



February 27, 2023

Greg Kegel  
Chancellor  
Montana State University - Northern  
300 13th Street West  
Havre, MT 59501

Dear Chancellor Kegel:

Attached please find the Fall 2022 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR) Evaluation Committee's review of Montana State University - Northern. The attached review documents areas where the institution was found to be in compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation and where additional opportunities for improvement exist. Please note that the Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) Evaluation Team will receive a copy of this report, as will the NWCCU Board of Commissioners at your EIE evaluation by the Commission in roughly one year's time.

NWCCU asks that you address any areas of needed improvement that the PRFR Evaluation Committee has noted as findings in this report in your EIE self-evaluation. Please feel free to reach out to your NWCCU Staff Liaison if you have further questions.

**Findings:** None

**Future Evaluations**

- Year 7 - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Fall 2023
  - Recommendation 2: Fall 2016 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability
  - Recommendation 5: Fall 2016 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability
  - Recommendation 6: Fall 2016 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability
  - Recommendation 7: Fall 2016 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability
- Mid-Cycle Review Fall 2026

Thank you for your commitment to the process of peer evaluation and continuous quality improvement. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your staff liaison, Dr. Gita Bangera, at [gbangera@nwccu.org](mailto:gbangera@nwccu.org).

Sincerely,

Ron Larsen  
Senior Vice President

cc: Dr. Carol Reifschneider, Interim Provost



## Peer Evaluation for: Montana State University - Northern

### Standard 2: Governance, Resources, and Capacity

*The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.*

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#### Standard 2.A.1

The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure, with a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual, employment relationship, or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have, with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

#### Evidence:

- Institutional governance policies and procedures ✓
- System governance policies and procedures (if applicable) ✓
- Multiple board governing policies and procedures (if applicable) ✓
- Board's calendar for reviewing institutional and board policies and procedures ✓
- Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation referencing governance structure ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN demonstrates effective governance, with the responsibilities of the Montana University System Board of Regents, the President of MSU and the Chancellor of MSUN clearly delineated. The Board of Regents meets every two months on alternating campuses.

#### Standard 2.A.2

The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

#### Evidence:

- Leadership organizational chart ✓
- Curriculum vitae of executive leadership ✓

**Rationale:** Leadership at MSUN includes an Executive Committee, a Core Leadership Team and a Dean's Council which provide management, oversight and support to the Chancellor on the administrative and academic functions of the university.

#### Standard 2.A.3

The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

#### Evidence:

- Curriculum vitae of President/CEO ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN is led by Mr. Gregory Kegel who has prior experience as a professor at MSUN and as a trainer in the private sector. He holds an MS in Occupational Education from Central Washington University.

#### Standard 2.A.4

The institution's decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

#### Evidence:

- Institutional governance policies and procedures (see 2.A.1) ✓



**Rationale:** MSUN provides opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and students to participate in decision-making processes through the Academic Senate, the Associated Students of MSUN, and the University Advisory Council.

#### Standard 2.B.1

Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Academic freedom policies and procedures ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN is dedicated to its mission of teaching and providing knowledge. The Montana Board of Regents endorses statements on academic freedom from AAUP and AAC, with additional support provided in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

#### Standard 2.B.2

Within the context of its mission and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to test and examine all knowledge and theories, thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Individuals within the institution allow others the freedom to do the same.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Rationale:** MSUN supports intellectual and academic freedom as part of the pursuit of and dissemination of knowledge without restriction or censure.

#### Standard 2.C.1

The institution's transfer-of-credit policy maintains the integrity of its programs and facilitates the efficient mobility of students desirous of the completion of their educational credits, credentials, or degrees in furtherance of their academic goals.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Transfer of credit policies procedures ✓

**Rationale:** The Montana University System (MUS) has policies regarding common course numbering along with specific policies related to transfer of general education credits and demonstration of proficiency. These policies and procedures are readily available and maintained by the Registrar. The MUS also provides for a single-admission process and for ease in managing multi-campus enrollment.

#### Standard 2.C.2

The institution's policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, provisions related to academic honesty, conduct, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

Documentation of student's rights and responsibilities policies and procedures, which include:

- Academic honesty ✓
- Appeals, grievances ✓
- Accommodations for persons with disabilities ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides specific policies for standards of progress, academic honesty, student conduct code, grade appeals and grievance procedures. Accommodation for person with disabilities is available through their Accessibility website.

