



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**

**MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**YEAR SEVEN SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

March 1, 2015

*changing lives – achieving dreams*

"It's so great to have the opportunity of a college choir here at Great Falls MSU. Music is a great way to make friends and getting to express and share the talents we have makes it all worthwhile."

Megan N.  
GFC MSU CHOIR



Dr. Susan J. Wolff  
CEO/Dean

"The 2015, Year 7 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Report is dedicated to the exceptional faculty, staff, administrators, and students of Great Falls College Montana State University. All of us, together, live and learn each day and are making a difference for one another, the community, the state, the country, and the world. Many people, both on and off campus contributed significantly to the self-study and the creation of this report. Their hard work is greatly appreciated."

*Susan J. Wolff*



# Dedication

**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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“GFC MSU offers programs  
a lot of two-year  
colleges do not.”

VICTORIA A.  
DENTAL HYGIENE



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Institutional Overview

## Institutional Overview

*Changing lives – Achieving Dreams:* it is more than a tag line supporting the mission, vision, and values of Great Falls College Montana State University (GFC MSU). It is a maxim that has sustained the college through a decade of transformational change and restructuring. The college is a shining example of how a commitment to scholarship and achievement and a reliance on data-driven decision-making can create an environment where all can thrive and grow.

GFC MSU is a public two-year college offering the comprehensive community college mission to the larger Great Falls area. The city of Great Falls, Montana's third most populous, is located in the northcentral part of the state. It is the county seat of Cascade, with approximately 70,000 residents. Over 70 percent of the students in academic year 2013-2014 were residents of that county. Of the remainder, the largest numbers of enrollees were from neighboring Choteau, Teton, Glacier, and Pondera Counties. Online courses and programs extend the reach of the college throughout Montana and nationwide. There is no public four-year higher education institution in Great Falls.

The GFC MSU student population is 71% female. Fifty-one percent of the students attend part-time and 72% work at least part-time. Thirty-three percent are first-generation college students and 50% are older than 25, with an average age of 29. In academic year 2013-2014, the college had an average class size of 17.2 for fall term with a student to faculty ratio of 16:1. Fifty-four percent of GFC MSU students attended class face-to-face, 6% in a hybrid format, and 39% wholly online.

The college was founded in 1969 as a vocational technical education center and initially operated as a unit of Great Falls Public School District (GFPS) to provide employment training to the community. Great Falls College MSU (then the Great Falls Vocational-Technical Education Center) earned initial accreditation in 1979 from (then) Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

In 1987, the Montana Legislature delegated the general administration and supervisory control of Montana's five vocational technical education centers to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. In 1994, as a result of Montana University System restructuring, the college became one of four campuses in the Montana State University family and was renamed Montana State University Great Falls College of Technology (GFC MSU COT). In early 2013, all Montana's two-year colleges of technology were renamed through the *College!Now* Montana University System two-year campus rebranding initiative, and the college became Great Falls College Montana State University.

The campus includes two main buildings and an early childhood education center located on 36 acres. The 134,650 square-foot main building houses the Weaver Library and eLearning Center; a bookstore and café; faculty and administrative offices; an Academic Testing Center; the Adult Education Center (administered by the Great Falls Public School District); KGPR Public Radio; MSU-Northern Great Falls offices; state of the art science, computer and sustainable energy labs; classrooms; the Advising and Career Center; the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) node (one of only two in the lower forty-eight United States); a staffed Native American Center; a staffed Veterans Center; the Academic Success Center (ASC); and centralized student support services in Student Central. A second building, the 12,392 square-foot Trades and Industries Building, houses welding and carpentry programs. A third building is home to the Bright

Beginnings Learning Center, a child development center providing daycare and early childhood education services for the children of students attending the college and others in the community.

GFC MSU offers 3 transfer degrees: the Associate of Science, the Associate of Arts, and the Certificate of General Studies. In addition, the college provides 6 Certificates of Technical Studies (CTS, formerly called Professional Certificates); 11 options for the Certificate of Applied Science (CAS); and 22 Associates of Applied Science (AAS) designed specifically for entry into and advancement in a variety of career fields. The college offers developmental education coursework to upgrade math, reading, and writing skills; schedules lifelong learning and community enrichment programming to teach new skills, support hobbies, or allow for career exploration; and provides customized and contracted workforce training to support the economic development of northcentral Montana. The college is also recognized as a trans-border welding testing facility, allowing Canadian and American welders to complete certification testing without traveling to Alberta. The college offers more health science programs than any other institution in Montana with a grand total of 22. The college is home to the most comprehensive simulated hospital in the state, allowing all the healthcare programs to participate in simulations simultaneously.

GFC MSU is an important employer in the Great Falls region. At this writing, the college employs 85 full-time administrative and support staff, 45 full-time faculty, 3 part-time faculty, and 95 adjunct faculty. Of these, 75% live in the service area. The college is itself a large-scale buyer of goods and services. According to an economic impact study, in FY 2012-2013 the college spent \$9.8 million on payroll and another \$11.2 million on day-to-day operations. The net impact of this spending was approximately \$13.7 million in added regional income.

Thirty faculty and adjunct faculty members at GFC MSU hold advanced credentials and certifications, including 19 who have doctorate degrees. Over 100 of our full- and part-time faculty and adjuncts hold Montana OPI Class 1, 2, 3, 4, or 8 licenses, allowing them to teach dual credit courses. That number is higher than on any other campus in Montana. As a result, the college has been able to develop and pilot innovative programs such as a dual credit welding cohort that allows high school students to complete the Certificate of Applied Science in Welding and Fabrication Technology during their senior year of high school.

Many of the faculty engage in research activities and supervise important grants that support cutting-edge advancements in science and technical education. GFC MSU has expanded STEAM, creating new arts, humanities, advanced mathematics and science courses to support transfer in engineering and technology and the fine arts. This has allowed for the creation of new articulations such as a 1 + 3 transfer option to Montana State University in nine engineering fields. The Great Falls College MSU Community Choir has been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City in spring of 2016.

Great Falls College MSU is committed to fostering innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations, and to contributing to the stability and economic growth of the Great Falls community. The college efficiently provides programs and services for students with funding from state appropriations, federal grants, and student tuition. Students at GFC MSU received over 600 scholarships for 2012-13 totaling over \$584,000. Scholarships were received from institutional, local, state, and out-of-state resources.



**“I choose GFC MSU because it’s affordable, close to home and I love the smaller classroom.”**

**KATHERINE H.**  
ASSOCIATE OF ARTS



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
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# Basic Institutional Data Form



***NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES***

**BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA FORM**

Information and data provided in the institutional self-evaluation are usually for the academic and fiscal year preceding the year of the evaluation committee visit. The purpose of this form is to provide Commissioners and evaluators with current data for the year of the visit. After the self-evaluation report has been finalized, complete this form to ensure the information is current for the time of the evaluation committee visit. Please provide a completed copy of this form with each copy of the self-evaluation report sent to the Commission office and to each evaluator.

To enable consistency of reporting, please refer to the glossary in the 2003 Accreditation Handbook for definitions of terms.

Institution: Great Falls College MSU

Address: 2100 16th Ave S

City, State, ZIP: Great Falls, MT 59405

Degree Levels Offered:  Doctorate  Masters  Baccalaureate  Associate  Other

If part of a multi-institution system, name of system: Montana State University

Type of Institution:  Comprehensive  Specialized  Health-centered  Religious-based  
 Native/Tribal  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional control:  Public  City  County  State  Federal  Tribal  
 Private/Independent ( Non-profit  For Profit)

Institutional calendar:  Quarter  Semester  Trimester  4-1-4  Continuous Term  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Specialized/Programmatic accreditation:** List program or school, degree level(s) and date of last accreditation by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

Program or School	Degree Level(s)	Recognized Agency	Date
Dental Assisting	CAS	American Dental Association	Oct. 2008
Dental Hygiene	AAS	Commission on Dental Accreditation	March 2011
Paramedic	AAS	Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)	Sept. 2011
Health Information Coding	CAS	American Health Information Management Association	Sept. 2010
Health Information Technology	AAS	Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics & Information Management Education (CAHIIM)	Oct. 1999
Interior Design	AAS	National Kitchen and Bath Association	Nov. 2011

Medical Assisting	AAS	Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs	March 2012
Physical Therapist Assistant	AAS	Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)	April 2009
Practical Nurse Program	AAS	Montana State Board of Nursing	Oct. 2014
Respiratory Care	AAS	Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC)	May 31, 2007
Surgical Technology	AAS	Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)	Nov. 2004

**Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment** (Formula used to compute FTE: Number of total credits divided by 15 (full time unit count).)

**Official Fall 2014 (most recent year) FTE Student Enrollments**

Classification	Current Year	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Undergraduate	1,255	1252	1,300
Graduate			
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels			

**Full-Time Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.** (Count students enrolled in credit courses only.)

**Official Fall 2014 (most recent year) Student Headcount Enrollments**

Classification	Current Year	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Undergraduate	1873	1832	1861
Graduate			
Professional			
Unclassified			
Total all levels			

**Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff and Numbers of Full-Time (only) Instructional and Research Faculty & Staff by Highest Degree Earned.** Include only professional personnel who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Total Number **45** Number of Full Time (only) Faculty and Staff by Highest Degree Earned

Rank	Full Time	Part Time	Less than Associate	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate
Professor								
Associate Professor								
Assistant Professor								
Instructor	45	3	3	5	7	27	0	6
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant								
Research Staff and Research Assistant								
Undesignated Rank								

**Mean Salaries and Mean Years of Service of Full-Time Instructional and Research Faculty and Staff.** Include only full-time personnel with professional status who are primarily assigned to instruction or research.

Rank	Mean Salary	Mean Years of Service
Professor		
Associate Professor		
Assistant Professor		
Instructor	51,613	8.85
Lecturer and Teaching Assistant		
Research Staff and Research Assistant		
Undesignated Rank		

**Financial Information.** Complete each item in the report using zero where there is nothing to report. Enter figures to the nearest dollar. Auxiliary and service enterprises of the institution (housing, food service, book stores, athletics, etc.) should be included. The institution's audit materials should be an excellent reference for completing the report.

Fiscal year of the institution: July 1- June 30 2014

Reporting of income: Accrual Basis \_\_\_\_\_ Accrual Basis \_\_\_\_\_  
Reporting of expenses: Accrual Basis \_\_\_\_\_ Accrual Basis \_\_\_\_\_

**BALANCE SHEET DATA**

ASSETS	Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2014	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2013	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2012
<b>CURRENT FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted			
Cash	706,582	928,321	904,551
Investments	0	0	0
Accounts receivable gross	209,750	227,583	242,158
Less allowance for bad debts	56,904	(5,501)	(3,723)
Inventories	0	0	0
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	356,510	214,804	118,918
Other	0	0	0
Due from	0	0	0
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	1,329,747	1,365,208	1,262,437
Restricted			
Cash	75,385	113,365	203,174
Investments			
Other (Account Receivable)	1,433	43,082	(2,150)
Due from	113,463	42,237	41,856
<b>Total Restricted</b>	190,281	198,684	242,880
<b>TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS</b>	1,520,028	1,563,892	1,505,317
<b>ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS</b>			
Cash	11,300	11,300	11,117
Investments	0	0	183
Other	0	0	0
Due from	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS</b>	11,300	11,300	11,300
<b>PLANT FUND</b>			
Unexpended			
Cash	1,080,461	1,533,489	1,638,096
Investments			
Accounts Receivable Net	11,117	477	5,175
<b>Total unexpended</b>	1,091,579	1,533,966	1,643,272
Investment in Plant			

Land	363,993	363,993	363,993
Land improvements	78,301	90,665	103,028
Buildings	19,438,167	19,447,436	18,917,844
Equipment	1,169,284	841,931	983,114
Library resources	183,138	217,847	242,807
Other (Intangible Assets)	34,936	59,395	30,537
<b>Total investments in plant</b>	<b>21,267,819</b>	<b>21,021,267</b>	<b>20,641,323</b>
Due from			
Other plant funds (identify)			
<b>TOTAL PLANT FUNDS</b>	<b>22,359,398</b>	<b>22,555,233</b>	<b>22,284,594</b>
<b>OTHER ASSETS (AGENCY, DESIGNATE, AUX)</b>	<b>3,883,901</b>	<b>3,741,073</b>	<b>3,711,509</b>
<b>TOTAL OTHER ASSETS</b>	<b>23,075,493</b>	<b>23,282,768</b>	<b>23,238,268</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>50,580,119</b>	<b>51,154,265</b>	<b>50,750,988</b>

**BALANCE SHEET DATA (continued)**

LIABILITIES	Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2014	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2013	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2012
<b>CURRENT FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted			
Accounts payable	450,236	564,283	438,252
Accrued liabilities	225,837	215,317	180,341
Students' deposits			
Deferred credits	93,748	190,112	255,869
Other liabilities (comp abs)	571,909	534,916	578,869
Other: (Security Lending/Prop Held for Others)	571,909	534,916	578,921
LT OPEB Implicit Rate Subsidy	1,932,164	1,727,412	1,492,408
<b>Fund Balance</b>	<b>2,046,650</b>	<b>1,952,515</b>	<b>1,730,925</b>
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>3,278,120</b>	<b>3,234,308</b>	<b>2,945,791</b>
Restricted			
Accounts payable	33,238	9,196	11,961
Other (Deferred Rev & Accrued Liab)	37	4,702	5,572
Due to	1,958	3,157	4,052
LT OPEB Implicit Rate Subsidy	62,282	47,455	38,121
Fund balance	92,766	134,173	185,820
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>97,515</b>	<b>64,511</b>	<b>59,706</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS</b>			
<b>ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS</b>			
Restricted	0	0	0
Quasi-endowed	0	0	0
Due to	0	0	0
Fund balance	11,300	11,300	11,300
<b>TOTAL ENDOWMENT AND SIMILAR FUNDS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PLANT FUND</b>			
Unexpended			
Accounts payable	3,576	4,938	8,264
Notes payable			
Bonds payable			
Other liabilities (Comp abs & Deferred Rev)	62,420	71,850	74,225
Due to			
Fund balance	1,025,583	1,457,179	1,562,101
<b>Total unexpended</b>	<b>65,995</b>	<b>76,787</b>	<b>82,490</b>
Investment in Plant			
Notes payable	0		

Bonds payable	0		
Mortgage payable	0		
Other liabilities (identify)	573,604	620,161	663,899
Due to	0		
Other plant fund liabilities (identify)	573,604	620,161	663,899
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS IN PLANT FUND</b>			
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES (AGENCY, DESIGNATED, AUXILIARY)</b>	683,899	593,020	530,556
<b>TOTAL OTHER LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	4,699,133	4,588,789	4,282,442
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	20,694,216	20,401,106	19,954,372

**CURRENT FUNDS, REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND OTHER CHANGES**

REVENUES	Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2014	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2013	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2012
Tuition and fees	5,766,216	4,172,280	3,728,640
Federal appropriations	4,331,612	4,529,601	4,690,709
State appropriations	6,941,133	6,124,436	6,121,433
Local appropriations			
Grants and contracts	1,659,670	990,386	1,596,697
Endowment income			
Auxiliary enterprises	1,916,585	1,528,215	1,380,783
Other – Scholarships	83,578	101,566	80,018
Other	966,189	971,409	531,713
<b>EXPENDITURE &amp; MANDATORY TRANSFERS</b>	21,664,983	18,417,894	18,129,993
Educational and General			
Instruction	8,030,260	6,978,495	6,455,053
Research			
Public services	70,869	72,794	68,121
Academic support	1,389,049	1,319,543	1,327,772
Student services	1,399,095	1,303,049	1,227,923
Institutional support	1,414,439	1,481,300	1,567,018
Operation and maintenance of plant	1,019,853	929,754	1,263,273
Scholarships and fellowships	5,124,578	3,205,730	2,830,672
Other (Plant, Depreciation, Amortization)	1,569,111	1,284,315	1,224,428
Mandatory transfers for:			
Principal and interest			
Renewal and replacements			
Loan fund matching grants			
Other (identify)			
<b>Total Educational and General</b>	20,017,253	16,574,981	15,964,259
Auxiliary Enterprises			
Expenditures	1,855,005	1,794,418	1,803,736
Mandatory transfers for:			
Principal and interest	0		
Renewals and replacements	0		
<b>Total Auxiliary Enterprises</b>	1,855,005	1,794,418	1,803,736
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE &amp; MANDATORY TRANSFERS</b>	21,872,258	18,369,399	17,767,995
<b>OTHER TRANSFERS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS (identify)</b>			
EXCESS [deficiency of revenues over expenditures]	(207,275)	48,495	361,999

and mandatory transfers (net change in fund balances)]			
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**INSTITUTIONAL INDEBTEDNESS**

TOTAL DEBT TO OUTSIDE PARTIES	Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2014	One Year Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2013	Two Years Prior to Last Completed FY Dates:06/30/2012
For Capital Outlay	0	0	0
For Operations	0	0	0

**Domestic Off-Campus Degree Programs and Academic Credit Sites:** Report information for off-campus sites within the United States where degree programs and academic coursework is offered. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

**Degree Programs** – list the names of degree programs that can be completed at the site.

**Academic Credit Courses** – report the total number of academic credit courses offered at the site.

**Student Headcount** – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.

**Faculty Headcount** – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

**PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT OFFERED AT OFF-CAMPUS SITES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES**

Location of Site Name City, State, ZIP	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
Not applicable				

**Programs and Academic Courses Offered at Sites Outside the United States.** Report information for sites outside the United States where degree programs and academic credit courses are offered, including study abroad programs and educational operations on military bases. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

**Degree Programs** – list the names of degree programs that can be completed at the site.

**Academic Credit Courses** – report the total number of academic credit courses offered at the site.

**Student Headcount** – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of students currently enrolled in programs at the site.

**Faculty Headcount** – report the total number (unduplicated headcount) of faculty (full-time and part-time) teaching at the site.

**PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT COURSES OFFERED AT SITES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

Location of Site Name City, State, ZIP	Degree Programs	Academic Credit Courses	Student Headcount	Faculty Headcount
Not applicable				



“With helpful instructors and  
sign language interpreters,  
I’m never afraid to ask questions.”

ALEXA B.  
MEDICAL ASSISTANT

# Preface



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Preface

### **Update on Institutional Changes since the March 2012 Year Three Report**

The last report from the college, the *Year Three Report*, was submitted in March 2012. Keeping with the mission of a two-year college to be flexible, nimble, and relevant to best serve its constituency base, the college has made several changes since the last report. Those changes are the following:

#### **College Name Change**

The college has a new name due to the College!Now Mission Expansion initiative of the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The initiative is to increase accessibility to two-year education as a means to increasing the percentage of state residents attaining postsecondary credentials from 40% to 60% as per the Complete College Montana and Main Street Montana initiatives. The expanded mission of the former Colleges of Technology is to provide transfer education, workforce development (including certificates and applied associate's degrees), developmental and adult basic education, lifelong learning, and community development (Exhibit P.3).

To reflect the expanded mission, the names of the former Colleges of Technology were changed. Montana State University Great Falls College of Technology is now Great Falls College Montana State University (GFC MSU).

#### **Changes in Management and Department Structure**

Following a national search, Dr. Susan J. Wolff was hired as the new CEO/Dean on July 15, 2012, replacing Dr. Gwen Joseph, who had been serving as interim CEO/Dean.

Other new personnel include:

- Dr. Darryl Stevens, Chief Financial Officer, hired January 2, 2013 when previous CFO retired
- Dr. Camille Consolvo, Chief Student Affairs Officer, hired February 25, 2013 when previous CSAO accepted a promotion out of state

Great Falls College MSU affiliated its fund-raising activities with the Montana State University Bozeman Alumni Foundation for the 2013-2014 academic year in an effort to strengthen its ability to attract donations. The foundation hired a Director of Development who reported to the Vice-President of Development at the foundation but was housed at the GFC MSU campus. When the Director resigned in February 2014, the Vice President of the foundation and the CEO/Dean of GFC MSU agreed to have the Development Director report to the college CEO/Dean.

- Development Director Lewis Card was hired on September 15, 2014.

The previous Marketing, Communications, and Outreach Department was restructured into two units: Communications and Marketing, and Business and Community Development.

- Mel Lehman, appointed as Interim Executive Director of Business and Community Development on July 1, 2013 due to restructuring mentioned above
- Lewis Card, named Executive Director of Development, Communications & Marketing in January 2015

After the resignation of the Executive Director of Institutional Research, the position was restructured as a mid-management position of Research Analyst.

- Dr. Grace Anderson was hired July 7, 2014, as Research Analyst.

Dr. Bruce Gottwig was hired to lead the Business, Trades, and Technology Division on April 7, 2014, when the previous Director accepted a promotion opportunity out of state.

The Commissioner of Higher Education asked GFC MSU to be the lead college in writing and submitting a 13-college consortium TAACCCT III grant proposal to the Department of Labor. Upon successful award of the \$25 million grant in September 2013, GFC MSU assumed administrative leadership responsibility for the implementation and success of the Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana's Manufacturing and Energy Industries (SWAMMEI) grant. Newly created positions at Great Falls College MSU funded from that project include:

- Matthew Springer, Program Director, January 15, 2014
- Ed Binkley, Fiscal Manager, December 16, 2013
- Katy Brooke, Project Coordinator, January 2015
- Susan Estes, Administrative Assistant, January 2015
- Kelsey Kojetin, Workforce Navigator, February 28, 2014

## **Strengthened College/Community Partnerships**

During the 2013-2014 academic year, with the leadership of the previous Development Director and the Development Board, there was a concerted effort to engage with the community, businesses, and industry to increase funds for scholarships. With the hiring of the college's first full-time Fine Arts faculty, the Arts and Humanities Department is growing and providing more college/community activities, such as a student/community choir. With the expansion of the welding program to meet an increased workforce demand, several local companies have provided financial, equipment, and scholarship support. And finally, faculty are being encouraged to infuse community-based teaching/learning opportunities into their classes.

*The strong partnership between the Great Falls Development Authority and Great Falls College MSU has been critical to our success in growing and diversifying the Great Falls region and supporting the creation of high wage jobs. The College has been an instrumental partner in working with existing businesses, entrepreneurial startups, and out of state companies considering expansion into the Great Falls region. The College has been very responsive in doing what it can to provide custom training and creating/adapting academic programs to meet the workforce skill needs of growing companies. The Simulated Hospital and accompanying medical academic programs, and the welding program partnership with the Canadian Welding Board, are just two examples of the*

## **Brief Description of Other Institutional Changes**

- GFC MSU has completed or institutionalized through ongoing efforts the six goals set in 2011 in its operational plan, *Common Ground* (Exhibit P.4).
- Although GFC MSU had been offering core general education classes required for its one- and two-year associate of applied science programs, it is expanding its general education offerings to better support its associate of arts and associate of science transfer degrees. The former Developmental Education and Transfer Division was renamed General Education and Transfer Division in May 2014.
- The Great Falls College MSU Advising and Career Center has been in operation since 2011 with five full-time advisors who advise students throughout their academic career. The Student Success Alert program was developed and implemented in Fall 2013 using the GradesFirst advising software. Faculty can easily submit an alert for at-risk students, opening a case file for the academic advisor to more effectively assist faculty and students in solving issues and concerns that are affecting success in their courses.
- An MOU was signed by leadership at Great Falls College MSU, MSU-Northern, MSU-Billings, and MSU in Bozeman to create a transfer advising program between the colleges. Advisors at Great Falls College MSU have been assigned to a specific MSU institution and have developed relationships and procedures for students wishing to transfer.
- Student orientation and registration processes were reviewed with a focus on differentiating between the various programs. As a result, a new student registration and orientation with a separate Essential Start program is required prior to the beginning of classes.
- The Native American Center opened with an Open House in February 2013. Funding for the center was provided by the Issksiniip Project at Great Falls College MSU in partnership with Blackfeet Community College. The Issksiniip grant was funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Professions Opportunity Grant to aid low-income individuals in gaining self-sufficiency through lucrative educational and internship opportunities intertwined with culturally appropriate training in high demand healthcare fields. Since 2012, approximately 20 students per semester have received financial support to cover tuition and fees, support services, one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, job shadowing, and job placement.
- An important partnership with the Great Falls Public Schools has expanded. Two pathways advisor positions (one in each local high school), created in 2011 with grant funding to help students choose a pathway in high school that steers them into a college program, have been institutionalized. The Pathways Advisors, after three years, became High School Career Coaches in Fall 2014 to assist with dual enrollment and college access for all of our high school partners.
- Funded through a grant from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, a part-time veteran's success coach was hired in November 2013 to work in the Veterans Center, providing assistance and serving as a referral source to student veterans to increase retention/completion. The center was established by an active Student Government.
- In January 2014, through a College Access Challenge Sub-Grant administered by the

Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, GFC MSU hired a Financial Wellness Coordinator to lead the college in efforts to improve financial literacy awareness across campus.

- Bright Beginnings Learning Center, with a capacity of 88 children, opened in January of 2013 on College property. It serves families of children ages 0-5, with priority placement of children in the program given to enrolled Great Falls College MSU students. If spaces are not utilized by students, consideration will be given to faculty/staff and the general public in that priority order.

## Planning

The previous Strategic Plan expired in 2013. In setting the future direction for the college, several planning initiatives were initiated in the 2013-2014 academic year. In Fall 2013, Dr. Bob Bontrager from AACRAO led the Executive Team and Joint Directors in the initiation of a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan. During the academic year the SEM leadership team conducted an internal process review of the college. An abbreviated Academic Master Plan process was used to gather an external perspective of the College's assets, opportunities, challenges, and aspirations. The above mentioned planning work, the continuous analysis of established core indicators and assessment protocols, and preparation of the NWCCU Year 7 Report will lead to a comprehensive mission, vision, and values review and to the development of a new strategic plan to be put in place during the 2015-2016 academic year. The college is proud of its shared governance structure; therefore, these planning processes will be inclusive of faculty, students, staff, administrators, and when appropriate, the external community. The resulting Strategic Plan will guide the development of a Facilities Master Plan.

Additionally, Dr. Christine Kerlin from AACRAO conducted an assessment of the college's admissions processes. These findings will be used in the SEM and other planning processes.

# GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY: CORE THEMES

**Mission:** Our Mission is to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.

## Workforce Development

Through applied programming our students successfully attain a credential leading to life sustaining careers.

- CI1. Enrollment Rates
- CI2. Regional Market Penetration Rates
- CI3. Persistence (Retention)
- CI4. Graduation Rates
- CI5. Demonstration of Abilities
- CI8. Workforce Degree Production
- CI9. Placement Rates
- CI10. Licensure and Certification Pass Rate
- CI11. Employer Satisfaction with Graduates
- CI17. Success of Students in College Coursework

## Transfer Preparation

Our students complete transfer programming and successfully transfer toward a four-year degree.

- CI1. Enrollment Rates
- CI2. Regional Market Penetration Rates
- CI3. Persistence (Retention)
- CI4. Graduation Rates
- CI5. Demonstration of Abilities
- CI11. Employer Satisfaction with Graduates
- CI12. Transfer Degree Production
- CI13. Transfer Rates
- CI14. Performance after Transfer
- CI17. Success of Students in College Coursework

## Academic Preparation

We prepare individuals for success in college coursework through developmental (remedial) education and adult basic education.

- CI1. Enrollment Rates
- CI2. Regional Market Penetration Rates
- CI3. Persistence (Retention)
- CI4. Graduation Rates
- CI5. Demonstration of Abilities
- CI6. Success of Students in Remedial Courses
- CI7. Success in Subsequent and Related Coursework
- CI17. Success of Students in College Coursework

## Community Development

As the community's college, we support social and economic development through outreach, lifelong learning, and active partnership.

