



Montana State University Billings (MSUB)

Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR): Year 6 Report

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
(NWCCU)

August 30, 2024

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INSTITUTIONAL REPORT CERTIFICATION FORM

Please use this certification form for all institutional reports (Self-Evaluation, Annual, Mid-Cycle, PRFR, Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness, Candidacy, Ad-Hoc, or Special)



Institutional Report Certification Form

On behalf of the Institution, I certify that:

- ☒ There was broad participation/review by the campus community in the preparation of this report.
- ☒ The Institution remains in compliance with NWCCU Eligibility Requirements.
- ☒ The Institution will continue to remain in compliance throughout the duration of the institution's cycle of accreditation.

I understand that information provided in this report may affect the continued Candidacy or Accreditation of my institution. I certify that the information and data provided in the report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Montana State University Billings

(Name of Institution)

Stefani Hicswa

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

August 30, 2024

(Date)

Table of Contents

Mission Fulfillment.....	1
Eligibility Requirements	2
Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity	2
Standard 2.A Governance	2
Standard 2.A.1	2
Standard 2.A.2	3
Standard 2.A.3	4
Standard 2.A.4	4
Standard 2.B Academic Freedom.....	6
Standard 2.B.1	6
Standard 2.B.2	6
Standard 2.C Policies and Procedures.....	7
Standard 2.C.1	7
Standard 2.C.2	8
Standard 2.C.3	9
Standard 2.C.4	10
Standard 2.D Institutional Integrity	11
Standard 2.D.1	11
Standard 2.D.2	12
Standard 2.D.3	13
Standard 2.E Financial Resources	13
Standard 2.E.1	13
Standard 2.E.2	15
Standard 2.E.3	16
Standard 2.F Human Resources	18
Standard 2.F.1	18
Standard 2.F.2	20
Standard 2.F.3	21
Standard 2.F.4	23
Standard 2.G Student Support Resources.....	25

Standard 2.G.1.....	25
Standard 2.G.2.....	27
Standard 2.G.3.....	29
Standard 2.G.4.....	30
Standard 2.G.5.....	31
Standard 2.G.6.....	32
Standard 2.G.7.....	34
Standard 2.H Library and Information Resources.....	35
Standard 2.H.1.....	35
Standard 2.I Physical and Technology Infrastructure.....	36
Standard 2.I.1	36
Moving Forward	41
Required Evidence List	42

Mission Fulfillment

The institution provides a one-page executive summary, which describes the institution's framework for its ongoing accreditation efforts. This might include evidence of institutional effectiveness, Core Themes, or other appropriate mechanisms for measuring fulfillment of its mission.

To meet the institutional mission of delivering “a *transformative education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed*,” Montana State University Billings (MSUB) identifies priorities through strategic planning. The [current strategic plan \(2019-2026\)](#) was informed by a variety of stakeholders—both internal and external to MSUB—using an iterative process. As a public regional university, MSUB prioritizes a transformative experience for all students; the following highlights some of the MSUB efforts that work to fulfill the mission.

The [strategic plan framework](#) articulates MSUB's mission, vision, and four Core Themes, which establish a strong foundation to direct the work of the institution. Each Core Theme contains a major objective and sub-objectives that operationalize the work. A close review of the strategic plan in spring 2021 resulted in productive conversations and further refined and focused the work of the strategic priorities, paring down some sub-objectives and revising others. Without compromising the spirit and intent of the original strategic plan (keeping the core themes and major objectives in place), those adjustments reinvigorated MSUB's strategic planning work. Now, over halfway through implementation of the current plan, much of the work has been operationalized. One of the proudest accomplishments from the work of the current strategic plan is the development and implementation of a cross-divisional [Retention and Graduation Plan](#). The plan includes year-over-year targets as well as five-year targets and disaggregated student achievement data by specific subpopulations to inform and guide decisions for the success of all students.

The MSUB Academic Program Review (APR) process helps to ensure academic offerings are current, relevant, and equitable. As programs undergo review every seven years, faculty write a self-study which includes analysis of disaggregated student achievement data at the program level. This important process encourages reflection and an opportunity to intentionally guide how the program serves evolving student and workforce needs. The process aims to keep programs resourced and current to ensure a transformative educational experience for all students.

Both the strategic plan and the APR process are well-supported by the Office of Institutional Research (IR). Without the collective knowledge and expertise of the MSUB IR staff, these critical processes would lack the necessary data for informed decision-making towards mission fulfillment.

We are proud of the work we have accomplished and are excited to continue to carry out the work of the MSUB Mission through intentional strategic planning in the years to come. The next iteration of strategic visioning and planning will coincide with the celebration of MSUB's

centennial in 2027. As this exciting milestone approaches, strategic visioning will guide the MSUB community into the next century.

Eligibility Requirements

The institution provides an attestation that it remains compliant with NWCCU's Eligibility Requirements. Citations and reports in support of specific Eligibility Requirements may be included in the Year Six and Year Seven reports as appropriate.

MSUB attests that it remains in compliance with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Eligibility Requirements, as certified in the Institutional Report Certification Form included at the beginning of this report. MSUB complies with the NWCCU Standards and discloses accurate and necessary information to the Commission. The Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) works closely with the institution's NWCCU liaison to ensure timely submission of accreditation reports and substantive changes.

Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity

The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.

Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure, with a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual, employment relationship, or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have, with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.

The Montana University System (MUS) consists of 16 colleges and universities across Montana, including MSUB. The MUS is governed by the Montana Board of Regents (BOR). The BOR appoints a commissioner to serve as the “chief executive officer of the Montana university system.” Additional duties carried out by the Commissioner of Higher Education are outlined in [BOR Policy 204.3](#). The roles, authority, and responsibilities of the BOR are clearly defined in the [Montana Code Annotated 2023](#) and further articulated in the [BOR Policy and Procedures Manual](#), which include the [Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation BOR Policy 201.7](#). The Commissioner works closely with the appointed Regents to

implement policies and decisions. The decisions at this level guide and inform the policies and decisions implemented at MSUB.

The MSUB leadership works closely with the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the BOR to stay informed. The BOR convenes at least six times throughout the year and posts the [meeting schedule](#) on the MUS website. MSUB leadership attends these meetings and sends a campus report in advance of the meeting. As appropriate, MSUB leadership presents to the BOR concerning action items under review and consideration by the BOR. This relationship is clearly defined in the [BOR Policy and Procedures Manual](#), specifically within [BOR Policy: Section 200 Governance and Organization](#). The relationship between the BOR and MSUB provides sufficient autonomy to fulfill the mission.

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

MSUB maintains an effective system of leadership with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability. The MSUB administrative leadership consists of the Chancellor, three Vice Chancellors, and five Academic Deans who lead each College.

The [Chancellor's Cabinet](#) serves as the leadership team for MSUB. The Chancellor ensures Cabinet consists of campus-wide representation with qualified administrators who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution. Cabinet convenes at the start of each academic year for a two-day retreat, where members draft an operational plan which serves as a year-long guiding document for the leadership team. The operational plan for the academic year often includes initiatives aligned with the current strategic plan, priorities related to accreditation, budget goals, and academic-related priorities. To demonstrate the collective expertise and qualifications of MSUB's leadership, the curriculum vita for each member of the Chancellor's Cabinet is listed below:

- [Chancellor: Stefani Hicswa](#)
- [Vice Chancellor and Provost for Academic Affairs: Sep Eskandari](#)
- [Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success: Kim Hayworth](#)
- [Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance: Leslie Weldon](#)
- [Director of Athletics: Michael Bazemore](#)
- [Director of Communications and Marketing \(Interim\): Shiloh Skillen-Robison](#)
- [CEO, MSU Billings Foundation: Krista Montague](#)
- [Director of Assessment and Accreditation, ALO: Kathleen Thatcher](#)
- [Dean of Students: Kathy Kotecki](#)
- [Director of Human Resources: Paula Highlander](#)
- [Academic Senate Chair and Professor of Athletic Training: Suzette Nynas](#)
- [Executive Assistant to the Chancellor: Natalie Preston](#)

The [MSUB Organization Chart](#) provides insight to the current levels of authority and responsibility for campus-wide leadership, including members of the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Adjustments to the organization and structure of the positions included in the MSUB Organization Chart occur as needed. These changes often coincide with a position becoming vacant, as personnel transitions can be an opportunity to review the current structure for inefficiencies.

2.A.3 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.

The Chancellor, [Dr. Stefani Hicswa](#), began leading MSUB in January 2021. She has served as a leader in higher education for over thirty years. She came to MSUB having served as former President of Miles City Community College and President of Northwest College in Powell, WY. As a native Montanan, Dr. Hicswa is equipped with professional expertise and a deep knowledge of the region that MSUB serves. Dr. Hicswa serves as the chief executive officer of a unit of the Montana University System (MUS) as outlined in [BOR Policy 205.2.1](#). She is not an ex officio member or serving as the chair of the governing board.

2.A.4 The institution's decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.

MSUB has established decision-making structures and processes that ensure transparent communication for staff, faculty, and administrators. MSUB upholds the principles of shared governance through a variety of mechanisms. As discussed in greater detail in the response to Standard 2.A.2 (page 3), the Chancellor convenes the Chancellor's Cabinet as the leadership team for MSUB. This group works to organize, plan, and manage the yearly priorities.

Additionally, the Chancellor facilitates monthly meetings with the [Jacket Leadership Team](#) (the term Jacket is shortened from Yellowjackets, MSUB's mascot). The Jacket Leadership Team is comprised of faculty leadership positions, vice chancellors, deans, directors from each Division (Academic Affairs, Student Access and Success, and Administration and Finance), a representative from Staff Senate, and a representative from the Student Senate. The purpose statement for the Jacket Leadership Team is:

promotes shared governance by including a wide representation of departmental leaders in decision-making processes and the enacting of institutional priorities. It aims to enhance the university's mission, improve operational efficiency, and foster a collaborative environment that promotes academic excellence and student success.

Major projects impacting the campus community, strategic planning updates, policy discussion, accreditation updates, budget presentations, updates from the MSUB Foundation, and topics related to human resources are some of the items that are regularly addressed during Jacket Leadership Team meetings. Minutes from these meetings are distributed via email and posted

on the [Jacket Leadership Team webpage](#). In addition to the Jacket Leadership Team, the Chancellor offers “Coffee with the Chancellor” twice a semester. These conversational meetings are often conducted virtually so all available employees can join. The Chancellor provides updates on pertinent topics and allows time for questions from employees.

[Provost Council](#) is an inclusive group that meets twice monthly and ensures shared decision-making and information dissemination throughout Academic Affairs. Provost Council is facilitated by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The group consists of Deans, Directors reporting to the Provost, faculty leadership, a Staff Senate representative, a Student Senate representative, and relevant members from the Division of Student Access and Success, including the Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success. All campus leaders have a standing invitation to attend Provost Council meetings. Each department, college or office represented on Provost Council has the opportunity to present the work of their area and solicit feedback from their colleagues. Faculty and student leadership provide rich insight on faculty and student issues to the members of Provost Council. This, in turn, strengthens Academic Affairs as a cohesive team which ultimately helps to better serve the students. Meeting agendas and all materials presented at Provost Council are accessible to all members.

