Assurance Argument

Metropolitan State University of Denver - CO

3/7/2017

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

Role:

Metropolitan State University of Denver is a comprehensive baccalaureate- and master's-degree-granting urban university that offers arts and sciences, professional and business courses and programs to a diverse student population in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Excellence in teaching and learning is MSU Denver's primary objective.

Mission:

MSU Denver's mission is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, postgraduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society. To fulfill its mission, MSU Denver's diverse university community engages the community at large in scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge.

The role and mission statements guide MSU Denver in its outreach to prospective students, its scholarly activities and research, its support services and the use of its resources for the betterment of society.

[1.A.1] – The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

The current role and mission statements were adopted by the MSU Denver Board of Trustees on April 5, 2006, with input from employee and student governance groups: President's Cabinet, Council of Administrators, Classified Staff Council, Faculty Senate and Student Government Assembly. Since that time, the only modification to the mission statement has been adding the reference to master's degree programs in the *2010-11 University Catalog: The College and Mission Statement* and changing the institution's name from Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD) to Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), following the granting of legislative authority to do so in

April 2012.

[1.A.2] – MSU Denver's academic programs, support services and student profile reflect the University's mission.

The role and mission statements underpin and guide the workings of MSU Denver. They are broadly available and are a preface to key planning and operation documents. The statements are the preamble to the _MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh_. Three of the five core values articulated in the strategic plan – diversity, access to learning and a climate of mutual respect – are clearly stated in the role and mission statements. The other two core values, entrepreneurship and community of civic engagement, are implied in the role and mission statements. These values are the basis of what we call CADRE on our campus: Community, Access, Diversity, Respect and Entrepreneurship.

An expanded version of the role and mission statements is found in the Operational Mission Statement of the _Trustees Policy Manual_ signifying the governing board's adherence to the statements. The statements are published verbatim in the _Handbook for Professional Personnel_ which governs faculty and staff performance. The role and mission statements are also stated in the beginning of the Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies (use both links) and the Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual, both of which define curriculum guidelines, policies and procedures.

MSU Denver's statutory role of "providing comprehensive, baccalaureate and master's degrees" is demonstrated on the "Academic Programs" page at MSU Denver's website which lists the 342 options in majors, minors, concentrations, certificates and licensures. MSU Denver provides outreach programs to underserved communities, engaging prospective and current students. MSU demonstrates accessibility to a college education, offering a substantial number of student support services (see 3.D.1). To prepare our students for successful careers, the degrees reflect our mission to serve the metropolitan Denver urban community and address the region's workforce needs. All of the many programs added in 2015-16 were added in response to current, regional work-force needs. Twenty-two academic programs have active advisory boards to develop relevant curriculum ensuring that graduates meet employers' needs.

To support the mission statement goal of preparing students for a multicultural, global and technological society, MSU Denver's General Studies program has student-learning outcomes that require students – including transfer students – to complete one each of courses designated as global and multicultural. The Global Diversity requirement (see 3.B.4), which focuses on cultural similarities and differences outside the U.S. and across the globe, can be met by taking one of 32 courses that range from Global Health Systems to Technology and Design: Global Perspectives. Courses that satisfy the Multicultural Requirement (see 3.B.4), which focuses on diverse cultures within the U.S., are offered in degree programs including Africana Studies, Chicana/Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, Women's Studies and Genders and Sexualities Studies, among others.

In 2013, MSU Denver's mission to "provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education" was recognized and reinforced by the state of Colorado when its Commission on Higher Education, utilizing the newly passed House Bill 12-1155, approved the University's application to become the first baccalaureate-degree-granting institution in Colorado to provide supplemental academic instruction to its marginally prepared students instead of sending them to remedial courses at the community colleges. The University provides additional student support services through the Writing Center and the Student Academic Success Center's Tutoring Center and Supplemental Instruction (SI) program.

Consistent with the accessibility component of its mission, the University is a modified open-enrollment institution, charging the lowest tuition of the largest public baccalaureate-granting institutions in Colorado.   Moreover, tuition is the same amount between 12 and 18 credit hours in order to make it more affordable for students and to encourage them to attend full time, thereby supporting retention and graduation goals. *Affordable Colleges Online* lists MSU Denver 25th in its 2016 list of the 50 most affordable large public colleges.

According to Colorado Department of Higher Education data, one in five Coloradans seeking a bachelor's degree enrolls at MSU Denver. Per the University's Undergraduate Student Profiles the student population is composed of 32 percent first-generation students and 33 percent Pell Grant-eligible students. The average age is 26.

The University's commitment to student veterans and active military, of which there are more than 1,000, is substantiated by its 2016 rankings of 32nd and 52nd, respectively, in the *Military Times'* Best Colleges for Veterans and Best for Vets: Business Schools lists. *Military Advances in Education* included MSU Denver in its Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges and Universities 2015 , and, in addition, G.I. Jobs has given MSU Denver "Military-Friendly Status" since 2013. *U.S. Veterans Magazine* listed the University in its 2016 list of the top veteran-friendly schools.

MSU Denver is committed to a diverse student population as evidenced by its role and mission statements and the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*. The University's current student demographic for students of color is 38.9 percent undergraduate and 24.9 percent graduate as listed in the Spring Undergraduate and Graduate Student Profiles. The University has a higher head count of ethnically diverse students as well as undocumented ASSET (Advancing Students for a Stronger Economy Tomorrow) students (defined in 1.C.2) than any other college or university in Colorado.

In 2007, Hispanic students represented 13.2 percent of MSU Denver's total full-time equivalency. In Fall 2016, Hispanic students represented 24.0 percent of the total full-time equivalency (FTE) of our undergraduate student body, an increase that aligns with the University's Hispanic Serving Institution initiative (see 1.C.2 for detailed information).

MSU Denver continues to confer a large number of degrees to non-white students. In 2015-16, 156 African-American students and 591 Hispanic students earned baccalaureate degrees.

The May 2016 edition of *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* magazine lists MSU Denver 69th in its annual "Top 100 Issue" for colleges and universities throughout the country for graduating Hispanic students – the highest ranking of any baccalaureate institution in Colorado. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* ranked MSU Denver among the nation's top 100 institutions in 2016 for awarding bachelor's degrees to students of color.

A STEM Jobs-Approved™ College 2016, MSU Denver is recognized as Colorado's leader in providing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education to students of color, with more than 2,000 enrolled in STEM programs of study. For Fall of 2016, 38 percent of all STEM students are students of color. This reflects a 98 percent growth since Fall of 2006. Students of color and Pell-eligible students together comprise 54 percent of the University's STEM students.

The University's commitment to accessibility includes a robust and innovative Access Center (see 3.D.1) that provides leadership, advocacy and accommodation support for between 1,000 and 1,200 students who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The center promotes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices and was instrumental in forming a working group of faculty that sends out weekly tips to all faculty and administrators called SIPs (Strong Instructional Practices). In

addition, the center is collaborating with other institutional partners to implement an *Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Plan* that provides processes to ensure equal access for all individuals.

The University's commitment to high-quality education is further evidenced by its average class size of 21 and student/faculty ratio of 18:1.

MSU Denver offers an array of services to support student success at the University and to prepare graduates to become engaged citizens. The University has several unique student supports in place. For example, Immigrant Services offers wrap-around services to immigrant students who are oftentimes navigating unique and complex challenges. Another example is a Student Food Bank, offering resources and support to low-income students struggling with food insecurity. The institution has also prioritized the expansion of academic advising in recent years to help students progress appropriately through their degree sequence and to assist them in identifying and overcoming barriers that may hamper success. Personalized academic advising is available to all students and may be of particular value to students who are the first in their family to attend college (see 3.D.3).

Last, according to the Colorado Department of Education's edpays.org, MSU Denver's baccalaureate graduates earn above the statewide median income for all Colorado public universities.

[1.A.3] – The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

To determine its budgetary priorities, the University aligns internal budget requests with the core values expressed in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh (s*ee 1.A.2). When the proposed budget is presented to the Board of Trustees, it clearly indicates the connection each new spending request has to those values (see 5.C.1). For example, the *FY16 Budget Alignment* section of the State of the Budget contains the pie chart that illustrates the FY16 Alignment with the Strategic Plan:

• Student and Academic Success: 90.31 percent

• Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship: 3.69 percent

• Institutional Resources: 3.43 percent

• Other: 2.57 percent.

Our budget priorities are evident, with over 90 percent of the University's budget supporting student and academic success.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

The role and mission statements are the fabric of MSU Denver, weaving together the priorities inherent in its policies, programs, services and budget. They are stated in numerous official internal and external documents and the prominence of their use demonstrates their significance as the guideposts for the University.

[1.B.1] – The mission is clearly articulated and widely disseminated.

The role and mission statements are widely available; they are in the 2016-17 University Catalogs (undergraduate and graduate), the *Trustees Policy Manual* and stated verbatim in several locations on www.msudenver.edu, including the Academic and Student Affairs section. In addition, the University's *2016-17 Fact Sheet* is constructed around values articulated in the role and mission statements: accessibility, diversity, affordability, an excellent education that is relevant and transformative, and community involvement.

Because the role and mission statements are the foundation of the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*, they are widely available to the University's constituents as well as the public. They are the basis of the widely distributed CADRE posters. In addition to their publication in the major governance documents mentioned above, they are also prominent backbones in the *Curriculum Manual* for *Undergraduate Studies (use both links)* and the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*.

[1.B.2] – The role and mission statements are current and explain the institution's emphases.

While approved in 2006, the current role and mission statements were updated in the 2010-11 University Catalog:*w*hen master's degrees were added and in 2012 when the Colorado legislature approved the institution's change from college to university status. MSU Denver's role and mission statements remain congruent with MSU Denver's statutory role. The University's alignment of its budgetary priorities with the role and mission statements is manifest as explained in 5.C.1. MSU Denver's student demographics demonstrate the University's alignment with the role and mission statements' emphases on accessibility and diversity. The University reinforces these emphases with activities and programs (see 1.C), such as:

• The annual Richard T. Castro and the Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorships, which

recognize the contributions of local civil rights activists and combine community outreach and campus lectures to promote civil rights.

• Universal Design Learning (UDL) courses and electronic accessibility that emphasize accessibility for all students as well as the annual UDL Recognition Award to recognize faculty who have embraced the challenge of rethinking the structure of their curricula to best serve a diverse population of learners.

• Pre-collegiate programs, such as Journey Through Our Heritage, a yearlong program for high school teams geared at introducing underserved students to the University and reinforcing pride in their heritage.

• Summer science camps for middle-school and high-school students sponsored by multiple entities.

• Outreach programs for at-risk K-12 students that are run by the University's Center for Visual Art off-campus gallery in the low-income neighborhood adjacent to the campus.

• The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), which supports college-age agricultural workers through their freshman year.

• The Center for Advanced STEM Education, a participant in the Colorado Alliance for Minority Participation grant, supports students of color in STEM majors.

• An active student services program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students through the tri-institutional LGBTQ Student Resource Center.

• In the Urban Leadership Program, students enhance the leadership skills through coursework and experiential learning. These students explore and examine leadership and how they can better lead our Denver Metro Community.

• The annual Zarlengo Foundation Endowed Scholarship to support a student with a diagnosed learning disability.

The key role played by the faculty in fulfilling MSU Denver's role and mission is defined by University policies contained in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 7) that describe the primary responsibility of the faculty as "to provide academic services such as teaching, academic advising and curriculum development to the institution and its students." Furthermore, the Handbook (p. 15) states that the award of tenure "should recognize contributions to teaching as the most significant factors in evaluating faculty for tenure, but acknowledge that outstanding teaching will not be sufficient to justify tenure." To achieve tenure, scholarly activities and service to the University, profession and community are also required. These requirements further cement MSU Denver's commitment to "excellence in teaching and learning" as a primary objective.

The overarching themes in the 2010 and 2013 *Chronicle of Higher Education Great Colleges to Work For* and *Campus Climate Surveys* were that faculty and staff reported a strong sense of pride in the organization, a commitment to the mission, the transformative impact on students and the positive influence in the community. Pride in MSU Denver and its contributions to the community again received high ratings in the follow-up, truncated 2015 Pulse Survey. The strong, positive response to the University's mission demonstrates employee alliance with the mission, with an 85 percent positive response rate to the question, "I understand how my job contributes to the institution's mission," earning an "Exceptional" rating. In addition, 74 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "I

am proud to be part of this institution," and 72 percent responded that "people are supportive of their colleagues regardless of their heritage or background," both earning a "Very Good" rating.

It is important to note that MSU Denver resides on the Auraria campus, along with the University of Colorado Denver and the Community College of Denver. Although some of the instructional spaces are shared spaces (the Science building, the King Center for performing arts), etc., each institution has its own buildings and mission and values statements. The campus is operated by the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC).

[1.B.3] – The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher-education programs and services the institution provides.

The MSU Denver role and mission statements are in alignment with the University's statutory responsibilities. They define the institution as a "comprehensive, baccalaureate-and master's degree-granting urban university." As described above, the University fully embraces these concepts, building the Curriculum Manual for *Undergraduate Studies (use both links)*, the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Man*ual and the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* on the role and mission statements. The budget requests and budget updates to the Board of Trustees are organized to fit the strategic plan and thus the role and mission of MSU Denver. The major governance guidelines are also in alignment with the role and mission and insure that faculty are hired by and evaluated according to the primacy of teaching. The University's student demographics and services reflect that MSU Denver operates within its defined role and mission.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

MSU Denver's commitment to diversity is reflected by its status as the consistent leader of enrolled ethnic minority students within Colorado four-year higher education institutions. The University's diverse student population mirrors that of Colorado, and its goal of attaining the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution is within sight, with Hispanics now at 24 percent of the undergraduate student population. MSU Denver's policies regarding equal opportunity in education and employment guarantee the fair treatment of its students and employees. Further, the University understands and addresses all segments of diversity: from its Access Center for people with disabilities, to its services for veterans, to its LGBTQ Student Resource Center and more, the institution's educational programs and special activities make apparent how important it is that all students, faculty and staff are respected members of the University community.

[1.C.1] – The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

MSU Denver firmly addresses its role in a multicultural society and leads Colorado higher education in cultural inclusiveness. In 2010, the University incorporated inclusive excellence – the practice of moving beyond numeric measurements as a key strategy to promote diversity – in the University's diversity policies, projects and initiatives. Inclusive excellence involves embedding the practices and philosophies that encourage diversity and inclusivity in every aspect of an organization. Moreover, it encompasses institutionalizing systemic practices and philosophies, thus generating a broader outcome in regard to inclusivity, excellence, cultural competence, innovation, synergy and pride.

MSU Denver's commitment to diversity is internally recognized through its prominent role in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* as one of the University's core values. The University's efforts were recognized in June of 2016 when it was named one of ten Diversity Champion colleges and universities in the nation by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. Diversity Champions exemplify an unyielding commitment to diversity and inclusion throughout their campus communities, across academic programs, and at the highest administrative levels.

The University also won prestigious national Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Awards in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The HEED Award is a comprehensive measurement of an institution's level of achievement and intensity of commitment to broadening diversity and inclusion on campus through initiatives; programs and outreach; student recruitment, retention and completion; and hiring practices for faculty and staff.

External diversity awards and recognition (see 1.A.2 for additional items) include:

• Civil Rights Award (Anti-Defamation League, Mountain States Region, 2014)

• Nonprofit Impact Award for championing state legislation to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students (Colorado Nonprofit Association, 2015).

• Outstanding Support of Hispanic Issues in Higher Education Award (American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, 2014).

• One of four Model Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions nationally (*Excelencia in Education*, 2010).

• Sol Trujillo National Lifetime Leadership Award for President Stephen Jordan (Latin American Education Foundation, 2014).

• 2015 Emmy for Student Achievement given by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Heartland Chapter to Noticiero TVMET, the Spanish-language newscast produced by MSU Denver's own Met Media.

• One of the "100 Best LGBT Campuses" in the country (*Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*, 2006); because of late notification, this recognition was not included in our HLC 2007 self-study.

Multicultural and Diversity Events:

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion supports diversity programming through Diversity Initiatives grants totaling $100,000. With in-kind contributions, the total is valued at approximately $300,000 annually. Examples of funded events and programs range from An Evening with Dr. Cornel West to Outstanding Women's Awards to the Lalo Delgado Poetry Festival.

Beyond its large commencement exercises, the University holds smaller, more personalized celebrations targeted at underrepresented populations: Latina/o Graduation, Black Graduation Celebration, Veteran Graduation, LGBTQ Lavender Graduation and Native American Graduation.

Also, MSU Denver's Institute for Women's Studies and Services hosts the largest Women's History Month celebration in the region.

MSU Denver organizes and supports a number of programs that reach out into the surrounding community as well as students. Examples include the Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship, the Richard T. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast and Awards and the Higher Education Diversity Summit conference.

Pre-Collegiate Programs:

MSU Denver's pre-collegiate programs target underserved middle-school and high-school students with the goal of eventually enrolling these students at MSU Denver:

- Journey Through Our Heritage
- Excel Pre-Collegiate Program
- Peer Ambassador Program
- Summer Science Institute
- TRIO High School Upward Bound (HSUB)
- 21st Century College Readiness Centers

[1.C.2] – The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Diversity is reflected in MSU Denver's curriculum, programs, major undertakings such as the Hispanic Serving Institution initiative (described below), and the composition of its faculty, staff and students – all of which have led to its status as the leader in diversity among Colorado's four-year higher-education institutions.

The University's student population mirrors the ethnic demographics of the state, with 39.5 percent of the undergraduate student body and 21.7 of the graduate student body being students of color. Full-time faculty members who are ethnic minority total 23 percent and affiliate (part-time) faculty total 16.4 percent.

The associate to the president for diversity, who serves as director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, reports to the University's president and provides a proactive and balanced approach to meeting the institution's inclusive excellence goals. One of the first things President Jordan did upon arriving at MSU Denver in 2005 was to create this position as a direct report to him.

Hispanic Serving Institution Initiative (HSI): In 2007, with a challenge from the Board of Trustees, MSU Denver embarked on the bold goal of attaining the U.S. Department of Education Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation by achieving 25 percent Hispanic FTE enrollment within a decade. President Stephen Jordan charged a volunteer HSI Task Force of some 60 staff, administrators, students and faculty to deliver recommendations to raise the University's Hispanic student enrollment from 13.2 percent in Fall 2007 to 25 percent in Fall 2018.

In February 2008, the task force presented President Jordan with the HSI Task Force Final Report providing 55 recommendations for MSU Denver to achieve HSI designation. Two of the recommendations, in particular, show the impact the initiative has had on the University. The first, to establish master's-degree programs, resulted from research that showed that HSI institutions with graduate programs had higher retention and graduation rates for their undergraduate Hispanic students. Offering master's degrees required approval from both the Colorado State Legislature and the Higher Learning Commission; approval was subsequently granted by both bodies. In Fall 2010, MSU Denver enrolled the first cohort of students into two graduate programs: Master of Professional Accountancy and Master of Arts in Teaching. In Fall 2011, the Master of Social Work program began enrolling students. As of Fall 2016, 531 master's students were enrolled, with 21.7 percent being ethnic minority. Master's programs in Business Administration and Healthcare Administration have been approved by the Higher Learning Commission and enrollment began in January of 2017.

The second impactful HSI task force recommendation was to support state-level DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) legislation to allow in-state tuition for undocumented students. MSU Denver has a long history of supporting "dreamers." MSU Denver's Faculty Senate, in 2003, was the first body in Colorado higher education to publicly support in-state tuition for undocumented students. President Stephen Jordan was the first college or university president in Colorado to support the DREAM Act in front of the Colorado Legislature. In 2012, following the sixth failure to pass the by-then renamed ASSET Bill (Advancing Students for a Stronger Economy Tomorrow), President Jordan proposed to the Board of Trustees an institutionally crafted, modified tuition rate for undocumented students (called the "Colorado High School GED rate"). The trustees approved this controversial rate on June 7, 2012. After the Colorado Attorney General issued an opinion against the new rate, the Colorado Legislature's Joint Budget Committee held a special session to question President Jordan and a Board of Trustees member about it. Despite the controversy, MSU Denver received support from many state legislators and U.S. representatives and senators as well as leaders of other higher-education institutions. In Fall 2012, 257 students enrolled under the University's new rate. This bold action demonstrates MSU Denver's commitment

to serving diverse and underserved populations and distinguishes the institution from all other colleges and universities in Colorado in its willingness to take innovative and controversial steps to provide education to all students regardless of background.

The ASSET Bill (Advancing Students for a Stronger Economy Tomorrow), to allow educational access to undocumented students who graduated from high school in Colorado, was passed and became law in 2013, following MSU Denver's lead from 2012. Gov. John Hickenlooper signed the bill in MSU Denver's Student Success Building as he acknowledged that MSU Denver's leadership in creating the modified tuition rate played a significant role in the ASSET Bill's passage. In Fall 2015, MSU Denver enrolled 359 ASSET students (87 percent or 311 of whom are Hispanic) – nearly triple the total enrolled at Colorado's other four large public institutions. MSU Denver also enrolled another 40 undocumented students, who for varying reasons could not qualify for ASSET-legislation tuition. Twenty-seven ASSET students graduated from MSU Denver in May 2016, notable since this was accomplished only three years after the bill became law. In a letter to the *Denver Post,* on January 14, 2017, MSU Denver's President Jordan affirmed his support for metro-Denver's undocumented students.

Other task force recommendations that are being realized include the Collaborative Teacher Education Research with *Excelencia in Education*, a grant to provide improvements for Latina/os and newly redeveloped and expanded programs, such as Journey Through Our Heritage (see 1.C.1) and the Excel Programs (see 3.D.1).

Current figures indicate the remarkable success MSU Denver has achieved toward HSI designation. Undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment has increased in headcount from 2,880 students (13.3 percent of the total student population) in Fall 2008 to 4,770 (24.1 percent of the total student population) in Fall 2016, an increase of 1,890 students in eight years. However, for Fall 2016 the FTE percentage was 24.0 percent, as opposed to the 24.1 percent of headcount, which means Hispanic students take just slightly lower than the average number of credits hours. Spring 2017 numbers are slightly less.

Hispanic students composed 17 percent of the total Spring 2016 graduating student body. The HSI Initiative is aimed at increasing not just Hispanic student enrollment but retention and graduation as well.

In early 2015, MSU Denver embarked on the last phase of the HSI initiative. President Jordan appointed a new HSI Task Force to study the efforts to date and determine the steps needed to finally reach the HSI designation with 25 percent Hispanic FTE enrollment, thereby better representing the local demographics of MSU Denver's service area.

Connecting the Dots: Report and Recommendations of the MSU Denver Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Task Force, the task force's final report issued in January 2016, focuses on three target populations for increased Hispanic recruitment, enrollment and degree completion to achieve HSI designation by Fall 2018: the preK-12 pipeline; transfer students, adults and military veterans; and currently enrolled students. It lists 21 recommendations that fall into five categories: institutional infrastructure, outreach to preK-12 schools, transfer and enrollment policies, financial aid, and advocacy and policy development. Among the recommendations are creating a data-tracking system to monitor the effectiveness of MSU Denver's programs and initiatives aimed at Hispanic students; increasing Hispanic students' participation in concurrent enrollment programs; developing transfer pathways and creating dual enrollment-programs with community colleges; and redesigning the financial aid application to take into account the needs of undocumented students. An implementation team has been established and is developing investment scenarios as well as implementing the

recommendations from the report.

Other examples of the University's attention to human diversity and its commitment to educating a diverse student body include:

Multicultural Studies Departments: MSU Denver is unique in Colorado in that it boasts individual, degree-granting departments of Africana Studies, Chicana/o Studies and the Institute for Women's Studies and Services. Also, the Native American Studies Program, housed in the Department of Political Science, offers a degree minor, and Women's Studies offers a minor in Genders and Sexualities.

Office of International Studies (OIS): In order to promote greater internationalization on campus, Denver re-established the Office of International Studies (OIS) in 2007. The OIS promotes study-abroad opportunities through faculty-led courses and third-party enrollments; assists Chairs and Deans with the development and management of institutional partnerships with overseas institutions of higher education; provides some financial support to faculty for participation in international conferences and research activities; seeks external funding for special projects; and promotes internationalization of curricula. Between the 2007-08 and 2014-15 academic years, students participating in study-abroad courses increased from 131 to 230; the number of faculty-led courses offered annually increased from 13 to 24 and approximately 40 new faculty-led study abroad courses were developed; the number of faculty members supported increased from 14 to 93, although this number declined significantly during 2016-17 due to reallocation of resources directly to the departments; the number of international partnerships increased from one to 18; and the amount of grant money (mostly federal grants) received, to support student travel, totals over $500,000.

Multicultural and Global Diversity Course Requirements:

- **Multicultural Courses**: To graduate, all students take a multicultural course. Courses designated as multicultural increase students' awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in the United States by examining the interactions of values, beliefs, traditions, identities and contributions of one or more of the following four groups of color in the United States: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American and Native-American. They may include the characteristics of gender, sexual orientation, age or disability within these groups.
- **Global Diversity Courses**: To meet general studies requirements, all students take a global diversity course. The student-learning outcomes for global diversity courses are: 1) Exhibit knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the United States including aspects such as the historical, political, social, cultural, legal or business contexts of these regions or countries and 2) Describe the implications of global interdependence, including its impact on societies from a governmental, technological, institutional, organizational or individual context.

(See 3.B.4 for more detailed information about the global diversity and multicultural requirements.)

Equity in Excellence: The objective of this initiative, begun in Spring 2013, is to identify equity gaps in graduation rates and then recommend how the gaps can be closed. Following the initial work of the Equity in Excellence Task Force and the publication of the *2014 Equity Scorecard*, a steering committee, counseled by an advisory council, is continuing this work to integrate the values of the Equity in Excellence project into the structure and culture of MSU Denver.

Student Engagement and Retention Programs: To insure that the University meets its "primary objective of excellence in teaching and learning" per its role statement, these programs go hand-in-hand with the university's academic programs. Examples include:

- Veteran & Military Student Services Center
- Student Academic Success Center (SASC)
- Brother to Brother (B2B) Program (See 3.D.1)
- TRIO Student Support Services (See 3.D.1)
- Fostering Success Program
- Immigrant Services
- College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)
- Applied Learning Center
- Urban Leadership Program
- Transfer Student Success & Persistence Program.

Faculty and Staff Diversity Programs, such as those listed below, support the University's role and mission statements and its vision of inclusive excellence:

- Faculty Learning Communities
- Universal Design for Learning Awards
- Outstanding Women Awards
- LGBTQ Student Resource Center Ally of the Year Awards
- Target of Opportunity (TOP) and Faculty Recruitment Incentive Program (FRIP), diversity hiring programs
- Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) - MSU Denver has sent five faculty and staff to this national program over the last two years; another will attend this coming year
- HR Employee Training Programs that reinforce diversity – Required trainings for new employees, with additional optional training for current employees:
  - Disability and Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Training
  - Cultural Competence Training for University Supervisors
  - Preventing Sexual Harassment
  - Title IX Trainings for Investigators.

MSU Denver addresses its role in a multicultural society in a variety of ways—at the pre-collegiate level and the student level, with program offerings and graduation requirements, with multiple events and faculty and staff awards and training. As demonstrated by MSU Denver's leadership with providing an affordable education for undocumented students, MSU Denver places a high value on serving the underrepresented and recognizing the richness of a diverse community.