#### Standard 2.C.3

The institution's academic and administrative policies and procedures should include admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Such policies should also include a policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs, including its appeal and re-admission policy.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies and procedures for recruiting, admitting, and placing students ✓



- Policies/procedures related to continuation and termination from educational programs including appeal process and readmission policies/procedures ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN adheres to the MUS policies on admission standards and provides information regarding requirements and processes for application. Student advising is provided as a collaborative service between the Registrar and faculty, and an Academic Alert System is in place to promote student success. Information regarding readmission, progress and standards is available.

#### Standard 2.C.4

The institution's policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release, and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures regarding secure retention of student records, i.e., back-up, confidentiality, release, protection from cybersecurity issues or other emergencies ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN complies with FERPA and other federal standards. There is an Enterprise Data Stewardship policy in place, as well. Reliable storage of student records is documented.

#### Standard 2.D.1

The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures/ for reviewing published materials (print or websites) that assures institutional integrity ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN's Office of University Relations ensures accurate, clear, consistent communication to the community through branding and content policies and review procedures.

#### Standard 2.D.2

The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in its management and operations, including in its dealings with the public, NWCCU, and external organizations, including the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other stakeholders and constituencies. The institution ensures that complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures for reviewing internal and external complaints and grievances ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN follows many state and federal policies to ensure that the faculty, staff, administrators, students and other stakeholders are treated equitably.

#### Standard 2.D.3

The institution adheres to clearly defined policies that prohibit conflicts of interest on the part of members of the governing board(s), administration, faculty, and staff.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures prohibiting conflict of interests among employees and board members ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN has clear policies defining and prohibiting conflicts of interest for board, administration, faculty and staff.

#### Standard 2.E.1

The institution utilizes relevant audit processes and regular reporting to demonstrate financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures that articulate the oversight and management of financial resources ✓
- Latest external financial audit including management letter ✓
- Cash flow balance sheets ✓
- Audited financial statements ✓



- Tuition and fees, educational, and auxiliary revenue for undergraduate and graduate enrollments ✓
- Significant contracts/grants ✓
- Endowment and giving reports ✓
- Investment revenue ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN shows evidence of audit processes and regular reports that illustrate financial stability. They show evidence of audited financial statements and oversight management. They also show evidence of planning for budget and long-range planning. Tuition and fees are clearly part of the planning process.

### Standard 2.E.2

Financial planning includes meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholders and ensures appropriate available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and comprehensive risk management to ensure short term financial health and long-term financial stability and sustainability.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies / procedures for planning and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, transfers and borrowing between funds ✓

**Rationale:** Business Services oversees all financial activity on campus, while leveraging the benefits of being part of the MSU system. Planning processes are tied to revenue forecasts. Annual budget is monitored externally through the Board of Regents.

### Standard 2.E.3

Financial resources are managed transparently in accordance with policies approved by the institution's governing board(s), governance structure(s), and applicable state and federal laws.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Description of internal financial controls ✓
- Board approved financial policies, state financial policies, or system financial policies ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN follows Board of Regents and MSU policies. The Fiscal Affairs division monitors and manages financial transactions. MSUN uses an industry-standard financial data system (BANNER).

### Standard 2.F.1

Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Human resource policies / procedures ✓
- Policies/procedures related to teaching, scholarship, service, and artistic creation ✓
- Policies/procedures for apprising employees of working conditions, rights and responsibilities, evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides clear information about benefits, retirement, employee assistance, employment conditions and rights and responsibilities.

### Standard 2.F.2

The institution provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Employee professional development policies/procedures ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides information on professional development opportunities available through MSU and through the state. There is a Professional Development Committee that coordinates these activities.

### Standard 2.F.3

Consistent with its mission, programs, and services, the institution employs faculty, staff, and administrators sufficient in role, number, and qualifications to achieve its organizational responsibilities, educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs.



**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Documentation about engagement and responsibilities specified for faculty and staff, as appropriate ✓
- Personnel hiring policy/procedures ✓
- Academic organizational chart ✓
- Administrator/staff /faculty evaluation policies/procedures ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides information about its faculty and staff and their ability to maintain academic programs appropriately.