Deans Council is facilitated by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and includes the leadership of each of MSUB’s five academic colleges. Deans Council meets twice monthly. Relevant information discussed and shared at Deans Council meetings is communicated back to faculty and staff in the respective colleges. The Deans also use these meetings to bring concerns and challenges to the Provost and share feedback they have received from the faculty. Deans Council agenda and meeting materials are accessible to all members of Deans Council and Provost Council. In addition to Deans Council, the Department Chairs play a significant role in the process of shared governance. Department Chairs collect information from faculty and disseminate information to the faculty in their respective programs. Department Chairs meet with the Deans regularly and conduct a Department Chair Forum (all department chair meeting) each semester. Guests at the Department Chair Forum often consist of members from the MSUB leadership team, including Vice Chancellors and Directors.

The MSUB Academic Senate, the highest faculty governing body, prioritizes a commitment to shared governance and faculty leadership engagement. The Academic Senate ensures the quality and maintenance of curriculum, discusses academic policies, works to resolve academic issues as they arise, and partners with the MSUB leadership team, including the Chancellor and Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Faculty from each College are appointed to serve the Senate for three years. The Academic Senate [Bylaws](#) govern its structure and processes. The Academic Senate maintains a description of [Academic Senator Responsibilities](#) that outline the expectations, including shared governance and faculty leadership. A current [membership list for the Academic Senate](#) is maintained on the MSUB website.

The MSUB Faculty Association and the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association work collaboratively with the MSUB leadership, including the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, to ensure transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and collaboration between the faculty unions and the administration. The [Faculty Administration Collaborative Committee](#) (FACC) and [Union/Management Committee](#) are the joint management committees at MSUB. The charge and purpose of these two committees are outlined in the respective Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). Sections 6.200 and 6.210 of the [MSUB Faculty Association CBA](#) (bottom of page 8) and section 4.10 of the [Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association CBA](#) (page 5) outline the scope and purpose of these important committees.

The entities discussed in this section communicate and collaborate through a variety of processes to ensure the principles of shared governance are upheld. The Provost provides [a blueprint](#) for decision-making structures and processes for Academic Affairs, which includes many of the groups discussed in this section. It is through these structures that MSUB can implement effective shared governance strategies.

Academic Freedom

2.B.1 Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

Academic freedom principles at MSUB are guided and informed by the [Montana Board of Regents policy 302](#). This policy establishes a foundation for academic freedom at MSUB. Academic freedom is further defined through the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) for both [two-year](#) (Section 4.15, page 8) and [four-year](#) (Section 3.200, page 6) faculty. A [formal statement from the MSUB Academic Senate](#) also supports the principles of *full freedom in research and publication, freedom in the classroom, and free of institutional censorship or discipline*. Students' relationship with academic freedom at MSUB is articulated in the [Academic Catalog](#) under Students Rights (page 45) and in the [Student Handbook](#) under Student Rights, section B (pages 3-4). The principles contained in these documents are upheld through faculty engagement with students in and outside of the classroom.

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

MSUB maintains a [freedom of expression policy](#) that outlines the expectations for staff and faculty. For students, MSUB defines freedom of expression in the [Student Handbook](#) (Part VI, Section F, page 13) and references academic freedom under Student Rights in the [Academic Catalog](#) (page 45). The Student Handbook details guidance on exercising freedom of expression responsibly. MSUB maintains an institutional and educational responsibility to safeguard learning. Through the [mission of the institution](#), MSUB “*empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed.*” Freedom of expression is essential to the mission and carried out by all MSUB faculty, staff, and leadership.

Policies and Procedures

The institution develops and widely publishes, including on its website, policies and procedures that are clearly stated, easily understandable, readily accessible, and administered in a fair, equitable, and timely manner.

MSUB maintains a [Policy Directory](#) on the MSUB website. Institutional policies are also shared on relevant department webpages (examples: Human Resources, Academic Affairs, Business Services, Student Access and Success, etc.). The process for proposing a new institutional policy or revising an existing policy is detailed in the [Policy Development and Approval document](#). As policies are regularly reviewed and revised as necessary, the processes outlined in this policy procedural document provide an opportunity for a broad representation of campus to offer feedback following the shared governance process. With many individuals involved in the review and approval of new or revised institutional policies, MSUB strives to ensure policies are administered transparently, fairly, and equitably.

2.C.1 The institution’s transfer-of-credit policy maintains the integrity of its programs and facilitates the efficient mobility of students desirous of the completion of their educational credits, credentials, or degrees in furtherance of their academic goals.

MSUB maintains a fair and equitable transfer-of-credit policy guided and informed by the [Montana Board of Regents policy 301.5](#). In line with BOR policy 301.5, MSUB accepts credits from the following accrediting agencies:

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission of Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
- WASC Senior College and University Commission

MSUB transfer-of-credit policy is published in the [Academic Catalog](#) (page 24-25) and reviewed for updates annually. All college-level courses from institutions of higher education accredited by agencies listed above are received and applied towards the general education, major, minor,

and elective requirements of certificate, associate, or baccalaureate degrees as applicable in accordance with MSUB academic policy.

The Montana University System (MUS) coordinates [common course numbering](#) (CCN) for public colleges and universities across the state. Instituted in 2007, the CCN provides students with a “reasonable level of transparency and predictability for the transfer of courses and credits.” Additionally, the MUS defines [the MUS Core](#), a transfer agreement among community, tribal, and publicly funded colleges and universities. The details are described in [BOR Policy 301.10](#) and in [the Operational Rules for the Montana University System Core](#). In this region, it is common for students to take classes from several state institutions before completing their degree. The CCN and the MUS Core are important tools for students wanting to transfer credits from another Montana college or university.

Articulation agreements are designed to maximize the number of credits students will be able to transfer. [Transfer guides](#) are posted publicly on the Advising webpage and linked on the Registrar’s webpage. MSUB faculty and staff have made a concerted effort to increase and renew articulation agreements with Tribal partners and two-year colleges in the region, as this is an important consideration for the students MSUB serves, especially with the proliferation of dual credit opportunities.

Finally, course-by-course review conducted by the Office of the Registrar, in collaboration with faculty from associated disciplines, is another method used to help students receive appropriate credit for courses completed at other accredited higher education institutions. The strategies outlined in this section describe an intentional effort to acknowledge prior work and apply credit where appropriate while maintaining the integrity of academic programs at MSUB.

2.C.2 The institution’s policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, provisions related to academic honesty, conduct, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Policies and procedures related to student access and success are published throughout the Academic Catalogs, Student Handbook, and other documents and webpages. This information is accessible to all students, current and prospective.

NWCCU Standard 2.C.2	Undergraduate Catalog page number(s)	Graduate Catalog page number(s)	Student Handbook page number(s)	Other Resources
Academic Honesty	pg. 33	pg. 20	pg. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students (Section 230.00, page 6)
Conduct	pg. 45	pg. 33	pg. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct Process ▪ Code of Conduct

NWCCU Standard 2.C.2	Undergraduate Catalog page number(s)	Graduate Catalog page number(s)	Student Handbook page number(s)	Other Resources
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students (Sections 300.00, pages 7-17)
Appeals and Grievances	pg. 7, 34	pg. 20	pgs. 10-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Grievance and Appeal Procedures ▪ Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students (Section 400.00, pages 17-20)
Accommodations for people with disabilities	pg. 9	pg. 36	Part IV, Section G, pgs. 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disability Support Services ▪ Syllabus Template
Student Rights and Responsibilities	pg. 45	pg. 33	Part II, Section B and C, pgs. 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct Process

2.C.3 The institution’s academic and administrative policies and procedures should include admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution’s expectations. Such policies should also include a policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs, including its appeal and re-admission policy.

MSUB’s academic and administrative policies and procedures are informed and guided by the Montana University System [Board of Regents Policy and Procedures](#). [Board of Regents policy 301](#) articulates standards for general admission, transfer admission, and dual enrollment admission. The MSUB [Office of Admissions](#) and the [Academic Catalog](#) (pages 19-23) contain information and guidance for current and prospective students regarding admission policies and procedures. The Admissions office hosts [preview days](#), in November and March, where all prospective students learn directly from student support services staff, making early connections. MSUB applicants receive [informational emails](#) which include guidance towards resources and student services to ensure a successful start to their academic journey. Both prospective students and MSUB applicants also receive a comprehensive [campus programs and student support guide](#) to help connect with MSUB student support offices and resources. The Office of Admissions maintains [step-by-step information](#) to guide students through the processes of applying to MSUB through preparing for their first day of classes.

MSUB recently revised the placement policies and procedures for students. In fall 2021, MSUB transitioned away from ACCUPLACER to a mixed methods approach. The mixed methods approach has proven to be challenging for several reasons. As a result of those continued challenges, a new placement pilot was launched in spring 2024. The pilot follows a [placement](#)

[flow chart](#) to better articulate how a student should be placed. As a result of this pilot, MSUB is excited to implement a more strategic approach to placement, adding EdReady for mathematics placement, and a homegrown writing sample assessment tool created by MSUB's English faculty.

EdReady is provided by the Montana Digital Academy, a state sponsored program for public institutions. Access to this tool is free and it is accessible to all students, as the services are digitally provided. Writing assessments for placement purposes were created by MSUB English faculty. While results from GPA, SAT, and ACT are still used to inform placement (when available), MSUB has improved the mixed methods approach by clearly defining the data to be used for math and writing placements and clearly articulating the decision tree that guides staff for effective student placement.

BOR [Policy 301.8](#) outlines the terms for academic warning (probation) and BOR [Policy 301.9](#) outlines the terms for academic suspension. The [Academic Catalog](#) further details how these policies are enacted at MSUB (page 32-33).

Students can electronically re-apply or choose the appropriate form from the MSUB [webpage for Returning Students](#). The Registrar's office reviews the application. Transcripts from other institutions are reviewed as well. The advising appointment ensures the re-admit student is registered for the appropriate classes, provided with pertinent financial aid information, and provided additional student support resources.

2.C.4 The institution's policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release, and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records.

MSUB securely retains student records and implements procedures to maintain confidentiality, outlines the parameters for release, and maintains reliable backup and retrievability of student records. Student records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The related MSUB policy is posted on the [Registrar's Office webpage](#) and is further contextualized for students in the [Student Handbook](#) (Part III: Student Records, pages 7-8) and on the [Registrar's webpage on FERPA and release of information](#).

At MSUB, student records have been maintained electronically since 2018. The MSUB policies and procedures used to securely retain student records are directed by the [Montana Board of Regents Policy 1300.1](#) and the [Montana University System General Record Retention Schedule](#). Records prior to 2018 are hardcopy and archived in a secure location, but accessible to the Registrar staff.

