fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. MSU is dedicated to excellence in education as defined by its mission statement. MSU ensures that fiscal allocations are geared toward this goal through its detailed budget process that includes linking budget requests to the strategic plan while safeguarding resources.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1

MSU engages in an Annual Budget Request Process, initiated during academic year 2016-2017 with the development of budget workbooks by the VPAF. The budget process allows for robust links between planning, assessment of student learning, and budget prioritization, and ensures sustainability beyond current personnel. The budget process relies on annual campus-wide program assessment of student learning outcomes and operational needs (see 4.B for details on MSU assessment). Based on this information, units complete budget workbooks to request resources that address assessment outcomes and related needs. The process requires units to align their requests with MSU's mission and goals. Each of the goals of the Strategic Plan relate directly to or supports student learning. Unit workbooks are summarized under the appropriate Vice President; budget workbooks reviewed in 2020-2021 for 2021-2022 allocations were Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Student Affairs, and Advancement.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC) reviews and recommends resource allocation guided by the mission and priorities of the institution. The SPBC is charged to:

1. Implement MSU's strategic plan, *Empowering Generations,* and to advise in the budget development and required budget request processes;
2. Identify priorities and create implementation calendars along with the funding mechanisms to ensure MSU's success; and
3. Review MSU's strategic goals, objectives, action items, and metrics as needed.

To further clarify its role in aligning budget priorities with the MSU mission, the SPBC purposes are to:

1. Review annual budget requests and presentations via the annual budget process and make recommendations to President's Staff.

2. Get progress reports from those leading strategic planning initiatives (i.e., document progress and hold people accountable).
3. Review new academic and co-curricular program requests, new positions, space requests, and other related requests before proceeding.
4. Assist with program prioritization and budget cuts when appropriate.
5. Help plan the annual strategic planning retreat.
6. Review the information from the annual strategic planning retreat and make recommendations for updates to the strategic plan to President's Staff.
7. Communicate with campus constituency groups (e.g., senates) and seek total understanding and commitment by campus.

During the annual budget review process, the SPBC begins its review with a presentation from the VPAF, who shares the current and trending budget picture. Next, the SPBC reviews budget workbooks submitted by each area; each is invited to present its budget in an open meeting. SPBC members are assigned to view specific presentations. Members discuss the information provided, and each rates the requests based on the following questions (see SPBC Budget Recommendations for 2020-2021 submitted during January 2020):

1. Is the budget request a new or an existing budget item?
2. Which strategic goal(s)/objective(s) does the request support and how?
3. What is the evidence to support this request? (e.g., assessment, satisfaction, or other data)
4. How does the request contribute to MSU's bottom line?
5. Is the request a necessity or not?

Using the aggregate results from the SPBC member surveys, the SPBC deliberates, prioritizes requests using the criteria, and develops a list of recommendations that it submits to the President's staff in January for consideration in resource allocations for the following academic year. SPBC Recommendations to Presidents Staff for the 2020-21 Budget and SPBC Recommendations to Presidents Staff to the 2021-22 Budget are located on the MSU website.

By the end of FY21, MSU had completed three cycles of the Annual Budget Request Process with clear evidence of consistent links to its planning process, assessment of student learning, and budget prioritization. The Annual Budget Process and Timeline approved by the Faculty Senate and endorsed by the Staff Senate in fall 2018, articulates expectations of all parties in Annual Budget Request Process. MSU remains committed to the new budget cycle and process, and the President's Staff has operationalized the process. Now in its fourth iteration, the budget process is participatory and transparent. Each spring, based on recommendations of the SPBC and analysis of future and trending budget allocations, the President holds a budget forum to share budget plans with the campus.

MSU faculty engage in scholarly activity and rely primarily on departmental budgets for support. Faculty can also apply to the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Research for small grants; the criteria for selection includes alignment with goals of the strategic plan. The Office of Sponsored Programs supports faculty and staff grant activity, which often contributes to faculty scholarship. The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) is a North Dakota Center of Excellence associated with MSU; however, its funding is through the Center.

5.C.2

MSU's Annual Budget Request Process links assessment of student learning, evaluation of

operations, planning, and budgeting. As described in 5.C.1, and on page 28 of the MSU Focused Visit Report, this comprehensive process requires programs to clearly align requests for resources to the mission and goals of the institution. The process begins with assessment of student learning through the annual academic assessment process. Departments/divisions reflect on their assessment results, establish goals and action steps, and determine their budget needs. Budget requests focus on student learning improvement and align with goals of the strategic plan. For example, please see the budget request for the VPAA's reports. As detailed in 5.C.1, the SPBC completes its review and makes recommendations for funding to President's Staff. President's Staff examines budget projections for the next biennium and prioritizes resource recommendations.

