

Criterion 3 – Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

Criterion 3 – Summary

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

Summary

Across traditional, online and hybrid program delivery, MSU provides a high quality education. Continuous reviews of course design, programs, policies and procedures are primary means of assuring appropriateness, quality, relevancy, and currency. Rapid growth in non-traditional course formats requires attention to ensure consistency and improve quality.

MSU's Essential Studies (General Education) program has undergone revisions and updates to reflect integrative skill sets for success; it is focused on preparing students to deal with complexity, diversity and change.

MSU employs an appropriate numbers of qualified full-time and part-time faculty who are regularly evaluated. While faculty are not required to research and publish, some MSU faculty and students also contribute to scholarship and creative work. MSU offers courses that guide students in the effective use of research and information resources.

Faculty are involved in curricular oversight and assessment, are evaluated using institutional procedures, are current in their disciplines and adept in teaching. They are supported in professional development and are accessible to students. Strong academic advising exists in many divisions, but may still vary in quality; as such, improving advising can be a continued priority. A well-qualified staff promotes student support across academic areas and student life. Because diversity is valued among our students, staff, and faculty, MSU supports diversity in recruitment, hiring, and course offerings.

Staff providing support services are qualified, trained, and supported. Student learning and effective teaching are supported through student services, technology, laboratories, libraries and clinical sites. Curricular and co-curricular opportunities at MSU align with its mission.

Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

Argument

Program and institutional accreditation are indicators of quality, relevancy, and currency. MSU is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Nursing and Education adhere to specialized professional evaluation for program accreditation. Evidence of attaining standards is needed for programs to maintain accreditation and candidate

licensure. In 2014-15, reaccreditation occurred for programs in Education. The Nursing program will undergo initial accreditation during 2015-16. MSU annually submits [University Goals](#) based on the [NDUS strategic plan](#). At the conclusion of each year the University President meets with the NDUS Chancellor to review the goals.

Prior to academic catalog publication, divisions review programs and courses. [Course change forms](#) are collected by the Office of Academic Affairs and document changes prompted through curriculum and programming assessment. As part of the NDUS, [MSU program review policies](#) mirror requirements of [SBHE policies](#) to maintain currency. All programs are reviewed on a seven-year [Program Review Cycle](#); new programs are reviewed on a five year cycle. Many programs collect stakeholder input as a part of program reviews. This process is used to ensure quality and appropriateness of student learning outcomes. Reviews occur with the purpose of meaningful opportunities for self-study, reflection, and data-based decisions. The [MSU Biology program](#) was reviewed in 2015, with an executive summary of the review sent to the NDUS. All review documentation is available in the Office of Academic Affairs for the Biology program and other reviews.

Several factors specify appropriate expectation levels of undergraduate students. [Academic information](#) about satisfactory program completion and degree requirements is outlined in the academic catalog. Graduation standards indicate a minimum 2.0 GPA on all university work. Education programs require a minimum 2.75 GPA and Nursing 2.5. These standards are to ensure that more than passing courses is required for graduation from a program of study; courses must be passed at a satisfactory level of achievement to earn the degree. One professional area of study, Education, requires adequate pass rates on exit exams consistently above the required 80% pass rate; MSU's current pass rate stands at 86%, which indicates an appropriate level, yet also room for improvement.

MSU has a [formal agreement](#) for common student experiences in general education courses within the NDUS. Similar agreements are regularly updated with seven institutions within ND, seven in Minnesota, four in Wyoming, two in Arizona, and six in Washington. Further information about the [Transfer Evaluation System](#) is available on the course equivalency website. The course equivalency website is accessible through the MSU website as follows: Prospective Students/Transfer/Course Equivalencies. This demonstrates a level of appropriate performance for higher education as peer institutions also evaluate quality.

MSU articulates [student learning outcomes](#) at two levels, Essential Studies programs (ELOs) and Major/Minor programs (SLOs), stemming from the institutional mission. The SLO document is placed in all course shells in Moodle and referenced/linked to syllabi. This provides students with easy access to SLOs for all programs. Certificates and endorsement learning goals are commensurate with the program in which they are associated. The requirements for each are articulated in the academic catalog with specific completion requirements of each degree, certificate, and endorsement. These are also defined in program assessment plans as prepared and reviewed by faculty through the process of [affirmation](#) of SLOs. Faculty review SLOs along with the two-year academic assessment cycle (section 4.B); ELOs are reviewed annually. Learning goals are articulated on every course [syllabus](#).

MSU offers programs and courses, traditionally on the main campus, on location at NDUS Community Colleges, through the Interactive Video Network, online, hybrid, and as dual credit and has a number of processes in place to address quality across delivery modes. Program delivery modes are determined by the Division offering the program and approved by the [Curriculum Committee](#) and the Office of Academic Affairs. The [course request form](#) documents the decision process for choosing course offerings. MSU adheres to a standard course outline for each individual course across delivery modes through the [syllabus template](#); an example of this consistency is provided in the syllabi for [EDUC 422 on campus](#) and [EDUC 422 online](#). This includes the consistent articulation of appropriate learning goals, and consistency in methodology, assessment, and communication of university and course information.

Online course quality is supported through the [Office of Instructional Design & Technology \(IDT\)](#), which offers programs and resources in development and course design, regardless of mode. The IDT assists faculty in integrating a variety of instructional technologies into courses, and offers support for those technologies in the

form of one-on-one training, informal meetings, demonstrations, and workshops. It is the goal of IDT to review all online courses every three years using [The Quality Assurance Process](#). All newly developed online courses are evaluated using the [Approved Course Development Rubric](#). While this process is in place only for online courses, the Online Learning Committee, which oversees quality of online programs, is in discussion to expand a similar level of rigor to the review process of other delivery modes (i.e., hybrid courses). Additional consistency in process requires strategic involvement from the faculty association and Office of Academic Affairs for institutionalization.

Major and minor courses offered in both traditional and online formats must be [assessed](#) within a two-year academic assessment cycle. Essential studies courses in all delivery modes undergo an annual [verification process](#) which addresses alignment of outcomes and activities. [Faculty evaluation](#) is another process that maintains program and course quality and consistency. All instructors are evaluated by a division chair according to [MSU policy 605.1.5](#) to ensure overall faculty quality. Questions comprising this evaluation originate from an [assessment of teaching survey](#) that can reveal concerns based on delivery method.

The availability of [technology support services](#) for all faculty, students, and staff across all modes and locations enables students to take full advantage of learning opportunities, regardless of delivery system or course location. Some of these [services](#) that support learning outcomes include: Atomic Learning (24/7 online tutorials), Library Resources, Student Success Center (on-campus and online appointments), Smarthinking (online tutoring), Blackboard Collaborate, Blackboard IM, NDUS Core Technology Services, and resources specific to MSU's LMS system, Moodle.

To maintain consistency and program rigor, the Division of Education & Psychology is beginning to work with the "master course" concept for foundational courses, where a master course gets replicated into multiple, relatively consistent sections in a repeatable manner. Once designed, the master course sections can be taught/facilitated by multiple instructors.

To ensure consistency in dual credit courses, leadership of ND's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the NDUS have agreed to a [set of expectations for all college courses](#) offered for dual credit. All instructors have [mandatory training sessions](#) and follow guidelines in the [MSU Adjunct Instructor Handbook](#). Instructors must have the same qualifications as any other faculty member in the program area, syllabi which follow the common template are submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs for review, and dual credit courses are included in the institution's academic assessment process.

Self-study of the quality assurance processes demonstrated efforts for consistency, but also revealed areas for improvement in explicit consistency. Additionally, the "master course" concept is being utilized in one program area and could be expanded to other programs or essential studies courses. Typically, response rates for student evaluations in online settings are lower than of on-campus; it remains a challenge to solicit feedback for improvement in online courses compared to traditional. It is also a challenge to find collaborative work time to make meaningful comparisons across delivery modes beyond the program level.

Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and

intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

The first two sub-components in Criterion 3B relate to the general education program at MSU.