Students can use the guidance posted to the [Registrar's Office webpage](#) to access their official records, including transcripts and grades. This information is posted on MSUB's public-facing webpage to serve both current and former students. Current and former students can use the

MyInfo login to access student records. MyInfo provides information on registration, advising, transcripts, and permits students to re-admit if they have stopped out.

Institutional Integrity

2.D.1 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

The [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Academic Catalogs serve as the primary sources of information for MSUB's academic policies, intentions, programs, and services to students. The Academic Catalogs are reviewed and updated continuously and published annually. Catalog updates are completed through the curricular review process.

The MSUB faculty implement a comprehensive [curricular review process](#), both for existing programs and newly proposed programs. Curricular revisions are the purview of the faculty and begin at the department and college levels. Once approval has been granted at the college level, the proposal moves to either the [Undergraduate Curriculum Committee](#) (UCC) or the Graduate Committee. The proposal is then reviewed by the Provost for final approval, with additional review and approval for some program proposals by the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the BOR. The approved changes and proposals are eventually reflected in the appropriate Academic Catalog. This rigorous process is necessary to ensure MSUB curricular offerings are accurate, relevant, current, and in keeping with the institutional mission.

From the Academic Catalog, MSUB builds advising worksheets and plans of study. Electronic plans of study are created and maintained in DegreeWorks, which is accessible to the student, advising staff, and relevant faculty.

Additionally, the Division of Student Access and Success conducts an annual review of the [Student Handbook](#) and implements changes before the start of each new academic year. The Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success disseminates the [Annual Notice](#) each semester in fulfillment of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 and subsequent reauthorizations that requires colleges and universities that participate in federal student aid programs to disclose various aspects of university policies and procedures. The disclosures include the information that institutions are required to provide to the public, including current and prospective students and families, and current and prospective employees.

Also in accordance with the HEA of 1965, MSUB posts and updates consumer information annually. The [MSU Billings Consumer Information Directory](#) is published on the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships webpage. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships also posts

information related to the [cost of attendance](#) on their website and updates it annually. The MSUB Business Services office provides an [explanation of student fees](#), detailed on their website. Students can also access comprehensive fee and extra fee tables on the [Business Services webpage](#). Student Tuition and Fees and Financial Aid and Scholarships information is also shared in the [Academic Catalog](#) (page 39-44). These resources are updated regularly and help to ensure current and prospective students are aware of the cost of attendance and the associated fees.

Faculty, staff, and students stay informed through announcements, newsletters, and internal publications. The Office of University Communications and Marketing (UCAM) annually reviews publications, news releases, reports, and web resources to ensure accuracy. The MSUB office of Admissions collaborates with UCAM to review recruiting materials annually. Website updates are constant for areas like the Admissions Office as the website is used to promote visit days, preview days, registration days, and student orientation.

2.D.2 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in its management and operations, including in its dealings with the public, NWCCU, and external organizations, including the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other stakeholders and constituencies. The institution ensures that complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner.

MSUB institutional policies help to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The grievance and complaint procedures, both internally and externally, help to ensure complaints and grievances are addressed in a policy-guided, fair, equitable, and timely manner.

Specific to student complaints, the Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success maintains a comprehensive listing of [Student Grievance and Appeal Procedures](#) on the MSUB website. This page outlines the internal procedures and resources for a variety of grievance and appeals that can impact students including grade appeals, student code of conduct concerns, and general student grievances, among others. The Vice Chancellor and Provost for Academic Affairs maintains the [Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students](#) on the MSUB website. This document contains the guidance and procedures for all grievances related to academic conduct.

MSUB recognizes that delivering a transformative education to students from diverse backgrounds requires that a safe and productive learning environment is provided for all students, faculty, and staff. [Policies](#) related to discrimination, harassment, and campus safety outline the expectations for behavior. In the event a policy has not been followed or an individual needs to file a complaint, a full spectrum of mechanisms is available to obtain a resolution.

The processes for filing a complaint are outlined on the [MSUB website](#). Individuals are encouraged to initially address complaints through the appropriate MSUB procedures

(internally). If complaints remain unresolved after engaging in the internal procedures, they may be pursued externally through the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Board of Regents, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, or the Montana Department of Justice Office of Consumer Protection. The MUS also offers a system-level [compliance hotline](#).

2.D.3 The institution adheres to clearly defined policies that prohibit conflicts of interest on the part of members of the governing board(s), administration, faculty, and staff.

[BOR Policy 760](#), Service on Outside Governing Boards, provides the parameters and expectations for upper-level administration employees of the Montana University System (MUS). [BOR Policy 770](#), Personnel Conflict of Interest, outlines what constitutes a conflict of interest for employees within the MUS. This policy is in line with state statutes on standards of conduct for public employees, [MCA 2-2 105](#). MSUB further articulates these standards and expectations for employees through the [MSU Policy for Conflict of Interest](#) and the [Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#). All employees complete the [Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#) at the time of hire and as a conflict of interest arises. MSUB contract employees complete the [Conflict of Interest Annual Disclosure Form](#) each year. The MSUB Human Resources department maintains these records for each employee.

Financial Resources

2.E.1 The institution utilizes relevant audit processes and regular reporting to demonstrate financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission.

Oversight of financial resources at MSUB is set by state law [MCA 17-1-102](#) and [Board of Regents policy 970.1](#). The [Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education](#) (OCHE) oversees all aspects of financial administration within the [Montana University System \(MUS\)](#). [BOR policy 210](#) establishes internal audit as an independent function to examine and evaluate the MUS activities. The objective, responsibilities, and standards of the internal audit function are further defined in the [MUS Internal Audit Charter](#).

MSUB's internal financial audits are conducted by the [Montana Legislative Audit Division \(LAD\)](#), which issues a financial audit report on the [Montana State University annual consolidated financial statements](#). Montana State University consists of four campuses: Montana State University (Bozeman), Montana State University Billings (MSUB), Montana State University Northern (MSU Northern), and Great Falls College Montana State University (Great Falls College MSU). The most [recent audited MSU Financial Statements are for Fiscal Year 2023](#) and are publicly available (campus-specific financial information begins on page A-74). The LAD meets with MSUB's financial staff, separately, to obtain more campus-specific information (journals, bank reconciliations, etc.). Additionally, LAD completes the [Montana State University Compliance Audit](#) every two years and meets with pertinent MSUB staff. The primary objective of the Compliance Audit is to determine compliance with regulations relating to contract and

grant expenditures, other governmental financial assistance, and to test compliance with requirements of selected state laws, regulations, and rules. Both the MSU Financial and Compliance audit reports are on the [Legislative Audit Reports](#) webpage.

MSUB ensures financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Cash flow balance sheets, audited financial statements, and revenues from tuition, fees, and other educational sources for MSUB are documented in the supplemental information section (A-74 through A-81) in the most recent [MSU Financial Audit Report ended June 30, 2023](#). Excess cash is invested through the [Montana Short-Term Investment Pool](#) and BOR Adopted Policy [40.600 STIP IPS.pdf](#). The BOR also maintains a [Negative Fund Balance Policy 901.11](#) that requires campuses to report chronic negative or material fund balances.

MSUB has maintained reserve funds, per [Board of Regents policy 901.15](#), to manage and mitigate the impact of unanticipated revenue shortfalls and/or unanticipated and unavoidable increases in expenditures. The BOR policies related to reserve funds and the most current reserve fund balances are listed below:

Montana State University Billings Board of Regents Mandated Fund Balances, as of June 30, 2023

- Facilities Maintenance: \$637,098 [BOR Policy 901.6](#)
- Reserve Revolving: \$5,430,178 [BOR Policy 901.15](#)
- Retirement: \$150,276 [BOR Policy 901.10](#)
- Scholarship: \$1,696,641 [BOR Policy 901.13](#)

The MSUB FY23 reserve balances can be found on the [FY24 MSUB Operating Budget report](#) under section CHE 114 – BOR Reserve Funds Report. Previous [MSUB Operating Budget Reports](#) are available on the MSUB Budget Office webpage.

Auxiliary operations of the university have their own set of accounts and related fund balances. Historically, auxiliary income has not been used to support non-auxiliary operations of the university. The auxiliaries have sufficient income and reserves to meet debt, capital projects, and equipment outlays. Fund balances are sufficient to meet unexpected fluctuations in operations, with cash and investment reserves.

Where applicable, MSUB adheres to allowable cost principles as required by [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) circulars](#) and grantor stipulations, including the Federal [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) which is an authoritative set of rules and requirements for Federal awards. In addition, MSUB adheres to the [BOR Policy 404](#) regarding Facilities and Administrative (F & A) rates for research and public services, and maintains an [F & A rate agreement](#) with the Department of Health & Human Services for federally sponsored projects per [2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements](#). The [Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards \(SEFA\)](#) reports award activity of MSUB under programs of the federal government per the requirements of Uniform Guidance – Title 2 US code of Federal Regulations Part 200. The report is submitted annually to the [State of Montana Office of Budget and Planning](#).

[BOR Policy 901.9 - Campus Affiliated Foundations](#) allows the university to pursue additional financial support through [fundraising](#). The [Montana State University Billings Foundation](#) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the goals of MSUB through solicitation, investment, and stewardship of financial support for the university. A volunteer board of trustees, composed of community leaders, guides the foundation in achieving its mission. All cash or gift donations must go through the MSUB Foundation and are addressed in [MSUB's Fixed Asset Policy](#). The [most recently audited MSUB Foundation financial statements for June 30, 2022](#), as well as the previous year's statements, can be found on [MSUB Foundation Financial Reports](#).

2.E.2 Financial planning includes meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholders and ensures appropriate available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and comprehensive risk management to ensure short term financial health and long-term financial stability and sustainability.

[The Board of Regents Policy & Procedures Manual](#) for the Montana University System guide the financial structure and management of the universities within the MUS. The [MSUB 2019-2026 Strategic Plan](#) also guides MSUB's budget development process.

The university is funded through state appropriations, student tuition and fees, federal and state grants, and donations. The legislature allocates general fund monies as a lump sum appropriation biennially to the MUS per [Board of Regents policy 970.1](#):

"Funding is appropriated to the Board of Regents on behalf of the university system units and is contingent upon the approval of a comprehensive operating budget by October 1 of each fiscal year. [17-7-138\(2\) MCA](#)."

In preparation for developing the budget, the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Finance hold presentations and listening sessions with campus constituents. Additionally, campus-wide listening sessions are conducted (two at the University campus and two at the City College campus) to discuss the goal of strategic resource reallocations before deploying the budget workbooks. The aim of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for all staff and faculty to participate and to contribute ideas for realigning the MSUB budget, focusing on increasing revenue (through entrepreneurial activities, etc.) and optimizing the impact and the efficiency of resources. All faculty and staff can also meet individually or in smaller groups with the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Finance, as needed.

During the MSUB budget development process, the Budget Office creates budget workbooks for each fiscal manager by division. Fiscal managers enter their budget proposals into the workbooks, including justifications. Upon their approval, the budget workbooks are submitted to the Budget Office where the information is entered into the budgeting software. The full [budget and planning process](#) is outlined on the Budget Office's webpage. The Budget Office provides budget development training to all levels of staff involved in the process and meets periodically throughout the year with various departments. Budget updates are provided to

several groups on campus, including the [Jacket Leadership Team](#), Academic Department Chairs, Vice Chancellors, and Chancellor throughout the year to keep the university informed of budget news and other related concerns.

