Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A Full-Scale

Evaluation Committee Report

Montana State University - Bozeman

Bozeman, Montana

October 5-7, 2009

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

That Represents the Views of the Evaluation Committee

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

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Manchester, New Hampshire

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Pocatello, Idaho

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University of Washington Libraries
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Seattle, Washington

Joan S. King
Executive Director of Planning and Budget
Washington State University
Pullman, Washington

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Introduction

The full-scale self-study exercise, including the visit of an Evaluation Committee, is but a moment in an institution's ongoing process of review and development. For at least the last year, the Montana State University community has examined itself with reference to the nine standards of "best practice" developed by its peer institutions in the Northwest. This Evaluation Committee has come as colleagues to engage in shared reflection with the MSU community, and has recorded its findings in this Full-Scale Evaluation Report for the dual purpose of advising the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities on its deliberations and action as well as to leave a record for the university and thereby to assist it in its further planning and operation. We believe that the visit of the Evaluation Committee should complement the university's efforts and result in a shared understanding of and commitment to the immediate as well as longer-term tasks ahead.

So while it is an integral part of the process that the Evaluation Committee visits the campus, it is nevertheless true that for us to do so is an honor. For not only does the host campus extend generous hospitality, it also makes itself fully available for us to review its records, grants full access to its personnel, and enters into candid discussion.

The committee notes with pleasure that these qualities and opportunities have indeed characterized its work with the university over the course of this visit. We are grateful for the generous hospitality extended to us by the MSU community. We have experienced a genuine readiness to help us in our work and we express appreciation to all who planned and executed the myriad arrangements needed to support this visit.

Lastly, we would acknowledge that in conducting this visit, we, too, have also benefited from the opportunity to "compare notes" with colleagues regarding both the timely as well as the perennial challenges of higher education—challenges that transcend any single institution or type of institution and that are common to our work wherever it is done.

Report on the Self-Study

Without question, great care and effort went into the preparation of the Self-Study Report. The product is well presented and nicely formatted. It uses as organizing headers within each chapter the Standards of the Commission, and also includes at the end of each section a "Summary" that sets out strengths as well as challenges. In a very real sense, the Self-Study Report serves as a blueprint for this, the Evaluation Committee's report, insofar as it anticipates this document's analysis, findings, and conclusions. The Committee would further compliment MSU on the large number of persons who were engaged in the self-study process. This large and representative participation is likely the result

of the president's proposal that the university's strategic planning process be complemented by the self-study review, thus resulting in a document that will assist the new president who will take office shortly. In the end, it is clear that the MSU community undertook the study so that it might better understand, evaluate, and improve on current operations, not merely to explain or defend them.

Were the committee to make a suggestion for improvement of the self-study report, it would be to observe that the website references provided at the end of each chapter were of marginal benefit. As they were not live links, but rather required typing in the complete (and very lengthy) URL address, the arrangement frustrated the obviously well-intentioned original purpose.

Eligibility Requirements

Montana State University Bozeman appears to meet all of the provisions of the Commission's Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation and Accredited Higher Education Institutions.

Standard One – Institutional Mission and Goals,

Planning and Effectiveness

As the state's land grant institution, Montana State University Bozeman occupies a place of historical significance, respect, and recognition. From its foundation to its current operations, it embodies the State of Montana's commitment to higher education of quality, timeliness, accessibility, and affordability. Its history is one guided by an abiding concern to offer to as many qualified citizens as possible the programs and services that would not only prepare graduates to work effectively in a changing economy but also to lead personally fulfilling lives. The growth of its professional programs around a core of arts and sciences has continued from early days to the present. As set forth in its Mission Statement, the University is committed...

- To provide a challenging and richly diverse learning environment, in which the entire university community is fully engaged in supporting student success;

- To provide an environment that promotes the exploration, discovery and dissemination of new knowledge;

- To provide a collegial environment for faculty and students in which discovery and learning are closely integrated and highly valued.

This Mission has the full endorsement of the Board of Regents and is actualized through the Five-Year Vision Document that was developed through extensive campus constituency participation. The Vision

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Document serves as the point of reference for the work of the University Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (itself a broadly-representative body). While mechanisms for the assessment of institutional effectiveness relative to the goals of the Vision Document are still in the early stages of development, such as have been formulated are clearly linked to the planning and budget process and are summarized publicly in an annual report. While all parties agree that shared governance is both a priority and an ongoing commitment, and that this process is itself sound, they admit equally the logistical challenges of engaging completely all potentially interested parties in the annual process by which strategic planning and budget allocation are carried out. The senior administration acknowledges that the University is, on the one hand, sufficiently small that there is an expectation all will know what they wish to know, but that it is sufficiently large that such "deep-penetration" communication is difficult. Nonetheless, the Evaluation Committee discerned a strong resolve to make stronger an already-effective mechanism.

Standard Two – Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

College of Agriculture

The College of Agriculture structure consists of a Dean, Associate Dean, and seven Department Heads. The six academic departments include: Agriculture Education, Land Resources and Environmental, Veterinary Molecular Biology, Agriculture Economics and Economics, Animal and Range Sciences, and Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology. The College also has one Research Department which houses seven research centers. Faculty workload is typically a combination of two of the following: academic, research, and extension. The balance of the work assignment was described as a "dynamic tension." As the University continues to develop its assessment plan, it will be necessary to ensure there are assessment activities which demonstrate how students who complete programs in the College of Agriculture have achieved outcomes. Some of the assessment measures currently used in the College are: exit interviews, student evaluations, talk with employers, and capstone courses.

The 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report stated there had been five different deans during the past ten years. Since that time less turn-over in leadership has created greater continuity in delivery of undergraduate and graduate programs and aligning a strategic plan with the vision and mission of the College. In addition, the College has responded to a demand in non-traditional areas of study by developing such programs as Landscape Design and Equine Science. In addition, faculty are open to creative ideas across campus for interdisciplinary opportunities for new programs. A number of faculty members are participating in joint-efforts with other departments in order to offer programs such as, Yellowstone Eco-System, Hydrology Watershed Management/Restoration, and Sustainable Food and Bio-Energy Systems. Even though these non-traditional programs are attracting students there is a lack of student interest in some of the more traditional programs that are needed. Due to lack of resources for all programs this has created discussion in the College based on which programs to preserve and

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which programs to eliminate even though there is a shortage for graduates in the more traditional programs.

College of Arts and Architecture

Schools of Art, School of Film and Photography, and Department of Music

The School of Art, the School of Film and Photography (recently renamed from the Department of Media and Theatre Arts) all provide evidence of well thought-out and implemented degree programs sufficient to satisfy the requirements of Standard 2A. All three programs offer multiple tracks for the degree programs and thus afford students an ample range of curricular options. With the exception of Film and Photography, the arts units have a strong commitment to teacher training, thus reflecting the MSU's long-standing priorities as a Land Grant institution. The three units have affiliations with relevant local media and cultural organizations, including the Montana Public Broadcasting System, local theater and concert organizations, and regional museums.

The School of Art offers a range of degree options, including Graphic Design, Studio Arts, Art History, as well as a Liberal Arts Studio option. All the degree programs have thoughtful and sequenced curricula, with adequate balance between lower and upper-division coursework. A long-standing Semester in Italy program provides enrichment opportunities for students in the various degree tracks. An MFA is also available with concentrations in such areas as drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, and metalsmithing. An MA (in addition to the MFA) program has recently been put into place. The School of Arts is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Arts and Design.

The newly renamed School of Film and Photography has undergraduate degree tracks in Motion Pictures/Video/Theatre and Photography. Both tracks have well-thought out curricula displaying evidence of sequential learning. The Master of Fine Arts in Science and Natural History Filmmaking is a particular strength of the School, attracting students from across the United States and with its graduates obtaining prestigious jobs at such organizations as NASA, the National Geographic Society and the Discovery Channel. A new director is in place for the School and efforts are underway to broaden the curriculum, so as to include more emphasis on film studies and to increase the visibility of the photography program. A potential matter of concern for the unit is the status of its theater program, which has a small faculty and whose place within the overall structure of the College is unclear. The position and function of the theater program both within the College and MSU needs to be thought through carefully in the near future. An additional concern for this School concerns accreditation. The photography component for the unit is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Arts and Design, but there is no accrediting agency for film programs.

The Department of Music offers several well-conceived undergraduate majors and minors, with a strong emphasis on music education. The Department is longstanding connections with the public schools in Montana and graduates in music education are able to find employment in the K-12 system. The degree options, Music, Music Education, and Music Technology are appropriate to the overall educational

mission MSU. The Department has established linkages to the local and state-wide arts community. The Music Technology option, which has been operative for seven years, blends technological training with strong fundamentals in music theory and is particularly noteworthy. An issue of concern for the Department of Music is a perceived lack of space, which adversely affects the ability of music faculty members to provide lessons to students. The relationship of the Music Technology option to the other degree also needs clarification. Of the three arts units in the College, Music is the only one that is classified as a department, rather than a school. The desirability converting the department into a school needs to be considered, possibly in conjunction with curricular changes, such as the creation of a master's level degree. The Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music.

School of Architecture

The division of Architecture within the College of Arts and Architecture is a healthy and well regarded program. Over 200 students enter the program as freshmen, are carefully evaluated with 90 being allowed to move on to the second year of study. After the first year of study, there are few departures from this program. After graduation, approximately 80% move on to study at the master's level at MSU. These students then encounter an intense studio experience as they work closely with faculty mentors. During the undergraduate experience students are exposed to and attain skills in critique as a way of knowing. Students expressed some concern about "floundering" in the first year while they came to understand how to critique and be critiqued by faculty and peers. The final year of undergraduate study is project and client based meaning that student work with clients on defined projects.

Facilities were noted as not being ADA compliant (as noted in the professional accreditation report). Architecture is located in two older buildings with some isolation of freshmen students for upper division students.

Students were enthusiastic about the faculty members. They enjoy their association with them and regarded them as caring and well trained. They valued the networks they were establishing with fellow students. There is obvious pride in their program.

College of Business

The mission for the College of Business is to provide excellence in undergraduate and select graduate business education. To fulfill this mission faculty work across the traditional business disciplines to integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences for students, frequently employing engaged learning opportunities. These teaching activities are linked to identified learning outcomes for critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, ethical decision making, social responsibility, and life-long learning.