Sources

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- ASA_CBUS_Master of Business Administration (MBA) MSU Denver
- ASA_CBUS_Masters Degree Department of Accounting MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_Master of Health Administration Department of Health Professions MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_MSW Program Department of Social Work MSU Denver
- ASA_SEW_Urban Leadership Program MSU Denver
- ASA_SOE_Graduate Programs School of Education MSU Denver
- ASA_US_Excel Programs MSU Denver
- ASA_US_FYS Peer Ambassadors
- ASA_US_General Studies Requirements Information for Faculty and Staff Advisors
- ASA_US_SI Tutoring FYS fall 2015 revised 1-12-16
- ASA_US_Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver

- ASA_US_Transfer Student Success Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- ASA_US_TRIO Student Support Services Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- BOT_BOT Consent Item Non Resident Tuition 9_6_12
- BOT_Faculty Senate
- FINAD_DATA_Enrollment by Ethnicity
- FINAD_HR_Professional Development Training Human Resources MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_21st Century College Readiness Centers Center for Urban Education MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_ASSET
- PRES_DIV_Best for LGBTQ
- PRES_DIV_Brother 2 Brother Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Connecting the Dots
- PRES_DIV_Cornel West
- PRES_DIV_Diversity Initiatives Office of Diversity and Inclusion MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Diversity Spotlight MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_DREAM
- PRES_DIV_Equity in Excellence MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Equity in Excellence Scorecard 2014
- PRES_DIV_Equity in Excellence Scorecard 2014
- PRES_DIV_Excel Pre-Collegiate Program Excel Programs MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Faculty Learning Communities Center for Faculty Excellence MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Fostering Success Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_FOX31 Article Undocumented
- PRES_DIV_FRIP
- PRES_DIV_Hickenlooper Signing ASSET
- PRES_DIV_Higher Education Diversity Summit
- PRES_DIV_Hispanic Serving Institution MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_HSIPublicRelations_finalreport_080125
- PRES_DIV_Immigrant Services Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Insight into Diversity HEED Award 2016 Recipients
- PRES_DIV_Institute for Womens Studies and Services MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Lalo Delgado Poetry
- PRES_DIV_LGBTQ Student Resource Center
- PRES_DIV_Metropolitan Magazine
- PRES_DIV_MLK Peace Breakfast MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Office of International Studies MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Outstanding Womens Awards Institute for Womens Studies and Services MSU Denve
- PRES_DIV_Professional Development Training Human Resources MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_SEED
- PRES_DIV_Specialty Commencement
- PRES_DIV_Summer Science Institute Center for Advanced STEM Education MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_TOP
- PRES_DIV_TRIO High School Upward Bound Program MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_UDL Recognition Award Access Center-Disability Support Services MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Veteran and Military Student Services MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Vet-MilStudent TaskForceReportSummary-FINAL
- PRES_Emmy Award
- PRES_EO_Civil Rights Award
- PRES_HSI Newsroom Article
- PRES_Jordan Honored for Commitment to Underserved Students

- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_College Assistance Migrant Program MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Denver Post Article_Undocumented Students
- PRES_MISSION_Five Core Values Strategic Plan 2020 MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Journey Through Our Heritage MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Rachel B Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship
- PRES_MISSION_Richard T Castro Distinguished Visiting Professor MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh
- PRES_President Jordan Three Awards

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

MSU Denver firmly embraces its institutional mission and its contribution to the public good; its transformative function extends deeply into the community. The values of community, access, diversity, respect and entrepreneurship are clearly articulated in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* and reflect the University's commitment to the community. Examples of contributions that benefit Colorado and the region include the University's modified open enrollment admission standards as well as the high numbers of Pell Grant recipients and first generation college students. Per the Fall 2016 Student Profile, Pell-eligible students are near 31 percent of the student body (over 6,000 students), and First-Generation students are 32 percent (over 6, 200 students) of the student body. Beyond its enrollment of underrepresented students, the University maintains significant ties to the surrounding community through educational programs for at-risk youth, partnerships with community organizations and local school districts, resources for families and more.

[1.D.1] – Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

The University, along with the actions and decisions previously mentioned, regularly applies for and receives grants to create and maintain programs that benefit Colorado and the region, most of which have an educational focus. Examples include:

- Teaching with Primary Sources, Western Region (TPS)
- Equity Assistance Center
- Colorado Initiative to Prepare Multiculturally and Linguistically Competent Graduate Social Workers for Careers Serving Children, Adolescents and Transitional Age Youth in Interprofessional Behavioral Healthcare
- Family Literacy Program
- Providers for Youth Partnership.

[1.D.2] – The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization or supporting external interests.

MSU Denver is a public university that has an independent Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor, and is approved by the Colorado Legislature as an autonomous university. With its focus on teaching and learning excellence, it supports only external interests that complement its educational

mission. The University will continue this approach by investing its resources in its areas of strategic priority with a strong emphasis on student and academic success, which is the number one theme in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh:* "At MSU Denver, we believe excellence in teaching and learning and student success — supported in a collegial atmosphere of academic freedom — must be accorded the highest priority. We evaluate our success by utilizing measures focused on the knowledge and skills students gain during their educational experience with us." The institution assesses the success of this goal through defined metrics such as specific percentage increases in retention, an increase in the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and percentage increases in the number of graduates working full time within one year and those who are attending graduate school.

[1.D.3] – The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

MSU Denver continues to demonstrate its investment in and commitment to educating the greater community and providing a wealth of opportunities for collaboration and partnership. Some of these initiatives involve students from elementary, middle and high schools as well as individuals from companies and corporations of varying sizes, all of which contribute to enhancing the public good. Indeed, the University is a gateway of opportunity by transforming the lives of its students and serving the community as a courageous change agent. Examples of its impact on the broader community include:

• **Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center (HLC):** In partnership with Sage Hospitality, the HLC (see 3.D.4) is an on-campus hotel and learning center for University students studying in the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Events.

• **Center for Visual Art** (CVA): An off-campus art gallery, the award-winning CVA hosts exhibitions of distinguished national and international merit and public lectures by the artists and University art faculty and provides art programs to at-risk youth.

• **Project SOAR:** In 2015, the Department of Aviation and Aerospace Science hosted its fourth year of a collaborative grant-funded effort with the Denver Housing Authority and Shades of Blue, a nonprofit organization dedicated to encouraging the study of STEM disciplines.

• **Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building**: By providing a cohesive space for the integrated study of aviation and aerospace science, engineering technologies, computer information systems, computer science, industrial design and advanced manufacturing, MSU Denver will educate skilled, workforce-ready professionals to meet the aviation, aerospace and advanced manufacturing needs of the state of Colorado. MSU Denver is currently finalizing a public-private partnership for the use of some of the space in the building.

• **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program:** In partnership with the Denver Asset Building Coalition and the Piton Foundation, MSU Denver's Department of Accounting assists approximately 1,000 area families with tax preparation each year.

• **Departments of Music and Theatre:** These academic programs promote the cultural life and health of the University and the surrounding region by providing public performances and educational outreach to area K-12 schools**.**

• **One World, One Water Center for Urban Water Education and Stewardship (OWOW):** In collaboration with local and national water organizations, MSU Denver established this interdisciplinary education program that addresses the growing demand for water and the need for

greater public education about this vital resource.

• **Colorado Center for Medical Laboratory Science:** This center, operated by the institution's Extended Campus program, provides post-baccalaureate-level training for medical laboratory scientists, contributing trained professionals to meet a critical health care workforce need in the Rocky Mountain region.

• **Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis (CAVEA):** CAVEA is a unique multi-room venue with cutting-edge technology that supports meetings, events and presentations for the public and the campus community. CAVEA has welcomed clients from education, government, nonprofit, business and manufacturing.

• **Applied Learning Center**: This center provides oversight and support for a myriad of community-based student activities which include:

- Service Learning Program
- Community-Based Research (CBR)
- Fellows Program Internships
- Civic Engagement Grants
- Puksta Scholars Alternative Break Program
- 1Book/1Project/2Transform.

• **Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver:** In 2015, the University opened a newly constructed athletic complex which is adjacent to the low-income neighborhood that surrounds the campus. It serves as a neighborhood and community resource.

• **Career Services Center:** The center provides opportunities for volunteer career assistance to the larger community and career services to MSU Denver alumni as well as current students and hosts events open to the general public.

• **Office of Student Activities**: The office coordinates numerous outreach events and programs that are open to the larger community.

• **Counseling Center:** The center hosts National Awareness and Screening Days on Depression, Alcohol and Eating Disorders that are open to the larger community.

• **Health Center at Auraria:** The health center continues its partnership with Denver's Clinica Tepeyac, a community health clinic with a primary clientele of low-income Latinas/os, including immigrants. Center doctors often volunteer at the clinic to assist with 18 immunization initiatives to provide culturally sensitive and affordable health-care services to uninsured patients.

• **LGBTQ Student Resource Center:** This center engages with the GLBT Center of Colorado to provide events for the larger community.

MSU Denver also has numerous articulation agreements with many educational programs in metro-Denver and within the state of Colorado.

Sources

- ASA_Articulation Agreements

- ASA_CLAS_Center for Visual Art MSU Denver
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Music MSU Denver
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Social Work MSU Denver
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Theatre MSU Denver
- ASA_House Bill 121155 Supplemental Instruction
- ASA_US_Mini Grants Civic Engagement Program
- FINAD_DATA_Fall Undergraduate Student Profiles 2012-2016
- MISC_EXT_Health Center at Auraria
- PRES_DIV_Clinica Tepeyac
- PRES_DIV_LGBTQ Student Resource Center
- PRES_MISSION_1 Book 1 Project 2 Transform MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_2015 Student Profile Enrollment_by_Class_Level
- PRES_MISSION_Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building About MSU Denver MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Alternative Break Program Civic Engagement Program MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
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- PRES_MISSION_Civic Engagement Program Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_CO Initiative to Prepare Multiculturally and Linguistically Competent Graduate Social GranteeFindResults 1-11-2017_3-12 PM
- PRES_MISSION_Colorado Center for Medical Laboratory Science MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Community-Based Research Fellows Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Counseling Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Events MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Family Literacy Program MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Internships Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Office of Student Activities MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_One World One Water Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Providers for Youth Partnership (PYP) Department of Human Services MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Puksta Scholars Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Service Learning Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_SOAR New Student Orientation (NSO) MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh
- PRES_MISSION_TPS Western Region
- PRES_MISSION_VITA Program MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Western Educational Equity Assistance Center

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

MSU Denver proudly publishes its role and mission statements throughout its communications so that all its constituencies understand the vital role the statements play in the University's aspirations. The principles set forth in the statements guide MSU Denver as its system of shared 19 governance assures they are embedded in all policies, regulations, procedures and processes. But the role and mission statements do more than provide direction for the University's operations. Given MSU Denver's modified open enrollment admission standards, these statements go to the very core of what makes the University unique and why its faculty and staff are so loyal. Not only is the institution a gateway of opportunity for many who would otherwise not have the chance to earn a college degree, it is also a leader, a game changer, in finding innovative ways to transform the lives of its students, their communities and even higher education itself. From its rigorous academic programming and its bold leadership in championing higher education for undocumented students, to its unique public/private partnerships that meet critical workforce needs and its commitment to improving the quality of life for all Coloradans, it is evident how MSU Denver lives its role and mission.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

Integrity is essential to MSU Denver's educational and administrative operations. The University's policies and procedures represent the highest standards for the conduct of its governing board, senior leadership, faculty and staff. The University's basic tenet of shared governance ensures that its commitment to ethical and fair processes is woven throughout its culture, programs and community.

Board of Trustees: Responsible for the governance of the University, the board consists of nine members appointed by the governor and approved by the Colorado State Senate and three elected, non-voting members who represent the faculty, the student body and the MSU Denver Alumni Association. The *Trustees Policy Manual* provides the trustees with guidance on the proper governance and oversight of the rules, regulations and standards set by the institution.

Faculty and Staff: The *Handbook for Professional Personnel* and the Colorado *Classified Employee Handbook* for classified employees are the faculty, administrator and staff guides on MSU Denver's employment practices, including the code of conduct (based on the Colorado Revised Statutes article 24, p. 209), policies, procedures and the process for bringing complaints (p. 59) and concerns forward for review by the administration. Both handbooks are accessible to University employees and the broader community on MSU Denver's Board of Trustees website.

The University steadfastly upholds equal opportunity of employment and educational services as outlined in the anti-discrimination policy in the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 16). Also, the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 3) includes policies related to equal opportunity in hiring practices. The Office of Equal Opportunity oversees institutional policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination.

Research: MSU Denver is committed to protecting the rights and welfare of subjects in Human Research. The 13-page *Human Research Protection Plan*, signed by President Jordan in September 2014, describes the University's plan to comply with the legal and ethical requirements for the conduct and oversight of human research. The Human Subjects Protection Program offers guidance and resources for student and faculty researchers. (See 2.E.1.)

The University's associate director for research, housed in the Center for Faculty Excellence, plays a key role in building and maintaining a culture of ethical research (see 2.E.1).

Shared Governance: MSU Denver's commitment to shared governance plays an integral role in

upholding integrity and fairness in all aspects of the University's operations. The *Trustees Policy Manual (p.3)* explicitly states the importance of shared governance in its interaction with the University community. Signifying its importance, the Shared Governance statement comprises the second section of the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 2).

To address concerns raised in campus climate surveys about the University's decision-making process, President Jordan formed the Shared Governance Task Force in Fall 2014 to assess MSU Denver's model of shared governance and make recommendations to improve governance at the University. This group, who helped frame the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* core value of respect, considered various models and approaches of governance and engaged in dialogue with faculty, staff and students on the topic. In June 2015, the task force presented its *Shared Governance Task Force Final Report* outlining key recommendations, including:

- Establish a discourse of trust
- Prioritize communication, including revising the statement of shared governance to better reflect its meaning
- Increase opportunities for people's voices to be heard
- Study current governance structures
- Increase access to the Board of Trustees and enhance trustee engagement.

President Jordan has communicated to the University community his and the board's commitment to ensuring participatory dialogue through a transformation of the University's governance model. Stating that the report's nuanced details will need work in order for the recommendations to be actualized, he has encouraged academic departments and administrative units to discuss the report at team meetings and provide feedback.

Each year, the American Council on Education (ACE) works with education professionals across the U.S. in its professional development program. This year, MSU Denver is a beneficiary of an ACE case-study as 30 education professionals examine the challenges in our *Shared Governance Task Force Report.* They, too, are soliciting feedback on their recommendations.

A Shared Governance Implementation Task Force has been established, headed by the MSU Denver's provost and MSU Denver's chief of staff and associate to the president for marketing and communications. A faculty member has agreed to serve as project manager for this implementation.

Ombuds Office: The University Ombuds Office (UOO) is an employee resource that promotes understanding of University policies and procedures and is committed to finding fair and equitable outcomes to conflicts and concerns. Working outside of the normal lines of authority, the UOO is not aligned with and is functionally independent from any and all of the University's offices. The ombuds officer makes every effort to maintain neutrality and impartiality by acting through the lens of fairness and equity and supports institutional integrity by giving professional and student personnel as well as external constituents who have business with the institution a place to voice their concerns in a fair, ethical, nonjudgmental atmosphere. Communication is voluntary, informal, unbiased and confidential.

In 2014, the UOO handled 148 cases and offered 35 presentations about its functions and limitations to approximately 450 attendees. Annual Reports are posted on the UOO website.

Sources

- ADV_Alumni Friends MSU Denver(2)

- ASA_CAE_Center for Faculty Excellence
- ASA_Center for Faculty Excellence MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_Human Research Protection Plan_SIGNED_updated IO
- ASA_POLICY_Human Subjects Protection Plan Institutional Review Board MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_Research Workshops Research Support
- ASA_Presidents Communication on Shared Governance
- BOT_Board of Trustees MSU Denver
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 7)
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 8)
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 20)
- FINAD_HR_Classified Employee Handbook
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15 (page number 7)
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- PRES_ACE Early Bird
- PRES_MISSION_Office of Equal Opportunity MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Shared Governance Memo
- PRES_MISSION_Shared Governance Task Force_Final Report_MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh
- PRES_MISSION_University Ombuds Office Annual Reports
- PRES_MISSION_University Ombuds Office Homepage
- PRES_Shared Governance Early Bird

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

At MSU Denver, the administration, faculty and staff strive for preeminence and transparency in all facets of the University's work. Articulating its goals, functions and academic offerings to prospective and current students as well as to its internal community and the general public is achieved through numerous communication channels. While MSU Denver recognizes that the internet is the main communication method in this day and age, particularly for younger students, it has not lost sight of the importance of personal, one-on-one interaction. In fact, the University prides itself on its focus on each student's success through its teaching faculty, small classes (18 to 1 ratio) and support services.

The University's main communication tool is msudenver.edu, the institution's home page that presents general information on its programs and initiatives. From there, constituents can access the *2016-17 Catalog* (undergraduate and graduate) as well as older catalogs that outline all academic programs and policies for any given academic year. The home page offers access to each departmental website with detailed program information, specific degree requirements and faculty and staff information. In addition, the home page connects to all administrative office and support services sites where constituents can find tuition-and-fee costs, general University and student policies and information on governance bodies.

Beyond clearly outlining its functions and offerings, the University provides a robust self-service student portal accessed through the Student Hub that allows all admitted students to track their individual student records, degree progression and all information pertaining to their experience at the University.

The President's Cabinet meetings are open to all.

Academic Program Information: The msudenver.edu website contains a section that provides an interactive table of degree options in majors, minors, concentrations, certificates and licensures that community members and prospective students can easily navigate to view the programs offered by the University.

Degree Requirements: Current and archived catalogs on the University catalog site explain the degree requirements and academic policies enforced for a given academic year. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the services offered by the Academic Advising Center and the advisors in the Colleges of Business; Letters, Arts Sciences; and Professional Studies; and the School of Education to guide them through their college career from their first semester through graduation. Students are advised on policies and degree requirements by professional advisors, faculty advisors or both.

Access to Faculty and Staff: Each college/school has established minimum expectations for full-time faculty office hours when students may visit with their instructors to discuss course content, seek advising or otherwise engage in relevant discussion. All faculty and staff members along with their phone numbers and email addresses are listed under the "Contact" tab on their respective

departmental or office website. They can also be searched on the "MSU Denver A to Z" link on msudenver.edu.

Costs to Students: MSU Denver offers the lowest tuition [out of Colorado's four other large, public universities. To retain students and help them graduate in a timely fashion, MSU Denver has a tuition window that sets one price for tuition between 12 and 18 credit hours.

Per the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 31) the Board of Trustees has the authority and responsibility to set tuition and fees in accordance with Colorado Commission on Higher Education policies and guided by the University's mission to provide high-quality, accessible education. The University president annually submits a recommended tuition-and-fee schedule based on enrollment projections and other factors as part of the process of setting the operating budget for the coming fiscal year.

The University makes every effort to ensure students know upfront what costs they can expect. Prospective students and constituents can find official tuition-and-fee charges for the current academic year on the *Important Dates and Deadlines Payment Guide* webpage. The Office of the Bursar is a valuable resource for students to learn about payment options and to plan for specific payment deadlines. Further, upon registering for courses, students can at any time access their detailed tuition-and-fees statement on the self-service portal on the Student Hub.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships teams up with other offices on campus to provide presentations for students on financial literacy and student financial health. Our outreach team also discusses financial literacy at New Student Orientation. The office also has a contract with $ALT, a nonprofit education company, that provides students with financial resources such as repayment options, savings, how to manage a budget, etc. The office also sends communication to students informing them of the amount they have borrowed in student loans and tools on how to manage their debt. Operating under strict guidelines for best business practices, the office works to ensure students fully understand the parameters and obligations of their financial aid package. Its Debt Management program helps students track their student loan debt, resolve issues with default and over-borrowing, review student loan repayment options and develop an understanding of financial literacy.

Control: MSU Denver is governed by the University's Board of Trustees, whose specific role and function are discussed in detail in section 2.C. Biographies of each trustee, the schedule of meetings and associated agendas, policies and governance manuals as well as contact information are available to the internal and external public on the MSU Denver's Board of Trustees website.

Accreditation Relationships: The University's accreditation relationships are published in the 2016-17 Catalog Accreditation and Approvals (undergraduate and graduate). A link to the Higher Learning Commission North Central Association is provided, as is contact information for the other accrediting agencies so that the public can access detailed information, including the corresponding program's accreditation status and accreditation dates.

Sources

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- BOT_Board of Trustees MSU Denver
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- CDHE_Colorado Commission on Higher Education
- MISC_EXT_NCA
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- MISC_INT_MSU Denver-Homepage
- MISC_INT_Student Hub MSU Denver
- PRES_Cabinet Office of the President MSU Denver
- PRES_HLC Path to Preeminence
- PRES_MISSION_Cheapest Colleges in Colorado 2017 - CollegeStatsorg
- PRES_MISSION_Cost
- PRES_MISSION_SOAR New Student Orientation (NSO) MSU Denver

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

The MSU Denver Board of Trustees' autonomy is granted through the Colorado Legislature. As specified in Colorado Revised Statute 23-54-102, the board has full authority and responsibility for the control and governance of the University, including such areas as finance, resources, academic programs, curriculum, admissions, role and mission, personnel policies, etc. The trustees regularly establish policies designed to enable the University to perform its statutory functions in a rational and systematic manner. To assist them in meeting their responsibilities, the trustees delegate to the University president the authority to interpret and administer their policies in all areas of operations.

Each year, the board elects a chair and vice chair. In addition, a trustee serves as the board's representative on the Auraria Higher Education Center Board (AHEC; MSU Denver is located on the Auraria campus, along with the University of Colorado Denver and the Community College of Denver) and the MSU Denver Foundation Board. The Board of Trustee's has three standing committees, including Academic and Student Affairs, Finance and Board Governance, each chaired by a trustee. The committees allow specific, qualified, trustees to engage with the operations of the University at a more detailed level, and subsequently report their findings, suggestions or recommendations to the full board.

The Bylaws of the Board of Trustees are published in the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 5).

[2.C.1] – The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Using its substantial administrative authority, the board monitors the University to be certain that it is performing at the highest possible level and institutes changes when necessary to achieve institution-wide goals. Examples of board actions include the creation of a separate category of non-resident tuition for undocumented students (prior to the ASSET bill), the public/private partnership to construct the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center and its recent deliberations to fill a critical workforce need in Colorado by constructing the Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building to house the Institute for Advanced Manufacturing Sciences and an undergraduate Advanced Manufacturing degree that integrates the STEM disciplines (see 1.D.3).

[2.C.2] – The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interest of the

institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Within the Board of Trustees' operational mission, all internal constituencies – and external constituencies as appropriate – have a role and a responsibility in assisting the University to achieve excellence in its programs and activities. It is incumbent upon the trustees to operate within an environment that encourages participation from the University's constituents and to consider this input and feedback in their decisions.

Notice of meetings: Section 1.5.E. of the *Trustee Policy Manual* (p. 6-7) addresses the requirements of all meetings among the Trustees of MSU Denver. Notices of meetings are also directly in accordance with Colorado's Open Meetings law.

Complete and accurate minutes of each meeting constitute the official record of proceedings of the board and are made available to the public when requested.

The dates of the meetings of the board's three standing committees – Academic and Student Affairs, Finance and Board Governance – are published on the trustees' website. These meetings are open to the public, and time is always set aside for the general public to speak if they sign up on the day of the meeting.

Internal Constituents: The elected Faculty Senate, Student Government Assembly and Alumni Association trustees represent their respective constituencies in board discussions. Beyond these nonvoting trustees, the board expects the participation of faculty, students and staff in its decision-making process and so encourages a broad exchange of information and ideas. To facilitate this exchange, the board looks to the University president as its primary liaison with the University constituencies. To be effective in this role, President Jordan has established avenues for consultation and recommendation by faculty, students and staff regarding policy matters considered by the board. This includes the President's Cabinet that consists of representatives from all the internal employee groups, each vice presidential branch, college, school, major student services areas and the Student Government Assembly. Cabinet minutes are available on the msudenver.edu website under Office of the President.

In addition**,** constituent groups, including the Faculty Senate, Student Government Assembly and administrator/staff council representatives, may initiate and propose changes in policy to be considered by the board if they are submitted in accordance with guidelines established by President Jordan.

[2.C.3] – The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

The board's conflict-of-interest policy, as articulated in the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 9), states: *"The office of trustee is a public trust, created by the confidence which the public reposes in the integrity of its appointed and elected public trustees. Each member of the Board of Trustees shall, mindful of the importance of public confidence, carry out his or her duties with self-evident due care, for the benefit of the University as a public institution, and not for personal benefit."*

The policy lays out the liability for abuse of trust. Each trustee is required to inform the board of any interests that could be a conflict with their official duties and to file an annual financial report that outlines their business interests.

The board reviews the *Articles of Incorporation* of the MSU Denver Foundation, Inc., and approves any gift or activity funded through the foundation that requires or is likely to require, the use of state-appropriated program funds. A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, the foundation is a separate legal entity from MSU Denver that accepts, controls and manages funds and other gifts received as donations to the University. Gifts to the foundation and expenditure of foundation funds must be consistent with the role and mission of the University and must contribute to institutional goals and objectives.

In addition, the board operates under *Colorado Revised Statute 23-1-10*6, as amended, which states that all acquisition of real property by state-supported universities of higher education which is conditional upon or requires expenditures of state-controlled or federal funds for its utilization, whether acquisition is by purchase, gift or otherwise, shall be subject to approval by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

[2.C.4] – The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The president of the University, who is responsible to the Board of Trustees, has general authority and responsibility for administering the University within the board's policies and procedures. The president is responsible for keeping the board informed of all facets of its operation in a timely and appropriate manner. The president is responsible for recommending annual operating and capital budgets (in addition to any budget formula established by the board) that reflect University priorities and other plans, financial and otherwise, for realizing the University mission. The president is to provide sound management of the approved budgets and plans and facilitate their achievement.

The board delegates to the president powers over professional personnel (faculty and administrators) as they are defined in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel.* This includes all personnel offered employment or employed as probationary faculty members, tenured faculty members, administrative personnel, administrative/regular personnel, classified staff and temporary personnel.

Academic Planning and Approval of Curricular Items: In alignment with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) guidelines, MSU Denver's Faculty Senate--in consultation with appropriate representatives from the provost's and president's offices--develops academic policies and curriculum proposals. These are reviewed, and possibly revised, by various levels within the University. Ultimately, they are recommended to the board for approval. The board, which endorses the principle of academic freedom, has the ultimate authority for approving curriculum, but it recognizes that the faculty must play a proactive role in formulating curriculum for the board's consideration. The following curricular actions must be approved by the board before becoming effective:

- New degree programs
- New minors, concentrations and certificates of completion
- Discontinuation of any program.

The board delegates approval of all other curriculum changes to the president as well as the approval of internal policies and procedures for curriculum approval.

Sources

- ADV_FOUND_MSUDF Articles of Incorporation-FINAL-6.4.13-SIGNED

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- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual
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- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 10)
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 13)
- BOT_BOT Approval_Trustee Delegation of Authority to the President
- BOT_BOT Minutes
- BOT_BOT Three Standing Committees
- BOT_BOT_Consent Item
- BOT_Colorado Revised Statutes Title 23
- BOT_Faculty Senate
- BOT_Student Government Assembly MSU Denver
- CDHE_Colorado Commission on Higher Education
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15
- MISC_EXT_Auraria Board of Directors AHEC
- PRES_Cabinet Office of the President MSU Denver
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- PRES_Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center About MSU Denver MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Advanced Manufacturing Sciences Degree Program
- PRES_MISSION_Advanced Manufacturing Sciences Institute MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building About MSU Denver MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Denver Post Article_Undocumented Students
- PRES_Office of the President MSU Denver
- PRES_President's Cabinet Minutes 1_11_16 and 9_19_16

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

MSU Denver's commitment to academic freedom and truth in its educational enterprises is a core tenet that underpins its culture and the manner in which it performs its responsibilities.

Trustees: The University's commitment is affirmed in the Trustees Policy Manual (p. 43). *The board "endorses the principle of academic freedom, which means the freedom to fully discuss academic subjects; engage in research and publish the results of research; and write or speak as citizens without fear of institutional censorship or discipline, provided that individuals do not represent themselves as writing or speaking for the University."*

Faculty and Staff: Academic freedom is one of the seven interrelated principles to which faculty and staff members aspire; the others are communication, valuing all employees, democratic workplace, management excellence, diversity and management innovation. The *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 2) states the commitment to academic freedom: "The University is a teaching institution where excellence in teaching and learning is accorded the highest priority. Student success, supported in a collegial atmosphere of academic freedom is of paramount importance, and all members of the University community seek to inspire students to strive for the highest level of achievement." While not specifically addressing academic freedom, the *Colorado Classified Employees Handbook* addresses integrity and honesty in its section on ethics on page 10 for classified employees.