- CI1. Enrollment Rates
- CI2. Regional Market Penetration Rates
- CI15. Professional and Continuing Ed Participation
- CI16. Business and Industry Training

CI = A Core Indicator is "...a regularly produced measure that describes a specific condition or result that is central to the achievement of the college's mission and to meeting the needs and interests of key stakeholders" (Alfred, Shults, and Seybert, 2007, p 12)

## **Response to Topics Previously Requested by the Commission**

The college submitted its Year Three Report in March 2012. This section addresses responses to two recommendations from that report and provides the Year Three Peer Evaluation Report of April 2012: Note Regarding Recommendation 2 of the *Year One Report of March 2011*.

### **Recommendation 1**

*While the College employs appropriately qualified faculty, the evaluation committee is concerned that the institution's inability to employ qualified part-time faculty on a sustained basis may negatively impact the College's ability to achieve its educational objectives, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs (Standard 2.B.4).*

### **Response**

This recommendation resulted from the college's struggle to find qualified adjunct instructors, particularly in the areas of math and science. To remedy the situation, full-time faculty were added by creating two new positions in math and in-filling a vacant position in biology. All full-time positions added are shown below:

- 2 Math
- 1 Fine Arts/Humanities
- 2 Welding
- 1 Health Information Technologies
- 1 Nursing

Because of these additions, fewer adjunct faculty are needed. The percentage of adjunct instructors compared to full-time faculty decreased from 70% to 67%. The current percentage is comparable to the national average of 69% for two-year institutions (IPEDS). However, recruiting and maintaining quality adjunct faculty remains a focus for the college.

Measures have been implemented to better support and retain existing adjunct instructors:

- Pay rate has increased from \$700/credit to \$735/credit.
- Adjunct instructor orientation was revised and combined with the new full-time faculty orientation.
- A COLS 104 Foundations of Teaching at a Community College course was created and is available for all instructors, including adjunct instructors, to take at no charge for professional development or continuing education credits, or for a fee for college credit (Exhibit P.5).
- Evaluation forms have been standardized and a tracking system implemented to evaluate adjunct instructors during their first semester and then every three years afterward. Faculty are notified by letter when an evaluation is upcoming (Exhibit P.6).
- The Adjunct Faculty Handbook is updated every year and made available on the college's website (Exhibit P.7).
- Hiring practices have been standardized, including a hiring approval form, interview questions, and reference checks (Exhibits P.8, P.9, P.10).

- The onboarding process for newly hired adjunct instructors has been standardized (Exhibits P.11, P.12).
- In the General Education & Transfer Division, which has the largest number of adjunct faculty, department chairs were appointed to act as a point of contact and support for the adjunct instructors in their departments (Exhibit P.13).
- In the General Education & Transfer Division, a schedule of regular contact times to reach out to adjunct instructors throughout the semester was created and distributed to the department chairs (Exhibit P.14).
- In the General Education & Transfer Division, beginning- and end-of-semester checklists were created and distributed to adjunct faculty (Exhibits P.15, P.16)
- In the Business, Trades & Technology and Health Sciences Divisions, program directors were already filling this role as the contact person for the adjuncts. It is their responsibility to recruit, orient, and correspond with the adjunct faculty.
- A standard campus syllabus and checklist were created for all campus faculty, including adjunct instructors, to use (Exhibit P.17).

Meeting the needs of adjunct instructors continues to be a priority of the college. The Division Directors regularly discuss adjunct support and schedule strategic planning meetings to work on ways to improve communication, support, and wages for adjunct instructors.

## **Recommendation 2**

*The Committee found evidence that one program, AAS Fire and Rescue Technology accepts credit for prior experiential learning that exceeds 25% of the total credits required for the degree. This is in conflict with Standard 2.C.7 and all programs must meet the Standard.*

## **Response**

We appreciate the Committee's concern; this subject is no longer an issue. As of October 29, 2012, the AAS Fire and Rescue Technology was placed in moratorium by the Montana Board of Regents. If the program were to be placed in an active status in the future, the program would be modified to comply with Standard 2.C.7. The Chief Academic Officers of the Montana State University System were formally notified of this change (Exhibit P.16).

## **Year Three Peer Evaluation Report of April 2012: Note Regarding Recommendation 2 of the Year One Report of March 2011**

In the *Year Three Peer Evaluation Report* of April 2012, the following was noted in regard to Recommendation 2 of the *Year One Report* of March 2011 (see Addendum H: Progress on Recommendation 2, p. 5-6 of the *Year Three Peer Evaluation Report of April 25-27, 2012*):

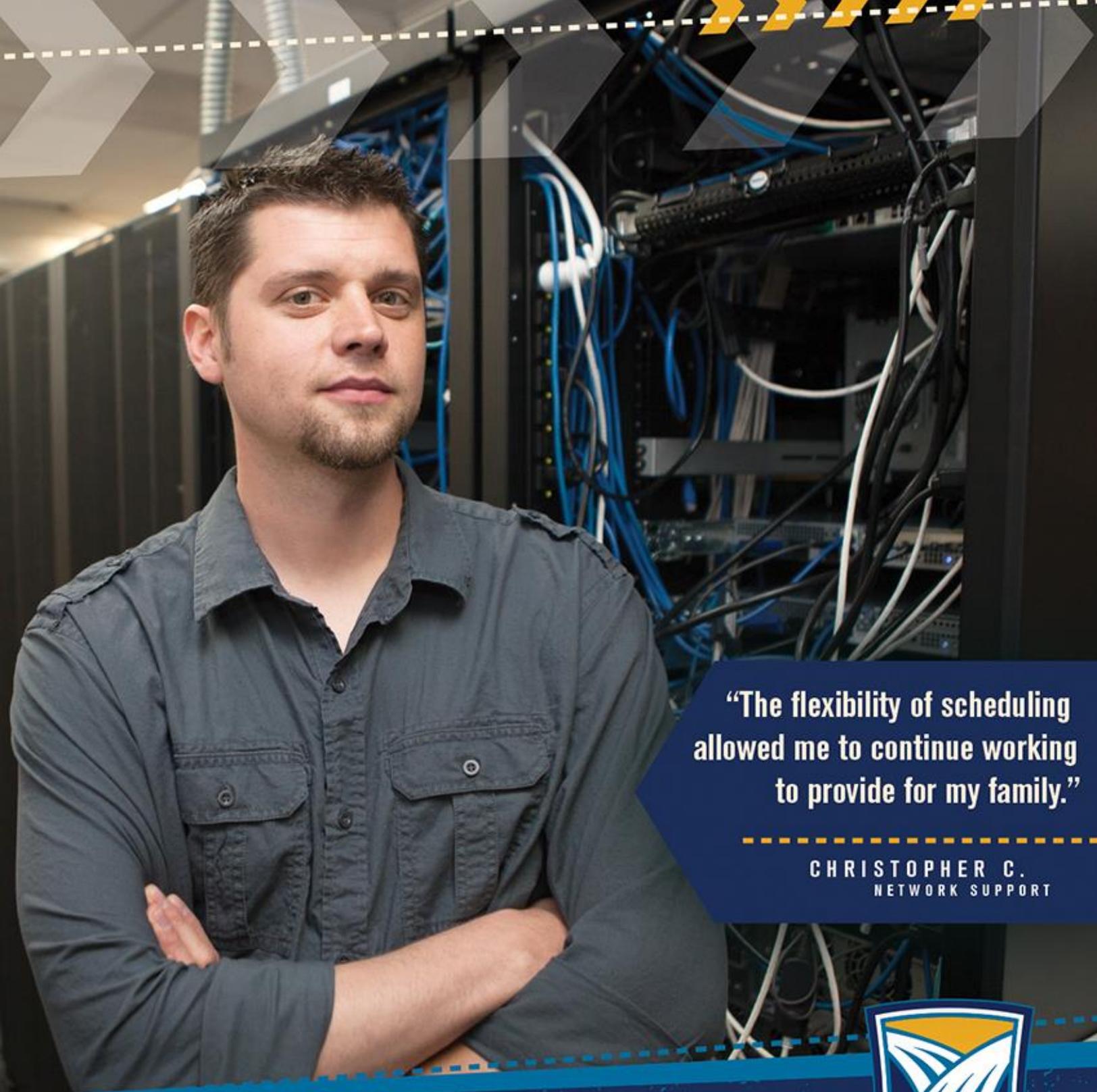
*"While the College has documented a faculty-driven, comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement the evaluation panel recommends that the College provide evidence that students who complete its educational course, programs and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program and degree learning outcomes (Standard 4.A.3 and 4.B.2)."*

*\*This Recommendation is in response to Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2010 Regular Interim Evaluation Report as reported in the addendum to the College's Year One Self Evaluation Report, and thus, the Standards cited in this Recommendation reflect the conversion to the 2010 Standards."*

“In response to this request the College is implementing a four-phase process that will support systematic and consistent evaluation of both student performance and faculty teaching. There has been a renewed focus on creating a college-wide system for storing student learning outcomes data and longitudinal tracking of that data for better understanding of students learning and the effect of change son that learning.

These actions indicate a commitment of the College to address this issue in its on-going activities. This committee recommends that the College address this recommendation in its Year Five Self-Study Report, since that report includes a report on Standard 4.A and 4.B.”

Since the receipt of the *Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report*, the *Year Five Report* requirement has been eliminated by the Commission. To satisfy the above request, the report on Standard 4.A and 4.B of the Year Seven Report will close the loop on the recommendation as stated.



**“The flexibility of scheduling allowed me to continue working to provide for my family.”**

**CHRISTOPHER C.  
NETWORK SUPPORT**



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**Mission, Core Themes  
and Expectations**

# Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

## Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 1-3

### **Eligibility Requirement 1. Operational Status**

**The institution has completed at least one year of its principal educational programs and is operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs at the time of the Commission accepting an institution's Application for Consideration for Eligibility. The institution has graduated at least one class in its principal educational program(s) before the Commission's evaluation for initial accreditation.**

Great Falls College (GFC MSU) has been accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) since 1979.

### **Eligibility Requirement 2. Authority**

**The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.**

Great Falls College MSU is authorized to deliver certificates and degrees by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, the state's public higher education governing board.

### **Eligibility Requirement 3. Mission and Core Themes**

**The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interest of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.**

Great Falls College MSU's mission and core themes epitomize the mission of the comprehensive community college and were adopted by the Montana Board of Regents, the college's governing board, in May of 2009. As a comprehensive two year college, GFC MSU's primary purpose is to serve the students and community through a focus on teaching and learning and to award students with recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with their educational goals. The college allocates all of its resources to this end.

## **Standard 1.A: Mission**

### **1.A.1 The institution has a widely published mission statement – approved by its governing board – that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.**

The mission of Great Falls College Montana State University, approved by the Montana Board of Regents, is: *“to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.”* The college communicates its mission through the tagline, *“Changing Lives, Achieving Dreams.”*

To fulfill the mission, the campus community has identified the following set of values that describe and define the qualities the college deems essential to a student’s development, and that create a sense of distinctiveness:

- **Accountability** – We ensure our decisions are data-informed and grounded in the best interest of our students and their communities.
- **Integrity** – We value civic responsibility, high academic standards, ethical practices, and the courage to act.
- **Lifelong Learning** – We believe education is a lifelong necessity and commitment; we personify this belief by engaging and reengaging students from all generations in learning opportunities.
- **Respect** – We value differences and treat others with civility, encouraging open and honest communication.
- **Responsiveness** – We recognize and act upon opportunities to be innovative, flexible, and adaptable to our students’ and community’s needs.
- **Student Success** – We are dedicated to student success and achievement; we strive to meet the educational needs of our students and their communities.

During the Academic Year 2008-2009, the campus community engaged in an intensive process to review and refine the mission of the college. Prior to that point, the college had undergone two changes of purpose and governance. Originally the college was a Vocational Technical Center governed by the Great Falls Public Schools. In 1987, the Vocational Technical Centers in Montana came under the leadership of the Montana University System and the previous Centers were renamed as Colleges of Technology providing postsecondary certificates and degrees.

The 2008-2009 mission review effort was led by a subcommittee of the college’s shared governance group, the College Planning and Budget Analysis Committee (CPBAC). The review helped shape the campus culture and future through the development of the current mission, vision and values. Centered on the educational philosophy of the comprehensive two-year college, and driven by the college’s foundation of student centeredness and innovation, the group worked with the campus community to reaffirm and clearly provide a mutual purpose (mission), a vision for the future, and values the community agreed to live by.

In 2010, the Montana University System received a Lumina Foundation grant to fund expansion of the two-year college mission at the system level. The purpose of the resulting College!Now project is to increase the number of Montanans with post-secondary credentials. The process included a new naming nomenclature for the five former Colleges of Technology. The MSU Great Falls College of Technology was renamed Great Falls College Montana State University or GFC MSU.

The college is currently developing a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, with a critical component being review of the mission statement, vision, values, and core themes. Once completed, the mission statement will be presented to the Montana Board of Regents for approval.

The college widely publishes its mission statement through print, Internet, and social media and through oral communication in presentations, radio, and TV. College documents include or refer to the mission and often the tagline. Specific examples of these formats include the online catalog, the Digital eLearning guide, Student and Employee Handbooks, Faculty and Adjunct Handbooks, the college's Annual Report and Fact Sheet, physical signage on campus, and on official letterhead and email.

**1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.**

As the college's mission statement, core themes and values emerge from the comprehensive two-year college mission, the college focuses on engaging individuals from all walks of life, serving community needs, delivering credit and non-credit academic programming in a variety of fields and modalities, and providing high-quality services centered on student success.

The college embraces the mission of a two-year campus with its open-access admissions policy, a comprehensive educational program, a focus on teaching and learning, and a philosophy of student-centeredness. The college's mission is further delineated through the identification of four Core Themes and objectives: 1) Workforce Development, 2) Transfer Preparation, 3) Academic Preparation and 4) Community Development. As the community's college, the institution supports social and economic development through outreach, lifelong learning, and active partnerships.

Therefore, the college defines the fulfillment of its mission as the functional deployment of the comprehensive two-year college philosophy and the achievement of the objectives tied to the four Core Themes of the institution. The community college philosophy is embodied in the institution's values, policies, and role within Montana's system of higher education. The core themes, their objectives, and indicators of achievement are designed to measure continuous improvement of institutional effectiveness, and ultimately mission attainment. These concepts and results will be further discussed in subsequent sections of this report.

**Interpretation of an Acceptable Threshold, Extent, or Degree of Mission Fulfillment**

The college has adopted a culture of data-driven, continuous quality improvement. As a performance-based institution, the college has created and is committed to an integrated, mission-centric model of assessment, planning, and resource allocation at all levels of operation. This

commitment is reflected through activities and processes emanating from the college's mission, vision, values, core themes, and strategic and operational plans.

As a component of this model, the college uses Core Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness to support operations and continuous improvement toward mission attainment. Core Indicators will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

The college's integrated planning, assessment, and budget-setting model flows from the institution's mission. The model is further delineated by core themes and objectives assessed by core indicators and further guided by strategic plan priorities. The resource allocation and operational planning processes run in tandem and are implemented over the course of the cycle using formative and summative evaluation. Core indicators and strategic plan measures are continuously analyzed to gauge changes in institutional relevancy and effectiveness to fulfill the college mission.

The college utilizes an Institutional Performance Report Card to communicate mission attainment. Each year the college establishes targeted goals for performance for each core indicator based on average and peak performance, an external national benchmark, and an aspirational goal. The goal is built into a rubric allowing for the assessment of the institution's performance and determining whether the indicator goal was met, partially met, or not met. These grades collectively offer an institutional performance grade. The college has adopted a 10% threshold of mission fulfillment when a goal is met or partially met (Exhibit 1.01).

## **Standard 1.B: Core Themes**

### **1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.**

The college strives to attain its mission through four core themes, which are measured by core indicators. Some indicators support more than one core theme.

#### **Core Theme 1: Workforce Development**

**Description:** Through applied programming, students successfully attain a credential leading to life-sustaining careers.

**Objective:** The objective of the core theme of Workforce Development is to provide, through applied programming, an avenue for students to complete credentials leading to life-sustaining careers.

**Indicators and Rationale:** The following Core Indicators (indicated with CI#), and their rationale for inclusion, are used to measure the achievement of this core theme.

CI1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE and Headcount)

Rationale: In order to obtain a useful workforce credential, students must first participate. The most commonly measured and tracked input of higher education is participation. This indicator illustrates the students entering the college, who, through the core themes, will obtain the desired student outcome. In this case, the outcome is the number of individuals sufficiently prepared to succeed in the workforce.

CI2: Regional Market Penetration Rates

Rationale: A clear indicator of the strength of community is the academic and job training preparedness of its residents. As a two-year comprehensive college, evaluating the level at which the community engages in the institution's programs and offerings is a good indicator of how well the college is serving the community's workforce needs. This measure considers both the portion of the population from the service region (market) engaged in credit-bearing coursework, as well as the proportion of the population participating in non-credit, professional and continuing education activities. Both of those activities, within their respective programming, contribute to preparing students for success in the workplace.

CI3: Persistence (Retention)

Rationale: The college cannot ensure students effectively achieve their educational goals, leading to success in the workforce, if it is ineffective in keeping them enrolled to completion. Monitoring and measuring how many students return to the college in the following academic year is essential to sustaining student momentum to completion, the campus's ability to fulfill this core theme, and the institution's mission.

CI4: Graduation Rates

Rationale: One of the fundamental outcomes necessary for the fulfillment of the college's mission is

student attainment of an educational credential so they become successful members of the workforce. For this core theme, that means an applied degree or credential. The majority of students at the college are degree seeking. Thus, the proportion of those students who successfully complete their credential within an expected timeframe is a quality indicator of institutional performance of this core theme.

#### CI5: Demonstration of the Eight Abilities

Rationale: The faculty and staff of the college have deemed the following abilities to be central elements of a college credential. Essentially, the abilities are the Institutional measures of student learning:

- Communication: The ability to utilize oral, written, and listening skills to effectively interact with others.
- Quantitative Reasoning: The ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts and models.
- Inquiry and Analysis: The ability to process and apply theoretical and ethical bases of the arts, humanities, and natural and social science disciplines.
- Aesthetic Engagement: The ability to develop insight into the long and rich record of human creativity through the arts to help individuals place themselves within the world in terms of culture, religion, and society.
- Diversity: The ability to understand and articulate the importance and influence of diversity within and among cultures and societies.
- Technical Literacy: The ability to use technology and understand its value and purpose in the workplace.
- Critical Thinking: The ability to understand thinking that is responsive to and guided by intellectual standards such as relevance, accuracy, precision, clarity, depth, and breadth.
- Effective Citizenship: The ability to commit to standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty, and fairness.

#### CI8: Workforce Degree Production

Rationale: Applied programs are intended to prepare students for entry or advancement in the workforce. Therefore, the number of applied, or workforce, credentials earned is a good indicator of how well the college is providing potential employees to meet the community's workforce needs. The calculation of a production rate, taking the number of credentials as a percentage of the total student FTE seeking a workforce credential, allows the college to monitor the annual success rate of students in obtaining these credentials.

#### CI9: Job Placement and Earnings

Rationale: The Core Theme of Workforce Development cannot be measured only by the output of graduates and the production of degrees. Those graduates must be highly sought out and valued by employers. In addition, they must be aligned to community needs, which may be best identified through employment opportunities. Therefore, the rate at which the college's graduates become employed within their field of study or expertise is a sound indicator of both the quality and appropriateness of the programming the college offers to fit with community workforce needs. Assessing earnings provide a good indication of how well the credential is valued.

#### CI10: Licensure and Certification Pass Rates

Rationale: Two rationales are provided for this measure. First, the success of graduates in many applied fields must be measured by more than just graduation rates. Many occupations, especially in healthcare (in which the college has strong programming), require licensure to practice or enter the workforce. Thus, measuring the success of students in passing licensure and certification exams is a critical indicator of success in developing a qualified workforce.

Second, not all students who come to the college are seeking a degree. Some leave with the requisite skills and knowledge developed in key coursework. Often, the coursework or activities that help develop these skills lead to industry-recognized certifications that provide added assurance to success in employment, professional advancement, or both. Thus, this indicator provides another mechanism for measuring success in preparing students to enter the workforce.

#### CI11: Employer Satisfaction with Graduates

Rationale: Measures of workforce development other than graduation rates are critical to assessing the efficacy of the college in achieving this goal. Asking employers how satisfied they are with graduates' preparation provides an additional perspective on the quality of the college's programming.

#### CI17: Student Success in College-Level Coursework

Rationale: Most students mark their path to the achievement of their educational goals by completing individual courses. Monitoring and assessing the overall success rate of students in individual courses at the college provides an indication of how well the college is doing in helping students move along this path. It also shines the light on courses that may need different methodology to help students succeed.

The combined assessment of the indicators described above demonstrates from a holistic perspective how well the college is meeting the objective of the Core Theme of Workforce Development. The indicators answer how many workforce-oriented degrees students complete, how well that credential is valued, how many students obtain employment after graduation, how many students pass nationally-recognized certification or licensure exams, how satisfied local employers are with the quality of the college's graduates, and how students are faring in individual courses.

## Core Theme 2: Transfer Preparation

**Description:** Transfer preparation supports the college's mission of fostering the success of students by preparing them for continuation of their studies and transfer to a baccalaureate degree. Providing transfer curricula leading to a four-year institution is a fundamental element of the comprehensive community college mission. The continuation of students' educational pursuits often spans a timeframe greater than two years. Thus, this core theme is focused on that aspect of the college's programming and services, and ultimately leads to ensuring the self-fulfillment and competitiveness of students in an increasingly global society.

**Objective:** The objective of transfer preparation is for the college's students to complete transfer programming, including the Montana University System Transfer Core, and to successfully transfer to a baccalaureate program.

**Indicators and Rationale:** The following Core Indicators (indicated with CI#), and their rationale for inclusion, are used to measure the achievement of this core theme.

CI1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE and Headcount)

Rationale: Any output requires input. To measure how well the college is accomplishing transfer, it must start with measuring participation. This indicator illustrates the students entering the college, who, through the core themes, will achieve the desired student outcome – individuals sufficiently prepared to transfer and succeed in achieving a four-year degree.

CI2: Regional Market Penetration Rates

Rationale: As a comprehensive two-year college, evaluating the level at which the community engages in the institution's programs and offerings is a good indicator of how well the college is serving the community's needs. The two-year mission in Montana focuses on the economic value and the contribution to student success of starting higher education in a two-year college. This measure considers the portion of the population from the service region (market) engaged in credit-bearing coursework with the intent of transferring to a four-year degree.

CI3: Persistence (Retention)

Rationale: The college cannot ensure students successfully achieve their educational goals leading to transfer if it is unsuccessful in keeping them enrolled to meaningful completion. Monitoring and measuring how many students return to the college in the following academic year is essential to sustaining those students' momentum to completion, the campus's ability to fulfill this core theme, and the institution's mission.

CI4: Graduation Rates

Rationale: One of the fundamental outcomes necessary for the fulfillment of the college's mission is student attainment of educational goals. For this core theme, the goal is completion of the Montana University System Core, an Associate of Arts degree, or an Associate of Science degree. The majority of students at the college are seeking a degree. Thus, the proportion of those students who successfully complete their credential within an expected timeframe is a good indicator of institutional performance of this core theme.

CI5: Demonstration of the Eight Abilities

Rationale: Higher education, and more specifically community college education, is more than training. As the college's mission states, we ensure that students are prepared to succeed in a global society. To do so, graduates need more than occupational skills, or even competency in core academic areas. They must possess abilities in the areas of problem solving, communication, critical thinking, etc. This measure will assess how well the college develops these abilities in its students, in tandem with academic and occupational skills and knowledge.

CI12: Transfer Degree Production

Rationale: The transfer degrees at the college (Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and the Montana University System Core), and the credentials awarded through them, are intended to prepare students to transfer to a four-year institution to work toward a bachelor's degree.

Therefore, the number of transfer degrees awarded is a good indicator of how well the college is preparing potential transfer students for other four-year campuses. The calculation of a production rate, taking the number of credentials as a percentage of the total student FTE seeking a transfer credential, allows the college to monitor the annual success rate of students in obtaining these credentials.

#### CI13: Transfer Rates

Rationale: Not all students who enroll at the college in transfer programs have plans to complete an accompanying degree. In many instances, these students intend to take only a specific selection of general education coursework and plan to transfer to a four-year campus without completing an associate degree or even the MUS Core. This indicator allows the college to track the success of these students by assessing those individuals who are enrolled in a transfer program, complete a significant number of credits, but do not return to the college.

#### CI14: Performance after Transfer

Rationale: Tracking the success of transfer students requires more than simply assessing them at the time they leave the college. The college wants to know not only that students complete their transfer credential and successfully matriculate at a four-year university, but also that they achieve their bachelor's degree. This indicator allows the college to track its transfer students' success in bachelor's degree attainment within the Montana University System's universities.

#### CI7: Student Success in College-Level Coursework

Rationale: Most students mark their path to the achievement of their educational goals by completing individual courses. Monitoring and assessing the overall success rate of students in individual courses at the college provides an indication of how well we are doing in helping students move along this path. It also shines the light on courses that may need different methodology to help students succeed.

Monitoring these metrics helps measure how well the college succeeds in preparing students for transfer. These metrics simply answer the questions of how many students complete a transfer degree, how many students start at Great Falls College MSU and then transfer to four year programs the next semester or year, and finally, when students transfer, how well they perform in a larger four-year campus environment.

### **Core Theme 3: Academic Preparation**

**Description:** As an open-admissions institution, the college welcomes individuals from all walks of life. Whether they are new high school graduates or adults coming back after an absence from education, a component of the community college mission is to prepare individuals to succeed in college-level coursework. Toward that end, the college aims to offer appropriate and effective developmental coursework that prepares students to attain their educational goals.

The core theme of academic preparation encompasses the mission to provide quality education and developmental learning opportunities to the larger community by providing flexible learning opportunities to a wide variety of learners with varied educational backgrounds. The college

provides the tools necessary for students to succeed in college courses through developmental and preparatory coursework.

**Objective:** Therefore, the objective of the college's core theme of academic preparation is to prepare students for academic success in their programs through effective developmental course work and academic support.

**Indicators and Rationale:** The following Core Indicators (indicated with CI#), and their rationale for inclusion, are used to measure the achievement of this core theme.

CI1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE and Headcount)

Rationale: Any output requires input. This indicator illustrates the students entering the college, who will achieve the desired student outcome – successful remediation of critical knowledge, skills, and abilities for college-level coursework.

CI2: Regional Market Penetration Rates

Rationale: As a comprehensive two-year college, evaluating the level at which the community engages in the institution's programs and offerings is a good indicator of how well the college is serving the community's needs. This measure considers both the portion of the population from the geographic service region (market) engaged in credit-bearing coursework, as well as the proportion of the population participating in non-credit, professional, and continuing education activities.

CI3: Persistence (Retention)

Rationale: The college cannot ensure that students successfully achieve their educational goals, leading to success in the workforce, if it is unsuccessful in keeping them enrolled to meaningful completion. Monitoring and measuring how many students return to the college in the following academic year is essential to sustaining those students' momentum to completion, the campus's ability to fulfill this Core theme, and the institution's mission. Simply stated, if the college is successful in remediating students, it should be evident in their persistence.

CI5: Demonstration of the Eight Abilities

Rationale: Higher education, and more specifically comprehensive two-year college education, is more than training. The college's mission is to ensure that students are prepared to succeed in a global society. To do so, graduates need more than occupational skills, or even competency in core academic areas. They must possess abilities in the areas of problem solving, communication, critical thinking, etc. This measure will assess how well the college develops these abilities in students, even at the developmental level.