Fiscal managers are directed to develop budget proposals that are mindful of the university's mission and vision, strategic plan, fiscal responsibility, and financial stewardship while providing excellent service and educational opportunities to the students.

The Budget Office has several forecasting models that are used for modeling revenue, including tuition and mandatory fees, Resident Housing, and Food Services. The Budget Office also builds schedules for debt services and insurance expenses for departments that have these costs.

Fiscal managers and/or support staff within their departments have access through Banner and the Banner Web Reports to routinely run and review their budget and financial operational reports as needed to monitor their budget. [Jacket Success trainings](#) are conducted twice per year and include topics on managing operational budgets and running reports.

College finances are held in various fund types, including unrestricted, restricted, designated, auxiliary, and plant. The Montana Board of Regents authorizes campuses to hold up to five percent of their previous year's revenue in reserve to cover unanticipated revenue shortfalls and increases in expenses ([Board of Regents policy 901.15](#)). Additionally, Regents policies allow for the establishment of separate reserves for scholarships ([BOR Policy 901.13](#)), retirement expenses ([BOR Policy 901.10](#)), and facilities deferred maintenance ([BOR Policy 901.6](#)).

2.E.3 Financial resources are managed transparently in accordance with policies approved by the institution's governing board(s), governance structure(s), and applicable state and federal laws.

Financial resources are managed transparently and in accordance with the institution's policies, its governance structure, and state and federal laws. MSUB uses an appropriate accounting system (Banner Finance Module) that provides timely and accurate financial information required for effective institutional decision making. MSUB also follows General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) in financial reporting for fund groups and prepares financial reports using the [National Association of College and University Business Officers \(NACUBO\)](#) model. MSUB regularly reviews and applies technical guidance on accounting best practices from NACUBO. In addition, MSUB monitors new and proposed standards specified by Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), and accounting policies and guidance are taken from the [Montana Operations Manual \(MOMs\)](#).

To ensure that the campus community follows appropriate rules and regulations regarding financial transactions, policies and procedures regarding delegated authority, general guidelines, purchasing cards, and contractual agreements, the policies and procedures are outlined in the [MSUB Business Office Purchasing Policies and Procedures](#). The Jacket Success team (consisting of staff from the Budget Office, Business Services, Facilities Services, Financial

Services and Payroll, Human Resources, Information Technology, and University Police) also holds a [semi-annual employee training](#) for all faculty and staff. Training materials can be found on the MSUB Jacket Success intranet (MSUB login credentials required), available to all employees. Individual training is available to employees as needed.

MSUB complies with OCHE and BOR policies and procedures related to financial resource management. OCHE and the MSUB leadership partner to validate the financial information and resources on an annual basis. Data from MSUB's Banner system populates dashboards that OCHE uses to monitor the finances of the MUS campuses.

Internal controls are an integral part of the financial and business processes that are designed to safeguard University assets, ensure compliance, check accuracy and reliability of data, segregate duties, and review authorizations and transactions. The financial management team is responsible for setting the controls environment, designing internal controls, assessing risk, and communicating and monitoring internal controls. MSUB maintains clearly defined policies for the oversight and management of university financial resources in its [Internal Control Guide](#). These policies address the following:

- Tuition, fees, and student receivables
- Federal, state, F&A recoveries, non-governmental revenues, and related receivables and deferred revenues
- Educational, Auxiliary, and other revenues, and related receivables
- Compensation and benefits and related payroll-related accruals including compensated absences
- Operating expenses and accounts payable
- Scholarships, financial aid, and loans receivable
- Capital assets, depreciation, and amortization
- State appropriations and state-related balances
- Gifts
- Debt balances and interest expense
- Cash, investments, and investment income
- Net asset balances

This office of Financial Services oversees the fiscal cash management function and handles the day-to-day reporting and monitoring of cash and investments under the direction of the Financial Services Controller. The university maintains a cashier's office for the accumulation and security of cash on hand and this function is overseen by the Business Services Director.

Tools are also in place for the university community to report suspected fiscal misconduct and compliance violations. The [Fiscal Misconduct Policy](#) is listed on the University Policies web page. In addition, the [MSUB Compliance Hotline](#) is available for employees to report suspected compliance violations.

Human Resources

2.F.1 Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

Staff

Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, and rights and responsibilities during the recruitment, hiring and onboarding processes. During the recruitment stage, employment announcements include minimum and preferred qualifications, as well as details and expectations specific to the open position. The [Recruitment and Selection policy 401.1](#) provides the necessary information to guide employees for recruiting to fill an open position. A [new hire workflow for staff positions](#) was recently revised by the Human Resources Office to clearly outline the necessary steps when posting, interviewing, selecting, and onboarding for a vacant staff position. This workflow helps ensure the proper procedures are followed, and appropriate position information is shared with candidates and new hires.

The Human Resources Office and the home department of the new hire work collaboratively during the onboarding phase. [Job descriptions](#) outline the conditions of employment, work assignments, and responsibilities for classified and professional staff. Each employee receives this information during new hire onboarding. Professional staff contracts are also guided by the [BOR Policy 711.1](#). Classified and professional staff receive a [new hire email](#) from the Human Resources Office containing an overview of tasks that should be accomplished within the first week. The email also directs new employees to review their job description with their direct supervisor. Classified and professional staff are evaluated annually, and completed evaluations are due to Human Resources at the end of each fiscal year (June 30). The details of MSUB's employee evaluation processes are outlined in response to NWCCU Standard 2.F.4, beginning on page 23.

Employee retention is an institutional priority, as it is a focus of the current university strategic plan (2019-2026). MSUB recently operationalized and implemented several strategies to increase retention of all employees. Human Resources introduced the stay interview process to the campus. This process has helped some departments identify why employees choose to work and stay at MSUB. Employee wellness efforts and internal professional development offerings from Human Resources are also strategies that have been implemented to increase retention of MSUB employees. Opportunities for promotion are supported by progression plans and career ladders, in addition to employees who may choose to advance by applying for other opportunities on campus. The [MUS compensation plan](#) outlines the structure of identifying appropriate compensation, including the use of lump sum bonuses and temporary and permanent strategic pay increases for classified staff. MSUB Human Resources maintains policies for staff compensation, including [Compensation-Classified Staff 403.1](#), [Overtime and Compensatory Time for Non-Exempt Staff 403.2](#) and [Compensatory Time for Exempt Classified Staff 403.3](#).

Classified and professional staff undergo a probationary period at the start of their employment, and this information is shared with employees during the Human Resources onboarding process. If an employee experiences challenges with meeting the expectations of a position, HR staff work with the direct supervisor using a performance improvement plan and progressive discipline model. Through these approaches, employees are kept informed of expectations and the progress of meeting those expectations. Eventually, if the issues are not resolved, this results in termination.

Faculty

MSUB has two faculty unions. The [MSU Billings Faculty Association maintains a collective bargaining agreement](#) (CBA) for faculty on the University campus, and the [Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association maintains a CBA](#) for faculty on the City College campus. These documents will be referenced as the University CBA and the City College CBA, respectively, in this report.

Each faculty member is issued a contract that adheres to the respective CBA guidelines and outlines the conditions of employment, work assignments, and responsibilities. Any adjustments to salary that occur are documented in the faculty contract. These documents are retained in the Office of the Provost. Hardcopies are also maintained in the Office of the Chancellor. The Provost works closely with the faculty leadership within the two faculty associations to ensure full compliance with the respective CBA. Human Resources staff created [new hire](#) and [rehire](#) workflows for faculty positions. These forms are accessed on the [Provost's webpage](#) under Forms. The workflows serve as guiding documents that articulate the process and procedures for hiring a new faculty position or filling a vacant faculty position, once hiring approval has been obtained.

Procedures for evaluation of faculty, including rank advancement and evaluation for tenure are addressed in the respective CBA.

University CBA:

- a. Evaluation Procedures: Section 9.500 and subsections (pages 31-38)
- b. Performance Reviews: Section 9.630 and subsections (pages 38-39)
- c. Post Tenure Review: Section 9.700 and subsections (pages 39-43)

City College CBA:

- a. Level Definition and Threshold Criteria for Promotion: Section 10.1.I (pages 33-37)
- b. Promotion Timelines and Procedures: Section 10.1.J (pages 37-38)

In addition to the information articulated in the City College CBA, the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association maintains supplemental agreements with the University administration. These supplemental agreements are reviewed annually by the [Union/Management Committee](#) and include [Supplemental Renewable, Non-Tenure Track Appointment \(RNTTA\) Agreement](#), [Supplemental Fixed-Term Agreement](#), [Faculty Peer Mentoring Proposal](#) and a [Faculty Evaluation Proposal](#).

Disciplinary actions and retrenchment procedures for faculty are outlined in the respective CBA.

University CBA:

- a. Disciplinary Actions: Section 15.100 and subsections (pages 64-65)
- b. Retrenchment: Section 15.200 and subsections (pages 65-68)

City College CBA:

- a. Layoff: Section 9.4 (pages 27-28)
- b. Due Process: Section 9.6 (bottom of page 28)

The two CBAs outline the human resources topics for both University campus faculty and City College campus faculty. These comprehensive documents are reviewed every other year by the faculty leadership and the administration, helping ensure they remain current and relevant.

2.F.2 The institution provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development.

The [Chancellor supports professional development](#) by setting an expectation that all staff engage in at least 12 hours of professional development each year. Staff annual performance evaluations include goal setting and a review of the previous year's professional development activities. The Human Resources Office coordinates and offers [several opportunities for staff professional development](#) throughout each academic year. Additionally, the MSUB Counseling Director offers Mental Health First Aid training and QPR Gatekeeper Training (Suicide Prevention) to all MSUB employees. These important training opportunities are offered multiple times each semester (including summer) and help promote the mental well-being of employees and students. MSUB applies a broad definition for what constitutes professional development, allowing employees to choose from a range of interests. This approach encourages staff to consider growth for both professional and personal purposes.

For faculty, professional development is guided by the language within the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Faculty professional development is reviewed during promotion and tenure processes at the department and university levels. Faculty professional development opportunities are outlined in the following sections of the University CBA.

University CBA:

- a. Professional Development: Section 10.400 and subsections (page 46)
- b. Professional Travel: Section 11.200 (pages 51-52) specifies a peer review process by faculty representation from each College. Faculty from each college elects the participating member.

Sections of the [City College CBA](#) that indirectly address professional development include Educational and Professional Improvement Leave Without Pay: Section 6.9 (page 17) and Full-time Faculty Member Professional Responsibilities: Section 4.8 (page 4). While not directly outlined in the City College CBA, the Provost works closely with the City College faculty to implement support. The Provost aims to implement consistent professional development

support for all faculty, regardless of two or four-year status.