Faculty Senate: MSU Denver's Faculty Senate has a strong *Statement on Academic Freedom* on its website.

Students: The *2016-17 Catalog Student Code of Conduct* (undergraduate and graduate) defines the University's rules and regulations for student conduct regarding academic freedom and the disciplinary sanctions to which a student would be subject if said rules and regulations are broken. General University policies regarding academic freedom are stated in the *2016-17 Catalog Student Rights and Responsibilities* (undergraduate and graduate) and the *IT Technology Policy Manual.*

MSU Denver hosted an "Academic Freedom Forum" on March 6, 2017.

Sources

- ASA_CLAS_Academic Freedom Forum
- ASA_POLICY_IT Policy Handbook-Nov 2009
- ASA_POLICY_Student Code of Conduct-MSU Denver-Acalog ACMS
- ASA_POLICY_Student Rights and Responsibilities-MSU Denver
- BOT_AcademicFreedomStatement03302005
- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual

- BOT_Board of Trustees Policy Manual (page number 47)
- BOT_Faculty Senate
- FINAD_HR_Classified Employee Handbook
- FINAD_HR_Classified Employee Handbook (page number 12)
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15 (page number 7)

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

The responsibility for honesty and integrity is the touchstone that buttresses academic freedom and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning at MSU Denver. The University has wisely employed its system of shared governance to give faculty, staff and students a voice and ownership in the review, decision-making and oversight processes that address academic responsibilities.

[2.E.1] – The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice by its faculty, staff, and students.

The Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures document applies to all members of the University community who are engaged in any research and includes definitions of misconduct, filing complaints, the investigation process, notifications and reporting obligations, outcomes and record retention. It is published on the Academic Affairs website.

In 2016, the position of associate director for research, which is located in the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE), was created specifically to provide a key role in building and maintaining a culture of ethical research. The associate director serves as the initial point of contact for IRB/human subject protection protocol submissions and promotes the *Responsible Conduct of Research* (RCR) through education and training initiatives. MSU Denver is required to have an RCR educational program, especially given NSF grants. The associate director provides guidance, consultation and strategies to support a wide range of proposed research activities, such as student-driven research proposals, multi-institutional proposals, scholarship of teaching and learning and/or community-based research initiatives.

Research: The University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) is the administrative unit that oversees the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with all regulations and standards. The HSPP provides resources and administrative support to MSU Denver researchers and manages the IRB website, a comprehensive compilation of all the procedures, policies and guidelines that researchers and reviewers must follow.

The cornerstone of the University's HSPP is the *Human Research Protection Plan,* which outlines a system that ensures the protection of the rights and the welfare of subjects in human research. The plan defines the parameters for conducting human research in compliance with ethical and legal requirements as well as the mechanisms for its oversight. Signed by the University president in September 2014, the plan sets the expectation that all members of the MSU Denver community will adhere to it.

The IRB Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) provides courses for faculty, staff and students that are an overview of human subjects research and protections. The CITI training is the minimum requirement for researchers who are submitting materials for IRB review. Basic course trainings are valid for three years from completion.

Student Research: MSU Denver's strict rules for students' scholarly and research work emphasizes the same level of expectations for ethical academic conduct as that of the faculty and staff. The rules apply to both undergraduate and graduate students. Plagiarism and academic integrity are addressed in the *Student Code of Conduct* published in in the *MSU Denver 2016-17 Catalog.* One of the responsibilities listed in the 2016-17 Catalog *Student Rights and Responsibilities* section (undergraduate and graduate) is that students must "maintain academic ethics and academic honesty." Some students are asked to sign an academic integrity statement in their courses, and, for most classes, MSU Denver faculty use the plagiarism detection software that is part of the Blackboard Learning Management System called *Safe Assign. (See 3.D.5)*

MSU Denver's *Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for Federally Funded Proposals*, the *Collaborator Certification Form* and the *Disclosure Form* are published on the Academic and Student Affairs website.

The Undergraduate Research Program in the Applied Learning Center promotes and supports undergraduate research activities that adhere to institutional policies for ethical research by holding workshops throughout the year on topics such as the definition of research, human subject protection and the IRB process and offers guidance for writing abstracts. The program's goal is to enhance students' preparedness and competitiveness for future employment and the pursuit of advanced degrees. Students have the opportunity to apply for mini research grants, be mentored by MSU Denver faculty and participate in the annual spring semester Undergraduate Research Conference. Students who participate in these programs have an MSU Denver faculty mentor who signs off to ensure faculty oversight for all research projects. MSU Denver is a member of the National Science Foundation's Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR).

Scholarly Practice: Institutional performance measures for tenure-track faculty that are in accordance with AAUP guidelines are outlined in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 10), *Chapter V − Policies and Procedures for Tenure-Track Faculty: Reappointment, Tenure, Tenure Promotion, Post-Tenure Review and Emeritus Status*. The president's and provost's offices provide oversight of these policies and expectations. In addition, each academic department has a set of guidelines for faculty that clearly define the expectations for scholarly activity within the department and University.

The Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) is responsible for presenting workshops for tenure-track faculty on portfolio preparation that review these measures and guidelines. The CFE also provides support services for faculty including faculty development workshops, learning communities, mentoring and instructional consultation.

The *Academic Integrity* section on the dean of students' website includes both on- and off-campus academic integrity resources, definitions and examples of various forms of student academic misconduct, frequently asked questions about academic integrity and support resources for faculty and staff who are educating students about the ethical use of resources.

[2.E.2] – Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Undergraduate students learn and practice the ethical use of information resources through MSU Denver's General Studies curricula, which requires student-learning outcomes, each with its own

rubric. These outcomes include:

- Use and document resources and evidence in an ethical manner.
- Demonstrate the ability to locate resources when information is needed.
- Evaluate the authenticity, validity and reliability of resources applied to a specific purpose. Individual sessions offered to students at the University's Writing Center assist them with their writing, including how to properly cite resources. The Auraria Library offers online tutorials on the use and proper citation of resources that any student can access.

Also, all students are required to take a second semester composition course. As is true at many universities, MSU Denver's second semester composition course, ENG 1020, includes research techniques and the conventions of documentation.

Each graduate program has mechanisms in place to make sure graduate students have guidance in the ethical use of information resources:

- Master of Arts in Teaching students are required to take a 6000-level research class where they must complete Human Subjects Review training and are provided with instruction on how to appropriately and accurately cite resources.
- Master of Professional Accountancy students are required to take Accounting Ethics, Professionalism and Leadership (ACCM 5000) where they learn about plagiarism, proper citation and other ethical obligations. Because the program is research-based, most courses require extensive research and writing, giving students an opportunity to practice those skills. The curriculum also addresses the appropriateness of sources from a reliability standpoint in communicating accounting information to necessary parties.
- Master of Social Work students take a 5000-level course that goes through the entire research proposal process with ethics as one of the content modules. At the 6000 level, students propose a piece of practice or program evaluation that they carry out in the spring semester. The proposals are reviewed by the program's Research and Ethics Committee.

[2.E.3] – The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

MSU Denver's Academic Integrity section published on the dean of students' website is robust and applies to all members of the University community. Specifically, faculty members are strongly encouraged to include the academic integrity statement on their syllabi and discuss it the first day of classes.

Students: One of the responsibilities listed in the *2016-17 Catalog Academic Responsibilities* section (undergraduate and graduate) is that students must "maintain academic ethics and academic honesty."

The *2016-17 Catalog Student Code of Conduct* specifically defines academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, using the same work for multiple classes and other acts of dishonesty. The code also defines other prohibited behaviors and the accountability process if a student violates these policies. The code is included in all official student email at the beginning of the semester. Anyone can report an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct through an online form on the website.

In cases of student academic misconduct, faculty members make the determination of responsibility as the content-matter experts and can assign a grade sanction, including a permanent "F." They are expected to also file the incident with Student Conduct in the Dean of Students Office. Student Conduct will review the case for potential institutional sanctions as this office is responsible for adjudicating any violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Student Conduct maintains student

conduct files and can identify patterns of behaviors and repeat offenders.

Faculty: Chapter XV of the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 100) outlines the policies and procedures for termination of faculty and includes the following section: Professional Conduct, Ethics and Responsibilities of Faculty: "Lists of specific unprofessional or unethical acts that would subject a faculty member to dismissal are inevitably incomplete or susceptible to overly broad or narrow interpretations. Therefore, faculty shall be guided by a common-sense interpretation and application of the general standards of professional conduct summarized in this section relating to academic responsibilities and responsibilities to students, colleagues, staff and the University as well as responsibilities as citizens. The University hereby adopts and incorporates by reference the *AAUP's 1987 Statement on Professional Ethics* as the standard against which faculty conduct will be measured." Academic dishonesty and fraud are listed as examples of unprofessional conduct which can be a basis for dismissal of faculty.

The president and provost have oversight of any faculty dismissal process.

Classified staff dismissals are governed by the Colorado State Department of Personnel Rules. **Administrators** are "at will" employees and their dismissals fall under the president, provost, deputy provost and vice presidents.

Research: All members of the University community engaged in research must adhere to the *Research Misconduct Policy* and Procedures (see 2.E.1).

Information Technology: The University's *IT Security Policies* include the *Responsible Use of Information Technology* Resources Policy and *IT Security Policies on Academic Freedom, Confidentiality and Privacy.* These documents outline the ethical use of MSU Denver technology, including data sharing, piracy, confidential information and private communication

Sources

- ASA_Academic and Student Affairs MSU Denver
- ASA_CAE_2016 General Studies Requirements
- ASA_CAE_Email_URL for Research
- ASA_CBUS_Masters Degree Department of Accounting MSU Denver
- ASA_Center for Faculty Excellence MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_MSW Program Department of Social Work MSU Denver
- ASA_CUR Council on Undergraduate Research
- ASA_Dean of Students MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_Academic Integrity Dean of Students MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_Campus Policy-Academic Freedom and Confidentiality SNAP MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_CITI Training Institutional Review Board MSU Denver
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- ASA_POLICY_Rubrics Assessment General Studies MSU Denver
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- ASA_POLICY_Student Conduct Dean of Students MSU Denver
- ASA_POLICY_Student Rights and Responsibilities-MSU Denver
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- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15 (page number 105)
- MISC_EXT_AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics
- MISC_EXT_Auraria Library
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center Annual Report
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center MSU Denver

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

MSU Denver's adherence to the principle of shared governance has proven to be the foundation that confirms the University is honorable and accountable in its conduct. Through shared governance, the University has in place all the necessary components for assuring the integrity of its operations, the ethical and fair treatment of all members of the University community, compliance with laws and regulations and abidance of the precept of academic freedom. Shared governance drives the University's culture of communication, mutual respect and commitment to its role and mission — from its faculty and staff, through to its senior leadership and ultimately its governing board. MSU Denver students are given the knowledge, tools and mentorship they need to pursue their education successfully within this culture that so values its integrity.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - 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

MSU Denver is a comprehensive university offering 73 bachelor's degrees, 85 minors, 130 concentrations, 31 certifications, 33 licensure programs and five master's degrees (https://msudenver.edu/programs/) through its College of Business, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, College of Professional Studies and School of Education.

As stated in the University's role and mission, excellence in teaching, learning and scholarly inquiry are MSU Denver's primary objectives. To accomplish this, the University reviews and assesses all curricula, including General Studies, to ensure that it is rigorous, topical and meets the institution's goals for student-learning outcomes.

Undergraduate Degrees: At the undergraduate level, MSU Denver awards bachelor of science, bachelor of arts, bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of social work, bachelor of music and bachelor of music education degrees. Its programs range from the traditional disciplines, such as history and biology, to contemporary fields of study, such as biochemistry, athletic training and communication design. The University offers several bachelor's degree programs unique in Colorado, including aviation management, recreation management, geospatial sciences, meteorology and integrative healthcare. Students may also design their own degree through the Individualized Degree Program housed in the Center for Individualized Learning (see 3.A.3). Support for these programs is provided by an associate vice president for undergraduate studies.

Master's Degrees: MSU Denver offers five professionally oriented master's degrees in:

- Professional accountancy
- Social work
- Teaching (concentrations in elementary education and special education)
- Business administration (began January 2017)
- Health administration (began January 2017).

All courses in the graduate curricula were designed and are offered as graduate-level courses only.

Support for MSU Denver's Graduate Council and graduate programs has been provided by an associate vice president, but a director of graduate studies was recently hired. The Graduate Council and the director of graduate studies are responsible for building and maintaining the graduate culture at the institution. The council has taken a two-pronged approach to this charge. The first is the development of policy and procedures for graduate programs such as the curriculum-review process. The second is to develop guidelines that facilitate the research efforts of faculty teaching in the graduate programs – both their own research and research collaborations with students. To this end, the council is developing proposals regarding best practices (for example, for graduate teaching loads), and it hosted an inaugural Graduate Studies Conference for faculty and staff in February of 2016.

[3.A.1] – Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

MSU Denver has comprehensive review and approval processes in place to ensure the appropriateness and currency of courses, minors, certificates, concentrations and majors at the undergraduate and graduate level. The processes include both internal and external review.

The *Curriculum Manual* for *Undergraduate Studies* *(use both links)* and the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual* document the governing policies and procedures for creating, modifying and discontinuing courses, certificates, degree programs and degree concentrations at MSU Denver. All submitted curriculum proposals are reviewed by faculty committees to ensure that they are pedagogically aligned with current scholarship, appropriate as an undergraduate or graduate-level course or program and of benefit to students and the community. All new degree programs must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Curriculum originates in academic departments. In the case of interdisciplinary courses or programs, the department with primary responsibility for the course or program is considered the originating department. Administrative units, such as the Applied Learning Center, Athletics, Extended Campus and the One World One Water Center for Urban Water Education and Stewardship (OWOW), must work through the appropriate academic department(s) to submit curriculum through the approval process.

In addition to the review process for all curricular changes, every seven years the University schedules a program-review procedure for each academic program to evaluate enrollment data, retention and completion rates, staffing and facility needs, and assessment of student learning. An external review by an invited peer consultant in the field is included. (See 4.A.1.)

Also, there is an annual assessment requirement for every program at MSU Denver. These assessments, based on learning outcomes, allow programs to update their programs regularly to support continuous improvement (see 4.B.3).

One requirement for each undergraduate academic program is to include a capstone course in its curriculum. The Senior Experience course provides a culmination of the undergraduate experience, allowing students the opportunity to synthesize acquired knowledge and skills and to demonstrate critical analysis and logical thinking. This requirement further ensures a level of performance appropriate for a baccalaureate degree.

Over 20 academic programs at MSU Denver hold a specialized accreditation, such as the Council on

Social Work Education for the Social Work Program and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing for the Nursing Program. The external reviews by these accrediting bodies ensure the currency, quality and appropriateness of these programs (see 4.A.5).

Twenty-two academic programs have an advisory board to review the program's overall health and status, advise faculty on the general direction of the program, critically review the program's strategic plans, provide guidance regarding proficiencies needed when hiring new faculty, identify potential sources of supplemental funding and help develop, maintain and innovate the curriculum. Samples of advisory board meetings minutes are provided.

[3.A.2] – The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, postgraduate and certificate programs

All of our programs have goals or learning outcomes appropriate for their level, undergraduate, graduate, etc. Also, in the summer of 2015, an Undergraduate Outcomes Task Force was convened to continue work that had begun in 2012-13 to identify outcomes for graduates of MSU Denver's baccalaureate programs. In the fall of 2015, surveys were used to gather input from multiple stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, alumni and local business leaders. The results of the surveys were then vetted in public "town hall" forums and outcomes were finalized. In the spring of 2016, the Task Force met to identity assessment strategies and revise the number of now nine outcomes. This discussion continued into the fall of 2016. In the spring of 2017, these undergraduate outcomes and their assessment strategies are being presented to Faculty Senate for a discussion and possible vote in March of 2017.

Once the Undergraduate Outcomes are approved by Faculty Senate, MSU Denver's Graduate Council intends to develop MSU Denver's Graduate Outcomes, to be in place for 2017-18.

[3.A.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).

MSU Denver's primary objective of excellence in teaching and learning, as articulated in its role statement, remains consistent among all the University's academic programs and delivery methods. All courses offered by MSU Denver for transcript credit fall under the purview of department chairs, regardless of mode or location of delivery. Deans and department chairs are responsible for hiring appropriately qualified faculty and maintaining consistent content and rigor across all modes of delivery and in all locations. Department chairs are responsible for the evaluation of instruction and chairs and faculty are responsible for assessment of student learning. Note: MSU Denver does not deliver courses through any contractual or consortial agreements.

Online and Hybrid Courses and Programs: In addition to traditional classroom learning options, MSU Denver offers approximately 1,700 online and hybrid course sections, encompassing 400 unique online and 200 unique hybrid courses per semester. Since launching online courses in the Fall 1996, the University has responded to increasing demand for online and hybrid delivery options. These delivery methods are well-suited to MSU Denver's student population, many of whom have competing work and family obligations. MSU Denver's class schedule does allow students to peruse lists of either hybrid (mixed F2F) or online courses only.

Faculty, staff and students can get technology assistance through the IT Services Helpdesk which provides phone assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Walk-in help is available in two different buildings on the campus. Anyone at the university can submit a service

ticket.

Based on the analysis of feedback from surveys of online faculty and students each fall and spring, the University has launched several initiatives to promote continuous quality improvement for all online courses. These include:

- An institutional course template developed in alignment with the Quality Matters rubric
- Implementation of Course Constellation program to empower faculty with course development
- Faculty Instructional Lab hours with instructional technology staff available
- Launch of an Online Faculty Commons virtual community of practice
- Updated instructional design and support processes
- New training and professional development options, including Faculty Learning Communities (see 1.C.2) on the pedagogy of online learning as well as an advanced Quality Matters course certification program
- eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar ELITE), an online faculty certification program
- CourseAssist, a course improvement program for faculty
- Technology Accessibility Initiative
- AIDNet, an organizational infrastructure to support faculty with instructional design
- Best Practices document circulation.

In the fall of 2016, the associate vice president for innovative learning developed and circulated a best practices checklist for department chairs to department chairs. The Educational Technology Center has an implementation plan in place for *Continuous Quality Improvement for MSU Denver; Blended Courses, Online Courses and Online Programs, 2015-2018*.

While the University has over 20 years of experience delivering online courses, marketing online programs is a relatively new initiative launched after substantial planning and discussions through various committees consisting of campus-wide representation. Specifically, the University charged a campus-wide task force with exploring the feasibility of and need for online programs, as well as charged a council to develop a pilot plan for marketing online programs. Based on the findings of these two groups detailed in the *2014 Online Task Force Report* and the 2015 Council for Online Programs Strategic Plan the University is currently conducting a pilot of online programs in Social Work and Healthcare Management. To support this initiative, the position of director of online programs was created. Reporting to the associate vice president for innovative learning, the director oversees the launch of online academic programs, conducts marketing and planning activities, and develops strategies to ensure the success of online programs.

In 2015, MSU Denver joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for out-of-state student enrollment.

In February of 2017, the director for online learning developed and circulated to department chairs a set of key indicators for evaluating online offerings, identifying the data needed for this process.

Extended Campus: MSU Denver's Extended Campus (of which Metro South is a part) houses degree-completion courses, self-paced distance-learning courses, the Alternative Teacher Licensure Program, the Colorado Center for Medical Laboratory Science post-baccalaureate program and professional development courses for Continuing Education Units. All courses that award MSU Denver's transcripted credits and all certificate and degree programs are the purview of the department chair for that discipline, including faculty qualifications and selection, course content and rigor. Extended Campus hosted a Higher Learning Commission site visit in 2015. As detailed in the

report, the pattern of operations at the locations were deemed adequate and no further review or monitoring was necessary.

In 2015, the state of Michigan affirmed MSU Denver's ability, as a public institution of higher education, to have a physical presence in Detroit at the Detroit Institute of Music Education (DIME), and the University joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) to be authorized to deliver online courses in Michigan as well. In 2016, the Higher Learning Commission approved DIME as an additional location for MSU Denver. The program is offered through Extended Campus, but all its instructional aspects are under the purview of the Department of Music, including the hiring of faculty, curriculum oversight, syllabi and delivery of instruction, and assessment of student learning. The University began admitting students in bachelor of arts music programs there in fall of 2016.

Center for Individualized Learning: The center helps students design their own degrees through its Individualized Degree Program (IDP) and/or integrate their prior experience with their current education through the Prior Learning Assessment Program, among others. However, all decisions regarding faculty qualifications and selection, content and rigor are the purview of the department chair for each course prefix, and all IDPs are reviewed and approved by faculty, department chair and dean.

The University grants credits for prior learning, depending on the academic program, as verified by the following assessment methods:

- National standardized tests, including: Advanced Placement Examinations (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)/Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) and International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Departmental credit by examination
- Portfolio assessment
- Military training and military occupational specialties (MOS) evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE)
- Other training programs evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE).

With the assistance of the Colorado Department of Higher Education staff, and approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, faculty across the public higher-education institutions in Colorado have identified and agreed to common AP and IB scores for General Studies credits. Similar discussions are going on currently, vis-à-vis the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado's higher education faculty, with regard to CLEP and DSST scores. For now, all decisions regarding credit for prior learning at MSU Denver, except for AP and IB scores for general studies, are made at the department level. Credit for prior leaning must be documented, evaluated and appropriate for the program where it is being applied.

Sources

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- ASA_Academic Assessment
- ASA_CAE_2016 General Studies Requirements
- ASA_CAE_2016 Graduate Curriculum Guidelines Policies and Procedures
- ASA_CAE_2016CurriculumManualREV916_Part1
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- ASA_CAE_Undergraduate Outcomes and Notes
- ASA_CAE_University Outcomes Draft Chart 6_5_13
- ASA_CAE_UOTF FAQ
- ASA_CAE_UOTF Notes
- ASA_CAE_UPRC
- ASA_CBUS_College of Business MSU Denver
- ASA_CBUS_Master of Business Administration (MBA) MSU Denver
- ASA_CBUS_Masters Degree Department of Accounting MSU Denver
- ASA_CLAS_College of Letters, Arts and Sciences MSU Denver
- ASA_CLAS_Continuous Quality Improvement
- ASA_CPS_College of Professional Studies MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_Master of Health Administration Department of Health Professions MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_MSW Program Department of Social Work MSU Denver
- ASA_EXT State of Michigan Letter
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- ASA_EXT_DIME Department of Music MSU Denver
- ASA_EXT_Director for Online Programs Position Description
- ASA_EXT_Extended Campus MSU Denver
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- ASA_EXT_Professional Development Extended Campus MSU Denver
- ASA_EXT_SARA
- ASA_EXT_Self-Paced Online Learning Extended Campus MSU Denver
- ASA_IT Services Help Desk
- ASA_Online and Hybrid Checklist
- ASA_Online and Hybrid Progress
- ASA_Online Evaluation
- ASA_Online Learning Taskforce Recommendations
- ASA_SOE_Alternative Licensure Program MSU Denver
- ASA_SOE_Graduate Programs School of Education MSU Denver
- ASA_SOE_School of Education MSU Denver
- ASA_Undergraduate Learning Outcomes Summary 2_24_2017
- ASA_Undergraduate Outcomes
- ASA_US_Alternative CreditOptions
- ASA_US_Center for Individualized Learning MSU Denver
- ASA_US_Individualized Degree Programs Center for Individualized Learning MSU Denver
- ASA_US_Prior Learning Assessment Center for Individualized Learning MSU Denver
- BOT_Board of Trustees MSU Denver
- BOT_Faculty Senate_Graduate Council
- BOT_Graduate Council
- CDHE_AP Scores 2017
- CDHE_Colorado Commission on Higher Education
- CDHE_IB Scores 2017
- FINAD_HR_Director Graduate Studies
- PRES_Accreditations and Approvals
- PRES_ACE Alternative Credit Project
- PRES_Active Advisory Boards
- PRES_Athletics MSU Denver

- PRES_MISSION_Advisory Board Minutes
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_One World One Water Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_The University and Its Mission-MSU Denver

3.B - 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

MSU Denver accepts responsibility for assuring that its baccalaureate degrees include a broad-based education that prepares students for the more focused study of the academic major and which encourages intellectual habits that promote lifelong learning. The University has been through a thorough and thoughtful research-driven process over many years to make certain that the general education component of an MSU Denver degree teaches foundational skills and crucial intellectual skills in analysis, research and communication and introduces a broad range of studies in the natural sciences, the human condition, aesthetic experience, and global and cultural diversity.

Undergraduate and graduate research opportunities in collaboration with faculty strengthen the rigor of the student academic experience. In addition, the University is noted for its programs, curricular and co-curricular, that offer students the opportunity to apply practical skills in their chosen field.

The University has policies in place to ensure its faculty maintain a high level of scholarship and service.

[3.B.1] – The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution.

MSU Denver's General Studies (GS) program, described in the 2016-17 Undergraduate Catalog General Studies Requirements, has been the center of critical discussions and significant effort toward its improvement for the past two decades. In 1987, a new GS curriculum was approved and implemented. It grew organically until Spring 1997, when an accreditation evaluation team noted an "excessive" number of courses in MSU Denver's (then MSCD's) GS program. They also pointed to a lack of clearly defined and publically available student-learning outcomes (SLOs) tied to general studies. This in turn led to concerns about the assessment of student learning within the GS program. The evaluators subsequently recommended that MSU Denver revise its GS program "so that the

important skills and student-learning outcomes" would be "clearly delineated."

A 2007 site visit from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) found that some improvement had been made with respect to general studies, but noted that since the necessary modifications were still "in progress," the University must file a monitoring report in April of 2009.

Faculty members began surveying GS programs at peer institutions to create a program best suited for MSU Denver. The results were shared campus-wide; subsequently, faculty from across disciplines met with administrators and staff consistently for over a year to devise the core of the GS program. An attempt at consensus for a new GS program did not succeed in 2008 and the conversations continued. Over the next several years, the core of the program, as it exists now, was carved out, building on the American Association of Colleges and University's LEAP recommendations, best practices at other institutions and the Colorado State Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways General Education Curriculum. When the MSU Denver community agreed upon the broad categories, faculty and administrators took the next step to develop SLOs for each category. That proved to be a tremendous challenge as content experts met and debated the most effective SLOs for a given category. Joan Foster, dean of what is now the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, lead the General Studies Task Force, composed of faculty from across the disciplines. In the end, consensus was reached and the SLOs for each category were overwhelmingly approved by a faculty-wide vote.

HLC conducted a focused visit in October of 2010, followed by a monitoring report in the summer of 2012. The 2012 report revealed a "lack of sufficient progress" and MSU Denver was required to report again in 2014. That report earned commendation from the HLC, as they noted "substantial progress" in both the GS program itself and the assessment of student learning within the program.

While the process of creating a new GS program was long, it resulted in diverse input and wide faculty participation. What one sees with the program now is the distillation of decades of thought and consideration toward how best to serve MSU Denver students through general studies. The process has insured that the GS program is strong and sufficiently nimble that SLOs can be changed as assessment data is reviewed. (See 4.B.2.)

The GS program in its current form reflects a general studies philosophy held by the MSU Denver faculty who contributed to its creation and voted on the distinct SLOs. It is deliberately broad to provide courses that will nurture the skills and knowledge of an engaged, lifelong learner, and the SLOs continue to facilitate transfer within GT Pathways, the state's Guaranteed Transfer program, even though the outcomes for GT courses were recently revised.

The University has continued to improve the GS program (see 3.B.2), and, as of 2016, the program is meeting the needs of the diverse student population. The new GS program is anchored by SLOs that provide clear and concise standards for learning and assessment related to the University's mission to offer *"enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, postgraduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society"* (from MSU Denver's "Role and Mission" statements).

Several SLOs are found in different GS program categories to encourage broad critical thinking across disciplines. For example, the Written Communication, Oral Communication, Historical, Natural and Physical Sciences, Arts and Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences I and II categories all share the SLO: *"Demonstrate the ability to locate sources when information is needed, and evaluate the authenticity, validity and reliability of resources applied to a specific purpose."* This cross-category approach insures that the stated core goals of the GS program are reinforced while allowing students to acquire the knowledge and unique skills of MSU Denver's varied disciplines.