CI6: Success of Remedial Students in Developmental Coursework

Rationale: The college accomplishes this in part by helping students become ready for college-level coursework in many fields, but primarily in Math and English. Their success in these courses has been proven to increase their likelihood of persisting to goal attainment and/or completion of a college credential. This indicator measures how effective the college is in moving students through remedial coursework.

#### CI7: Student Success in College-Level Coursework

Rationale: Most students mark their path to the achievement of their educational goals by completing individual courses. Monitoring and assessing the overall success rate of students in individual courses at the college provides an indication of how well the college is helping students move along this path. It also shines the light on courses that may need different methodology to help student succeed.

These indicators are meaningful measures of the core theme of academic preparation. Policies for mandatory placement testing into math and writing assist the college in understanding the need, and thus planning for the capacity necessary to serve students entering with academic deficits. Additionally, for this core theme, the college measures the success of remedial students in developmental coursework, primarily mathematics and English, assessing the proportion of students enrolled in developmental coursework who earn at least a grade of C- or better in that particular course. Finally, success of remedial students in subsequent related coursework is measured by the proportion of students who have completed a remedial course and then completed a non-developmental course in that same area of study with a grade of C- or better, helping the college understand the effectiveness of its developmental course sequences.

### **Core Theme 4: Community Development**

**Description:** The college strives to engage its community to enhance and update workplace skills, promote lifelong learning, and provide the training required that may be outside traditional academic programming. Community Development is the offering of services and education to its communities through a variety of methods including non-credit bearing courses, workshops, and customized training for businesses within the college's service area.

**Objective:** As the community's college, the objective of the college's core theme of community development is to support social and economic development through outreach, lifelong learning, and active partnerships.

**Indicators and Rationale:** The following Core Indicators (indicated with CI#), and their rationale for inclusion, are used to measure the achievement of this core theme.

#### CI2: Regional Market Penetration Rates

Rationale: As a comprehensive two-year college, evaluating the level at which the community engages in the institution's programs and offerings is a good indicator of how well the college is serving the community's needs. This measure considers both the proportion of the population from the service region (market) engaged in credit-bearing coursework, as well as the proportion of the population participating in non-credit, professional, and continuing education activities. Both of those activities, within their respective programming, contribute to preparing students for success in the workplace.

#### CI15: Participation (Professional and Continuing Education)

Rationale: Community colleges are known for serving large constituencies through non-credit and continuing education coursework. At Great Falls College MSU, nearly one out of every five students on campus is enrolled in these types of courses. The college, through its Professional and

Continuing Education offerings, provides numerous and diverse opportunities for community members of all ages and backgrounds to further themselves professionally and individually. Tracking total participation, both by individuals and enrollments, is a good indicator of how well the college is developing the community's professional and continuing education capacity.

#### CI16: Contract Business Training

Rationale: The strengths of any community are evidenced by its social and economic health. Community colleges play a vital role in developing both aspects. Contract or customized training is an effective mechanism by which community colleges work directly with business and industry to develop their workforce and enhance their success as companies. Measuring both the number of participants and the number of companies the college serves through non-credit contract/customized business training provides valuable insight on how well the college is contributing to the economic aspect of community development.

These indicators are meaningful measures of the core theme of community development. Collectively they demonstrate how well the college is meeting the objective of this core theme. The indicators answer what percent of the potential community population is engaged in non-credit educational activities, how many individuals are engaged in professional and continuing education activities, and how many community businesses and organizations are being served through the college's outreach efforts.

**“It’s an excellent school  
with wonderful, helpful faculty.  
A great way to get an education.”**

**SAMANTHA D.  
WELDING**



# Resources and Capacity



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Resources and Capacity

### Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21

#### **Eligibility Requirement 4, Operational Focus and Independence:**

**The institution’s programs and services are predominately concerned with higher education. The institution has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable and responsible for meeting the Commission’s Standards and Eligibility Requirements.**

Great Falls College MSU is one of eight independently accredited institutions within the Montana University System, organized under two “flagship” research universities – Montana State University and the University of Montana. The college functions as a “stand alone,” or autonomous, two-year college under the Montana University System (MUS), with its own independent accreditations through NWCCU and applicable program-specific accrediting bodies.

The college offers the Certificate of Applied Science, the Associate of Applied Science, and the Certificate of Technical Studies (formerly the Professional Certificate), as well as the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degrees intended for transfer. Academic Affairs is organized into academic divisions: General Education and Transfer; Health Sciences; Business, Trades and Technology; Outreach; and eLearning and Library Services. The departments of Student Affairs, grouped together as Student Central, the Department of Development, Communications and Marketing, Department of Workforce Development, Outreach and Community Relations, and the Division of Administration/Finance support the academic divisions and the overall mission and strategies of the college.

The MUS is governed by the Montana Board of Regents, which delegates broad authority to the college, including developing and implementing instructional programs and ensuring that those programs, as well as its general operating procedures, meet the requirements of the NWCCU.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 5, Non-Discrimination:**

**The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its charter, its mission, and its core themes.**

The college is an open admissions institution, admitting students without regard to race, age, gender, or religious beliefs. The college’s mission centers on fostering student success “for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations.” Programs that have enrollment caps have admissions procedures based on college performance, community service, and work experience. The admission requirements for these programs are published in the academic catalog and on the college’s website.

The college adheres to all federal and state requirements to ensure that non-discriminatory hiring and employment practices are followed and are clearly communicated to employees and job applicants.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 6, Institutional Integrity:**

**The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships.**

Great Falls College MSU maintains the highest integrity in all its practices by delivering the highest quality academic programming possible; by fully informing students about the college, its programs, the costs, their rights and responsibilities, and faculty and administrators; by fostering academic freedom; by providing a fair and safe work environment; and by operating in a manner that follows NWCCU, Board of Regents, and Montana University System policies and procedures.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 7, Governing Board:**

**The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for each unit within a multiple-unit institution to ensure that the institution's mission and core themes are being achieved. The governing board has at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution.**

The Montana Board of Regents, a seven-member board appointed by the governor, is the governing body for the Montana University System. Board members come from outside the university system, with the exception of one student member, and have no contractual relationship with MUS.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 8, Chief Executive Officer:**

**The institution employs a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board and whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. Neither the chief executive officer nor an executive officer of the institution chairs the institution's governing board.**

The CEO/Dean of the college is appointed by the seven-member Montana Board of Regents on the recommendation of the President of Montana State University. The CEO/Dean is focused solely on the oversight of Great Falls College MSU and is not the chair of the college's governing board. The chair and vice-chair of the Montana Board of Regents are both elected by the membership of that body and have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution.

### **Eligibility Requirement 9, Administration:**

**In addition to a chief executive officer, the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and achievement of its core themes.**

The CEO/Dean of Great Falls College MSU is supported by a group of key administrators who make up the CEO's Executive Team (ET): the Chief Academic Officer/Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; the Chief Financial Officer /Associate Dean of Finance and Administration; the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean of Student Affairs; the Executive Director of Human Resources; the Executive Director of Development, Communications, and Marketing; and the Executive Director of Workforce Development. All divisions and departments on campus are represented through the Executive Team members.

### **Eligibility Requirement 10, Faculty:**

**Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution employs and regularly evaluates the performance of appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever offered and however delivered.**

GFC MSU employs both contract full-time and adjunct faculty members to serve its students. All faculty members meet or exceed the minimum educational and/or work experience qualifications set by the Montana Board of Regents. Faculty members hold one or more of four types of state teaching licenses required by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). This licensure assures faculty are qualified to teach all manner of courses, including those offered for dual credit.

All new faculty and adjunct faculty are evaluated in their first semester on teaching effectiveness and student learning, professional development and achievement, and service; existing faculty are evaluated every three years on the same criteria. Faculty members are responsible for developing and maintaining programs according to industry standards and accrediting/licensing agency requirements and recommendations. New curricula and changes in courses and curricula are overseen by the faculty Curriculum Committee.

### **Eligibility Requirement 11, Education Programs:**

**The institution provides one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes, and lead to collegiate-level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.**

Students can earn the Certificate of Applied Science, the Associate of Applied Science, or the Certificate of Technical Studies (a credential recently re-named by the Montana Board of Regents and formerly known as the Professional Certificate) through the Division of Business, Trades and Technology, and the Division of Health Sciences. The Associate of Science, the Associate of Arts, and the Certificate in General Studies are offered through the Division of General Education and Transfer. All programs contain content that is aligned with the college's mission and core themes. Programs have clearly identified student learning outcomes and result in college-level degrees in the appropriately recognized field of study.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 12, General Education and Related Instruction:**

**The institution's baccalaureate degree programs and/or academic or transfer associate degree programs require a substantial and coherent component of general education as a prerequisite to or an essential element of the programs offered. All other associate degree programs (e.g., applied, specialized, or technical) and programs of study of either 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more for which certificates are granted contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Bachelor and graduate degree programs also require a planned program of major specialization or concentration.**

The college offers and actively promotes the Montana University System (MUS) Core, a statewide recognized foundation of general education that includes communication, math, humanities/fine arts, natural science, social sciences/history, cultural diversity, and cultural heritage of American Indians. The student learning outcomes include understanding major findings; understanding methods, skills, tools and systems; understanding historical, theoretical, scientific, technological, philosophical and ethical issues; using technology; critical analysis and evaluation; understanding diversity; understanding and applying mathematical concepts and models; and communicating effectively.

The Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are designed as transfer degrees and are based on the MUS core. The Associate of Arts degree includes additional credits in arts, humanities, and social sciences; the Associate of Science degree includes additional credits in math and science. Applied programs include related instruction that ensures students acquire skills and knowledge in communications, math, writing, and computers.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 13, Library and Information Resources:**

**Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution maintains and/or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's programs and services wherever offered and however delivered.**

The holdings of the Weaver Library are driven by the patrons to ensure that they support the programs offered at the college. The holdings include print and eBooks, audio/visual, print journals, and online journals.

A collection development policy governs acquisitions. Additionally, the Weaver Library Committee (comprised of students, faculty from each academic division, and online faculty) meets monthly.

The library's extensive online collection serves both on-campus and distance students and faculty. To further engage the community, staff members maintain a Facebook presence and provide online assistance through a chat widget embedded on the main library web page.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 14, Physical and Technological Infrastructure:**

**The institution provides the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to achieve its mission and core themes.**

The GFC MSU campus consists of one main building, a smaller Trades and Industries Building, and the Bright Beginnings Learning Center. The buildings include regular classrooms, computer classrooms, one large lecture hall, science labs, health care practical labs, a simulated hospital (the most comprehensive of its kind in the state of Montana), trades workshops, study areas, cafeteria, bookstore, and student support and administrative and faculty offices.

Information Technology Services (ITS) supports the campus network resources (including wired and wireless systems, server services, and telecommunication infrastructures). Most classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboard technology and have networked instructional computers available to faculty. The campus provides access to general word processing, spreadsheet, and database software, as well as specialized software required in some programs.

#### **Eligibility Requirement 15, Academic Freedom:**

**The institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.**

The college ensures an atmosphere of academic freedom both through Board of Regents policy and the faculty collective bargaining agreement. Faculty members have full freedom in research and publication, freedom of discussion in the classroom with appropriate prudence in controversial matters, and freedom from instructional censorship or discipline. The Board of Regents reminds faculty that they must work to ensure accuracy in their communications and respect for others' opinions. Other policies protecting students and employees from discrimination and harassment also serve to promote academic freedom.

### **Eligibility Requirement 16, Admissions:**

**The institution publishes its student admission policy which specifies the characteristics and qualifications appropriate for its programs, and it adheres to that policy in its admissions procedures and practices.**

GFC MSU is an open admissions institution for students who have a high school diploma or a HiSET or GED certificate. The academic catalog details regular admission procedures and expectations, as well as admission procedures and expectations for programs with enrollment restrictions. Requirements for restricted enrollment programs are posted in the academic catalog, on the program application, on the program recruiting card, and the program-specific website, if one is available.

### **Eligibility Requirement 17, Public Information:**

**The institution publishes in a catalog and/or on a website current and accurate information regarding: its mission and core themes; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names, titles and academic credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.**

The college's mission and core themes are published in the online academic catalog and on its web site, as well as in numerous other documents intended to show how the mission and core themes drive various initiatives. Academic programs are outlined in the academic catalog and on recruiting materials. Information about the academic credentials of faculty and administration is published in the academic catalog. Rules, regulations, rights, responsibilities, tuition, fees, program costs, refund policies and procedures, financial aid information, and the academic calendar all are documented in the online academic catalog, on the web site, and in other publications available to students, potential students, and the general public.

### **Eligibility Requirement 18, Financial Resources:**

**The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and, as appropriate, reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and long-term financial sustainability.**

The primary sources of revenue for the college are student tuition and fees, state general funds, auxiliary revenue, federal student financial aid funds, federal stimulus funds, and grants and contracts. Despite tuition freezes for eight consecutive years and generally lagging state general fund support for the past decade, cash balances have been healthy over the past ten years and cash flows have been generally positive. The college maintains a reserve fund for unexpected revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures.

### **Eligibility Requirement 19, Financial Accountability:**

**For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and governing board.**

The Montana Legislative Audit Division conducts an annual audit in accordance with generally accepted standards. Audit reports are reviewed by the Legislative Audit Committee in a public meeting shortly after the results are released.

### **Eligibility Requirement 20, Disclosure:**

**The institution accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.**

GFC MSU is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the NWCCU and fully discloses all information necessary for the Commission to conduct its evaluation and make its recommendations. The Chief Academic Officer serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and provides all the appropriate information and notifications to the NWCCU as required.

### **Eligibility Requirement 21, Relationship with the Accreditation Commission:**

**The institution accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy. Further, the institution agrees that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Commission to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.**

GFC MSU follows the policies of the Montana Board of Regents and accepts the standards and policies of the Commission. The college is committed to complying with these standards and policies and agrees that the Commission's actions should be made public. The college posts all such reports on the campus website.

## **Standard 2.A. Governance**

### **2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.**

As mentioned previously, Great Falls College MSU (GFC MSU) is an independently accredited two-year college within the Montana University System (MUS). The system's institutions include two "flagship" research universities, four regional universities, and two autonomous two-year colleges, one of which is GFC MSU. It also includes three community colleges, and four embedded two-year institutions at MSU in Bozeman, MSU-Billings, Montana Tech, and the University of Montana. The MUS is governed by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, which is supported administratively through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

In 1994, the Board of Regents voted to restructure the MUS, creating the dual university system of two flagship campuses (Montana State University and The University of Montana) and multiple campuses affiliated with one of these two entities. The University of Montana institutions include the research university, two smaller universities, and one autonomous two-year college; the Montana State University institutions include the research university (also the state's Land Grant institution), two regional universities in Havre and Billings, and one autonomous two-year college, Great Falls College MSU.

The college has an effective and widely understood shared-governance structure that allows for consideration of the views of all campus constituents. The Executive Team (ET) comprises the CEO/Dean and the executive administrators, and is ultimately responsible for overall operations. The college has vested the primary decision-making and governance processes to a shared governance model. In 2005, the college formally established the College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee, or CPBAC (pronounced "sip-back"). CPBAC has representation from faculty, staff, students, directors, and the ET, and ensures that planning, assessment, and resource allocation is aligned with the mission and Core Themes of the college.

CPBAC is charged with shared governance throughout the budgeting, planning, and assessment process by: (1) communicating the process to the campus stakeholders and constituencies; (2) gathering and interpreting institutional data to evaluate performance and effectiveness at the institutional, divisional, and departmental levels; (3) leading the development and aggregation of budget projections, strategic and operational goals and objectives; and (4) working with the college's leadership to allocate resources strategically to improve overall institutional effectiveness and achieve the goals set forth by the strategic plan (Exhibit 2.01).

In the 2012-2013 academic year, the college strengthened its shared governance model by creating two standing committees of the Faculty Senate. Those committees are Curriculum and Program Review. This committee structure created opportunities for more faculty to serve on the Senate and its committees. In 2013-2014, the Faculty Senate was approved to do the first reading of new or revised policies prior to the Executive Team (ET) and broader campus review. This action has proven to be expeditious in terms of timeliness and building a stronger collaboration of faculty with administration and staff. Faculty Senate recommendations become action items at ET meetings.

The college also has a Joint Director group that serves as a mid-management governance, work, and recommending body that broadens awareness across all college departments. Recommendations are brought to the ET for action. Monthly, the Joint Directors, Executive Team, Faculty Senate, and the Associated Students meet to further ensure communication across campus.

Other college committees charged with decision-making or advisory responsibilities have appropriate representation from all campus constituency groups. Table 2.A.1 summarizes the various decision-making groups on campus. Groups have formal intra-group communication processes and expectations as well as expectations for individual members to communicate with the constituencies they represent.

**Table 2.A.1 Governance, Decision-Making, and Advisory Groups**

Group	Meets	Focus
Executive Team	Weekly (formal meetings); Daily (10-minute “stand up” meetings)	Led by the CEO/Dean, campus executives discuss and act on operational issues such as personnel, final approval for new or modified campus policies, ratification of annual budget, strategic and annual plans, and other time-sensitive issues relating to the overall campus operations.
College Planning, Budget & Analysis Committee (CPBAC)	Monthly/ As Needed	Led by the Chief Financial Officer, representatives from all constituencies decide on the allocation of new resources, set the annual budget, develop the college’s strategic and operational plans, assess institutional effectiveness, decide on major changes to the organizational structure, and, as necessary, evaluate the mission, vision, and values of the college.
Curriculum Committee	Biweekly	Led by the chair of the Faculty Senate and staffed by the CAO’s office, it is the faculty-led decision-making body on curriculum and academic programs, policies, and procedures.
Faculty Senate	Biweekly	This group was formally organized and its charter signed in December of 2008. It oversees and coordinates all faculty-led committees on campus and provides a unified faculty voice in decisions directly impacting faculty. Two primary committees overseen by the Faculty Senate include the Curriculum Committee and the Program Review Committee.
Division Directors	Weekly	This group, led by the CAO, addresses ongoing divisional issues and focuses on the implementation of the campus operational plan and the goals of each of the academic divisions.

**Table 2.A.1 Governance, Decision-Making, and Advisory Groups (cont.)**

Group	Meets	Focus
Joint Directors	Monthly	The Joint Directors include administrators of all departments within each division. They focus on implementing the campus operational plan and departmental goals.
Division/Department Meetings	Varies	Led by the division or department head, faculty and staff in each division or department discuss ongoing operations and needs for the unit.
Associated Students	Weekly	As the student government on campus, its voice impacts decisions on student policies and its leaders act as liaisons for students with administration and faculty. Members serve on College committees that decide on the allocation of student fees.
College Committees	Varies	Led by a committee chair, each group makes decisions and/or advances recommendations based on the committee’s focus area.
Program Advisory Committees	Biannually	Industry/professional representatives, former students, and/or subject matter experts serve the college through advising program faculty on current industry standards and future workforce needs.
Development Board	Monthly	The mission of the Great Falls College MSU Development Board is to increase private giving to augment funding beyond tuition and state appropriations in support of the college. Through philanthropic support for student scholarships, academic programs, and select campus projects, the Development Board recognizes the importance of its role in advancing access to higher education, the future of the college’s service region, and the State of Montana.
Executive Advisory Council	Biannually or each semester	Great Falls College MSU believes the community plays a vital role in ensuring currency in college programs and services, and projecting future needs to grow and strengthen the area’s economy, workforce, and communities. The Executive Advisory Council (EAC) is the “community voice” for Great Falls College MSU.

**Table 2.A.1 Governance, Decision-Making, and Advisory Groups (cont.)**

Group	Meets	Focus
Program Review Committee	Weekly Fall Semester	The primary goals are to enhance the alignment of the college’s academic programs and their quality with community and state needs. To achieve this purpose, these internal program review procedures encourage self-study and planning within programs and strengthen connections among the strategic plan and mission of Great Falls College MSU. The essential element of the internal program review is the identification and evaluation of student learning outcomes as a key indicator of program effectiveness. Further, internal program reviews provide information for curricular and budgetary planning decisions for the Division and the college.
Strategic Enrollment Management Team (SEM)	Monthly	The primary goal of the Strategic Enrollment Management Team is to identify and engage in strategic enrollment management initiatives promoting recruitment, retention and completion. The SEM team informs planning and budgeting processes and promotes collaborative communication through the SEM Communication process.

**2.A.2 In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.**

As stated previously, the college is part of the multi-unit Montana University System (MUS) and one of four campuses of Montana State University (MSU). Its governing body, the Board of Regents, functions under a traditional model of governance, and as such has adopted system-wide policies and procedures that are clearly defined and administered equitably across all institutions within the MUS. These policies and procedures cover the areas of Governance and Organization, Academic Affairs, Research and Public Service, Student Affairs, Personnel, Compensation, Financial Affairs, Physical Plant, Athletics, and Information Technology (Exhibit 2.02). More detail pertaining to the Board of Regents and its authority and responsibility is provided later in this section.

GFC MSU has authority for all campus day-to-day activity, strategic planning, budgeting, hiring (except the CEO/Dean), purchasing up to a total contract value of \$25,000 (MSU in Bozeman has authority for contract values from \$25,000 to \$500,000; Montana Procurement Services has

authority for contract values exceeding that amount), executing contracts pertaining to the GFC MSU campus subject to the purchasing authority guidelines, and construction up to \$75,000 (Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has authority for construction from \$75,000 to \$150,000 and Montana Procurement Services has authority for construction valued more than \$150,000). The Montana Board of Regents grants the CEO/Dean authority to grant degrees and certificates.

**2.A.3 The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.**

The Board of Regents Policy 320.2 requires all institutions under its governance to maintain accreditation from the Commission (Exhibit 2.03). The policy also outlines the requirements for documenting, monitoring, and reporting accreditation status and activities. To accomplish this, the college has appointed the chief academic officer as the accreditation liaison officer (ALO), who holds representative positions on key groups and functions to stay abreast of changes to collective bargaining agreements, legislative outcomes and actions, and other external mandates affecting the campus. The ALO is charged with reviewing and monitoring these aspects and other College operations to ensure their compliance with the Commission’s standards. Where appropriate, the ALO engages the assistance of various groups or committees of the college to share in this work (e.g. Curriculum Committee, Labor/Management group, etc.).

**Governing Board**

**2.A.4 The institution has a functioning governing board consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.**

The MUS governing body, the Montana Board of Regents, comprises seven members appointed by the governor. Not more than four may be from one congressional district and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party. One seat is held by a student who is registered full-time at a unit of higher education under the jurisdiction of the board (Exhibit 2.04). The current board members and their respective term expirations are listed in Table 2.A.4.

**Table 2.A.4. Montana Board of Regents**

Regent	Residence	Term Expiration
Fran M. Albrecht	Missoula	February 1, 2019
William Johnston	Great Falls	February 1, 2017
Jeffrey Krauss	Bozeman	February 1, 2015
Major Robinson (Vice Chair)	Billings	February 1, 2018
Martha Sheehy	Billings	February 1, 2021
Paul Tuss (Chair)	Havre	February 1, 2020
Mariah R. Williams (Student)	Missoula (U of M)	June 30, 2015

The Board of Regents has full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the MUS. Board members are confirmed by the State Senate to seven-year overlapping terms and are not compensated for their services, nor do any of them have contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institutions they govern. The officers of the Board consist of a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The secretary is an ex-officio role of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The chair and vice-chair are elected from the appointed membership of the Board and serve one-year terms.

**2.A.5 The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.**

The Board's bylaws require a quorum of a majority of the Board to be present at meetings, which, under Montana's stringent open-meetings law, are open to the public. The Board has standing and special committees, whose actions must be confirmed by the full board. Executive sessions that comply with constitutional and statutory provisions may be held after the chair announces the rationale that forms the legal basis for the session.

**2.A.6 The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.**

As noted previously, the Board of Regents has adopted system-wide policies and procedures that are clearly defined and administered equitably across all institutions within the MUS. The review and revision of these policies are conducted regularly, and are predominantly delegated to staff in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, although they often occur in board subcommittees or within other groups and settings across the system.

**2.A.7 The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.**

The CEO/Dean of Great Falls College MSU is appointed by the Board, upon recommendation from the President of Montana State University who functions as the CEO/Dean's direct supervisor. The Board also delegates the responsibility for annual review of the CEO/Dean to the MSU President. The CEO/Dean is given the authority and the responsibility for the administration and oversight of Board policies and procedures relating to the operations of the college.

**2.A.8 The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.**

Board of Regents Policies 705.1 and 705.5 describes the periodic self-study of the Board's performance, which occurs at three- to four-year intervals, or as determined by the Board. The purpose of this review is to enable the Board to strengthen its performance, to identify and reach a consensus on its goals, to ensure that the Board has a clear grasp of its responsibilities, to strengthen

relationships among Board members and with the Commissioner of Higher Education and other system leadership, and to clarify expectations among Board members and with the Commissioner. It is the responsibility of the Commissioner of Higher Education and Board chair to plan a special workshop devoted entirely to reviewing the board's work.

## **Leadership and Management**

### **2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.**

Great Falls College MSU is organized under the leadership of its CEO/Dean and a seven-member Executive Team (ET). Team members are the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer, the Associate Dean of Administration and Finance/Chief Financial Officer, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Chief Student Affairs Officer, the Executive Director of Human Resources, the Executive Director of Development, Communications and Marketing, and the Executive Director of Workforce Development. Each member of the Executive Team is given the authority and responsibility for the major functions of the institution – academics, student affairs, finance and administration, communication and marketing, business and community development, and fundraising development.

The college has made substantive changes in its administrative organizational structure over the past eight years. In 2006, based on recommendations from the Commission's findings during the decennial accreditation process, the college hired an independent consultant to review its administrative structure. The findings of that review suggested the administrative structure was problematically lean. Since that time, the college has split the responsibilities of academic affairs and student affairs between a Chief Academic Officer/Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and a Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean of Student Services. To accommodate for this change and for growth in its academic and student affairs divisions, the college hired full-time directors for each of those divisions.

Although the Executive Team members, and ultimately the CEO/Dean, are responsible for ensuring the college's efficacy, the institution, as part of its strong focus on shared governance, utilizes the leadership of all major constituencies to manage key processes of the campus. The CPBAC, whose membership includes every member of the Executive Team, also engages major faculty, student, divisional, administrative, and employee classification representatives to guide institutional planning, resource allocation, and assessment of institutional effectiveness. The restructuring of the faculty and student senates has strengthened shared decision-making. Thus, executive leadership remains strong, while also engaging leadership from other constituency groups on campus. The result has proven to be incredibly effective. In fact, during the 2007 Regular Interim Visit by the Commission, the evaluators provided the following two commendations:

- Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology leadership has influenced the increased communication across campus, promoted stronger coordination within and

among organizational units, and built a culture that supports data-driven decision making (Standard 6.C.6).

- The College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (CPBAC) adheres to its role in the governance system; uses effective communication strategies, including their web site; and has established an open, transparent budgeting process that is aligned with the college's mission and strategic plan and is representative of all constituencies at Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology (Standards 6.A.2, 6.A.3).

**2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.**

The college employs a CEO/Dean as its chief executive officer, whose full-time responsibility is to effectively and efficiently lead and manage the college's resources, and to represent the college within the communities and region it serves, as well as within the Montana University System. Dr. Susan J. Wolff was appointed as GFC MSU CEO/Dean in July 2012. None of the MUS presidents or deans is a member of the Montana Board of Regents.