The [Provost's Faculty Professional Development Grants](#) are available to both University faculty and City College faculty each year, based on availability. In academic year 2023-24, the Provost awarded \$40,000 of faculty professional development funds. The Provost sends a letter to all faculty at the start of the academic year, notifying them of the funds available and the [instructions to apply](#). Staggered grant submission deadlines are used to equitably distribute funding to the faculty throughout the academic year. A committee, comprised of the Provost and faculty who have been nominated by the Academic Senate, uses a rubric to review and score the submitted proposals. Funds are generally used within a year of the award and summary reports are provided to the Provost's Office at the end of the grant cycle.

College level professional development funds are also available to faculty. Each college implements the distribution of those funds using different approaches. Faculty can apply for funds from both the Provost's Office and their respective college.

The Grants and Sponsored Programs (GSP) office manages several professional development grants for faculty funded by the Provost's Office. The Creative and Research Endeavors (CARE) Grant, the Pre-tenure Scholarship Enhancement (PTSE) Grant, and the Interdisciplinary Innovations Grant (IIG) provide varying levels of support for faculty at different stages in their academic career. The description, deadline, amount, and eligibility for each of these grants are outlined in the [Institutional Funding Opportunities](#) provided by the GSP office. In recent years, the CARE and PTSE grants have annually awarded a total of \$65,000 each. This is the first year of the IIG and a total of \$10,000 was awarded.

The MSUB [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL), established as a result of recent strategic planning efforts, serves as an internal professional development resource for University and City College faculty. The Center *fosters a culture of learning to promote equity in the classroom and enhance pedagogical perspective through collaboration, mentorship, knowledge sharing, and course design for both physical and virtual spaces*. In addition to events and workshops, the CTL offers teaching resources, LMS training, and funding opportunities for faculty. MSUB is particularly proud of the HyFlex training offered to faculty through the CTL, providing faculty with the necessary tools to offer a flexible course modality for all students. The success of the CTL stems from the staffing structure, which includes two faculty co-directors—one from University campus and one from the City College campus. The faculty co-directors are supported by the executive director, an instructional designer, an instructional technologist and a program coordinator. The faculty co-directors play a critical role in guiding the resources and programming offered. The CTL helps foster a collaborative culture among faculty to share knowledge and best practices of classroom pedagogy, while advancing the knowledge and skills of the MSUB faculty.

2.F.3 Consistent with its mission, programs, and services, the institution employs faculty, staff, and administrators sufficient in role, number, and qualifications to achieve its organizational

responsibilities, educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs.

MSUB employs faculty, staff, and administrators sufficient in role, number, and qualifications. The Chancellor is supported by three Vice Chancellors in the areas of Academic Affairs, Student Access and Success, and Administration and Finance.

For Academic Affairs, each of the five colleges are led by a full-time Dean who supports the faculty and the Provost. Academic departments within each college are led by full-time faculty members serving as department chairs. The MSUB leadership continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to tenure-track faculty positions. During their time leading MSUB, the current Provost and Chancellor have hired over 25 tenure track faculty positions, helping to ensure MSUB maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty to deliver its academic offerings.

For the Divisions of Student Access and Success and Administration and Finance, the Directors work collaboratively with the Vice Chancellors to determine the staffing requirements. The organization and responsibilities of staff positions are evaluated regularly and especially when positions are vacated.

Approximately 80% of the MSUB general fund is dedicated to personnel expenses, ensuring the institution employs a sufficient number of faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve its mission. The Vice Chancellors are responsible for working with the Chancellor to ensure the faculty, staff and administrator roles are distributed appropriately and the positions are filled with qualified personnel. These decisions are supported by the Human Resources Office. To view the current structure, the relevant organization charts are linked below.

- [MSUB Organization Chart](#)
- [Academic Affairs Organization Chart](#)

Staff and faculty engagement and responsibilities are outlined within the respective Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and with each position's job description. The MSUB Human Resources Office maintains [an internal webpage](#) (MSUB login required) which includes the CBAs by employee type. The specific CBA documents are provided in the [Required Evidence List](#), for Standard 2.F.3, on page 7.

MSUB received a formal recommendation in fall 2018 from the NWCCU regarding Standards 2.A.9 and 2.A.11. The recommendation was re-categorized during the fall 2021 mid-cycle review to align with the NWCCU 2020 Standards, specifically standard 2.F.3. The language for the recommendation remained the same and it is as follows:

Demonstrate a commitment to stabilize its administrative team and provide effective leadership and management, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, for the major support and operational functions and units to foster fulfillment of its mission.

MSUB has made substantial progress in stabilizing the administrative team since this recommendation was issued. At the time of the recommendation, the Chancellor had only been in the position for six months, the Provost was hired a week before the visit, and the Vice Chancellor of Students (title at the time, and is currently Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success) was interim. Additionally, three of five Dean positions were interim. Dr. Stefani Hicswa has served as Chancellor since January 2021 and is the longest serving chancellor since 2010. Dr. Kim Hayworth was hired as Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success in June 2019. Dr. Sep Eskandari became Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in July 2021, and Ms. Leslie Weldon was hired as Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services and Finance in March 2023, after serving as interim since November 2022.

After a thorough national search, Dr. Susan Gilbertz was appointed as the permanent Dean of the College of Business on July 1, 2024. Dr. Gilbertz is a long-term tenured MSUB faculty member with outstanding academic accomplishments. She is well respected by her MSUB colleagues. Additionally, Ms. Tami Haaland was hired as the permanent Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences on July 1, 2022. Ms. Haaland is also a long-term tenured MSUB faculty member with outstanding academic accomplishments. Currently, the dean positions at City College and the College of Education are filled by interim appointments. The interim dean positions are held by well-regarded and long-term MSUB faculty leadership, helping to ensure stability during these transitions. A national search is underway for a permanent dean position for City College. The College of Education dean position will be interim through AY24-25 and a national search for a permanent position will launch in Fall 2024. While some turnover is inevitable, the MSUB administration aims to minimize disruptions by filling interim roles, when possible, with internal candidates—employees who know MSUB, the culture, and processes. Strategies such as these help keep the work progressing and preserve institutional integrity while a more thorough, national search can be conducted.

2.F.4 Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided feedback and encouragement for improvement.

MSUB staff are evaluated through an annual process managed by the Human Resources (HR) Office. An evaluation form is completed by [classified staff](#) and [professional staff](#). The completed form is signed by the supervisor and employee, and then submitted to HR. It is commonplace for supervisors to review the previous year's performance, accomplished goals, and areas for improvement. Goal setting for the upcoming year and professional development are often discussed during performance review meetings. The review of each employee's job description is integrated into the annual evaluation process. These are reviewed together to ensure job descriptions and expectations are clear and relevant. While job descriptions can be updated at any time, the annual review process ensures they are reviewed each year at a minimum.

Faculty evaluation and promotion processes are outlined in the respective Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

University CBA:

- d. Evaluation Procedures: Section 9.500 and subsections (pages 31-38)
- e. Performance Reviews: Section 9.630 and subsections (pages 38-39)
- f. Post Tenure Review: Section 9.700 and subsections (pages 39-43)

Once tenured, University campus faculty are evaluated every five years. Each department at MSUB has established rank and tenure guidelines. The Department Rank and Tenure Committees (DRTC) submit their guidelines to the Provost's Office. The guidelines are updated every two years. The Provost and President of the Faculty Association use [a rubric](#) to evaluate the completeness and clarity of each set of guidelines.

City College CBA:

- c. Level Definition and Threshold Criteria for Promotion: Section 10.1.I (pages 33-37)
- d. Promotion Timelines and Procedures: Section 10.1.J (pages 37-38)

Once tenured, City College faculty are evaluated every three years. The City College faculty leadership and the administration are in the initial stages of developing guidelines for each department, similar to the process employed for University campus faculty. The Provost's Office maintains a [faculty review timeline](#) for each academic year. The timeline is aligned with language from the CBAs and outlines the important deadlines and expectations.

As part of faculty's role in joint governance, the Academic Senate has an established process for evaluating the MSUB leadership, including the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and Deans. The intent is to collect feedback from faculty to identify areas of strength, and areas of concern or challenges that need to be addressed. To that end, the Academic Senate views this as a collaborative process. Faculty feedback is collected through [a survey](#). The Deans, the Vice Chancellors and the Chancellor are reviewed every three years, based on the following schedule:

- AY 24-25 - Deans
- AY 25-26 - Chancellor & Provost
- AY 26-27 - Vice Chancellors: Administration & Finance and Student Access & Success
- AY 27-28 - Deans
- AY 28-29 - Chancellor & Provost
- AY 29-30 - Vice Chancellors: Administration & Finance and Student Access & Success

The collected data are analyzed by the Senate Executive Committee and one member of the administration who is not being evaluated. Summary data are shared with all faculty (for Deans, only faculty in their college evaluate them and the results are only shared with the faculty belonging to that college), the administrator's supervisor, President Cruzado, and the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Evaluation processes for staff, faculty and the MSUB leadership are equitable, fair, and consistent in relation to the position's responsibilities and duties.

Student Support Resources

2.G.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, and with a particular focus on equity and closure of equity gaps in achievement, the institution creates and maintains effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success.

Student support resources at MSUB are comprehensive and inclusive of prospective students, current students, and alumni. The following resources help to create equitable and effective learning environments that empower students to succeed:

- Office of Admissions
- New Student Orientation
- Jacket Student Central
- Academic Support Center
- TRIO Programs
- Montana 10
- Native American Achievement Center
- Military and Veterans Success Center
- Women's and Gender Studies Center
- La Plaza
- Disability Support Services
- Office of International Studies
- Housing and Residential Life
- Student Health Services
- Career and Employment Services

Specific details for each of these services are described in the [MSUB Student Support Resources document](#). Many students access multiple support services and as a result, the staff and faculty strive to integrate these resources to ensure easy access and seamless assistance for all students.

Care Teams: The student support resources outlined in this section come together for students in the form of care teams. These care teams offer customized, holistic student support. With the use of EAB Navigate 360, care teams are assigned to each student, as categorized and tagged in Banner:

- Military and military-affiliated
- Athletes
- International
- Native American
- Hispanic Outreach

- Honors
- TRIO
- City College
- Advising
- Housing
- Montana 10
- Graduate
- Retention Director
- Academic Support Center (added in Fall 2024)
- Women's and Gender Studies Center (added in Fall 2024)

When a faculty or staff member submits an early alert for a student, the Care Teams receive them. This process allows for seamless communication from the point the alert is submitted to providing the assistance the struggling student requires. The student support resources, and associated care teams are helping to increase retention rates at MSUB. These resources are informing and improving the strategies used to approach and care for the whole student.

Retention efforts: An institutionalized Retention Director position, established in 2019, has enabled MSUB to implement initiatives identified in its [2022-2027 Retention & Graduation Plan](#). The Retention & Graduation Plan sets five-year and annual targets for retention and graduation and encompasses ten initiatives, each with several action items that are assessed periodically.