The University has experienced the growth of unique GS course offerings related to the institution's commitment to civic engagement and community partnerships. For example, the Social Work course SWK 1600 Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility, approved in 2015, is now an approved GS course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences II category and carries a service-learning designation. SWK 1600 provides an outstanding opportunity for students to earn GS credit while working in the classroom and the community.

Although these kinds of new general studies courses are valued, because of significant overall growth of GS course offerings at MSU Denver, in January of 2017 MSU Denver's Faculty Senate imposed a moratorium on new general studies courses until the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate General Studies Committee can determine what is in the best interest of MSU Denver students. They are to make a recommendation to Faculty Senate by May of 2017.

The process of creating a clearly structured GS program helped foster important conversations among faculty. For example, the History Department engaged in a yearlong effort to hone the SLOs for the Historical category. The process involved several meetings at the department level, and then significant vetting by Faculty Senate committees and the Office of the Provost. In the end, the course offerings in the Historical category were significantly reduced in order to meet the refined SLOs. This is evidence that the attention paid to the GS program over the past two decades has awakened and invigorated faculty, staff and administrators while simultaneously contributing to a robust GS philosophy and curriculum that will continue to evolve and improve in the decades to come.

[3.B.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.

Subsequent to the reinvigoration of the GS program, the University has made an earnest effort to communicate the nature and purpose of general studies to its student population through advising, advising guides and the *2016-17 Undergraduate University Catalog General Studies Requirements*. First, the catalog clearly and concisely states that the GS program's mission is to foster lifelong learning. Then, in the following section, Structure of General Studies, students are introduced to the coordinating philosophy that scaffolds the entire GS curriculum, expressed in three goals:

- Develop intellectual and practical skills
- Explore essential knowledge, perspectives and methods in arts and humanities, history, social and behavioral sciences, and natural and physical sciences
- Understand the global interconnectedness of diverse individuals, communities and societies.

Distinct SLOs are published within each of the nine general GS categories and support the three program goals. Students can find, embedded within the categories, the courses that will satisfy the given GS requirement. Students must also complete a 3-credit-hour Multicultural course (see 3.B.4) and a 3-credit-hour Senior Experience course (see 3.B.3), or selection of courses, to be awarded a bachelor's degree.

[3.B.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.

Each academic program at MSU Denver has program goals and SLOs that relate to higher education

objectives such as establishing and enhancing critical thinking, information processing, decision-making and workplace competencies among students.

Students engage in a variety of practical and theoretical skills and modes of inquiry. Consistent with University policies, program faculty determine the manner in which students obtain these skills. MSU Denver emphasizes collaboration between students and faculty in scholarship and creative work, and there are numerous opportunities for students to present these efforts (see 3.B.5).

While each distinct degree program at MSU Denver works to engage students in the process of knowledge acquisition, analysis and critical communication, the University has also deliberately structured its GS program to cultivate the complex skill sets and modes of inquiry needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world (see 3.B.2).

Students must complete a Senior Experience course at the end of the undergraduate program and must take the course or courses at MSU Denver. Senior Experience courses include "senior standing" as a prerequisite in addition to other prerequisites designated by the department. In some cases, students may need to take two courses to satisfy the requirement. Senior Experience courses provide a culmination of the undergraduate experience, allowing students to synthesize their learning using critical analysis and logical thinking, and serve as a site for program assessment. Students may use the course to satisfy major or minor requirements if the course is approved for that use.

Assessment of the nine undergraduate outcomes (see 3.A.2), to be voted on by MSU Denver's Faculty Senate this spring, will provide a way to measure graduating baccalaureate students' mastery of the skills needed for today's work and civic world. The Senior Experience courses are where these assessments can be done.

[3.B.4] – The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Given MSU Denver's urban location and distinct student population, diversity is both a daily reality and educational philosophy. Since the 1990s the University has required all baccalaureate students to complete a three-credit **Multicultural Course requirement** dedicated to understanding the multicultural nature of the United States. These courses introduce students to the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of Denver, Colorado and the nation. The University offers more than 80 courses in 29 disciplines for the multicultural graduation requirement.

MSU Denver took advantage of the momentum dedicated to overhauling its GS program and created a **Global Diversity requirement** dedicated to understanding the diversity of cultures across the globe rather than within our own country. In order to keep credit requirements manageable in the GS program, there is an approved list of Global Diversity courses that exist within another of the GS program's eight categories. The Global Diversity course may be used to satisfy requirements in both the Global Diversity category and another GS program category. A student who completes the GS program at MSU Denver will have had the opportunity to confront, study and hopefully understand the complexities of human existence in the U.S. and the world.

In addition to the above requirements, courses in the GS Arts and Humanities category and the two Social and Behavioral Sciences categories address human and cultural diversity; the SLOs for these categories make clear the goal of recognizing such diversity.

Diversity Academic Programs, Support Services and Events:

(See 1.C.1 for an additional listing of events, student engagement programs and support services related to diversity.)

- The **Institute for Women's Studies and Services** offers a rigorous, multidisciplinary curriculum in women's studies, with a major and minor in Women's Studies and a minor in Genders and Sexualities.
- The **Department of Africana Studies** offers a major, majors with elementary education or secondary social studies teacher licensure and a minor as well as a range of courses that address various dimensions of the global African experience.
- The **Department of Chicana/o Studies** offers a multi-disciplinary major, a major with secondary social studies teacher licensure and a minor that allows students to study the historical, cultural, social and economic dynamics of Chicana/o and Latina/o communities in the U.S.
- The **Office of International Studies** provides support for study-abroad courses and programs and facilitates partnerships with almost a dozen universities around the world. (See 1.C.2)
- The **LGBTQ Student Resource Center** is a tri-institutional office that provides support services and growth opportunities for LGBTQ students so they may realize their fullest potential. Note: MSU Denver's main campus is on the Auraria campus that is also home to the Community College of Denver and the University of Colorado Denver. Tri-institutional entities serve students in all three institutions and are often jointly-funded.
- The **Individualized Degree Program** in the **Center for Individualized Learning** guides students in creating customized degrees centered around diverse topics which can include Far East Asian Language and Culture, International Studies and Community Development, Latin American Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.

MSU Denver also holds numerous events that relate to diversity each year, including two **visiting professorships**, the **Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast** and the **Higher Education Diversity Summit** conference**.**

MSU Denver staff are exploring the possibility of opening a multicultural center called **ALANA** (African/African American, Latina/Latino, Asian/Asian American and Native American/Indigenous Students) in the 2017-18 school year. The purpose of this center is to support students of color and promote race conscious development for the entire campus community.

[3.B.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. Scholarship and creative work are done by faculty and students.

MSU Denver's primary objective of excellence in teaching and learning requires students to have ample opportunities for creative endeavors and research. Faculty model rigorous scholarship in academic programs that include elements designed to help students learn and practice scholarship appropriate to the discipline.

The University's emphasis on work that combines creativity with scholarship has proven to be an effective academic experience for students. **Met Media,** formerly the Office of Student Media, houses several programs in which students can hone their creative and technical skills – and often find great success and recognition for their efforts. For instance, *Metrosphere*, the student-run arts and literary magazine, received an Associated Collegiate Press 2011 Pacemaker Award, a top national honor likened to a Pulitzer Prize for student publications, as well as a 2015-16 Region 9 Mark of Excellence Award from the Society of Professional Journalists. *The Metropolitan* newspaper regularly wins regional and national awards for its content and photography. In 2015-16, it won three Pacemaker and

three Mark of Excellence Awards. The cable newscasts *Met Report* (English) and *Noticiero TVMET* (Spanish) each won an Emmy in 2015-16 from the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences – Heartland Chapter, and KMET Radio won two Mark of Excellence awards.

The **Department of Theatre** is the first institutional member in Colorado to be accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The department sponsors multiple theatrical productions each year and theatre faculty members have been recognized for their work by entities within the University and in the community. The department's founder and chair was recognized in 2014 with a Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) "Certificate of Merit," and since 2013, five productions have garnered nine KCACTF awards. Also since 2013, 24 MSU Denver theatre students have been selected by outside jurors to participate in regional Irene Ryan competitions. In 2015, theatre students, commissioned by the Denver/Boulder/Aurora Water Utilities, developed an original play called "Water Wise." The students then toured and performed for over 3,000 students and adults in 2015-16.   In 2011, with support from Kaiser Permanente, MSU Denver's Theatre Department also toured "Here's to Ears," a theater production about hearing health presented at elementary schools in metro-Denver.

The **Department of Art** is the only public higher-education art program in Colorado to maintain accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. The department houses the award-winning Center for Visual Art (CVA), an off-campus art gallery where students can attend lectures and workshops by the exhibiting artists. The CVA also hosts a faculty show every other year, and exhibits student artwork in the Senior Thesis exhibition for B.F.A. students in the Art and Communication Design programs every semester. Students have opportunities to curate exhibitions in the 965 Gallery, the student-run gallery within the CVA. MSU Denver art students and alumni have been selected for inclusion in local, regional and national juried art exhibits.

The **English Department** maintains a vigorous writing program. Its Undergraduate English Conference features a variety of writing and scholarship that is created by undergraduate students working in areas of English studies. The department's Writes of Spring competition awards first, second and third place to students for their works in the categories of Academic Essay, Creative Nonfiction, Drama, Fiction and Poetry.

Through public performances and educational outreach, the **Department of Music** creates access to excellence in the arts for the campus and broader community, promoting the cultural life of the University and the surrounding region. The department offers a wide variety of instrumental and choral ensembles designed to provide diverse performing experiences for talented students from all areas of the college, regardless of their major. With the addition of the University's partnership with the Detroit Institute of Music Education (DIME) in Detroit (see 3.A.3), music faculty will be providing additional music instruction for those with demonstrated talents in songwriting and performance.

Student and Faculty Research: Recognizing that undergraduate research is a High Impact Practice (HIP) proven to help retain students and help them persist through to graduation, MSU Denver has a robust Undergraduate Research Program that promotes and supports student and faculty engagement in research activities. Throughout the academic year, workshops and informational sessions are held to help students prepare for the annual spring Undergraduate Research Conference. Grants of up to $500 are available for students who need funding for their research. Instituted in 2011, the conference has grown in reputation and is now a significant contributor to student scholarship and creative activities. The 2016 conference drew more than 600 attendees and showcased 171 student poster and oral presentations. In addition to the knowledge they gain through their projects, students learn and practice the ethical and legal obligations of research through the Human Subjects Protection

Program.(HSPP). Some of these undergraduate students go on to present at major conferences, nationally and internationally.

In the Fall 2017, the **Graduate Council** hopes to inaugurate an annual Graduate Research Program to provide a University-wide forum for graduate student research from the five graduate programs, each of which is responsible for scholarly inquiry. For example, all the courses in the Master of Professional Accountancy program require students to write a research paper. These papers, the product of a faculty member and student developing and expanding a topic, often culminate in a number of conference presentations. To facilitate this process, the Accounting Department hosts a research forum every semester for its graduate students and faculty. To encourage faculty/student research collaboration the department offers a Research Assistantship course as well as independent study options.

Regarding **faculty research**, each academic department establishes guidelines for its faculty's scholarly activity, as part of the typical higher-education triad of teaching, scholarship and service. For faculty to advance to the next level in their career, they must successfully complete their scholarship requirements, as determined by peers in the University tenure and promotion process. In some departments, the guidelines focus on the publication of peer-reviewed scholarly works; in other departments the production of creative materials is required. The Center for Faculty Excellence provides workshops and guidance in research for faculty (see 2.E.1). The following chart, based on Digital Measures and Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System(IPEDS) data, provides evidence of MSU Denver's faculty activities in producing scholarly works:

Activity	2006-7	2008-9	2010- 11	2012- 13	2014- 15
Total # of Faculty	1,194	1,248	1,382	1,486	1,448
Articles	671	796	947	927	820
Book Reviews	46	50	42	54	47
Books	18	22	32	59	35
Grants	475	432	371	362	311
Musical Compositions	1	7	2	6	9
Presentations/Exhibits	1,313	1,741	1,851	1,904	1,756
Total	2,524	3,048	3,245	3,312	2,978

Along with 11 other higher-education institutions in the Rocky Mountain West, MSU Denver is a member of the University Press of Colorado and helps support the press's mission to advance and disseminate knowledge globally by publishing significant scholarly works and making them accessible. The press has published eight books by MSU faculty members. The benefits of membership include opportunities to serve as trustees on the press's board (a member of the History Department is currently the organization's Board of Trustees' vice chair), editorial guidance and assistance and peer review of manuscripts. Membership in the press provides a relatively low-cost means of marketing MSU Denver, as the institution is mentioned in every title the press publishes and in all of the press's marketing efforts.

The **Office of Sponsored Research and Programs** assists faculty and staff with research endeavors.

Services include:

- Locate funding opportunities
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and community outreach
- Proposal development and technical support, including research, budget development and writing assistance
- Training and professional development.

MSU Denver currently has over 46 continuing grants totaling more than $27 million from state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of State, National Institutes of Health, Library of Congress, National Science Foundation and others.

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- ASA_US_Undergraduate Research Program Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
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- CDHE_gtPathways Curriculum-Colorado Department of Higher Education
- PRES_DIV_ALANA
- PRES_DIV_Department of Africana Studies MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Department of Chicanao Studies MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_Higher Education Diversity Summit
- PRES_DIV_Institute for Womens Studies and Services MSU Denver
- PRES_DIV_LGBTQ Student Resource Center
- PRES_DIV_MLK Peace Breakfast MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_2 Visiting Professorships
- PRES_MISSION_CVA_Staff Center for Visual Art MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Rachel B Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship
- PRES_University Press of Colorado-Our Books

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution 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 articulated in the institutional role and mission, "excellence in teaching and learning is MSU Denver's primary objective." To attain this goal, the University recruits, hires and supports faculty and staff who have the knowledge, skills and belief in its role and mission to provide effective, high-quality academic programs and student services. The University has significant search-and-screening policies for the hiring of faculty and staff to ensure candidates meet the required qualifications. In addition, the University's substantial Professional Development and Training Program maintains faculty and staff currency in their field and grows their skills while serving as incentive for improvement and a tool for retention.

[3.C.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; and involvement in assessment of student learning.

As of September 2016, the University employed 567 full-time faculty members and almost 900 affiliate (part-time) faculty members. Of the full-time faculty, 340 are tenured. Despite decreased enrollment in recent years, these figures represent an overall increase from the five years prior when the number of full-time and affiliates was 517 and 865, respectively. In the last ten years, over 200 full-time new faculty have been hired; given retirements and departures, MSU Denver has a net increase of 170 new faculty positions (does not include part-time faculty).

Most importantly, between 2005 and 2015, MSU Denver increased the number of tenured faculty of color from 43 to 67, and the number of full-time faculty of color from 83 to 126 (including tenure-track, tenured, category II and visiting faculty). During this same time period, MSU Denver's students of color grew by 48 percent, from 5,094 to 7,561.

In his 12 years at the helm, President Jordan has continually emphasized the importance of increasing the ratio of full-time faculty to affiliate (part-time) faculty. This is illustrated in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* where a metric under Goal Two of the Student and Academic Success Strategic Theme is to: *"Achieve a 60 percent /40 percent full-time to affiliate faculty ratio across campus. Based on current credit-hour production the University would need to increase full time faculty by 21.5 positions – and decrease the amount of adjuncts accordingly – to achieve 60 percent."* The baseline for FY13 was 57.34 percent full-time and 42.66 percent part-time. For FY16, the percentages are 60.04 percent for full-time and 39.97 percent for part-time.

Curriculum originates in academic departments, and all curriculum work is done by faculty. Each department has a curriculum committee, and each of the three colleges and the School of Education have a faculty curriculum committee. At the University level, curriculum is reviewed and voted on by the Faculty **Senate Curriculum Committee** and then the full Faculty Senate.The *Curriculum Manual* for *Undergraduate Studies (use both links)* and the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual* document the governing policies and procedures for creating, modifying and discontinuing all curriculum – both programs and courses – at MSU Denver. Submitted curriculum proposals are reviewed by faculty for their merit to ensure that they are pedagogically sound, in line with current scholarship, appropriate for their level of instruction (lower-division versus upper-division, undergraduate versus graduate) and of benefit to students and the community.

Faculty within departments determine the required qualifications for faculty in their area; changes to these stated qualifications must be approved by the Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee and Faculty Senate (see 3.C.2). Faculty within departments also determine the student learning outcomes for their programs, perform the assessment activities around those outcomes and make improvements to instruction based on what is learned from those activities. Participation in assessment of student learning is required by faculty as stated in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* (p. 39) and is considered in tenure and promotion decisions.

[3.C.2] – All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual-credit, contractual and consortial programs.

According to 2015-16 Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDs) data, terminal degrees are held by 66 percent of the University's full-time faculty and 17 percent of the part-time faculty. All of our graduate courses and programs are taught by faculty with terminal degrees or credentials approved by the program's external accrediting body.

MSU Denver has three categories of faculty--Category I (full-time, tenure-track/tenured); Category II (full-time instructors); and affiliates (part-time)--with similar qualifications for each category used in recruitment and hiring practices. Categories I and II are defined in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*. All faculty, including those teaching dual or concurrent enrollment courses, are held to established qualifications. MSU Denver does not offer instruction through contractual or consortial programs.

The *ASA (Academic and Student Affairs) Policy Manual,* a compilation of guidelines and policy documents, includes the *Protocols for Searching/Hiring Faculty* and the *Minimum Requirements for Rank upon Appointment,* which identifies the minimum credentials (minimum degree level) and experience required for hiring faculty at each rank (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor and professor). Departments may request modifications to the minimum requirements for rank upon appointment according to a process that involves recommendations by the department chair, dean of the appropriate college or school, the chair of the Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee and to

the provost, who approves or denies the request. Involving a Faculty Senate committee in this process provides faculty oversight for changes to minimum credentials and ensures that at least one faculty member from each college and school is aware of every requested change.

Faculty qualifications are the same for all courses within a department, whether online or in the classroom, on the main campus or at an additional location or for concurrent enrollment.

Additionally, there are department, college/school and Faculty Senate-level retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) committees that review qualifications for continuation of temporary contracts and recommendations for permanent ones. At the university level, there is a post-tenure-review committee. All this is covered in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*.

The required qualifications in the position announcement for the hiring of new faculty are the minimum requirements for rank upon hiring. The faculty search process for Category I (tenure/tenure track) and for Category II (full-time temporary) faculty includes a number of provisions to ensure that candidates who progress in the search, and those who are ultimately hired, do indeed meet the established qualifications. For example, the search committee must develop a rubric to determine, prioritize and document search criteria to be used for screening application materials. The initial screening of applicants must determine whether or not candidates meet the required qualifications.

[3.C.3] – Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Policies pertaining to faculty evaluation are articulated in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel, p. 10-16, 46*, with discipline-specific guidelines for each department that clearly describe performance expectations for tenure-line faculty seeking reappointment, tenure, promotion, a successful post-tenure review and/or emeritus status (see also 3.C.2).

The basis of full-time faculty evaluation is the professional portfolio, which enables faculty to provide evidence of their competence and professional achievement. The University uses an online portfolio management tool, Digital Measures, to aid in the facilitation of reviews and to document information on faculty teaching, scholarly activities and service.

Category II faculty are evaluated annually; the form for "Visiting Faculty" is used for this.

The Handbook for Professional Personnel specifies that department guidelines for affiliate (Category III) faculty "*must establish expectations that fit their disciplinary or departmental needs.*" Department guidelines specify the protocols to follow for peer observations of affiliate faculty. A written record of observations is kept on file in the department. Student Ratings of Instruction (SRIs) for courses taught by affiliate faculty are administered consistent with the practice for tenure-line faculty.

For affiliate, or part-time, faculty, Student Ratings of Instruction (SRIs) are reviewed and observations are done as well, but the evaluation of part-time faculty varies from department to department.

[3.C.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.

The Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) plays a prominent role in supporting the professional development of MSU Denver faculty, part-time as well as full-time. The center is staffed with a full-time director, an associate director of research, an associate director of teaching and learning, faculty

associates in writing practice and peer observation and a support staff member. The center:

- Provides professional learning resources and activities designed to help all faculty flourish as teachers, scholars and colleagues
- Provides assistance with identifying research-project funding, assists with the development and design of research projects and advises on human subject research protocols
- Strives to facilitate an academic climate where faculty partner with faculty so that all may reach their full professional potential
- Strengthens MSU Denver's academic climate by raising awareness of current developments in teaching and learning, research, scholarly publishing, leadership and service
- Fosters inclusive cross-disciplinary collaboration by facilitating the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge across programs and partnering with other professional units
- Promotes, sustains and supports state-of-the-art teaching and learning initiatives at the institutional level.

In 2015-16, the CFE events drew 477 participants who were tenure-track, full-time non-tenure track and part-time faculty, comprising over 30 percent of the University's 1,467 faculty members.

The center accomplishes its mission through a variety of initiatives that include faculty learning communities, peer observations, workshops and faculty institutes.   The CFE coordinated a Faculty Scholar Forum in 2015, a Graduate Studies Conference in 2016 and an event called "Mindset for Success," a conference on student persistence in 2017.

Additionally, the University's three colleges and school make professional development funds available to support the professional development of tenured/tenure-track faculty. For example, the School of Education has $1,500 each year available to each tenured/tenure-track faculty member who is presenting at a conference or other scholarly venue, or who are involved in governance of a national organization or are receiving an award. Faculty receiving the funds must provide justification for this professional development funding by demonstrating how the funding expenditure aligns with the School of Education mission, and, in some cases, agree to present to faculty in-house. A similar model is used within the three colleges to further support faculty professional development.

Also, the university's support for sabbaticals has increased substantially. In 2004-05, seven sabbaticals were requested and six were supported; in 2016-17, 23 sabbaticals were requested and 20 were supported.

Some professional development support is provided for Category II faculty (non-tenure track instructors), but this varies from department to department. Usually, these funds come from summer revenues.

[3.C.5] – Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Instructors at MSU Denver are committed to their students and understand that students may seek information and guidance from them through a variety of communication channels. Many students communicate with their instructors through the Blackboard online course management system or via email. Additionally, each college/school has established minimum expectations for full-time faculty office hours, when students may visit with their instructors to discuss course content, seek advising or otherwise engage in relevant discussion.

Although each college/school has the authority to establish additional expectations regarding office hours, there is uniformity across the University that full-time faculty keep a minimum of five weekly

office hours during each academic term of the regular academic year, adding additional hours as needed to respond to student needs. Individual faculty member's office hours are posted on departmental and/or college websites.

[3.C.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.

MSU Denver invests in student support services as a strategy to enhance student learning and success. As such, the institution takes care to recruit, retain and support staff members in a variety of student service functional areas. Given the broad array of services needed to meet the needs of the University's diverse student body, each functional unit has its own specific qualifications, training and support. For example, the staff working to attend to students' academic and personal needs have different qualifications and requisite support than those working within the nuanced financial aid system to assist students with navigating their financial options.

Most staff providing direct student services are housed within three primary areas at the institution: 1) Student Engagement and Wellness, 2) Undergraduate Studies and 3) Financial Aid and Enrollment Services. Associate vice presidents in these areas work to ensure that the staff are appropriately qualified to carry out their assigned duties, and they address training and support needs through resource allocation and the budgeting process. Select examples of staff qualifications, training and support from across the university include:

The Writing Center, a part of the English department, employs two full-time staff, including a director who holds a Ph.D. in English with an emphasis in composition. In the 2015-16 academic year, ten professional writing advisors, each holding a graduate degree in English, writing or a related field, provided services. Nine peer writing advisors – current students who have successfully completed Composition Theory or Writing Center Theory and Practice – completed the staff team. All writing advisors undergo initial training and shadow a seasoned writing adviser before assisting students. Ongoing training and development is provided through regular workshops on topics such as working with English Language Learners, helping students with sentence-level concerns and tutoring to engage different learning styles. All advisors are required to attend two, two-hour workshops every semester and also receive regular feedback from peers and supervisors.

The financial aid team in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, under the associate vice president for enrollment management, is composed of 25 professional staff members with a variety of skills and expertise whose work is supported by a team of 20 to 30 competent student staff members. Professional staff qualifications vary, with many veteran staff members bringing years of financial-aid experience to their role of supporting MSU Denver students. To ensure that staff members are current on state and federal financial aid policies, the institution maintains memberships in the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), the Colorado Association of Financial Aid Administrators (CAFAA) and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASFAA). MSU Denver's associate director of financial aid operations served was the president of CAFAA in 2015-16, and several other staff members have held or now hold leadership positions within the organization. The staff regularly participates in workshops hosted by the above-listed organizations, as well as the Federal Student Aid (FSA) Training Conference and on-site trainings related to a variety of topics, including responding to the needs of undocumented students.

To better serve the needs of the students, academic advisors work in a variety of administrative and academic units across the University. The University maintains common minimum qualifications for

all advisors that include a bachelor's degree and experience in developmental advising and student information systems. Most professional advisors have master's degrees in higher education, college personnel, counseling or the discipline related to students they advise. Two advising administrators hold PhDs. Training is provided both centrally at the **Academic Advising Center (AAC),** under the associate vice president for undergraduate studies, and at the unit level, under college/school deans. The AAC provides initial training on general degree requirements, academic policies and procedures and basic counseling skills. Further training on the curriculum and policies and procedures specific to a program is handled at the unit level. Similarly, ongoing professional development available to all advisors is coordinated through the AAC, while professional development specific to a program, department or college is provided by that unit. Examples of professional development opportunities include working with particular groups of students (e.g. military/veteran students, students with disabilities and Advancing Students for a Stronger Economic Tomorrow (ASSET)/Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students); expanding skill sets (career advising and financial aid information) and managing an advising caseload. The University makes use of best practices developed by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and provides NACADA memberships for all professional advisors. The University also supports an advising council, both to guide the direction of academic advising and to provide support for advisors.

Additionally, as part of its commitment to staff development, the University offers a variety of programs designed to help staff achieve professional growth, including the annual Professional Development Conference, university-wide workshops and seminars and a tuition-aid program that allows employees to take MSU Denver courses to improve or enhance job skills at no cost. In 2014-15, tuition aid provided to employees was valued at $16,506; in 2015-16, it was valued at $23,296. There is also a professional development fund through which employees may apply for reimbursement for educational activities relevant to their work at the University. Non-instructional staff can apply for up to $750 a year; for 2016-17, $38,000 has been allocated for this purpose. A current budget goal is to increase this amount t $75,000 annually.   Details on these offerings as well as the official policy and guidelines for staff development are available on the Human Resources training page.

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3.D - 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

MSU Denver offers a supportive environment that places all students at the center of teaching and scholarship through thoughtful interaction with faculty and staff as the well as a variety of programs and services that provide individualized attention. The University offers support to faculty and students for high-impact instructional practices as well as a holistic set of support services that are responsive to student needs. These include learning support, academic advising, career placement and personal development. To help ensure that its students are academically prepared for General Studies courses in English and math, the University requires students who have ACT or SAT scores below certain levels take computer-based placement tests (see 3.D.2).

MSU Denver has developed tools and protocols for intrusive advising aimed at ensuring either that students remain on track for graduation or that they have the support to get back on track. The University benefited from a National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) site visit in 2015, and teams continue to work on implementing the recommendations from that visit. Recommendations include developing a broadly supported advising mission statement as well as outcomes.

Student learning at MSU Denver is supported by ongoing investment in state-of-the-art learning facilities and infrastructure, and students access guidance in the effective use of research and information resources through the Auraria Library, the Human Subjects Protection Program and the Undergraduate Research Program housed in the Applied Learning Center.