**2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.**

The college's redesigned administrative structure is proving to be effective for managing the complex operations of the institution. The college has purposefully staffed mid-level administrative positions in areas such as the academic divisions, library and eLearning, financial aid, admissions, and others to meet the needs of a growing campus (Exhibit 2.05). To strengthen cross-functional collaboration, the campus established a Joint Directors meeting at which administrative challenges are addressed to help the campus achieve its mission and accomplish its core theme objectives. The Joint Directors meet with the Executive Team once per month for the purpose of communication. In comparison to the past, the college currently employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Academics**

**2.A.12 Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.**

Great Falls College MSU adheres to policies and procedures set by the State through the Montana Board of Regents and MSU in Bozeman. Additionally, the Executive Team, with input from the campus community, sets campus policies regarding academics, students, human resources, its dealings with the public, academic freedom, and its financial operations. Proposed academic policies

go to Faculty Senate, with recommendations to ET, and are then distributed for comment to the faculty, staff, and student government via email before coming to the Executive Team for final approval.

Campus academic policies are available at the About GFC MSU Policies and Procedures web site. (Exhibit 2.06). The same GFC MSU campus policies may also be accessed through the Montana State University Academic Policies and Procedures website (Exhibit 2.07). The Montana Board of Regents academic policies cover topics such as admission requirements, enrollment, coursework, online learning, common course numbering, honorary degrees, collaborative programs, academic freedom, degree requirements, and program review (Exhibit 2.08).

All policies and procedures are on the college website, and specific campus and MSU policies are also included in the GFC MSU online catalog (Exhibit 2.09). Students are provided information on campus policies during their orientation, and a brochure with important policies for students is distributed during new student orientation and around campus. The college requires all new first-time students to enroll in COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student, which includes examination and discussion of the college's policies. Specific information about safety and conduct is emailed to all students and employees twice a year.

Policies are shared during new employee onboarding and are also discussed during new staff orientation and new faculty orientation, which includes a policy outline listing the locations for all policies. Additionally, new faculty members attend a specific faculty orientation covering academic policies.

GFC MSU is committed to shared governance and transparency. According to the Policy Development and Approval policy, the college seeks input from all stakeholders when policy is created or updated. Once a new policy has been drafted or an existing policy updated, the draft is vetted through the appropriate committee structure and is then emailed to the entire campus for review and input (Exhibit 2.10).

### **2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced.**

The library is a key component of academics. The Weaver Library's operation is governed by policies that cover borrowing by students, faculty, staff, community members, and graduate students; access to library computers and checkout of laptops; and access to group study rooms. These policies are linked from the main GFC MSU website as well as the main library web page (Exhibit 2.11). The Weaver Library Committee regularly reviews and suggests revisions regarding library policy as needed. To ensure ease of physical access, library hours are posted on the website and on the building doors. Online materials are available at all times. The Library Procedures Manual, kept at the main desk, documents and clarifies library practices and guides acquisitions. These policies are enforced by library personnel and administration.

### **2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.**

The Board of Regents has system-wide transfer policies on its web site (Exhibit 2.12). These policies cover general education transfer; outdated coursework; minimum course grades; math proficiency for students transferring from a two-year to a four-year program; writing proficiency requirements; allowing students to transfer admissions files between MUS schools rather than creating a separate admissions file; an appeals process; designation of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees as transfer degrees to four-year institutions; establishment of system controls on deadlines, documentation, and evaluation records; and establishment of an assessment plan to monitor effectiveness of the transfer policies.

The college's transfer policy for incoming students is a simplified version of the Board of Regents' policies and provides directions for students to request an evaluation of credit. These policies are listed in the online catalog (Exhibit 2.13). Transfer from GFC MSU to another institution is also outlined in the online catalog (Exhibit 2.14).

The catalog also lists 23 specific transfer programs from GFC MSU to a four-year institution (e.g., Accounting and Business to MSU Billings BS in Business Administration). The information for each transfer program lists the GFC MSU courses that will transfer to the four-year program. These transfer agreements and policies were developed after careful review by faculty at each institution or, in the case of system-wide transfer, teams of faculty from throughout the system, to ensure equivalency of learning outcomes.

## **Students**

### **2.A.15 Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities — are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.**

Great Falls College MSU physically distributes to all new students an annually-updated brochure containing links to all policies and procedures that pertain to students, along with Clery Act information. This brochure is also available at the Information Desk, Student Central, and other Student Services areas. Policies and contacts for complaints and grievances as well as the student code of conduct (including academic dishonesty) are all listed in the brochure and on the website. Student-related policies are part of the curriculum in the course COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student, which is required for new students and includes a quiz on the policies as one of its graded assignments. Contact information for the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean for Student Services, the main contact for conduct code violations, is readily available in the brochure and on the website (Exhibit 2.15). For academic grievances the student is referred to the instructor, program director, and division director, with appeals made to the Chief Academic Officer. All other grievances are made to the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Title IX coordinator for handling (Exhibit 2.16).

Students with disabilities can self-refer and/or are referred to the Office of Disability Services by college employees, often faculty. This office also has a web page containing its procedures and other helpful information about accommodations (Exhibit 2.17). The Director of Disability Services meets

with every student interested in receiving accommodations for a disability. The Director assists students with disabilities in navigating the college's processes and policies for accommodations.

The following language is required on all course syllabi: "Students with documented disabilities, whether physical, cognitive or psychological, are entitled to reasonable accommodations in their classes. If you would like to use accommodations for this class, please contact Kathy Meier, Director of Disability at 406-771-4311 or stop by the Disability Services office (R261) to make arrangements."

**2.A.16 The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.**

Great Falls College MSU is an open admission institution, and as such, students are required to have a high school diploma or GED/HiSet to be registered as a degree-seeking student. All degree-seeking students are required to have placement test scores or appropriate college transfer work in math and writing before registering for classes in their first semester. The college accepts transfer work and ACT, SAT, or COMPASS test scores for student placement in math and writing.

Faculty in the specific discipline areas create coursework and determine which level from the standardized tests would be acceptable for placement based on standards published by ACT, the College Board, and the State of Montana. The placement or pre-requisite course requirements are detailed in the course description portion of the catalog. Students who have the required placement scores are reasonably ready to succeed in the course work. Placement is currently required for statistics, physics, math, writing, biology, chemistry, and accounting.

GFC MSU has programs that have limited selective entry based on students' prerequisite coursework and other published guidelines. These prerequisite courses are selected by the program directors and guided by accreditation standards for each program. Requirements for program entry are posted in the Academic Catalog, on the program application, and on each program's website.

Each year GFC MSU publishes the academic catalog, which details expectations for students to continue in programs. Students who are in programs that require activities other than academic coursework are provided with a program handbook or guidelines by the program director, which detail the student expectations (Exhibit 2.18).

If students are asked to leave or withdraw from a selective entry program, they are given information on how to reapply for the program if they are eligible and how to appeal the decision if they choose. Academic appeal procedures are outlined in the catalog as well as the student policy and procedure manual that are published on the college website and in the program handbooks that students receive upon entering the program (Exhibit 2.19).

**2.A.17 The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.**

The college supports and encourages student participation in co-curricular activities (Exhibit 2.20). The Student Activities Coordinator works closely with newly created and current student groups, which are formally recognized by the college's Associated Students of GFC MSU each year. The constitution and bylaws of each group are reviewed annually; the president/spokesperson also verifies contact information and advisors with the Student Activities Coordinator and ASGFC MSU Student Government.

Each student group or organization is required to have a College faculty or staff member as an advisor prior to being officially recognized. Student groups/organizations are asked to follow the college's fundraising, financial, marketing, posting, and other policies listed on the GFC MSU web site (Exhibit 2.21).

GFC MSU does not have student publications or student media, and thus does not have a policy addressing those areas.

## **Human Resources**

**2.A.18 The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.**

The policies and procedures governing human resources are developed in a manner to ensure that they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to all employees. Proposed policies undergo a campus-wide review process. The author first presents the policy to Faculty Senate, which makes recommendations to the Executive Team. Recommended policies are then shared via email and on the policy web page with the rest of the campus for input. They are vetted with legal counsel as necessary. The policies are published on the Great Falls College MSU website (Exhibit 2.22).

**2.A.19 Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.**

Employees are apprised of their work responsibilities and conditions of employment through the initial vacancy announcement and position description. Information about employees' rights, work assignments, criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion and termination and related information are provided by a variety of means including supervisors, collective bargaining agreements, policy discussions, evaluations, training opportunities, and state and federal laws and regulations. Probationary periods are discussed with classified employees and tenure-track faculty, and tenure-track faculty members receive notice of tenure eligibility in accordance with their collective bargaining agreement.

All new faculty and staff complete a comprehensive orientation training offered by the Department of Human Resources immediately upon hire. A packet of important materials is given to support the new staff and faculty, who also meet with the college's benefit coordinator. Staff and faculty have handbooks that outline important policies and guidelines.

New faculty are required to complete courses in college teaching and the use of the campus learning management system Desire to Learn (D2L). A three-tiered level of faculty training offers D2L Basics, a mandatory training for all full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as a wide range of technology training and teaching with technology incubation and support to the faculty through the mastery level. The GFC MSU Community College Teaching course can be taken for graduate credit and all training can be considered for tenure and promotion. That course is required during a new faculty member's first year (Exhibit 2.23).

### **2.A.20 The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.**

Personnel records are kept in a fireproof vault that only human resources department staff can access. The vault is located in the personnel associate's office. Electronic records are maintained in SCT Banner, a SunGard software product, for maintaining electronic records, again only accessible by Human Resources staff. The servers are located at the Montana State University campus in Bozeman, Montana, and are maintained and backed up by information technology services there.

Campus personnel records are protected and treated in a confidential manner. The employees of the Department of Human Resources are committed to the protection and confidentiality of all employee files.

## **Institutional Integrity**

### **2.A.21 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 assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.**

To facilitate the college's ability to represent itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications, the staff in the Department of Development, Communications, and Marketing at Great Falls College MSU is responsible for implementing and coordinating activities governed by GFC MSU policy (Exhibit 2.24). This policy outlines the role of College Spokesperson, the functions of news releases and their distribution, official photography, advertising, and Campus News, respectively. These areas of governance ensure that the college communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to student and the public while demonstrating that programs can be completed in a timely fashion. These activities occur through a wide variety of internal and external publications, coordinated media stories, public statements and events, and timely updates of disseminated information. The Development, Communications, and Marketing team routinely reviews these publications and varied mediums to ensure that accurate representations of its mission, programs, and services are integrated into these communications.

More generally, the department keeps fully informed of events, incidents, and developments in which there is current or potential media or public interest. In the event of controversy, as well as in routine matters, it is the responsibility of the Communications and Marketing staff to work closely with those involved to coordinate release of news items, to respond to inquiries, and to offer counsel as requested or required. If employees are contacted directly by a media representative for an interview, they are required to inform and/or refer the media representative to the Executive Director of Development, Communications, and Marketing to ensure accuracy and consistency in all external college contacts with print and broadcast media. Information with reference to students will not be released unless the information qualifies as “Directory Information” as legally authorized under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA; Buckley Amendment).

In order to ensure the accurate, consistent, and timely communication of information by external media sources, the college strives to establish relationships with local media outlets and provides press releases regarding newsworthy items to effectively communicate its mission, programs, and services to the community.

Academic programs and college services are communicated primarily through the college’s website and online catalog, which focuses on specific details such as program outcomes, costs, and semester-by-semester plans for completing those programs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Various print materials provide supporting information on programs and services, often incorporating information from the Montana Department of Labor regarding workforce needs and average occupational salaries.

The Registrar ensures that the academic catalog is reviewed and updated annually by asking program directors and faculty to review the information and recommend changes.

**2.A.22 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.**

Great Falls College MSU adheres to high ethical standards in the management and operation of the college. As reflected in the campus mission, core themes, and values, the entire campus community is dedicated to student success and achievement. The college value of integrity speaks to “high academic standards, ethical practices, and the courage to act.” This foundational devotion to students is led by the CEO/Dean’s Executive Team, a highly effective team collectively dedicated to embodying that mission and value across campus.

Employees at every level of the college respect the professional partners they serve, and value the college’s reputation in the external community. The college’s commitment to ethical standards is seen in its business and financial practices, and adherence to state and federal laws, Montana Board of Regents policy, campus policy, and collective bargaining agreements (Exhibit 2.25)

The mission, vision, and values statements describe in great detail a strong commitment to respecting the rights of all. This is seen clearly in hiring practices, provision of quality education, and service within the community (Exhibit 2.26).

Processes for resolving grievances and complaints are defined by policy and accessible via the campus website. Employees whose complaints cannot be resolved by working with the immediate supervisor can request involvement from the next level supervisor or the Executive Director of Human Resources (Exhibit 2.27). If informal problem solving is not successful, employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement can file a formal grievance. Grievance procedures are described in the collective bargaining agreements for covered groups of employees.

Student Equal Opportunity complaints, grievances, Title IX, and student conduct complaints are handled by the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean for Student Services. Procedures are outlined in the academic catalog and the Policies and Procedures manual, including documents to be submitted, timelines for responses, and decisions and procedures for appeal (Exhibit 2.28).

The college values differences, and members are expected to treat others with civility, encouraging open and honest communication. The campus is committed to the organizational goals and processes (e.g., strategic plan, operational plan), and does not usurp them to meet individual, personal agendas. As conflict is encountered and then resolved, individuals focus on solutions and positive beginnings.

**2.A.23 The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.**

Great Falls College MSU follows clearly defined Board of Regents (Exhibit 2.29) and College Conflict of Interest policies (Exhibit 2.30) that require administration, faculty, and professional staff to submit a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement Form annually. These policies are intended to enable employees to recognize potential conflicting interests and, thus, to protect themselves and the college from such conflicts of interest through disclosure, evaluation and, if required, management or elimination of conflicts of interest.

In addition, employees are subject to the college's standard of conduct policy, which outlines the expectation that all employees serve students and the public with courtesy and professionalism, and contribute to an atmosphere of institutional harmony that allows each employee to work productively. These standards are discussed in the new employee onboarding and orientation processes, and online (Exhibit 2.31).

**2.A.24 The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.**

Montana Board of Regents issued Policy 407 to address software and intellectual property rights as they typically apply to research universities (Exhibit 2.32). This policy speaks to respect for intellectual labor and creativity as vital to academic discourse and applies to works of all authors and publishers in the media. Great Falls College MSU adheres to a campus copyright policy based upon the Montana Board of Regents policy. (Exhibit 2.33).

**2.A.25 The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms “Accreditation” and “Candidacy” (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.**

Great Falls College MSU represents its current regional accreditation status in the college catalog and includes information regarding regional accreditation on an Accreditation Webpage (Exhibit 2.34). Information about programmatic accreditation and links to recent Accreditation Reports and contact information for the NWCCU can be found on the site as well. The academic catalog also includes the following statement:

“Great Falls College MSU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.”

**2.A.26 If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services — with clearly defined roles and responsibilities — is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation.**

All contractual agreements and memoranda of agreement are reviewed and approved by the CEO/Dean or appropriate designee as per college, MSU, and Board of Regents policies. The scope of work with roles and responsibilities is stipulated according to those policies and compliance with various government regulations pertaining to purchasing. Contracts are reviewed for compliance by GFC MSU purchasing staff. The college’s Purchasing Guidelines guide the college in contracting with external entities so as to maintain the integrity of the institution. (Exhibit 2.35).

## Academic Freedom

### **2.A.27 The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.**

The college adheres to Montana Board of Regents Policy 302 as it addresses academic freedom (Exhibit 2.36). The policy allows for full freedom in research and publication for faculty members, freedom of discussion in the classroom but with prudence applied to controversial matters, and freedom from institutional censorship or discipline. The Board of Regents reminds faculty members that their special position in the community imposes special obligations, which include accuracy in communication and respect for others' opinions.

Further guidance on academic freedom at Great Falls College MSU is provided in Article 4.15 of The Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education and the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association (Formerly Vocational Technical Educators of Montana [VTEM]) #4610, MEA/MFT, AFT, AFL-CIO, which addresses academic freedom while recognizing that academic freedom is accompanied by a corresponding responsibility of the faculty members to their colleagues, the Montana University System, and students to maintain the highest standard of academic integrity and scholarship (Exhibit 2.37).

### **2.A.28 Within the context of its mission, core themes, 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 examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.**

Great Falls College is deeply committed to academic freedom and expresses that commitment in a variety of ways. Critical thinking and intellectual freedom – an open discourse of ideas, regardless of the popularity of those ideas – are supported through our mission statement, our core value of respect (“We value differences and treat one another with civility, encouraging open and honest communication”), and our Eight Abilities, which include “Diversity: the ability to understand and articulate the importance and influence of diversity within and among cultures and societies.”

### **2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.**

Great Falls College MSU ensures that faculty present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively through a robust orientation and evaluation process. Faculty are provided a comprehensive orientation and on-going professional development focused upon their obligation to support their scholarly practices with those identified in their discipline.

The faculty, as a body, has identified Eight Abilities, essentially institutional student learning outcomes to reinforce and guide their practice. Those abilities align with their programs and course outcomes and are articulated in every course syllabus.

Great Falls College MSU policies on equal opportunity, protection against harassment, discrimination, disability – as well as disciplinary, complaint, and grievance policies – serve to reinforce an environment that encourages freedom to share scholarship and intellectual ideas without fear of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

## Finance

### **2.A.30 The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.**

Great Falls College MSU maintains fiscal stability through sound financial practices that incorporate generally accepted accounting principles issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). The college adheres to guidelines established by the Board of Regents and to legislative authority.

The goal of the fiscal office is to ensure that financial resources are provided and utilized effectively in accomplishing the college's mission. Long-range considerations within the budget process are:

- Expenditure of resources to maintain institutional stability.
- Examination of options for expansion and support to new programs in light of fiscal resources and institutional mission.
- Increased personnel, provision of on-going faculty and staff development, and meeting new demands for student services.

Fiscal administration is directed by the chief financial officer/associate dean for administration and Finance, who reports directly to the CEO/dean, and is a member of the Executive Team. GFC MSU has fiscal policies and procedures documented on its policy website (Exhibit 2.38). If not addressed in these policies, GFC MSU follows MSU policies, listed on that institution's web site (Exhibit 2.39). All policies must fall within the guidelines of the Board of Regents policies governing financial affairs (Exhibit 2.40).

## **Standard 2.B Human Resources**

**2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.**

Great Falls College MSU employs 85 full-time administrative and support staff, 45 full-time faculty, and 95 adjunct faculty.

The Human Resources department, in conjunction with applicable administrators and supervisors, reviews job descriptions prior to recruitment and hiring in order to ensure accurate reflection of the position's duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and authority. Vacancy announcements, distributed in printed form and on the college website, clearly identify duties, responsibilities, and both minimum and preferred qualifications for positions. Hiring authorities receive recruitment and selection guidelines prior to and during the recruitment process.

**2.B.2 Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.**

The Human Resources Department notifies employees about, and tracks compliance with, the performance evaluation process for classified, professional, and administrative employees. Classified staff members are evaluated and role descriptions updated annually in May. Professional and administrative staff members are evaluated each year in June.

**2.B.3 The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.**

Great Falls College MSU provides all employees with a variety of training and professional development opportunities in support of their professional growth and development. In the past, professional development funds were one of the first resources cut when budgets were lean, but the college has since changed its approach. The CPBAC (the planning and budget committee) has designated and identified a professional development pool of funds. Each division has written procedures for the application of those funds

During the annual evaluation cycle, employees identify professional development goals and possible training opportunities. Professional development requests are prioritized within the department, and as funds become available, employees attend or present at professional development and training opportunities in order of their priority.

Faculty professional development is reviewed and tracked by the Tenure and Promotion Committee, a committee of the Faculty Senate. At this writing, the college has a faculty and staff professional development presentation day scheduled for April 2015. This event will allow anyone who has attended professional development to present an overview of what they have learned in the form of a break-out session or poster session.

In many of the Health Science programs, certain faculty professional development or certifications are required for program accreditation. These requirements are considered an operating expense and are not part of the professional development process outlined above but do constitute professional development opportunities for those to whom this applies.

**2.B.4 Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered.**

Great Falls College MSU is dedicated to employing well-qualified faculty for its educational programs. Faculty members are hired for their expertise in content, professional experience, and commitment to postsecondary education. In addition to teaching, full-time faculty assist in student advising, curriculum development, and instructional programs, and participate in shared governance of the college.

Faculty members are active agents supporting the delivery of quality education at the college. They play a key role in institutional governance, through the Faculty Senate and representation on CPBAC, as well as other special initiative work groups and faculty committees of the Senate.

Faculty members are creative in their approach to teaching and scholarship and are active in campus governance and the community at large, as evidenced by national recognition. For example, since 2005, eleven faculty have received national recognition by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD). All have been recognized and received professional development at a NISOD annual national conference. In 2010, a student success initiative for the biology courses – Anatomy and Physiology Night – was published in one of NISOD’s teaching innovation newsletters. In 2011, GFC MSU joined the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) as a project partner. Three of the college’s faculty members are involved as members of the NANSLO discipline panels in this project, which will allow distance students to conduct real-time lab experiments remotely.

### **Faculty Recruitment**

Great Falls College MSU continues to be challenged at times in recruiting well-qualified full- and part-time faculty, due to salary competition from the private service sector, business, and industry. Quality science, health science, and mathematics instructors are difficult to recruit, even with allowable recruitment stipends. The college, however, is receiving more applicants for open positions than in the past.

### **Faculty Minimum Qualifications Policy**

Montana specifies minimum qualifications for faculty at two-year colleges, based on whether they are teaching in transfer programs/disciplines, career/technical programs, or professional and continuing education. The requirements include formal education, graduate credits in the field, work experience, and specialty training (Exhibit 2.41).

## College Faculty Licensure

In 2008, the Montana Board of Public Education adopted an additional mandate for the licensure of college instructors teaching courses that offer dual credit (secondary and post-secondary). The State of Montana has four different classes of licensure for post-secondary faculty teaching dual credit classes. GFC MSU has more dual-credit licensed faculty than any campus in Montana. Table 2.B.4 shows a breakdown of the license classes and the number of faculty holding those licenses.

**TABLE 2.B.4. License Class and Requirements**

License Class and Requirements	No. of Faculty
<b>Class 1</b>	<b>24</b>
Hold a Class 2 Standard Educator License or meet the qualifications of the Class 2 Standard Educator License; and A master's degree in professional education or an endorsable teaching area(s) from an accredited college or university; and Verification of three years of successful K-12 teaching experience as a licensed teacher.	
<b>Class 2</b>	<b>13</b>
Hold a bachelor's degree; and Verify completion of an accredited professional educator preparation program in an area approved for endorsement in Montana; and Successfully complete a supervised teaching experience either as part of an accredited professional educator preparation program or successfully complete one year of teaching experience in a state accredited elementary and/or secondary school district.	
<b>Class 4</b>	<b>20</b>
For those with work experience in career and technical areas, but without degrees in education. Must demonstrate 10,000 hours of work experience in each area they wish to teach. Degrees, licenses and industry standard designations may be substituted for some of the work experience requirement.	
<b>Class 8</b>	<b>46</b>
For those college instructors who teach university courses in which high school students enroll and receive both college and high school credit for completion. Eligible instructors must verify employment at a university and eligibility for licensure.	

### **2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.**

The collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Regents and the faculty designates the guidelines for workload and faculty responsibilities for the fall and spring semesters and the parameters of faculty salaries and salary levels (Exhibit 2.42). The agreement designates a maximum of 162 instructional days in the academic year with additional non-instructional days required. At GFC MSU, faculty members are required to work 170 days each academic year, which include:

- Two 16-week semesters, each including one week for final examinations; and
- Up to ten pre-semester duty days each semester (formerly referred to as faculty orientation and advising days) to be used in providing orientation, professional development, and information to faculty and in ensuring faculty have time to advise students and prepare for instruction.

In Spring 2010, the college implemented changes to reduce the number of pre-instructional days a faculty member was required to be on campus. Faculty, though on contract ten days prior to the start of classes, are required to be present on campus only three days. Additionally, with the advent of the college's centralized advising model, faculty workload has been adjusted to allow more time focused on teaching and student success. A thorough exploration of the new advising model is addressed in section 2.D.10 of this report.

Since the 2005 Self-Study and site visit, and as outlined in the 2010 Interim Report, salaries for faculty have increased by 3.5 % in FY06, 4% in FY07, 3% in FY08, 4% in FY09, 0% in FY10 and FY11, 1% in FY12 and 2.25 % in both FY13 and FY14. The employer contribution toward insurance has increased from \$506/month in 2005 to \$733/month in 2012 and to \$887/month, an increase from 2005 of 75%.

**2.B.6 All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.**

The purpose of faculty evaluation is to clarify expectations, support improvement in teaching and learning, and recognize and promote academic excellence and innovation. The faculty at the college recognize and promote academic excellence and innovation.

In 2010-2011, an ad hoc committee of the Labor-Management team, as required by the Montana Two-Year Faculty Association (MTYFA) through the collective bargaining agreement, reviewed and updated the full-time faculty performance evaluation process. Expectations for faculty are outlined in the collective bargaining agreement and are highlighted in the Faculty Evaluation Handbook. Expectations fit well with the college's mission, vision, and values statement and indicate that the faculty, as a body, is committed to student success and completion. The handbook is available from the division directors and is distributed to faculty who are scheduled for evaluation in the coming year.

Faculty evaluation is conducted annually by the division director for non-tenured faculty and once every three years for tenured faculty. The evaluation is focused on the goals of individual faculty members and the vision, mission, and values of the college. There are three performance indicators:

- Teaching effectiveness and student learning
- Professional development and achievement
- Service

The evaluation components are:

- Faculty goals
- Faculty self-evaluation
- Administrative evaluation
- Student evaluation
- Peer observation (optional)
- Student evaluation of advising, if applicable

All new credit and non-credit adjunct faculty members teaching in the academic divisions and Outreach are evaluated during their first semester of teaching. The adjunct faculty evaluation process is tailored to the expectations the college has for its part-time faculty members. After the first evaluation, returning adjunct faculty members are evaluated at least once every three years. The adjunct faculty protocol consists of a classroom observation, student evaluation, self-assessment, and the submission of a course syllabus (Exhibit 2.43).

## **Standard 2.C Educational Resources**

**2.C.1 The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.**

Great Falls College MSU offers the Certificate of Applied Science (CAS), the Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS), and the Associate of Applied Science (AAS). The Associate of Science and the Associate of Arts are offered in preparation for transfer. The Montana University System Core, a 30-32 credit package of general education courses that allow students to transfer to any four-year campus within the Montana University System, is also offered. Every course has clearly defined student learning objectives that are aligned to meet the appropriate program outcomes. Each course objective also aligns with one or more of the Eight Abilities, which are competencies identified by faculty as overall institutional student learning outcomes.

Educational programs at the college are distributed among three academic divisions: Business, Trades and Technology, Health Sciences, and General Education and Transfer. They are supported by the Division of eLearning and the Weaver Library and the Division of Outreach. All divisions report to the Chief Academic Officer.

New programs and changes to programs are reviewed by the GFC MSU Curriculum Committee (a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate) and ultimately by the Board of Regents and the NWCCU. All course changes are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee. All academic programs are internally reviewed every five years by the Internal Program Review Committee.

In accordance with the Board of Regents Policy 303.3: Program Review, internal program review is conducted for all degrees and certificates. The primary goal of the review is to enhance the alignment of the college's academic programs and their quality with community and state needs. To achieve this purpose, these internal program review procedures encourage self-study and planning within programs and strengthen connections among the strategic plan and mission of the college. In addition, an essential element of the internal program review is the identification and evaluation of student learning outcomes as a key indicator of program effectiveness. Further, internal program reviews provide information for curricular and budgetary planning decisions for the divisions and the college.