When compared to MSUB's overall student population, students with the greatest retention and graduation equity gaps include first-generation, low income, Native American, and Hispanic students; students placed on probation and suspension; students entering with a GPA at or less than 2.5; and students with financial holds. Disaggregating and analyzing this data has provided the impetus for implementing high-impact practices to address attrition of high-risk students.

Examples of efforts to address equity gaps with student support programming include:

- Implementation of EAB Navigate 360 as a retention and communication tool that connects faculty, staff, and students. Use of the Early Alert system in EAB Navigate 360 by faculty to identify students who are struggling academically has increased significantly. To support this process, MSUB has developed an extensive case management approach to supporting students when Early Alerts are issued by faculty, in conjunction with students' Academic Advisors.
- The development of Care Teams, both within and outside of EAB Navigate 360, provides student subpopulations with coordinated, holistic support and guidance. As an example, the Native American Achievement Center (NAAC) works closely with American Indian students within and outside of EAB Navigate 360 to support their success. To support Hispanic/Latinx students, staff with the newly developed "La Plaza" office provide outreach to Hispanic/Latinx students with Early Alerts and offer culturally sensitive and holistic assistance.
- Crisis funds provide just-in-time monetary support to students to assist with needs during unexpected hardships. Since the inception of the Crisis Fund, 90.5% of crisis fund recipients were retained to the subsequent semester after receiving their awards.

- Since Spring 2023, students in Suspended Reinstatable academic standing meet with the Retention Director to develop Academic Success Plans and explore students' use of resources and services on campus and in the community. These students were also included in Progress Report Campaigns in EAB Navigate 360 beginning in Spring 2024, and progress report data received was used to further intervene.

Inclusive [student support resources](#) at MSUB are critical to maintaining effective learning environments. The programs and services to [support student learning and success](#) are comprehensive and integrated. MSUB continues to strive to expand and improve resources with a focus on student success. The first-year fall-to-spring retention rate has increased by nine (9) percentage points. While significant additional progress must be made, MSUB is encouraged by the early progress, and excited to allow these resources to continue to evolve to ensure MSUB students are adequately supported.

2.G.2 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: institutional mission; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings; names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

Annually, MSUB publishes the Academic Catalogs—[Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#)—on the website, accessible to prospective and current students. The academic catalogs serve as the official source of MSUB's academic programs, courses, policies, and procedures. Admission requirements and procedures, grading policy, information on academic programs and courses, expected program student learning outcomes, required courses and sequencing, and timelines for degree completion are outlined in the catalog and on the respective program webpages. The [student handbook](#), academic catalogs, and various MSUB webpages contain information for students and other stakeholders regarding rules and regulations for conduct, rights and responsibilities, tuition and fees, other program costs, refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment, opportunities and requirements for financial aid, and the academic calendar.

MSUB maintains an [Experts Database](#) of all full-time faculty which includes information on faculty expertise and a link to their biography. Faculty expertise and credentials are often included on the respective program pages, as well. The [MSUB Directory](#), accessible from the homepage, provides access to faculty biographies including the names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions. While some of this information is included in the Directory for administrators (names and titles), other webpages offer additional information for administrators including [the Chancellor](#), the [Vice Chancellor and Provost for Academic Affairs](#),

the [Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success](#), and the [Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance](#) webpages.

The following chart was created to demonstrate how MSUB publishes the relevant information for Standard 2.G.2 for students and other stakeholders:

NWCCU Standard 2.G.2	Undergraduate Catalog page number(s)	Graduate Catalog page number(s)	Student Handbook page number(s)	Other webpages
Institutional mission	pg. 10	pg. 8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chancellor's webpage
Admission requirements and procedures	pg. 19-23, 213-216	pg. 13-17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undergraduate Admission ▪ Graduate Admissions ▪ International Admissions ▪ Transfer Students ▪ Returning Students ▪ Dual Enrollment ▪ Non-Degree Seeking ▪ What's Next?
Grading policy	pg. 25, 30-32, 223-226	pg. 19-20	pg. 11	
Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes	By College: COB: pg. 67-76 COE: pg. 78-91 CHPS: pg. 92-135 CLASS: pg. 137-205 CC: pg. 231-271	By College: COE: pg. 40-52 CHPS: pg. 54-67 CLASS: 69-77		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each on individual program webpages.
Required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion	Embedded in each program description in pages listed above.	Embedded in each program description in pages listed above.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each on individual program webpages.
Rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities	pg. 45	pg. 33	pg. 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct Process
Tuition, fees, and other program costs	pg. 39-41	pg. 27-29		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Attendance ▪ Cost of Attendance-City College ▪ Cost of Attendance-University Campus ▪ Cost of Attendance-Master's Degrees ▪ Cost to Attend MSUB International Students

NWCCU Standard 2.G.2	Undergraduate Catalog page number(s)	Graduate Catalog page number(s)	Student Handbook page number(s)	Other webpages
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fee Schedule Explanations
Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment	pg. 29, 40	pg. 18-19, 28	pg. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refund Withdrawal Policy
Opportunities and requirements for financial aid	pg. 42-44	pg. 30-32	pg. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Aid and Scholarships ▪ Applying for Aid ▪ Financial Aid Forms ▪ Types of Financial Aid ▪ Financial Aid Policies
The academic calendar	pg. 12-13	pg. 9-10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University Academic Calendar

2.G.3 Publications and other written materials that describe educational programs include accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered. Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.

MSUB uses the Academic Catalogs ([Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#)), applicable program webpages, [institutional webpages](#), [Major Career Information Sheets](#), and student advising as the primary means for communicating licensure and certification expectations to prospective and current students. When prospective students send an inquiry or complete an application, a [disclosure statement](#) regarding licensure is sent. A list of the applicable programs is included, along with a link to [MSUB's State Authorization and Licensure disclosure webpage](#) (actively being updated to reflect recent changes to federal regulations). The following table is not an exhaustive list, but rather, provides some examples as to how specific programs communicate licensure and certification expectations to students:

College	Program	Supporting Documents
City College	Associate of Applied Science in Paramedic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undergraduate Academic Catalog (pg. 259) ▪ Paramedic Program Webpage ▪ Paramedic Policy Handbook (pg. 19)
City College	Certificate of Applied Science in Practical Nursing/Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical Nursing Program Webpage ▪ Registered Nursing Program Webpage

College	Program	Supporting Documents
	of Science in Registered Nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nursing Student Handbook (pgs. 25-26) ▪ Undergraduate Academic Catalog (pg. 233 and 261)
College of Health Professions and Sciences	Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program Webpage ▪ Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Career Information Sheet ▪ Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Student Handbook (pg. 8)
College of Health Professions and Sciences	Master of Science in Athletic Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Graduate Academic Catalog (pg. 54) ▪ Athletic Training Program Webpage ▪ University of Montana Athletic Training Partnership Webpage ▪ Athletic Training Career Information Sheet
College of Business	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an Accounting Option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ College of Business Webpage ▪ Undergraduate Academic Catalog (pg. 68) ▪ Business Administration, Accounting Option Career Sheet
College of Education	Teaching Licensure in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Licensure Eligibility and Licensure Processing Procedures ▪ Undergraduate Academic Catalog (pg. 80) ▪ Elementary Education Career Information Sheet (Example)
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences	Teaching Licensure in multiple disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Licensure Eligibility and Licensure Processing Procedures <p>Example – History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undergraduate Academic Catalog (pg. 168)

2.G.4 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

The MSUB Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS) is dedicated to assisting students to finance their educational goals by providing them with timely, and accurate information. The OFAS provides multiple options and details for funding higher education. [Categories of financial assistance](#) are published on the [OFAS webpage](#) and available to both current and prospective students. Information regarding available [financial aid programs](#), student-eligibility requirements, and procedures for [applying for financial aid](#) are also published on the website. The University offers both federal and state aid, including:

- Federal Grants
- Financial Aid Loans
- Work Study Opportunities
- Waivers

The Financial Aid website also provides students with [information and resources](#) related to [applying for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA). Communications with students occur through individual letters, emails, texts, phone calls, and social media. Further outreach is provided through presentations on campus, virtually, and in regional high schools. The OFAS staff also work closely with Admissions and the different TRIO programs to connect with students to provide help with financial awareness and FAFSA completion. Requests for additional information from financial aid, as well as financial aid offers, are sent to students through individual letters, email, and they are posted in the student's MyInfo portal (secure login required).

Financial aid and scholarships are awarded to students in accordance with all applicable federal Title IV, Montana state, and institutional rules and regulations. Application and scholarship information is available on the [scholarship webpage](#). Multiple scholarships opportunities are available to various student populations. The OFAS adheres to all institutional, state, and federal reporting requirements, policy maintenance, and program audits which help to ensure program integrity and eligibility. The [policies and procedures](#), including satisfactory academic progress, student rights and responsibilities, cost of attendance, and payment options are published on the Financial Aid webpage. Specific guidance for [receiving aid](#) and the necessary steps to take are also included on the OFAS website.

Additional information related to financial aid and scholarships, including aid types, is also provided to students in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pages 42-44).

2.G.5 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and publicizes the institution's loan default rate on its website.

MSUB adheres to all requirements related to the Federal Direct Loan Program. Students borrowing for the first time are required to accept the awarded Direct Loans, complete the Federal Entrance Counseling, and complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN). The entrance counseling session provides information about how to manage student loans, both during and after college. In addition, students are required to complete exit counseling at the end of their academic career at the MSUB. Information regarding repayment obligations is located on the [loans webpage](#), describing the federal loans available to students:

- Federal Direct Loans/Subsidized
- Federal Direct Loans/Unsubsidized
- Federal Direct Loans/Graduate & Professional PLUS
- Federal Direct Loans/Parent PLUS

MSUB also receives the cohort default rate from the U.S. Department of Education annually. The official cohort default rates are reviewed by the OFAS staff, as they impact eligibility to participate in the Title IV Student Financial Assistance Programs. MSUB publicizes this cohort default rate on the [loans webpage](#). The OFAS continues to evaluate strategies to assist students

with loan education. The OFAS staff recently reviewed partnerships with third-party vendors to communicate and facilitate repayment education for students. The OFAS at MSUB remains committed to helping students fully understand financial assistance and the associated repayment obligations. They continue to strive to be fully transparent, while supporting students during their academic career.

2.G.6 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.

Professional academic advisors assist students with navigating the tools, timelines, forms, and processes needed to progress from initial registration through graduation. All new, transfer, and returning students work with the Advising Center to begin their college experience. Advisors help students with understanding their degree program, taking advantage of campus resources, and meeting educational goals. The Advising Center's goal is to assist students in designing an academic plan which enables them to complete their program requirements as efficiently as possible.

During Registration and [FastPass Registration sessions](#), the admission team and professional advisors work with students to demonstrate student facing tools including MyInfo, DegreeWorks, and EAB Navigate 360. Students and advisors review these tools regularly during one-on-one advising meetings and through email and text communications. Additional advising resources for students are available on the advising websites: [University Campus Advising](#) and [City College Campus Advising](#). Both the University campus and City College campus advising centers maintain a reference guide. These guides ([University Advising Guide](#) and [City College Advising Guide](#)) provide students with the necessary tools to get started on their academic journey at MSUB. [Advising worksheets](#) are also used by professional advisors to inform students of program requirements and expectations. These worksheets not only help advisors direct the student to enroll in the appropriate courses, but also help advisors guide the students to the appropriate course sequencing. The many tools used by the MSUB professional advisors are critical to student success.