#### Standard 2.F.4

Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided feedback and encouragement for improvement.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Administrator/staff/faculty evaluation policies/procedures ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN evaluates all faculty and staff members according to the CBA for each area.

#### Standard 2.G.1

Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, and with a particular focus on equity and closure of equity gaps in achievement, the institution creates and maintains effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Listing of programs and services supporting student learning needs ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN is the comprehensive regional in the area and are an open-enrollment school. Student support services are offered to all students, including TRiO, tutoring, advising, the Little River Institute, accessibility center, veterans services, and health and mental health services. MSUN appears to be particularly inclusive in providing a wide range of these services.

#### Standard 2.G.2

The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: institutional mission; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings; names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

Catalog (and/or other publications) that provides information regarding:

- Institutional mission ✓
- Admission requirements and procedures ✓
- Grading policy ✓
- Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion ✓
- Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty ✓
- Rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities ✓
- Tuition, fees, and other program costs ✓
- Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment ✓
- Opportunities and requirements for financial aid ✓
- The academic calendar ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides public, detailed information on all of these policies and procedures.



### Standard 2.G.3

Publications and other written materials that describe educational programs include accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered. Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

Samples of publications and other written materials that describe:

- Accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered ✓
- Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides detailed information regarding licensure programs and employment entrance for its programs in counselor education, nursing, plumbing, electrical, and civil engineering.

### Standard 2.G.4

The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Published financial aid policies/procedures including information about categories of financial assistance ✓
- Information to students regarding repayment obligations ✓
- Policies / procedures for monitoring student loan programs ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides detailed information regarding financial aid policies, procedures, types of aid, and student obligations.

### Standard 2.G.5

Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and publicizes the institution's loan default rate on its website.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Published financial aid policies/procedures including information about categories of financial assistance ✓
- Information to students regarding repayment obligations ✓
- Policies / procedures for monitoring student loan programs ✓
- Loan default rate published on website ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provides detailed information regarding financial aid policies, procedures, types of aid, and student obligations.

### Standard 2.G.6

The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Description of advising program, staffing, and advising publications (Student handbook or Catalog; links to webpages – please note specific pages or areas) ✓
- Systematic evaluation of advising X
- Professional development policies / procedures for advisors ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN offers a comprehensive advising and orientation program. MSUN offers a variety of resources and checklists for its academic advisors. First-year faculty are not required to serve as advisors, and the Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence provides professional development opportunities for new and returning faculty.

### Standard 2.G.7

The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution



ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

**Note:** Institutions should refer to NWCCU Distance Education Policy for guidance and definitions related to the required evidence.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Policies/procedures for ensuring identity verification for students enrolling in distance education courses ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN has implemented security and verification measures for all students using the LMS.

### Standard 2.H.1

Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution's mission, programs, and services.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

- Procedures for assessing adequacy of library collections ✓
- Library planning committee and procedures for planning and collection development ✓
- Library instruction plan; policies/procedures related to the use of library and information resources ✓
- Library staffing information; policies/procedures that explains faculty/library partnership for assuring library and information resources are integrated into the learning process ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN's Vande Bogart Library offers access to substantial information resources locally and through the TRAILS consortium. The instruction program provides access to information literacy skills across the curriculum, and there is a Library subcommittee of the Academic Senate.

### Standard 2.I.1

Consistent with its mission, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities and technology infrastructure that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support and sustain the institution's mission, academic programs, and services.

**Team Verification:** Compliant

**Evidence:**

Facilities master plan, including:

- Equipment replacement policies/procedures ✓
- Procedures for assessing sufficiency of physical facilities ✓
- Policies and procedures for ensuring accessible, safe, and secure facilities ✓
- Policies/procedures for the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste ✓
- Technology master plan and planning processes ✓

**Rationale:** MSUN provided evidence of policies related to equipment replace cycles, physical facilities assessment and planning, campus safety in a number of areas, including hazardous waste. The technology planning and equipment replacement cycles are described in the narrative.

### Concluding Comments

The panel appreciated receiving the extra information that was provided. This allowed us to fully evaluate MSUN.