Besides accreditation from NWCCU, GFC MSU actively pursues programmatic accreditation from individual accrediting agencies when available. These agencies ensure that the programs have appropriate content and rigor to allow graduates to succeed in their chosen fields.

**2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.**

Learning outcomes for each program are identified in the college catalog. Each course has a syllabus that outlines course requirements and learning outcomes. The syllabus is available in class, and/or through the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system. All faculty use a common syllabus

template identifying and linking student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are reviewed with students at the beginning of the course and referred to throughout the course. General graduation requirements as well as program-specific completion requirements are published in the catalog as well.

The academic divisions also list program outcomes in the program-specific student handbooks that students receive during program orientation. The outcomes support not only the college's mission, vision, and values but also the goals of the division. For example, the Division of Health Sciences is committed to and identifies itself as a student-centered division providing quality care in health science education that is responsive to community health care needs. Each program creates a student handbook that clearly outlines all outcomes and requirements.

**2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.**

All courses align with program and degree outcomes. The faculty design course curricula that include course objectives and assessment tools for achieving these program and degree outcomes. Each course syllabus has a defined grading rubric that outlines how student achievement will be evaluated in the course. Evaluation can be through written or online testing, evaluation of hands-on skills, evaluation of clinical practice, and evaluation of portfolios or written assignments. The College Operational Plan for 2011-2016 includes a focus on closing the loop and using evidence gathered to improve student learning and completion.

The assessment of student learning is a cornerstone of the operational plan. Great Falls College MSU builds on the Community College Research Center's (CCRC) Assessment of Evidence Series, which is crucial to student success. Recommendations involve engagement of faculty, the alignment of course curricula by defining common learning outcomes and assessment, and collecting and utilizing data to improve practices. Faculty identified "Eight Abilities" important to the success of all Great Falls College MSU graduates. Faculty then created tools for measuring graduates' achievement of the Abilities, as identified in Core Indicator 5.

**2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.**

Degree programs are developed by faculty knowledgeable and experienced in the field, based on guidelines from accrediting agencies, advice from advisory boards (comprising industry experts), Montana University System core requirements, and collaboration with faculty in similar programs at other campuses. All programs clearly list pre-requisite and co-requisite courses to ensure that students are prepared for their studies. All programs have a suggested sequence of coursework listed in the online catalog and in program materials to guide students through an appropriate sequence of courses.

GFC MSU has an open admissions policy for all students meeting basic admission requirements. Individual programs may have admission requirements (such as a certain level of math or writing

skill) to ensure student success or, in the case of limited enrollment programs, to ensure that admission is based on non-biased, objective criteria.

The online catalog, student orientation handbooks, program advisement sheets, and program applications clearly define the requirements for admission, as well as completion requirements for graduation. Programs utilizing competitive admission processes use an admissions committee of program faculty, the registrar, and an administrative representative to rank applicants according to admission criteria. During advising sessions, students interested in applying for these limited enrollment programs are informed of the application process and encouraged to apply at the earliest qualifying date.

**2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.**

The college requires faculty to clearly define what is expected of students (learning outcomes) and to utilize evidence gathered to assess their achievement of those outcomes. All courses and programs have student learning outcomes. The faculty have designed course curricula and assessment tools for achieving program and degree outcomes. The operational plan for 2011-2016 includes a focus on closing the loop and using evidence gathered to improve student learning and completion. That plan has required faculty to gather and assess evidence on the progress toward student learning outcomes and make changes to their courses and programs accordingly.

All full-time faculty members are given full authority to design, implement, and revise the curriculum for the program they instruct in order to ensure that the appropriate competencies are embedded in the program learning outcomes and course learning objectives, and that student achievement of those competencies is appropriately assessed and documented. Faculty decisions regarding curriculum are guided by a multi-phase process that assesses student achievement, as well as by the program's advisory committee, program student feedback, and, where applicable, program accreditation requirements, professional association input, and analysis of content being tested on national boards. Evidence is gathered and faculty work together to use data from the process to inform curricular changes and updates.

All curriculum changes are reviewed by the applicable academic division director and the faculty-led Curriculum Committee (CC), a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. The CC meets bi-weekly and elects its Chair from its faculty members. It is the decision-making body on curriculum and academic programs, policies, and procedures. The CC includes eight tenured or tenure-track faculty (two elected from each division, one faculty elected at large, and one faculty elected by and representing adjunct faculty), two students (voting), the Chief Academic Officer (non-voting), and the Registrar (non-voting). Curriculum Committee members ensure that proposals for curriculum changes align with the institutional mission and consider proposals' impacts on human, physical, and fiscal resources at the college.

Search committees for faculty consist of at least two faculty members from the appropriate program or division, plus at least one of the following: a faculty member from outside the unit, a classified or

professional staff member, an advisory committee member, or a student. Search committees for contract faculty, outreach instructors, adjunct faculty, and clinical instructors consist of at least two faculty members from the appropriate program or division.

**2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.**

Library staff provide information literacy instruction for all face-to-face and hybrid sections of College Writing I, and for many of the developmental writing and interpersonal communication courses. Information literacy instruction is also promoted and provided in other courses upon request from faculty. The library staff have designed a series of online research guides using LibGuides (Exhibit 2.44). This significantly expands library instruction services to students enrolled in online and hybrid courses. Library instruction was provided to over forty course sections in the following discipline areas over the last fiscal year (2013-2014): education, college studies, nursing, dental hygiene, business, chemistry, writing, communication, and psychology. Library resources and a research assignment have also been incorporated into COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student, which is required for all new first-time students.

**2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.**

Great Falls College MSU has an experiential learning policy, which allows for credit to be granted for prior learning (Exhibit 2.45). The policy, adopted in June 2007 and revised in July 2010, follows all NWCCU requirements that such credit is awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; is limited to a maximum of 25 percent of the credits needed for a degree; is awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and is granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. This policy specifically addresses how the college evaluates and awards credit for prior learning and outlines the points noted above. If awarded, experiential learning credits are posted clearly on the student's transcript as Experiential Learning with the grade of P for pass.

Students and the appropriate faculty are required to work through the process together, identifying the method of evaluating the experiential learning (portfolio, proof of competency, or challenge exam). The form is signed by both faculty and student and submitted to the registrar, who alerts Student Accounts to assess the fees. When the evaluation documents are submitted or testing is complete, the faculty evaluates it and, if approved, submits it to the division director. If all agree to

the award of credit, the registrar posts the award on the student transcript and notifies the student (Exhibit 2.46).

**2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.**

Requests for transfer credits are handled by the Registrar's Office, which reviews official transcripts. The office evaluates credits that apply to the student's declared program of study. A copy of the office's evaluation of credits is placed in the student file, a copy is mailed to the student, and the evaluation is posted in the Banner software system. Credits from other regionally accredited postsecondary institutions may be accepted as they apply to the established guidelines as listed in the catalog (Exhibit 2.47). If a student has taken courses at an institution using quarter credits or units other than semester credits, Great Falls College MSU will convert the quarter credits/units to semester credits using the quarter-to-semester policy outlined on the policy website (Exhibit 2.48).

Previous transfer questions in the Montana University System have been managed system-wide through the common course numbering policy, which dictates that equivalent courses at different campuses have the same title, number, and prefix and will be accepted in transfer. Those courses have been evaluated by faculty committees throughout the state and have been determined as equivalent. The information is contained in an online transfer table available at the Montana University System website (Exhibit 2.49). Great Falls College MSU also maintains an online transfer guide to assist students with transferring (Exhibit 2.50).

For courses not previously evaluated, the Registrar's Office forwards the request to the appropriate program faculty or program director for review. The office may also request a course description and syllabus of the requested transfer course. The final decision on course acceptance rests with the faculty.

Montana Board of Regents policy does not allow transfer credit for grades less than a C- or for courses taken more than 5 years prior to the transfer request (for specific required classes in a major, minor, option, or certificate) or more than 15 years prior (for general education coursework). Some GFC MSU programs have more rigorous transfer requirements (e.g., the Dental Hygiene and Practical Nurse programs have minimum grades of C or higher instead of the C- or higher as outlined in the above policies). Those exceptions have been recorded with the Board of Regents and are also noted on the appropriate program's academic catalog page.

## Undergraduate Programs

**2.C.9 The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.**

The General Education and Transfer Division oversees developmental and general education courses at the college. The division underwent a name change in Summer 2014 to give internal and external audiences a better understanding of the division. Previously, the division was called “Developmental Education and Transfer.” Developmental education is still provided through the division, and there is a renewed focus on students completing their general education requirements, either through the MUS core or an associate degree, and transferring to four-year institutions. “General Education and Transfer” speaks to those goals. The term “general education” is also commonly recognized by and is familiar to students, other institutions, and the community.

The general education courses offered at the college provide an integrated course of study based on the Montana University System’s General Education Core (MUS Core). As stated in the college’s academic catalog, the purpose of the general education courses is as follows:

In our world of rapid economic, social, and technological change, students need a strong and broadly-based education. General education helps students achieve the intellectual integration and awareness they need to meet challenges in their personal, social, political, and professional lives. General education courses introduce great ideas and controversies in human thought and experience. A solid general education provides a strong foundation for the life-long learning that makes career goals attainable. The breadth, perspective, and rigor provided by the core curriculum helps students become educated people.

The MUS Core comprises 6 credits in communication (3 writing and 3 verbal), 3 credits in college-level math, 6 credits in humanities/fine arts, 7 credits in natural science (must include 1 lab course), 6 credits in social sciences/history, 3 credits in cultural diversity, and 3 credits in cultural heritage of American Indians, for a total of 31 semester hours.

**2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution’s mission and learning outcomes for those programs.**

The student learning outcomes for the MUS Core demonstrate a breadth and depth of intellect (Exhibit 2.51). As stated in the catalog, after completing the MUS Core, students will be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate understanding of major findings and ideas in a variety of disciplines.
- Demonstrate understanding of methods, skills, tools, and systems used in a variety of disciplines, and historical, theoretical, scientific, technological, philosophical, and ethical bases in a variety of disciplines.
- Use appropriate technologies to conduct research on and communicate about topics and questions; to access, evaluate, and manage information; to prepare and present their work effectively; and to meet academic, personal, and professional needs.
- Demonstrate critical analysis of arguments and evaluation of an argument's major assertions, its background assumptions, the evidence used to support its assertions, and its explanatory utility.
- Understand and articulate the importance and influence of diversity within and among cultures and societies.
- Understand and apply mathematical concepts and models.
- Communicate effectively, through written and oral communication and through other forms as appropriate.

The college expands upon the MUS Core's outcomes and provides additional student learning outcomes specifically in the following areas: communication (English composition and oral communication), mathematics, humanities/fine arts, natural science, social sciences/history, cultural diversity, and the cultural heritage of American Indians. Those specific outcomes are listed in the academic catalog.

Every course offered at GFC MSU has measureable student learning objectives that align with the program's outcomes and the college's mission. A chart showing the alignment is included in the syllabus for each course (Exhibit 2.52).

**2.C.11 The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.**

The General Education and Transfer Division provides the coursework needed to earn an Associate of Science (AS) or an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, which are transferable to a four-year university for a baccalaureate degree. The courses in the AS and AA degrees provide an integrated course of study based on the MUS Core. Both degrees include 31 semester credits of the MUS Core, general education courses offered online and on campus that include 6 credits in communication (3 writing and 3 verbal), 3 credits in college-level math, 6 credits in humanities/fine arts, 7 credits in natural science (must include 1 lab course), 6 credits in social sciences/history, 3 credits in cultural diversity, and 3 credits in cultural heritage of American Indians. Both also include 3 credits of Computer Skills/Usage. The Associate of Arts Degree includes an additional 9 credits in arts, humanities, and

social sciences plus 17 elective credits for a total of 60 credits. The outcomes for the specific degree include those of the MUS Core and those set by the college. The Associate of Science Degree includes an additional 9 credits in math and science, as well as 17 credits of electives for a total of 60 credits. Similarly, the student learning outcomes for the Associate of Science Degree include those of the MUS Core and those set by the college.

As mentioned earlier, each course taught at the college has student learning objectives aligned with the degree's stated outcomes and the college's mission. A chart showing the alignment is included in the syllabus for each course (Exhibit 2.52).

The general education core is also part of the coursework for the college's applied degrees and certificates, with specific courses and student learning outcomes in communication, computation, and human relations. For example, the Business Fundamentals Certificate of Applied Science is a one-year, 32-credit program that includes WRIT 101 College Writing I for communication, M 108 Business Mathematics for computation, and COMX 115 Intro to Interpersonal Communication for human relations (Exhibit 2.53).

Another example is the Construction Technology – Carpentry Certificate of Applied Science, a one-year, 31-credit certificate, which includes WRIT 104 Communication Skills in the Workplace for communication, M 191A Special Topics: Math for Carpentry for computation, and COMX 102 Interpersonal Skills in the Workplace for human relations. While the related instruction is geared toward the workplace, the general education areas of communication, computation, and human relations are clearly defined and are taught by faculty qualified in the appropriate discipline (Exhibit 2.54).

An example from an AAS program is the general education requirements for the Accounting Associate of Applied Science Degree, a two-year, 60-credit program. The coursework includes WRIT 101 College Writing I for communications, M 121 College Algebra for computation, and COMX 115 Interpersonal Communication for human relations (Exhibit 2.55).

## **Graduate Programs**

2.C.12 through 2.C.15 address graduate programs, which are not offered at Great Falls College MSU.

## **Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs**

### **2.C.16 Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.**

The college offers continuing education and non-credit courses to meet the educational needs and personal enrichment goals of the citizens in Great Falls College MSU's service area. Offerings are consistent with the mission and goals of the college, providing access for upgrading skills for current or future jobs, providing opportunities for cultural enrichment as well as physical and emotional well-being, and supporting workforce training needs of the area.

An integral component of the college mission is to provide “innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations.” The activities termed professional, continuing education, community enrichment, and workforce development provide workforce preparation, employee training or re-training, business support, and personal enrichment. Courses offered through the Outreach Department provide flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages. All courses offered are in accordance with college policies (Exhibit 2.56).

**2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution’s continuing education and special learning activities.**

All continuing education offerings are held to the same standards as regular academic courses. Faculty develop syllabi with measurable learning outcomes and assessment rubrics. Some continuing education offerings are integrated into the existing instructional divisions on campus. Continuing education courses and programs undergo the same approval and monitoring process as other academic offerings, which is documented under section 2.C.5. Program directors and faculty members develop and lead the approval processes for program-specific courses. Workforce offerings have additional approval processes and requirements, which include an advisory committee and applicable state board approval. Outreach Department staff and faculty are responsible for maintaining appropriate standards and achievements.

**2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.**

For quality assurance purposes and record keeping, all activities must adhere to the continuing education approval policy (Exhibit 2.57). The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for the development of professional and continuing education (PCE) activities. The policy outlines criteria for the educational activity, the types of suggested CEU applications, learning activities that are not eligible as CEU, and the procedure for review and approval. All are reviewed by the Joint Directors and Curriculum Committee.

All professional and continuing education courses use the same standards and processes to assign grades and Continuing Education Units (CEUs). These are based on written learning objectives and grading policies for each offering. Pass or fail grades are given based on the participant satisfactorily completing all course requirements.

**2.C.19 The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.**

All non-credit Continuing Education activities are automatically eligible for Continuing Education Units (CEUs). All non-credit continuing education activities are recorded in the Banner records system and appear under the continuing education portion of the student's transcript.

## **Standard 2.D Student Support Resources**

### **2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.**

Based on research and best practices, student support services are a high priority for student success. Each student support unit is discussed individually below.

#### **Academic Success Center (formerly the Learning Center)**

The Learning Center has undergone significant changes in its operations, including a transition in name from the Learning Center to the Academic Success Center (ASC). The ASC is no longer housed under the General Education and Transfer division. Instead, the ASC has become its own academic division under the division heading of Academic Success and Excellence. The Director of Academic Success, hired in August 2013, is responsible for the Academic Success Center, the online writing lab, professional development of faculty, and all COLS classes, including COLS 103, which is a graduation requirement for all new first-time students.

To increase frequency of use and improve access, the ASC remains a drop-in facility. All services of the ASC are provided free-of-charge. Students are not required to make appointments, allowing them to seek and receive assistance when they need it. Hours have been expanded to include evenings and Sundays, when the tutoring is held in the Weaver Library until 9 pm. The center also uses Homework MT, a product purchased by the State of Montana, to facilitate online tutoring. Additional tutors have been added and tutors are now available in every core class and many elective classes. A nursing tutor, physics tutor, EMS tutor, physical therapy tutor, and dental tutor were added to support students in specialty courses. There are plans to add veteran-specific tutors in English and Math starting in the fall of 2015. A tutor is present in Anatomy and Physiology open labs. This further facilitates student success by ensuring that students in open labs have access to a knowledgeable tutor in addition to lab instructors. In order to improve student success, the ASC has plans to embed tutors in the courses with the lowest student success rates.

Quality of tutoring has been a major focus during the past evaluation cycle. Currently, writing tutors have Bachelor's degrees in Writing and Language Arts, which helps ensure a high quality of writing support. These degreed tutors are responsible for the online writing lab where students can have their papers critiqued and returned within 72 hours. English faculty assist in training these tutors and remain available for support throughout the term. Faculty remain very much involved in the operation of the Academic Success Center and spend part of their office hours tutoring in the ASC. In response to data showing that 40% of the students served in the ASC seek math assistance, faculty in that department contribute tutoring in the ASC each class day. This combination of peer, professional, and faculty tutoring provides a comprehensive, high-quality service for students that follows best practices in the field.

Tutor training has become a formal process with ten hours of onboard training, monthly meetings, and eight hours of online module training required during the first sixteen weeks of employment. The ASC has received tutor training certification through the college Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). Tutors receive training on multi-cultural issues and working with students who have differing abilities, as well as specialized training from faculty in their subject of expertise.

Training is required for all tutors, and all campus tutors go through the ASC to ensure compliance with CRLA accreditation standards. Tutors are reviewed each term and a formal evaluation process, handbook, and policies and procedures are now in place.

Each term tutors visit every classroom to encourage students to use the ASC. In addition, tutors and the Director of Academic Success have provided workshops on study skills to classrooms at the request of faculty. There are plans to expand this program and have workshops available for days when faculty must be absent.

In Spring 2014, the biology faculty added one hour per week of supplemental instruction time for each of their classes. All students were required to attend until the first exam. After the first exam, those with a 75% or above in the course were not required to continue to attend unless their grades slipped below a 75%. The supplemental instruction time was built into the students' schedules. The faculty used the time for a variety of activities, ranging from teaching study and note taking skills to reviewing specific content. The supplemental instruction time was in addition to regularly held review sessions. The supplemental instruction time proved valuable and will continue to be built into the course structure.

### **Student Success Course**

COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student has been made a graduation requirement for all new first-time students. The one-credit course focuses on connection, study skills, life skills, soft skills, school policy, and self-reflection, all designed to support the student through their first term of school and connect them to the college.

### **Bright Beginnings Learning Center**

The campus added a child development center, Bright Beginnings Learning Center, which opened in January of 2013. The Center serves families with children ages 0-5 on a full- and part-time basis. The Center can serve a maximum of 88 children at one time. Children are grouped into classes of 8, 16, and 20 students with adult-to-child ratios corresponding to the minimum required by the state for the youngest child in each specified group. GFC MSU students are given priority placement in the program. If there is space available, College faculty and staff, and then the general public, are given consideration in that order. The childcare facility is essential to the student community as there is the understanding that childcare is a necessity as students work to obtain their college education. The child care center works with the students to provide a flexible schedule and a supportive environment that works closely with them to achieve their educational goals.

### **Veterans Success Center**

The Veterans Success Center was expanded as the need for such services increased. The Center provides resources, coaching, and other information to veterans and their families. The Center's mission is designed to serve the needs of active duty military and veteran students. The college understands that balancing college life with military obligations, career, family, and personal affairs can be highly challenging. The Veterans Success Coach works diligently to assist with achieving students' personal and educational goals by providing support, resource, and information tailored to the unique needs of each student.

### **Native American Enrichment Center**

The Issksiniip Native American Enrichment Center was added to the college in February 2013. This project is in partnership with Blackfeet Community College and funded by the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services' Health Professions Opportunity Grant, and works to aid low-income individuals in gaining self-sufficiency through lucrative education and internship opportunities combined with culturally appropriate training within the high demand healthcare fields. It provides participants with support services and scholarships to ensure the successful completion of academic programs.

### **Developmental Courses**

Support for students in developmental writing has been added. Students with placement scores that would place them below WRIT 095 Developmental Writing are referred to Adult Education and enrolled in WRIT 094 Writing Skills Workshop, a no-charge/no-credit, semester-long workshop in which they can strengthen their writing skills and then re-take the COMPASS test at no cost at the end of the semester.

Students whose placement test scores would place them into WRIT 095 Developmental Writing have the option of enrolling in WRIT 101 with the co-requisite of WRIT 098 Accelerated Developmental Writing. WRIT 098 is a one-credit support course that enables higher-level developmental writing students to enroll directly into their college writing course but still receive additional support. This additional support allows the college to provide an accelerated option that accounts for the possibility of poor test-taking skills in placement and removes potential time or financial hurdles to degree completion. Students who select this option must first meet with the division director before enrolling to ensure that they would be better-served by this model rather than by the traditional WRIT 095 course.

Developmental math classes have been identified as some of the classes with the lowest success rates, and have been redesigned accordingly. First, the required placement score was revised for M 065 Pre-Algebra (the college's lowest math class) based on institutional data showing that only one-third of students with COMPASS Pre-Algebra scores below a 27 successfully completed that course. Students scoring below the new placement requirements are referred to a free, no-charge/no-credit workshop created by the math department and Great Falls Public Schools Adult Education program located at the college. Adult Education staffs the course, but it is part of those students' college schedules with a regular meeting time and classroom. Students in the workshop have the opportunity to re-take the COMPASS test at no cost at the end of the semester to attempt to improve their placement scores.

Second, math faculty created an accelerated course M 098 Introductory and Intermediate Algebra, comprised of modules that combine the content of M 090 Introductory Algebra and M 095 Intermediate Algebra. Students placing into M 090 have the option of enrolling in the accelerated version, which enables them to complete both courses in one semester. The class meets every day with extended time twice a week to work with the computer-aided instructional program MyMathLab. The success rates for the accelerated course are approximately the same as those for the non-accelerated M 090 course (between 50% and 60%); however, those who do complete the course are able to complete the courses in one semester instead of two, enabling them to enter their programs of study sooner and experience fewer potential "exit points." Students who select this option must also first meet with the division director to ensure that this option best meets their needs.

Third, institutional data showed that student success rates in face-to-face sections of M 065, M 090, and M 095 were approximately 20% higher than in online sections. The data were supported by

students, who said they found learning math online more difficult for several reasons: they were learning the computer system at the same time as the course material, they were not visual learners, they procrastinated and ran out of time to complete homework and exams by the deadlines, and they were not seeking additional support. To help students make better informed decisions and to become more aware of what it takes to be successful in an online course, the number of online developmental math courses were reduced and students now need departmental consent to enroll in online sections of M 065, M 090 and M 095.

As a result of all of these changes, developmental math success rates overall increased to 62% for AY 2012-2013, an increase of seven percent.

The Division of General Education and Transfer began offering a reading support course for students in Fall 2014. Titled RD 101 Reading Improvement for College Students, the course focuses on textbook and content area reading strategies. It is recommended for students scoring below 80 on the reading portion of the COMPASS exam. The course is designed so that students complete assignments by using reading strategies in their reading assignments and textbooks from other courses.

### **eLearning Support**

Two full-time eLearning staff, a Student Support Coordinator, and an Instructional Technology Specialist provide training and technical support for students attending Great Falls College MSU. Training on the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system is offered in a variety of ways. New students are required to register for a D2L orientation session, which is offered in person or online. During orientation, students create a password, log into a practice course, and are instructed in various D2L tools and navigation. Students may also add the practice D2L Student Resource course to their list of online courses in D2L. The D2L practice course includes a set of eight videos that replicate the face-to-face orientation. Training sessions are available in person, online, through email, and by phone.

The eLearning staff also provides continued technical support for students throughout the semester by phone, walk-in, email, and through an online chat. The online chat is available from noon until 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, which allows students to receive help in the evening. In addition, students can submit a help request form that is distributed to all members of the eLearning department. Staff responds to these requests within one business day. eLearning provides limited technical support for other software utilized in online courses. The eLearning office is open with extended hours into the evening and on weekends based on need.

### **Advising and Career Center**

The Advising and Career Center provides holistic development advising and career services, including course registration, referral to college and community resources, academic and career goal setting, academic planning, major exploration, problem-solving with students, and general student support. All incoming students are assigned to a particular advisor based on their academic goals. This advisor works with the student throughout his or her academic career at the College, helping that student identify courses that meet program requirements, assisting in exploring and choosing a major, connecting that student with resources for academic success, clarifying academic policies and procedures, and helping to develop an academic plan from the first semester through to graduation.

## **Disability Services**

Students needing accommodations for disabilities work with the Office of Disability Services to receive reasonable accommodations that allow them to reach their performance potential in their coursework. Each student who chooses to seek accommodations meets with the Director of Disability Services, and together they determine what accommodations to request based on the needs of the student and the demands of the course. Available accommodations include, but are not limited to, extended test time, distraction-free testing environment, various other test accommodations, adaptive computer equipment/software, note takers, Sign Language interpreters, ergonomic equipment, preferential classroom seating, and audio recording lectures.

### **2.D.2 The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.**

The college's safety and security policies offer students a safe educational environment (Exhibit 2.58). Students and employees are asked to report any criminal activity, to secure personal possessions, and to have an awareness of personal safety when entering and exiting the campus buildings. Brochures are available in Student Services that include campus crime prevention information and statistics on incidence of campus crime. The campus files the annual Campus Safety and Security Survey and Report as required by the U. S. Department of Education (Exhibit 2.59). Summary statistics can also be viewed on the GFC MSU website (Exhibit 2.60).

Students are asked to report any unsafe conditions on campus to faculty, staff, or other campus personnel. The college's Safety Committee, which includes a student member, identifies campus safety needs and acts to improve overall campus safety. There is a crisis team in place, and a crisis guide is posted in each classroom containing specific instructions for emergency events. In addition, each classroom is provided with an emergency evacuation map for the campus and has been equipped with a telephone capable of making outgoing emergency calls directly to the local 911 dispatch center.

Campus Security Authorities, as required by the Clery Act, have been trained and report concerns as they are made aware of them. A Care and Behavioral Assessment Team addresses student behavior and intervention to ensure the safety of students and the campus community.

The campus contracts with a local security company to provide services five evenings a week. A guard patrols on foot in and around campus, is readily available to respond to emergencies, and can be reached by cell phone or two-way radio.

### **2.D.3 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.**

Great Falls College MSU actively recruits students who will benefit from the courses and programs that are offered. Prospective students are encouraged to visit campus and be in contact with the

recruitment coordinator to learn about the academic offerings. The recruitment coordinator visits high schools around the state to deliver information to potential students. These visits can happen as part of a college fair, an individual visit, or by request of the high school or students. Visits also are made bi-weekly in conjunction with the campus outreach representative from Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) to the Great Falls Job Service to talk about GFC MSU and the offerings available for potential students who are utilizing other resources. Great Falls Public Schools' Adult Education program is located on the GFC MSU campus, and their faculty and staff refer interested students. Visits are also made quarterly, in conjunction with the campus Veterans Success Coach, to Malmstrom Air Force Base. A variety of marketing methods are employed to recruit students of all ages.