3.B.1 and 3.B.2

Since MSU's last HLC accreditation, a philosophy shift has occurred in the purpose of general education as a basic set of courses/experiences to the development of integrative skill sets essential for academic and career success. As such, MSU's general education program is referred to as [Essential Studies \(ES\)](#). It is focused on core competencies for realizing career potential and enhancing life in relation to twenty-first-century challenges. The revised ES outcomes implementation began in courses during the 2013-2014 academic year, with first reflection in the catalog in 2014-2015.

MSU retains an [Essential Studies Committee](#) to study and make recommendations in curricular and instructional areas. Divisions/instructors who seek to add courses to ES can complete the [Essential Studies Certification](#) form which triggers the [process](#) for approval. Major areas of study in each program have designated LEAP capstone assignments to guarantee transfer students interact with skills of the LEAP quality initiative. MSU has recommended that instructors of upper level courses apply for ES certification; fifteen courses have thus far been certified. Through this transparent process, MSU's Essential Studies Committee initially certifies [ES courses](#) and annually verifies alignment of ES and LEAP Capstone course activities with each Essential Learning Outcome.

[Essential Learning Outcomes \(ELOs\)](#) apply to students in all courses offered for ES. The four ELOs include:

- ELO #1 Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
- ELO #2 Intellectual and Practical Skills
- ELO #3 Personal and Social Responsibility
- ELO #4 Integrative Learning

These ELOs are grounded in the framework of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education - America's Promise (LEAP) initiative and corresponding [VALUE rubrics](#). This is compliant with the North Dakota General Education Council recommendation. These ELOs are intended to ensure that all degree-seeking students gain the same competencies, even when they take different ES courses from a list of approved [ES courses](#) for a total of 36 semester hours. ELOs for all approved courses are evidenced in course syllabi. As reflected in the academic catalog, these requirements empower individuals and prepare them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. ES emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society); ES help students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong intellectual and practical application skills that span all areas of study. Through technology-enriched instruction, students acquire basic knowledge in the behavioral and social sciences, the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the fine arts.

The ES program is also a response to systematic changes to improve student success: evaluating ES program outcomes, capacity for assessment, LEAP initiative, and [NDUS review of general education](#) quality initiatives. In response to ES changes, MSU developed a systematic approach to improving how all programs, including ES are evaluated. ES courses in each degree program are regularly reviewed as a part of the [Program Assessment Plan](#) for continuous improvement. Complementing ES, MSU also maintains [institutional graduation requirements \(IR\)](#) for all students who enter MSU without a prior degree. These IRs include required courses in wellness and technology.

3.B.3

MSU engages students in practices and experiences that encourage intellectual inquiry. These practices include: capstone projects, common intellectual experiences, clinical placements/internship, experiential learning, service learning, professional development seminars, and community-based learning. Students develop and hone these skills through experiences with essential studies, capstone courses, hands-on experiences, and community engagement. Courses by program in which this skills are engaged, and the description of the actual learning experiences, are included in the [HLC 3.B.3 Matrix](#).

- The Division of Science and Mathematics provides learning experiences within program courses, as well as essential studies courses which address these topics. Students in laboratory courses often work in cooperative teams in hands-on learning environments to collect and analyze data. Individual lab reports are usually required so students practice their written communication skills. The science programs also require an [independent project](#) of graduating seniors, which demonstrates their communication skills and inquiry/creativity. Mathematics courses also employ cooperative learning activities providing students experience analyzing data and communicating about it. Mathematics uses a capstone experience, MATH 480, which requires students to communicate about math as part of their capstone. Nursing, within the Division of Science and Mathematics, educates nurses to serve clients, health care systems, and the profession of nursing by leading and managing care, and contributing to advancement of the profession. The learning environment educates the baccalaureate nurse generalist to build on previous learning and is characterized by personalization, collaboration, and integration of technology that promotes lifelong student learning, pursuit of graduate studies, and development as a professional nurse. Nursing students engage in scholarship that supports the development of critical thinking, creative problem solving, and innovative leadership in care delivery, and embrace professionalism and professional values in the care of individuals and populations across diverse cultures, ages, and environments.
- The Division of Business and Computer Information Systems encourages the development of leadership skills through the [Larson Leadership program](#). The program is designed to promote leadership enhancement on the campus of MSU, as well as in the Mayville-Portland community. Students from all academic areas can participate in seminars, symposiums, and on-campus leadership positions through the program.
- The Division of Liberal Arts provides opportunities for collecting, analyzing, communication, inquiry, and creative work in its programs. Music students spend significant portions of their curricula rehearsing and performing. Students involved in theater collaborate in productions throughout their college careers. Students across all programs also engage in independent study, leading to creative activities in their respective fields, through private instruction and culminating senior exhibitions, recitals, and projects. Communication and English majors collaboratively produce content for Comet Radio, an academic project bringing together MSU students to produce radio programming for air on KMAV 105.5 FM and 1520 AM, and on the MSU webcast.
- The Division of Education and Psychology has a long history of providing students with high-impact practices. The conceptual framework, *The Reflective Experiential Teacher*, is based upon a belief that teacher candidates develop the ability to reflect on, and apply, current research findings, theoretical knowledge, and effective teaching practices. Candidates learn how to use inquiry to question and test hypotheses in simulated and clinical experiences with subsequent reflective exercises that develop their ability to analyze and think critically. The Division annually brings visiting scholars from diverse backgrounds to MSU for program level,

faculty, community, and intercollegiate seminars. Programs culminate with a capstone portfolio and semester of student teaching/internship.

- In the Division of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics, students are grouped for creative activities in lesson development, unit planning, and team teaching. EMT classes measure blood pressure at the local nursing home facility, and students also conduct 15 hours of volunteer work at the Luther Memorial Home. Students in all program areas lead the annual American Heart Association project Jump Rope for Heart at the local elementary school. The Division will be implementing an additional 20 hours of service learning to capstone portfolio requirements during the next academic year.

Service learning is offered within all academic Divisions; projects are variable as content is in response to a recognized need. One example in the Division of Education, EDUC 495, places MSU students in the local public school to assist in daily Common Time (homework and skill building) as the school seeks to meet Adequate Yearly Progress and create a multi-tiered system of support.

According to 2013 results of the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) (n = 145), “Active and Collaborative Learning”, when asked the extent to which extent they participate in internships, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement, 3% of freshman and 41% of seniors responded in the affirmative. First year students reported more emphasis on leadership roles (12%) and participating in a learning community (10%). Senior students (48%) recognized participation in a culminating senior experience involving skills of analyzing and mastery. This is slightly higher than the national average of 45%. Working with faculty members on research projects was rated at 3% by freshman and 16% by senior students, which is reflective of MSU’s mission as a regional 4-year university. Very few students engaged in study abroad (0% of freshman and 4% of seniors). Examining these response patterns and trends, MSU will be able to better serve students in providing additional ways to engage in high-level inquiry and creative work in changing environments. One initiative, currently underway, is a study abroad opportunity with the American College in Norway beginning in [summer 2016](#). More occasions for leadership during early college years, continued leadership initiatives into upper-level courses, and arrangements for study abroad would further advance opportunities for inquiry and skill development.

3.B.4

Throughout the university’s academic programs and student activities, students are provided with opportunities to gain knowledge about human and cultural diversity. At MSU, it is understood that diversity represents all aspects of human difference including, but not limited to, age, background, citizenship or national origin, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, language, political views, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, and veteran status. Efforts to address diversity focus on the dual charge of investing in people and relationships. Beginning with Essential Studies, MSU, as a whole, is dedicated to providing all students with an understanding of diversity aligned to AAC&U goals in undergraduate education, specifically: knowledge of human cultures, humanities, histories, languages, problem solving and personal and social responsibility. This is the collective goal of Essential Studies Learning Outcomes. One essential studies course in particular, [Geography 103: Multicultural World, Global Issues](#), was created for the expressed purpose of exploring diversity. Diversity is also engaged as a cross-cutting theme embedded in all academic programs. [The MSU Diversity Curriculum Matrix](#) illustrates the systematic approach for student learning related to diversity across course content, experiences and working with diverse faculty. Faculty have pursued options to use technology, build collaborative partnerships, and bring guest speakers to campus with the intent of enhancing diverse learning. Additionally, the [MSU Strategic Plan \(page 6\)](#) contains diversity specific goals which demonstrate an institutional commitment to recognizing diversity; these include elements 1F, 1K, 3C, 3D and 3F, in particular.