[3.D.1] – The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Understanding student needs is critical to designing effective support services. The Office of Institutional Research annually publishes data regarding student demographics and performance in its Undergraduate Census. Most MSU Denver undergraduates could be considered non-traditional students, but given the Spring 2017 average age of 26 with 61.4 percent attending full time, they could also be considered "post-traditional." All students receive academic support through programs

that are overseen by the associate vice president of undergraduate studies (see 3.D.2) as well as individual academic units. Out-of-classroom support comes primarily through the Dean of Students Office, Health Center at Auraria, Counseling Center and other units within the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. Additional graduate student support services are provided by academic units.

MSU Denver has extensive orientation programs for incoming students of all types to assist with their transition into the University and to inform them about available support services. New traditional-aged undergraduate students and their families attend all-day student orientation, advising and registration sessions in the summer prior to the fall semester. First-time students who enter in the spring or summer complete a half-day New Student Orientation (NSO). MSU Denver also provides specialized orientation services to groups of students with unique needs such as transfer students, returning adult students and student veterans/active military. Graduate students are oriented to their academic program and support services through their department/school.

First Year Success (FYS): The FYS program is the entry point for all beginning MSU Denver students. Incoming first-year students averaged 25 percent of total enrollment between 2011 and 2015, and a total of 2,046 students participated in First Year Success in 2015-16 (this number varies annually based upon enrollment). FYS is a retention program focused on building academic and college readiness, knowledge and skills to increase student persistence and foster a passion for lifelong learning in a nurturing, scholarly community. It prepares first-year students to succeed in their second year and beyond, with the ultimate goal of shorter time-to-degree and persistence to graduation.

For the FYS students enrolled in the Fall 2015, 87 percent enrolled in Spring 2016, compared to 83 percent of those not enrolled in FYS courses.   Of these same FYS students, who enrolled in Fall 2015, 72 percent enrolled the following fall, Fall 2016, compared to 68 percent of those not enrolled in FYS classes.

The program serves the needs of students through collaborative, engaging methods that promote on- and off-campus relationships, connect learning to compelling issues and are culturally relevant. It accomplishes this through linked courses, active learning and access to enhanced resources. Suitable both for traditional students and those whose time constraints might not enable them to otherwise immerse themselves in college life, FYS provides students with many benefits designed to enrich their time at MSU Denver, such as a collegial environment, supplemental programming and enhanced support services designed to promote academic and personal success. Programs include:

- General Studies curriculum offerings that help students begin the path to degree completion in an effective manner
- Linked courses that share curricular components and help students to create a community of learners
- Yearlong learning communities that provide consistency throughout the students' first year
- Collaboration with the Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring programs in the Student Academic Success Center to provide academic support closely aligned with the classroom recognizing scholars and outstanding leaders at the Annual FYS Scholars Recognition Program to encourage a culture of success.

MSU Denver also supports students and faculty engaged in highly effective instructional practices through programs housed in the Applied Learning Center and the Office of International Studies.

Applied Learning Center: Internships, service learning and undergraduate research are high-impact

instructional programs supported by the Applied Learning Center. While many departments manage their own internship programs, this center's 38-year-old Internship Program manages more than 1,300 internships each year to give students meaningful work experiences related to their academic major or minor. The staff works closely with students and employers to match students' skills and theoretical training with positions in businesses, governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations. The program administers the academic credit interns earn for many academic departments and also works directly with faculty to ensure that internships meet the educational needs of the students. The Service Learning Program mentors and supports faculty who would like to integrate service learning into their courses, providing seminars and grants assistance. The Undergraduate Research Program supports faculty mentors of undergraduate research with professional development, awards grants to undergraduate researchers, and hosts the annual Undergraduate Research Conference where student research and creative activities are showcased.

Office of International Studies: This office supports faculty in creating short-term, faculty-led study abroad courses and advises students who are interested in study abroad and who may opt either to enroll in a short-term MSU Denver course, an exchange or a third-party program (see 1.C.2.).

Other student support services include:

Student Support Services (TRiO SSS): TRiO This federal grant-funded program serves first generation-to-college, low-income and/or students with learning/physical disabilities. Participants receive comprehensive support through advising, mentoring, tutoring, informational workshops and financial literacy information. MSU Denver has been awarded the U.S. Department of Education TRiO grant for almost 40 years and was recently funded again, for an additional five years. TRiO services include:

- Individual academic, career and personal counseling
- Involvement with student organizations
- Academic recognition
- Group workshops
- Mentoring and career courses
- Leadership development.

For the 200 students who participated TRiO SSS in 2015-16, 90.2 percent persisted into Fall 2016; 96.1 percent of the Fall 2016 participants remain in good academic standing with the University.

Excel Program: Excel is a program that begins while students are attending high school, supporting them through the college application process while building connections to the University. Those relationships carry over to MSU Denver and are strengthened by program activities that develop a connection to campus/peers, build a community and offer support through their higher education-experience. Excel at MSU Denver is specifically designed to support the transition and continued education of currently enrolled students who attended the Excel Program in high school. The majority of these students are underserved, first-generation, Latina/o students who benefit from additional support to effectively navigate the educational system and their path to graduation**.**

Immigrant Program Services: This program serves MSU Denver's refugee and immigrant students (including ASSET and DACA) and any student whose first or home language is not English. The coordinator, specialist and trained peer mentors provide personalized academic guidance and academic support services for these often underprivileged and underserved college learners, beginning with the admissions process and lasting throughout graduation. The program supports students through:

- Information on scholarships that specifically target immigrant and undocumented students
- Help with financial aid applications and application essays
- Review of degree plans and academic progress towards graduation
- English language and college-composition support from the coordinator and specialist
- ESL-focused workshops that aim to address the reading, writing and proofreading needs of non-native English speakers enrolled in any MSU Denver course
- Assistance and consultation for faculty and staff and assistance in training student staff in other University offices to raise awareness about the unique challenges that non-native language learners and undocumented students face
- Partnerships with community organizations such as the Denver College Attainment Network or La Familia Vota to educate the community about the support systems that are in place for non-native English speakers or young students without a secure immigration status.

The Banner student data and tracking system shows the program recorded 593 points of contact from June 1 − Aug. 17, 2016 by the professional and student staff, 153 of which consisted of face-to-face meetings.

Brother to Brother (B2B): An Urban Male Initiative, B2B assists students in building strong study habits, organizational skills and test-taking skills. B2B social activities create a sense of community for male students, including the development of friendships with student peers. B2B leadership development provides opportunities for students to learn about leadership and how to become a leader on campus. Students receive planning support to prepare to transition into a career or graduate school after graduation. Student leaders monitor participants and offer assistance/mentorship throughout the academic year. B2B offers assistance to a total of 40 students per academic year focusing on:

- Leadership development
- Social enrichment
- Academic support
- Career, advisor and diversity nights
- Student-led events
- Peer mentoring.

College Completion Program: Housed in the Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver this program helps students resolve specific issues, attain academic success and graduate from MSU Denver. The program consists of three parts: college completion, transition and re-engagement. Services include:

- Research-based, best-practices degree-completion strategies
- Catalog-specific academic advising
- Student advocacy
- Access to campus and community resources
- Finding alternative paths to fulfill graduation requirements such as appropriate course substitutions, recognition of prior learning assessments and referral to degree options such as the Individualized Degree Program.

For students who are contemplating leaving or withdrawing from MSU Denver, the program offers:

- Counseling on the potential consequences of completing a university withdrawal
- Catalog-specific academic advising/counseling
- Information on alternative institutional resources
- Advice on developing a specific timeline for re-entry back into MSU Denver.

Re-engagement services include outreach to students who left MSU Denver with at least 90 credits completed, developing comprehensive graduation plans and advocacy.

Access Center: The center's goal is to create an accessible, inclusive, sustainable learning environment, where disability is recognized as an aspect of diversity that is integral to the campus community and to society. The center currently has 1,224 students registered for services. The center offers:

- Academic **accommodations** as mandated under the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Since each disability and the particular circumstances surrounding each request for accommodations are unique, it is impossible to predict which accommodations will be provided to any given student. The following is a list of potential accommodations which may be granted based on the students' disability and how it impacts them in a postsecondary educational environment: extra time on exams, peer note-taker, assistive technology, sign language interpreters and print material in alternative formats.
- Volunteers in the center's Student Ambassador Program promote awareness of the services provided and support other individuals with disabilities as they pursue their higher-education goals. Ambassadors participate in various positions throughout each semester. There were 7 active ambassadors in Fall 2016.
- The center offers sophisticated and up-to-date **adaptive technologies** to ensure students have the opportunities every student should have. Examples include screen-reading software and the ability to control the entire computer by voice.
- Academic **success videos**.

Financial literacy: The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships works with other University offices to provide presentations on financial literacy and how students can be financially healthy. These outreach teams also discuss financial literacy at New Student Orientation. MSU Denver has a contract with $ALT, a nonprofit education company, that provides students with financial resources such as repayment options, savings, how to manage a budget, etc. The office also keeps students informed of their student loan amounts and teaches them about tools to manage their debt. MSU Denver has also added a loan repayment calculator that a student sees before he or she accepts a financial aid disbursement.

Transfer Student Success and Persistence Program: The percentage of new undergraduate transfer students since 2010 has hovered around 11 percent; the Fall 2015 total is 12.1 percent or 2,433 students. According to the Colorado Department of Higher Education website, MSU Denver is and has been the No. 1 transfer school (both from Colorado public 2-year and 4-year schools) in Colorado for well over 10 years. This Transfer Student Success and Persistence Program connects transfer students with the appropriate advisors, departments and resources and provides individualized assistance to help them acclimate to MSU Denver and persist through graduation. Its primary goal is to increase retention of transfer students from approximately 75 percent to 85 percent. Services include:

- Registration events
- Transfer Affinity Groups (TAG's) for student populations such as veterans and parents
- Referrals to departments
- Assistance with requests for transfer-credit approval
- Personalized assistance by admissions professionals in the Academic Advising Center (see 3.D.3 below).

Diverse students: Academic and student support units that provide specific services for students of color, LGBTQ students and women include:

- Department of Africana Studies
- Department of Chicana/o Studies
- Native American Studies (Department of Political Science)
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- LGBTQ Student Resource Center
- Institute for Women's Studies and Services (See 3.B.4).

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Initiative: This initiative (see 1.C.2) to attain the federal HSI designation by increasing Latino student enrollment to 25 percent by 2018 is directly responsible for the reinvigoration of Journey Through Our Heritage MSU Denver (see 1.C.1) and the expansion of the Excel Program (see above), both of which provide services and engagement for Latina/o prospective and enrolled students.

Veteran and Military Student Services: MSU Denver works to create the best support possible for the approximately 1,000 students per semester who have served or are serving in the nation's armed forces. The University's efforts in this regard have been recognized with numerous rankings with military publications (see 1.A.2).

The December 2013 *Veteran/Military Students Task Force Report* made recommendations for ways to strengthen the University's services for veterans. Top among them was the establishment of the Veteran and Military Student Services office and the hiring of a full-time veteran and military student services coordinator. (The majority of office staffers are veterans, military or military family members.) The center is a point of access to many of the support services at MSU Denver that help students persist to graduation, such as the Tutoring Center, the Access Center, the Counseling Center, Career Services and Academic Advising. It offers student veterans a space to gather and connect with each other for camaraderie and support. The coordinator helps students craft a plan to overcome the challenges that may present themselves, academic or otherwise, and ensures that veteran and military-affiliated students are aware of and connected to applicable resources across campus and in the greater Denver community.

Another key task force recommendation that has been implemented is the addition of academic policies that support veterans, including priority registration and a Military Credit Transfer Package.

Other veteran-specific programs include:

- **Veterans Education Benefits Office**: This office tracks veterans and other military connected students receiving federal education benefits, serving as their liaison with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense. It assists veterans in obtaining their education benefits and works with their dependents. The office serves approximately 850 students per semester using military benefits to finance their education.
- **Veterans Upward Bound Program**: Operating since 1973, this program provides eligible military veterans with academic-skills refresher training through a core curriculum of subjects that prepares them to succeed at the postsecondary educational level. It also provides participants with a unique pre-collegiate experience that is designed to remove apprehensions that many veterans, as nontraditional students, may have about entering college.
- **Student Veterans at MSU Denver:** The mission of this student-run organization is to provide a supportive community for student veterans as they transition into college life, graduate and begin their civilian careers. Bringing student veterans together to provide opportunities to

address shared needs, the group offers leadership opportunities, social interactions and resources for its members.

[3.D.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.

Course-placement services: Before students can register, they must take assessment tests in writing and mathematics if their ACT or SAT exam scores are below an acceptable threshold. Transfer students must take the tests unless they have successfully completed a college-preparatory or equivalent course. In addition to taking the assessment tests, first-time students are required to see an advisor in the Academic Advising Center (see 3.D.3) before being allowed to register. (These students must complete both an orientation and a meeting with an advisor before the Orientation/Advising [OA] hold in MSU Denver's Banner student data system is removed to allow them to register.) The center's advisors have a list of courses recommended for first-time students interested in particular majors; in some cases, these students are referred directly to the major department.

Placing first-time students in Oral and Written Communication and Quantitative Literacy General Studies (GS) courses is given the highest priority, and additional sections are added if there is a need.

In 2013, MSU Denver's mission to "provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education" was recognized and reinforced by the state when the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, utilizing the newly passed *House Bill 12-1155,* approved the University's application to become the first baccalaureate-degree-granting institution in Colorado to provide supplemental academic instruction (SAI) to its marginally prepared students (historically, this has been the purview of the state's community colleges). For students who do not score high enough on English and Math assessment tests, the University offers a secondary placement.

For students who score lower in writing on the Accuplacer (College Board's standardized placement tests), the University offers a secondary assessment consisting of a writing sample that is graded by faculty in the Department of English. Rather than assume that the Accuplacer score indicates whether or not a student is ready for college work, the University assumes that the student is ready for college work and uses the secondary placement to place students in one of three options, all of which carry college-level credit and result in the completion of the first semester of a two-semester first-year writing sequence: 1) directly into ENG 1010, which has an overall pass rate of 75.90 percent, 2) into ENG 1010 plus ENG 1001, a 1-credit Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) course, which has a pass rate of 80.46 percent, or 3) into a two-semester "stretch" composition course, ENG 1008-09, with a pass rate in ENG 1008 of 83.60 percent and a pass rate in the subsequent ENG 1009 of 92.92 percent. These pass rates demonstrate that these students who tested low do better than students who place into ENG 1010 via the Accuplacer or ACT scores; indeed, the results show that the so-called achievement gap virtually disappears.

Math also uses a secondary assessment for MTH 1080 Mathematical Modes of Thought, MTH 1210 Introduction to Statistics and MTH 1610 Integrated Mathematics I (the specialized course for elementary education majors). In 2013, the University lowered the prerequisite Accuplacer score for admission to MTH 1080 and implemented the secondary-assessment test, admitting students into MTH 1080 who would previously have been required to take a remedial course at the Community College of Denver on the Auraria campus. In two semesters, Fall 2013 and Spring 2014, this resulted in 141 additional students being admitted to MTH 1080, about half with Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) Peer Study required and half without (based on their score on our

secondary-placement test). Those doing the required SAI Peer Study had an 83 percent success rate in MTH 1080. The University also offers SAI Peer Study for marginally prepared students desiring to take Finite Math (MTH 1310). The students who tested ready for MTH 1310 had a pass rate of 65 percent whereas those in Peer Study had a pass rate of 74 percent. The University does not have corresponding SAI support for MTH Introduction to Statistics and MTH 1610 Integrated Mathematics due to their high pass rates.

Students who had been sent to the community college for a remedial Math course before entering college algebra at MSU Denver subsequently had a low success rate, less than 50 percent, in MTH 1110 College Algebra. And the peer study model has not been as effective for College Algebra as in MTH 1080 (see paragraph above). The students who test into College Algebra have a pass rate of 68 percent whereas those requiring Peer Study had a pass rate of 59 percent, a pass rate still above those who were sent into remedial math first. But, clearly, some students needed additional help.

In Fall 2015, the University began piloting a stretch version of MTH 1110 College Algebra. This two-semester course sequence, MTH 1108/1109, is designed for students who otherwise would be required to take a remedial math course at the community college. The two-semester sequence teaches the same syllabus as College Algebra, interspersed with just-in-time algebra review, with more applications than MTH 1110 and with all students also required to attend a one-hour recitation twice a week. At the end of the second semester, the MTH 1109 students take the same common final exam as all MTH 1110 students. MTH 1109 provides credit equivalent to MTH 1110, and students earn elective credit for MTH 1108. In the pilot, 21 of the 23 students enrolled in the first semester (MTH 1108) passed with a C or better, and 18 of these students then enrolled in the subsequent semester (MTH 1109). Of this pool of students, two withdrew and 14 of the remaining 16 students passed the second semester with a C or better. Thus, 14 of the original 23 students (61 percent) completed with a C or better the two course sequence of Stretch Algebra. This compares favorably to the success rate of less than 50 percent for those who start in the community college remedial math course and somewhat more favorably than those in the Peer Study model. These efforts, with the two-semester sequence, are being continued.

Academic Support Programs: Most academic support program services at MSU Denver have been consolidated under the associate vice president of undergraduate studies: First Year Success, Student Academic Success Center (SASC), Applied Learning Center, Center for Individualized Learning, Honors Program, International Studies, Academic Advising, Career Services, Access Center and New Student Orientation. Students access most University programs and services through the Academic Advising Center (see 3.D.3). Undergraduate students on academic probation are required to consult with a Student Intervention Services advisor who will assist them in setting academic goals, accessing campus services, understanding probationary policies and ultimately returning to good academic standing.

Students benefit from support programs both during the testing-and-placement process and then in support of their coursework. All admitted students have access to free tutoring services provided by the SASC's Tutoring Center to help them prepare for Accuplacer tests. Tutoring services additionally support students enrolled in courses from across a range of disciplines. According to the *Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Fall 2015 Report,* in Fall 2016, tutoring services saw 1,416 students for a total of 4,408 visits, and those students on average earned higher GPAs than did students who did not visit tutoring services. MSU Denver also provides supplemental instruction (SI) in "high-risk" courses, or gateway courses with high rates of D, F and W (for withdrawal) grades. Typically, students in 60 to 80 sections per semester of high DFW courses benefit from SupplementaI Instruction (SI). In Fall 2016, 946 students attended an SI session, and the average number of visits per student was six. The Early Alert program in Academic and Student Affairs uses midterm faculty

feedback to target both advising and tutoring interventions to students who are identified as at risk of not succeeding in their courses.

The Student Academic Success Center also provides tutors in the Administration Building for students in the College of Business which is housed there. And the College of Businesshires affiliate (part-time) faculty to serve as tutors for the College of Business upper-level courses that students struggle with: Managerial Statistics, Management Science and Managerial Finance. Also, the Department of English Writing Center provides help for students, as does the Center for Advanced STEM Education. And many departments provide informal assistance for students. For example, the Department of Physics provides a student resource room where students can help each other or get help from a faculty member.

Honors Program: MSU Denver also seeks to connect high-achieving students with courses and programs that will support their interests and aptitudes. The Honors Program provides both curricular and co-curricular opportunities that promote exceptional learning to highly motivated students in all disciplines and majors. The program proactively identifies and invites students to enroll in the program based on GPA and positive faculty feedback.

[3.D.3] – The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

MSU Denver supports a centralized/decentralized Academic Advising Program. The AA Program is a decentralized program, not a physical space, through which students obtain assistance at various levels and at multiple locations. The Academic Advising Center (AA Center) is a physical space that consists of a centralized unit of trained academic advisors who specifically address the needs of undeclared/exploratory students and students changing majors. Professional (staff) advisors and faculty advisors in the Colleges of Business, Letters, Arts and Sciences, Professional Studies, and the School of Education and departments provide specialized advising services for incoming (first-time-to-college and transfer) students and continuing students. On the graduate level, advising services are provided by faculty members serving as graduate program coordinators in their units.

Since 2009, the University has approached the organization of advising services in a more thoughtful, intentional way. Colleges/schools/departments have developed advising systems more consistent with the needs of students and of the academic units. Due in large part to this shift, professional and faculty advisors have been more effective in providing opportunities for students to engage in meaningful advising experiences.

The University recently completed a five-year U.S. Department of Education Title III Strengthening Institutions grant that focused on improving academic advising services and preparing for a School of Education. Much of the infrastructure improvements for advising have come from grant funding.

AA Program/AA Center mission: The lack of a common mission for the AA Program as a whole had been noted as a deficit, and a task force drafted an *Academic Advising Mission, Goals and Outcomes* in Fall 2015 which was circulated widely in Spring 2016. The AA Center and the college/school/department advising programs now use the AA Program mission to define and align unit mission statements and develop an assessment plan. The 2016-16 *Academic Advising Annual Report* tracks progress.

AA Program organization and leadership: All advising services are part of Academic and Student Affairs under the provost and are under the direction of the associate vice president for undergraduate studies. The AA Center reports up through the associate vice president of undergraduate studies.

Reporting to the appropriate dean, the colleges/school advising offices have professional advising and support services that provide students with accurate information on academic programs, policies, procedures and deadlines. Professional academic advisors assist new and transfer students in their transition to the University and define an appropriate academic path in the student's chosen discipline.

Each department within the colleges and school also has faculty advisors for more in-depth discipline-specific advising. Faculty advisors provide information on academic programs, graduate programs and discipline-related career paths. A student's transition from professional academic advisors to faculty advisors varies by discipline.

An ongoing challenge related to decentralization of advising services is assurance of high-quality and consistent services across all advising units. For advising on the undergraduate level, this issue is addressed through the Advising Council, which reports jointly to the deputy provost and the associate vice president for undergraduate studies. The Council brings accountability to all the advising services across the University and ensures coordination among the advising units. The Council also oversees assessment of advising outcomes and evaluation of advising effectiveness. Consisting of members from all units responsible for advising, in addition to deans and associate deans, the Council serves in an advisory role to the University administration in matters of advising policy and procedures and serves to recognize and promote the role of advising to accomplish the University's strategic goals.

AA Program human resources: Professional advisors are selected and trained following the University's guidelines for professional personnel. Faculty advisors have been hired following relevant University guidelines for tenure/tenure-track faculty and instructors. Recognizing the need for a position dedicated to training and development for professional and faculty advisors, the University created and filled an academic advisor training position in December of 2015..

In the last several years, developing consistent training and development protocols and materials has been identified as a need. In response, the *Advising Handbook* on the AA Center website has current advising policies and is continually updated with the latest information on tools and resources to advise students in a timely and accurate manner. The site also lists training opportunities on essential topics such as maintaining confidentiality of student records, policies and procedures pertaining to advising and curriculum knowledge. Training and development practices are modeled on recommendations from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and all professional advisors are members of NACADA.

AA Program ethics, law, policy and governance: Professional advisors are trained on the relevant ethical standards and practices related to advising, including maintaining confidentiality of student records, institutional policies, conflicts of interest, nondiscrimination policies and requirements to disclose information to appropriate authorities. Through MSU Denver's complaint policy, students have means to seek redress if they feel an advisor has misadvised them or treated them inequitably.

AA Program diversity, equity and access: As part of its mission statement, the AA Center has adopted inclusive excellence as a key principle. All advisors receive training from University and non-University resources to develop cultural competency in areas such as (but not limited to) students with disabilities, students with mental health issues, LGBTQ issues and working with military/veteran students.

The need for assessment data to be disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity, and first generation is being addressed for the 2015-16 data-collection cycle. The expectation is that all all AA Program data will be similarly disaggregated over time.

AA Program internal and external relations: Professional and faculty advisors are actively seeking collaborations with internal constituents that provide allied student services, including career counseling, internships and service learning, First Year Success, the Honors Program, tutoring and specialized support services (TRiO, athletics, etc.). The University is now more proactive in its outreach to students and the coordination of outreach efforts is being addressed through organizational and technical means.

AA Program financial resources, facilities and equipment: The University has added 26 professional advising positions in colleges/schools/departments since 2010, including 15 in 2015-16. Consistent with University policy, the salary for the positions are funded at 87 percent or more of salaries in comparable positions at comparable institutions. Sufficient resources have been provided for supplies, training and development. Advisors have the necessary office space and equipment to conduct appropriate meetings with students.

AA Program technology: MSU Denver provides appropriate technology tools to support advising. Advisors and students had been using Ellucian's Curriculum, Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) degree-audit tool. With the CAPP software at the end of its lifecycle and Ellucian is discontinuing development, the University moved to Ellucian's next-generation, degree-audit package, DegreeWorks, in 2015-16. Given its history of the efficient implementation of degree audits, the University anticipates that having a better tool will improve advising services. Once the audits are fully functional, the University will implement more advanced DegreeWorks tools.

The institution is also moving to a software platform more specifically designed to support its advising model, the Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC Campus). This software will allow students to make online appointments with advisors, tutors and other support services. It will also allow advisors to efficiently manage a caseload of students, which will alleviate some of the issues the University has had with coordination of outreach efforts. The current version of SSC Campus was implemented in early 2016.

AA Program assessment: Once the mission statement written by the Advising Task Force, which is currently in circulation, is approved, the Task Force will develop the assessment plan. Until now, data collected has primarily consisted of student satisfaction and utilization surveys.

The University recently surveyed 13,000 students who have left the University and received an approximate 10 percent response rate. Of those who responded, 35 percent indicated that dissatisfaction with the overall quality of the advising system was a reason for discontinuing enrollment.

The University has responded to survey data by adding professional advising positions, moving advising services closer to the academic units and improving the technological infrastructure for advising, as noted above.

[3.D.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).

Facilities: MSU Denver manages and maintains 277 learning spaces, including classrooms, computer labs, departmental labs and lecture halls. During the Spring 2015 semester, MSU Denver developed a comprehensive set of classroom technology guidelines and established a goal of updating all learning spaces on a seven-year cycle. The guidelines were developed to achieve the following four goals: 1)

provide spaces that support optimal teaching and learning experiences through a consistent and functional set of technologies, 2) initially upgrade rooms that have non-functioning or significantly out-of-date equipment to better meet faculty and student needs, 3) when possible, upgrade all rooms assigned to a single department at the same time to provide a consistent teaching-and-learning experience within that department and 4) provide proactive classroom maintenance, management and support to significantly reduce technological problems. The new learning-spaces guidelines suggest that all learning spaces be upgraded to include contemporary digital-learning technologies, such as optical media players and faculty workstations, while still supporting analog device inputs. Furthermore, these upgraded learning spaces should allow for remote and proactive monitoring of services using audio/video control systems.

To date, 76 classrooms have been upgraded to meet these guidelines. New construction projects, such as the recent remodel of the Department of Art's learning spaces and the development of the new Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building, were informed by the new guidelines and will meet the prescribed standards when completed. Each semester, Information Technology Services (ITS) utilizes a faculty survey regarding learning spaces and analyzes related Help Desk service tickets to determine the impacts of classroom upgrades and to inform the prioritization of future learning-space technology upgrades. In addition to the 277 MSU Denver learning spaces, the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) manages an additional 40 classrooms that are shared by MSU Denver, University of Colorado Denver and the Community College of Denver.

MSU Denver shares the **Kenneth King Academic & Performing Arts Center** with its sister institutions. The center houses six performance spaces, four of which are available to MSU Denver: a production studio permanently assigned to MSU Denver; a 200-seat Recital Hall; a 520-seat Concert Hall; and a 275-seat Courtyard Theatre. There are dressing rooms, a green room, recording studio, lighting and music electronics labs, classroom space, box office, dance studio, and scene, paint and costume shops. All spaces are fully equipped with state-of-the-art equipment.

Aerospace and Engineering Sciences (AES) Building: In October 2015, MSU Denver broke ground on the AES Building, an innovative project that will integrate the study of advanced manufacturing disciplines. This 142,000 square-foot facility will revolutionize aviation, aerospace and advanced manufacturing education in Colorado by integrating various related disciplines. The $60 million state-of-the-art building will provide students with the curriculum, advanced technologies and the labs necessary to give them a highly experiential, relevant education. It is scheduled to open in Summer 2017. A public/private partnership has been signed with York Space Systems for the fourth floor of the building; they will manufacture spacecraft there, providing hands-on experiences for MSU Denver students.