All new, transfer, and readmitted students are required to attend an orientation/registration session conducted by the Admissions Office, in conjunction with the Advising and Career Center. During check-in for these sessions, students receive a guide book, program catalog, advising sheet, registration worksheet, carbon copy advising sheet, Dollars and Sense resource book, D2L set-up instructions, the placement chart for math and writing, and information on signing up for the campus Alert System. Students learn about the policies and procedures of the college, campus resources, placement test scores or transfer work, as well as program-specific information. Advisors also assist students with developing an academic plan to graduation, specific course questions, course selection, and other program-related academic requirements. Students are advised to take courses in their first semester of classes that will set a foundation for an educational path that will lead them to graduation. Students who plan to apply for or enter a competitive-entry program are advised about that program's application requirements and where to find the specific program application, if not already admitted. Students entering the AA or AS programs are advised to complete the MUS Core requirements before transferring to their bachelor degree granting institution and are encouraged to research specific program requirements at that institution.

At the time of admission, students are assigned an academic advisor in the Advising and Career Center and are required to meet with this advisor every semester before registering for classes. Except in special cases, such as transfer students, this advisor will serve as the students' advisor from entry to graduation, even if they change programs. The advisors in the Advising and Career Center are current on all program requirements and any specific academic or program-related information as it leads to graduation.

In July 2013, to better support the transfer mission, GFC MSU began intentionally collaborating with the three other MSU schools (MSU in Bozeman, MSU-Northern, and MSU-Billings) to support transfer advising from GFC MSU to the four-year campuses. Each advisor is assigned to work with a specific MSU school to support students seeking to transfer. This includes helping connect students to admissions and financial aid, setting up campus visits, connecting with advisors at the receiving campus, and answering general advising questions. In addition, one advisor advises all pre-Practical Nursing students to better support the transition from the Practical Nursing program to the Associate of Science Registered Nursing program with MSU-Northern.

The competitive-entry programs have slightly different procedures. Prior to admission to competitive-entry programs, students are assigned to an advisor in the Advising and Career Center. Upon admission to these programs, however, a program faculty member becomes their primary advisor, and the advisor from the Advising and Career Center becomes the secondary advisor.

Students are encouraged to attend Essential Start classes that are held on weekdays, weekends, and online in the month prior to the first day of classes. Essential Start classes include mandatory sessions on relevant student success pieces: student email and network access, online learning (D2L) training, financial literacy, and basic student success. These events are scheduled for the students' convenience and have been shown to increase students' comfort in attending classes in the first few days of the semester.

**2.D.4 In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.**

In responding to community and workforce needs, it is sometimes necessary to change the academic requirements of a program or eliminate it from campus offerings. Any decision leading to a change in a student's future is not taken lightly. Information about changes in an academic program or program requirements is given to students using a variety of methods. The specific program director or division director sends an initial notification by mail to all currently enrolled students. This notification is also sent to any prospective students and to previous students who did not complete the program requirements. Students are advised about the changes and what they must do to either continue in the current program or adjust to the new requirements. Students also are encouraged to meet with the program director individually about any other questions or concerns that they may have.

In the event of a program elimination or termination, the same student population as above is notified and students are given the opportunity to complete their program with either the courses that are still being offered or course substitutes appropriate for the field.

The college also distributes talking points throughout the campus community and to the appropriate MUS leadership and other campuses as appropriate. The talking points are posted on the GFC MSU website and distributed to local media.

**2.D.5 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: a) Institutional mission and core themes; b) Entrance requirements and procedures; c) Grading policy; d) 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; e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; f) Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; g) Tuition, fees, and other program costs; h) Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; i) Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and j) Academic calendar.**

The college publishes an annual online academic catalog (Exhibit 2.61). The Office of the Registrar works with each department to make sure all material is up-to-date and accurate. The catalog is

archived after being published in the spring. Prior to the new catalog being published, the final version is archived online with all changes.

The academic catalog includes information such as college policies, mission, vision, and core themes, entrance requirements and procedures, support services, academic programs, and course outcomes. Program-specific web pages list program requirements, learning outcomes, course sequences, timelines to completion, faculty credentials, and information about tuition and fees. The catalog outlines refund policies, withdrawal procedures, and information about financial aid. The academic calendar is available on the website.

**2.D.6 Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on: a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered; b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.**

Each year the Office of the Registrar asks program directors and faculty members to review the catalog information for accuracy before it is finalized in April. From that publication the Registrar's office works closely with the Marketing and Admissions offices to ensure that all publications are accurate. The online catalog reflects specific licensure and unique requirements for specific career fields. In the program areas, students are given specific related material that will prepare them for entry into the workforce. Gainful employment information is available in the catalog for all programs that lead to a certificate.

**2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.**

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining student academic files. Paper files are located in a secure, fire-proof vault in Student Central. The Records Manager is responsible for file management, including maintaining admissions, records, and financial aid files and materials, and archiving and purging records based on a retention schedule. Student code of conduct or disciplinary records are maintained by the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean of Student Services' office in a separate location.

The college uses the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers file management and record retention recommendations as guidance for its current academic and admissions records retention schedule. The Financial Aid Office uses the Department of Education federal financial aid regulations and Montana state recommendations as guidance for the records retention, archiving, and purging schedule.

GFC MSU uses SCT Banner, a SunGard product, for maintaining electronic admissions, academic, and financial aid records. The servers for Banner are located at the campus of MSU in Bozeman and are maintained and backed up by IT services there.

All employees, including student workers, who have access to the electronic or paper records are required to watch a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training video and sign a

confidentiality statement. The Office of the Registrar continues to work on creating a system for an annual update of FERPA for all employees on campus or at a distance.

New, transfer, and readmitted students are notified of FERPA regulations during new student orientation/registration. Currently enrolled students are given a registration worksheet every semester prior to registration for their courses, which includes the campus FERPA policy. The academic catalog and the Student Handbook also contain the college's FERPA policy.

Students may find forms to release or restrict FERPA information on the college's website or obtain the form from any of the desks in Student Central (Exhibits 2.62, 2.63).

**2.D.8 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.**

The mission of the Financial Aid Office focuses on service to students and stewardship of funds. The Financial Aid Office assumes primary responsibility on behalf of the institution for compliance with government requirements. Many aspects of financial aid are mandated by federal and state entities that define the parameters within which institutional programs must operate. Therefore, the Financial Aid Office develops and reviews cost of attendance budgets that reflect student needs and packaging policies to extend the limited amount of funding to reach the maximum number of students. The office disseminates financial resources to students to assist them in achieving their educational goals from pre-enrollment through graduation while working with all constituents in a manner consistent with the goals of the institution. Information about available financial aid programs, student eligibility requirements, and procedures for applying for financial aid is published on the college website (Exhibit 2.64).

The college offers federal and state aid, including the federal Direct Student Loan program, Pell grants, SEOG grants, federal work-study, state work-study, Montana Baker Grant (MTAP), Montana Higher Education Grant, and Governor's Postsecondary Need Based Scholarships. The college also offers scholarship assistance from various sources and provides information on its website about scholarships administered by external entities. In 2013-2014, 66% of the student population received some form of financial aid.

To maintain accountability, in accordance with federal regulation, the Financial Aid Office submits the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) by October 1 each year. The information addressing any state funding received by the college such as the Baker Grant, Montana Higher Education Grant, and state work-study is available for the state to access via the MUS Data Warehouse. In addition, the financial aid office is responsible for contributing required information to the Department of Education via the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) report submitted by the college annually. The Financial Aid Office is also subject to internal audits performed by the state as well as federal program reviews.

**2.D.9 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution’s loan default rate.**

In loan borrowing, students are informed of their repayment obligations formally in three ways: student loan entrance counseling, the master promissory note, and student loan exit counseling. In accordance with federal regulations, all student loan borrowers are required to complete student loan entrance counseling and the master promissory note prior to receiving student loan funds. The student can meet entrance counseling requirements by attending a face-to-face entrance counseling session or by completing an online counseling session. The college offers several “in person” entrance counseling sessions at the beginning of each term where college staff or a representative from Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) reviews the repayment requirements, as well as deferment and forbearance options. If the student chooses the online option, the repayment information is presented in written format and the student is quizzed on its content. Once the student submits the online quiz, the information is sent electronically to the college and logged into the computer system as satisfied.

The master promissory note is also completed electronically online. The promissory note explains in detail the repayment obligations associated with borrowing student loan funds. Finally, students who end enrollment are also required to complete an exit counseling session. Again, this session can be completed online or in person. Several face-to-face sessions are scheduled at the end of each semester where college staff or SAF personnel remind students of their repayment options, as well as deferment and forbearance opportunities. The students may also complete this requirement by visiting the student loan website, where the exit counseling is available similar to the entrance counseling described earlier (Exhibit 2.65).

Students can incur repayment obligations if they completely withdraw before establishing eligibility for the full amount of their financial aid in a semester. Federal regulations require the Financial Aid Office to monitor complete withdrawals and unofficial withdrawals to determine if a student has attended classes sufficiently to have “earned” their federal financial aid. If a student completely withdraws before 60% of the semester’s class days have elapsed or receives all “F” grades at the end of the term due to nonattendance, the Financial Aid Office must perform a return of Title IV funds calculation. Depending on the results of that calculation, a student may owe a repayment of grant and/or loan funds that they were not eligible to receive that semester. A student who must repay aid is sent a letter by certified mail that explains the calculation and their requirement to repay funds.

The Financial Aid Office regularly monitors the college’s Cohort Default Rate (CDR). Although the national trend shows that the CDR is on the rise, the college has enjoyed low default rates in the most recent years, as shown in Table 2.D.9.

**Table 2.D.9: Cohort Default Rate**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2-year Official</b>	<b>3-year Official</b>
2008	4.1	N/A
2009	7.1	10.1
2010	8.6	12.0
2011	11.2	14.5

The college's CDR is consistently lower than the national CDR. Changes in the United States economy, however, as well as the shift to direct lending and a new three-year calculation versus a two year calculation beginning next year, contribute to the expectation of increased CDR. To monitor the students going into default and institute actions for default prevention, the college has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program (MGSLP) whereby the college provides borrower information to MGSLP so that they may help resolve delinquencies, provide financial literacy education services, and provide administrative services necessary and related to default prevention.

**2.D.10 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 requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.**

The Advising and Career Center is designed to provide holistic advising services, including course registration, referral to college and community resources, academic and career goal setting, academic planning, major exploration, problem-solving with students, and general student support. The Advising and Career Center comprises the director and four full-time professional advisors. The director serves approximately 150-170 advisees, and each full-time professional advisor serves approximately 300 advisees. Each week the advisors participate in professional development for one hour of dedicated time. This has provided important opportunities to expand their knowledge regarding advising-related topics. Advisors are assigned as academic division liaisons, participating in division meetings and receiving important division email information to remain up-to-date with program changes and other important information. Each advisor teaches one section of the COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student course each term, which allows them to connect with students and support students in their first semester.

To better support students who are placed on academic probation, a new probation process was implemented in Summer 2012. Students placed on probation are now required to meet with their advisor prior to registration in the following term, and a registration hold is placed on the student so that the self-serve Banner Web system alerts them to contact their advisor. Students must complete a Student Success Worksheet in addition to completing an academic plan. Additional meetings may be set up for later in the term to check in with the student regarding their progress.

The Financial Aid Office collaborates with the Advising and Career Center for students who do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and must appeal to receive financial aid. Students must meet with their academic advisor to complete the appeal paperwork. If a student does not meet SAP due to grade issues, the student will complete the Student Success Worksheet to discuss the factors that affected their success and their goals and plans for success in the next term, in addition to completing an academic plan. If the student has reached the maximum timeframe for financial aid eligibility, they will meet with their academic advisor to develop a plan to complete their program.

In Fall 2012, the Advising and Career Center began using the GradesFirst advising software. GradesFirst allows advisors to document all meetings with students and communicate with faculty,

students, and all necessary parties to support student success. In Fall 2013, the Student Success Alert program was introduced to the campus utilizing the early alert module in GradesFirst. Faculty are able to submit an alert on a student, which creates a case file and alert for the academic advisor and, if applicable, the Director of Disability Services. The advisor is able to contact the student and communicate outcomes with faculty to close the communication loop in helping at-risk students. Supporting videos and handbooks have been developed for faculty.

In the Fall of 2013, the college made COLS 103 Becoming a Successful College Student a graduation requirement for all new first-time students. The course was developed with a cross-campus group of individuals from both academic and student affairs. This course is designed to set the foundation for a successful college experience. The course covers school resources, study skills, time management, financial wellness, and contributes to student development and success by introducing advising to students through course assignments, such as “Meet Your Advisor.” As part of this assignment, students develop their individualized academic plan. The course serves approximately 875 students each academic year. Initial results indicate that students who complete COLS 103 have much higher retention rates, higher GPA, and higher feelings of connection to the college than students who do not complete it.

Each advisor in the Advising and Career Center has developed an online advising room utilizing the D2L learning management system. The D2L advising shell allows all students, particularly students who are attending the college online, to connect with their advisor and access advising information, such as the advising syllabus, catalog information, and academic planning forms. In addition, the four MSU campuses have implemented DegreeWorks, which is a degree audit and academic planning program. Students are able to audit their current program, conduct “What If?” scenarios of other programs to evaluate their status in other majors, and utilize an electronic academic plan to graduation that is developed with their academic advisor. These are supplementary means for defining, publishing, and increasing the availability of advising requirements and responsibilities to students.

#### **2.D.11 Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution’s mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.**

The college’s co-curricular activities follow student interests and tie closely with the mission and core values of the institution (Exhibit 2.66). A list of active clubs and contacts is kept by the Chief Student Affairs Officer/Associate Dean of Student Services, the Student Activities Coordinator, and the Associated Students of Great Falls College MSU (ASGFC MSU) to help students connect with clubs that meet their interests. Many programs of study also have student groups associated with them that support the curriculum and professional connections students can make while they are still students.

The overarching organization for student involvement is the ASGFC MSU, also called Student Government. This governing body has authority over the funds generated by the student activity fee and, with the approval of the Student Senate, provides money upon request to student clubs and organizations for activities and projects. The clubs and organizations must provide ASGFC MSU with a current roster of their members and advisors annually. Faculty or staff advisors play key roles in the clubs and in ensuring that all students have the opportunity to be involved outside of the classroom.

Opportunities for student involvement in co-curricular activities include Student Government, Phi Theta Kappa, Health Occupation Students of America, a Christian Bible Study group, a Latter Day Saints Student Association, groups for Practical Nursing and Emergency Medical Services students, and a Native American Student group. The college also has a Food Pantry and Community Garden supported by Student Government that helps meet the needs of students and provides a unique opportunity for volunteering. The goal of involving students in extra-curricular activities is to provide opportunities to serve so that they are empowered to grow and be a positive presence in the community, and to encourage student success and engagement.

**2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution’s mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.**

GFC MSU does not have student housing or food service to support student housing on campus. The mission of the GFC MSU Bookstore and Café is to provide students, staff, and faculty the materials needed to support the instructional goals and to provide convenience products. The Bookstore and Café is an integral part of the functioning of the college and is one of the main gathering hubs for the college community. The Bookstore and Café’s staff take pride in providing the highest quality customer service, defined as providing products to customers at a competitive price, maintaining a positive professional attitude, listening to the customer’s needs, resolving problems, and purchasing saleable products with the customers’ needs, interests, and wants in mind.

The Bookstore and Café maintains communication with all the college’s students, departments, faculty, and staff to ensure that all required and recommended textbooks, supplies, and general merchandise are available to students year round. To assist students with the ever-increasing cost of textbooks, the Bookstore strives to give the students the opportunity to purchase used textbooks, rentals, and EBooks whenever possible. To increase its stock of used textbooks, the Bookstore and Café has a textbook buy-back at the end of every semester. This not only increases used textbook inventory but also puts cash back into the students’ hands to assist with their future educational costs.

The GFC Bookstore and Café’s website ensures that all customers, on-campus and off-campus, have the same opportunities to purchase required and recommended textbooks, supplies, and general merchandise (Exhibit 2.67). Students can participate in the textbook buy-back program online. The Bookstore and Café’s hours of operation during fall and spring semesters are Monday through Thursday 7:30am to 7:00pm and Friday 7:30am to 5:00pm. During summer and intersessions the hours are Monday thru Friday 7:30am to 5:00pm.

**2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution’s mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.**

The college has no intercollegiate athletics/co-curricular programs.

**2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures 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.**

Each student's identity is confirmed using the Banner student integration system prior to establishing password security for all online interactions. All students have unique, secure usernames and passwords to access the campus learning management system for online courses (Desire2Learn) and other necessary services. There are not any current or projected charges to students associated with the identity verification process.

## **Standard 2.E Library and Information Resources**

### **2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution’s mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.**

The mission of the Weaver Library at GFC MSU is to support and enhance instruction and learning in a manner that is consistent with the institution’s philosophy and evolving programs. The library serves as the major information resource on campus. It contributes to the educational process and assists students in achieving success by maintaining a well-balanced collection of materials in a variety of formats and by providing knowledgeable staff to help patrons with their information needs. The library also exists to foster the broader educational ideals of life-long learning, information literacy, and intellectual freedom.

The Weaver Library holds and provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth and breadth to support the institution’s mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered. library collection development liaison areas are divided evenly between two full-time staff positions – the librarian, and the director of eLearning and Library Services. Collection development efforts follow a patron-driven acquisition method to adequately support academic programs and faculty. Library liaisons regularly touch base with faculty to ensure that the collection is meeting faculty curricula as well as research needs. Faculty, students, and staff may suggest materials for purchase via a form on the main library web page (Exhibit 2.68).

Collection data as of July 2014 are as follows:

- Print volumes: 9,167
- eBooks: 63,724
- AV items: 1,309
- Active print journal subscriptions: 69
- Active online full-text journal subscriptions: 67,936

Library services are very flexible and support college programs and services both on and off campus as well as online. Students, faculty, and staff can access online library resources 24/7 via the main library web page; library resources are also linked via the college learning management system Desire2Learn. The library facility averages more than 300 visitors per day. Library staff members provide troubleshooting support with computer issues, library research, and a variety of other services. Students, faculty, and staff are able to take advantage of global interlibrary lending and borrowing services through the library. In addition, reciprocal borrowing agreements exist between the other Montana State University campuses in Bozeman, Havre, and Billings and the University of Great Falls, a private university located across the street.

### **2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.**

The Library Procedure Manual is updated as necessary. The library gathers data and receives feedback from users in a variety of ways. Front gate count, website traffic, circulation, interlibrary loan, reference transaction, and other statistics are tracked. Library users regularly provide suggestions or feedback through the library email address as well as face-to-face directly to the director of eLearning and Library Services. Faculty, students, and staff may suggest materials or online resources for purchase via a form on the library web page, via the LibGuides, or via the library's Facebook page. The library staff incorporates these data on student, faculty, and staff feedback and database usage statistics, as well as desk support statistics, in the annual strategic goal planning process. The library contributes local data to national surveys including the Academic Library Trends survey and the CCSSE survey as well as IPEDS.

The Weaver Library Committee meets regularly throughout the academic year as needed. Membership includes students as well as faculty members from each academic division, adjunct and online faculty, and a member of the Great Falls community. Library staff serve on a variety of campus committees and obtain feedback from students, faculty, and staff as needed.

The director of eLearning and Library Services regularly attends the Faculty Senate and Curriculum Committee meetings. New curriculum request forms submitted to the Curriculum Committee require feedback from the Director of eLearning and Library Services, which ensures adequate library collection development support for new courses and programs.

**2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.**

The Weaver Library provides instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services. Four full-time library staff members are available to answer questions and instruct users face-to-face, over the phone, or online via the online chat platform during operating hours, which includes evening and weekend hours. Students and faculty may also make an appointment to meet with a librarian for more in-depth research assistance as needed.

The library staff provide information literacy instruction for all face-to-face and hybrid sections of WRIT 101 College Writing I and COLS 103 Becoming a Successful College Student, which is required for all new first-time students. These sessions include an introduction to research, including how to formulate a search strategy, Boolean logic, selecting an appropriate database, evaluating resources for credibility, citing sources, and integrating information into the research. Information literacy instruction is also promoted each semester and provided upon faculty request. Instruction was provided to over 40 course sections in the following discipline areas over the 2013-2014 fiscal year: education, college studies, nursing, dental hygiene, business, chemistry, writing, communication, and psychology. In addition, library staff members provide orientation for new staff and faculty.

The library staff participate in campus events including student open houses, the annual Higher Education Month celebration, and any other opportunities available to promote library services and materials. The library provides subject-specific LibGuides online research guides and creates customized subject guides as needed and requested by faculty for specific courses or programs (Exhibit 2.69). The library also uses social media tools such as Facebook to promote events, services, and new materials.

**2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.**

The Weaver Library staff tracks annual usage statistics and inventory. Library liaisons maintain regular contact with faculty to ensure adequacy of the collection. Faculty must review items selected for weeding prior to the item being permanently discarded from the collection. The library receives regular feedback and suggestions on library services and materials through the Library Committee as well as through email or in person at the library. The library has a Collection Development Policy and a comprehensive Library Procedure manual in place (Exhibit 2.70, 2.71). Database and full-text journal usage statistics are used to inform purchasing decisions for additional resources or replacement of current resources with more appropriate tools.

Library staff are carefully trained to protect user data, and library materials are barcoded, labeled, and stamped with identifying property information. Library materials are kept secure through a 3M RFID security system. Library policies are clearly posted on the campus website as well as in the physical library facility. Databases accessed off-campus require authentication through EZ Proxy, an authentication software that validates the individual's affiliation with GFC MSU.

The Weaver Library maintains strong cooperative database purchasing agreements with the other academic libraries in the Montana State University system. The Director of eLearning and Library Services meets monthly via phone with the other MSU library directors to discuss consortia purchases and agreements. The Weaver Library also continues to provide access to resources provided at little or no cost by the Montana State Library. Users must authenticate into these online resources through the EZ Proxy server.

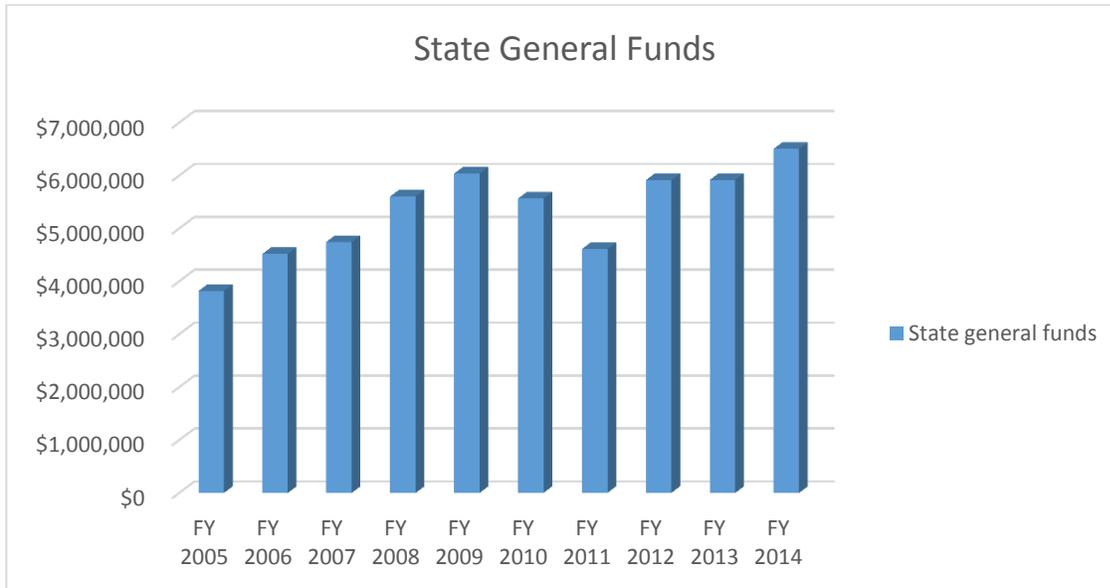
**Standard 2.F Financial Resources**

**2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.**

Great Falls College MSU’s revenues are monitored by senior-level administrators for adequacy and stability. Total fiscal year 2014 revenues amounted to \$21.7 million compared to expenses of \$21.8 million. Primary sources of revenue during fiscal year 2014 were student tuition and fees (\$4.2 million), state general funds (\$6.5 million), auxiliary revenue (\$1.6 million), federal student financial aid funds (\$4.3 million), and grants and contracts (\$1.74 million).

Over the 10-year period of fiscal years 2005 through 2014, state general fund contributions have increased more than 41 percent. See Table 2.F.1a.

**Table 2.F.1.a State General Funds**



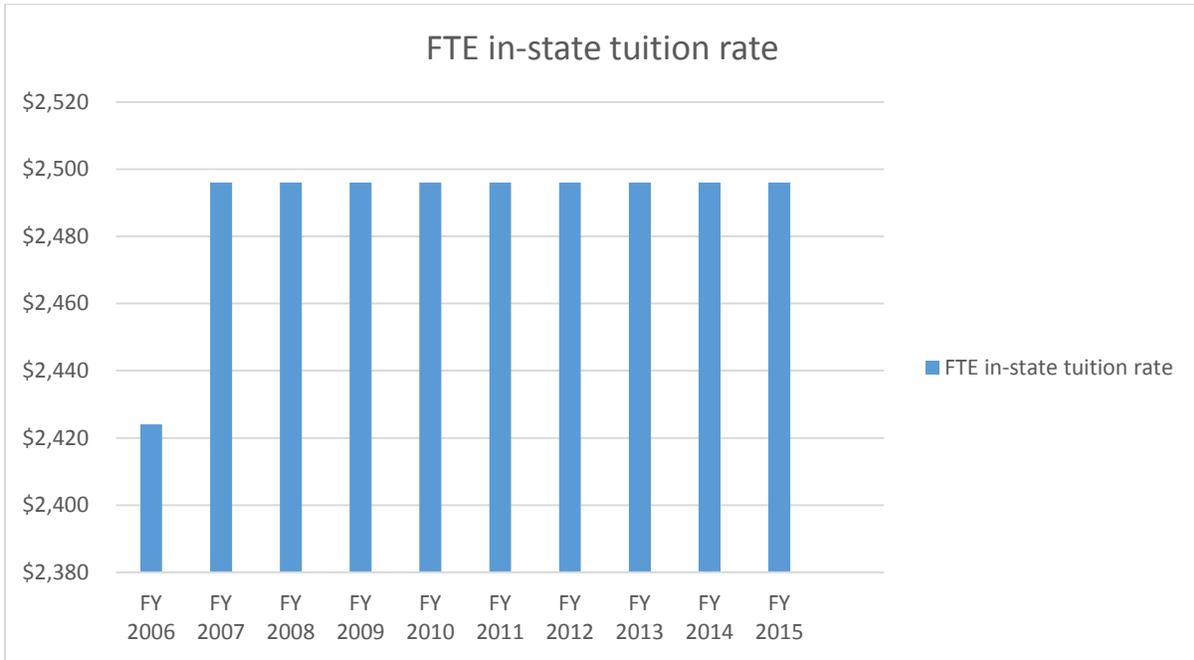
	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
State General Funds	\$3,816,979	\$4,517,491	\$4,744,049	\$5,603,818	\$6,035,155

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
State General Funds	\$5,563,011	\$4,608,739	\$5,910,068	\$5,914,015	\$6,502,951

State funding has finally regained losses from 2010 and 2011 to return to levels not seen since 2009.

As part of the attempt to increase enrollment of Montanans in higher education, GFC MSU has not increased tuition rates for several consecutive years. See Table 2.F.1.b.

