

University HLC Accreditation  
THE PATH TO PREEMINENCE



**DRAFT**  
**10/03/16**

## **1 – Mission**

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

### **1.A – Core Component 1.A**

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

#### **Argument:**

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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. [there will be links to policies, meeting minutes, legislation, etc. below]

#### **[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 the changing of 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.

An expanded version of the role and mission statements is found in the Operational Mission Statement of the *Trustees Policy Manual* (p. 3), signifying the governing board’s adherence to the statements. The statements are published verbatim in the Handbook for Professional Personnel (p. 1), which governs faculty and staff performance. The role and mission statements are also stated in the beginning of the *Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies* 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 [msudenver.edu](http://msudenver.edu) which lists the 244 degree\* options in majors, minors, concentrations, certificates and licensures. MSU Denver provides outreach programs to underserved communities, engaging potential 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. Twenty-six academic programs have 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 (2016-17 Undergraduate Catalog General Studies Requirements) 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) 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) are offered in degree programs including Africana Studies, Chicana/Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, Women’s Studies, and Gender 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 instruction to its marginally prepared students. The University provides the support services through the Writing Center and the Student Academic Success Center’s Tutoring Center and Supplemental Instruction (SI) program. Federally and privately funded grants facilitate the success of these students.

\*highlighted text will be updated in January of 2017

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 25<sup>th</sup> in its 2015 list of the 50 most affordable large public colleges.

One in five Coloradans seeking a bachelor's degree enrolls at MSU Denver. Per the University's *Fall 2015 Student Profile*, the student population is composed of 32 percent first-generation students and 32 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 32<sup>nd</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in the *Military Times* Best Colleges for Veterans and Best for Vets: Business Schools lists. *Military Advanced 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 2015 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 37.1 percent undergraduate as listed in the *Fall 2015 Student Profile* and 21 percent graduate. The University has a higher head count of ethnically diverse students as well as ASSET (undocumented) students (defined in 1.C.2) than any other college or university in Colorado.

In Fall 2015, Hispanic students represented 21.1 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 increase its baccalaureate graduation numbers of African-American and Hispanic students. From May 2014 to May 2015, the number of African-American graduates increased 12.9 percent (85 students to 96 students), and the number of Hispanic graduates increased 16 percent (284 students to 322 students).

The May 2016 edition of *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* magazine lists MSU Denver 74<sup>th</sup> 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 2015 for awarding bachelor's degrees to students of color.

A STEM Jobs-Approved™ College 2015, MSU Denver is recognized as Colorado's leader in providing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education to students of color, with more than 1,900 studying STEM subjects. Students of color and low-income students together comprise 64 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 Practice”). 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 20 and student/faculty ratio of 19:1.

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. This type of 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](http://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*. (See 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

**1.A Sources:**

[2010-11 University Catalog: The College and Mission Statement](#)

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

*Trustees Policy Manual*

[Handbook for Professional Personnel](#), p. 1

*Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies*

*Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*

[msudenver.edu](http://msudenver.edu) MSU Denver A to Z webpage

[2016-17 Undergraduate Catalog General Studies Requirements](#)

Student Academic Success Center, Tutoring Center, Supplemental Instruction

*Fall 2015 Student Profile*

*Affordable Colleges Online*

*Military Times*

*Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges and Universities 2015*

*G.I. Jobs*

*U.S. Veterans Magazine*

*Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*

*Diverse Issues in Higher Education*

*STEM Jobs-Approved™*

Access Center

*Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Plan*

edpays.org

Office of Budget, State of the Budget, **FY 16** Alignment with the Strategic Plan

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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.

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### **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 Catalog: The University](#) (undergraduate and graduate) the *Trustees Policy Manual* and stated verbatim in several locations on [www.msudenver.edu](http://www.msudenver.edu), including the Academic and Student Affairs section. In addition, the University's **2015-16 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. In addition to their publication in the major governance documents mentioned above, they are also prominent backbones in the *Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies* 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: The College and Mission Statement](#) when 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 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.
- The annual Zarlengo Foundation Endowed Scholarship to support a student with a diagnosed learning disability.
- Pre-collegiate programs, such as Journey Through Our Heritage, a yearlong program for teams geared at introducing underserved high school 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. These students explore and examine leadership and how they can better lead our Denver Metro Community.

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. 10) 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 its primary objective.

The overarching themes in the 2010 and 2013 *Chronicle of Higher Education* Great Colleges to Work for 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.

**[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*, the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual* 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.

**1.B Sources:**

[2016-17 Catalogs The University](#)

*Trustees Policy Manual*

msudenver.edu. Academic and Student Affairs website

**2015-16** *Fact Sheet*

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

*Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies*

*Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*

[2010-11 University Catalog: The College and Mission Statement](#)



Richard T. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship  
Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship  
Access Center, Universal Design for Living  
MSU Denver Foundation Scholarship List  
Journey Through Our Heritage  
Center for Visual Art, Education  
College Assistance Migrant Program  
Center for Advanced Stem Education  
LGBTQ Student Resource Center  
[Handbook for Professional Personnel \(p. 7\)](#)  
*Chronicle of Higher Education* Great Colleges to Work For Campus Climate Surveys

## **1.C – Core Component 1.C**

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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:**

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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 **22.1** 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 10 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 and 2015. 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 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 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.

**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: [there will be links to pdfs with more information about each of these items]

- Journey Through Our Heritage
- Excel Pre-Collegiate Program
- Roadrunner Ambassador Program
- Summer Science Institute
- TRIO High School Upward Bound (HSUB)
- 21<sup>st</sup> 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 37.1 percent of the undergraduate student body being students of color. Full-time faculty members who are ethnic minority total 22 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

**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 double 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 2015**, 469 master's students were enrolled, with 21 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 legislation to allow in-state tuition for undocumented students. MSU Denver has a long history of supporting “dreamers.” The 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, 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.