To facilitate the integration of the disciplines the college does not have departmental structures. Rather, its administration is composed of a Dean, an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, an Associate

Dean for Administration and Finance, and an Assistant Dean for Student Services. One undergraduate degree is offered with four option areas: accounting, finance, management, and marketing. One Masters of Professional Accountancy is also offered in line with its separate accreditation requirements. These option areas are managed by disciplinary area coordinators.

The College administration and faculty work collaboratively to provide a quality learning environment for students. There is an active strategic plan that is linked to an operational assessment system. The college faculty and administration have operationalized learning outcomes and are in a second generation of the assessment cycle. Assessment evidence is collected from a standardized ETS examination. Students have performed very well on this test when compared to national norms. The college has also developed a series of rubrics to assess student performance across the learning goals. These rubrics are employed by small teams of faculty and administrators to assess student performance. The performance of students and graduates is also assessed by seeking qualitative feedback from the College Advisory Board and local business leaders. There is evidence that the results of this assessment are then in turn used to improve curriculum and pedagogy. One example is an emphasis on student professionalism in which a number of curricular and co-curricular innovations have been implemented. In the current phase of assessment, adjustments are being made to improve the assessment system, as well as student learning outcomes.

Classes in the college are relatively small (less than 30) and there is a collective culture of support among faculty and staff. Active learning is promoted and hands-on experiences in the community are encouraged. One of the emphasis areas in the college deals with entrepreneurship. In this area students work with Montana businesses to help them be successful while at the same time grounding their learning in real-world experiences. Such activities link directly to the college' mission and related learning outcomes.

Facilities in the college are adequate, but becoming dated. One notable exception is the Bracken Center which was remodeled a few years ago with a generous gift from alumnus Gary K. Bracken and provides a professional physical environment. The Center's supports scholarships, travel abroad fellowships, career counseling services, mentoring programs, executives-in-residence, and curriculum development.

The student body is strong and quality trends are improving. The faculty interacts well with students through courses, advising, and an active set of student clubs. There is a culture of collaboration in the college dealing with enhancing student learning, as well as scholarship. While the focus of the college is on education, particularly undergraduate education, there is also an active research culture. Research productive faculty are rewarded with lower teaching loads and collaborate across disciplines.

In summary, given its role and mission, the college seems to be functioning as a strong component of Montana State University. It has a vision for where it is going, is attempting to best spend its resources on its top priorities, and collaborates well internally. It also reaches out to the community through

programs such as Entrepreneurship, and is poised to collaborate to a greater extent with other colleges internally.

College of Education, Health and Human Development

The College of Education, Health and Human Development is composed of two departments: Education, and Health and Human Development. The administration consists of a Dean, Associate Dean, and two Department Heads. Each department offers both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report for Montana State University stated the College of Education, Health and Human Development had developed a strong assessment effort which it has begun to use in its planning and in improving instruction. In a more recent State Review Exit Report for Teacher Education (October 2008), the team found there was no evidence of data routinely analyzed and systemically shared in order to improve unit operations and program quality. The Teacher Education program is in the process of establishing national accreditation with TEAC and is no longer with the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE).

The College has not had consistent leadership for a number of years until the appointment of a new Dean spring 2009. In addition, at the time of this report there is a new Education Department Head and the second year for the Department Head for Health and Human Development. The stability and collaborative style of leadership has been described as getting the College "back on track" and empowering the faculty to organize its efforts in a positive direction for the College. A process of revitalizing its mission, aligning curriculum, pursuing interdisciplinary degrees, and developing an assessment plan is underway in the College. Even though the College has been in a leadership transition it should be commended for developing six online programs that address the need for access to education in rural areas and to serve to the American Indian population.

The Department of Education has recently hired an Assessment Coordinator to address assessment concerns. The department has also developed a teacher preparation matrix that aligns student outcomes, data analysis, and program improvement. The Department of Health and Human Development's complexity of having six very different majors has made it difficult to identify a common focus. The department has engaged in a strategic planning process during the past two years that has reenergized the faculty. The department has aligned its mission with a conceptual model of wellbeing. More recently a department wide assessment approach for the six programs has been developed within the department. The Assessment and Outcome Plan describes how a combination of yearly survey data and survey data from students' capstone experiences will be shared with program leaders in each major.

College of Engineering

The College of Engineering contains the Department of Chemical & Biological Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, Department of Computer Science, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, and Department of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering. These 5 departments offer 10 baccalaureate degree programs and 4 minors.   Accreditation is by ABET's Engineering Accreditation Commission for Chemical, Civil, Computer, Electrical, Industrial, and Mechanical Engineering and ABET's Technology Accreditation Commission for Construction Engineering Technology and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

The College mission is widely promoted and aligned with the university mission: "The College of Engineering will serve the State of Montana and the nation by:

- Supporting student achievement
- Integrating learning and discovery
- Developing and sharing technical expertise"

Individual programs have educational objectives that are consistent with ABET and with the needs of the program constituents. Assessment of program objectives is an ongoing process but appears to be successfully standardized across the college. One successfully implemented student outcomes assessment strategy examines the results of the Fundamentals of Engineering examination, a nationally normalized test that is required of graduating engineering seniors at MSU. Students are required to enroll in an Engineering Program Assessment course, take the FE exam, and make an honest and serious effort to pass it. Review sessions are available leading up to the exam.

The evaluation revealed the following concern: As with other colleges across MSU, inadequate state funding is a major impediment to sustainability and further growth of COE. Faculty salaries are well below par; at the Full Professor level are up to 60% below market. This has resulted in applicants for faculty positions declining offers and COE faculty taking positions elsewhere.

Increasing reliance on overhead to cover costs (such as building O&M) customarily supported by state funds has resulted in a need to revise the approach to distributing Indirect Costs (IDC) to units and faculty. While the majority of faculty and staff understand and accept this need, it has caused anxiety among some. Open communication and an engaging, objective approach to prioritizing future uses of indirect funds will be important in easing tensions and improving the current situation.   In recent years, UPBAC has approved a number of new charges to IDC. The Committee is concerned that this eclipses the role of the VPR whose responsibility it is to set the IDC distribution plan.

College of Letters and Science

The College of Letters and Science offers 47 majors and 25 minors for undergraduates and is the largest and most diverse college at MSU. Its fifteen departments span the natural and social sciences, mathematics and humanities. L&S is home to approximately 2,200 undergraduate students and 450 graduate students (21 percent of MSU students) and 190, or approximately 40 percent, of MSU's tenure-track faculty. The college is committed to helping students think critically, communicate clearly, understand various disciplines and cultures and develop the skills that will make them life-long learners and leaders.

Departments of Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Earth Sciences, Microbiology, Physics

The Departments of Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Earth Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Microbiology and Physics demonstrate alignment with the University mission through a strong commitment to student success, research excellence, and engaging students in research activities. Its Math Learning Center has succeeded in elevating math competency of students preparing for Physics and other science degrees. The college has doubled its grant expenditures since 1996 to over $27 million, significantly expanding opportunities to engage students in research projects. The Biomedical Science program has a 75-90 percent placement rate for its graduates into medical schools, compared to approximately 50 percent nationally. Completed in 2008, the new 73,000 square foot Chemistry and Biochemistry Research Building provides cutting-edge laboratory space for research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

The evaluation revealed the following concerns. Inadequate state support plagues the college and endangers the progress and positive trends shown in the recent past. Low faculty salaries – especially at the Associate Professor and Full Professor levels – have resulted in reduced faculty morale and lost recruitments in L&S as well as other colleges across MSU. If this problem persists, the growing research enterprise will stall and instructional quality will suffer. Funding for Graduate Teaching Assistants is scarce, resulting in an inadequate number of TAs and low stipends compared to those of Graduate Research Assistants funded through most federal research awards. It will be more difficult to attract and retain students in the future unless this problem is remedied. Rising costs of operating and maintaining state-owned buildings has not been borne by increased state support, stretching thinly limited revenues from federal reimbursement of indirect costs. These trends threaten the overall success of MSU; unless corrected the university is in jeopardy of falling well behind its peer institutions across the country.

There is an impressive utilization of undergraduates in research activities within L&S (as in other colleges within MSU). However, this and a strong reliance on post-doctoral fellows has resulted in a lower than expected number of graduate students for the level of research expenditures the college receives. Furthermore, while some departments have exemplary approaches to assessing student success, there is no single, effective approach to defining and evaluating student outcomes across the college.

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Departments of English, History and Philosophy, Modern languages and Literatures, and Native American Studies

There are four units within the College of Letters and Sciences whose subject matters fall within the general rubric of the "humanities." These units are English, History and Philosophy, Modern Languages and Literatures, and Native American Studies. The B.A. is offered in English, History, Philosophy, but not Native American Studies. Minors are offered in all the units, as well as in Japan Studies (administered by the Department of History and Philosophy) and Women's Studies. In addition, humanities departments offer subject area concentrations in conjunction with degrees offered by the College of Education. At the graduate level, the MA is awarded by English, History (but not Philosophy, and Native American Studies. The Ph.D. is awarded only by History. The line of demarcation between the humanities and the social sciences is not reflected in the formal administrative structure of the College, since both are subsumed by "Letters." Some of the units, particularly History and Native American Studies, straddle the humanities/social sciences divide. In some cases, courses in subject areas that are often thought of as pertaining to the humanities (e.g. linguistics) may be offered in such "social sciences" departments as Anthropology.

As demonstrated in the self-study and in supporting documents, the various humanities units of the College of Letters and Sciences are in accord with provisions of Standard 2, most particularly 2.A. (General Requirements), 2.C. (Undergraduate Program), and 2.D. Graduate Program. All provide evidence of well thought-out and implanted degree programs and minors compatible with the requirements of Standard 2A. All programs offer multiple tracks for the degree programs and all demonstrate a strong commitment to teacher training. In addition to producing majors, minors, and graduate degree holders in their respective subject areas, all the units contribute substantively to the general education function of the University. All the units have faculty members who, in addition to the carrying out of their service functions, "[excel] in scholarship, teaching, and research (Standard 2E). The units all demonstrated a high degree of cooperation and coordination with one another.

