

Year-7 Peer-Evaluation Report

Montana State University-Northern

Havre, MT

October 10-12, 2016

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendation 1

The evaluation committee commends Montana State University-Northern for the depth, breadth and strength of its community engagement and numerous partnerships with external entities. Examples in this area include the positive impact of the university on its region as well as ongoing collaboration with public schools, business and industry. Also commendable are the needs assessments conducted in the area of healthcare, and its collaborations and partnerships with native peoples and Tribal Colleges.

Commendation 2

The evaluation committee commends the MSUN faculty and staff for their high degree of positive involvement in the academic and personal lives of their students. Institutional strategies in place to support student success are thoughtful and tailored to meet the needs of each student. Institutional recognition and awareness that every University employee may act to shape the trajectory of a student's life through efforts and actions that contribute to student achievement and well-being is exemplary.

Revised Recommendation 1: Mission Fulfillment.

While the University has identified core themes, objectives, and indicators of achievement, the evaluation committee finds that levels of mission fulfillment have not been defined in a manner that permits evaluation of mission fulfillment. The committee recommends that the University establish meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement, and threshold levels of achievement, that can form the basis for evaluation mission fulfillment and accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes. Progress toward mission fulfillment should be regularly assessed, reported and documented. (1.A., 1.B., 4.B.1., 5.A).

Revised Recommendation 2: General Education

The Evaluation Committee recommends that MSUN continue to refine its processes for general education assessment, as stated in Recommendation 2 of the Fall, 2013 Peer-Evaluation. While MSUN has made progress in standardization of general education courses and how they are assessed, further work is needed to clearly document the identified course outcomes, the thresholds for achieving these outcomes, and the assessment of achievement of each of the stated outcomes. (2.C.10).

Revised Recommendation 3: Financial Resources

The evaluation team recommends the University continue to carefully monitor its financial environment to ensure short term solvency and anticipate long term obligations. Furthermore, it recommends it is recommended the institution establish by institutional policy, budgetary and long term reserve levels that are within industry guidelines (2.F.1., 2.F.3).

Recommendation 4: Educational Resources

The evaluation team recommends that Montana State University-Northern should more visibly and consistently provide expected course, program and degree student learning outcomes to enrolled students in written form (2.C.2).

Recommendation 5: Institutional Planning

The evaluators found evidence of a tremendous amount of focused and purposeful activity concerning comprehensive planning. However, the evaluators recommend that the emerging comprehensive plan be informed by the collection of appropriately defined data and documented so that it can be more systematic, better integrated, and more widely available to appropriate constituencies for input (3.A.).

Recommendation 6: Effectiveness and Improvement

As program assessment capacity is systematized and developed, the institution should incorporate more evidence of student learning outcome assessment, and assessment-informed improvement efforts throughout the educational experience, including services as well as academic degrees, programs and certificates (4.A, 4.B).

Recommendation 6: Core Theme Planning

The evaluation team recommends that planning for core themes, and decisions and resource allocations concerning core theme programs and services, be consistent with the University's comprehensive plan and informed by the evaluation of the accomplishment of core theme objectives (3.B., 4.B., 5.A).