Other task force recommendations that are being realized include the Collaborative Teacher Education Research with *Excelencia in Education*, a grant to provide improvements for Latinos 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 (13.2 percent of the total student population) in Fall 2008 to 4,441 (22.1 percent of the total student population) in **Fall 2015**, an increase of 1,561 students in seven years if ASSET students who are Hispanic are counted (per DOE regulations ASSET students cannot be counted

toward HSI designation). However, for **Fall 2015** the FTE percentage was 20.3 percent, as opposed to the 22.1 percent of headcount, as our Hispanic students tend to take a lower CHP than the University average.

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

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 the Women's Studies Program offers a minor in Genders and Sexualities.

**Office of International Studies (OIS):** In order to promote greater internationalization on campus, MSU Denver re-established the OIS in 2007. The OIS promotes study-abroad opportunities through faculty-led courses and third-party enrollments; develops and manages institutional partnerships with overseas institutions of higher education; financially supports faculty 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 increased from 13 to 24; the number of faculty members supported increased from 14 to 93; the number of international partnerships increased from one

to 10; and the amount of grant money (mostly federal grants) received, to support student travel, totals over \$500,000.

**Multicultural and Global Diversity Course Requirements for Graduation:** The following are part of the University's General Studies program:

- **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 Course:** The student-learning outcomes for global diversity courses are: 1) Exhibit knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the U.S. 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 exciting initiative, begun in Spring 2013, is to identify equity gaps in outcomes 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 its academic programs: [there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items]

- Veteran/Military Students
- 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)
- RISE Program
- Outstanding Multicultural Student Awards
- Applied Learning Center
- Urban Leadership 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: [there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items]



- Faculty Learning Communities
- Universal Design for Learning Award
- Outstanding Women Awards
- LGBTQ Student Resource Center High Tea
- Target of Opportunity (TOP) and Faculty Recruitment Incentive Program (FRIP), diversity hiring programs
- 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
  - Sexual Misconduct (under development) .

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.

### **1.C Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

*INSIGHT Into Diversity*

Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Diversity Initiatives, Higher Education Diversity Summit

Noel Visiting Professorship

Castro Visiting Professorship

MLK Peace Award and Breakfast

Journey Through Our Heritage

Excel Pre-Collegiate Program

Center for Advanced STEM Education, Summer Science Institute

TRIO High School Upward Bound

Center for Urban Education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century College Readiness Centers

Hispanic Serving Institution Initiative, *HSI Task Force Final Report*, Collaborative Teacher

Education Research with *Excelencia in Education, Connecting the Dots: Report and*

*Recommendations of the MSU Denver Hispanic Serving*

*Institution (HSI) Task Force*

Department of Africana Studies

Department of Chicana/o Studies

Institute for Women’s Studies and Services

Department of Political Science, Native American Studies Program

Office of International Studies

Equity in Excellence, *2014 Equity Scorecard*

Veteran and Military Students Services, *2014 Veteran/Military Students Task Force Report*

Student Academic Success Center, Brother to Brother Program, TRIO Student Support

Services, Fostering Success Program, Immigrant Services  
College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)  
Center for Faculty Excellence, Faculty Learning Communities  
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Award  
Outstanding Women Awards  
LGBTQ Student Resources Center  
HR Employee training web page

## **1.D – Core Component 1.D**

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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**

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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 diversity, access, entrepreneurship, respect and community 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 2015 Student Profile**, both cohorts are near 32 percent of the student body, or approximately 7,000 students in each cohort. 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: [there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items]

- 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, the No. 1 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 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: [\[there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items\]](#)

- **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.
- **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: [there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items]
  - 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 Latinos/as, including immigrants. Center doctors often volunteer at the clinic to assist with

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.

### **1.D Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

*Fall 2015 Student Profile*

Teaching with Primary Sources – Western Region

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

Department of Human Services, Providers for Youth Partnership

Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center

Center for Visual Art

Project SOAR

Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building

VITA Program

Department of Music

Department of Theatre

One World, One Water Center for Urban Water Education and Stewardship

Colorado Center for Medical Laboratory Science

Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis

Applied Learning Center, Service Learning Program, Community-Based Research (CBR)

Fellows Program, Unpaid Internships, Paid Internships, Civic Engagement, Puksta Scholars, Alternative Break Program 1Book/1Project/2Transform

Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver

Career Services Center

Office of Student Activities

Counseling Center

Health Center at Auraria

LGBTQ Student Resource Center

### **1.S – Core Component 1 – Summary**

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

#### **Summary**

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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

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.



## **2 – Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

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

### **2.A – Core Component 2.A**

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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**

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Integrity is integral 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 [State Personnel System 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. 15). 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 enhancing 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 encouraged academic departments and administrative units to discuss the report at team meetings and provide feedback.

**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. The *UOO 2015-16 Annual Report* is posted on the UOO website.

## 2.A Sources:

*Trustees Policy Manual*, p. 15, p. 3  
[Handbook for Professional Personnel](#), p. 3, p. 2  
[State Personnel System Employee Handbook](#)  
*Human Research Protection Plan*  
Human Subjects Protection Program  
*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

## 2.B – Core Component 2.B

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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

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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 (19 to 1 ratio) and support services.

The University's main communication tool is [msudenver.edu](http://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.

**Academic Program Information:** The [msudenver.edu](http://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 Office of the Bursar Tuition Dates and Deadlines webpage. The Important Dates and Deadlines with Payment *Guide* 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 Approval](#) (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.