The Department of English has well structured and coherent undergraduate degree programs, with options in Literature, and English Teaching. It also offers an MA. All the degree programs and options exhibit evidence of coherent and appropriate curricula, with adequate attention to sequential learning and the offering of its courses at appropriate levels. In addition, the Department bears a heavy responsibility with regard to the core curriculum of the University as a whole. The writing program of at MSU is administered out of the Department of English, which imposes an exceptionally heavy service responsibility on the unit. At present MSU has a one semester undergraduate writing requirement, which the relevant faculty in English do an excellent job of administering. The institution lacks, however, an upper-division writing requirement and as yet does not have a program in writing across the curriculum. A desideratum for the unit (and for writing at MSU as a whole) is increased faculty lines in rhetoric and composition and for increased emphasis in writing so to expand the franchise for writing instruction at MSU beyond the freshman year.

The Department of History and Philosophy (DHP) offers an impressive array of degree options at the undergraduate level. Tracks for History include a teaching option, a "traditional" history option, and an interdisciplinary program in Science, the Environment and Society (SETS). One of the philosophy options is "Philosophy and Religion," which constitutes the only degree option at MSU for the academic study of religion. In addition, the Department administers both a major and minor in Japanese Studies, which requires close cooperation with the Department of Modern Languages and Literature. It also offers a minor in Latin American and Latino studies, as well as one in Museum Studies.   The department has wisely opted to focus its graduate areas of concentration to a few areas in which it has particular strength, namely the history of science, technology, and society, environmental history, and American history, particularly with reference to the American West and Montana. The Department has been successful in fundraising efforts, notable successes of which are the endowed Stegner Professorship and the Stegner Lectureship.

The Department of Modern Languages (DML) of offers a number of undergraduate degree tracts and minors growing from a traditional emphasis on teacher training, but evolving into broader concerns with area studies, cultural studies, and professional education. The set of languages for which instruction is offered is relatively small (French, Spanish, German, Japanese, and as of this year, [Mandarin] Chinese) and the unit is having to balance the demand for traditionally taught languages such as French, German, and Spanish, some of which are experiencing declining enrollments, and pressures for languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic, for which demand is increasing substantially. The Department soon will be implementing a language program in Arabic, targeted to a regional consortium of institutions, with instruction delivered by remote learning devices. If MSU is to take the lead in running such a program, it may wish to consider whether it wishes to establish a "normal" instructional program in Arabic on the MSU campus to complement the remote learning option.

The Department of Native American Studies is an interdisciplinary unit that offers an undergraduate minor, an MA, but no undergraduate major. The existence of the Department is fully consonant with the MSU's service commitment to Montana's tribal communities, as well as with the mission to expand scholarly research on Native Americans. The unit also shoulders a heavy service responsibility in providing courses intended to satisfy the diversity component of the undergraduate Core curriculum. The Department has a significant research presence, with faculty active in scholarly research and publication. The unit has been successful in attracting federal research money for its various programs. The minor in Native American Studies is accredited by the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC).

Departments of Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology

There are four units within the College making up the Social Sciences area: Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology and Anthropology. The Department of Economics is jointly housed with the College of Agriculture and is the result of the merger of Agricultural Economics and Economics a number of years ago. The Dean of Agriculture controls the budget for the Department, but decisions on issues

such as hiring, tenure, and promotions are jointly made across Deans and the Colleges. The Department offers B.S. degrees in Economics and Agricultural Business and an M.S. in Applied Economics.

The Political Science department offers a B.S. degree with options in Analysis and Policy and International Relations. It also offers a M.P.A. with a focus on government administration. Enrollments in the program are capped at 25. The Psychology Department offers a B.S. degree with an applied focus across a wide range of topical areas. It also offers a M.S. in Psychological Science with a research focus preparing students for both continued education at the doctoral level or for a career. Finally, the Sociology and Anthropology Department offers B.S. degrees in each of its named areas. The Sociology degree also affords the opportunity for students to study justice issues.

Across all of these departments and their degree programs it is clear that the faculty care deeply about their students. They carry a heavy teaching load in the general education program as well as teaching significant numbers of majors in their disciplines. Most programs have numerous opportunities for students to have engaged learning opportunities such as undergraduate research, internships, and study aboard. The departments have varied levels of emphasis on scholarship with faculty in some programs having active funded research programs and successful publication records. While most of the departments have attempted to focus their activities, many are stretched to fulfill their obligations within their allocated budgets. In addition, a number of the departments have limited or low quality space for offices and laboratories. Given these limited resources and the extensive demands on their use, it will be important for the departments to continue to prioritize and focus their activities on the most promising strategic areas.

College of Nursing

The College of Nursing is one of two publicly supported baccalaureate nursing programs in Montana (the other is at MSU Northern) and is the largest supplier of baccalaureate prepared nurses in the state. It is Montana's only provider of graduate nursing education. The master's level programs lead to preparation of family nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and clinical nurse leaders. The college also offers a post-master's certificate for family nurse practitioners and a graduate level certificate in nursing education. The College of Nursing is a multi-campus program with campuses in Billings, Great Falls, Missoula and Kalispell. Each of the campuses has resident faculty who serve both baccalaureate and master's students. Faculty members at the distant sites participate in faculty meetings and on college and university committees via two-way audio-video conferencing (Poly-Com) or use of a conference phone.

The mission and goals of the College of Nursing are congruent with the mission and goals of the university. The general education courses required for the bachelor's degree reflect the CORE 2.0 curriculum requirement of the university as well as general education courses that support coursework in the major. The breadth, depth, and sequencing of courses have been reviewed by the program's professional accreditation body (Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education). The full accreditation

achieved by the program indicates that the undergraduate and graduate degree programs demonstrate a coherent design and meet the standards for the professional degree.

The degrees offered by the College of Nursing are consistent with program content. All meet the professional requirements for graduates to take a certification, board or licensing examination in their field. Students who earn a Bachelor of Science degree may continue on to earn a graduate degree. The coursework for the advanced degree builds on previously learned knowledge, is clearly defined and provides more in-depth subject content as the student moves to a different curricular level.

Faculty members are responsible for the course design and implementation of the curriculum. There are representatives on the curriculum committees from all campuses. The faculty's knowledge of the major and the clinical areas for practice results in the design of a curriculum that is current and meets professional requirements. The clinical faculty members work in clinical areas. This ensures that they maintain clinical competency, and are knowledgeable about new developments in their field, in changing technology and its effect on clinical practice.

The College of Nursing has a well articulated master evaluation plan that addresses all aspects of college and program evaluation, time frames, individuals or groups responsible for components of the evaluation, instruments used and plans for feedback based on outcomes. Changes made based on student evaluation data include but are not limited to changes in the course credits for the research and management courses at the baccalaureate level and incorporating more preparation for clinical laboratory procedures within the family nurse practitioner curriculum in the master's program. A review of the consistently high pass rates on the licensing (NCLEX-RN) and certification examinations (AANP and ANCC) affirmed the high quality of the educational programs and that no change was needed.

It is incorrectly noted in the Self-Study Report that the master's degree is the terminal degree in nursing. The doctorate is the terminal degree and even though the number of faculty holding a doctorate has not significantly increased in the last 10 years, all of the core nursing courses in the graduate program are taught by faculty with a doctorate. The clinical courses are all taught by certified nurse practitioners with a master's degree. This meets the standard expected for graduate programs in nursing that prepare nurse practitioners.

The College of Nursing has been committed to increasing its research productivity in recent years. An Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education was hired in 2007 to enhance the research mission. In 2009, the College of Nursing was awarded $1,543,186 for research and other sponsored programs. This is the greatest amount received in the last four years. Faculty members at all levels are committed to the research mission. Clinical faculty members who are not active researchers utilize research findings in their practice. Students verified that the research component of CORE 2.0 is carried out in the upper division courses and that their clinical practice is evidenced-based.

In support of the MSU Mission Statement that reads: *To serve the people and communities of Montana by sharing our expertise and collaborating with others to improve the lives and prosperity of Montanans,*

CON faculty have received six grants to improve the health of Native Americans. These one to three year awards, some in collaboration with community partners, were awarded by NIH, Robert Wood Johnson, the Lance Armstrong Foundation and other funding agencies totaling approximately $1, 270,000.

The College of Nursing faculty on all campuses are academically and experientially qualified to teach in their respective programs. Even though the percentage of faculty with doctorate degrees has remained essentially unchanged during the past 10 years, graduate core courses are all taught by faculty members with a doctorate. All of the clinical faculty teaching in the graduate practitioner courses have a master's degree and are certified in their field of practice. There are qualified part-time clinical faculty who teach undergraduate students on all campuses. Students verified the competence of their clinical faculty. Volunteer preceptors are used on all campuses. These nurses meet the preceptor requirements of the Montana State Board of Nursing.

Faculty members verified that they are evaluated annually by their campus director. These sessions help them develop goals for the coming year. In general they believe that annual evaluations help them in their pursuit of promotion and tenure.

Ten years ago faculty salaries in the College of Nursing were at or above the mean salaries for academic year full-time nurse faculty in public institutions in the Western region as reported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) guidelines for the region. The mean faculty salaries are now below the AACN mean in all categories. Interviews with faculty verified that the low level of salaries is discouraging and that many of them supplement their income with clinical practice. They remain in their faculty role because they like the academic environment and the role they play in educating future nurses. However, the salaries they can earn in service positions in most cases are much higher than their salaries at MSU.

Faculty members receive support for research. Several were awarded grants from the Clinical Research Development Program that was funded by the Provost and the Vice President for Research. This support and mentoring resulted in faculty receiving funding for their research proposals. Faculty members in the College of Nursing have consistently received funding from NIH/NINR and other funding agencies for research and training grants. This was a very cost effective investment that was made by the university.

Division of Graduate Education

The Division of Graduate Education (DGE) supervises graduate studies at Montana State University (MSU). Admission to graduate programs, development of curricula, and review of programs are accomplished by the faculty of the involved departments. The DGE oversees and monitors all graduate education policies and procedures. MSU offers 48 masters' and 19 doctoral degrees of which nine are classified as professional degrees.

The MSU's mission statement contains the following: "To provide an environment that promotes the exploration, discovery, and dissemination of new knowledge," and "to provide a collegial environment for faculty and students in which discovery and learning are closely integrated and highly valued." The DGE's mission correlates closely to these elements by providing 58 research oriented graduate degrees where graduate student work in close association with faculty members in their research endeavors.