In Spring 2012, the 151,360-square-foot, four-story **Student Success Building (SSB)** was opened to serve as a dedicated facility for the University. The SSB creates an identity for MSU Denver and serves as a gateway for the students and community. Many student-serving departments are conveniently located in this building in addition to 12 new classrooms. The layout was designed to provide easier way-finding for students new to the University.

The **Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center** is a public/private partnership between Sage Hospitality and MSU Denver to operate the Spring Hill Suites™ Denver Downtown hotel and a state-of-the-art 28,000-square-foot academic center with learning laboratories that are designed to sharpen the skills of students in the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Events as they study to become leading professionals in the hospitality industry (see 5.D.1, "Other Financial Strategies").

Technology: Information Technology Services (ITS) at MSU Denver is committed to providing the

highest quality and most responsive service possible to the MSU Denver community with the resources available. The ITS department consists of five functional units: Educational Technology Center, Application Services, Infrastructure Services, User Support Services and Business Services. ITS provides comprehensive technical support for all students, faculty and staff via a 24/7 hotline and walk-in support during regular business hours.

• The ITS **Educational Technology Center** enhances teaching and learning through the innovative and effective use of instructional technology. In collaboration with faculty, the center designs, develops, implements and supports systems, services and products that are essential to teaching and learning. The center also supports instructional technologies that contribute to MSU Denver's academic excellence by increasing student engagement with course materials, supporting active learning strategies, fostering communication and collaboration, streamlining course administration and assisting students in developing their skills for future learning and work.

• The University provides **21 computer labs**, 13 of which may be reserved by faculty for class use and eight of which are open labs for students use. Over 13,000 MSU Denver students access the 700 Mac or PC workstations provided in the combined 21 computer labs each semester. All labs are equipped with contemporary technology and a wide range of specialized applications supporting engineering, art and music curricula in addition to more general applications and Internet access. All labs are ADA compliant and open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Additionally, several student computer labs are available on a limited schedule on Sundays and during semester breaks. Between semesters, most labs are closed for maintenance. In addition, several department-specific computer labs and 65 computer carts are available and provide an additional 500 student workstations. In early 2015, the University surveyed students who take advantage of these labs to determine their specific needs. As a follow-up, in late 2015, the University deployed the Labstats monitoring application to better analyze the use of these labs and provided software to facilitate planning.

• **ITS Application Services** supports and enhances the administrative enterprise and departmental business applications used at MSU Denver. Among these are Ellucian's: Banner Student, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Finance, Human Resources, Banner Document Management System (BDMS) and Banner Relationship Management. A partial list of the non-Ellucian applications of focus includes Enterprise Content Management, the UC4 Job Scheduler, CASHNet Cashiering, data integration and feeds to third-party departmental systems, Account Management and departmental database support.

• **ITS Infrastructure Services** provides the infrastructure that supports the applications running on the MSU Denver network as well as a virtual computing environment. This includes servers, storage, backups, datacenter hosting, visualization, applications and more. Three teams manage the system: 1) datacenter and storage operations, 2) the Windows environment which includes email and authentication, and 3) the Linux environment supporting Web and Banner services.

Auraria Library services and research resources**:** The Auraria Library supports the diverse and evolving teaching, curricular learning, research needs and intellectual curiosity of the students, faculty and staff of MSU Denver. The library offers print and digital resources, expert guidance in information-gathering and research techniques, partnerships in instructional development and technology geared to discovery, learning, discussion and knowledge creation.

The library also serves the University of Colorado Denver and the Community College of Denver. The presence of three schools on one campus enhances the library's holdings by promoting a collection that is more diverse, both in subject areas and academic level, than the traditional college library.

The library houses databases, online collections, digital and printed books and periodicals, DVDs, CDs and streaming music and videos. These resources span the sciences, humanities, social sciences and professional study areas to address learning and research needs at MSU Denver and the other two institutions. Acquisitions encompass materials that support similar courses at all three institutions as well as those that support programs unique to MSU Denver, including the Departments of Social Work; Chicana/o Studies; Africana Studies; Hospitality, Tourism and Events and the Institute for Women's Studies and Services. The library holds classes on using its resources; in FY 2016, more than 4,200 MSU Denver students attended 192 classes.

Acquisitions for the collection are primarily determined by course content, department/program/ college goals, research initiatives and faculty recommendations. Many MSU Denver faculty members are proactive in utilizing library services through requests for materials and feedback on collection trials.

The library offers the following research materials:

- 298 databases and collections spanning multiple subjects, time periods and formats
- Summon, Serials Solutions "discovery" software, represented by the "Start my Research" box on the library's home page, for easy location of relevant online journals, streaming videos and ebooks through its catalog and databases
- More than 6,521 journal, magazine and newspaper titles in print format and more than 89,954 full-text periodicals in digital format
- Books/e-books, including specialized collections of scholarly e-books
- More than 88,000 documentary, educational and performance videos, including some special streaming collections, such as the CyberCinema collection that specifically supports MSU Denver's Hospitality, Tourism and Events program.

The library is funded by the three institutions based on FTEs, thus MSU Denver is the major financial supporter. In FY 2016, the University contributed $4,352,340 (44 percent) of the total Auraria Library budget of $9,882,938.

In 2013 and 2014 the library was awarded a total of $26.8 million by the State of Colorado for space and infrastructure improvements. This financial support along with donor contributions fund cutting-edge technology enhancements and comfortable learning spaces that promote active, collaborative learning.

In addition to the Auraria Library, the LGBTQ Student Resource Center maintains a library of over 2,000 books and videos on the subjects of gender, sexuality, and social justice, and the Institute for Women's Studies and Services has a small, multi-media library focused on women's issues. Both libraries are for student, faculty and staff use.

[3.D.5] – The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Students are encouraged from their first year of undergraduate study to participate in research. ENG 1020, our second semester in the required First Year Writing sequence, concentrates on the research and writing of a 10-15 page essay that advances the student-writer's argument on a topic that s/he has chosen. Learning how to conduct appropriate research, analyze it, synthesize it from various researched sources, and advance a coherent argument are all taught in this course. To that end, we instruct students in conducting library and online research, using, among other resources, the Auraria Library's instructional videos, sequenced assignments that require documenting research as well as

summary, analysis and appropriate quotation.   In addition to this guidance in acquiring and developing these skills at the first-year level, we also instruct students in the nature of plagiarism and the ethics involved in producing writing that is truly the student's own.

The Undergraduate Research Program provides resources for students pursuing grants or intending to present at the annual Undergraduate Research Conference. The University instituted a Graduate Research Program in Fall 2016 (see 3.B.5).

As noted in 2.E.1, the University has several resources to guide students in the ethics of research and other academic work, including the *Research Misconduct Policy,* the *Human Research Protection Plan,*   CITI Training, the *2016-17 Catalog Students Rights and Responsibilities* and the Student Code of Conduct. In addition, a number of academic units – the Writing Center, Department of Social Work and Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, for example – also make available plagiarism statements and resources.

Many faculty also use the SafeAssign paper submission tool in Blackboard, ensuring academic integrity while helping students identify how to participate in responsible academic discourse.

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3.E - 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

MSU Denver achieves the goal of its mission statement *"to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, postgraduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society"* by every department and unit adhering to the principles behind the University's Strategic Themes (Community, Access, Diversity, Respect and Entrepreneurship, or CADRE) and the five Strategic Pillars (Student and Academic Success, Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship, University Culture, University Resources and Telling the MSU Denver Story) that are the foundation of the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh.

[3.E.1] – Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

In addition to academic programs, MSU Denver's robust Student Activities office offers an abundance of co-curricular opportunities for students to engage and explore ways in which they can transform their lives and that of the community.

The office manages almost 150 student organizations with a range of interests from nonprofit and political to service and the performing arts. Students are encouraged not only to join but to found a student group around their passion and/or educational goals. These organizations provide experiences and services that go beyond what a student acquires in a classroom. For example, RISE, a special-interest student organization dedicated to the support and empowerment of undocumented and refugee students, gathers and disseminates information about resources available for this student group and provides opportunities for these populations to discuss issues and challenges they face. This network of support has the potential to increase the retention and graduation of student members of these communities. The Human Services Education Organization recently hosted a career and networking fair on campus with 57 human services exhibitors/employers participating and over 350 students attended. The event provided opportunities for students to connect with employers and several students landed internships and/or jobs.

The Student Activities office also houses the student fee-funded Student Travel Program that provides funds for students to attend regional and national professional conferences or conventions. Last year, with support from the program, a group of 15 meteorology students traveled to New Orleans to present original research at the American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting. For many of the students, this was their first time presenting their own research at a national conference. Six of the students won awards based on their research on tornado forecasting in the plain states. As another example, two business students presented original research on trade decisions for SMEs (Small and

Medium Enterprises) at the 9th Annual Small Business Institute Conference in St. Petersburg, Fla. These students also received an award.

Student Activities also sponsors special leadership programs and a variety of events including annual festivals in the fall and spring where departments and organizations can showcase themselves to students.

The University's NCAA Division II Roadrunner Athletics Program is a competitive powerhouse in men's and women's basketball, soccer, tennis, track and field, baseball, softball, men's cross country and women's golf. The Roadrunners boast several national championships, including two in men's basketball and two in women's soccer. The program also houses 14 club sports ranging from ice hockey to women's lacrosse to rugby.

The recently opened $24 million Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver is home to Roadrunners baseball, softball, soccer and tennis. In addition to the sports facilities, a 20,000- square-foot building houses locker rooms for each sports team, along with a state-of-the-art weight room and athletic training room. The building also features a student-athlete lounge and meeting rooms. The University hosted the 2016 NCAA Division II Spring Sports Festival national championships in softball, tennis, lacrosse and golf at the facility at the new complex.

[3.E.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.

MSU provides avenues for students to engage in opportunities beyond educational attainment. Samples include, but are not limited to:

The **Honors Program** connects high-achieving students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities that support their interests and aptitudes. It promotes exceptional learning to highly motivated students in all disciplines.

Human Services majors participate in 750-1,050 hours of field experience before they graduate. Interns are evaluated on 17 competencies by their field supervisor and that data is collected for program assessment purposes. The evaluation is based on a five-point scale, and the averages for each competency range between 4.14 and 4.86. This serves well for assessment purposes, but it also provides students with confidence in their workplace skills.

Anthropology faculty in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology built an Ethnography Lab and a Human Identification Lab for students to use.

Hotel and Restaurant Management students in our Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Events get real-world experience working in Degree, an upscale, on-campus restaurant that is part of the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center.

The Department of Philosophy's Denver Project for Humanistic Inquiry (D-phi) partners with cultural and arts organizations in metro Denver to offer students varying perspectives around topics of wide interest. For example, the department convened a panel discussion featuring its professors with philosophy faculty from the University of Denver and the University of Colorado Denver on the ethical uses of robots as part of the Museum of Nature and Science's exhibit on robots.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

The Strategic Themes and Strategic Pillars of the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh exemplify an enriched educational environment through the use of research-based, best-practice, degree-completion strategies that include challenging classroom environments and experiences, engaging curricula and academic standards that both address unique and varied student needs while maintaining rigorous, academic integrity. Further, an enriched educational environment certainly includes civility, clarity, transparency, accountability and inclusivity all taking place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. MSU Denver embodies an enriched educational environment through the sheer diversity of offerings and programs for students, ranging from cultural affiliations, to rigorous academic competitions to co-curricular programs that harness the expertise of the faculty and the intelligence and energy of MSU Denver students to address quality-of-life issues for Colorado communities.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

MSU Denver demonstrates a clear responsibility toward maintaining and enhancing the quality of its educational programs, student support services and learning environments. The University continuously evaluates quality through clearly defined and measurable goals that are evaluated at all organizational levels and practices continuous improvement through these processes.

[4.A.1] – The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

MSU Denver manages and maintains a rigorous seven-year cycle of program reviews of academic programs facilitated by the University Program Review Committee (UPRC) and of non-academic units by the Academic and Student Affairs Unit Review Committee (ASAURC). The UPRC is composed primarily of faculty members and supported by the associate vice president for curriculum and academic effectiveness and the program manager. Composed mainly of administrators from units overseen by the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, the ASAURC is also supported by the associate vice president for curriculum and academic effectiveness and the program manager. Each committee facilitates a review process that includes a self-study, an external consultant report and in-

depth discussion of findings. The *UPRC Guidelines for Department Chairs and Program Directors* and the *ASAURC Unit Review Guidelines* are distributed to departments undergoing review to assist them in preparing a self-study narrative and supporting materials.

MSU Denver maintains and enhances the academic quality, efficiency and accountability of academic programs through consistent and thorough evaluation. When a department is under review, the department's self-study narrative and materials are shared in advance with an external consultant who is identified by the department and approved by the appropriate dean's office. All of the materials produced are used to prepare the executive summary that is submitted to the Board of Trustees. Ultimately, the results of the reviews are communicated to the appropriate administrators and the trustees to facilitate decisions regarding program expansion, re-structuring, contraction, consolidation or discontinuance and the possible reallocation of resources.

The review process for non-academic units is designed specifically for the consistent and thorough evaluation of these types of units. Again, an external consultant is used. As with the academic review process, an executive summary of the results is submitted to the Board of Trustees and to the appropriate administrators who are responsible for decisions regarding unit expansion, re-structuring, contraction, consolidation or discontinuance and the possible reallocation of resources.

In addition to the academic and non-academic reviews conducted by the UPRC and ASAURC, respectively, the teacher education curriculum in the School of Education must be approved by the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to assure that each teacher candidate has demonstrated a thorough understanding of and ability to apply the teaching strategies, classroom management/school discipline methods and the measurement and evaluation tools necessary for success as a first-year licensed teacher.

Furthermore, certain individual programs maintain additional program reviews through specialized accreditations and approvals as described in 4.A.5.

Most programs under Student Engagement & Wellness conduct Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) reviews. The Health Center and the Counseling Center are both accredited by their individual accrediting agencies (see 4.A.5).

[4.A.2] – The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

MSU Denver grants credits for college-level learning and coursework completed at other regionally accredited colleges or universities to all admitted transfer students on a course-by course basis after careful evaluation of the official transcript. Relevant credit is also awarded to students with official AP, CLEP, IB and military documents. The University honors all articulation agreements formally approved. To ensure that transcripts are evaluated and posted in a timely and accurate manner, the University employs five dedicated transfer evaluators and one transfer evaluation manager. Course equivalencies are also built into the Student Information System (Banner) to further ensure consistency and timely awarding of credits. These equivalencies are also made available to prospective students via the Transfer Equivalency Self-Service (TESS) system. Students are sent clear and detailed communications once credits are posted and are provided with opportunities to discuss, and if appropriate, appeal transfer-credit decisions.

The guidelines that MSU Denver uses to accept **transfer credits** are published in the *2016-17 Transfer Credit Evaluation* section on the Admissions page of our catalog. MSU Denver has

developed strategic policies and procedures to evaluate all transcribed credit offered to students, including conducting degree and certificate audits for every graduating student. Furthermore, robust evaluation procedures have been developed to ensure that credit for prior learning is provided only when quality thresholds have been met.

MSU Denver values students' **prior learning** and has a Prior Learning Assessment Program through the Center for Individualized Learning. The University has multiple forms of credit for prior learning including:

- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)/DANTES Subject Standardized Examinations (DSST)
- Credit by Departmental Examination
- Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment
- Military Training
- American Council on Education-Approved Credit.

In addition to these methods to approve prior-learning credits, two options for credit awarded for experiential learning are offered:

- **Internship Credit:** Academic departments may elect to award internship credit using a variety of upper-division course numbers. The credit itself is awarded by the department; the faculty advisor assigns the appropriate grade. Most departments work with the Applied Learning Center's centralized Internship Program that administers and monitors the internship placements. The **Internship Program** develops a customized-learning agreement among the student, faculty supervisor and the internship supervisor that includes learning outcomes and academic assignments. Quality control is managed through site visits and evaluations conducted both by faculty and by Internship Program staff. Accreditation or the certification of some disciplines requires direct faculty supervision of internship experience, thus promoting quality control over student learning in these fields. Although many departments work with the Applied Learning Center's Internship Program, some departments arrange their own internships.
- **Service-Learning Credit:** Some courses, after having undergone a substantive curriculum review to ensure that they meet specific criteria related to best practices for service learning, have achieved the University's official "service-learning designation." These classes appear in the class schedule as such. Requests for new service-learning course designations must be approved through the University's curriculum change review process. In addition to designated courses, the Service Learning Program in the Applied Learning Center provides mentoring and support to faculty who would like to integrate service learning into their courses as well as mini-grants to promote service-learning scholarship in teaching and research.

The assessment of transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions is discussed in detail in the next section.

[4.A.3] – The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

MSU Denver strives to ensure that incoming credits meet quality standards. The University adheres to strict *Transfer Credits Guidelines* which are included in MSU Denver's *2016-17 Undergraduate Catalog* and on MSU Denver's web page.

With the help of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, faculty in public higher education

across the state have approved state-wide articulation agreements for over 30 Colorado community college degrees in specific disciplines that meet the first two years of requirements at all state four-year programs for these disciplines. Students graduating with these associate's degrees are guaranteed to be able to transfer and finish a four-year degree in these disciplines within an additional 60 credits.

Transfer students who have attended any Colorado two-year community college or junior college may transfer credit through several transfer policies that guarantee transfer of credit. For example, state Guaranteed Transfer (GT) courses are guaranteed to meet general education requirements in all public four-year programs in Colorado. Most academic credits from Colorado's community colleges transfer to MSU Denver; community college students do not need to have completed their associate's degree to earn transfer credits.

[4.A.4] – The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual-credit programs. It assures that its dual-credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher-education curriculum.

Department chairs, who are faculty with reassigned time, carry out the administrative work of a department. They have oversight over the assignment of teaching loads and delivery of instruction. They have a leadership role in working with faculty to establish course prerequisites, to identify course and program outcomes and to modify curriculum, pedagogy and/or assessment practices based on what is learned from assessment of student learning.

Department chairs and deans are responsible for making sure that all faculty meet the required faculty qualifications, that all courses require the same rigor and outcomes across all modes of delivery and that students in their programs have access to learning resources. They are also responsible for ensuring that online courses and dual-credit courses for high school students are as rigorous and have similar outcomes and expectations as those same courses offered face-to-face on the Auraria campus. The role of department chairs is included in the *Handbook for Professional Personnel, pp. 37-41.*

All departments require the same contact hours per credit for lecture courses, lab courses, field experience courses, etc., as outlined in MSU Denver's Undergraduate Curriculum Manual *(use both links)* regardless of discipline.

Each of the three colleges and the School of Education have their own faculty committees that review curriculum and make faculty promotion and tenure recommendations. This is true also for each department within the colleges/school. Also see 3.C.2 regarding faculty oversight of faculty qualifications.

The broad participation of faculty in the oversight of academic standards is also ensured through Faculty Senate committees that review and make recommendations to the full senate regarding curriculum and academic policies. These committees are:

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: This committee has jurisdiction over all undergraduate curriculum proposals and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning these proposals, including:

- Degree programs and concentrations

- Certificate programs
- Global Diversity courses
- General Studies, Multicultural and Senior Experience courses and requirements.

Academic Policies Committee: This committee makes recommendations to the senate on all matters related to academic standards, including, but not limited to:

- Academic evaluation policies, standards and procedures
- Academic calendar
- Admissions policies
- Suspension policies
- Transfer policies
- Re-admission qualifications.

General Studies Committee: This committee is tasked with making recommendations to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee regarding:

- Courses submitted for designation as General Studies (GS) courses, using program guidelines appropriate to the catalog year for which determination is being made
- Continued GS designation of GS courses it reviews on a rotating basis of a maximum of seven years
- Proposed changes in the criteria for conferring GS designation.

Multicultural Review Committee: This committee evaluates each new or existing courses proposed to receive either the multicultural designation and review any changes to the criteria for conferring that designation. Committee recommendations are forwarded to the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

In addition to the above Faculty Senate committees, the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee has jurisdiction over all graduate curriculum proposals and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning these proposals, including:

- Graduate degree programs
- Graduate certificates
- Graduate course clusters (such as those in English and math).

[4.A.5] – The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Many academic programs at MSU Denver have earned specialized accreditations. They are included in the MSU Denver *Undergraduate Catalog*, on MSU Denver's website and on individual department web pages. Additional programs have approval and/or endorsement from external bodies; they, too, are in the catalog and on MSU Denver's website and departmental webpages.

Also, MSU Denver's **Counseling Center** is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services, and MSU Denver's **Health Care Center** is accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.

[4.A.6] – The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems

appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).

Information about the success of MSU Denver graduates is gathered in numerous ways.

Graduate Outcomes Survey: This alumni survey includes questions about employment rates, future plans, enrollment in additional education, experiences while earning their degree at MSU Denver (including internships, student teaching, study abroad, etc.) and satisfaction with post-graduate employment. Department-level reports can be generated upon request for use in program planning and accreditation.

The Office of Career Services' annual Impact and Outcomes Report highlights data from the Graduate Outcomes survey to show first-destination outcomes of graduates. This office also conducts a comparison of graduate outcomes and satisfaction by those who used its services versus graduates who did not. The Outcomes Survey data is a foundational component of this analysis. As a result, the Office of Career Services has continued to play a role in the management of the Outcomes Survey in partnership with the Business Intelligence unit and the Office of Alumni Relations, particularly in regard to strategies to help increase response rates and historical background on the origination and intent of the Outcomes Survey® for MSU Denver.

Post-Graduate Achievement Report: Every two years, data are collected from the National Student Clearinghouse on graduate school completions for 10 years of MSU Denver graduates. The most recent report, completed in 2015, includes graduates from FY 2000-01 through 2009-10. The report details rates of graduate school achievement, time to first graduate-school completion and highest post-graduate degree for each major and college in the University. This report is used for Board of Trustees meetings, department planning and program review.

Department-level evaluations: Departments also collect information on their graduates through surveys, often conducted in the Senior Experience course. In all cases, the results of these surveys are used within departments to make improvements in instructional content, pedagogy and/or student support services. Some examples of these and other strategies include:

- The **Department of Nursing** surveys graduates and employers as required by their national accreditation. As a result of student feedback in these surveys, the Nursing department changed the delivery method for some of their nursing courses to an online format.
- The **School of Education** (SOE) does a Student Teaching Exit Survey and an Alumni Survey. Because of student feedback in the Alumni Survey, two new courses have been developed: an early childhood course, ECE 3350, Documentation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education, and a special education course, SED 3600 Exceptional Learners in the Classroom. Also, with thanks to the Colorado Department of Education, the SOE is able to access our students' results on PLACE and PRAXIS tests administered by the Educational Testing Service. Recognizing a need to better prepare Elementary educators in differentiation in instruction, MSU Denver's Elementary Education and Literacy Department is focusing on inclusion in a current faculty search.
- All graduating seniors in the Engineering Technology programs are surveyed based on their national accreditation outcomes. Results related to lab work are relatively low, but the Engineering and Engineering Technology Department anticipate that moving into the new Aerospace & Engineering Sciences Building will address this concern.
- The **Department of Nutrition** conducts senior and postgraduate surveys as well as a survey that asks post-baccalaureate internship directors to evaluate MSU Denver graduates.

Substantial program modifications have been made as a result of these surveys.
- in MSU Denver's **Athletic Training** program, the director does a WOTS ("Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Strengths) analysis and makes changes as a result of responses.
- The **Industrial Design Department** (IND) uses multiple measures to assess the effectiveness of current curriculum and the level of skill of graduating students. All IND students complete 150 internship hours in a professional environment under professional supervision, after which the student and the internship provider complete a review survey. Also, all full-time IND faculty review graduating seniors' portfolios using the same rubric that is used for the internship course to evaluate the quality of the work students produce. The IND senior design show provides an informal way of measuring the level of education and skill a student has achieved. The show is open to the public and local professionals, business owners, alumni and faculty from other institutions attend. At this event, MSU Denver IND faculty interact with others in the design field and hear their views, opinions and comments. These comments are shared among all faculty later to identify areas or needed change or improvement.
- For the first time, in the spring of 2016, the **Department of Art** graduates were asked to participate in a Strategic National Arts Alumni survey. The survey's goal is to demonstrate that art majors make a decent living and have a low unemployment rate.

Another way departments evaluate the success of their graduates is by tracking pass rates for licensing or certification exams. For instance, national licensing exam pass rates are tracked for nursing graduates Undergraduate and post-baccalaureate teacher education students must receive a passing score on the state-required PLACE and PRAXIS II examinations in order to qualify for student teaching.

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- PRES_MISSION_Internships Applied Learning Center MSU Denver
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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

The University's commitment to educational achievement of its students is evidenced by its commitment to assessment of student learning and the use of assessment data to improve student learning

[4.B.1] – The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

MSU Denver's programs have goals or learning outcomes appropriate for their level--undergraduate, graduate, etc.--with accompanying assessment strategies. For example, the General Studies (GS) program, which has a clearly stated mission and three goals (see 3.B.2), has SLOs and rubrics tied to each of its nine categories. All of MSU Denver's assessment activities are overseen by the University-wide Provost's Assessment Committee (UPAC) chaired by an MSU Denver faculty member. UPAC has six subcommittees: Assessment Resources, Co-Curricular Units, General Studies Assessment, Multicultural, Outreach and Programmatic AssessmentReports. MSU Denver's Office of Assessment of Student Learning provides resource materials for faculty and departments doing the assessment work.

For assessment of student learning outcomes, each department or program identifies the artifacts that can provide evidence of student learning. These artifacts are measured by rubrics, also established by the department or program. The result is data that is reviewed by the department or program to determine if curricular or other changes are needed to improve instruction.   And these results, along with proposed changes, are included in an annual report which goes to the the appropriate dean, their own colleges/school assessment committee and the **director of student learning outcomes** assessment using a template that is available on the MSU Denver website. These reports are then peer reviewed, with feedback going back to the departments that submitted them. The most important aspect of these reports is the delineation of the changes and improvements that have been made as a result of the assessment practices. All assessment practices are based on the SLOs identified for each program or unit. The director of student learning outcomes assessment uses the annual reports to prepare an annual brief overall assessment report that goes to the deans, deputy provost and provost. The 2013-14 General Studies Assessment Report is offered as an example.

The assessment of student learning work is done by faculty within instructional departments and by staff who work directly with students in the non-instructional units. The director of student learning

outcomes assessment provides support and guidance for UPAC and the assessment work across the university, brings in resources (she is bringing in a speaker in mid-April), maintains an inventory of the University's assessment activities and provides annual reports to the Arts and Student Affairs leadership, as mentioned above. An abbreviated inventory of General Studies Arts and Humanities is offered as an example of the university-wide tracking of assessment that is done.

Also, in the summer of 2015, an Undergraduate Outcomes Task Force was convened to continue work that had begun in 2012-13 to identify outcomes for graduates of MSU Denver's baccalaureate programs. In the fall of 2015, surveys were used to gather input from multiple stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, alumni and local business leaders. The results of the surveys were then vetted in public "town hall" forums and outcomes were finalized. In the spring of 2016, the Task Force met to identity strategies for assessing the outcomes. This discussion continued into the fall of 2016. In the spring of 2017, nine undergraduate outcomes and their assessment strategies are being presented to Faculty Senate for a discussion and possible vote.

[4.B.2] - The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

The University has in place rigorous policies and procedures for assessing student learning outcomes in its General Studies, undergraduate degree, graduate and co-curricular programs (see also 5.D.1).

General Studies (GS) Assessment: The three goals of the GS program are supported by a set of SLOs and measurements developed by the General Studies Task Force (GSTF). These outcomes are addressed by courses in one or more of nine distinct categories (see 3.B.2), each with a Draft Rubric; three are offered here as examples.

When the reinvigorated GS program was established in 2012, it was agreed that each year approximately one third of the GS courses would be subject to assessment, so that after three years, the entire program would have gone through an assessment cycle. All General Studies programs have received the analysis (examples are offered here; note three links) of their first round, from 2013-14, of assessment data to help inform decisions about the assessment process and improvement of instruction. Results of the 2014-15 GS assessment were shared with program chairs and deans in Summer 2016. Results of the 2015-16 GS assessment are currently being tallied for disbursement to program chairs and deans.