**2.B Sources:**

[2016-17 Catalog](#), (undergraduate and graduate), [Accreditation and Approval](#)

msudenver.edu: MSU Denver A to Z

Academic Advising Center

College of Business, Advising

College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, Advising

College of Professional Studies, Advising

*Trustees Policy Manual*, p. 31

Office of the Bursar, Tuition Dates and Deadlines, *Important Dates and Deadlines with Payment Guide*

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Debt Management program

Board of Trustees website

**2.C – Core Component 2.C**

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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**

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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 and the MSU Denver Foundation Board. The board has three standing committees, 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 who have graduated from a Colorado high school (see 1.C.2, Hispanic Serving Institution), 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 and an undergraduate 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.

**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 22-member 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 23-1-106, 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:** The president and provost/vice president for academic and student affairs develop policies for short- and long-term academic planning that are subject to board approval and must be consistent with its goals and priorities. The president and provost/vice president for academic and student affairs also develop policies and procedures for the approval of curricular items. The board, which endorses the principle of academic freedom, has the ultimate authority for approving curriculum, but it recognizes that the faculty should 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.

## **2.C Sources:**

*Trustees Policy Manual*, p. 5, p. 9

Board of Trustees website

Faculty Senate

Student Government Assembly

Alumni Association

MSU Denver Foundation, Inc., *Articles of Incorporation*

[\*Handbook for Professional Personnel\*](#)

President's Cabinet

## **2.D – Core Component 2.D**

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

## Argument

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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 [State Personnel System Employee Handbook](#) for classified employees addresses integrity and honesty in its section on employee conduct.

**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 that are stated in the [2016-17 Catalog Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (undergraduate and graduate) and the *IT Technology Policy Manual*.

### 2.D Sources:

*Trustees Policy Manual*. p. 43

[Handbook for Professional Personnel](#) (p. 2)

[State Personnel System Employee Handbook](#)

*Faculty Senate Statement on Academic Freedom*

[2016-17 Catalog Student Code of Conduct, Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

*IT Technology Policy Manual*

### 2.E – Core Component 2.E

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

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**

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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.**

**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.

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.

**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 Student Handbook and the 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 CUR, the National Science Foundation's Council on Undergraduate Research. The Graduate Research Program provides similar support for graduate students; their research presentations are in fall semester (See 3.B.5)

**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 workshops, learning communities, mentoring and instructional consultation.

In 2016, the position of associate of director for research, which is located in the 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 through education and training initiatives. 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.

*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.

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 Statement\*](#) 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 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.

**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.

## **2.E Sources:**

Human Subjects Protection Program, IRB website, *Human Research Protection Plan*, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative  
*Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures*

*MSU Denver Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct*

[\*2016-17 Catalog Student Rights and Responsibilities\*](#), [\*Student Code of Conduct\*](#),  
[\*Academic Responsibilities\*](#)

Academic and Student Affairs website, *Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for Federally Funded Proposals*, *Collaborator Certification Form*, *Disclosure Form*

Applied Learning Center, Undergraduate Research Program Workshops  
Graduate Research Program



*Handbook for Professional Personnel*, p. 10 and p. 100

Center for Faculty Excellence

Dean of Students website, *Academic Integrity Statement*

General Studies\_ rubric

Writing Center

*Responsible Use of Information Technology Resources Policy*

*IT Security Policies on Academic Freedom, Confidentiality and Privacy*

## **2.S – Core Component – Summary**

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

### **Summary**

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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.

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

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

#### 3.A – Core Component 3.A

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

#### Argument:

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MSU Denver is a comprehensive university offering 59 bachelor's degrees, 85 minors, 130 concentrations, 32 certifications, 33 licensure programs and five master's degrees (see msudenver.edu MSU Denver A to Z) through its College of Business, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, College of Professional Studies and School of Education. [use HLC's and CCHE's numbers for degrees and cert. when we are close to submitting; check other numbers]

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. (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 (beginning January 2017)
- health administration (beginning January 2017).

All courses in the graduate curricula were designed and are offered as graduate-level courses only. Support for MSU Denver's graduate programs is provided by a director of graduate studies.

The Graduate Council and the director of graduate studies are responsible for developing a 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. In Fall 2016, the Graduate Council inaugurated an annual Graduate Research Conference to showcase the research efforts of the institution’s graduate students.

**[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* 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. This external review ensures the currency, quality and appropriateness of these programs. (See 4.A.5 for a complete list.)

Over a dozen 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.

**[3.A.2] – The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, postgraduate and certificate programs. [this section will be written after the undergrad outcomes and graduate outcomes are approved and in the catalog addendum]**

**[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.

**Online and Hybrid Courses and Programs:** In addition to traditional classroom learning options, MSU Denver offers approximately 1,400 online and hybrid course sections, encompassing 250 unique online and 80 unique hybrid courses per semester [check numbers]. 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.

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
- the development of a second three-person instructional design team
- the 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 certification program.

While the University has over 20 years of experience delivering online courses, offering 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 to launch 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.

**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 transcript credits and all certificate and degree programs are the purview of the department chair for that discipline, including faculty qualifications and selection, 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 appeared to be 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). 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), DSST/DANTES 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 accepted common AP and IB scores for General Studies credits, but all other decisions regarding credit for prior learning at MSU Denver are made at the department level. [update, once CCHE finalizes decisions on CLEP and DSST]

### **3.A Sources:**

msudenver.edu MSU Denver A to Z

Department of Accounting, Master of Professional Accountancy Program

Department of Social Work, Master of Social Work Program

School of Education, Graduate Programs

College of Business, Master of Business Administration

Department of Health Professions, Master of Health Administration

Graduate Council

*Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies*

*Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policies and Procedures Manual*

*2014 Online Task Force Report*

*2015 Council for Online Programs Strategic Plan*

Center for Individualized Learning, Individualized Degree Program, Prior Learning Assessment Program

Extended Campus: Metro South [degree-completion](#), [self-paced distance learning](#), [Alternative Teacher Licensure Program](#), Colorado Center for Medical Laboratory Science, [DIME](#), [professional development courses](#)

### **3.B – Core Component 3.B**

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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. Scholarship and creative work are done by faculty and students.