Additionally, MSU has established a Five-year Vision Document which lays out markers for future success. Some of those goals have positive implications for graduate studies. For example, one goal is to increase the number of graduate students to 1800 (which has been exceeded) with an increase of 10% in graduate student support from grants, scholarships, and waivers (which has yet to be met). Another example from the vision document includes a statement to increase the number of graduate students supported by grants and contracts.

The following chart provides a longitudinal measure of the numbers of graduate research assistants and teaching assistants. While the number of RA's has increased (this is associated with the increase in funded research activity) the number of TA's has not which presents a problem in that there is an imbalance between levels of pay for teaching and research assistants and in the numbers of RA's contrasted with the number of TA's.

Number of Graduate Research and Teaching Assistants by Year
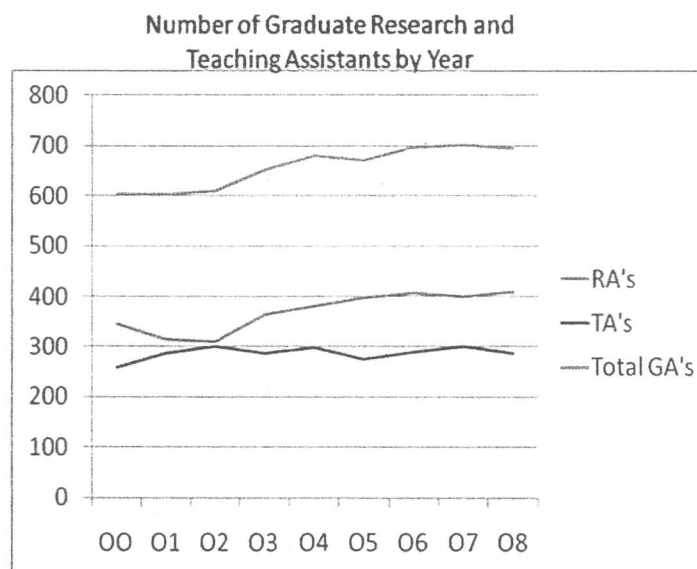
There are specific requirements for master's and doctoral level study. Master's degrees typically require 30 credit hours beyond a bachelor's degree (10 of which may be awarded for thesis work). Profession master's degrees require capstone experiences. Doctoral degrees require a minimum of 60 hours beyond a bachelor's degree of which 18 to 28 hours must be dissertation credits. There are specific limitations to transfer credits (no more than 9) of non-matriculated hours, specific limitations as to type of credits (special topics), type of grading scale used (pass/fail), and age of courses (not to exceed 10 years at time of graduation).

The DGE sets and enforces policies on qualifying and comprehensive exams, thesis and dissertation defenses. Doctoral credit requirements are differentiated in both level and amount and the requirement for dissertation work include extensive research by the candidate, original contribution to knowledge, and include new information worthy of publication.

In the past 3 or 4 years there have been great efforts in making the policies and procedures of the DGE easily accessible to the campus generally. Unit heads are appreciative of this effort and also noted that the Graduate Council has been empowered and is functioning well. They feel there is excellent guidance from the DGE Office. They also noted that the Office was understaffed and that additional human resources might be needed to accelerate decision making (it was noted that an associate vice provost was slated to be hired, but that action has not taken place).

The adequacy of faculty, resources and facilities is mixed. Faculty are well trained; however, there are inadequate resources in terms of support for graduate student tuition waivers and stipends. MSU programs that have access to research grants are able to support graduate research assistants while those that do not have access must rely upon graduate teaching assistantships which are usually funded at much (50%) lower levels than research assistantships and are fixed in terms of numbers. In one ironic case, PhD candidates are required to have teaching experience, thus requiring them at some point to reduce their stipend by half.

It was also noted that in the research areas some PIs are inclined to hire post doctorates rather than graduate assistants because post docs are already trained and do not cost much more than a graduate assistant. The matter becomes one of choosing to support important research activities while neglecting doctoral preparation.

Academic program reviews occur on a seven year cycle and include graduate programs. However, it was noted that there is uneven follow up on the findings from these reviews.

Duties in the DGE Office are specific and the staff has a service orientation to the students. Comments from faculty and departmental administrators substantiate the fact that the Office has moved to a more student centered philosophy. Graduate students who were interviewed also indicated that the Office had changed in the last four years. Graduate students also noted that they were considering unionizing, but had recently pulled back and were thinking about forming a graduate student organization. They were complementary as to the competency of faculty and library resources; however there was some concern about dated research equipment (this was especially true in the highly technical fields).

Graduate students were generally complementary of their faculty mentors noting that they were very accessible, well trained, and had the best interest of the student in mind. Adequacy of facilities varied but was usually satisfactory. Montana State University's culture of cooperation across departmental and college lines was mentioned as a positive in terms of provide access to needed equipment in select

graduate research projects. Most students choose MSU because of the programs offered, the reputation of the university, and the location.

Both faculty and students were highly complimentary of the Library's accessibility to information in the form of books (they were purchased when suggest by graduate students or brought in via interlibrary loan), electronic journals, and the helpfulness of the reference librarians.

MSU does not have a graduate faculty. Any faculty member can serve on student committees. Only tenure track faculty may serve as chairs. Other than this, there are no guidelines for committee service. This seems to be problematic for a research university that should be concerned about the currency of scholarship and creativity among its faculty.

Faculty members were concerned that there is no metric for working with graduate students in mentoring activities. Course loads are not reduced for those mentoring larger numbers of graduate students. The Responsible Conduct of Research while being formalized by federal granting agencies does not seem to be evident at MSU except at the departmental or individual level.

Perhaps the most critical concern for the DGE is a "decoupling" of the stated goals of increased numbers of graduate students and increased support for them, and financial decisions that do not support or are even harmful to those goals (i.e. tuition waiver policies dealing with nonresident tuition).

Conclusions:

Graduate education at MSU is healthy and a leader in some areas. Faculty regard students as hard working and intelligent. There is a student orientation at the Division of Graduate Studies which is known by both faculty and students alike. Facilities are generally adequate and supportive of creation of knowledge and scholarly activity.

There are some issues that ought to be considered. The most important and far reaching would be linking fiscal decisions with the stated goals of the university. Other issues include consideration of public stated guidelines for serving on masters' or doctoral committees, the growing practice of hiring post docs in preference to graduate assistants, the flat line numbers of entering doctoral students, a formal approach to training in the responsible conduct of research, a metric for direction of graduate students, and communicated logic in awarding teaching assistants over time.

Cooperative Extension

As the land grant university of Montana, MSU has an extensive system of county agents and specialists located and tenured in academic department who provide unbiased information to the citizens of the state. In 2000 Cooperative Extension was brought under the direction of the Provost with the Extension

Director being named as a vice provost. This is a departure from the decades old model of Extension being located in colleges of agriculture. With a wider university mission, Extension participates in a variety of programs that are designed to involve all Montana citizens. For example, Outreach Awards sponsored by the Provost's Office recognized an assistant professor in chemistry for sharing his scientific work with the public schools, an Extension specialist for working with farmers and ranchers to achieve sustainable agriculture, and a professor of art for helping a non-profit organization receive broad exposure for its work providing needy children throughout the world with pediatric wheelchairs.

In addition to recognizing MSU faculty, Extension is involved in providing extensive educational services to agricultural producers, youth, families, and communities. It does this through informal and non-credit activities. One of the most notable is The Horizons program, a 3 million dollar partnership between MSU Extension and the Northwest Area Foundation providing leadership and development activities to local communities that face the growing concern of rural poverty in Montana. Over 4,000 citizen representing sixteen different communities took part in this program which counted among its results the following: Increasing local employment, growing food, increasing affordable housing, building community values, creating a youth focused foundation, promoting economic development, creation of parks, and assisting in business development.

Extension employs extensive needs analysis to gather stakeholder input as it develops programs in nutrition, food safety, youth development, agricultural sustainability, family issues and resources, community development and economic development, and natural resources and environment. Extension is a major portal to the university for a wide variety of residences and citizens of the state.

Educational Policy 2.1 – General Education/Related Instruction

The University Core Curriculum was revised in 2004 and a CORE 2.0 curriculum was implemented. The goal of this curriculum is to provide a foundation of undergraduate courses and ensure a wide ranging general education. It is the expectation that these courses will be built upon within the various majors within the university. The institution is committed to providing students access to CORE 2.0 early in their academic programs. There is also a commitment to a requirement that at least one of the courses be a research or creative experience course. It is the expectation that the knowledge gained will be threaded within courses taught in the student's major. There is some evidence that this CORE 2.0 content is used in upper division courses although it is not always evident. College of Nursing students described how research is incorporated into the curriculum and how they are expected use the results of clinical nursing research in their practice which is expected to be evidence based. There is less documented evidence that the CORE 2.0 is used as a basis for upper division courses in the majors across the colleges. In addition, there is no evidence that there is a formal university assessment plan for how CORE 2.0 is used, evaluated and changes, if needed, are made based on that assessment.

Educational Policy 2.2 – Educational Assessment

During the past ten years, the University has attempted to address the need for campus-wide educational assessment. The initiatives established included participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement and a review of departmental assessment plans by the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC). Following these reviews, departments were expected to have full assessment and evaluation plans. The goal of the AOC was to review assessment plans and reports and provide formative feedback on those reports. The evaluation team did not find a full university educational assessment program with well defined learning outcomes and feedback based on collected information with subsequent actions taken to improve student learning.

While some academic programs are at the beginning stages of developing an active assessment cycle, many programs that have been frequently reviewed by their professional accrediting societies have been required to do programmatic assessment for several years. In contrast, many of these professional programs have used the results of the learning outcomes assessments to improve educational offerings and student learning. Thus, while many programs across the university give examples of specific curricular or teaching changes made, based on assessment data, others are just beginning to collect data or have not made specific changes based on observed learning outcomes.

In some cases, the rate of development for learning outcomes assessment has been slowed by the limited role of Deans who did not have adequate information on assessment activities in their own colleges. As such, they were not able to help lead efforts to ensure that student learning outcomes were identified, information was collected on whether students attained those goals, and if curricular or teaching changes were undertaken to enhance the learning. Further, it appears that in some cases department members did not understand what was being asked of them in this assessment cycle, while in others the seriousness of the need to undertake this activity was not comprehended.

There also appeared to be some confusion over what constituted an adequate assessment process. For undergraduates, there were varying levels of assessment emphasis on curriculum design, courses taken, topics covered, student satisfaction, and teacher evaluations, none of which actually measured the actual learning of students. Limitations of the assessment cycle were pronounced at the graduate level.