**Table 2.F.1.b. FTE In-State Tuition**

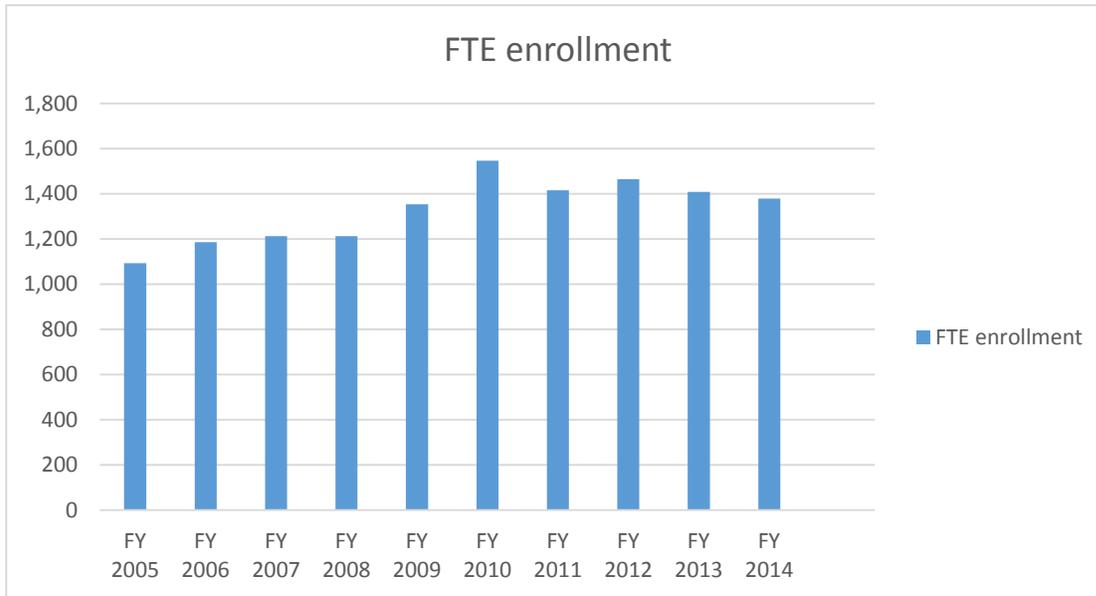


	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
FTE in-state tuition rate	\$2,424	\$2,496	\$2,496	\$2,496	\$2,496

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
FTE in-state tuition rate	\$2,496	\$2,496	\$2,496	\$2,496	\$2,496

Enrollment at Great Falls College MSU has recently seen a decline. See Table 2.F.1.c.

**Table 2.F.1.c. FTE Enrollment**



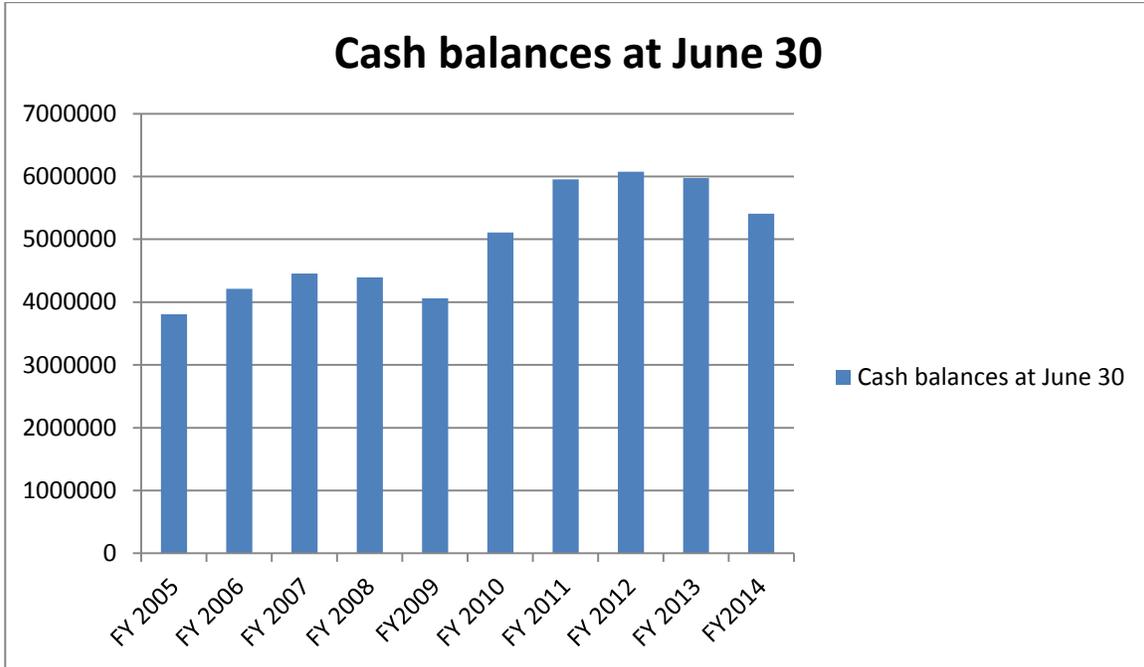
	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
FTE enrollment	1,093	1,186	1,213	1,213	1,353

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
FTE enrollment	1,547	1,415	1,465	1,409	1,379

As of July 1, 2010, (fiscal year 2011), the Gallatin College Programs, which previously operated under the auspices of Great Falls College MSU as the College of Technology in Bozeman, was transferred to Montana State University, resulting in a decrease of 228 FTE. The Great Falls campus, however, increased by 96 FTE over the 2010 fiscal year, yielding a net decrease of 132 FTE from 1,547 FTE in fiscal year 2010 to 1,415 in fiscal year 2011. (Note that the table above includes the Gallatin College students until 2010).

Cash balances have remained healthy over the past decade and cash flows have been positive during the same period.

**Table 2.F.1.d. Cash Balances at June 30, 2014**



	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Cash balances at June 30	\$3,806,789	\$4,211,320	\$4,452,601	\$4,395,292	\$4,060,577

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Cash balances at June 30	\$5,108,724	\$5,956,683	\$6,075,967	\$5,974,046	\$5,405,742

The college has also maintained a reserve fund, in accordance with Board of Regents policy 901.15, which allows for unexpected revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures (Exhibit 2.72). As of June 30, 2014, the reserve totaled \$847,466. This includes a one-time-only funding of \$325,000 from the Montana State Governor’s Office to expand our welding program.

Funds to be invested are pooled and managed by the Montana Short-Term Investment Program. The college has no debt.

**2.F.2 Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.**

As an MUS institution, the college receives appropriated revenue figures each biennial period based on legislative allocation from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, in cooperation with MSU in Bozeman and the State, and there is little flexibility in adjustment for those revenues. Based on historical trends in higher education, program enrollment projections, workforce demands, and demographic data, tuition revenue is projected as realistically as possible each fiscal year. These

two revenue sources make up the majority of what becomes the general operating budget for the college.

Beginning in late fall of each fiscal year, budget sheets are sent out to each GFC MSU division from the CFO for completion. The budget sheets contain four years of actual expenditures for each department, as well as the previous year's budget projections. This historical information assists departments and divisions in developing realistic budget projections for the following fiscal year. Once the forms are completed and forwarded to the College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (CPBAC), committee members analyze each department budget for increases exceeding 5 percent. Those departments are approached individually and asked to provide justification for the deviation.

Budgets for grants are established by the grant writer, in consultation with the grants accountant and controller, and are based on revenue information received from the granting agency. Expenditures are budgeted in compliance with the guidelines outlined for each grant, and include personnel services and operating expenses.

**2.F.3 The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.**

Since the inception of the College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (CPBAC) in October 2006, major constituencies on campus have participated in shared governance throughout the budgeting, planning, and assessment process (Exhibits 2.72 and 2.73). A CPBAC webpage was developed and offers a brief overview of the role that this committee has on campus (Exhibit 2.74). The site also has various links to documents and materials involving CPBAC, including a policy established in January 2008 and revised in January 2011. A flexible timeline, which includes guidelines and processes, is available in the documents section of the webpage. This committee's membership includes 24 voting members and 3 non-voting members and meets as needed, but at least four times throughout the fiscal year. All CPBAC meetings are open to the public. Minutes and agendas are posted on the CPBAC web site.

**2.F.4 The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.**

Great Falls College MSU uses the Ellucian Higher Education Banner (Banner) suite of integrated software applications to manage its administrative technology systems. The finance module meets all Generally Accepted Accounting Requirements (GAAP) and addresses the latest updates in accounting positions and financial reporting standards as established by the Financial Accounting Standards Boards (FASB) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). The college regularly installs updates and upgrades to Banner system modules in order to maintain compliance with new and changing laws or regulations and to remain accurately integrated with the companion modules.

The information technology staff onsite, as well as the computer programming analysts at our parent campus MSU in Bozeman, are extremely knowledgeable about the Banner system and work with

users in:

- selecting and integrating third-party software and interfaces, accounts receivable payments and financial aid disbursements,
- designing and developing routine tasks and reports to enhance Banner capabilities,
- maintaining a data warehouse, and
- developing third-party reporting tools that enable end users to design specific financial and data analysis reports or to assign parameters to a programmer-designed report.

The controller of the college controls access to the financial system through role-based security profiles to ensure that users have access only to the information they need to perform their job duties. Access can range from different levels of “read only,” “update,” or “add or delete” status.

All Banner financial processes are scheduled to align with the academic calendar, the fiscal year calendar, and the 12-month calendar. Financial processes are coordinated so that the college will meet all required obligations, as directed by college policy as well as the Board of Regents.

**2.F.5 Capital budgets reflect the institution’s mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution’s mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.**

Capital budget requests are created using the college’s strategic plans, academic priorities, and the campus master plan. These requests are submitted to MSU in Bozeman and combined with all requests from MSU schools. This combined long-range building plan is then prioritized by a committee at MSU in Bozeman before submission to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). OCHE combines all requests from higher education units in the state and reprioritizes the list at that level. These requests are then forwarded to the State Legislature for consideration.

Academic equipment (capital and non-capital) requests are submitted to the Equipment Fee Committee each spring for consideration. Criteria established by the committee include needs of the program, technological advances, age of current equipment, the number of individuals impacted, previous funding, etc.

Great Falls College MSU currently has no debt and does not anticipate using that avenue of funding in the near future.

**2.F.6 The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.**

The auxiliary operations of Great Falls College MSU consist of the wholly-owned bookstore and food court. Both are under common management and fall under the purview of the controller, who reports to the CFO/Associate Dean for Administration and Finance. The general operations of the

college do not contribute to the support of the auxiliary operations, nor do the bookstore and food court contribute to the college's general operations. Starting in FY 2015, the bookstore is contributing \$50,000 towards scholarships, renewable annually as operation permits.

All funds generated by the auxiliaries are used for employee expenses, new equipment, and updating and remodeling expenses incurred by the auxiliaries. In addition, bookstore funds are used to fund textbook buybacks at the end of each semester. These buyback functions return nearly \$200,000 to students annually.

**2.F.7 For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.**

The Legislative Audit Division of the State of Montana performs annual audits on the consolidated Montana State University financial statements. The consolidated financial statements include Montana State University, Montana State University–Billings, Montana State University–Northern, and Great Falls College MSU. Internal controls are reviewed during each audit. No adverse audit opinions have been issued (Exhibit 2.75). Audit reports, generally performed in the fall following the completion of the fiscal year, are considered by the Legislative Audit Committee in a public meeting shortly after the audit is completed.

Members of administration and staff are included in each audit as subject matter, questions, and recommendations dictate. All reports and recommendations are reviewed by senior administration. Responses are formulated by the Controller, reviewed by senior administration officials, and relayed to the Internal Auditor at Montana State University for inclusion with the four-campus response to each audit. In turn, audit results are reported to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Montana Board of Regents.

**2.F.8 All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.**

Great Falls College MSU recognizes the need for well-coordinated philanthropic efforts and fundraising initiatives to support the multiple needs of the college and the academic endeavors of its students. The fundraising activities of the college are detailed in Policy 504.1 (Exhibit 2.76).

For the purposes of investment and providing proper and ethical recognition for all charitable gifts, the college has a working agreement with the MSU Alumni Foundation, which is the designated philanthropic organization that supports Montana State University. The MSU Alumni Foundation is a separately incorporated entity, organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), governed by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws affected by the Board of Directors of the Foundation, Board of Directors of the Alumni Association, and Board of Governors of the Alumni Foundation on September 9, 2011, to enhance the continuing excellence of the University

by attracting financial support and being prudent stewards of its resources and friendships. The foundation has agreed to accept and manage gifts made to GFC MSU in compliance with the MSU Alumni Foundation Gift Policies and other governing documents (Exhibit 2.77).

The relationship between GFC MSU and the MSU Alumni Foundation is detailed in an operating agreement that has been agreed upon in principle and is pending approval from the Montana Board of Regents, in accordance with MUS Policy 901.9 detailing the relationship between system campuses and affiliated foundations (Exhibit 2.78).

Fundraising activities are coordinated, managed, and staffed by the director of Development, Communications, and Marketing, an employee of GFC MSU. The director is responsible for securing financial gifts from individuals, families, private foundations, corporate groups, and other philanthropic entities to benefit GFC MSU. The director promotes the private giving needs and planned priorities of the college to prospective donors. These private giving needs and planned priorities are determined by the CEO/Dean of GFC MSU, with input from the Executive Team and the Development Board.

The director of Development, Communications, and Marketing reports to the CEO/dean and is supported by guidance and involvement from volunteers who serve on the college's Development Board, as established by policy (Exhibit 2.79). The mission of the Development Board is to "enhance Montana's future through increased access to public higher education by advancing the philanthropic support of student scholarships, academic programs, and select campus projects at Great Falls College MSU." The Development Board is charged with advancing the philanthropic activities of the college to ensure that students are provided the privately-funded financial assistance needed to attend college, and that they experience high-quality programs, services, and facilities. The Development Board provides leadership and guidance to the college, serves in an advisory capacity to the CEO/Dean, advocates on behalf of GFC MSU, and leads the college's charge to generate private resources on behalf of students.

Within this capacity, the Development Board will function to meet the following objectives:

- serve as advocates for GFC MSU in the community,
- identify prospective donors for the college to solicit in support of the college,
- cultivate and create relationships for the college with various segments of the community,
- review and approve campus policies related to private giving at the college, and
- identify and set near-term and long-term goals to improve the college's private giving.

The Development Board may consist of up to 15 members at any one time, who serve alternating three-year terms. Board members are appointed by the CEO/Dean, and are ratified by the board. Members may serve multiple terms. The board also includes the CEO/Dean of the college and the Director of Development as ex-officio members. The board elects a chair, vice chair, and an at-large member to serve as the Executive Committee on an annual basis. Officers may serve multiple terms as determined by the board.

## **Standard 2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure**

### **Physical Infrastructure**

**2.G.1 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.**

Great Falls College MSU incorporates many different services and programs for students, faculty, staff, and the Great Falls community. The Facilities Services Department operates to provide a safe, clean, and secure atmosphere. The college campus consists of a 134,650 square foot main building, a 12,392 square foot trades building, a 6,505 square foot child development building, and one small storage facility.

#### **Accessibility**

The main building is equipped with elevators and ramps, and is 95% accessible by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. One small second-floor hallway is not accessible, but classes are not scheduled there if any student has difficulty with the stairs. The Trades Building is 100% accessible. Restrooms are ADA compliant.

#### **Safety**

All classrooms on campus are equipped with telephones for emergency calls. Recent additions are the Emergency Notification Systems with an upgraded phone system that has Voice Over Internet Protocol software. A Voice Over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, phone is a telephone specifically designed to convert standard telephone audio into a digital format that can be transmitted to the Internet, and by converting incoming digital phone signals from Internet to standard telephone audio. Labs containing potentially hazardous materials or equipment are equipped with appropriate safety equipment (e.g., washing stations).

#### **Security**

Individual classrooms and offices are kept locked when not in use or after hours. Exterior doors remain unlocked during the day and scheduled evening hours; entry is restricted during holidays and on weekends, according to published schedules. The college contracts with a private security company to be present in the evenings and weekends.

#### **Facilities**

The campus has 17 standard classrooms (including one tiered classroom with a capacity of 90), 8 computer classrooms, and 25 specialty classrooms and labs (e.g., nursing, physical therapy, chemistry, biology, microbiology, Sandbox technology, carpentry, etc.) Thirteen classrooms and the Academic Success Center have been updated with white boards and smart projectors. These additions enhance faculty innovation and student participation and productivity. Specialty classrooms are equipped with appropriate lab or clinical teaching equipment. Sixteen classrooms have been updated with foldable and rolling desks and chairs that allow for easy room configuration to foster various types of interactive learning sessions. Adjustable podiums have also been added to the classrooms to allow more efficiency. The South Court student gathering space has been updated

with rolling tables and chairs, allowing for easier flexibility and flow. The common area outside the Advising and Career Center, Disability Services, and the Academic Success Center has been updated with new furniture, couches, tables, and chairs to allow for an environment conducive to studying and the ability to aid students with their specific tutoring and learning needs. A collaborative work station has been added outside of the Dental Department, allowing students to connect their laptop to the projection system so that the work being done on the computer is projected onto a flat-screen and students can work together on group projects.

The computer classrooms are available for student use when they are not being used as a classroom. The library also has student computers available for use. Wireless internet access is available to students, visitors, and staff in all areas of the building. In addition, the area outside the bookstore is equipped with kiosk-style computers. Printers are available from these kiosks, in the library, and in the computer classrooms.

Great Falls College MSU is now the home to one of only three online science labs in North America. The North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) lab increases student engagement in online science courses and allows more students, especially ones who may have difficulty taking classes on campus, to utilize the science programs. Supported through a Department of Labor TAACCCT grant, NANSLO is in association with an international network of science labs that utilize remote and web-based technologies to allow students the opportunities to participate in real science experiments with lab equipment that they control remotely. This lab serves not only our students but also students at three other participating institutions: Flathead Valley Community College in Montana, Lake Area Technical Institute in South Dakota, and Laramie County Community College in Wyoming.

The basement of the main building contains a 10,000 square foot simulated hospital, with hospital equipment and programmable simulation manikins. The SIM Hospital has had room improvements since the last report, with the addition of an independent classroom where an open format had previously existed. A second operating room was also added, which allows more availability for training in the operating area.

The campus has added a child development center, Bright Beginnings Learning Center, which opened in January of 2013. The 6,505 square foot facility is located just south of the college. The Center serves families with children ages 0-5 on a full- and part-time basis.

The college Veterans Center was expanded to three times the previous space with additional computer stations because the need for such services has increased. The Issksiniip Native American Enrichment Center was added to the college in February 2013.

Student Central (which houses admissions, registrar, financial aid, and student accounts offices), the Weaver Library, and the eLearning Division are all located just inside the building's main entrance. An Information Desk is staffed by student workers who direct individuals to appropriate locations and assist with computer-related technical questions. The food court and bookstore are joint operations in the center of the main building. This area also has tables and chairs and serves as a study area, gathering place, and dining area.

### **2.G.2 The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.**

Great Falls College MSU is diligent about safety. The college meets and communicates safety standards in several key ways: safety training programs, a Hazardous Waste Disposal system, annual inspections with the Great Falls Fire/Rescue Department, and cooperative trainings with the Great Falls Police Department and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The Hazard Communication Program ensures compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200, also known as the Employee Right to Know Law).

Great Falls College MSU has a Campus Safety Committee and the Campus Safety Officer. Campus Safety falls into several categories that cover a range of safety issues, including:

- Hazardous Materials – receiving
- Waste: Hazardous Disposal (sharps disposal by private contractor)
- Waste: Infectious (autoclaved before disposal) (Cadaver program)
- Spill Response: Chemical

### **2.G.3 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.**

The college has had a master plan for physical development in place since 2005-2006. It was revised once in 2011 with assistance from a professional architectural firm (Exhibit 2.80). Shortly thereafter there was a change in leadership at the college and since the college is beginning the process of formulating a new Strategic Plan, a new Campus Master Plan will be developed at that same time.

The Trades and Industries Building and the Main Building are being remodeled to add twenty new welding stations. Since the Auto Body program is no longer offered, that space in the Main Building will become the new Carpentry area and will include a lab, classroom, and storage and office space, renovated for Industrial Tech in this area. The Welding program will expand into the 3,700 square feet currently used by the Carpentry program. The existing restrooms adjacent to the Welding Shop will be expanded to accommodate additional students. The estimated completion date is September 2015.

### **2.G.4 Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.**

Great Falls College MSU has \$30.1 million in equipment assets. This inventory includes projection equipment, books and maps, HVAC, building renovation, computers, communications equipment, software, data processing, furniture and fixtures, wind turbine, parking lot pavement, ovens, kitchen equipment, science lab equipment, X-ray/medical equipment, maintenance and grounds-keeping equipment, copy machines, office equipment, industrial trades equipment, and vehicles.

GFC MSU has been successful in replacing furniture in many classrooms throughout the facility and in many of the community areas. New and used equipment (fixed assets) is inventoried for tracking purposes.

Surplus property is recycled between departments if possible, and then redistributed back through a State Agency and is often sold at public auction by the State.

## **Technological Infrastructure**

### **2.G.5 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.**

The college provides an extensive technology platform to support both academic and administrative operations. All locations have robust access to internet resources, including wireless access for students as well as an information/help desk for student support. Computers, printers, servers, and other technical equipment are updated on a regular basis and recycled through several different programs. All past and recent technological advancements are installed and maintained by the IT Department. A computer fee pays for student use of computers and printers, and an equipment fee pays for interactive white boards, instructional equipment, and other miscellaneous items.

### **2.G.6 The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.**

The Information Technology Services and eLearning departments provide instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems. ITS provides training, help desk support, and classroom technology support. The faculty are provided support and training to use instructional software tools through the eLearning department. ITS also assists faculty with some lessons on topics such as maintaining computers, protecting your computer, and other topics, and has hosted open lectures on various topics such as Windows 8, computer security, and other current event topics in the past. ITS provides one on one training in different software applications when appropriate or needed.

### **2.G.7 Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.**

Industry best practices and representative committees from the college's technology support staff and constituencies provide guidance for technological infrastructure planning. Information Technology Services also works very closely with the other MSU agencies to obtain system-level technologies whenever possible. GFC MSU has recently formed an IT Governance counsel to assist with IT decision-making in regards to both campus- and system-level priorities. The college's Chief Financial Officer and Chief Information Officer both sit on the MSU four-campus IT Governance

committee and vote on system-wide software and technology decisions such as customer relationship manager software, document imaging and workflow, Banner student information system decisions, and a variety of other projects.

**2.G.8 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.**

The college has established an aggressive technology update and equipment replacement plan to ensure technology is kept current and is keeping the total cost of ownership low while maintaining a current technological infrastructure (Exhibit 2.81). The college plans near-term investments in systems that enhance student success by enabling better planning and tracking of student progress.

“I wanted a career where  
job growth and security were  
things I never had to worry about.”

BRIAN C.  
RESPIRATORY CARE



# Institutional Planning



GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Institutional Planning

### **3.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.**

In the spring of 2006, Great Falls College MSU began a transformation, becoming an institution focused on the success of its students through institutional planning and a data-driven examination of all its programs and services. For GFC MSU, which started as a vocational school and then a technical college, this represented a major shift in philosophical focus. As with all major philosophical shifts, this required a great deal of discussion, experimentation, data collection, planning, understanding, and work on behalf of the students, staff, faculty, and administration. From 2008 to the present, the college as a community has made tremendous progress. GFC MSU has made great strides towards cultivating a deeper understanding of assessment, data collection, and purposeful planning across all constituencies. This has been successful because of the campus's commitment to setting measurable goals and targets, creating and utilizing interdisciplinary project teams, and cultivating a safe climate for innovation. In many ways this work continues as we seek to continually improve our data-driven planning processes and refine our focus as a comprehensive two-year college. This transformation continues to this day, building on the initial 2006 efforts to effect a deep change in the beliefs, norms, and structures of interactions between faculty, staff, and students. GFC MSU's efforts have been noted by many in the community, including the Great Falls Development Authority (Exhibit 3.0).

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the college reviewed and refined the college mission, vision, values, core themes, and core indicators. These new elements were approved by the college community and the Montana Board of Regents, and became the foundation upon which the college has built over the past six years.

The college's most recent five-year strategic plan was also developed during this time and was published in 2009 (Exhibit 3.01). The strategic plan was created with input from the entire campus community through a group exercise led by the CEO/Dean. The plan identified four strategic priorities with measurable goals. Those four strategic goals, also known as strategic priorities, include (1) increasing student transfer participation, (2) increasing adult student participation, (3) increasing high school participation, and (4) increasing success in developmental coursework. The fifth strategic priority, added in 2012, is to decrease the withdrawal rate.

These strategic priorities are monitored quarterly and reported annually via the institution Report Card (Exhibit 3.02). The college's strategic plan documents and provides the five strategic initiatives for the college that construct a framework for fulfilling the mission. These five strategic priorities, developed from the four institutional core themes, are subsequently measured by the 17 core indicators (Exhibit 3.03). Together, these core indicators guide decision-making and resource allocation to support the college and achieve the mission.

The college measures mission achievement through the assessment of institutional effectiveness and data collection. However, to fully achieve effectiveness, resource allocation and planning must be linked. The College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (CPBAC), a group consisting of stakeholders from across campus and open to the community, was formed to support the strategic

plan by gathering data and information to drive decision making and link the planning process to the allocation of campus resources. CPBAC was charged with communicating the budget, planning, assessment, and allocation process across campus; gathering and interpreting data to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the institution; leading the development of budget projections and strategic and operational plans; and working with leadership to allocate resources strategically to improve and support institutional effectiveness (Exhibit 3.04).

Two years into the strategic plan, Dr. Joe Shaffer became the CEO/Dean and coordinated a campus-wide effort to revisit the strategic plan. That effort resulted in an operational plan, called Common Ground. Common Ground became the institution's operational plan to support the mission of the college, building on and surpassing the former strategic plan. Common Ground was forward thinking, inspirational, and grounded in data collection that allowed for ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning (Exhibit 3.05).

The charge of Common Ground was to “turn our efforts towards an aggressive approach to accelerating our progress in becoming a high-performing institution with regards to student success. We have established the foundation, structured the organization, and now we have identified the work remaining in the following six areas.” With that charge, Common Ground established six areas, with each area having specific measureable goals and tasks. The six Common Ground Goals were: (1) Set & Achieve Institutional & Student Success Goals; (2) “Close the Loop” on the Assessment of Student Learning; (3) Strengthening Student Support Services and Programs; (4) Enhance & Strengthen Learning Process through Reform; (5) Strengthen External Linkages with K-12 & University Partners; and (6) Identify Key Points of Student Success & Challenges for Students. Each task and measureable goal was supported by an interdisciplinary implementation team that represented all campus constituencies. Overall progress was tracked through quarterly progress meetings. At the writing of this report, all the goals of Common Ground have been met and new practices or changes have been institutionalized (Exhibit 3.06).