## **Argument:**

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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 AAC&U 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.

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.

In the end, consensus was reached and the SLOs for each category were overwhelmingly approved by a faculty-wide vote.

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 that it can be nimble in that SLOs can be changed as assessment data is reviewed. (See 4.B.2)

The GS program in its current form absolutely 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 facilitate transfer within GT Pathways, the state’s Guaranteed Transfer program.

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.*”

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 is currently experiencing 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.

The process of creating a clearly structured GS program helped foster important conversations among faculty. 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 provides direct 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.

The nine categories are:

- Written Communications, 6 credit hours
- Oral Communication, 3 credit hours
- Quantitative Literacy, 3 credit hours
- Arts and Humanities, 6 credit hours
- Historical, 3 credit hours
- Social and Behavioral Sciences I, 3 credit hours
- Social and Behavioral Sciences II, 3 credit hours
- Natural and Physical Sciences, 6 credit hours
- Global Diversity, 3 credit hours.

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 (see [2016-17 Undergraduate Catalog Degree Requirements](#)) 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. The Senior Experience course provides a culmination of the undergraduate experience, allowing students to synthesize their learning using critical analysis and logical thinking. Students may use the course to satisfy major or minor requirements if the course is approved for that use.

**[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 3-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**. 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. The University offers 32 courses in 18 disciplines that can be taken to fulfill this requirement. 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:** [there will be links to pdfs with more information for all of these items]

(See 1.C.1 for a complete 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.
- The Office of International Student Services assists students from more than 60 countries transition into the University's diverse community.
- The Individualized Degree Program in the Center for Individualized Learning guides students in creating customized degrees centered around diverse topics such as Far East Asian Language and Culture, International Studies and Community Development, Latin American Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.
- MSU Denver 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.
- A multicultural center called ALANA (African/African American, Latino/Latina, Asian/Asian American and Native American/Indigenous Students), opened in the 2016-17 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.

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 also 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:** While primarily a teaching institution, the University 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 2014 conference drew more than 500 attendees and showcased over 175 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](#).

In the Fall 2016, the Graduate Council inaugurated 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 provides evidence of MSU Denver’s faculty activities in producing scholarly works:

Activity	2005-7	2008-9	2010-11	2012-13	2014-15	Grand Total
Articles	671	796	947	927	820	4,161
Book Reviews	46	50	42	54	47	239
Books	18	22	32	59	35	166
Grants	475	432	371	362	311	1,951
Musical Compositions	1	7	2	6	9	25
Presentations/Exhibits	1,313	1,741	1,851	1,904	1,756	8,565
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>3,048</b>	<b>3,245</b>	<b>3,312</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>15,107</b>

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 Trustee’s vice chair), editorial guidance and assistance and the 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 that the press publishes and in all of the press’s marketing efforts.

The **Office of Sponsored Research and Programs** assists faculty 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 **30** continuing grants totaling more than **\$25 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.

### **3.B Sources:**

[2016-17 Undergraduate University Catalog General Studies Requirements Global Diversity Requirement, Senior Experience Requirement, Multicultural Course Requirement](#)

Colorado State Guaranteed Transfer GT Pathways General Education Curriculum  
First Year Success

Institute for Women’s Studies and Services, Degree Programs

Department of Africana Studies, Academics

Department of Chicano/a Studies, Degree Programs

Office of International Studies

LGBTQ Student Resource Center

Office of International Student Services

Center for Individualized Learning, Individualized Degree Program

Met Media

Department of Theatre

Department of Art, Center for Visual Art

Department of English, Writing program

Department of Music

Undergraduate Research Program

Human Subjects Protection Program

Graduate Research Program

Center for Faculty Excellence

University Press of Colorado

Office of Sponsored Research and Programs



### 3.C – Core Component 3.C

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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:**

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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 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.

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%, 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 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 is 57.63 percent full-time and 42.32 percent 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* and the *Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual* document the governing policies and procedures for creating, modifying and discontinuing all curriculum – degree 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 2014-15 IPEDs data, terminal degrees are held by 62 percent of the University's full-time faculty and 16 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 with established qualifications for each category used in recruitment and hiring practices. All faculty, including those teaching dual or concurrent enrollment courses, are held to established qualifications (which differ by rank/field). (MSU Denver does not offer instruction through contractual or consortial programs.) The *ASA 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 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.

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 and 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 to aid in the facilitation of reviews and to document information on faculty teaching, scholarly activities and service.

The [Handbook for Professional Personnel](#), p. 42 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.

**[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 instructional/ePortfolio designer, 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 the Spring 2016, XX full-time and part-time faculty participated in CFE faculty development activities, an increase of XX % over a XX period of time.

The center accomplishes its mission through a variety of initiatives that include faculty learning communities, peer instructional coaching, workshops on teaching and learning and faculty institutes. In 2016, the CFE coordinated conferences for faculty and staff on graduate studies and student retention.

Additionally, the University’s three colleges and school make professional development funds available to support the professional development of faculty. For example, the School of Education has \$1,500 each year available to each 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 colleges to further support faculty professional development. Also, the university’s support for sabbaticals has increased substantially. In 2004-5, X sabbaticals were supported; in 2016-17, X sabbaticals were supported.