There were parallel limitations with the assessment of learning outcomes of the Core 2.0 and subsequent improvements coming from that analysis. While a great deal of effort went into the design of the program and many strong and dedicated faculty teach in it, an effective assessment cycle for student learning is limited. Here, the assessment activities were decentralized to the course level which made it difficult to assess the program as a whole, its impact on student learning, and what could be done to improve it over time. The assessment decentralization also created difficulties in linking the Core 2.0 to the needs of majors downstream from the program.

Educational Policy 2.3 – Credit for Prior Experiential Learning

Credit for prior learning may be granted for College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. In some courses, credit may be granted based on performance on a comprehensive examination for the course as described in the MSU Advanced Standing Policy. No credit is awarded for experiential learning alone.

Educational Policy 2.6 – Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate, and Degree Programs

At the time of the Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report in 1999, the following examples described the extended and distance learning programs: 1) student services are relatively underdeveloped and uncoordinated, 2) primarily individual courses rather than full degree programs, 3) experimenting with web-based instruction, and 4) professional development for faculty is needed. The 2004 Regular Interim Report - Recommendation 5 also addressed the need for central administration oversight for consistency in distance programs and services, and for the website and university catalog to provide a clear and complete picture of distance education at the University.

Montana State University has made great progress in addressing the above listed concerns during the past ten years. During the past two years, a Student Support Coordinator and an Instructional Technology Support Specialist have been hired to provide support to students participating in online courses. To date, there are seven full degree programs online. As of June 2009, the University has transitioned from the learning management system (LMS) WebCT to Desire2Learn for delivery of online courses. Courses are automatically populated with students and instructors making access easier, user-friendly and therefore utilized. Over 10,000 students are currently in Desire2Learn. All four campuses are using the same system which makes sharing courses available for students to access.

The development of MSU Extended University (EU) and its mission are in alignment with the University mission and the Five-Year Vision document. The EU Executive Director reports to the senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The three major services of EU are: Office of Continuing Education, Montana State Online, and Burns Technology Center. The EU staff has specific areas of expertise to meet the expectations of outreach and the effective use of educational technologies. Extended University academic programs are approved through the academic department. The academic department is responsible for ensuring rigor and maintaining quality of instruction in the program. A number of workshops and training sessions are available for faculty to assist with web-based online course development as well as providing teaching strategies for online course delivery. Students participating in online courses have access to online library materials and services. The University has made a commitment to funding Extended University.

Currently the Extended University is not aware of all online courses or programs across campus; therefore, quality control related to consistent delivery of student services and faculty support is not and cannot be provided. The EU Executive Director has recently been appointed to the Deans Council. As a member of the Deans Council, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to address EU concerns related to online delivery of programs and courses. In addition, there is not a formal assessment process or annual report produced by Extended University. Such a report would systematically inform how decisions are made related to where resources should be allocated based on need.

Standard Three – Students

Introduction

The organization and administration of student services programs are well organized and coordinated and are staffed by a dedicated core of qualified professionals, with evidence of extensive collaboration both within student services and with other campus departments and offices. The services and programs emphasize enrollment management, campus climate, and student success as goals for continuous improvement. Data obtained from surveys combined with formal and informal student feedback is used effectively to work toward solutions of identified problems. While the student affairs staff has served a major role in establishing student success initiatives, such as First Year Initiatives, they are nonetheless acutely aware of the need to further refine retention interventions. The majority of student services are centralized in and around the Student Union. While the majority of office facilities are adequate, the residence halls and student health service facilities are in need of renovation, remodeling or replacement. The campus has an established student code of conduct and grievance procedure that is reviewed on a regular basis. The code provides for due process with regard to behavioral and academic issues. The code is online and distributed to target groups.

Programs and Services

The undergraduate admissions function is coordinated and uniformly applied. There is a formal process for exceptions and appeals. The office also coordinates recruitment and orientation as well as works extensively with the freshman year initiative to assure a positive transition from prospective to enrolled student. The admissions office personnel recruit extensively out of state and have continued to raise the academic profile of the incoming freshman. Of particular note is the successful recruitment of Native American students. Transfer students are also a critical part of the enrollment profile. The recruitment and orientation programs utilize student feedback to assure currency and relevance. The registration and registrar functions are efficient and contemporary with communication to the campus community

effective. Records are appropriately maintained utilizing AACRAO guidelines with adequate protection and backup.

Academic advising is an evolving process that has received considerable attention from the colleges, departments, and student services staff. The Academic Advising Council has been a strong grassroots effort to share information and provide training for advisors across the university academic and student services units. The academic advising center housed in University studies has provided a central place to assist undeclared student to transition into majors and programs. It also supports students seeking general assistance. Advising loads, access to advisors, and reputation for quality varies considerably across the university. However, when disparities or new needs are identified there is a concerted effort to resolve or address those needs. Recently advising positions directed to Students in Transition (students not meeting requirement for their first choice majors) and for Pre-Med/Health Professionals were added. There is a support system for specialized student interests and needs through TRIO, the Disability, Re-Entry and Veteran Services Office, Community Involvement, and Diversity Center.

The financial aid office is centralized, managed by an experienced staff and coordinates all forms of student assistance at the university. The office manages the standard array of federal, state, and campus based programs. The default rate is among the lowest in the country. The most recent audits and programs reviews did not cite any major exceptions. The staff is involved in relevant committees and discussions regarding the role of financial aid in enrollment and retention efforts.

The campus bookstore is a non-profit corporation and directs some profits to reduce textbook and supply costs to students. The student union has undergone a recent expansion that has also allowed numerous student services to co-locate and increase access and convenience for students. A wide range of student activities, clubs and organizations, and recreational programs are available to students. Students are highly engaged in the design and implementation of these programs. Student groups were particularly complimentary of the recent remodel of the Fitness Sport and Recreational Center. Further refinement of the usage data and formal feedback mechanisms for the Union and Fitness Center need attention to assure maximum benefits are being derived.

Student Residential Life student and professional staff pride themselves on establishing a sense of community within campus housing. There is a strong training and guidance structure in place for student and professional staff to address student needs and interests. Campus leadership is well aware that the facilities are aging and must direct attention to future replacement and remodeling needs. Campus personnel are proactive in addressing student safety and programming needs.

Students have a wide range of dining and food options throughout the campus and in the residence halls. The food services and catering are self- support operations. Student interviews revealed both positive and mixed reactions to the food operations, options, and hours of operation. There are mechanisms in place for students to provide feedback to the program.

The Student Health Service provides primary healthcare to MSU students supported by a per semester fee. The Center also offers a health insurance plan and houses a pharmacy and dental clinic. The Center

works closely with the Health Promotion program to address crucial health issues of students as well as health assessments. Counseling and Psychological Services are available for student mental health needs. The staff provides outreach and consulting to numerous student services and academic departments. These services regularly evaluate their effectiveness through student surveys and input.

The career services office is a proactive center that advocates an enrollment to employment philosophy. The center provides a wide array of services that support student employment, internships, and preparation for future employment. There is a strong relationship with prospective employers including major events highlighting opportunities. Students are also assisted with self-assessments selecting majors, and preparing for the world of work. The campus includes an internship experience as one of its major goals for the student experience.

The Intercollegiate Athletic program reports to the Vice-President for Student Affairs and is an integral part of the campus community. Admission and financial aid procedures are coordinated and consistently applied. Faculty involvement is achieved through a Faculty Athletics Committee. The department has added academic support personnel in the past two years to support student athletes in their educational attainment. The staff and VP for Student Affairs regularly review graduation rates and have established goals for their improvement. The campus reports they are under no sanctions from the NCAA. The campus will undergo a self-study for recertification in 2010-11. Department goals include resolution of identified gender equity issues.

The campus has an established Alumni Relations Office that provides a wide variety of activities to connect alumni to the campus as well as provides outreach to alums throughout the country. The office has utilized an external consultant to provide perspective on the next generation of programs and services. The office has a strong core of active alumni and the division has established ambitious goals to increase that core.

In accordance with Policy 3.1 institutional advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accreditation is appropriate.

Conclusion

The MSU student services personnel are highly dedicated and collaborative individuals who utilize data and student feedback to continuously improve the student experience of the campus. Student participation and persistence through graduation remains a priority for improvement. Student services staff are to be complimented for their implementation of a wide spectrum of initiatives directed to increase student success. There is a strong sense of commitment to working efficiently within the constraints of budgetary limitations. There are campus committees and groups that work diligently to address identified student success issues. Students were complimentary not only of their educational experience but the positive campus atmosphere and their ability to be actively engaged. The university is to be commended for its commitment to the recruitment and retention of Native American students.

Concerns

The Residential Halls and Family and Graduate Student Housing are in critical need of renovation, ADA compliance, and in some instances major remodeling and replacement. As over 80% of freshmen live on campus, Residential Life and campus environment are integral to an effective recruitment and retention effort. While discussions are underway as to how to achieve these improvements, it is important these discussions lead to an implementation timeline for improving the living environment for students.

The Five Year Vision plan articulates a strong commitment to student success. The student services and academic departments have initiated a number of research-based interventions to improve persistence and support student success. The work of the Academic Advising Council has been especially noteworthy in developing and improving academic advisement throughout the university. These interventions will need further refinement and evaluation to ascertain their specific effectiveness. Limited resources dictate the need to be strategic and comprehensive in developing a specific overall plan for achieving the stated goal of achieving improved student persistence and completion.

It is important that the crucial role of accessible and quality academic advisement remain at the forefront of any campus initiatives to address student retention and success.

Standard Four – Faculty
and Educational Policy 4.1 – Faculty Evaluation

By any reasonable standard, MSU is successful in attracting, developing, and retaining a competent faculty that enables the successful carrying out of the institution's educational mission. Overall, the faculty is adequate with regard to its size, range of areas of expertise, and professional qualifications. The institution as a whole exhibits an exceptional degree of enthusiasm and collegiality on the part of its faculty. It is evident to our Committee that there is a high degree of identification among the faculty with the mission of the University. MSU is an institution that attracts a highly motivated faculty, a significant portion of whose members wish to be at the institution and who work hard for the success of the institution and its various academic units. As of autumn 2007, MSU had a total of 1,530 faculty members, of whom 704 were full-time and 832 (including Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants) were part-time. The overwhelming majority of tenure-track faculty members hold terminal degrees in their fields. Data supplied in the self-study concerning teaching load indicate that MSU faculty members carry significant teaching loads, thereby furthering the instructional mission of the institution. The courses and universities from which faculty members earned their degrees include a broad cross-sampling of institutions of higher education, both in the US and abroad. Overall, the evidence provided in the self-study establishes a high level of professional qualification of MSU faculty members (Standard 4A.1).