There are multiple opportunities for students to put into action what they learn about diversity with their peers. A [log of diversity-related activities](#) occurring across MSU is maintained. During their Seminar on Success and Essential Studies courses, all incoming students engage in educational experiences with the MSU student population, which currently is comprised of 19.8% students of minority status. The Office of Student Life engages students in a variety of activities related to residence life, the arts, wellness, athletics, and annual events. One highlighted campus event, the [Multicultural Festival](#), is an annual spring event open to the public in which exhibits,

lectures, food, music, and dance representing world cultures, are showcased. During the Spring 2015 semester, MSU Cru (Campus Crusade) organized a [mission trip to Poland](#), and in Summer 2015 to the [Dominican Republic](#), through Adventures in Missions. Actions have been taken to positively impact opportunities for students to interact with their diverse peers. This includes the development of several activities or projects that provide greater opportunities for MSU students to interact with each other in meaningful ways (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, Black History Month trivia); the establishment of ten new full tuition Cultural Diversity Waivers for teacher education students (which brings the total to 15 Diversity Waivers), a new subcommittee for the selection of the awards, and the development of a mentoring/advising program for diverse MSU students. A variety of Student Support Services are available in response to the diverse needs of students attending MSU. These are explicitly described in 3.D.1-5.

[Students at MSU report](#) diverse perspectives are predominately included during their academic program ([see Table 3.B.4.a](#)). According to faculty report on the importance of diverse perspectives, 60-63% found diverse perspectives as important, or very important, in their courses. [NSSE results \(page 3\)](#) also indicate MSU provides opportunities to engage with others with different backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs ([see Table 3.B.4.b](#)). The distribution of student responses, concerning interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds, points to over half of students interacting often, or very often; resounding majority of respondents have discussions with peers from diverse backgrounds. However, the percentage of faculty who report substantial opportunities to engage in discussions occurring in their courses is less than half.

In May, 2014, a [Diversity Coordinator position](#) was created and a new faculty member hired, which created the Office of Diversity to focus on addressing changes needed to support a more diverse student population. Results from the [2011 HERI Faculty Survey](#) also provide indicators of recognition of human and [cultural diversity](#) at MSU: 29.7% of faculty agreed the statement "there is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs" was very descriptive of MSU, while 54.1% indicated it was somewhat descriptive. Approximately 16% stated "respect for expression of diverse values and beliefs" was not descriptive of MSU. When asked if racial and ethnic diversity should be more strongly reflected in the [curriculum](#), faculty responded as follows: 8.1% strongly agree, 51.4% agree somewhat, 35.1% disagree somewhat, and 5.4% disagree strongly. A [majority of faculty](#), approximately 84%, agreed creating a diverse multi-cultural campus environment should be medium to highest priority, and roughly 86.5% agreed recruiting more minority students should be a priority. Nearly all (97.6%) of faculty indicated agreement that racially/ethnically [diverse student body](#) enhances the educational experience of all students.

The Diversity Coordinator represents MSU at the [NDUS Diversity Council](#), which works to ensure diversity policies adopted by the SBHE are implemented and observed on campuses. The council advocates for [effective approaches to diversity issues](#) and encourages campus diversity initiatives. The council also provides information for MSU about practices that can be adopted to improve retention rates and ensure student success.

MSU maintains a standing [Diversity Committee](#) for the following purposes: revision and implementation of the institution's diversity plan, assistance with strategies to help the university meet accreditation recommendations for diversity, help plan and develop events and activities that promote the understanding of diverse cultures, advise on procedures and strategies for recruiting and retention of a diverse faculty, staff, and student body, increasing awareness of diversity in the university, and assistance in developing relationships with foreign universities. The committee is chaired by the Diversity Coordinator who reports to the VPSA. [Subcommittees \(page 2\)](#) have been established for campus events, marketing and publicity, collaborative projects, recruiting, academic curriculum, diversity tuition waivers, faculty development/mentoring, community facilitation, and minority student support.

A temporary Diversity Task Force was also established in May of 2014 to address diversity related to NCATE Accreditation criteria for the Division of Education & Psychology. With representation from the academic divisions, the Task Force approach was institution-wide. The Task Force utilized research, resources, and collaborative efforts to create a [Diversity Task Force Plan](#) that was institutionalized in the [MSU Comprehensive Cultural Diversity Plan](#) to address challenges. In May, 2015, the NCATE Board of Examiners indicated in their [final onsite report](#) the Division of Education & Psychology met all criteria related to diversity in teacher education programs. This included

attention to teacher candidates working with diverse faculty, diverse peers, and diverse P-12 students in partner school districts. The Task Force will remain in place during 2015-2016 to provide continued support during the transition in leadership of both the VPSA and Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Director. All remaining responsibilities will be transferred to the Cultural Diversity Committee by May, 2016.

3.B.5

Recognizing the need to bring international diversity into academic programs in a greater way, MSU is applying for the [Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence](#) and [Fulbright Outreach Lecturing Program](#) in the fall of 2015. The institution has also made a commitment to ongoing professional development for faculty in the area of culturally competent teaching methods and intercultural communication.

With a mission as a regional, and exclusively undergraduate, four-year institution, MSU faculty are not required to participate in research. However, faculty and students at MSU are engaged in a range of academic activities, some research as appropriate, to contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery, application, and distribution of knowledge. Faculty engage in full teaching loads, typically 12 semester hours of instruction per semester; service and scholarship are also considered [faculty expectations](#).

[Supplementary data forms](#) are submitted annually to the VPAA. These reports include, but are not limited to, improvement of scholarly qualifications, new academic or other professional duties and responsibilities, teaching and instructional duties, special responsibilities, research, publications, honors and recognition received, academic and professional services and recognition off-campus, memberships in learned societies, academic organizations, professional organizations, and community service. The [completed supplemental data forms for all full-time faculty in 2013-2014](#) show the scholarship activities of individual faculty members and a [sample of faculty scholarly work](#) is also available. Examination of supplementary forms reveals that of the full-time faculty, 59.5 percent (n = 25) engaged in research related to their field of study, made academic presentations, wrote papers or articles for publication, and/or conducted graduate research. An additional 21.4 percent (n = 9) either researched and developed new courses or wrote program reviews or reports.

Many scholarly projects completed by undergraduates are program-required culminating experiences. According to the [NSSE and FSSE survey](#), 69% of lower division (LD) and 100% of upper division (UP) faculty think it is important for undergraduates to complete a culminating senior experience, such as a capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam or portfolio before they graduate. In regard to completing a culminating experience, freshman students reported 3% were done or in progress, 25% plan to, 19% do not plan to, and 54% have not decided. In comparison, senior students reported 48% were done or in progress, 39% plan to, 7% do not plan to, and 6% have not decided. Examples of these scholarly projects include: (1) [capstone portfolio and presentation](#) open to the campus and greater community required for a B.S. Ed., (2) [social science comprehensive capstone project](#), where the senior student will select at least two social science disciplines to research, write a paper, present, and defend the paper to faculty and students, (3) [science capstone](#) laboratory or non-laboratory project which culminates in a senior paper and a multimedia presentation open to all interested person, and (4) a [business paper/project](#) for the BAS degree that is presented to faculty.

Opportunities exist for students to participate and engage in the development of scholarly, research, and creative projects. According to the NSSE and FSSE survey from 2013, 24% of lower division (LD) and 15% of upper division (UP) faculty think it is important for undergraduates to work with a faculty member on a research project before they graduate; of these faculty, 6% LD and 5% UD report that they work with undergraduates on research during a typical seven-day week. In regard to working with a faculty member on a research project, freshman students reported 3% were done or in progress, 14% plan to, 42% do not plan to, and 41% have not decided. In comparison, senior students reported 16% were done or in progress, 15% plan to, 56% do not plan to, and 13% have not decided.

Opportunities for formal research experiences for undergraduates are available at MSU. Individual faculty hire students to work in research labs, especially in fields like biology and chemistry. Within the Chemistry program, the faculty and student contribute to the discovery of knowledge through the [Chemistry 470: Integrated Lab](#) course. Within this course, students complete two major projects: one example project, instructor driven, where students synthesize content knowledge and lab skills, and the other, student driven, where the student develops their own project and conduct the necessary experiments.