Students can request advising appointments in several ways. Advising appointments can be made via phone, videoconference (WebEx or Microsoft Teams), and through walk-in availability. Students are also taking advantage of the new web-based advising appointment scheduling through EAB Navigate 360. An intentional effort is made to make advising appointments easily accessible to students.

Several strategies are used to keep professional advisors informed of the curriculum and graduation requirements. Members of the advising staff serve on various curriculum committees to remain current on changes and to ensure collaborative communication. The Director of Jacket Student Central serves as a member of the City College Curriculum

Committee. The Advising/Registrar Systems Analyst is a member of the University Curriculum Committee, and the University Registrar (who also supervises the Advising Center) attends all Academic Senate meetings, where curricular matters are broadly discussed and approved and forwarded to the Provost for final approval. Having advising staff serving on the various curriculum committees helps keep the professional advisors informed of changes. The Associate Director of Advising, along with the appropriate professional advisor, recently met with respective departments chairs to discuss questions and any concerns. These meetings not only help with identifying challenges, but also work towards maintaining positive partnerships between the advising staff and the faculty. Advising staff are often invited to participate in the various college opening meetings each fall. These communication channels, along with membership of curriculum committees, help to keep the advising staff adequately informed and prepared to fulfill their responsibilities.

In addition to the external strategies described above, strategies internal to the advising team also help keep advisors informed and prepared. Regular staff meetings are conducted. At these meetings, the advising team will address specific topics, discuss process and procedures, and invite guest speakers. The [Advising Syllabus](#) outlines the responsibilities and expectations for professional advisors. Newly hired advisors receive extensive [one-on-one training](#) with every member of the advising office on specific details. The new advisor will shadow current staff for multiple days and receive regular feedback on student interactions and documentation during their initial months of training. The Advising Center also holds membership in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) as well as the Montana NACADA (MAAC). In May 2023, advising staff participated in a state-wide advising conference held in Bozeman, MT. Through these professional organizations, the staff are invited to participate in web meetings, and they receive regular newsletters.

MSUB participates in the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), the Community College Survey for Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) every four years. For NSSE, MSUB deploys the [Academic Advising module](#) as an add-on to the survey, in order to capture student feedback on this important topic. CCSSE and SSI have [questions within the survey that address advising](#). These institutional survey instruments provide regular feedback on students' understanding and satisfaction of advising. The Advising team uses this data to enhance the advising outreach and service to students. A recent outcome of this evaluation was the co-assignment of both professional and faculty advisors during the student's first term to enhance the "soft handoff" of advising from the centralized office to the individual departmental faculty. Additionally, through EAB Navigate 360, students are assigned a [care team of staff](#) to offer more wrap-around services, including a Career & Employment specialist and other support area staff.

Finally, in July 2022, a decision was made in an effort to increase student retention by providing a one-stop shop for professional advisors, current and prospective students, and MSUB faculty and staff. The [Office of Academic Success](#) was created to organize the academic support provided to students. The units which comprise the Office of Academic Success collaborate to implement close and effective communication, share staffing and resources during busy periods

to provide wraparound services. Cross-training within these units allows for necessary shifting and flexibility to ensure students are adequately and consistently served. This approach not only helps to ensure students are supported by reliable services, but it also helps to keep the staff within these areas in close communication.

2.G.7 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students, including those enrolled in distance education courses and programs, to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

All students at MSUB must verify their identity through a secure process before they are provided with credentials that allow them to register for classes and access the institution's learning management system (LMS). Students must either appear in person or provide documentation of their identity remotely (in a secure area). This ensures that student data is protected in the process. The [Student Authentication Policy](#) outlines the identify verification process for MSUB students. MSUB uses Desire 2 Learn (D2L) as its learning management system. The D2L system integrates with the university's authentication services to ensure appropriate and secure student access to courses and other Student Information Systems. All users of the University's learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of NetIDs and passwords, or any other access credentials as required. Attempting to discover another user's password or attempts to gain unauthorized access to another person's files or email is prohibited. At this time, there are no additional student fees associated with student verification. In the event any verification fee is needed, it will be posted on the course registration site to provide an advance alert to students and included in admission documents at the time of enrollment.

Faculty leadership began drafting the [Regular and Substantive Interaction policy](#) in early fall 2023. The Center for Teaching and Learning worked in collaboration with the Academic Senate to approve the policy in February 2024. The faculty and administration are proud of the work to create a thoughtful policy that upholds the standards for online learning at MSUB, while allowing for the necessary autonomy of faculty to select appropriate pedagogical practices for effective online learning. The policy is posted to the [MSUB Center for Teaching and Learning webpage](#) and also included in the [Academic Catalog](#) (page 30). The Center for Teaching and Learning will offer workshops and information sessions in the fall to help faculty become better acquainted with the new policy.

Library and Information Resources

2.H.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution's mission, programs, and services.

Since the institution's founding, [the library](#) has been a core part of the curriculum at MSUB, providing for the informational and educational resource needs of students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the Billings community (see the [Library Mission & Policies](#)). A dedicated library building was built in 1969. The facility, which has undergone many renovations, consists of three floors for a total of approximately 58,000 square feet.

Each academic college or department is served by an [assigned liaison librarian](#). Liaisons keep faculty informed of new resources as they become available. Library liaisons assist faculty in support of student research needs through specialized library instruction. The MSUB Library offers [faculty a Toolkit](#), allowing instructors to request several services with a librarian. Librarians also curate specialized research guides (LIBGUIDES) for specific courses or areas of study. For courses, the library also offers [library instruction sessions](#) to faculty. Through ongoing relationships with departmental faculty, librarians also solicit recommendations for purchases. As of spring 2024, librarians are directly serving City College students and faculty with a newly established library help desk on the City College campus. This space will continue to be developed as resources become available. Librarians also remain current with campus curricular needs by participating in committees such as the General Education committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. The Director learns of new or revised curricular offerings at Provost Council and Academic Senate.

The MSUB print collection consists of approximately 139,972 items (see the updated [Association of College and Research Libraries Statistical Report 2023](#) and the [National Center for Library Statistics Academic Library Survey, 2023](#)). The library uses the Global Online Bibliographic Information (GOBI) platform as a book vendor and receives slips for review through an approval plan based on a profile with GOBI. The GOBI profile plan is reviewed when there are changes to the curriculum. The profile was most recently adjusted in January 2023. A Collection Development team comprised of library staff meets weekly to review slips and consider requests from students and faculty. In addition to GOBI, the library subscribes to Amazon Prime to facilitate more timely purchases of requested materials. As online resources continue to grow, the library strives to keep the collection updated and relevant. The library's online collection of videos, e-books, and online journals is over one million items.

The library maintains a broad collection of e-resources in addition to those provided via Treasure State Academic Information & Library Services Consortium (TRAILS). The digital collection includes over 200 databases, and hundreds of individual journal and eBook titles. The library works with various vendors and publishers, including larger packages from EBSCO, ProQuest and Adam Matthews, and smaller resources for individual programs, such as Teaching Channel, AllData Collision, and CCH AnswerConnect. The library also utilizes the Springshare

Suite of projects to manage e-resources and make them more accessible. In the face of steadily rising subscription costs, the library reviews journal subscriptions annually and makes retention decisions based on in-house and interlibrary loan usage as well as full text availability online. Such decisions are made in consultation with academic colleges and departments. At the same time, every effort is made to expand ejournal offerings. Through membership in the TRAILS, consisting of 24 academic libraries in Montana, the library has been able to affordably subscribe to online resources such as ProQuest Central, EBSCO, Gale, and Science (AAAS).

The library has a comprehensive media collection. Subscriptions to streaming video packages are provided as budget allows in support of instructional goals of the institution. Faculty requests for streaming media in specific courses are evaluated by the collection development committee on an individual basis. Additionally, the library supports digital access to audiobooks on the statewide Montana Library2Go platform. The library maintains a small collection of physical media including DVDs and audiobooks.

The Special Collections and Archives focus on the history of MSUB and the local area. Noteworthy collections within the Archives include University Archives, the Barstow Ledger Art Collection, the Artists' Book Collection, the Terry C. Johnston Collection, a small collection of Andy Warhol drawings, and the Dudley White Collection.

The library has been a selective depository library in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) since 1958. The entire government documents collection is discoverable through the library catalog. Print and microfilm holdings have been reduced, and whenever possible, electronic formats are selected. In 2022, the library transitioned to an all-digital depository, meaning all future additions to the government documents collection will be electronic. The library uses MARCIVE to incorporate catalog records that enhance electronic access to government documents. Criteria for weeding government documents is based upon the [Library's Collection Development Policy](#) and the FDLP's regulations. The library works closely with the Regional Depository Library at University of Montana in Missoula to follow appropriate weeding processes and requirements.

Physical and Technology Infrastructure

2.1.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities and technology infrastructure that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support and sustain the institution's mission, academic programs, and services.

Physical Infrastructure

MSUB is comprised of two campuses. The University campus and City College campus are approximately seven miles apart. Each campus is equipped with facilities to enable the full operation of all academic, administrative, and support programs that are contained therein. Buildings on both campuses are accessible and in compliance with the American Disabilities Act.

The University campus is located near downtown Billings at the base of Airport Road. It resides on 75 acres of land including 17 buildings and 39 rental properties. These buildings contain over 1 million square feet (1,012,772) of classrooms, lecture halls, offices, performance venues, stadium and gym space, and studio spaces to support the College of Business, College of Education, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and the College of Health Professions and Science. There are dedicated spaces for research in the areas of athletic training, human performance, earth science, chemistry and biological sciences (including neuroscience, microbiology, cell biology and botany). Research spaces are used by faculty and students in close collaboration, as faculty involvement of undergraduate students is a critical part of the mission. The campus physical infrastructure also houses the two residence halls, student dining service, athletics, the library, campus administration, facilities services, and University Police. In addition to the academic services, the University campus is also home to many outside support programs, such as Veterans Upward Bound, ROTC, Montana Center for Inclusive Education, TRIO/Student Support Services, and is serving as the home for the MSU (Bozeman) Nursing program.

The City College campus is located on the West end of Billings near the intersection of Central and Shiloh. This campus is made up of 35 acres and 2 buildings covering 172,009 square feet. The Technology building houses the administration, classrooms, lab space, and shop space to support the trade and technology programs. The Health Sciences building houses laboratories, classrooms, and lecture halls to serve the medical and first responder programs. In addition to the academic programs, City College is also home to a newly renovated soccer field.

Facilities at both campuses are fully equipped to accommodate the needs of students and faculty with accessibility accommodation available for any needs. Most buildings are also equipped with secure swipe access ensuring individuals can access the facilities required by their program as needed, regardless of normal operating hours, through access granted by program administrators. Accessibility and safety evaluations are conducted in cooperation with the University Police Department and details can be found in the [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#).