Mechanisms for faculty participation in academic planning, curriculum development and review, academic advising, and institutional governance are strong and well-established at MSU (Standard 4.8.2). Numerous standing committees are in place to ensure appropriate faculty input to decision making. There is a vigorous Faculty Senate and a central budget committee. The University Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (UPBAC) has been in place since 2001. There is a general sense on campus that the *overall* climate concerning open governance has improved significantly during the term of President Gamble. A large-scale study of faculty opinion conducted as part of the preparation for the accreditation review indicates that a majority of faculty members agrees that they are involved in academic program assessment, curriculum development, and policy making. The survey also reveals, however, that a sizable minority of faculty members believe that they do not have ample input into academic policy-making. During the course of its site visit, the committee heard numerous complaints that some recent financial decisions concerning the distribution of and uses to which grant and contract overhead funds were put had been made in an arbitrary manner with inadequate faculty input. The self-study document reports that "as a group, there is more neutrality—even slight negativity"—on the statements about governance, planning, and budgeting, than on any other block of questions. During the next few years there will be many changes in institutional governance with the implementation of collective bargaining agreements with a faculty union (MEA-MFT). MSU is the last of the four-year public institutions in Montana to have a unionized faculty and some aspects of shared-governance will be changed after the new union contracts are in place. It is encouraging that the advertised job description for the new president at MSU made the ability to work cooperatively with the union on shared-governance a desideratum for the presidential position. Mechanisms for faculty input in advising are adequate on campus, with over half the faculty reporting that they do student advising on a regular basis.

Faculty workloads at MSU generally reflect the mission and goals of the institution and the talents and competencies of faculty (Standard 4.A.3). As is the case with most comparable institutions, workloads differ from unit to unit with regard to the mix among teaching, research, and service responsibilities. Letters of appointment stipulate percentages of time to be allocated to the various responsibilities as a condition of employment. Teaching loads are general high at MSU, with a recent national survey indicating that the SCH taught by tenure-track faculty to be 113% of that at peer institutions. The work responsibilities of faculty at MSU also reflect the fact that the institution has a very substantial research presence and the institution has recently been classified as a Carnegie "Research University with Very High Research Activity", a classification supported by the institution's generation of approximately $100 million of research funding annually. The institution makes provision for allowing sufficient time and support for professional growth and renewal, although the funds for research leave, conference travel, etc. are not adequate and have been strained both by the recent financial downturn and by changes in MSU policies for the distribution of research generated funds.

As has been the case for a long time, the level of faculty salaries and benefits continues to be a serious concern at MSU (Standard 4.A.4). The self-study indicates that MSU salaries are between 10 and 30

percent lower than those at peer institutions. A substantial increase in the cost of living in the Bozeman has further exacerbated the level of faculty discontent concerning matters of salary and benefits.

 MSU has in place mechanisms for the regular and systematic evaluation of faculty performance (Standard 4.A.5). Teaching performance is evaluated by both standardized student evaluations and peer assessments. Procedures for the interpretation of student and peer evaluations are inconsistent across campus, however, and, as stated in the self-study, "developing a more robust teaching-evaluation process, with an improved, campus-wide instrument and better understanding of its use" is clearly warranted. Departments and colleges, and the University as a whole, have well-established procedures for the promotion and the granting of tenure, with appropriate reviews at intermediate stages of faculty members' terms of employment. Most units have mechanisms in place to inform and advise faculty members of their progress towards promotion and tenure. A post-tenure review process has been in place since 2003. Some departments have developed mentoring systems for new faculty and the institution as a whole provides a reasonable amount of orientation and training for new faculty appointments.

There are several aspects of faculty affairs at MSU that clearly are operating smoothly and for which there are no significant concerns. The recruitment and appointment of full-time faculty members (Standard 4.A.6) takes place at MSU according to procedures and standards consonant with those found at most major search institutions. Such hiring involves national searches and adherence to procedures, which are set out in a recruitment and hiring manual. Little evidence was seen of significant discontent with how MSU conducts its hiring of full-time faculty. Likewise, little evidence was seen of discontent concerning matters of academic freedom at MSU (Standards 4.A.7 and 4.B.7).

The status of part-time faculty members is an increasingly important matter at MSU. The Institutional Faculty Profile contained in the self-study identifies a total of 380 faculty members as occupying non-tenure-track positions. Faculty members holding such positions are teaching an increasing percentage of courses at the institutions and, in general, have teaching loads much heavier than those for tenure-track faculty. Faculty surveys indicate a high degree of confidence in the qualifications and performance of adjunct and other non-tenure-track faculty (Standard 4.A.8). Nevertheless, anxiety concerning the status of adjunct faculty on campus is evident. In recent votes concerning the unionization of faculty members, adjunct faculty voted for unionization at a significantly higher rate than did tenure-track faculty. The fact that there will be separate union agreements for adjunct and non-adjunct faculty indicates that greater attention will be given to the conditions of employment of adjuncts than has been the case in the past. Independent of union-university negations, however, the institution needs to development a wider range of policies concerning the use of adjunct faculty members throughout the full range of activities conducted at MSU (Standard 4.A.10).

As reflected by the awarding of Carnegie "Research University with Very High Research Activity" status to the institution, MSU is an institution at which faculty are engaged in scholarship, research and artistic creation (Standard 4.B.1). The productivity of the MSU faculty with regard to these endeavors is truly impressive and reflects a substantial change over the past decade in the essential nature of the

institution. It is not inaccurate to state that this past decade has witnessed a change at MSU from being an institution with a modest research and scholarly agenda to one having a substantial national presence. This is reflected in areas as changes in the percentage allocation of time stipulated in letters of appointment to new faculty so as to accord greater weight to research, greater emphasis on the obtaining of external grants, and the increased importance of establishing a visible presence outside of Montana and the adjoining regions. This change in the institution's character, while praiseworthy, is not without costs. The teaching load of faculty at MSU is already high. It will be difficult to sustain both a substantial increase in research expectations and high quality teaching if teaching loads remain as high as they are. There is increased need to further develop and publicize policies and procedures commensurate to the newly increased research status of the institution (Standard 4.B.2), as well as ensure that faculty members have appropriate input in the formulation of these rules and policies (Standard 4.B.3). One area in which this is particularly the case concerns graduate education. MSU does not have a graduate faculty and allows any faculty member to serve on graduate committees. As MSU continues to expand and develop its research role, it would seem important that guidelines be established to ensure that gradate mentors (those serving on committees) meet standards for such service. Such guidelines would ensure that the next generation of scholars is mentored by those current in research, scholarship, and creative activities.

In the 1999 accreditation report concerns were expressed concerning what was perceived as a lack of internal financial support for faculty research. In particular, the paucity of funds available for travel, the purchase of research materials, academic leave, equipment and laboratories, was cited as a source of concern. This state of affairs has not improved during the past decade. To the contrary, the financial exigencies of the past two years have only exacerbated what was already a bad situation. This is made even worse by the heightened expectations at MSU concerning research and artistic endeavor. The self-study documents lists as challenges both the need to increase research support and the need to increase funding for faculty development, particularly with reference to research leaves, course by-outs, and other devices conducive to increasing faculty productivity. Without increased attention to such matters of research support and faculty development, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for MSU to maintain the exceptional increase in research and artistic productivity it has demonstrated over the past decade.

Standard Five – Library and Information Resources

Montana State University has recognized and acted upon the need to fund library collections and information resources in a sustainable manner that can support the teaching, learning and research at an institution with "very high research activity." During the past five years library collections funding has increased a total of 66%, exceeding inflation and enabling the library to make a major investment in electronic resources. While funding for collections has risen substantially, support of operations and

personnel has remained flat. Funding for information technology services has followed a similar pattern allowing for ongoing network and computing upgrades.

The Libraries

The Libraries collections (physical and virtual) are sufficient to support undergraduate learning and scholarship. The more recent investment in library collections through indirect cost funds and annual inflation funding has enabled the library to provide an appropriate level of support for graduate programs and externally funded research. Faculty and graduate student satisfaction with library information resources improved in three key areas on the 2008 LibQUAL+® survey (a standardized library service quality survey): printed library materials, electronic information resources, and journal collections (although the latter was still below minimum expectations).

The Libraries has an Information Resources Development Policy Statement that is revised periodically (latest 2006) and available to the University community. The Burlingame Special Collections unit focuses on materials supportive of the University mission such as Montana and the Yellowstone region, and a unique and growing salmonid and trout fisheries collection. Librarian subject liaisons work closely with their assigned academic programs to select and manage collections. The Libraries has a number of consortial partners and relationships that help provide additional resources and lower the cost of subscriptions to networked titles through cooperative purchases. As the number and scope of graduate programs grows it is important for the Libraries to participate in discussions on new programs, as it is not represented on the Graduate Council. Since 2000, new doctoral programs have been approved in several fields that are expensive to support and often require both start-up and ongoing funding for library resources.

The Renne Library serves as the main campus library and was originally constructed in 1948 with an addition in 1961. A renovation in 2001-02 refurbished and enhanced existing library space, creating 8,500 sq. feet of user space from undeveloped storage areas, including five group study/work rooms, the first in the library. Current library size is 112,000 assignable square feet with a maximum seating capacity of 733. Compact shelving was installed in the basement in 2008 to provide additional collection housing. During the academic year, the Renne Library is open 100 hours per week (extended during finals) and provides sufficient number of open hours for students. The library provides 130 computers for use by faculty, students and staff. The Libraries also operates the Creative Arts Library located in Cheever Hall. That much smaller library supports Arts and Architecture and is open 83 hours per week.

The Renne renovation dramatically improved interior space although within the same footprint as 1961 with twice as many students and a much larger collection. The library is heavily used with annual gate counts continuing to increase. While there has been a substantial investment in online books and journals, the library still adds nearly 10,000 print and media items annually and it is increasingly difficult to accommodate this material. Space constraints limit the ability of the library to house larger onsite collections and provide more collaborative work and learning spaces for students. Student satisfaction

with library space declined substantially on the 2008 LibQUAL+® survey compared to 2004 – the only such area to show a decline. Undergraduate students also wrote more comments about the facility than any other area on the 2008 survey.