Another exceptional opportunity is the [INBRE \(North Dakota IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence\) program](#). Within the National Institute of Health (NIH) funded INBRE program, the research is undergraduate driven. Research students collect and analyze the data, present the research results at local, national, and international conferences, and then the findings are published in a peer-reviewed journal. An example of faculty and students working together to contribute to scholarship in this program is a study on [Dosage Dependent Mortality Rates of Stagnicola elodes Embryos to Cadmium](#). Another example includes a peer-reviewed article of faculty and student work in the [Asian Journal of Plant Sciences](#).

Some faculty work for research and scholarly pursuits are sponsored by external funding agencies through [grants and contracts](#). These are a few of the ways faculty and students support MSU's mission by contributing to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge appropriate to their programs, personal goals, and the MSU mission.

Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

As of Fall 2014, MSU had 84 faculty members; [54 faculty are full-time and 30 are part-time](#). Faculty are responsible for designing and delivering all of [MSU's 31 academic programs](#). A number of staff and faculty are recognized annually for completing years of service to MSU; 11 full-time faculty (23%) have served for 15 years or more.

The student to faculty ratio is 13:1 and average class size is 15.4. From fall of 2006 to fall of 2014, the number of full-time faculty has increased 31%, which accompanied a [total student enrollment](#) increase of 23% from 832 in 2006, to 1081 in 2014. The addition of programs in special education and nursing, and expansion of online programs are factors in increasing the number of faculty.

Record enrollments, a history of faculty teaching small overloads, and the current funding allocation model have created a need for additional faculty in certain areas, which is being addressed by the President's Cabinet. For example, the [Division of Business & CIS represents 191 out of 772 total majors enrolled \(24.7%\)](#) and has 9 full-time faculty (19.6%), 6 part-time faculty/full-time MSU employees, and 3 adjunct faculty. In, Fall 2014 MSU faculty were, on average, teaching an overload of [2.1 credits \(page 2\)](#); this has remained fairly constant even with the addition of five full-time faculty from 2012-2014. Four were added in 2015: two full-time tenure track: nursing and sociology, two full-time non-tenure track: English and business. MSU prides itself as the school of personal service, and in some cases, faculty overloads are the result of independent study courses taught to benefit students.

The Office of Academic Affairs has identified a need to increase faculty to address growth in dual credit courses. MSU has had consistent increases over the last three academic years that have required a greater percentage of faculty teaching loads, particularly in the Division of Liberal Arts, for dual credit English and Speech. [Increases per year](#) are in relation to baseline data in 2011 (n = 54) for students enrolled in dual credit: 2012 (n = 70); 2013 (n = 140); and 2014 (n = 184). An English instructor job posting was advertised and filled in spring 2015.

In addition to teaching duties, faculty are responsible for designing curricula. These processes vary among divisions, but follow similar methods. Changes are initiated by the respective academic division and typically result from ongoing assessment activities or accreditation revisions. The Division Chair brings proposed changes to the institutional [Curriculum Committee](#). The committee, including student representation, works within the areas of curricular structure, essential studies, requirements of discipline specific majors and minors, program additions, program revisions and deletions, grading, academic calendar, graduation requirements, and other presented curricular and instructional issues. Additionally, the Division of Education & Psychology maintains a [Teacher Education subcommittee on Curriculum Development](#) unique to its functions. This subcommittee formulates curricular goals and objectives, reviews and recommends to the Curriculum Committee relative to new courses and programs, and establishes policies regarding practicum and student-teaching procedures.

As a part of teaching duties, faculty are responsible for assessing student learning. In the spring semester of each odd-numbered year, faculty develop two-year [curriculum maps](#) for major and minor programs by considering revisions to existing SLOs and identifying the semester in which each section of a course is to be assessed for program purposes. Faculty members choose a signature activity in each course section to represent student learning on the outcome in accordance with the curriculum map. Faculty identify [a plan, findings, actions based on findings, and status reports](#) on those activities. Each fall, all faculty participate in preparing [annual reports](#) that summarize and synthesize important findings, course-embedded activities, and non-course embedded activities for each program in respective divisions. Suggested actions to improve academic quality at the division level are included, as well as a status report of the prior year's suggested actions. Each spring, all faculty participate in a collective [Assessment Day event](#) in which each division shares assessment results and ideas for improving student learning. Essential Studies courses are assessed through a similar, yet differentiated process. A single outcome is [assessed each year](#); all [outcomes](#) are assessed over a four-year cycle. Faculty are responsible for signature activities, plans, findings, and actions; statuses are reported just as with majors and minors.

All instructors at MSU are appropriately credentialed according to policy [M605.1.1 \(page 2\)](#). This policy contains guidelines that apply for the positions of instructor, which includes dual credit course instructors, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. In general, academic programs require an instructor to hold a degree one level higher than that in which the course is being completed. Some of the technical and/or developmental courses require different minimum certification and work experience. Part-time instructors are expected to have the same credentials as full-time faculty. The VPAA maintains a [list of full-time faculty](#) identifying their ranks, degrees, academic division, and employment start date; currently 43% of faculty have terminal degrees and 25% of faculty are working on terminal degrees. Additionally, all MSU full-time and part-time faculty and their degrees are included in the [academic catalog](#).

To ensure all instructors meet faculty qualifications, all applications for instructional positions are screened by the Director of Human Resources following [faculty selection and appointment procedures](#). To ensure minimum

qualifications are met, applicants provide information about their degrees, work experience, and official transcripts upon [application](#).

To maintain appropriate levels of instruction and provide feedback for improvement, MSU utilizes well established procedures for evaluating full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty that encompass three separate areas: student, self, and Division Chair. Instructors are evaluated by students according to [Policy M605.1.3](#) using standard [course evaluation questions](#). Faculty members select a minimum of one course per semester to be used for evaluation. Faculty also complete [self-evaluations](#) and are evaluated by the [Division Chair](#). As part of this process, faculty complete [goal sheets](#) at the beginning of each fall term. These serve as a reference point for faculty evaluation that occurs at the end of the academic year. Faculty members present their goal sheets to their respective Division Chair for approval; both the faculty member and the Chair sign the goal sheet. At the end of the spring term, faculty complete [supplemental data forms](#). These forms supplement the cumulative record in the faculty dossier and provide data which will be used in making recommendations for salary increases, promotion and tenure decisions, sabbatical leaves, and other personnel decisions. The Division Chair utilizes the information from the goal sheets and the supplemental data forms in preparing the annual evaluation of each faculty member. In addition, the Vice President of Academic Affairs evaluates the Division Chairs after soliciting [input from the faculty](#) of each respective division. This process ensures regular evaluation of instructors.

Assuring instructors are current is a part of the evaluation process described above. This allows faculty the opportunity to identify professional development opportunities to pursue and what activities they complete. An intention of the tenure and promotions policy is also to ensure instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in teaching.

Processes for ensuring currency in disciplines occur through regular evaluation procedures, as described in previous elements. MSU supports currency, as well as teaching quality, through a range of professional development resources. The faculty handbook identifies processes for [supporting professional development](#) including: [employee tuition waivers](#), [leaves of absence](#), [sabbatical leave](#), developmental leave, the small grants program, and faculty exchange. Survey results from the [2011 HERI survey](#) concerning faculty engagement in professional development opportunities are summarized in [Table 3.C.4](#). Results indicate faculty engaged in administrative leadership training at approximately the same level of participation as comparable institutions. Faculty participated more often in paid workshops, but all travel funds were not paid by the institution as frequently. Additionally, there was a low percentage of faculty taking paid sabbatical leave and internal grants for research. These numbers provide support for the notion that additional progress could be made by encouraging faculty to make use of these as professional development activities.

Faculty surveyed by HERI were in overall agreement that "[there is adequate support for faculty development](#)," with 66.6% agreeing strongly/somewhat and 33.4% disagreeing strongly/somewhat. These results are similar to comparable institutions. Yet, MSU faculty in the same survey believed that "faculty are rewarded for being good teachers": [76.9% of MSU respondents](#) claimed that the statement was "very/somewhat descriptive" of the institution in 2011, while comparable institutions indicated 72% very/somewhat descriptive.