The VPAF oversees the Business Office, Facilities Management, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Information Technology Central, and Safety and Security. The VPAF meets with each area regularly to discuss operational needs. During the Annual Budget Request Process the VPAF submits a budget request workbook on behalf of his reports. The most common requests are for updates to technology, increased utility budgets, security, and facilities/campus maintenance.

5.C.3

MSU's planning process includes the annual review of the strategic plan (see1.A.1), the annual budget request process (see 5.C.2), and campus initiatives to address current issues. The planning process involves administration, faculty, staff, and students.

During summer 2019, the VPAA held a campus-wide strategic planning retreat to sharpen *Empowering Generations*, update and refine objectives and action items, and identify metrics. Over 80 faculty, staff, and students participated. That fall a sub-committee of the Strategic Planning and Budget Council (SPBC) summarized the feedback from the retreat and recommended to President Shirley the campus concentrate its efforts on two goals, Goal 2: Recruit and Enroll as well as Goal 3: Retain and Graduate. In December 2019, President Shirley announced a Recruit and Enroll Team and a Retain and Graduate Team to focus efforts on Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan. Both teams included representation of all internal MSU constituencies.

The teams were formed but had to slow their efforts during spring 2020 due to the pandemic. During FY 2020-2021, the teams continued their work, gathering data and best-practices and presenting information to campus. As part of this work, a subgroup of the Recruit and Enroll Team visited every academic department/division on campus. During these visits, the group presented discipline-specific information that provided an increased focus on and awareness of trends in enrollment, academic programs, and careers (e.g., presentation to Division of Social Science). Following these departmental meetings, the VPAA charged departments/divisions to set enrollment targets, identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative degree and delivery options, and determine action steps. The responses to these requests are currently being reviewed for feasibility and implementation processes.

The Recruit and Enroll Team's work also led to a Summer 2020 pilot study to grant the Registrar's Office more authority to equate all 100- and 200-level transfer courses, hiring a web content specialist in 2021-2022, establishing a high-level leadership position to oversee Enrollment Services and Marketing and to serve as a member of President's Staff starting 2021-2022; and an increase in the campus marketing budget for 2021-2022 (see spring 2021 budget presentation).

In April 2021, a second Strategic Planning Retreat was held to refresh the strategic plan. Following the retreat, the VPAA formed a committee to organize information gained from it. This information

was presented to campus at Fall 2021 Convocation Mini-Sessions. The SPBC continues to meet to review the updated draft of the strategic plan, refine goals, and set action items.

5.C.4

MSU adjusts its operational plans in response to changing market conditions and educational trends. One example of that flexibility is the university's recent upgrade of most classrooms to a HyFlex model in response to the pandemic. Another is the recent implementation of operational software for functions such as scholarship applications, electronic signatures, and electronic ticket processing.

University administration's careful monitoring and conservative budgeting is most easily evidenced by several years of positive general fund net results of operations and growing reserves despite declining enrollment and residence hall occupancy, as described and evidenced in 5.B.3. The University has opportunistically reduced positions and operating budgets over the last six years to reduce expenditures while carefully avoiding negative impacts on the quality of programs

Enrollment drives tuition revenues and the state funding formula and is important for MSU's financial viability. Following the nationwide trend, MSU has experienced a decline in enrollment over the last several years:

- Fall 2016 enrollment: 3412
- Fall 2017 enrollment: 3216
- Fall 2018 enrollment: 3189
- Fall 2019 enrollment: 3121
- Fall 2020 enrollment: 2920
- Fall 2021 enrollment: 2836

Between 2017 and 2020 the university adapted to declining residence hall occupancy. In 2017, MSU eliminated the Beaver Lodge living spaces. Dakota Hall was effectively taken off-line and used as a quarantine center during the pandemic in 2020. In 2021, Dakota Hall was converted to a facility for an outsourced day care operation. MSU's residence halls have been updated over the last few years with auxiliary funding. A presentation of these updates was given by the director of Residence Life and Housing to the SPBC during the 2022-2023 budget presentations.

The strategic placement of a new AVP for Enrollment Management and Graduate School is intended to reverse our current enrollment trend. Under this new leadership, MSU developed marketing strategies such as Hometown Pride and November – Free Application month for fall 2021 implementation. This new leadership position and reporting structure promotes higher collaboration between Marketing and Enrollment Services and increased communication with President's Staff since the AVP was added to that leadership group. In 2021, MSU hired a new Marketing Director, a new Enrollment Services Director, and a Web Content Specialist.