As 2016-17 is the fourth year of the assessment cycle, the assessment results from the previous three years are being reviewed and the entire assessment process may be revised. Already it is generally thought that the three-year assessment cycle is too long, there are too many outcomes and not all departments feel the process works well for them. However, many have found the process to be useful and have made significant changes to either curriculum or pedagogy as a result of their assessment work. Examples of these changes include:

- During the 2013-014 academic year, the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) collected and analyzed the assessment data of four speech communication courses that are listed as meeting the GS Oral Communication requirement: SPE 1010 Public Speaking, SPE 1020 Communication in Action, SPE 1710 Interpersonal Communication and SLHS 1620 American Sign Language. (The prefix for all "SPE" courses is now "CAS.") For SPE 1010 Public Speaking, this resulted in the adoption of a "competency-based approach" to teaching and evaluating the speeches of students. The "competency based-approach" identifies eight core public speaking competencies that were developed through research by the discipline's National Communication Association. The assessment data also revealed a

disturbing lack of proficiency on the part of our students in meeting SLO 1: Demonstrate effective use of technology appropriate to the task and discipline. This problem has been addressed with more of an emphasis on how the course is taught now, with a particular focus on the use of presentation software in delivery of speeches. In SPE 1020 Communication in Action, because of assessment data, instructors now spend more time on the proper use of presentation software (SLO 1), cause-and-effect relationships and fallacies of argument (SLO 6).

- As a result of the assessment process, the **Department of History** modified the Historical SLOs, reduced the number of courses that fulfilled the GS Historical requirement from over 30 to 12, with only 1000-level courses fulfilling the GS requirement, and made substantive and non-substantive curriculum changes to reflect the new SLOs. The Historical SLOs are now the same for both General Studies and the History Program.

- The **Department of Mathematics** has responded to assessment results for MTH 1080 Mathematical Modes of Thought, a GS Quantitative Literacy requirement course, in two ways: 1) administering a survey of all math faculty teaching the course to address specific issues with course resources and 2) creating additional worksheets for each of the five core topics that target problems requiring quantitative analysis. Another change is that the department is also piloting a new sequence of courses and the use of student Learning Assistants for MTH 1110 College Algebra.

Undergraduate Program Assessment: All degree programs at MSU Denver are expected to annually assess student learning and submit reports to each department's dean, the AVP for curriculum and academic effectiveness and the director of assessment of student learning outcomes. The Program Assessment Report Template is available on the Office of Assessment of Student Learning website. Each report must include a statement of the changes that have been made as a result of assessment practices, and if and how students are better able to achieve program outcomes as a result. As with General Studies assessment, programs are using the assessment process to improve student achievement of outcomes. For example:

- With the recognition, during the assessment process, that students in the **Department of Human Services** needed additional support with writing, immediate changes were implemented. Faculty who teach the introductory level class now have a representative from the Writing Center speak to their classes about developing a healthy writing practice. The faculty who teach the ethics class agreed to have a representative from the Writing Center speak to their classes about writing cases studies and citations. And more writing assignments were added. Recent assessment of student writing shows a marked improvement.

- Due to the high number of students not meeting the outcome for recognizing ethical dilemmas, the College of Business hired one full-time temporary faculty member in 2013-14 to teach Business Ethics and lead the development of curriculum changes. Because of budget constraints, the College has not been able to do a permanent hire for this position and the College is now in the process of curriculum mapping to identify where ethics issues and topics are in the curriculum and moving the assessment to a course later in the sequence of courses, perhaps a capstone course. They are also considering adding a new BUS course called "Corporate Social Responsibility" to use in lieu of the current ethics course requirement.

Some departments have other strategies in place for assessment student achievement of outcomes. For example, the Department of Art has multiple assessment points throughout the student's degree: mid-career assessments in the form of portfolio reviews upon the completion of 21 credits in the major and evaluation of Senior Thesis work in the form of exhibitions and oral presentations that are evaluated by faculty committees. As a result of portfolio reviews, the department created a one-credit professional practice course for art majors to help them determine if they should stay in the B.A.

program or apply for the B.F.A. program. On the basis of thesis reviews, the department developed a new ART 4701 Advanced Interdisciplinary Studio course.

Graduate Program Assessment: Once MSU Denver's Undergraduate Outcomes have been approved by MSU Denver's Faculty Senate (they go to Faculty Senate in March), the Graduate Council will develop overall student outcomes for MSU Denver's graduate programs. And each graduate program has its own discipline-specific outcomes and assessment practices.

For example, the **Master of Social Work** program uses the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) ten competencies as their student learning outcomes (SLOs). To collect data, embedded assignments and practice behaviors are used. Practice behaviors are the behaviors that must be present in students in order to achieve each competency. The MSW Program faculty utilize the foundation-year practice behaviors as written by CSWE as assessment measures in the foundation year and have written their own practice behaviors (as recommended by CSWE) for each concentration in the concentration year (Macro Practice and Individuals and Families). In some cases, practice behaviors in the concentration year have been rewritten to fit the academic course in which it resides. The rewritten practice behavior is then called a secondary practice behavior and it supports the measurement of the primary practice behavior in a course-specific way. The program has established benchmarks for program assessment and rubrics have been developed to measure each practice behavior in all of the courses where an embedded assignment was located. The program produces an annual report. As a result of the 2013-14 assessment work, embedded assignments were refined and improved.

Another example is the **Master of Professional Accountancy** program which has developed SLOs that are assessed on a two-year cycle. SLOs 1, 2(a) and 2(b) were evaluated in the first cycle, in 2014-15. SLOs 3, 4, 5(a) and 5(b) comprise the second cycle and were evaluated in 2015-16. Rubrics have been developed for the assessed case studies and group presentations. Previously, in 2014-15, goal 2b (effective communication skills--oral--are accomplished in a professional manner) had been assessed in course ACCM 5000. Then, in the following year, goal 2b was evaluated and measured using data instead from course ACCM 5020. This change was made to enable oral communication to be assessed by a panel of professional accountants. Their last two annual assessment reports are offered here.

Specialized Accreditations: Over 20 of the University's academic programs are accredited by specialized accreditation bodies (see 4.A.5). To maintain these accreditations, these programs have specific student learning outcomes and must demonstrate how well students achieve these outcomes as well as how we maintain continuous improvement in instruction.

For example, the revision of the SLOs in the **Recreation Professions Program** was identified by the Council on Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions as a top priority for reaccreditation during the self-study in Spring 2015. In light of this, a consultant was engaged and, in conjunction with work done by department faculty, the program's SLOs were totally revised based on the council's newly adopted standards. These new outcomes were mapped specifically to courses, assignments and assessments. New collection procedures for measurement of the outcomes were devised and implemented in the 2015-16 academic year. Based on this assessment work, the program received re-accreditation for the next seven years.

Co-Curricular Assessment: Non-instructional programs and units submit assessment reports annually and are expected to use what they learn from the assessment cycle to shape programmatic efforts to enhance student learning or program improvement. Examples include:

- **Academic Advising:** Data collected has primarily consisted of the student satisfaction and utilization survey. The University has responded to the survey data by adding professional advising positions, moving advising services closer to the academic units and improving the technological infrastructure for advising. The Advising Task force is currently working on developing SLOs for advising that will be adopted University-wide.
- Access Center: Data on SLOs has been collected since 2014. Surveys and pre/post assessment are the main assessment tools used.
- **Applied Learning Center**: The Internship, Service Learning, and Undergraduate Research Programs have SLOs which are assessed annually; an annual report is produced.
- **Study Abroad:** During the 2015-16 academic year, the University International Education Committee identified SLOs that fall under the study-abroad experience and also developed and approved an assessment survey that will be administered for all courses.

The Academic and Student Affairs office of Student Engagement and Wellness, which includes Student Activities, Student Government and the Student Health Center, used a learning outcome template as a tool for writing outcomes. Assessment Planning Guides are due to the area's AVP each fall.

[4.B.3] – The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The director of assessment of student learning outcomes facilitates development of assessment plans for academic and other programs and assists faculty and staff with articulating desired SLOS and deciding the most appropriate ways to measure these outcomes. This position also assists with the intentional use of the findings generated from these measures to improve student learning and development. Data on student achievement on these measures is tracked over time and trends are observed by faculty in departments, who use the results to inform changes to curriculum and distribution of resources within the department. Examples, in addition to those listed in 4.B.2, include:

On the basis of 2013-14 assessment results, the **Department of English** revised their syllabi for their first year writing courses and revised a 3000-level course as well. The results of these changes can be determined when these courses come up again in the assessment cycle. This is an example of how the four-year general studies assessment cycle is too long (see 4.B.2, "General Studies Assessment").

A research survey conducted by a faculty member in the Integrative Healthcare Program found that 94 percent of students plan to pursue additional education after graduation. As a result, courses ITP 2850 Wellness Coaching I, ITP 4400 Wellness Coaching II and ITP 4910 Application in Wellness Coaching were created to make the program more flexible for students going on to other programs following graduation. Assessment findings led Integrative Healthcare faculty to make significant curriculum changes. For example, course ITP 2000 Introduction to Integrative Health was created to provide an introduction to the field of integrative health and to prepare students for meeting the program expectations. Additionally, the chemistry requirement was dropped because they found that many students didn't need the course. The capstone course ITP 4991 was created to provide additional means for achieving the SLO of articulating their skill set through a detailed presentation.

Additional examples, taken from annual program assessment reports, include the following:

Computer Information Systems (CIS) - Based on the feedback from the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET self-study report and site visit from the Fall 2015 the department made major change to the CIS major requirements. We added an existing elective to the require CIS major courses: CIS 3500, Information Systems Security. This closed a weakness we had in not having

consistent coverage of IS security and strengthen the program by having 33 credits for the CIS major. We also added two new security courses and a security concentration.

Art – As a result of the 13-14 assessment, faculty were concerned with the number of insufficient outcomes in the BA capstone. A curriculum change was made to require 18 credits of electives in the major be fulfilled by studio art courses. As of the 14-15 assessment, more exemplary and accomplished outcomes were reported in both execution and articulation.

Music - It is clear that the theory program within the department needs to be shored up in order to improve learning outcomes. The department is in the midst of a curricular overhaul of music theory. We will watch closely to see how students respond to the curricular updates.

Human Services – Based on feedback from the graduate survey, we are offering two information sessions this Fall on how to apply for the Certified Addictions Counselor (CAC) status through the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

Also see examples in 5.D.2.

[4.B.4] – The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

MSU Denver's *Handbook for Professional Personnel (p. 16)* stipulates that faculty are evaluated on the basis of three areas: teaching, scholarly activities and service. "Instructional assessment" is included as a teaching activity. In MSU Denver's *Guidebook for Portfolio Preparation,* a guidebook for those faculty seeking tenure and/or promotion, "instructional assessment" is included as a teaching activity. When faculty, in seeking tenure and/or promotion, write their narrative, they discuss their participation in assessment activities.

All instructional program outcomes are written by faculty and included in curriculum proposals which have to be approved by the department's Curriculum Committee, the college/school Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate.

Until Fall semester, 2015, assessment work was overseen by Faculty Associates with release time. In early spring of 2016, MSU Denver hired a director of student learning outcomes assessment. The role of this position is to provide support for faculty, departments and co-curricular units with their assessment work, develop and maintain assessment inventories, provide trainings and prepare annual reports for the provost, deputy provost and deans.

As stated in its charge document, the University-wide Provost's Assessment Committee (UPAC), composed almost entirely of faculty but inclusive of co-curricular representatives as well, has oversight over all assessment activities across the University. A faculty member serves as chair. The director of student learning outcomes assessment supports the work of UPAC. The goal of UPAC is to continue to build on MSU Denver's culture of assessment, to provide support and guidance for those who do the work of assessment and to make sure the work of assessment supports continuous improvement of learning.

UPAC replaced the General Studies Program Assessment Committee, composed entirely of faculty, which had been in place since the University revised the General Studies program. The annual program assessment reports that were submitted to the associate vice president for curriculum and academic effectiveness but are now submitted to UPAC and the director of student learning outcomes

assessment are written by faculty.

There is an interest on the part of some faculty to revisit the General Studies assessment plan. The concern is that there are too many outcomes (there are more than 20) and the four-year cycle may be too long when improvements are needed. The intention overall is to build on assessment practices that are meaningful and easy to routinely implement--for the sake of sustainability.

On April 14th, Dr. Marilee Bresciani Ludvik will present an all-day workshop on "Assessing the Transformational Process of Student Learning and Development. Dr. Ludvik serves as professor of postsecondary educational leadership at San Diego State University. Her past research has focused on the evaluation of student learning and development and the role leaders play in using evidence to improve student learning and development in higher education. Her most recent research explores the effectiveness of attention, emotion and cognitive reappraisal training programs in cultivating evidence-based decision-making and one's ability to think critically.

Sources

- ASA_Academic Assessment
- ASA_Assessment Report Templates
- ASA_CAE_2015-16 Programs
- ASA_CAE_Accreditations and Approvals-MSU Denver-Acalog
- ASA_CAE_CFA Newsletter
- ASA_CAE_Guidebook for Portfolio Preparation
- ASA_CAE_Instructional Assessment Narratives
- ASA_CAE_ProgramAssessmentReportTemplate2015-16
- ASA_CBUS_College of Business MSU Denver
- ASA_CBUS_Ethical Dilemmas
- ASA_CBUS_Masters Degree Department of Accounting MSU Denver
- ASA_CBUS_MPA Assessment Report
- ASA_CLAS_Assessment Department of Art
- ASA_CLAS_CAS Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_CAS Assessment Annual
- ASA_CLAS_CIS Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Art Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Art Portfolio Requirements
- ASA_CLAS_Department of Music Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_ENG Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_History Assessment
- ASA_CLAS_MSW Assessment
- ASA_CPS_Human Services Annual Assessment
- ASA_CPS_Human Services Assessment
- ASA_CPS_Integrative Healthcare Assessment
- ASA_CPS_MSW Program Assessment Report
- ASA_CPS_MSW Program Department of Social Work MSU Denver
- ASA_CPS_RECR Assessment Plan
- ASA_CPS_RECR SLOs
- ASA_CPS_Recreation Professions Program
- ASA_General Studies 3 Goals

- ASA_General Studies Requirements
- ASA_General Studies Rubric Examples
- ASA_GS 2013-14 Annual Assessment Report
- ASA_GS Arts and Humanities Inventory of Assessed Courses
- ASA_GS Assessment
- ASA_GS Map Structure
- ASA_GS Oral Communication Assessment
- ASA_GS Quantitative Literacy Assessment
- ASA_GS Written Communication Assessment
- ASA_GSAC Agendas
- ASA_International Studies SLO
- ASA_SEW_Assessment Planning Guide
- ASA_Study Abroad
- ASA_Study Abroad SLOs
- ASA_Study Abroad Survey
- ASA_UPAC Charge
- ASA_UPAC Subcommittee Charges
- ASA_US_Academic Advising MSU Denver
- ASA_US_Access Center SLOs
- ASA_US_Office of International Studies MSU Denver
- BOT_Draft Rubrics General Studies MSU Denver
- BOT_General Studies Task Force General Studies MSU Denver
- BOT_Graduate Council
- BOT_Graduate Council Agenda
- BOT_UOTF 2015 Undergraduate Outcomes MSU Denver
- FINAD_HR_Director Student Learning Outcomes
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15
- FINAD_HR_MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel Effective 10-1-15 (page number 21)
- PRES_EO_Disability Support Services Access Center MSU Denver
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center Annual Report
- PRES_MISSION_Applied Learning Center MSU Denver

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Argument

MSU Denver is committed to improving the retention, persistence and completion rates of all degree and certificate programs.

[4.C.1] – The institution has ambitious yet attainable goals for retention, persistence and completion.

In 2015, the University developed its Strategic Enrollment Management Plan in partnership with the consulting firm SEM Works. This plan proposes retention goals that range from "modest" (1 percent) to "aspirational" (2 percent). The Retention Task Force adopted the aspirational scenario and established the goal of improving undergraduate retention (measured as fall-to-fall retention) by 10 percentage points by 2020. The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan includes 165 recommended strategies that address recruitment, enrollment, retention and completion. Each of the 165 strategies has subsequently been assigned to various offices and units for lead responsibility. Strategies from the Enrollment Management Plan that address retention, persistence, and completion include:

- Select and possibly acquire a retention management system (completed; we selected the Education Advisory Board [EAB] Student Success Collaborative)
- Facilitate student transitions into and through the University via personal encounters, student success plan monitoring and early career assessments (a Guided Pathways/Meta-majors Visioning Session was held on Feb. 17, 2017 to begin laying the ground work)
- Leverage the student success planning process to promote student exploration and connections (this was part of the visioning session held on Feb. 17th)
- Identify mechanisms for capturing student intentions upon initial enrollment and thereafter as intentions change (Banner Managers are creating a field in Banner to identify students' educational goals; this information will be used to tailor individual student advising).

MSU Denver believes that "aspirational" goals for improving retention are in order due to significant investments and process changes that have been made in the last year, including adding 15 new

advising positions, changing to a case-management system for advising and eventually incorporating predictive analytics to enable targeted intrusive advising. As of now, every student has an assigned advisor. MSU Denver also anticipates retention gains from involvement as one of 44 institutions in American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY) initiative. The University's Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) initiative (see 1.C.2) likewise aligns with and supports broad retention goals.

Last year, the Center for Faculty Excellence hosted a faculty learning community on student retention and out of their work a full-day workshop on "Mindset" is scheduled for this spring.

The Enrollment Management office is now constructing a data dashboard that will communicate the university's progress on retention rates. Additionally, the Undergraduate Studies office is including faculty and staff in a two-hour Student Success and Retention Forum scheduled on April 25 and 26. The topics are: Early Alert, Guided Pathways, Equity and Closing the Attainment Gap, and Transfer Student Success. The intention is to make this a per-semester event.

[4.C.2] – Retention, persistence, and completion data are collected and analyzed.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) collects information pertaining to student retention and graduation rates and includes it in the annual MSU Denver Institutional Research Data Book. This information is distributed University-wide and to outside agencies and is available to the general public. The data book is a comprehensive compilation of information concerning the University's faculty, students, degrees, credit-hour production, majors and more. Faculty and administration analyze and interpret the data, with OIR providing insight as needed. In addition, the University's Business Intelligence unit furnishes near-real-time weekly retention reports during course registration periods. These reports are disaggregated by department and by the class standing of students.

Also, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees has a set of metrics to measure the University's retention, persistence and completion goals. And the State of Colorado Department of Higher Education's Performance Contract includes a sets of metrics by which the University's performance goals are measured.

[4.C.3] – Units at the institution use retention and completion data to make improvements.

Beginning in 2010, the University instituted a number of practices to improve data collection related to academic advising services and to use the data to improve services. The University was awarded a Title III Strengthening Institutions grant, which allowed for much improved data collection. Data collected through the grant and independent of it included:

- Regular surveys of students
- Regular surveys of faculty advisors and professional advisors
- A survey of "stopped-out" students, asking them about factors that led to their not returning.

Respondents to the "stopped-out" survey reported that academic reasons, including satisfaction with the overall quality of advising, were significant reasons for discontinuing enrollment. Based on the data collected, significant changes were made to the ways in which academic advising services are provided (see 3.D.3).

The University will continue to collect data to track how well these new approaches are working, and adjust accordingly. The survey of students' experience with advising will be administered every two years.

Also, data is collected and utilized to guide and improve units/programs specializing in retention and persistence for the University. The First Year Success program used focus-group results to rethink and revise curriculum offerings for students in their first year, and course success data is used each semester to determine which gateway courses will be supported by supplemental instruction.

A *Student and Academic Success Center Review* conducted in the summer of 2014 used data to determine appropriate services and resources needed to help retain and graduate students. The findings from the review allowed for better alignment of services, growth of services and new services to assist students. Programs that the University created or modified include Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Early Alert and College Completion. Also, as a result of this review, the Student Intervention Services Program was moved from the Academic Student Success to Advising. One example of expansion of services is evidenced through the creation of the Transfer Student Success and Persistence Program. This program has the ultimate goal of increasing retention and persistence among transfer students, who represent 60 percent of the student population at MSU Denver.

[4.C.4] – The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

MSU Denver actively engages in collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs. For example, the Business Intelligence Unit completed a study in 2016 that examined the impact of student involvement in co-curricular activities on retention, GPA and graduation (finding a positive correlation between involvement and student success). In addition, the University has established a culture of disaggregating data by race and ethnicity to ensure equity in outcomes, as exemplified by the 2014 Equity Scorecard.

Sources

- ASA_CAE_CFA Newsletter
- ASA_Reimagining the First Year (RFY)
- ASA_Retention Task Force
- ASA_SEM Critical Points
- ASA_Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
- ASA_Title III Grant
- ASA_US_College Completion Program Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- ASA_US_First Year Success MSU Denver
- ASA_US_SASC Program Review Outcomes
- ASA_US_SASC Review 2014
- ASA_US_Student Intervention Services
- ASA_US_Transfer Student Success Student Academic Success Center MSU Denver
- CDHE_CDHE Performance Contract
- CDHE_Performance Contract Metrics
- FINAD_DATA_Office of Institutional Research MSU Denver
- FINAD_DATA_OIR Data Book
- FINAD_DATA_Team DELTA Retention Reports
- PRES_DIV_Equity in Excellence Scorecard 2014

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

MSU Denver has achieved a University-wide culture of assessment and improvement based on the analysis of that assessment by creating significant, systemic policies and procedures over the last five years. These include 1) a reinvigorated General Studies program with Student Learning Outcomes and a definitive three-year assessment cycle, 2) a Transfer Student Success and Persistence Office, 3) an Academic Assessment Office, 4) the College Readiness Program and 5) the hiring of a director for assessment of student learning outcomes and other actions to strengthen and improve the University's learning environment. These improvements are in addition to the programs that have been in place.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

In the decade since the last accreditation review, MSU Denver has faced fiscal challenges resulting from national and state economic downturns, which, in turn, have resulted in reductions of state appropriations for higher education. The University has been able to meet these challenges through measured tuition and fee increases, strategic planning and budgeting, and conservative spending and borrowing. Other strategies include using public-private partnerships to strengthen the University's cash and financial position. In 2012, the University began a long-range planning process to ensure that fiscal challenges can continue to be met.

[5.A.1] – The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal and Human Resources: MSU Denver's budgeting process allocates fiscal resources and staffing amounts sufficient to support academic program delivery and support services.

The fiscal-year budget is built starting with a permanent base amount, adding an increment to cover merit increases if instituted and allocating additional base budget to departments/colleges/schools based on projected needs and alignment to the University's strategic goals and plan as defined in the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh (see 1.A.3).

The development of the internal budget process begins in January when all units within the University present their needs to the appropriate Vice President or the President (in the case of the President's Office). Within Academic and Student Affairs all direct reports – including Academic

Colleges/School, each AVP area, and Information Technology Services – submit their budget requests. In February, the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, and the other University branches, submit their requests (with strategic plan alignment) to the Budget Office. From there the requests, along with revenue forecasts and projections, are presented to the Budget Task Force (BTF). After vetting the proposed expenditures, the BTF presents its proposal to the president, who, if necessary, communicates his recommendations to the BTF. After the president's approval, the proposed fiscal-year budget is presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

The Operating Budget of the University consists of the Education & General (E&G) Fund as well as self-sufficient or "Business Enterprise" programs. E&G-supported programs receive spending authority through the annual budget-approval process. Business Enterprise Funds are managed closely to be self-supporting activities. Examples of Business Enterprise activities include the Student Health Center, the Accelerated and Traditional Nursing Programs, graduate programs and the Extended Campus program.

A third financing mechanism is non-base funding for one-time initiatives to support departments/colleges/schools with general needs that are not ongoing. These funds provide supplemental resources to offer additional courses essential to student matriculation and are distributed based on the evaluation of submitted proposals from the different branches.

Strategic Budgeting: MSU Denver has maintained a policy of carefully protecting its fiscal assets and spending them strategically. The University has maintained a strong cash balance and financial ratios during these past 10 years as a result of strategic and prudent spending and budgeting. The results of these practices are:

- **Net assets** have decreased, from $30,493,368 as of June 30, 2007, to $(48,621,441) as of June 30, 2016 (a 259 percent decrease). This decrease is due to the implementation of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement number 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions which required the University to record a liability equal to its proportionate share of the net pension liability of the Public Employee's Retirement Association (PERA). GASB 68 resulted in a net pension liability of $160.2 million, a deferred outflow of $18.3 million and a $6.6 million deferred inflow for the University. For comparative purposes if we were to remove the effects of GASB 68, the total net position would have been a positive $99.9 million, which would have been a $13.2 million increase from FY15 and would have resulted in a 228 percent increase from FY07.

- **Unrestricted net position,** i.e., assets available for any lawful purpose of the institution, decreased from $17,286,283 as of June 30, 2007, to $(90,277,546) as of June 30, 2016, (a 622 percent decrease). This decrease was caused by GASB 68 as stated above; removing the effects of GASB 68 would show unrestricted net position at a positive $58,258,210 in FY16, which would have been a 237 percent increase from fiscal year 2007.

- **Net operating-revenue ratios** throughout the last few years have remained positive, indicating that the University is effectively and wisely using its available resources. Between FY07 and FY16 the ratio ranged from 1.51 percent to 4.2 percent, respectively. According to the National Association of Colleges and University Business Officers, an ideal rate is between 2 percent and 4 percent.

Starting with Summer 2014, the University has a new initiative called Summer Revenue Sharing to encourage its colleges and school to bring in more summer revenue with the incentive of keeping their revenue after deducting all the direct and indirect costs. This initiative proved to be highly successful,

with student summer FTE increasing by 8.6 percent in one year.

Additionally, to ensure availability of funds for tenure-line faculty where they are the most needed, the Office of the Provost maintains the Faculty Vacant Pool Fund. When a tenure-line faculty position is vacated due to retirement or resignation, spending authority to fund the position reverts to the Faculty Vacant Pool rather than to the General Fund. Academic units then work with their colleges/school to prioritize their faculty needs, and the colleges/school, in turn, request funding authorizations from the provost. This process promotes ongoing review of tenure-line faculty needs across campus and allocation of limited funds to programs according to University, college/school and unit strategic plans.

Other Financial Strategies: MSU Denver has implemented several innovative projects to supplement state support and bring additional revenue to its operations. One of these projects is a public-private partnership (P3) with Sage Hospitality, a leading hospitality management firm, to build and operate the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center (HLC) (see 3.D.4.). Due to the bonds issued, and subsequently paid for by the excess revenue of the hotel, the entire project was innovatively constructed without the use of student, University or taxpayer money. In fiscal year 2017, HLC@Metro, Inc. transferred $2 million to the University Foundation, and half this amount will be used for scholarships. It is estimated that over the life of the bonds, approximately $20 million will be transferred for the use of the MSU Denver Foundation.

MSU Denver, in partnership with its foundation, has engaged more aggressively in recent years raising private gift support from donors. Examples of this aggressive pursuit of additional funding include the single-largest donation in the history of the University to establish the Rita and Navin Dimond Fellows Program and the sale of naming rights for the University's new state of the art Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver.

Currently, University and foundation leadership are pursuing a record number of seven-figure gifts to support University priorities, including capital needs as well as endowments and current gifts to support academic programs and faculty.

Long-Range Planning: In 2012, MSU Denver drafted its strategic plan for 2012 through 2017. The plan was updated in 2015 and renamed the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* (*s*ee 1.A.2.). Much of the direction that MSU Denver has taken when planning for the future has tied directly back to this strategic plan, and it remains a key document for the structuring of financial, academic and general University planning.

Educational and General Revenue (E&G Revenue) – Tuition and State Support: The nominal value of state appropriations for MSU Denver increased 17.5 percent from FY 2007 to FY 2016, while the real value decreased 10 percent considering a Consumer Price Index (CPI) factor of 3 percent. In FY07, MSU Denver received $42.7 million in state support (representing 47 percent of the E&G revenue). Ten years later, in FY16, the University received $50.1 million in state appropriations (representing 29.1 percent of the E&G revenue). The University's focus on a performance-based, state-support allocation model resulted in higher state support in FY16.