At pre-service events before the start of each academic year, the VPAA informs faculty of [professional development funding \(page 9\)](#) available for conferences, travel, due dates, and application guidelines. For 2014-2015, Academic Affairs and Extended Learning allocated \$49,450 for professional development/travel funds. Pre-service activities include a [number of workshops](#); adjunct faculty are encouraged to attend pre-service activities, if possible. To further support adjunct faculty in their role, [specialized training](#) is held.

Professional development opportunities are also available through MSU's Office of Instructional Design and Technology (IDT). Through this office's [various activities and resources](#), faculty work to assure that instructors are adept in their teaching roles. These include: workshops for instructional technology and pedagogy online and in person, one-on-one or small group workshops and brown bags (lunch meetings); MSU Faculty mentor program;

book study and discussions; faculty review of courses; teaching and technology tips; podcasts; and off-site training for faculty at distance locations.

In addition to MSU supported development activities, academic divisions sponsor activities for their own faculty. Education & Psychology partners with the [Red River Valley Education Cooperative](#) for professional learning opportunities. The Business & CIS Division hosts [leadership summits](#). Other opportunities include the Science and Math's annual [Young Investigator Competition](#), HPER hosted a [North Dakota Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Workshop](#), and Liberal Arts hosted the [Northern Plains Conference on Early British Literature](#). Such activities take advantage of discipline-specific knowledge, mentoring, funding, and other resources, and often combine student learning experiences with those for faculty.

[Mentoring](#) of new faculty is another way MSU supports new faculty in teaching roles. The program is designed to provide new faculty members with resources for success and to be productive members of the MSU Community. Mentoring is one mechanism for faculty to gain positive and corrective feedback about their performance in and out of the classroom. After observing the new faculty member's teaching, the mentor is expected to provide feedback outlining strengths and areas of needed improvement in teaching.

The resources in support of professional development are substantial, and MSU faculty are participating in them; this suggests that most development needs are being met.

The MSU Policy Manual identifies expectations for faculty in relation to students in policy [M490](#). To ensure accessibility for on-campus and online students, faculty are to hold office hours or define their hours of availability, which are submitted to the VPAA at the beginning of each semester, posted on office doors, acknowledged in syllabi, and also on the learning management system. MSU expects frequent access to [university assigned e-mail accounts](#) as another form of consistent access to faculty. The [Moodle](#) LMS contains video conferencing, through Blackboard Collaborate, and instant messaging on Blackboard IM.

Questions on the [standard course evaluation](#) address instructor accessibility for student inquiry. Student responses are recorded as not applicable, Poor (0), Below Average (1), Average (2), Above Average (3) and Excellent (4). When asked to evaluate if "the instructor was receptive to students and requests for individual consultation", aggregate data indicates faculty are scored by students between above average and excellent. Mean scores for the past five academic semesters are included in [Table 3.C.5.a](#).

The evaluation also asks students if, "the instructor attempted to identify problems encountered by students pertaining to the course, and provided spoken or written recommendations for responding to these problems". Aggregate data includes mean scores for the past five academic semesters and is included in [Table 3.C.5.b](#). On average, students report their instructors are between above average and excellent on this measure of faculty accessibility. These evaluation results are commensurate with MSU's mission of personal service and vision of being responsive to individual needs.

The [FSSE and NSSE surveys](#) results in [Table 3.C.5](#) show how faculty, first-year students, and seniors describe student interactions with MSU faculty in relation to specific types of inquiry: career planning, working on activities and committees, discussion outside of class on course-related topics, and discussion of student academic performance. First-year students gave relatively low (19% often or very often) to moderate (30% often or very often) ratings of the quality of interactions with faculty; senior students also gave predominately moderate (44% to 55% often or very often) ratings. Students rated the quality of interactions lower than faculty; with 33% to 69% of lower division faculty and 43% to 67% of upper division faculty rating interactions as often or very often.

Furthermore, the MSU Academic Advising Council conducted an [advising survey](#) in the spring of 2014. Nearly half (49%) of the 194 respondents said they had contact with their advisor at least monthly or more often, while 42% said that they had one-two contacts during the previous term; 8% indicated that they had never contacted their advisor. The majority of students agreed their advisor was easy to reach (80%); responded to e-mails for phone

calls within one-two days (89%); kept scheduled appointments (73%); and had regular posted office hours (72%). Complete results are available in the [Academic Advising Executive Summary](#). Findings from both students and faculty demonstrate perceptions that faculty are accessible for students inquiry.

At MSU, every staff position has a specific job description in accordance with [NDUS Broadbanding Policy](#), an approach to job classification and compensation that sets policy for qualifications by considering content and scope of the job, employee knowledge, skills and abilities, the job market, and employee performance. MSU procedures ensuring appropriately qualified staff are hired are outlined in [position description instructions](#) and [staff interview procedures](#).

Staff members providing student support services are typically classified into one of two professional bands: [3405 \(Educational Services Professional\)](#) and [3415 \(General Student Services Professional\)](#). Currently, there are six staff members employed within band 3405 and 8 employees within band 3415. Other significant staff positions fall in the [1000 \(Administrative/Managerial\)](#) professional band; some of the positions in these bands include [Student Success and Support Services](#), [Counselor](#), [Financial Aid](#), [Library Director](#), [Veterans Services](#), [Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Director](#), and [Career Services](#). Job titles and documentation of academic preparation for all staff positions are available in the [faculty and staff directory](#), which is available online.

[NDUS Human Resources Policy 17](#) directs supervisors to work with employees for development plans. MSU's Human Resource Director sends supervisors a [template](#) to use for consistency in professional development planning. According to Business Affairs, in 2013 MSU spent \$25,119.38 on staff development, \$22,988.27 in 2014 and budgeted \$25,000 for 2015. Many departments provide funding for professional staff to attend state, regional, and national conferences and/or participate in professional development activities on a regular basis to ensure that staff members remain current with best practices. Staff are also able to participate in webinars and other professional opportunities, as budgets and schedules allow. Opportunities are often supported by the professional associations in which staff are members. Examples of organizations in which MSU staff gain professional development include:

- [American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers \(AACRAO\)](#)
- [Higher Education User Group \(HEUG\)](#)
- [National Academic Advising Association \(NACADA\)](#)
- [North Dakota United \(NDU\)](#)
- [North Dakota Library Association](#)
- [Mountain Plains Library Association](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators \(RMASFAA\)](#)

From fall 2007 to fall 2012, MSU received a \$1.9 million U.S. Department of Education Title III Strengthening Institutions grant; professional development was a key activity. [Professional development opportunities](#) for faculty and staff were significantly expanded through the grant. At least 71% of staff involved in [professional development](#) demonstrated competence in training subject matter at conclusion. Additionally, 71% of staff integrated training into their job performance. The grant also helped to develop a comprehensive employee orientation program and the employee performance appraisal process.

On top of these opportunities, staff are eligible for [tuition waivers](#) to take [courses](#) from any NDUS universities or colleges.

Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

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

Argument

Student and Academic Services

MSU understands the importance and impact of providing students their educational and career development experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, thus student support services are integrated into all aspects of the student experience.

MSU provides an umbrella of information and services that support student success for both prospective and current students. Information is provided through the MSU Website and for [prospective students](#). These areas include: Admissions, Academics, Paying for School, Campus Living and Visit Us. For [current students](#) these areas include Academic Information, Student Life, Student Services, Paying for School and Student Resources.

Current admissions policies and procedures guide the institution in determining conditional vs. unconditional admission to the university. These policies mandate the completion of certain college preparatory coursework in high school by new freshmen, prior to their admission to a baccalaureate level program. All individuals who graduate from high school who are under age 25 must follow set requirements from both [North Dakota University System \(NDUS\)](#) and [MSU](#) in order to be admitted to a baccalaureate level program. Mayville State University has [established guidelines](#) to govern exemptions to the college admission standards.