As mentioned in 5.C.3, the Recruit and Enroll Team analyzed internal and external data and presented program-specific information to each department. Departments/divisions were asked to develop a plan for addressing their future by setting enrollment targets, identifying opportunities and challenges, considering alternative degree and delivery options, and determining action steps. Examples of this "SEM Homework" are here. During summer 2021, the department/division chairs met to share their plans with the Recruit and Enroll Team and the VPAA. Departments/divisions continue to work with campus administration to carry out their SEM plans.

MSU understands the necessity of building reserves and deleveraging debt. Administration anticipates possible reductions in state support beginning in FY24 due to the impact of fewer completed credit hours on the state funding formula allocation. Additionally, as the impact of anticipated demographic changes in the national number of traditional college-age students later this decade becomes clear, flexible finances will be important as MSU adapts to those anticipated market changes in student preferences and overall demand. The university works to keep the campus community apprised of these concerns and routinely asks for employee help to achieve that financial stability and flexibility.

5.C.5

Although MSU works to be nimble and flexible in its operations, operational improvement decisions are grounded in various plans. Larger master plan initiatives are dependent upon state funding information. Smaller projects are typically covered within department/division budgets or with reserves. Many of the initiatives are driven by the NDUS. For example, Core Technology Services (CTS) plans and oversees implementation of major technology projects throughout the NDUS system. Recent technology upgrades include facilities management software, an electronic grants administration program, and an updated academic library system to replace the current ODIN system.

MSU anticipates and plans for emerging trends in education, including changing student demographics. As mentioned in 5.A.2 and 5.C.3, the Recruit and Enroll Team, in response to declining enrollment trends, analyzed external and internal data and key performance indicators for academic departments, seeking higher education trends and expected outlook of academic programs. The committee met with every academic department/division and shared the results. Faculty used the information within their departments/divisions to set enrollment targets, identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative degree and delivery options, and determine action steps to improve recruiting and enrollment.

MSU's vision focuses on flexible delivery, technological challenges, innovation and creativity, and preparation for the future. MSU embraces technology and innovation in preparing students for 21st century jobs in a global economy. Toward this end, MSU continues to increase distance offerings, especially online; incorporate technology; and develop new programs addressing societal needs.

Using federal HEERF and CARES Act funds received in September 2020 and in March, June, and December 2021, nearly all MSU classrooms were upgraded to HyFlex technology. The university also took advantage of the federal funds to upgrade its network and IT infrastructure. As discussed in 3.D.4, faculty collaborated and were trained in non-traditional pedagogical delivery, allowing for increased flexibility in delivering coursework through a variety of modalities. This flexibility allows the university to be more competitive, expand into new markets, and provide students with the variety of coursework delivery modalities that they demand as changes in higher education play out in coming years.

Campus facilities are directed by the bi-annual campus master plan required by the NDUS and SBHE. Past projects within this plan include additional security cameras and outside lighting, energy savings projects, the repurposing of the lower level of the library to house the Academic Support Center, and multiple department/division renovations. The 2022-2028 campus master plan was recently submitted. Campus planning continued to align with *Empowering Generations* through FY 2020-2021; however, the pandemic created additional considerations during the April 2021 strategic planning retreat.

5.C.6

Since its 2020 Focused Visit MSU has worked to build a stronger foundation of systematic planning. Evidence shows overall campus operations have improved through the recently-developed annual budget request process, which stems from assessment of student learning and alignment of requests with the strategic plan. Data-based decision-making along with transparency and inclusion in strategic planning has strengthened the initial system.

Despite decreases in MSU's budget, the campus was able to act quickly to move classes to online delivery during the pandemic. This action took place because of effective and prompt communication among campus leadership and operational support and infrastructure.

At the forefront of MSU's planning is student learning. The systematic plan is initiated by assessment of student learning and ends with resources allocated in alignment with strategic goals that focus on student learning.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

MSU has made significant progress in the past four years regarding budgeting and its connection to campus priorities and academic needs. The campus has completed three iterations of a budget process that includes requests based on academic and assessment needs and justified by strategic plan priorities. These are evaluated through public presentations and ranked and recommended by the Strategic Planning and Budget Council to President's Staff for final decisions. A fourth cycle (2021-2022) is nearly complete. These processes position MSU to respond to changing priorities and environments, including unpredictable events such as the pandemic and enrollment and state funding trends, which it tracks carefully. Finally, MSU administration and faculty recognize the need to thoughtfully discuss changes to MSU's organizational structure. Important conversations regarding possible changes are currently underway, particularly regarding the arrangement of academic units.

Sources

There are no sources.