The Montana State University Libraries demonstrates a strong service commitment to students and faculty. Results from the 2004 and 2008 LibQUAL+® surveys reaffirm the excellence of the service provided by library faculty and staff. Each survey respondent group (undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty) rated the library exceptionally high in quality of service for such areas as knowledgeable staff, willingness to help users, dependability in handling users' service problems, responsiveness, and courtesy. Both the mean perceived satisfaction with services and the positive adequacy gap (perceived satisfaction above minimum service levels) increased among all groups between 2004 and 2008. In addition to providing on-site reference and information services, the library also offers reference via "Chat" and other online means. Librarians provide more customized assistance through the Research Assistance Program which offers specialized research consultations. The interlibrary loan service was also highly praised in LibQUAL+® survey comments.

The importance of teaching students how to find and use the information resources needed for their course work and scholarship is a core function of the Libraries. Library instruction occurs in multiple ways, including formal instruction sessions, the Research Assistance Program, credit courses such as LIBR 121, online instruction and tutorials, and workshops. Approximately one-third of MSU students receive direct, in-person library instruction each year with formal library instruction conducted primarily by librarian liaisons. LIBR 121 is offered each semester and enrolls 10 to 20 students. While there have been some efforts to assess the impact of instruction on student learning and abilities, these have not been systematic or well-integrated with library program development or other campus assessments. However, a newly hired Instruction Librarian is working on defining goals and outcomes for the instruction program using an array of assessment methods that can be used to measure effectiveness as well as inform program development. Some of these, such as peer observation and review, have already been put into place. These efforts at assessing student learning outcomes should also mesh with other campus and program learning assessments as appropriate.

The Libraries is administered by a Dean who reports to the Provost. Staffing is tight with high workloads and productivity. The organizational structure is relatively flat with many of the library service programs reporting to the Associate Dean. There are a number of different committees that bring together staff from different areas as well as standing administrative and management groups. Staff are well-qualified for their positions and take a customer-centered approach to their work. Library faculty, in particular, are actively engaged in campus service and governance through participation and leadership on many Faculty Council and other committees. They also contribute actively to professional organizations and use professional development opportunities. All library staff have opportunities for training and career development through the Libraries Leadership, Education, Ability, Potential (LEAP) program. Library faculty operate under a current Role, Scope, Criteria, Standards and Procedures for Formal Review of Faculty that details the process for review and promotion. This process appears to operate smoothly and a library faculty member serves on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

The Libraries understands the rapid changes taking place in the information and scholarly communication environments and is currently involved in developing a new strategic plan and a review of existing space and services. The Libraries mission, vision, and values along with the current Administrative Strategic Plan are on its public Web site. The MSU Libraries Five Year Vision follows the University's outline but neither the Administrative Strategic Plan nor the Five Year Vision contain measures, benchmarks or key performance indicators that show progress in achieving goals and objectives. At the current time there is no assessment plan or systematic process for establishing assessment and evaluation priorities.

The LibQUAL+® survey has been the primary tool used to acquire user input on library services and resources, with the survey run in 2004 and 2008. While this satisfaction survey had generally positive results, it is difficult to discern how they've been used to improve services. There has been little local analysis and reporting of results back to the campus community, and actions have pretty much been limited to acting on some of the comments. Other evaluation methods used include informal input and a report from the Student Marketing Club on information gathering and use habits, and more recently, some observation and focus groups.

The University Library Committee is composed of representatives from each of the Colleges and student representatives and functions as an advisory committee on library policies and programs. In general, the institution has not integrated the Libraries into its broader academic planning and assessment activities. The Libraries is not represented by Key Performance Indicators nor covered in other assessments, including the annual Senior Survey and the 2008 Faculty Survey for the Self Study. There are also no library measures in the University's Strategic Vision Progress on Numerical Goals - FY08 to FY13. While the Libraries development of an assessment plan for instruction and a new strategic plan are positive signs, they should be integrated with both the University's assessment efforts and as part of an overall library assessment plan and range of activities.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Center (ITC) is responsible for academic and administrative computing functions and security including the network (wired and wireless), ten general student computer labs with more than 350 computers, classroom technology, telecommunications, and administrative and financial systems. The ITC has made substantial strides in the past several years to improve access to computing and computing resources, build a robust campus infrastructure and to provide a broad-based governance structure. The results of a review conducted in 2005 led to changes in organizational structure and governance including appointment of a CIO (the Vice-President for Planning) and establishment of four stakeholder committees which include the Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC), which has broad representation from faculty, administrators and the ITC.

The Information Technology Strategic Plan was issued by UTAC in January 2007 and uses the University's Five Year Vision as a starting point. In each of the key areas the Plan calls for evaluation of needs and services and there is also a separate section dealing specifically with ongoing and

periodic evaluation. ATAC also establishes a set of priorities each year and works closely with ITC to meet these, such as establishing a single logon ID and password (where progress has been made). However, the resulting actions could be better documented and communicated to the campus community. While an Information Technology Satisfaction Survey was conducted in 2005, there hasn't been a follow-up. However, questions on information technology do appear on such other tools as the Senior Survey and the faculty and staff surveys conducted for the self-study in 2008 and there are a few IT related measures as numerical goals on the Strategic Vision progress charts.

The institution has a funded Lifecycle Capital Replacement and Enhancement Plan which replaces ITC servers every four years and equipment and routers every seven years. The student computing fee provides another stable source of funding (nearly $900,000 annually) for both central and departmental equipment, including replacement and upgrades on regular cycle. A competitive process is used for submissions with funding approved by the Computer Fee Advisory Committee. However, little evaluation is done on the utilization and effectiveness of these allocations. ITC has also upgraded classroom support by providing smart carts to about 50% of Registrar-controlled classrooms with another 17% of classrooms equipped with a laptop only and a ceiling projector. The wireless network has been extended to more than 30 buildings on campus. The student computing and equipment fees have been used to accomplish a significant part of this work.

OIT staff enjoy good support for training and attendance at professional meetings and show a strong commitment to the University. The ITC is located in the basement of Renne Library (there is no connection between the library space and the ITC). Staff space is cramped and there is lack of room to house some servers and other services.

The University made a rapid and successful transition to a new course management system – Desire to Learn – during the summer of 2009. The implementation was directed by the Extended University and by the time of the committee visit, there were 10,000 student accounts and nearly 500 faculty ones.

Concluding Statement

Montana State University has implemented methods of funding the Libraries and the Information Technology Center that enable those units to maintain and enhance services and accomplish institutional mission and goals. The relatively inadequate space and facilities of these units does constrain the ability to provide more effective research and learning environments. Planning takes place but this doesn't appear to be a continuous process and it is difficult to see assessment of outcomes. The University should also include the library more fully in its planning and assessment activities.

Standard Six – Governance and Administration

The Evaluation Committee's comments on Standard Six should properly be divided between those pertaining to the *Bozeman campus of the Montana State University* and those pertaining to the governance of the *Montana State University in its totality*. Regarding the latter: as noted in the Self

Study, the Montana University System was established by the Montana State Constitution and is wholly governed by a Board of Regents. It consists of Montana State University and the University of Montana plus the three community colleges within the state. In turn, Montana State University in Bozeman is the lead institution in the Montana State University which is itself composed of four campuses: Bozeman (MSU), Billings (MSU-Billings), Havre (MSU-Northern), and Great Falls College of Technology (Great Falls COT). The President of MSU Bozeman holds that title for all of the three "affiliated campuses," though each has a chancellor who is campus CEO but reports to the President who, in turn, reports to the Commissioner of Higher Education who, in turn, reports to the Board of Regents. The current administrative structure was established in 1994. Concerning the governance of the *Montana State University*, it should be recalled that the Report of the 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation noted that "...the division of authority and responsibility of MSU-Bozeman for the management of MSU and its relationship with the Board of Regents, is not clearly defined and specified...As an example of this problem, as yet, there is no clear policy on the financial responsibility of MSU-Bozeman for the other schools [read "affiliated institutions"] in the system."(p. 50) The current Evaluation Committee would agree that this ambiguity remains. Indeed, the 2009 Self Study notes that "...information from the OCHE (Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education) flows to the campuses through the President and then to the CEO's of the affiliate institutions (while) ...at other times, communication comes from the OCHE to the President and the affiliate institutions simultaneously." (p. 227) At present, efforts are being made at two levels to address these ambiguities. Within MSU, steps are being taken to distinguish between "front office" responsibilities and functions and "back office" operations. The former include the campus identity, symbols, character, mission, and persona of the CEO or chancellor. The goal is to preserve these so as to reinforce the "brand" of the individual affiliated institutions. At the same time, and in the interests of efficiency, steps are being taken to consolidate routine administrative functions (e.g., purchasing, registration, etc.) in order to achieve efficiency and cost reduction. Moreover, the President has established a weekly teleconference call with the chancellors of the affiliated institutions to ensure better communication, more effective planning, and, where possible, better articulation among the institutions and their relationships with the Office of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents. For its part, the Board of Regents is well aware of the ambiguity attending the working relationships within both the MSU and the UM and has established a Regents' Workgroup "...to address topics related to reinventing and reforming the Montana University System." Specifically, the Workgroup will explore performance-based funding, mission differentiation, and a two-year education initiative. While the outcome of this effort will not be known for some time, the Evaluation Committee expects it will clarify the continuing problematic governance issues within MSU.

Within MSU Bozeman itself, it must be noted that, while the University indeed has a long tradition of shared governance, it is the current President who has personally and consistently articulated an even higher expectation for openness, transparency, and inclusiveness at all levels of governance. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community representatives all compliment the senior administration for its commitment to these principles. At the same time, however, as has been noted earlier, timely and effective communication of both specific decisions (as well as the rationale for them), together with the all-too-human tendency of individuals within a relatively large organization to neglect opportunities and

occasions to learn what is transpiring, leads occasionally to frustration and disappointment regarding specific actions. The current administration is aware of this problem and is working to address it.