The NDUS adopted new and revised admission standards for all four-year institutions, including MSU. Beginning in the fall of 2016, these [admissions standards](#) will require the completion of a minimum number (13) of college preparation courses in high school, requisite high school GPA of 2.00, and ACT composite score of 18 or higher. Prior to this NDUS decision, MSU has been an "open enrollment" institution. Students who do not meet this minimum requirement may be admitted conditionally based on an individual review of their academic performance and past progress. MSU will utilize a sliding scale of GPA and ACT scores. Because of a changing profile of entering students, it is anticipated that there will be increased differences in the preparedness of students, necessitating MSU to continue providing [developmental](#) and [academic skills](#) courses.

All MSU incoming students have the opportunity to participate in a two-part [student orientation](#) process that includes both a summer and fall session. On-campus student orientation includes campus familiarization, academic advising, [placement testing](#), early registration, housing assignments, financial assistance, and a variety of social activities occurring prior to each academic year and between semesters. [Parents](#) are also invited to attend on-campus sessions designed to provide non-intrusive support into the life of their new, independent college student, while also educating them on financial assistance opportunities. Any student accessing MSU's online courses receives a [distance student handbook](#) and [orientation](#) process designed to meet online student needs and services. Faculty, support staff and peer leaders are on hand during face-to-face orientation sessions creating connections designed to support student success. Students with diverse needs such as adults re-entering, veterans, and other students with diverse needs are directed to specific staff that can assist them transitioning to college.

Central to directing entering students to programs and courses at orientation is testing, [initial advising](#), and [course registration](#). Freshmen and transfers are assigned to advisors at the time of their initial entry to MSU and when registering for first term courses.

MSU requires incoming first-year freshmen and transfer students to enroll in its [UNIV 100-Seminar on Success \(SOS\)](#). This class gives students another opportunity to connect with other new students entering MSU, and helps students become acclimated to the campus and community. SOS provides incoming students a comprehensive, semester-long orientation to institutional and student support services, service learning opportunities, and other activities designed to support both in and out of classroom needs, resulting in postsecondary success. Past SOS students serve as [Peer Leaders](#) in SOS courses. In partnership with SOS instructors, Peer Leaders provide assistance to students, one example is assisting new students during orientation sessions and move-in week. Peer leaders provide another source of support for student learners unique to MSU's learning environment.

Academic Advising

MSU's advising model has experienced significant change. MSU received a [Title III Strengthening Institutions grant \(pages 2-3\)](#) in 2007–2012; a significant accomplishment of the project was the redesign of MSU's student advising model. MSU implemented an Advising Taskforce as a result of Title III, with membership from faculty and student support services staff, where changes are discussed regarding academic advising. The Taskforce met most recently to discuss the freshman advisor transition and develop a seamless advising process. MSU is currently researching and actively pursuing [grant funding \(pages 22, 27-28\)](#) to support an intrusive-flipped advising model using professional advisors and faculty/staff. Additionally, advising was examined by faculty and staff spring of 2014 using the [Smart Evals Academic Advising Survey](#). Academic advising at MSU is an integral part in a student's total learning and development while pursuing a degree and major of choice. Advising provides the student an opportunity to build a partnership with the advisor for the purpose of developing plans that guide in the realization of educational, career, and life goals. MSU's advising partnership is a collaborative process with strong personal interaction and commitment to communication as the foci. Student and advisor both have clear responsibilities for ensuring that the partnership is successful. MSU provides faculty and students an [Advising Guide](#) and [advising folder](#) that serve as the tools for building this partnership, and are reference points from which both the student and the advisor work. Advisor and advisee responsibilities, learning outcomes, academic resources, and advising calendars support the process. Results of both the [Student Satisfaction Survey \(SSI\)](#) and the [Priorities Survey for Online Learners \(PSOL\)](#) have reinforced the positive perceptions and experiences that all students have recently reported on the Smart Evals Academic Advising Survey, and demonstrate the adequacy of advising for both distance and campus based students.

MSU provides numerous support services to ensure student persistence, success, and retention. MSU recognizes the need to offer support services targeted to meet the unique and changing needs of specific populations and has designed programs to increase student engagement and enhance the academic experience and success of students. Programs and activities are based on an analysis of Best Practices that were identified as part of the [Title III grant \(pages 2-4\)](#) and subsequent implementation between 2007 and 2012. They were further clarified and detailed as part of [on-site consultation](#) with Dr. David Trites, a senior consultant with Noel Levitz, a recognized leader in retention research and practice.

Of the many support services provided to MSU students, most significant were positive relationships with academic advisors, student support staff, and faculty.

MSU faculty utilizes the [Drop Guard Early Warning System](#) to identify any student intervention needs. Drop Guard is a campus-wide system in which instructors can document positive feedback about student performance, as well as concerns (i.e., attendance, tardiness, missed work, plagiarism or cheating, low test scores, and failing to meet with an instructor). Drop Guard data is forwarded to the student and academic advisers indicating intervention needs.

Students interested in pursuing on and off campus employment, internships, career guidance, and job search assistance can access the [Career Services Office](#).

Student Support Services

Mayville State University serves several diverse populations: first-generation, under-prepared, low-socio-economic, transfer, non-traditional, international, rural, students with disabilities, veterans, and others. To serve these and all MSU students most effectively, MSU provides instruction and student support services suited to the needs of its student populations from enrollment to graduation. Student support includes providing learning support and preparatory instruction that address the academic needs of students, including a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. MSU's Office of Student Affairs develops, supports, and sustains a vast array of student support services and student life opportunities essential to student success.

MSU understands college students may encounter obstacles that interfere with their academics and relationships and offers free limited and confidential [counseling services](#) to all students using face-to-face and telephone sessions. MSU's counseling professional provides support in areas of personal development and mental health, coping with conflict and loss, improving self-understanding and interpersonal relationships, time management, and developing realistic career plans. Referrals to professional counseling services off-campus are also available as needed. MSU's [student health](#) service provides limited office hours for medical, health education, and prevention support to students. Students may obtain consultations, care for minor ailments, and various other wellness related services. Students are referred to the local clinic and are at student cost. Uninsured students are entitled to one (1) free office call (for illness only), at the Mayville Sanford Clinic each year. For students not in the immediate area, health services refers them to appropriate health resources closer to home.

[Tutoring](#) services are free and available to all students who seek assistance in learning material for their courses. The tutors are upper-class students who have been recommended by faculty as experts in specific subject matter. Peer tutors are also available in a variety of courses during study sessions and by appointment. Peer tutoring focuses on helping students develop the problem-solving and analytical skills needed to understand, synthesize, or apply complex material. MSU also provides online support and information to assist student develop and maintain study skill habits such as time management, homework, and note taking assistance. [Smart Thinking](#), an online tutoring service is available for all students through Moodle, MSU's Learning Management System (LMS).

MSU is committed to facilitating opportunities for students with disabilities in higher education. [Disability Services](#) is responsible for the coordination of academic, non-academic, and other adjustments for students with disabilities. Disability Support Services belief is that students are in charge of their own learning and that all students can succeed. MSU strives to ensure access for students with disabilities in compliance with Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended. MSU instructors allow accommodations to [coursework and testing procedures](#) that give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. These accommodations are intended to provide students the same opportunity for success and achievement as their peers – a chance to be judged on the basis of abilities and accomplishments, rather than on disability. Faculty, students and Disability Services staff, together, develop plans to support student success.

As indicated earlier, MSU, as an open enrollment institution accepts students that may be inadequately prepared to succeed in the higher education system academically. To support their success, MSU provides developmental instruction and courses in Developmental [Math](#) and [English](#) that are available to prepare students for college-level work. These courses are designed for students who need assistance developing skills that promote successful performance in college.

MSU is committed to supporting the specific needs of student populations. One such example is MSU's student athlete academic success. All MSU athletic team coaches develop and supervise "study tables" where student

athletes are required to work on academic coursework, ensuring eligibility, as well as student academic success. In addition, coaches conduct “[academic checkups](#)”, further supporting student success suited to the needs of the student athlete population.

MSU is committed to its active duty military, veteran, and dependent students, and welcomes them to the institution as incoming students in pursuit of their educational goals. MSU’s programs have been approved for certification for the various [Veterans Administration Educational benefit programs](#).