**[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 Management. 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 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 **2014-15** academic year, eight 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, outlined in the *Writing Center Training Manual*, 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 AVP 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). **Currently**, MSU Denver's associate director of financial aid operations serves as the president of CAFAA, and several other staff members 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 in 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 Ph.D.s. Training is provided both centrally at the **Academic Advising Center (AAC)**, under the AVP 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 ASSET/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. There is also a professional development fund through which employees may apply for reimbursement for educational activities relevant to their work at the University. Details on these offerings as well as the official policy and guidelines for staff development are available on the Human Resources training page.

### **3.C Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

*Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies*  
*Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*  
[Handbook for Professional Personnel](#), p. 39, p. 10-16, p. 32  
Academic and Student Affairs, *ASA Policy Manual, Protocols for Searching/Hiring Faculty*,  
*Minimum Requirements for Rank upon Appointment*  
Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee  
Center for Faculty Excellence  
Writing Center  
Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships  
Academic Advising Center  
Human Resources, training

### **3.D – Core Component 3.D**

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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:**

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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 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 site visit, 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 are traditional students, i.e., in **Fall 2015** the average age was **26** and **60** percent attended full time. 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. 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.

**TRiO Student Support Services (TRiO SSS):** 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 refunded 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 2014-15, 90 percent persisted into Fall 2015. Ninety-one percent of the Fall 2015 participants were 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 Services Program:** 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, 2015 by the professional and student staff, 150 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, 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 1,100** students registered for services. The center offers:

- Academic accommodations as mandated under the 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 15 active ambassadors **in Fall 2015**.

- The center offers the most sophisticated and up-to-date adaptive technologies available 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 students:** 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. The 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.

**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 Institutional Diversity
- 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 (see 1.C.1) and the expansion of the Excel Program (see above), both of which provide services and engagement for Latino/a 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 *2014 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 unless their ACT or SAT exam scores exempt them. 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. 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 instruction to its marginally prepared students. For students who do not score high enough on English and Math assessment tests, the University offers a secondary placement.

If, after the secondary placement, additional support is needed, students can opt to do a stretch version of a course where a student takes two semesters to complete a one-semester course. Students can also take a developmental English course at the Community College of Denver (CCD) on the Auraria campus through an inter-institutional agreement.

**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 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 2015**, tutoring services saw **654** students for a total of **1,408** 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 SI. In **Fall 2015**, **813** 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. Presently, only distinct student groups are included in the Early Alert program, though discussions are underway to capture faculty feedback on all undergraduate students through the program.

The Academic Student Success Center also provides tutors in the Administration Building for students in the College of Business which is housed there. And the College of Business hires affiliate 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; and Professional Studies, 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 AA Center has an appropriate mission statement, which was developed in 2010 and reviewed in 2012. The lack of a common mission for the AA Program as a whole had been noted as a deficit, and in Fall 2015, the Advising Task Force drafted an *Academic Advising Mission, Goals and Outcomes* that 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.

**AA Program organization and leadership:** All advising services are part Academic and Student Affairs, headed by the provost/vice president. 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 to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs.

**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 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.

**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. 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. 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, GLBTQ 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 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 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 CAPP is 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 m efforts. The current version of SSC Campus was implemented in early 2016.

**AA Program assessment:** The Advising Task Force is developing an assessment plan as it defines appropriate outcomes for academic advising. Until now, data collected has primarily consisted of student satisfaction and utilization surveys. 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.

To date, 45 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.

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 SpringHill 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.

**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

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; Chicano/a 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 2014**, more than 4,100 MSU Denver students attended 160 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 3,000 journal, magazine and newspaper titles in print format and more than 101,000 full-text periodicals in digital format
- Books/e-books, including specialized collections of scholarly e-books
- More than 35,000 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 2014, the University contributed \$4,081,075 (44 percent) of the total Auraria Library budget of \$9,256,950.

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 approximately 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. 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.

**3.D Sources:**

Undergraduate Census  
Division of Academic and Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Health Center at Auraria,  
Counseling Center, Early Alert Program  
SOAR Experience, New Student Orientation  
First Year Success  
Applied Learning Center, Internship Program, Service Learning Program, Undergraduate  
Research Program, Undergraduate Research Conference  
Office of International Studies  
TRiO Student Support Services  
Excel Programs - Excel Pre-Collegiate Program, Excel at MSU Denver  
Immigrant Services Program  
Brother to Brother  
College Completion Program  
Access Center  
Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships  
Colorado Department of Higher Education website  
Transfer Student Success and Persistence Program  
Department of Africana Studies  
Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies  
Department of Political Science, Native American Studies  
Office of Institutional Diversity [and Inclusion](#)  
LGBTQ Student Resource Center  
Institute for Women's Studies and Services  
Hispanic Serving Institution Initiative  
Journey Through Our Heritage  
Veteran and Military Student Services  
2014 Veteran and Military Students Task Force Report  
Veterans Education Benefits Office  
Veterans Upward Bound Program  
Student Veterans at MSU Denver  
Academic Advising Center  
*Advising Handbook*  
Accuplacer Placement Tests, Writing, Math  
Supplemental Instruction  
Writing Center  
Tutoring Center, Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Fall 2015 Report  
Honors Program  
Auraria Higher Education Center  
King Performing Arts Center  
Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building  
Student Success Building  
Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center  
Information Technology Services, Educational Technology Center, Student Computer Labs,  
Application Services, Infrastructure Services  
Auraria Library



Undergraduate Research Program  
Graduate Research Program  
*Research Misconduct Policy*  
Human Research Protection Plan  
CITI Training  
[University Catalog Students Rights and Responsibilities](#)  
*Student Code of Conduct*

### **3.E – Core Component 3.E**

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

#### **Argument:**

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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 (Diversity, Access, Entrepreneurship, Respect and Community) 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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.