Standard Seven – Finance

Montana State University Bozeman has developed appropriate budget, financial planning, financial management and controls supported by processes and procedures that are aligned with its mission and goals. Financial planning appears to be sufficient to ensure that plans are in place to address revenue needs and expenditure control. Revenue at the state level has been constrained and recently, the Board of Regents (state-level board for both the MSU and the UM system) froze tuition rate increases for two years (2008 and 2009) for resident students. Although tuition and state appropriations are controlled by the BOR, the MSU Bozeman campus appears to have sufficient autonomy/control over its designated or non-appropriated funds. However, as noted in the self-study, "the BOR is indirectly involved in the development of nearly every budget, however, because it approves all fee increases and salary adjustments."

The NWCCU site team had access to three year projections for revenue and expenditures, including the long range capital plans for physical facilities and the acquisition of equipment. Such plans appear reasonable, given the current economic situation for the institution and the state. The annual operating budget is approved by the BOR and then distributed to the senior leaders. Operating budget adjustments are handled through the University Planning, Budget and Analysis Committee (UPBAC). Changes in student credit hours are calculated at the beginning of each fiscal year and any variances in actual tuition revenue, relative to budgeted values, are reviewed by UPBAC, and, generally delegated proportionally among senior leaders' areas. There is a concern, however, regarding the increasing reliance on enrollment growth and particularly, reliance on the growth in the number of out-of-state students. Should either of these enrollment projections not be realized, there could be budget repercussions in several areas of the university.

Debt is appropriately managed on the campus and is at a level that does not divert funds from the educational mission. (There is no formal BOR policy regarding appropriate debt levels for institutions.) MSU has very good credit ratings from both Standard and Poor's and Moody's. Recently, there was a shift in how Facilities and Administrative (F&A) returns on grants are used on the campus. F&A returns are used as the source for debt service on one bonded research building on campus. In addition, F&A returns are pledged to a short-term loan which financed a portion of the construction of another research building on campus. The administration notes that in virtually every biennium since 1993, the University has requested state funding for buildings, with minimal funding actually being provided through the legislative process. Hence, MSU has attempted to address its space needs through state requests *in addition to* F&A funding being so directed, a practice common across many major US research universities.

The University does have a diversified revenue stream including tuition, state appropriations, grants and contracts, F&A, mandatory student fees, land grants and interest on invested funds. MSU seeks to grow both its research and its donated revenues. There are sufficient revenues available to meet all debt service requirements and the appropriate records are maintained for future debt repayments. The financial statements reveal a stable financial history which was recognized as a positive by both bond rating agencies. Several of the revenue streams for debt service, however, are dependent on a stable enrollment base (see paragraph 2, above).

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that transfers among funds are controlled and prudent. The University uses a reallocation model to move funding between departments based on enrollment changes and there are program fees in place to support academic programs special needs such as lab course costs, field experiences as well as student fees for computer technology and the Learning Management System. Financial aid sources are identified for current as well as projected enrollments. Auxiliary enterprises such as Housing and Dining provide income to support some of the University's central administrative costs.

MSU Bozeman appears to have appropriate financial structures, people, systems and controls in place. Annual budget reports are prepared for the BOR and internal and external audits are performed regularly. All fiscal operations are consolidated under the Vice President for Administration and Finance, a direct report to the President. Budget, A/R, A/P, purchasing and other business functions also report to this VP. The Internal Audit function reports directly to the President. The University uses the Banner financial system to record all revenues and expenditures. This system is audited by the state of Montana, through its Legislative Audit Division (LAD). All funds are subject to audit by LAD, including financial aid. Both internal and external audit reports were available for examination by the site team. Investments and cash management at MSU are controlled by statute and/or state policies, as well as institutional business policies and procedures. The Banner system has a feature that supports GASB reporting and there are state generated financial statements which are reconciled to the Banner statements.

Development and fundraising for MSU Bozeman is coordinated by the MSU Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) organization. There are federal, state and local policies and procedures that govern the activities of the Foundation, which is audited annually. The Foundation has an investment policy in place to manage the receipts of gifts, cash and other donations. The Foundation executives and staff annually affirm the "Statement of Values and Code of Conduct" as well as the "Conflict of Interest" policies. There is a clear statement of the relationship between the University and the Foundation.

Conclusion

MSU appears to have appropriate business practices, policies and procedures in place. Budget and financial management are the responsibility of experienced personnel who are dedicated to the advancement of the institution while understanding the realities of the funding.

The declining level of state support for MSU remains a concern. The University is heavily dependent on student tuition and is focused on growing both the overall enrollment in general and the out-of-state student enrollment in particular. If the University suffers a noticeable drop in enrollment there could be serious budget consequences.

Standard Eight – Physical Resources

The overall appearance of MSU Bozeman is that of a well-maintained campus. There is a sense of growth and development on the campus, with new buildings and renovations underway. New buildings and renovations span academic, student, research and library uses. But there is a broad range of building functionality across the campus. Some of the instructional areas are badly in need of renovation while others are excellent examples of what current students expect when they enter college. Residence halls and dining facilities are very dated with renovations being done as funds are available. The recently renovated student recreational facility, however, offers many amenities that new students expect. As the appropriations from the state to the University have been further and further constrained, maintaining and upgrading the facilities has become a much more challenging issue. The recent shift of F&A funds for use as bonding revenue and a source for maintenance and operations funding could be problematic in the future, should research revenues drop. Additionally, student fees are an important source of revenue for bonding and equipment funding. Enrollment fluctuations could necessitate budget reallocations across areas.

MSU recently received a national award recognizing its creation of the Facilities Condition Inventory, a program that tracks the variable condition of campus buildings. The program assesses and tracks the general condition of buildings as well as their deferred-maintenance profiles and itemized deficiencies by category. This program has since been fanned out to other state agencies for use as a best practice.

MSU Bozeman has developed a long-range campus master plan that is well aligned with its mission and its desire to grow its research operation. The University regularly updates and maintains a consolidated long range building program list that includes renovations, new construction, utility and signage upgrades and maintenance projects.

MSU has worked steadily, as finances allowed, to upgrade the technology in various buildings, classrooms and laboratories. There is still a long way to go as evidenced by the many classrooms that remain in vintage condition. A classroom committee has been reconvened to be responsible for establishing a long-range improvement plan for all instructional spaces. ADA issues are addressed as needed, which can include relocating programs to other facilities to ensure access.

Summary: MSU Bozeman has addressed its aging facilities and technologies needs as best it can, within the constraints of its funding. The staff responsible for the physical facilities is dedicated to the improvement of the campus for the students, the faculty and the state. The campus has developed a long-range plan that is aligned with its mission.

The funding constraints have resulted changes in the allocation of F&A revenues and have also caused a reliance on student enrollment for bonded revenue and equipment replacement. There is little flexibility in the plan should either student enrollment or research funding falter in a significant way.

Standard Nine – Institutional Integrity

It is the expectation of Commission Standard Nine that an institution will adhere "...to the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public; in its teaching, scholarship, and service; in its treatment of its students, faculty, and staff; and in its relationships with regulatory and accrediting agencies." In the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, compliance with these principles is a vigorous and sustained commitment on the part of all parties. The University's own policies and procedures have been revised in light of new requirements – especially conflict of interest matters – established by the Board of Regents. In turn, MSU has provided training to nearly 800 of its employees, has put in place appropriate protocols for the reporting of potential breaches of policy, and has established mechanisms for the resolution of such issues. In all appropriate areas, the University is setting very high standards. Indeed, the Evaluation Committee repeatedly commented on the "culture of integrity" that characterizes the institution.

Commendations – MSU Bozeman

1. Acknowledging the University's attainment of the highest classification for research universities by the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching, the Evaluation Committee commends the faculty, staff, and administration for their extraordinarily high level of productivity and effectiveness. This represents creative and innovative use of resources particularly in light of the current fiscal challenges facing the University

2. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its stated and demonstrated commitment to undergraduate research and its effective efforts to increase annually the percentage of the student body that has this experience.

3. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its extraordinarily pervasive culture of collaboration across departments, units, and programs. This widespread and sustained commitment of faculty and staff offers rich and truly distinctive educational opportunities for students, teaching opportunities for faculty, and promising new areas of research and funding.

4. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its development in 1992 of the "Facilities Condition Inventory" that tracks the variable condition of campus buildings. Not only

has this provided an objective, consistent, and systematic evaluation of the general condition and deferred maintenance profile of buildings at MSU Bozeman, it has been adopted elsewhere in Montana and has been recognized nationally as a best practice. (Standard 8.A.4)

Recommendations – MSU Bozeman

1. The Evaluation Committee, recognizing the University's stated commitment to further development as a "Very High Research" institution (consistent with its mission), notes with concern the increasing tension between critical needs and available resources. It acknowledges that in any college or university, and particularly one aspiring to ever higher levels of achievement and recognition, there will always be a perceived lack of adequate funds or at least a perceived mismatch of allocated funds. Nonetheless, the Evaluation Committee respectfully recommends that either additional resources be generated to support such areas as research, graduate education, undergraduate research, faculty and staff development, and facilities management or that strategic reallocations be made to ensure such support and that the process by which this is achieved be consultative, participatory, and transparent consistent with the University's own commitment to those values. (Standard 7.B.1).

2. The Evaluation Committee acknowledges the steps that have been taken since the 2004 Regular Interim Report to clarify the mission, role, and operations of the affiliated campuses, but it recommends, nonetheless, that the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner to achieve better articulation among these campuses and to take advantage of possible efficiencies through standardization of processes, realignment of programs, and coordination of schedules. (Standards 6.A and 6.B)

3. Consistent with recommendations from the 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation Report and the 2004 Regular Interim Report, the Evaluation Committee again recommends the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner to develop comprehensive compensation policies and practices that will ensure competitive salaries and benefits for the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and administrators. This will, in turn, will serve to maintain the current high quality of operations as well as support further fulfillment of the University's stated goals. (Standards 4 and 7)

4. The Evaluation Committee acknowledges that significant progress has been made university-wide to define and publish expected student learning outcomes (especially in some professionally-oriented programs), but notes that this is, at present, still a largely decentralized and uneven process. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that further steps be taken promptly to ensure that the importance of educational assessment is communicated effectively

across all academic departments and programs (including the Core 2.0) and that steps be taken to ensure that all are: (a) defining and publishing expected student learning outcomes, (b) evaluating student achievement, (c) analyzing the results, and (d) providing evidence that changes in student learning experiences are made as needed. (Standard 2.B and Policy 2.2)