In response to MSU’s NCATE accreditation, MSU has developed an [Office of Diversity](#) where students of diverse population groups can network. The office has recently drafted a [plan](#) designed to guide the education division and institution in best practices for supporting diverse student persistence and achieve success, promoting awareness, understanding, appreciation, and value in human differences. Further information on diversity at MSU can be found in section 3.b.4.

Student access and affordability to postsecondary education can be a student support need. MSU’s Financial Aid Office provides both education and guidance related to their individual identified needs. MSU has a variety of need-based aid including [scholarships available](#) for students who show potential in the areas of academic achievement, leadership and participation in other activities. MSU, in the past two years, has shown [significant growth in scholarships](#) awarded to students.

Infrastructure

Over \$29 million in physical plant improvements have been made to the campus over the last eight years to create a campus desired by students, and better meets their needs. There have been improvements to academic space, campus lighting, residence halls, IT infrastructure, other student spaces, and overall campus safety. Virtually all areas of the campus received infrastructure updates to reduce the [campus deferred maintenance](#) from 39% to 6%.

MSU’s Writing Center realizes reading and writing are inextricably linked to the learning process and supports writers at all skill levels during any stage of the writing process. The writing center provides consultants with diverse academic backgrounds, and is useful for every writer, at every level, and in any discipline.

The ND State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) has capital improvement authority for all ND institutions including MSU. The SBHE has approved many campus improvement projects for MSU over the past several years in classroom buildings, student housing, sport and wellness facilities, institutional and student support service areas, campus safety and grounds, and in common areas providing students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. MSU’s [current Master Plan](#) identifies ongoing and future improvements regarding infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning across campus.

In 2009 MSU was approved by the SBHE for a [Science-Library Renovation and Education Addition](#), which was completed in 2011. [Renovation and addition provided](#): efficient and safe space for the Division of Education and Psychology, accommodated faculty growth in MSU’s early childhood, special education, psychology and distance education programs; improved classroom and lab space for meeting student needs in math, science, research and emerging healthcare fields; provided faculty and students with updated classroom technologies; and provided accessibility for the Byrnes-Quanbeck Library. In 2009, in an effort to provide improved health, safety, and accessibility for students, MSU received approval for the [Agassiz Student Residence Hall Renovation \(page 10\)](#), taking just over one year to complete. In November of 2009 MSU built a new [Central Powerhouse \(page 10\)](#) with a coal-powered, steam-heating system. As natural gas is not available in the community, MSU was authorized to participate in an energy performance contract as the most cost-effect renewable energy source.

In 2010 and again in 2014, MSU updated outdoor lighting for evening activities across campus, impacting student safety. Additionally, in 2010, MSU proposed and received funding for two additional projects. The first was a

campus-wide drainage project addressing street health and safety concerns in 2014. Second, and currently in process, a Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Center Gym Replacement and Fieldhouse Locker Room Improvement project. This project includes: updated health and safety conditions including fire alarms systems and restrooms, accessibility for students and community, innovation and technology upgrades for HPER classrooms, upgraded student athletics environment, faculty and coaching offices and classrooms, and increased amounts of classroom and lab space for instructional purposes.

MSU's Mission includes a "commitment to innovative technology-enriched education", supporting the teaching and learning mission of the institution.

MSU is currently transitioning to a "[bring your own device](#)" institution. MSU has the technological infrastructure and staffing to support the integrity and safety of student and institutional data. MSU's Learning Management System, Moodle, which MSU utilizes, is supported, in part, by the North Dakota University System (NDUS). This system is available for use with all on-campus, distance, online, and hybrid courses. It can be used to provide course materials, upload assignments, facilitate discussion, post grades, etc. It is available at all times to students. Faculty and staff have access to multiple technologies within the LMS system including Tegrity, Blackboard Collaborate and IM, Voice tools, and other resources to provide interactive and supplementary instruction.

MSU also offers ongoing support to faculty and teaching staff in several ways. Support to faculty is provided through the [Office of Instructional Design](#) while faculty are investigating, testing, proposing, and supporting innovative technologies, technology integration for student learning, and in the development of high quality courses. Support is also given to faculty in learning how to utilize, develop, and apply appropriate technology for teaching and learning purposes.

Building spaces that are appropriate for effective and engaging teaching and learning activities are a priority for MSU. Over the past few years, significant upgrades and renovations to buildings, classrooms, the library, common areas, and resident halls have been a priority. All buildings have internet access and/or are on wireless networks to support MSU's teaching and learning. MSU is currently expanding smart and technology-enhanced classrooms, providing students with high-quality technology.

MSU provides faculty and students with classroom and laboratory space necessary to support its mission and programs of study. As part of MSU's Essential Studies, every student must take at least one course with a science laboratory experience. The renovated Science building with new laboratory workstations increases safety and provides an appropriate learning space for students.

The Byrnes-Quanbeck Library is centrally located on the MSU campus and supports all education programs at MSU. The Library is available to students, faculty, and community. It provides reference services via in-person, telephone, email, and online chat. To support student learning, development of knowledge, and expansion of scholarly work, MSU has invested in providing up-to-date library offerings and collections. In 2014, the increased demand for online library services led MSU to increase discipline-specific holdings, collections, and [databases](#) that are accessible to students online. The library has increased its [resources](#) to meet student and faculty needs of the new Nursing Program.

Students in education programs and community educators across the Red River Valley have access to a [Teacher Center](#) and [STEM Center](#) located in the library. They have access to educational resources and materials specific to teacher and STEM education, supporting students and community development of knowledge and scholarly work.

Fall of 2014, MSU began an online [RN to BSN nursing program](#) that is using clinical placement sites for students in various community and public health locations across Minnesota and North Dakota. Students enrolled in the program complete one 40-hour, population-focused clinical experience through partnership with a community or public health agency available in their local community. Clinical practice sites focus on community and population

focused nursing care of clients, and may include but is not limited to: public health agencies, schools, correctional facilities, churches, community shelters, group homes, occupational health, client homes, and community mental health facilities. [Clinical agreements](#) are secured with each clinical agency identifying the clinical experiences that will facilitate achievement of the clinical course objectives and develop the student's understanding of the role of the nurse in the community. Faculty and students have full access to MSU resources and personnel while engaged in clinical experiences.

The [Clinical Experience/Student Teaching Experience](#) is a vital component in the development of effective teachers. The experience provides candidates the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, strategies, skills, and dispositions acquired through their professional courses and field experiences that will help them bring theory into practice. The Division of Education and Psychology at MSU makes every effort to select experienced and highly qualified cooperating teachers who will best facilitate a positive learning environment and mentor professional growth. All field-based experience activities are guided by a set of student learning outcomes. Contracts are in place with all clinical sites.

MSU's classroom auditorium serves as the main venue for band and choir concerts and [performances](#). The Music Department has a separate space for choir practice and rehearsal, practice rooms with pianos available for vocal or instrumental use, and additional faculty office space with a piano used for individual voice lessons. MSU's Main Building houses the theater used for theatrical and musical productions. The MSU Student Center houses a Northern Lights Art Gallery, a community gallery that hosts rotating exhibits. MSU's Performing [Fine Arts Series](#) performances are held in both the Classroom Auditorium and Student Center.

Research Skills

MSU recognizes that effective use of research information and resources is essential for students' success in college and throughout their careers. Consequently, all MSU students take [CIS 175 Information Literacy](#). This course explores how to effectively locate, retrieve, evaluate, and use information at the college-level. Emphasis is placed on the changing format of information in the digital world and how those changes affect the ethical use of information, especially copyright and plagiarism. Additional courses that provide students guidance on using the library and other resources for research are: [ENGL 120 College Composition II](#), [ENGL 125 Business and Technical Writing](#), and UNIV 100 Seminar on Success (SOS). In these and all other courses, students learn about and demonstrate their writing skills using library resources and appropriate research techniques. Several of MSU's academic programs also require a [Capstone experience](#) that includes a research-based project demonstrating the effective use of research and information resources.

The [Library](#) and the [Writing Center](#) provide education and training services for both individuals and larger groups. Representatives speak to classes or small groups at faculty request, and are available to work with students on individual needs. Sessions with students can review research and library services broadly, or focus on a narrow topic, such as framing a research question. The Writing Center is available to students in a drop-in or by-appointment basis. The library uses online chat reference, telephone, email, and a one-stop reference/circulation desk to assist students with their information needs.