### **3.E Sources**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

Student Activities office, Student Organizations, Student Travel Program, Leadership Programs, events

Roadrunner Athletics Program, Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver

Honors Program

Department of Human Services, Field Experience

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ethnography Lab

Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center

Teacher Education Programs

Department of Philosophy

Undergraduate Research Program

### **3.S – Core Component – Summary**

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

#### **Summary**

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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.

### **4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

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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**

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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**

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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. 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 *ASURC 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. 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 either self-study or specialized accreditations as described in Section 4.A.5.

Programs under Student Engagement & Wellness do Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) reviews.

**[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 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 University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs](#), Transfer Credit Evaluation section. 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 that is not reflected on an academic transcript from another accredited institution (Assessment of prior learning from accredited institutions is discussed in detail in 4.A.3):

- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- DANTES Subject Standardized Examinations (DSST)
- Credit by Departmental Examination
- Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment
- Military Training

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

- Internship Credit
- Service-Learning Credit

**[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's strict *Transfer Credits Guidelines* include:

- MSU Denver only accepts credit from institutions of higher education holding full regional accreditation by one of the following agencies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges of Schools or Western Association of Colleges and Schools. Course work from regionally accredited institutions is still evaluated on a course-by-course basis.
- The University limits the amount of transferrable credit from two-year institutions to up to 64 semester hours (up to 80 credits for students in the University's RN-to-BSN Nursing Program) and up to 90 semester hours from four-year institutions or from a combination of two-year and four-year institutions.
- Transfer credit is accepted only for those classes in which a grade of "C-" or better is earned and in which class content is similar to that of course work offered at MSU Denver.

- Students who transfer in a previous bachelor's degree will receive a block of 90 credit hours and be granted senior standing at the University.
- A professional course-by-course evaluation of international transcripts is required using a professional transcript evaluation service such as World Education Services or Education Credential Evaluators.

Transfer students who have attended any Colorado two-year community college or junior college may be eligible for transfer credit through several transfer policies that guarantee transfer of credit, e.g. 60 + 60 major programs, gtPathways or articulation agreements. These 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 release time, carry out the administrative work of a department. They have oversight over the assignment of teaching loads and delivery of instruction, and they have a leadership role in working with faculty to modify curriculum, pedagogy and/or assessment practices based on what is learned from assessment of student learning.

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 standards. 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
- 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; Global Diversity Review Committee:** These committees evaluate each new or existing courses proposed to receive either the multicultural or global diversity designation and review any changes to the criteria for conferring that designation. Committee recommendations are forwarded to the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

See section 3.C.2 regarding faculty oversight of faculty qualifications. Note: Each department and 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.

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.**

Academic programs at MSU Denver have earned specialized accreditation by the following accrediting bodies:

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Management and Computer Information Systems)
- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Information Systems and Computer Sciences)
- American Chemical Society (Chemistry)
- Council on Social Work Education (Social Work)
- National Association of Schools of Music (Music)
- National Association of Schools of Theatre (Theatre)
- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (Nursing)
- Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (Recreation Professions)
- Association of University Programs in Health Administration (Health Care Management)
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (Adult Fitness and Exercise Science and Human Performance and Sport)
- Committee on Accreditation for Exercise Sciences (Adult Fitness/Exercise Science)
- Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (Athletic Training Education, Human Performance and Sport)

- International Coalition for Addiction Studies Education (Center for Addiction Studies)
- National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (Center for Addiction Studies)
- Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (Human Nutrition-Dietetics)
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (Art, Industrial Design).

Additional programs have approval and/or endorsement from:

- American Chemical Society (Chemistry)
- Colorado Board of Accountancy (Accounting)
- Colorado State Board of Nursing (Nursing)
- Colorado Department of Education (Teacher Education)
- Federal Aviation Administration, Aviation and Space Education (Aviation and Aerospace Science)
- Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health (Certified Addiction Counselor)
- Council for Standards in Human Service Education (Human Services)
- Commission on Sport Management Accreditation, approved for candidacy (Sport Industry Operations).

Examples of non-academic program accreditations/memberships include:

- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- International Association of Counseling Services
- 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.

**CSO Research’s Outcomes Survey®:** This alumni survey is administered at graduation and then at three, six and 12 months thereafter for every graduating term (Summer, Fall and Spring). The 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 are generated upon request for use in program planning and accreditation.

The **Office of Career Services** annual Impact and Outcomes Employment Report highlights data from the 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. Examples include:

- Nursing
- Engineering Technology
- Nutrition
- Art
- Industrial Design.

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.

#### **4.A Sources:**

University Program Review Committee, *UPRC Guidelines for Department Chairs and Program Directors*

Academic and Student Affairs Unit Review Committee, *ASAURC Unit Review Guidelines*  
[2016-17 University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs](#), Transfer Credit Evaluation sections  
Applied Learning Center, Prior Learning Assessment Program

Center for Individualized Learning, Internship Program, Service Learning Program  
*Transfer Credit Guidelines*

Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Academic Policies Committee,  
General Studies Committee, Multicultural Curriculum Review Committee

Graduate Council Graduate Curriculum Committee

Outcomes Survey®

Office of Career Services

*Post-Graduate Achievement Report*

#### **4.B – Core Component 4.B**

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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**

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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.**