To help offset the decline in state appropriations, the Board of Trustees has increased the University's tuition rate per credit hour by an average of 8.4 percent annually over the last decade. The impact of these rate increases on students has been mitigated in part by:

- Offering a tuition window that allows students taking between 12 and 18 credit hours to pay the 12-credit-hour tuition rate

- Increasing the institutional financial aid budget by approximately $5.2 million since FY07, going from $1.8 million to $7.7 million in FY17.

Despite the trend of increasing tuition to offset the decline in state support, MSU Denver remains the lowest-cost, four-year institution in Colorado, and ranks among the lowest in cost of attendance of its assigned National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEM) peer institutions. MSU Denver is committed to providing its students with the highest educational value at the lowest cost.

In 2014, House Bill 14-1319 was introduced, and subsequently passed, which shifted Colorado's higher-education state appropriations funding model from one that was based on keeping funding percentages flat for each institution, to a performance-based allocation model that rewards institutions based on their outcomes (graduation, retention, number of PELL-eligible students, etc.). MSU Denver has focused its effort on analyzing and defending this model since it has resulted in higher state support for the University in FY16 while also providing Colorado with a more efficient higher-education offering. This model will work toward slowly increasing MSU Denver's state funding allocation to be comparable to its peers, rather than being dramatically under-funded by the state.

Physical and Technological Infrastructure: Support for physical and technological infrastructure is considered through the same budget process as outlined above. Allocation of new MSU Denver funds for these purposes is determined annually based on University priorities. The president and, subsequently the Board of Trustees, make the final determination regarding priorities included in the University request for state capital funds.

Factors considered when identifying and prioritizing facilities projects include condition and utilization of space, programmatic needs, and cost and alignment with the Auraria Campus Master Plan / MSU Denver Neighborhood Plan.

The Auraria Campus is a unique shared-campus arrangement among three higher-education institutions – University of Colorado Denver, Community College of Denver and MSU Denver – and the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC), which acts as the campus landlord and owns most of the buildings. Each higher-education institution pays a share of their state support to AHEC for facility services that AHEC provides. Currently, MSU Denver owns and operates the Student Success Building (SSB), the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center (HLC), the Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver and the Aerospace and Engineering Sciences (AES) Building, which is scheduled to open in Summer 2017

[5.A.2] – The institution's resource-allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Alignment with MSU Denver's role and mission is a key criterion in the resource-allocation process. This helps protect educational programs from diversion of funds to activities that do not support the academic mission of the institution. Long-standing shared-governance structures and processes ensure that open discussion and debate among internal constituencies occur before any such diversion could be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The University has no superordinate entity to which it could divert funds as the University is a public institution and state agency.

Key aspects of the budgeting process that help protect educational programs from elective resource

allocations include the approval process through the Budget Task Force, which has faculty, staff and student representatives to provide accountability to the budget process, the president and Board of Trustees. In addition, the use of incremental base budgeting and funding faculty positions through the Vacant Faculty Pool ensure that the best interests of academic programs are maintained.

[5.A.3] – The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

The process through which the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh was developed ensures that the goals and strategies set forth in the plan can be achieved in light of current and anticipated University resources and opportunities. The strategic plan reflects the latest trends at MSU Denver and includes metrics to measure progress toward the stated goals. It is intended to guide the University for five years, which constitutes a short-enough period that external and internal conditions are not likely to change appreciably and impede plan implementation. The plan is based on quantitative evidence and conservative projections compiled in an extensive Strategic Plan Methodologies document.

Since the adoption of the first iteration of the University's five-year strategic plan in 2012, departments and academic units have been encouraged to create second-tier plans that align with the refined vision, mission, goals and strategies in the strategic plan refresh. This alignment has furthered adoption of plans and creation of metrics that are realistic and attainable. An example of these 'second-tier' plans is as follows:

- College of Professional Studies
    - **CPS Goal One: Student Success**--SPS uses state of the art methods in curriculum, instruction, assessment, advising, and outreach to increase student learning and persistence, and raising the graduation rates for our diverse student body.
    - **CPS Goal Two: Quality Faculty and Staff**--SPS hires and retain quality faculty who are excellent teachers, productive scholars, and contribute to our communities. Likewise, SPS continues to hire and retain quality staff who are student focused and contribute to student success.
    - **CPS Goal Three: Community Engagement**--The School of Professional Studies continues to develop innovative programs that enhance community engagement.
    - **CPS Goal Four: Working Environment**--SPS has a professional, respectful, and collegial working environment for all employees.
    - **CPS Goal Five: Enhanced/Increased Resources**--SPS continues to provide excellent resources for student learning and innovative strategies for increasing resources to the school's programs.
- Similar plans have been created by College of Business and College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

[5.A.4] – The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained. MSU Denver attracts, retains and develops its faculty and staff to further the educational mission of the institution.

MSU Denver attracts, retains and develops its faculty and staff to further the educational mission of the institution. The University has standards in place that ensure that candidates selected for employment are appropriately qualified. Hiring standards and procedures differ by job classification, and the Human Resources office facilitates hiring in all classifications. Human Resources, in partnership with the Equal Opportunity Office, provides Search Committee Training and Guidelines at the time of job posting to ensure that application review and applicant interviewing are consistent

with posted qualifications. This training is required for all search committee members and hiring authorities and must be completed on an annual basis. Furthermore, the guidelines in the Best Practices Guide for Diversifying the Workforce provide a clearly defined set of steps to recruit and select qualified individuals who meet institutional needs. In addition, Academic and Student Affairs has Protocols for Searching/Hiring Faculty (Categories I-III). The Minimum Requirements for Rank Upon Appointment define the detailed hierarchy to determine minimum requirements in each academic field.

The University has required HR Training (New Employee Orientation, ADA and Sexual Harassment) to help all new employees acclimate to their positions as well as orientation programs specific to full-time and affiliate (part-time) faculty.

The University has professional development programs to help continuing faculty and staff further develop their knowledge and skills.

- **Faculty:** Each academic unit provides professional development funding (approximately $1,000 to $1,500 per tenured/tenure-line faculty member) as well as opportunities for faculty in particular fields. The Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) supports faculty in their scholarly pursuits and instructional practices. (See 3.C.4.). Faculty Learning Communities (see 1.C.2) provide networking opportunities for faculty to engage with others who have similar interests in non-evaluative contexts.
  (See 3.C.4 for more detailed information.)

- **Staff:** The University's Professional Development and Training Office offers a variety of programs and services designed to help staff achieve professional growth and greater job satisfaction, including an annual Professional Development Conference. All of the University's major units offer workshops and seminars throughout the year in the areas of management, work-skills development, communication skills, career and personal development, life skills, health, safety issues and more. (See 3.C.6 for more detailed information.)

[5.A.5] – The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Budgeting: As has been previously described, MSU Denver has an effective and collaborative budgeting process developed over many years. The process begins at the unit level and builds to the college/school, division and University levels, ultimately concluding with approval by the Board of Trustees of an internal budget that includes state appropriation.

Expense monitoring: MSU Denver monitors its expenses in a variety of ways. The departments are given access and training to the University's financial system, and are responsible for monitoring their expenses for not only appropriateness and accuracy but also to ensure they are in line with their budget. In addition to each specific department monitoring their own expenses, each college/school is assigned a fiscal manager responsible for reviewing expenses. After each accounting period is closed the Accounting Services office prepares financial statements that include detailed information for each expense category. A year-over-year variance analysis is done to ensure any significant changes are investigated and explained, and, if necessary, corrected.

Accounting Services also prepares a monthly report that monitors the University's grant budgets. Actual expense is compared to budgets and research is done on any questionable balances. This report is shared with several officials at the University including the provost and various financial liaisons.

Lastly, the Office of the Budget reviews the budget status of departments to ensure they are within budget. Research is conducted on any department that has exceeded their budget and errors are corrected as necessary.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

MSU Denver's policy of shared governance and its administrative structure are the foundation for effective leadership and collaborative processes that align with its role and mission. The input of faculty, staff and students is actively sought through established processes and policies and through representation on critical University-wide committees that develop policy and oversee the student academic and support services experience.

[5.B.1] – The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

As a cornerstone of its operational mission and statutory role, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees establishes policies, procedures and oversight that help guide the University administratively and financially. Through the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 43), the board provides high-level oversight of University policies and practices and meets its obligations regarding financial and legal matters. The board is actively engaged in planning for and attending to the future needs of the University.

As provided by Colorado Revised Statute 23-54-102, the board has full authority and responsibility for the governance of the University. The board has such powers, rights and privileges as are granted to it by Colorado law, including, but not limited to: suing and being sued, taking and holding personal property and real estate, contracting and being contracted with, selling, leasing or exchanging real property, controlling and directing all monies received by it, authorizing revenue bonds and other lawful financial transactions to raise money and determine personnel matters.

The board also reviews and approves the University's finances and budget and significant changes, including but not limited to, setting annual budget parameters, tuition rates, salary rates for professional personnel, financial aid, parameters for issuance of debt and other areas essential to the fiscal soundness of the University. The board's Finance Committee also serves as the Audit Committee and reviews annually and reports to the full board any material issues or findings pertaining to the University's annual audit or any significant interim audit or risk management issues.

In addition, the board reviews and approves academic and student issues, including but not limited to the addition of new academic requirements, programs, degrees, majors, minors, certificates, fees,

significant changes in policies and other areas essential to the academic endeavor of the University and the welfare of its students.

To remain current with pertinent issues internal and external to the University, the board is regularly updated by the president and receives reports from governance organizations such as the MSU Denver Foundation Board, Student Government Assembly, Faculty Senate, the Council of Chairs, Council of Administrators, Classified Staff Council, the MSU Denver Alumni Association and various department or program-focused industry advisory councils. Also, to remain current in best practices in governance and issues in higher education, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees members regularly attend Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges' events and programs.

Each October the board holds a retreat to discuss current issues in higher education and review its and the University's goals for the year. In recent years, the board has extended its retreat by an extra day to also have an annual dialogue about University priorities with the foundation board. Board members regularly attend University functions as well.

[5.B.2] – The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies – including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students – in the institution's governance.

Governance at MSU Denver is defined as a constellation of processes and structures that allow for a range of participatory decision-making (including policy formation) and the cultivation of a culture that builds trust, with members of all internal constituencies having a sense that their voices not only have been articulated, but vetted and heard. Shared governance at MSU Denver strives to be a living reality and an aspirational goal inextricably bound to the institution's educational mission.

Stating its commitment to shared governance, the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 3) lays out the manner in which the board operates within the University's shared-governance structure. The board welcomes and expects the participation of faculty, students, staff, the alumni association and other University constituencies in the decision-making process, but delegates to the president, as chief executive officer, principal authority and responsibility for administering the institution. However, the president and trustees do not operate in a vacuum. Faculty members have principal jurisdiction over curriculum, tenure and promotion. The president may delegate oversight of applicable areas of University operations, planning and decision-making to structures and/or individuals within the community. The board looks to the president as its primary liaison with each of these constituencies. To be effective in this role, the president must establish an environment of transparent communication, substantive dialogue and mutual accountability that will foster trust by faculty, students and staff regarding matters considered by the board.

The Faculty Senate, Council of Administrators, Classified Staff Council and Student Government Assembly, each made up of elected members, and the Council of Chairs are all self-governed constituent groups that comprise the University's governance structure. Each group has members that serve on various University-wide committees and has standing committees that specialize in specific areas and develop policies and procedures accordingly.

The president of each of these constituent groups serves on the President's Cabinet, ensuring a representative voice in the recommendation of policies and procedures to the president. Other cabinet members include the vice presidents and additional high-level administrators and advisors.

The president takes the cabinet's recommendations on policy issues to the Board of Trustees for their consideration and final approval. Typical policies include those related to admission and degree

requirements, student life and conduct, evaluation of faculty members, protection of rights and privileges of University constituencies, self-governance, budgets, plans, and academic and administrative structure. Policies and procedures approved by the board reside in various locations across the University.

In 2016, MSU Denver hired a full-time policy administrator in Administration and Finance as the primary facilitator of the University's administrative policy governance framework. The policy administrator works collaboratively with policy owners and others to ensure the University's administrative policies and procedures are effectively established, communicated, maintained, reviewed and aligned with the University's strategic goals, values and legal responsibilities. This ensures an ongoing process for continuous improvement of University policy practices.

To address concerns raised in campus climate surveys about MSU Denver's decision-making process, the president formed the Shared Governance Task Force in Fall 2014; in June 2015, the task force presented its *Shared Governance Task Force Final Report* outlining key recommendations. The president has encouraged academic departments and administrative units to discuss the report at team meetings and provide feedback (see 2.A). An example of administrative units responding to this encouragement includes the Vice President of Administration, Finance and Facilities (VPAFF) branch's annual action plan, which is heavily shaped by the results of the campus climate survey. Many of the metrics adopted within the VPAFF's strategic plan list specific items from the campus climate survey to improve upon. There is also now a shared governance implementation team in place.

[5.B.3] – Administration, faculty, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

MSU Denver provides multiple levels through which stakeholders collaboratively participate in institutional governance to establish University plans and policies. Participation occurs primarily through representational bodies (see 5.B.2), the President's Cabinet and institution-wide committees with representation by job function or organizational unit. Student representatives are included in many of these committees.

Curriculum: The heart of the University is its curriculum and the faculty members responsible for developing and implementing it. The institution's multistep review process provides opportunities for comment on any proposed academic change to ensure that faculty members drive curricular and program changes. As outlined in the Curriculum Manual *for* Undergraduate Studies *(use both links)* and the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*, curriculum proposals proceed through the department, college and University levels, based on the breadth of the curriculum. At every level, faculty decisions drive what moves forward. University-level curriculum is voted on and approved by Faculty Senate.

Per the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 43), the Board of Trustees approves new and discontinuance of degree programs, minors and certificate programs after such actions have been fully vetted by faculty. (In addition, the Colorado Department of Education must approve the University's Teacher Education programs.)

Student input: The student voice is sought after and heard through many avenues at the University, including membership on:

- Faculty Senate Academic Policy Committee (nonvoting); this student is charged with

considering student views with respect to policies relating to academic standards
- President's Cabinet; held by the Student Government Assembly president
- Board of Trustees (nonvoting); this elected position is a member of the executive branch of Student Government Assembly
- Student Advisory Committee to the Auraria Board of Directors.

The *2016 Faculty Senate Climate Survey* also serves as an important faculty voice.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

MSU Denver engages in systematic and integrated planning to guide its operations and use of resources. As discussed in 1.A.3 and described below, MSU Denver's mission and the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* are the basis for budget decisions. With ongoing communications with the Colorado Department of Higher Education, state requirements and educational needs are met.

[5.C.1] – The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

The Board of Trustees approves the initial fiscal year base budget documents each year in May, which includes state appropriations and an internal budget. State appropriation is presented in the state Long Appropriations Bill.

As previously mentioned in 5.A.1, the development of the internal budget goes through a rigorous and thorough vetting process that begins at the college/school levels, through the administrative branches, to the Budget Task Force and onto the president before it is presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

At each step, budget requests must show how they align with the goals in the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh. When the proposed budget is presented to the board, it clearly indicates the connection each new spending request has to the core values contained in the strategic plan. For example, the FY17 budget alignment, as presented in the material for the Finance Committee meeting, includes a graph that illustrates the alignment with the strategic plan:

- Student and Academic Success: 65.5 percent
- Institutional Resources: 17.8 percent
- University Culture: 8.1 percent
- Telling the MSU Denver Story: 5.0%
- Budgets not aligned with the Strategic Plan: 1.9 percent
- Community Engagement and Regional Stewardship: 1.7 percent.

The board is updated throughout the fiscal year, and if any amendment is necessary to the initial budget, the fiscal year projections are updated with the Board's approval.

[5.C.2] – The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

A primary assessment process used in academic and support units is program review. (See 4.A.1.) The self-study and external consultant report that are part of the program-review process address the assessment of student learning outcomes and resulting improvements in instruction in the evaluation of each area's operations. All areas of the University use the findings and recommendations that result from the program review when proposing initiatives and in their annual planning and budget reports. The provost and staff consult program-review findings and recommendations when reviewing initiatives proposed by the colleges/school and use them to guide recommendations regarding allocation of personnel and funding through the normal budgetary process.

Some examples include a space upgrade for the Chicana/o Studies Program based on their 2015-16 program review. Both the LGBTQ and Student Media spaces were remodeled on the basis of program reviews. MSU Denver's Testing Center was remodeled to address bottlenecks in traffic flow and FERPA concerns that surfaced in their most recent review.

Another example of how MSU Denver is using data obtained through its evaluation processes is found in the budget request by the Division of Academic and Student Affairs in Fiscal Year 2015. In July 2014, MSU Denver engaged Hanover Research to survey former MSU Denver students to determine the reasons they discontinued enrollment. Reasons included financial barriers, difficulties balancing work, family and school, the quality of academic advising and the availability of courses. Academic and Student Affairs requested, and the MSU Denver Board of Trustees subsequently approved, a significant number of additional advising and student persistence positions based off of this survey of students.

[5.C.3] – The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Collaboration among internal and external University stakeholders is embedded in the culture at MSU Denver. Stakeholders involved in planning processes vary depending on the scope of the plan and may include faculty, staff, students, alumni, community leaders, employers and concerned citizens. For instance, when the institution began the strategic planning process, the University sought the input of community leaders as well as all of its internal constituencies via faculty and staff participation on the strategic planning committee.

Planning processes routinely incorporate means of communicating with stakeholders regarding project status. Examples include project websites, progress reports, town hall meetings and *The Daily / Early Bird*, which is the faculty/staff e-newsletter produced by the Marketing and Communications office. Shared governance groups are represented on planning committees and are provided opportunities to review, comment on and endorse plans prior to their adoption. Task forces and planning committees regularly have a fair cross section of representation among faculty, administrators, classified staff and students. These groups also provide reports to the Board of Trustees at each regular board meeting.

The planning process and subsequent MSU Denver Strategic Plan Refresh 2020 is indicative of the planning processes used to prepare other planning documents throughout MSU Denver. Examples include the advisory board the College of Business established to help direct its activities toward earning national accreditation in 2016 and the School of Education's annual Education Summit and resulting strategic plan.

[5.C.4] – The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity.

Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy and state support. Goals and strategies of the MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh are based on a rigorous analysis of current and future institutional capacity and externalities such as need and demand for academic programs and trends in state funding. As of June 30, 2016, the University's operating reserve (displayed in the financial statements as unrestricted net position less the effect of GASB 68) was approximately $52 million. Displayed in the University's financial statements, net assets of the MSU Denver Foundation, which promotes the general welfare and development of the University, were approximately $16 million, which included $8 million of endowment funds.

MSU Denver continues to seek, sustain and grow innovative resources. Accordingly, one goal of the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs is to increase public grants awarded and fee-for-service by 50 percent by 2020. Two of the foundation's goals, working in partnership with University Advancement, are to triple annual private donations during the same period, as well as more than tripling the number of alumni donors

Additionally, MSU Denver has been successful in establishing public-private partnerships (P3s) to achieve its strategic goals. As an example, HLC@Metro, Inc. (the Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center, see 5.A.1) had net assets of approximately $767,000 as of June 30, 2016, exceeding expectations for its operational profits. Net profits, after debt retirement and establishing adequate reserve balances, will be contributed to the foundation for scholarships and other support for the University.

MSU Denver's other current P3s include the Aerospace and Engineering Sciences initiative, Wells Fargo Roadrunner Card, Tivoli Brewing Company, York Space Systems and the Detroit Institute of Music Education (DIME) (see 3.A.3). The University expects to double the number of P3s by 2020.

Finally, a key function of the MSU Denver Office of Budget is to provide internal governance committees such as the Budget Task Force and the Board of Trustees with extensive financial planning analysis that includes revenue reporting and enrollment trends to assist in further executive-level planning and resource stewardship.

[5.C.5] – Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts and globalization.

The MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh provides a scope of the University that includes the past and present, as well as emerging issues and factors that might impact the University. The five-year plan includes strategic enrollment as a response to market demand, increasing students' civic skills, emphasizing the University's attention towards shifting demographics and public-private partnership projections. The Board of Trustees provides consistent feedback on key trends identified in the strategic plan.

The University retains one legislative liaison to monitor activity on the state and federal levels. This liaison, along with the University's budget team, is especially vigilant and active in the Colorado State Legislature when it is in session. The liaison updates the Board of Trustees at their regularly scheduled meetings. Anticipated legislation with potentially significant impacts on University operations are brought forth in the President's Cabinet and vice president meetings in order to inform decision-making processes.

In 2015, MSU Denver began the application of "big data" differently by modernizing information systems, access and reporting. The University launched a Business Intelligence unit (called Team DELTA) to more quickly provide campus decision-makers with streamlined summaries of data so that they can easily convert this knowledge into informed action through robust analysis and communication.

In addition to the strategic plan and annual reports by each unit across the institution, University staff continually monitor demographic, economic, political and technological environments as tracked by higher-education data bases and entities at both the state and federal level, which include but are not limited to, Student Unit Records Data System (SURDS), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), the National Student Clearing House, the United States Census Decennial, American Community Survey of the U.S. Census and other sources.

Planning for technology, demographic shifts and globalization of the University are addressed in specialized plans that align with the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan Refresh 2020* and which guide the work of various committees and units. For instance, the Information Technology Strategic Oversight Committee (ITSOC) informs work on technology, and the *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan* guides the Enrollment Management and Academic Services unit. Extended Campus and the Council for Online Programs are working to develop an Online Strategic Business Plan for enhancing globalization of the campus and curriculum. Although in draft stage, the *2015-18 Implementation Plan for the Continuous Quality Improvement of Blended Courses, Online Courses and Online Programs* includes moving to the Quality Matters' standards of distance-delivery courses.

Sources

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

Assessment and program review are integral to the efficient delivery of educational programs and services to MSU Denver's students. Tying the goals and outcomes of the various academic and service units to the strategic themes and goals in the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh* provides an interconnected framework that gives direction and purpose to the University community. In addition, the University conducts research on its performance through surveys of current and former students and alumni to ascertain how it can improve upon the academic experience and the support programs it offers.

[5.D.1] – The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Paramount to the successful assessment of the University as a whole and of its various divisions and units at all levels are the goals tied to the five themes of the [MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh](#): student and academic success, community engagement and regional stewardship, culture, resources and telling the MSU Denver story. Each theme has two to three goals, and each goal has an action plan and metrics so that the University community can gauge the progress being made. One or more members of the University's senior leadership team are named as champions of the five themes, and committees made up of representation of the University community also champion the goals.

In addition, the University deploys several processes and tools for use in assessment and improvement, primary among them is the seven-year cycle of program reviews of academic programs facilitated by the University Program Review Committee ([UPRC](#)) and of nonacademic units by the Academic and Student Affairs Unit Review Committee ([ASAURC](#)) (see 4.A.1).

Each of the colleges as well as the school has its own assessment plan and process, every department completes an annual assessment report, and the [University Provost's Assessment Committee (UPAC)](#), chaired by a faculty member and composed of faculty, non-instructional program staff and an associate dean, works with the director for assessment of student learning outcomes to oversee the University's assessment activities. This director maintains an inventory of all university assessment practices and prepares annual reports for senior leadership (see 4.B.1).

College of Business: The College's dean works closely with their [Assurance of Learning Committee](#) to review and monitor progress on their assessment plans. In addition, each of the departments has an assessment committee that oversees and implements assessment activities, including the preparation of their department's annual assessment report. All of the College's departments prepare annual assessment reports which are reviewed by the dean, the University's director of student learning outcomes assessment and the UPAC (see above).The College of Business' assessment activities align with the expectations of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, its accrediting body.

College of Letters, Arts and Sciences: All of the College's departments prepare annual assessment reports which are then reviewed by the dean, the University's director of student learning outcomes assessment and the UPAC (see above). The Departments of Art, Music, Theatre, Social Work, Chemistry and Mathematics (Computer Science Program) also participate in assessment as part of their specialized accreditations.

College of Professional Studies: The college's associate dean works with each department in gathering annual department and program assessment materials. These data are reviewed by the college's Program Assessment Committee, where feedback is generated and reported back to each department chair and from there disseminated to University, community and discipline stakeholders. Accreditation requirements and/or national discipline standards are adhered to in the collection and reporting of assessment findings. Data is generated from a variety of sources (e.g. discipline-specific competency measures and portfolios) and is used for the continuous improvement of instruction.

School of Education: The School's data/assessment specialist works with the Office of Institutional Research in gathering data and reporting to the various stakeholders who require information, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Higher Education and various school districts and nonprofit organizations. All of the School's departments prepare annual assessment reports which are reviewed by the dean , the University's director of student learning outcomes assessment and the UPAC (see above).

In regard to non-instructional units, such as those providing co- and extra-curricular learning opportunities and direct student services and support, program effectiveness and/or learning outcomes are regularly reviewed through the Unit Review process. Assessment activities within each varies by unit, but a common expectation is that the data collected and analyzed is used for program improvement and/or to enhance student learning. Reports of assessment activities within each unit are submitted annually along with a summative annual report about unit accomplishments and needs. These reports are shared with various constituencies and with the senior leadership at the institution so that common trends and/or needs can be identified. (See 4.B.2.)

For all assessment activities, the Office of Institutional Research and the Business Intelligence unit (Team DELTA) provide all official statistical data regarding students, graduates, course enrollment, faculty workloads and other college characteristics.

[5.D.2] – The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Student recruitment, retention and graduation remain among the University's top priorities because of its mission to provide affordable, accessible education to Colorado and because 93 percent of the operating budget is dependent upon credit-hour production.

The **First Year Success** program was created to increase student persistence and graduation rates while fostering a passion for lifelong learning in a nurturing scholarly community.   The **Retention Task Force** was created for similar purposes.

In July 2014, MSU Denver engaged **Hanover Research** to survey former MSU Denver students to determine the reasons they discontinued enrollment. Reasons included financial barriers, difficulties balancing work, family and school, the quality of academic advising and the availability of courses. The University formulated a plan to improve academic and financial aid advising, the two main

factors for student departures.

Hanover's Former Student Survey Analysis reported 43 percent of those students responding to the survey who left the University did so because they were unable to afford the tuition. Therefore, University Advancement embarked on the **Transform Tomorrow**, a campaign to raise $6 million in the next three years for scholarships to support recruitment, retention and graduation of students. Contributions will support both annual and endowed scholarship opportunities to ensure immediate impact and long-term growth.

On November 7, 2016, the Office of Financial Aid announced a new student service called Academic Works. This is an online portal that will integrate a multiple scholarship application process into a single, seamless submission. This will facilitate greater student access to scholarship opportunities.

Additionally, to perform increasingly complex work in an environment of high accountability and scarce resources, and to meet the goals of the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh,* the University must have robust, transparent and accountable systems for performance. This means the University must be attentive to gathering evidence to inform decisions, tracking and assessing progress and responding to opportunities and challenges. Accordingly, the University created a long-range campus function for **process improvement and transformation** and has implemented a series of changes to improve efficiency and reduce cost. To date, the University has completed eight transformations, realizing estimated annual savings of 1,050 labor hours and $140,000. Examples of these transformations include:

- Printing costs have been reduced by over $4,000/month through new printing guidelines
- MSU Denver's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) has reduced the time required for Colorado Opportunity Fund reporting from three weeks to one day
- Revising the Personnel Action Form Signature requirements reduced approval time by three to five days.

In 2014, a Process Transformation position was added to MSU's Denver's Administration Finance and Facilities branch to lead these transformations.

Sources

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

MSU Denver has in place structures and processes for maintaining stability while also growing its resources – financial, human, technological and infrastructure – to achieve its mission to "provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, postgraduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society." The University is vigilant in its responsibility to assess, revise and improve these structures and processes in order to ensure the success of its students. The financial condition of the University has improved through long-range planning and innovative and entrepreneurial partnerships that benefit its students and the community at large.

Sources

There are no sources.