The library is staffed with two academic librarians, who also teach as part of their appointments, and two professional staff. With other duties, there are actually 3 FTE library staff positions, excluding the student work force. The library continually assists faculty in developing the research skills of students. The library developed and teaches CIS 175 Information Literacy based on the [Association of College and Research Library's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#). The library works with faculty to develop research guides and/or presentations to remind students of library resources at the beginning of research projects. They also work with faculty to ensure needed research materials are available. The library relies on [faculty recommendations](#) for purchases within their areas of expertise, as well as when removing outdated items from the collection.

Successful undergraduate researchers at MSU demonstrate a set of strategies designed for successful experiences, which include a genuine desire to expand knowledge, investigate problems, and produce and present results. [Education and guidance](#), including ethical standards, student and faculty mentor responsibilities, research methods, and lab safety, support and guide students' effective use of research and information resources.

Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

Curricular and co-curricular opportunities at MSU align with its mission "to educate and guide students, as individuals, so that they may realize their full career potential and enhance their lives. We do this in an environment that reflects our tradition of personal service, commitment to innovative technology-enriched education, and dynamic learning relationships with community, employers, and society".

MSU's Office of Student Life organizes a wide variety of social, recreational, and wellness programs throughout the year. Acting as a clearinghouse for all campus programs, the Office of Student Life works with MSU's Student Activities Council (SAC) and all [student organizations](#) on the development, organization, and implementation of student activities. The Office of Student Life is concerned about students' emotional and physical well-being. Student Life offers many [programs](#) to students living on campus covering a wide variety of topics each year including alcohol and other drugs, risk reduction, HIV/AIDS awareness, human sexuality, relationship development, physical wellness, and stress management.

The Student Senate at MSU serves an important role in representing the needs, opinions, and views of those students that it represents. Made up of six officers and one At Large Senator for every 100 students, the current student government represents students' interests on numerous [university committees](#). Students in these committees are instrumental in the development of policies, practices, and strategies that help guide and affect the quality of life for all students. As active members of these committees, students have the opportunity to provide input and advice. Student Senate has taken an active role in representing students' perceptions and thoughts on such topics as campus food services, parking and traffic issues, use of student activity fees, and shopping discounts in the surrounding community. Most recently, MSU student government implemented a "[Tuesday Two](#)", an informal two-question survey related to student needs and issues. Results from the surveys are [discussed](#) at Student Senate meetings and used to help guide student government. Individual Student Senate members are active at the state level by their participation in the North Dakota Student Association, which helps to represent the views of all university students in the state to the NDUS SBHE.

MSU students have the opportunity to actively engage in activities that support inquiry, practice, creativity, and social responsibility. Every academic area at MSU has a correlating organization for student engagement. Co-curricular activities at MSU are coordinated by various academic departments and divisions, student leaders, and organizations, that provide out-of-the classroom experiences that serve MSU's mission. These high-impact practice opportunities are currently being measured for their [impact](#).

Student organizations and their purposes demonstrate the wide variety of opportunities available to students, and also identify indirect relationships to wider curricular goals and outcomes for students. For example, MSU has an

active Collegiate DECA chapter. DECA's mission aligns to MSU in that it "prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management in high schools and colleges around the globe". DECA provides MSU students with a wide range of business topics to explore while providing hands-on experiences. It also enhances communication skills, critical thinking, time management, proper etiquette, and overall professionalism. MSU's chapter has shown tremendous skill and leadership through its performances at both the state and [national](#) levels. Additional student organizations have similar relationships between their purposes and goals of the curricular areas that they support; i.e. Science Club, Student Education Association, HPER Club, Pre Professional Health Careers Club, and Psychology Club.

[MSU's Larson Leadership Program](#) (established in 2011) is designed on four levels—interest, awareness, exploration, and demonstration. Approximately 200 freshmen and sophomores are introduced to leadership every academic year through the SOS courses and a freshmen leadership core. Freshmen leadership core members have indicated that with over 30 student organizations on campus, and the exposure given to these organizations and leadership opportunities have grown at MSU. This focus on leadership is a part of the MSU mission's responsibility to assist students in realizing their full career potential.

MSU's lead volunteer organization is the [Cometeers](#). They provide volunteer service to the university and throughout the surrounding communities by offering their time and efforts to a variety of activities and projects. Examples of their service include: assisting the local middle school with tutoring and supervision during their common time and annual food drives. Goals of the organization are to promote responsibility, leadership, and positive attitudes by providing opportunities for students to engage in volunteer services essential to both education experiences for students and MSU's mission.

An average of 94 students, annually, participate in band and choir and perform at four annual concerts. Every other year the music program sponsors a [madrigal dinner](#) in December. MSU performs three [theatrical performances](#). When possible, one is a musical and one is a children's performance, where MSU performs for local elementary schools.

MSU offers collegiate athletics, as well as [intramural activities](#). MSU football, basketball, and baseball for men; basketball, volleyball, and softball for women; the cheer team is co-educational. Intercollegiate athletics and the cheer team serve approximately 290 participants each year. [MSU's Wellness Center](#) has various activities to promote overall well-being and fitness for students, faculty, staff, and community.

Results of MSU's NSSE and FSSE surveys support the frequency of [High Impact Practices \(HIP\)](#) such as service learning and research experiences with faculty for students, especially for freshmen. Students at MSU also have the opportunity to advance their boundaries of knowledge through innovative research. Students seeking out research opportunities are linked with mentoring teaching and research faculty. Students can apply theories they learn in the classroom under laboratory conditions, and can [publish \(page 13\)](#) their work. More information about MSU's research opportunities can be found in Core Component 2.E.

MSU's [Career Services](#) assists students locate and apply for local and community internships. MSU's commitment to community engagement is exemplified through [MSU's Child Development Program \(MSUCDP\)](#). MSU is the Grantee for Federal Head Start & Early Head Start, and Community Pre-K & Child Care. The MSU CDP not only provides opportunities for students but also provides support for students who are parents.

MSU's Division of Education and Teacher Center sponsored a [Martin Luther King Professional Development Day](#) in partnership with the Red River Education Valley Cooperative. This is one example of how MSU is giving back to local schools and educators. The event was an all-day event, offered continuing education credit, partnered with Teacher Center and included student participation.

MSU values students' religious or spiritual growth by providing opportunities on campus through Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Campus Crusade, and Newman Club. Student participation with activities has shown significant

growth, for example Campus Crusade has grown from 4 students to over 50. Most recently Campus Crusade sponsored a mission trip to [Poland](#) with several student athletes over spring break.

MSU is a regional public institution with expectations that the institution will have a positive economic impact in North Dakota. Two of the Purpose Statements associated with the Mission speak to this expectation: 1) Collaborative relationships with schools, employers, and communities that contribute to the economic growth and social vitality of North Dakota and 2) Academic programs and services that address real-work career and North Dakota workforce opportunities. MSU has a strong [economic impact \(pages 1, 13-15, and 20\)](#) on the local economy. Annual economic contribution is estimated at \$61.8 million (2014), increased retail trade activity \$14.9 million (2013), personal income \$24.7 (2013). Direct impact of student spending in the area was just over \$7.7 million (2013) and compared to business activity to support almost 36 (indirect and induced) jobs.

MSU faculty and staff also impact the community by participating on a variety of boards and committees and organizations throughout the local area, including the Local Nursing Home, Economic Development, Community Club, the Food Pantry, Church and City Councils. MSU faculty and staff also model community commitment through representation on state, regional, and national organizations/groups. One such example is the [ND Higher Education Early Childhood Consortium](#), where MSU provides an academic partnership with Head Start programs across the State of North Dakota.

MSU [student placement rates](#) of its graduates and student testimonials on the MSU Website provide further evidence that MSU demonstrates its claims for personal service and an enriched educational environment. [Testimonials](#) also show how MSU has helped alumni achieve their full career potential. An outside indicator MSU is achieving its Mission is Affordable Schools recognizing MSU as “[One of the 30 Most Attractive Yet Affordable College Campuses](#)” in 2014.