Following five years of work by the General Studies Task Force (GSTF) and the Outcomes Work Group to integrate the undergraduate curriculum, the Undergraduate Outcomes Task Force (UOTF) was formed in Fall 2015. The results of a public survey that fall, which included 539 participants, led the UOTF to develop five (SLOs) that are integrally tied to the University's mission and to the *MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*. These undergraduate outcomes were approved by MSU Denver's Faculty Senate in the fall of 2016. Because all of the outcomes are embedded in either the MSU Denver's General Studies (GS) outcomes and many program outcomes, no new additional rubrics are needed. The five SLOs are:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking** – Determine lucid and innovative solutions by using complex cognitive skills such as analyzing evidence, applying the scientific method, making judgments, and reaching decisions.
- **Quantitative and Qualitative Reasoning** – Understand and work comfortably with numbers, data, mathematical concepts, written descriptions, observations, various sources of information, and conceptual contexts.
- **Ethics and Professionalism** – Recognize, articulate, and apply ethical principles in various academic, civic, social, or personal contexts in order to promote the common good among local communities and global society.
- **Communication and Collaboration** – Work with others to realize shared goals and effectively communicate verbally and in writing with diverse audiences, in different settings, and through various media.
- **Resilience and Perseverance** – Navigate obstacles in order to face adversity, take on new challenges, and reach goals.

In addition, the GS program, which has a clearly stated mission and three goals (see 3.B.2), has SLOs tied to each of the nine categories

The assessment of student learning is done by faculty within instructional departments and by staff in units that work directly with students. To provide support for all ongoing assessment activities, the director of assessment of student learning outcomes maintains an inventory and provides an annual report on GS assessment, instructional degree program assessment and assessment practices within the co-curricular units of the University. 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.

**[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 GS program, undergraduate academic departments and co-curricular programs. Assessment of the institution's relatively new graduate programs is under development. (See 5.D.1)

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

When the reinvigorated GS program was established, 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 of their first round, from 2013-14, of assessment data to help inform decisions about the assessment process. Results of the 2014-15 assessment were shared with program chairs and deans in Summer 2016. Results of the 2015-16 assessment were tallied for disbursement to program chairs and deans by early Spring of 2017.

As 2016-17 is the fourth year of the assessment cycle, the assessment results from the previous three years are being reviewed and, if necessary, the entire assessment process will 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. Examples of these changes include:

- The **Department of English** revised all First-Year Writing courses with both the new Colorado General Studies SLOs and content and the 2013-14 Written Communication GS assessment results in mind.
- Based on 2013-14 assessment data, the **Department of Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS)** adopted a “competency-based approach” to teaching and evaluating the speeches of students. Also, as a result of 2013-14 assessment data this department placed a greater emphasis on the use of presentation software in delivery of speeches and requiring an increased sensitivity to issues of cause-and-effect relationships and in recognizing fallacies of argument.

- The **Department of History** modified the General Studies History SLOs; reduced the number of courses that fulfilled the GS History requirement; and made substantive and non-substantive curriculum changes to reflect the new SLOs. The General Studies History SLOs are now the same for both General Studies and the History Program.
- The **Department of Mathematics** now surveys math faculty regarding resources and uses a worksheet as a result of 2013-14 assessment data. The department is also piloting a new sequence of courses and the use of student Learning Assistants.

**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 Academic Assessment 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 GS assessment, many programs are using the assessment process to improve instruction. For example:

- The department of **Human Services** made changes to support student success as writers.
- The **College of Business** hired one full-time faculty member to teach Business Ethics and lead the development of recommended curriculum changes.

**Graduate Program Assessment:** MSU Denver's Graduate Council is developing overall outcomes for MSU Denver's graduate programs. And each graduate program has its own discipline-specific assessment practice. Examples include:

- Master of **Social Work**
- Master of **Professional Accountancy**.

**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.

**Co-curricular Assessment:** All 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.

All centers in the Academic and Student Affairs office of Undergraduate Studies have assessment protocols in place including assessment of high-impact practices. Among them are:

- **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 developed SLOs and are assessing how well students have

reached the stated outcomes. Assessment activities and tools include basic satisfaction surveys, scoring artifacts using rubrics and employment outcomes tracking

- **First Year Success:** The First Year Success program has identified several SLOs and designed yearly reports and data collection points and methodologies. These new data sets and reports will be consistent from year to year and will be the basis for baseline data, student tracking and trend analysis. Data collection started Fall 2016.
- **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.

All activities in the Academic and Student Affairs office of **Student Engagement and Wellness**, which includes Student Activities, Student Government and the Student Health Center, a learning outcome template is used 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:

- 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, 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. 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.
- There are robust review processes at the program level, particularly for those programs with specialized accreditation. For example, 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 standard. 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.

- The Department of Art (and other departments) 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.

**[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.**

As MSU Denver's [Handbook for Professional Personnel](#) states, the work of assessment of student learning is part of the instructional responsibility of faculty. Also, each instructional department has its own promotion and tenure guidelines and most require participation in assessment of student learning. When those applying for tenure or promotion write their self-narratives, they mention their work with assessment of student learning. The previous deputy provost, Dr. Luis Torres who, until fall of 2016, was responsible for the oversight of the faculty tenure and promotion process, states that "that was not the case five years ago." This provides evidence of MSU Denver's growth in building a culture of assessment.

**4.B Sources:**

General Studies Task Force

Undergraduate Outcomes Task Force

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

General Studies, *Draft Rubric*

Academic Assessment, *Program Assessment Report Template*

Graduate Council

[Handbook for Professional Personnel](#)

**4.C – Core Component 4**

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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**

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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” to “aspirational.” 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 that address retention, persistence, and completion include:

- select and possibly acquire a retention management system (completed)
- facilitate student transitions into and through the University via personal encounters, student success plan monitoring and early career assessments
- leverage the student success planning process to promote student exploration and connections
- identify mechanisms for capturing student intentions upon initial enrollment and thereafter as intentions change.