MSUB uses the state's Long-Range Building and Planning process, combined with the comprehensive building deficiency report in lieu of a campus master plan. The Montana Code Annotated ([MCA-17-7-204](#)) articulates the procedures for state efforts related to the long-range building program and capital developments. Buildings are annually assessed as part of an ongoing [Long-Range Building and Planning](#) (LRBP) effort conducted in cooperation with MSU (Bozeman). In addition to annual assessments, a comprehensive building deficiency report (a facility condition assessment process) for both [University](#) and [City College](#) campuses is compiled every three years to provide an accurate assessment of the overall condition of University Facilities. The LRBP and the building deficiency reports provide critical guidance to the Administration and the Facilities staff for assessing the sufficiency of physical facilities. The Director of Facilities disseminates weekly emails to keep the campus community informed of

major construction projects, including timelines and potential disruptions that are occurring on campus.

The LRBP process occurs every other year and coincides with the State Legislature. During the LRBP process, the MSUB Director of Facilities and the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance prepares a draft presentation for the Chancellor that identifies MSUB's building project priorities and timelines. The Director of Facilities leads the conversation by highlighting areas of concern or new opportunities on campus. Both capital projects and major repair projects that require state funding are included. Projects funded using fundraising dollars are excluded from this process. The Chancellor provides feedback on the project priority list before submitting it to MSU (Bozeman). MSU (Bozeman) then submits proposals from the four Montana State University campuses to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for approval by the Board of Regents before forwarding to the State Legislature for approval.

MSUB promotes a robust safety culture that is inclusive for all students, staff, and faculty working within the campus facilities. The Chemical Safety Officer (CSO) provides training for each faculty member, laboratory researcher, and technician annually. The topics included in the training are provided in the [Chemical Safety document](#). For waste removal, MSUB contracts with Mountain States Environmental Services (MSES), a private company that performs waste collection and transfer of waste to off-site treatment facilities. Documentation from MSES is provided at the time of collection and transfer for both [University](#) and [City College](#) campuses. This documentation is then used for the annual Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) report that is submitted to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. This report details information about the nature, volumes, and transportation of hazardous waste generated by MSUB activities.

All hazardous waste at MSUB is addressed using the following steps:

1. Laboratory spaces are provided with appropriate satellite waste containers and secondary containment for the collection of hazardous waste near the point of generation. One container per waste stream is provided.
2. Once satellite containers are full, faculty and/or laboratory managers notify the Chemical Safety Officer (CSO), that the contents of the container(s) are ready for transfer to bulk waste.
3. The CSO is the only individual permitted to transfer satellite waste to the bulk waste drums located in a separate, secure, portion of the building. The CSO maintains the appropriate certifications in OSHA 40-hr HAZWOPER training, OSHA HAZWOPER Supervisor, and the OSHA HAZCOM Standard.
4. At the end of spring and fall semesters, MSUB coordinates waste removal with private-sector consulting company Mountain States Environmental Services (MSES), who removes bulk waste drums and transports waste to off-site facilities for treatment and disposal.

In the event of an emergency, procedures related to hazardous materials (among other types of emergencies), are articulated on the [University Police webpage](#), under the “Hazardous Materials” section.

Information Technology

MSUB has a centralized Information Technology (IT) department that supports students, faculty, and staff at the two campuses, University campus and City College campus. The IT team consists of ten professionals including the Director/CIO, systems administrator, network administrator, programmer/database administrator, AV specialist, service desk supervisor, and four service desk support technicians. The IT department is committed to a transformative education for students by providing secure and innovative technology services and support, reducing barriers to learning, and meeting students’ technology needs. This is operationalized by the services, support, and infrastructure the IT staff provide to the campus community.

Information Technology Infrastructure

The IT department reviews and updates its planning tools annually. The review includes necessary updates to the [IT Master Plan](#). The IT Master Plan identifies large-scale strategic initiatives and projects. The capital [equipment planning tool](#) uses a scoring system that considers the age of the equipment, its expected lifespan, warranty status, time remaining of security support, the cost of replacement, and redundancy, helping IT staff to evaluate and prioritize capital equipment replacement. A five-year timeline is generated to guide replacement cycles and to identify the financial resources needed to implement the timeline.

Technology projects implemented throughout the year are evaluated by considering university impact, implementation time, and cost. Some recent infrastructure improvements include:

- wireless access point refresh
- improved redundancy of network access across all buildings
- classroom technology improvements that provide digital whiteboarding in conjunction with audio/visual equipment, supporting faculty and students through the range of course modality offerings (HyFlex, hybrid, etc.)
- data center consolidation that significantly reduced costs and complexity while providing the same or greater level of technology services
- Transition from PRI phones lines to SIP
- Implementation of two factor authentication for all users.

IT security is of paramount importance for MSUB. The IT staff are continuously working to secure systems with timely installation of updates to the operating systems and applications, implementing a layered security posture, and educating users about the cyber security risks. Without these security measures, the university community would be vulnerable to a wide range of threats including malware, phishing attacks, and ransomware. Investing in IT security is a necessity and a strategic obligation. Maintaining the technology infrastructure is critical to the success of the services IT provides while also helping to provide the accessibility, security, and productivity the students, faculty, and staff need to be successful. Additionally, these planning

processes help the members of MSUB to be good stewards of the financial investments of the university and the fees contributed from students.

Technology Support

As important as the underlying technology infrastructure is, technology support is a crucial service provided by the IT department. IT recently completed a multiyear repurposing of the Information Commons, located in the library, that reorganized the open computer labs and centralized the IT Service Desk reception, office locations, and workroom. This move was part of the vision of the library to centralize student services for the convenience and support of the students. The library location now provides library services, technology services, and student tutoring, all from one location. The IT Service Desk is one of four ways students, faculty, and staff can request IT. Having a centralized location for the IT Service Desk also provides a collaborative space for the IT team to share ideas, ask peers for assistance, and to create efficiencies.

The IT department provides staff and faculty with standard-issued equipment including a desktop or laptop with docking station and two monitors. An internal website provides staff and faculty with the standard computer models to choose from, helping them to work with a device that is most productive for them. This standardization also assists with IT support as the number of different models a technician supports is streamlined. IT supports each employee by implementing a [five-year schedule to replace employee's devices](#). Additionally, all technology purchases are placed through IT which allows the department to confirm compatibility, needed performance, cost savings, and support capabilities before equipment is purchased. After the five-year rotation, the device is used in other areas around campus that do not have high computing needs for up to an additional two years before the equipment is securely disposed. Once the device is no longer useful, it is securely wiped seven times and then picked up by the local e-waste partner for recycling. No equipment is allowed to leave campus for disposal without being securely wiped.

Classroom Technology

IT recently completed a multiyear project of installing nearly one hundred “[Connected Classrooms](#)” to support students and faculty. The Connected Classroom is a classroom technology design that integrates digital whiteboarding with audio/visual equipment creating an immersive learning environment for the students and faculty. This environment not only allows faculty to experiment with different modalities, but it also allows the students flexibility with their education. Utilizing the HyFlex modality, a student can decide each day whether to physically participate in class, attend remote synchronously, or review the class from a recording. A sick child, work conflict, or athletic trip is no longer an issue as the student can participate remotely or review the recording and digital notes of the class after the fact.

For other computer labs and classrooms, IT utilizes a rotation schedule with a goal of replacing the computers every four or five years depending on utilization and funding availability. Over the last three years, IT has utilized an application that monitors computer and application utilization providing key usage metrics. The data has been used to help right size computer labs,

prioritize replacement schedules, and be good stewards of student fee funds. The “[Remote Computer Lab](#)” (RCL) provides remote access to a MSUB computer with many of the software applications students need to complete their studies. The RCL allows students to work on a campus computer whether it is from home, a residence hall room, a comfy lounge chair, or their favorite coffee shop. Students can login to an RCL computer to use the software needed to complete coursework even if they never step foot on campus. With access available on or off campus from anywhere, if students have an internet connection, they are able to use MSUB software whenever/wherever it is convenient.

Moving Forward

The institution must provide its reflections on any additional efforts or initiatives it plans on undertaking as it prepares for the Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report.

The narrative should answer the following questions, either implicitly or explicitly: what did the institution do, what occurred, what did the institution learn, and what will the institution do differently, going forward? The PRFR report should be a mission-centered reflection of how the institution complied with NWCCU Standards and how the process was used for future planning and quality improvement activities.

Compiling the narrative for the PRFR was a collaborative effort. Through the many conversations and discussions that took place while preparing the PRFR report, some institutional initiatives were identified as areas where MSUB would like to make additional improvements. Areas in which MSUB will continue to refine and bring focus towards are policy development and review, further strengthening shared governance processes, broadening campus involvement with budget processes, and implementing improvements to the website. More details on these topics are provided herein.

The Chancellor called for a centralized policy directory that aligns with the MUS policy directory. While MSUB has always maintained policies, they are distributed throughout the webpages, mainly located within department-specific pages. MSUB aims to increase accessibility and ease of navigating institutional policies by creating a centralized Policy Directory. This important page contains the institutional level policies by area/chapter. We are proud of the development of the policy directory but there is still more organizational work that needs to be completed. The directory is not yet fully comprehensive, and some policies need to be reviewed and likely updated. This work is ongoing.

The MSUB leadership continues to work on increased transparency for budget procedures. In the past, MSUB has used a hierarchical approach for budgeting decisions. In recent years, efforts have been made to broaden campus involvement with budget-related decisions. Budget Managers have worked closely with fund controllers to empower fund controllers with the knowledge and skills to plan. While many fund controllers are now planning for a year or two in the future, the MSUB leadership encourages them to have a 5-year plan for each index. Budget listening sessions were also implemented in academic year 2023-24 to collect feedback from

the campus. Listening sessions were open to all, and employees were encouraged to attend as many as their schedules would accommodate. The feedback collected from these sessions was productive, and there are plans to continue implementing these sessions in the future. This is another strategy being used to broaden campus involvement in budget conversations and decision-making.

Finally, MSUB plans to continue to refine and revise the university's web presence. While the information posted is accurate, knowing how students choose to navigate through the webpages provides insight on what improvements and adjustments can be made to help students find information with ease. Tools, like AI, can provide data to help expand the usefulness of the information posted on the MSUB webpages. MSUB is in the early stages of these conversations and looks forward to being able to report progress on this in the future.

As MSUB looks towards the comprehensive Year 7 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) review with the NWCCU, we continue to reflect on and respond to the feedback provided during the mid-cycle review (2021). MSUB appreciates the feedback from the NWCCU and respects a robust accreditation cycle that encourages continuous improvement. We use this valuable process to reflect on and review areas of strength and areas where we can focus improvement efforts. We look forward to receiving feedback from the PRFR panel and we are energized to outline the work related to the Year 7 EIE review.

[Required Evidence List](#): This document provides a consolidated checklist for all required evidence.