Members of the Retention Task Force believe 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 incorporating predictive analytics to enable targeted intrusive advising. MSU Denver also anticipates retention gains from involvement as one of 44 institutions in AASCU's Re-Imagining the First Year initiative. The University's Hispanic Serving Institution initiative (see 1.C.2) likewise aligns with and supports broad retention goals.

### **[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 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. The Business Intelligence unit is also developing a data dashboard on behalf of the University's Retention Task Force that will feature both lagging and leading retention indicators.

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 student
- 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. (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 program 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. 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*.

**4.C Sources:**

*Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan*

*State of Colorado Department of Higher Education Performance Contract*

*MSU Denver Data Book*

Transfer Student Success and Persistence Program

*2014 Equity Scorecard*

**4.S – Core Component 4 – Summary**

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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 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.

## 5 – Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

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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

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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:**

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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 in amounts sufficient to support academic program delivery and support services with the necessary staffing patterns.

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 each of the college/school deans submit to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs their budget requests. In February, the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, and the other divisions, 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 \$(57,523,472) as of June 30, 2015 (a 288.64 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 \$148.8 million, a deferred outflow of \$6.6 million and a \$2.1 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 \$86.7 million, which would have been a \$7.8 million increase from FY14 and would have resulted in a 184.38 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 \$(90,155,818) as of June 30, 2015, (a 621.55 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 \$54,084,716 in FY15, which would have been a 212.88 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 FY15 the ratio ranged from 1.51 percent to 2.3 percent. 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.

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. The expected net income from the hotel will be transferred to the University and is estimated to be approximately \$20 million over the life of the bonds.

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, faculty, etc.

**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*. (See 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 \$7.1 million in FY16.

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*.

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 both faculty and staff 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**
  - **SPS 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.
  - **SPS 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.

- **SPS Goal Three: Community Engagement**--The School of Professional Studies continues to develop innovative programs that enhance community engagement.
- **SPS Goal Four: Working Environment**—SPS has a professional, respectful, and collegial working environment for all employees.
- **SPS 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 the School of Education, the College of Business and the 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. 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. 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 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 tenure/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.)
- **Faculty:** In 2016-17, \$500,000 was set aside in base funding to support 20 sabbaticals each year.
- **Staff:** The University's Professional Development and Training 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 within budget. Research is conducted on any department that has exceeded their budget and errors are corrected as necessary

**5.A Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement number 68, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions*

Rita and Navin Dimond Fellows Program

Regency Athletic Complex at MSU Denver

*Auraria Campus Master Plan*

*Search Committee Training and Guidelines*

*Best Practices Guide for Diversifying the Workforce*

*Minimum Requirements for Rank upon Appointment*

HR Training

Professional Development and Training Program

## 5.B – Core Component 5.B

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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:

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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 22-member 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 strategic 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 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* 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:

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

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

### **5.B. Sources:**

*Trustees Policy Manual*, p. 3, p. 43

Alumni Association

Faculty Senate

Council of Administrators

Classified Staff Council

Student Government Assembly

Council of Chairs

President's Cabinet

Shared Governance Task Force, *Shared Governance Task Force Final Report*

*Curriculum Manual for Undergraduate Studies*

*Graduate Curriculum Guidelines, Policy and Procedures Manual*

*2016 Faculty Senate Climate Survey*

## 5.C. – Core Component 5.C

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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:

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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 FY16 Budget Alignment section of the State of the Budget website contains a pie chart that illustrates the 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
- budgets not aligned with the Strategic Plan: 2.57 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.**

The 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 student learning outcomes 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.

**[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 through faculty and staffs' service 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*, 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, 2014, the University's operating reserve was approximately \$52 million. Net assets of the MSU Denver Foundation, which promotes the general welfare and development of the University, were approximately \$15 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 \$524,000 as of June 30, 2015, 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, Dazbog Coffee, Tivoli Brewing Company and the Detroit Institute of Music Education (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.

Feedback from the 2015 year-end board meetings included analyzing the region’s industry skill and educational needs, expanding the University’s online portfolio to include competency-based education and proactively seeking out public-private partnerships in order to solve community problems.

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 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, SURDS, IPEDS, NELLS, 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 Online Program Council 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.

### **5.C Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*

State of the Budget, FY16 Budget\_Alignment

MSU Denver Foundation

Office of Sponsored Research and Programs

Division of University Advancement

Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center

Aerospace and Engineering Science initiative

Wells Fargo Roadrunner Card

Dazbog Coffee

Tivoli Brewing Company

Office of Budget financial planning analysis

Information Technology Strategic Oversight Committee

*Strategic Enrollment Management Plan*

*2015-2018 Implementation Plan Continuous Quality Improvement for MSU Denver*

*Blended Courses, Online Courses and Online Programs*

## 5.D. – Core Component 5.D

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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:

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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 non-academic 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 and the Provost's Assessment Committee (PAC), 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 the Assurance of Learning

Committee to review and monitor progress on the implementation of the college's assessment plan. 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. 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, Art, and Sciences:** All of the College's departments prepare annual assessment reports which are then reviewed by the University's director of assessment of student learning outcomes and the PAC (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 faculty associate for program assessment 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. The main data management system utilized by the school is Blackboard Outcomes.

In regard to non-academic 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 provides 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.

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.

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.
- OIR has reduced the time required for Colorado Opportunity Fund reporting from 3 weeks to 1 day.
- Revising the Personnel Action Form Signature requirements reduced approval time by 3-5 days.

**Sources:**

*MSU Denver Strategic Plan 2020 Refresh*  
University Program Review Committee  
Academic and Student Affairs Unit Review Committee  
Former Student Survey Analysis prepared by Hanover Research  
Transform Tomorrow  
Process Transformation Projects (rev. May 2015)

**5S – Core Component 5 – Summary**

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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**

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MSU Denver has in place structures and processes for maintain 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.