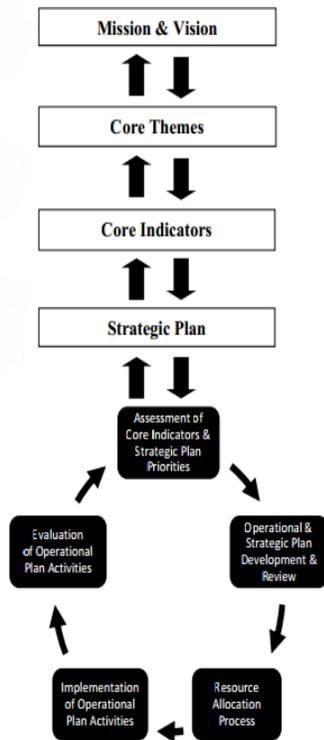
In 2012, college leadership changed once again. Together with the Executive Team, the new CEO/Dean Dr. Susan Wolff reviewed progress reports on the strategic plan and Common Ground. Dr. Wolff and her team decided to extend the final stages of the strategic plan and Common Ground, and to begin a new planning process after the culmination of the seven-year accreditation cycle. However, the new leadership has not waited idly for the cycle's end. Since 2012, leadership has continued planning and resource allocation in several ways:

- The college is developing a Strategic Enrollment Management plan to help guide enrollment, student support services, and admission targets. This process has involved professional development for staff, faculty, and administrators. The Director of Planning and the Registrar have led the establishment of a Strategic Enrollment Management team and report (Exhibit 3.07). This information will also be used to inform the new strategic planning process that began in January of 2015, with twenty-two campus-wide sessions to gather input for mission, vision, and core theme revision for year one of the accreditation cycle.
- Leadership has also responded to national and state conversations about two-year college reform and local needs by aligning its strategic plan with the following projects: Montana's College!Now and Mainstreet Montana initiatives. Data are collected monthly and reported to the Montana Governor's office. This information is also being compiled to assist in the

new strategic planning process that starts in January of 2015 (Exhibit 3.08).

- Finally, CPBAC continues its work under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer. The former CFO retired in 2012, leaving the CPBAC chair vacant. In 2013, a new CFO was hired. There was a period of acclimation with this change and campus-wide discussion about the membership and purpose of CPBAC operation. Though minor changes were made, CPBAC continues its important work as the foundation of GFC MSU’s data-driven decision-making and resource allocation process in driving mission fulfillment.

Figure 1.1  
Integrated Model Framework



Strategic planning and implementation is not a “top down” process. As a key part of the strategic planning process, information flows from the bottom up (Figure 1.1). The paragraphs above describe the institution-wide work toward mission fulfillment. However, all levels of the institution engage in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive data collection and planning that leads to fulfillment of the college mission.

Administration, faculty, staff, and students engage in reflection, review, assessment, operational planning, and integrated decision making. Students assess their progress towards class objectives through course evaluation of every course taught at GFC MSU. Originally this occurred through a standard form and process developed at MSU in Bozeman. Though sufficient, faculty desired more data about how students perceived their own progress towards course-level objectives and program-level outcomes in order to better drive course planning. Grassroots efforts developed to measure this input. Through discussion in Faculty Senate and other groups on campus, a new data-gathering assessment tool has been developed for use in course planning. The new assessment form is currently going through the campus and collective bargaining approval process for a pilot implementation in the fall of

2015. This is an excellent example of GFC MSU’s desire for continual improvement in data-driven planning and assessment.

Faculty assess their progress towards program goals through the Phase IV Course Assessment Planning and Outcome Form, which considers individual assignments, completion rates, student feedback, and grades for every class taught at GFC MSU (Exhibit 3.10). This form allows faculty to “close the loop” on class and program planning, and supports data-driven decision-making. At the program level these data are considered and used for goal setting and program revision through the Program Review process (Exhibits 3.11, 3.12, 3.13). This information is widely published through reports to the Montana Board of Regents (Exhibit 3.14). The academic divisions use these data to make strategic decisions with the guidance of the Division Directors, who meet daily for stand-up meetings, weekly for tactical meetings, and monthly for more intensive strategic meetings (Exhibit 3.15). Division Directors are responsible for leading the work of the academic divisions and implementing strategic directions, working with faculty, staff, program directors, project leads, and other stakeholders to assess progress toward goals, objectives, and outcomes. They also report accomplishments and identify areas of focus and priority for the coming year. This information

informs the strategic plan and contributes to mission fulfillment.

The culmination of these data collection, review, planning, and mission fulfillment processes is the annual Performance Report Card and Annual Report to the Community, which is presented and discussed with the college, Executive Team, CPBAC, Executive Advisory Council, and the Montana Board of Regents, and is posted on the college website and widely distributed to stakeholders (Exhibit 3.16).

**3.A.2 The institution’s comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.**

Great Falls College MSU’s College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (CPBAC) is charged with providing a framework for comprehensive planning and constituency input through a shared model used for decision making, planning, and resource allocation. Any member of the campus can request resources or add agenda items to the CPBAC meeting with the CPBAC Action Item Submission form (Exhibit 3.18). The committee membership includes representation from all college departments. All meetings are open to any member of the campus and to the public, who are free to join the discussion. Meetings are held quarterly or as needed, with meetings held as often as monthly during planning and resource allocation periods. A call for agenda items goes out campus-wide one month prior to the meeting; the meeting is published on the campus event calendar and minutes are posted on the CPBAC website following the meeting (Exhibit 3.19).

CPBAC provides comprehensive input into campus-wide planning, budget development, and analysis. The majority of CPBAC’s membership is ex officio; however, in 2013, the new CFO held open discussions to gather input on the membership, purpose, and governance of CPBAC. Of primary interest was whether membership was top-heavy with administration. It was unanimously decided that all current members should continue and that membership should be expanded to include all Division Directors and two additional staff-at-large positions. These discussions also resulted in affirmation that the CPBAC process worked well and was forward thinking, mission driven, and an important and positive practice embraced across the campus.

The CPBAC committee comprises both voting and non-voting members:

**Table 3.A.2 CPBAC Membership**

Committee Member	Title
Brittany Budeski	Director, Admissions & New Student Services
Dennis Devine	Director, Facilities Services
Jillian Ehnnot	Controller
Leanne Frost	Division Director, General Education & Transfer
Bruce Gottwig	Division Director, Business, Trades & Technology
Leah Habel	Director, Financial Aid
Frankie Lyons	Division Director, Health Sciences
Linda McNeill	Director, Contract Training
Katherine Meier	Director, Disability & Learning Support
Sandra Bauman	Director, Academic Success

Vacant	Director, Advising & Career Center
Kenneth Wardinsky	Chief Information Officer/Director of Planning
Laura Wight	Division Director, eLearning & Library Services
Teresa Rivenes	Director, Outreach & Community Enrichment
Mary Kay Bonilla	Executive Director, Human Resources
Lewis Card	Executive Director of Development, Communications & Marketing
Camille Consolvo	Chief Student Affairs Officer
Melvin Lehman	Executive Director, Business & Community Development (interim)
Heidi Pasek	Chief Academic Officer
Darryl Stevens	Chief Financial Officer
Carol Berg	Classified Staff at Large (testing center)
Cheryl McGee	Classified Staff at Large (facilities and maintenance)
Karen Vosen	Classified Staff at Large (eLearning and adjunct faculty)
Leonard Bates	Faculty Senate Chair
Teri Dwyer	Faculty Senate Representative
Erin Withrow	Student Government Representative

Non-Voting	Title
Grace Anderson	Research Analyst
Susan Wolff	CEO/Dean
Dena Wagner-Fossen	Registrar
Carmen Roberts	Budget Officer

The faculty senate representative and the classified staff-at-large positions are nominated from within their respective areas and appointed by the CEO/Dean.

In addition to CPBAC, there are other entities that play an important role in planning. The Great Falls College MSU Development Board is charged with advancing the philanthropic activities of the college to ultimately ensure that students are provided the privately funded financial assistance needed to attend college, and when they do, experience high-quality programs, services, and facilities. The Development Board provides leadership and guidance to the college, advises the CEO/Dean, advocates on behalf of Great Falls College MSU, and leads the college's charge to generate private resources on behalf of students (Exhibit 3.20). Their feedback is brought to CPBAC through the CEO/Dean and the Executive Director of Development, Communications, and Marketing.

All academic programs have program advisory committees, which help guide curriculum changes based upon industry input and changes and programmatic accreditation needs. The program director determines the membership of the committee and ensures that there is broad-based representation. These committees meet as needed and their feedback is brought to CPBAC and Curriculum Committee through the Division Directors.

Providing quality, relevant education for the community requires strong participation and contribution by key stakeholders. To this end, the Executive Advisory Council (EAC) provides a

“community voice” for guiding the work of GFC MSU. The Executive Advisory Council (EAC) includes select community leaders appointed by the CEO/Dean. Members are knowledgeable of the trends in their professions, aware of the needs of the community, engaged in the community, and committed to promoting higher education for residents of the College’s service area. The 40 EAC members serve staggered three-year terms, which can be renewed at the discretion of the CEO/Dean with concurrence by the EAC (Exhibit 3.21).

Through all of these processes, in a coordinated systematic effort, GFC MSU ensures that there is broad-based input from appropriate constituencies involved in the comprehensive planning process. As evidenced by the completion of the strategic plan and Common Ground, this process is moving GFC MSU toward mission fulfillment and thoughtful, data-driven decision-making.

### **3.A.3 The institution’s comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.**

The data used in the planning process includes institutional data from the student information system, survey data, regional population and demographic data, an economic impact study, and national benchmark data for comparison against peer institutions. Data are gathered by the Research Analyst, analyzed, and distributed to appropriate constituents (Exhibit 3.22).

Specific examples of the types of data used in the planning process include:

- Overall enrollment numbers (both credit and non-credit) that are calculated from the student information system. Both unduplicated headcounts and full-time equivalents (FTE) are utilized. In addition, the percentage of the student population that is enrolled in transfer programs and workforce programs, the percentage of students who are nontraditional (aged 25 and over), and the percentage of the student population who are high school students enrolled in dual enrollment coursework are tracked, analyzed, and distributed as often as weekly via email, monthly via Joint Directors meetings, and annually through the institutional Performance Report Card.
- The proportions of recent graduates who are employed within their field of study, which is tracked by administering a graduate survey each year. Recent graduates are asked about their current employment, plans to further their education, and current salary. These data are available at the program and institutional level.
- Regional market penetration rates, calculated using the most recent population estimates for the college’s service area (Cascade, Choteau, Fergus, Glacier, Judith Basin, Liberty, Meagher, Pondera, Teton, and Toole counties). These rates are calculated for both credit and non-credit enrollment.
- Many data points used in planning have national comparators. For example, the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) provides many data benchmarks. In other instances, data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and comparable measures are used as comparators to institutional data.

All of these data points are used and updated in the annual Performance Report Card produced by the Office of Institutional Research. This report card provides historical data on the 17 core indicators, in addition to annual goals and measures of performance for these indicators (Exhibit 3.23).

Economic impact studies use labor market data and workforce and regional economic analysis to help the college understand the connection between economies, people, and work.

Though not comprehensive, the list above provides an overview of a few selected data collection measures gathered by the Office of Institutional Research. As described above in section 3.A.1 and 3.A.2, data are also collected through students, faculty, departments, divisions, and committees as needed, reported and utilized through the CPBAC process, and widely disseminated in the annual Report to the Community and the annual Performance Report Card. All of these data will also be utilized during the mission and core themes revision, new strategic plan development, resource capacity and allocation planning, and institutional effectiveness and improvement plans throughout the cyclical process of data gathering, analysis, decision making, implementation, and mission fulfillment.

### **3.A.4 The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.**

The college is operating under the 2009-2013 strategic plan, which was extended in 2012 when college leadership changed and a new CEO/dean was installed into office. The 2011-2016 operating plan Common Ground is still in effect (Exhibit 3.24). Rather than implement a new strategic plan in the middle of a current operational plan and accreditation cycle, the new CEO/dean and her team elected to continue with the 2009-2013 strategic plan and Common Ground operational plan. At the time of this report, the college is gearing up for the mission revision and strategic planning process. As is appropriate for Year Seven of the accreditation cycle, nearly all initiatives from the current strategic and operational plans have been met and institutionalized.

The college fully realizes the correlation and connection between its fiscal, physical, and human resources, and the importance of aligning these with the processes of planning, data collection, assessment, and mission fulfillment. A major component of both the strategic and operational planning process is the college-wide planning and budget committee. As detailed in Standard 3.A.2, the CPBAC committee comprises a group of individuals representing all major constituencies on campus and oversees the work needed to ensure that the college's mission is on target, appropriately funded, and aligned with institutional priorities.

CPBAC is responsible for developing the long-range financial plan, developing criteria for budget allocations, receiving and reviewing budget allocation requests, reviewing and receiving fee requests, and providing a forum for college-wide dialogue on budget and finance issues. All requests for funding initiatives, personnel, or other projects are reviewed by CPBAC, where they are linked to strategic need, core priorities, and core indicators, and are ultimately linked to the college mission (Exhibits 3.25).

CPBAC is charged with providing shared governance throughout the budgeting, planning, and assessment process by (1) communicating the process to the campus stakeholders and constituencies, (2) gathering and interpreting institutional data to evaluate performance and effectiveness at the institution, division, and departmental levels, (3) leading the development and aggregation of budget projections and strategic and annual (operational) plans and (4) working with the college's leadership to allocate resources strategically to improve overall institutional effectiveness and achieve the priorities set forth by the strategic plan.

CPBAC has the following objectives:

- Annually assess data regarding institutional effectiveness and make recommendations to the Executive Team and CEO/Dean for areas of opportunity or concern to be addressed;
- Facilitate the development of annual budget projections;
- Facilitate the development of annual division and department goals and objectives geared at addressing the areas of opportunity or concern;
- In concert with the Executive Team, facilitate the strategic planning process of the college;
- Collect, aggregate, and evaluate annual budget projections and requests, as well as division/departmental goals and objectives, to assess the appropriateness and need;
- Recommend to the Executive Team annual institutional budgets and work plans as identified in the division/department annual goals and objectives;
- Consider requests for new allocation of fiscal, physical, and human resources not falling within the annual budget, planning, and analysis process and make recommendations to the Executive Team on the approval of such;
- Educate the campus community on the budget and planning processes; and
- Communicate processes and results of various CPBAC activities, meetings, and recommendations to all constituencies of the college.

CPBAC, chaired by the CFO, leads the development of the annual budget, which aligns resources with strategic priorities. Divisions and departments engage in budget planning, which starts with a public CPBAC review of the budget. The budget allocation publication is a public document and is made available for review; this helps ensure institutional transparency and awareness. Budget worksheets are then distributed to each department from the office of the CFO (Exhibit 3.26).

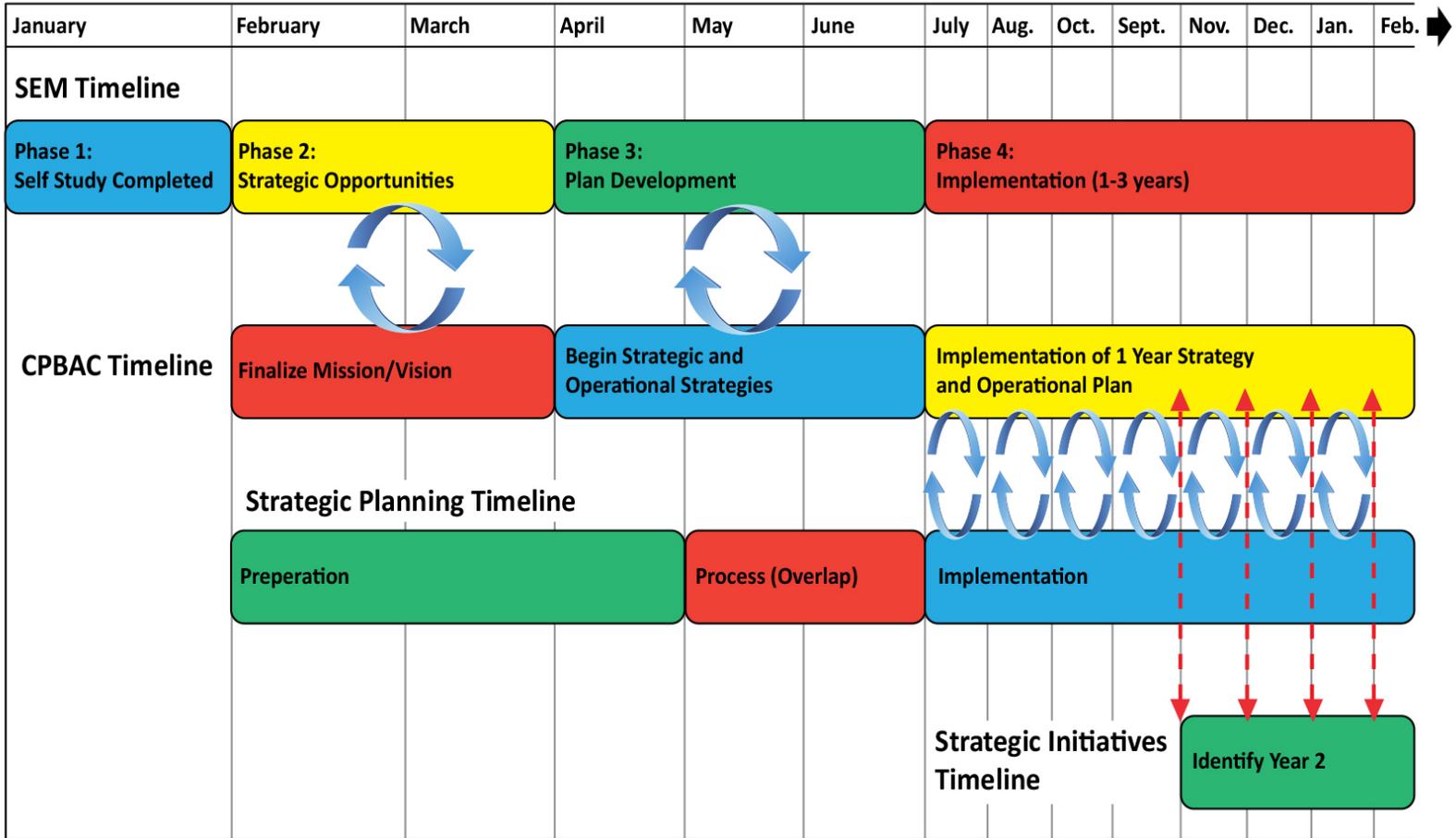
Each division and department is responsible for developing a one-year budget. In 2015, at the request of the CEO/Dean and CFO, each department are developing three-year rolling budget projection to allow for biennium state and institutional planning. Any request increased by more than two percent above the prior year's allocation must be justified by noting the reason and the institutional/strategic priority that supports the justification. This allows the CFO and CPBAC to make determinations and directly link resources to strategic priorities. Once budget worksheets are turned in, they are matched to the expected annual income projections and allocated accordingly. Discrepancies are discussed between the department and CFO and/or CPBAC if a balanced budget is not realized. All budgets are submitted to the Board of Regents and the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for final approval.

The budgeting process, which links resources to institutional priorities, is a public and transparent process. The annual budget is reviewed openly through CPBAC at least three times per year in a series of public CPBAC meetings: initially once the budget is developed (for CPBAC approval), midway through the year to monitor spending, and at the end of the year to report on each department's overall income and expenditures. Comprehensive budget reports are also run monthly and sent to the individual divisions and departments, where they are reviewed for accuracy and oversight.

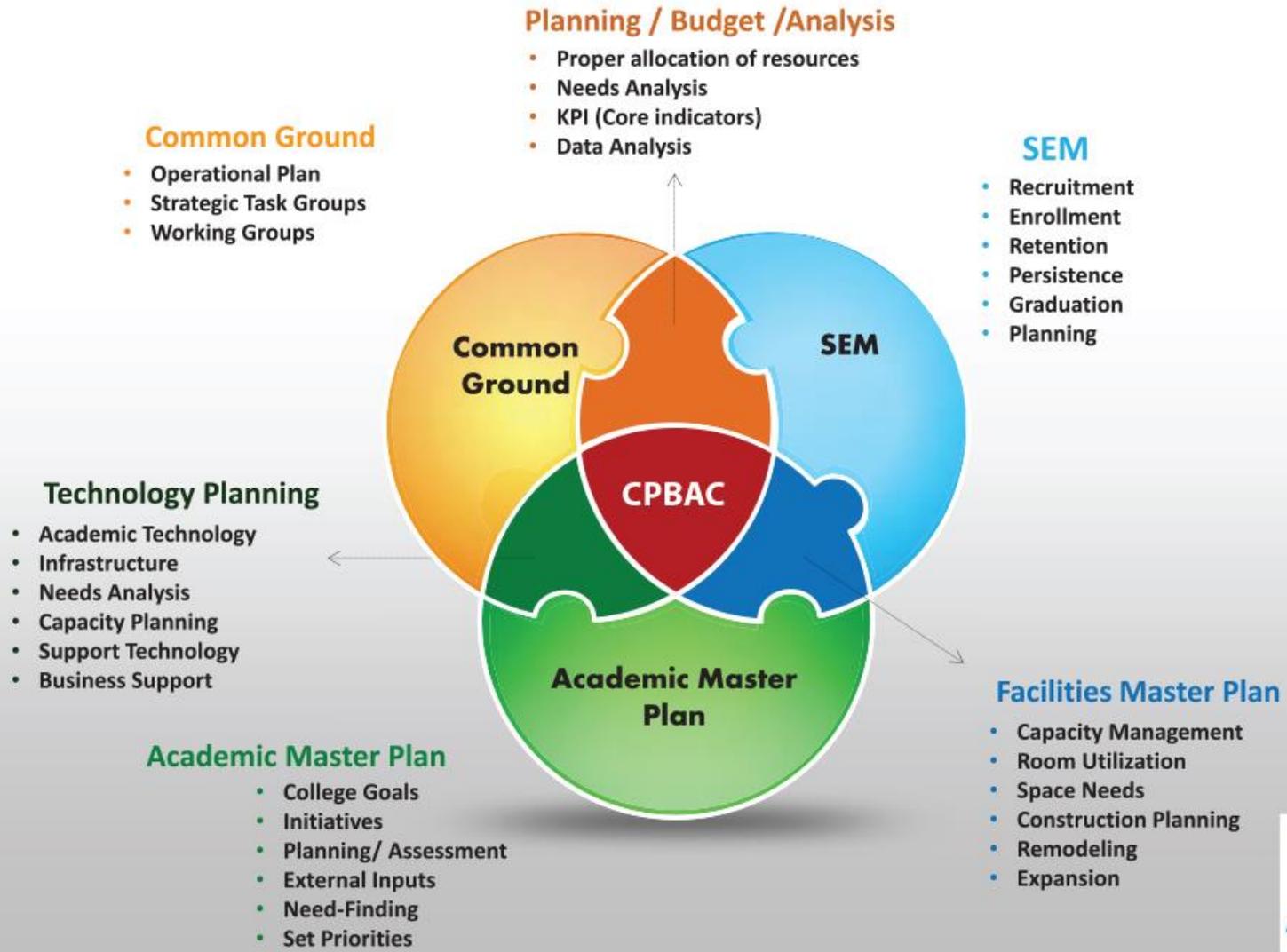
# GFC MSU Planning Timeline

2015

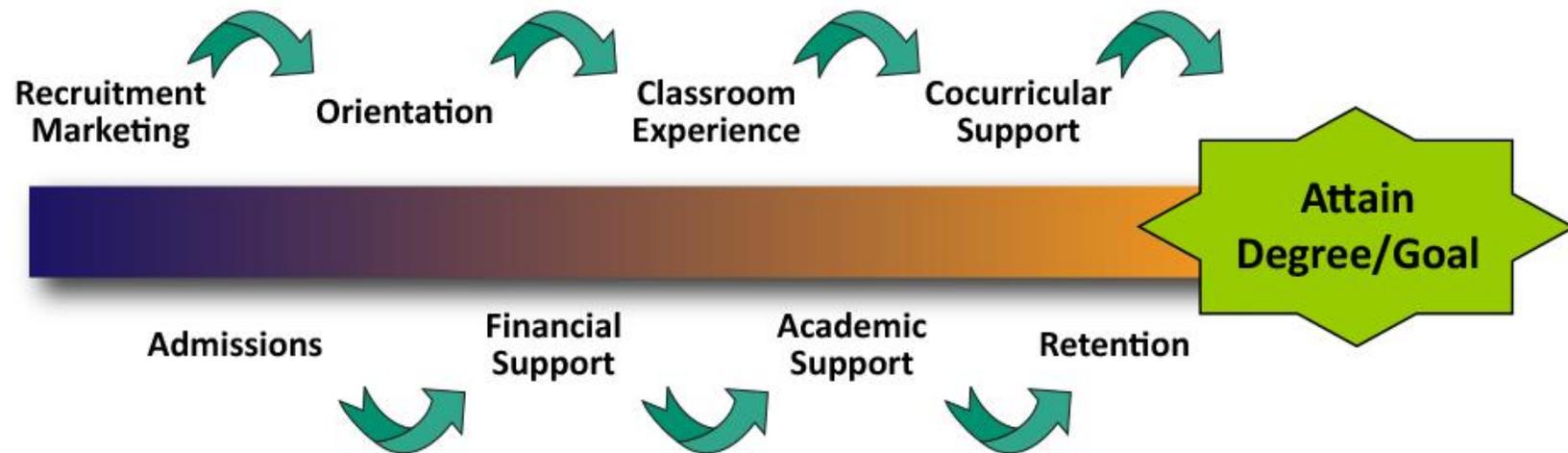
2016



# Putting it all together - Interactions 2014



# SEM and Student Success



### **3.A.5 The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.**

Emergency planning at Great Falls College MSU includes several different areas: planning, communication, training, partnerships, response, recovery, and preparedness.

The Crisis Response Team is an emergency planning committee that plans, implements, trains, and tests emergency procedures on campus. The committee includes administrators, facilities personnel, staff, and emergency management faculty (Exhibit 3.27). Members of the Crisis Response Team have attended FEMA disaster response courses and have utilized the Incident Command System (ICS) framework for handling ongoing campus-wide emergencies and their aftermaths. The emergency planning team continues to train in these areas as opportunities are available.

Under the direction of the CFO, who oversees facilities, the Crisis Response Team coordinates all aspects of emergency drills and actual emergencies. The campus also utilizes zone stewards during an emergency. Zone stewards are identified as key staff or faculty members who are normally in different sections of the building. The responsibilities of a zone steward include providing direction to individuals in their respective areas during an emergency or evacuation. These zone stewards help ensure that everyone is either safe in their areas or evacuated to the nearest exit. All zone stewards receive emergency preparedness training.

All faculty and staff are trained on emergency procedures and are provided a Staff Guidance for Incident Response card that can be easily used in the event of an emergency for quick reference (Exhibit 3.28). Incident Response cards and directions to the nearest fire exit can be found in all classrooms and offices on campus. GFC MSU has also incorporated emergency awareness training into its new employee orientation program. During this orientation, new faculty and staff learn emergency procedures, conduct a miniature tabletop exercise, and are informed of what to do during a variety of emergency situations. All employees are provided access to emergency awareness policies and procedures (Exhibit 3.29). GFC MSU offers free CPR, First Aid, and Winter Driving Safety courses to all personnel. Upon employment, new employees are also given a pair of cleats, which slip over regular footwear, for use in the harsh Montana winters.

The college also maintains active partnerships with several different emergency-response agencies, including the Cascade County Sheriff's Department, Great Falls City Police Department, Great Falls Fire Department, the Montana Air National Guard, and Malmstrom Air Force Base. The college has worked with county and state emergency management agencies and partners in developing its emergency planning procedures. These community partners also participate in drills and training.

Great Falls College MSU has held many year-round drills and events relating to safety training, such as multi-agency response situations including bomb threat, active shooter, and hostage situations, and a mass casualty evacuation. These exercises were performed with local law enforcement, military, and homeland security agents. Great Falls College also performs annual Fire Drills and participated in the Great Montana Shakeout event simulating a statewide earthquake in 2014.

The Information Technology department and Facilities Department have also worked closely to provide additional security measures. The college has recently deployed a new phone system utilizing VOIP. This system now allows all phones to be used as a PA system with either canned or live messages. The phone system is tied to the national E911 system and provides the room, name of caller, and address of the institution to the emergency operator during a 911 call. If a 911 call is placed on a campus-provided telephone, the Crisis Response Team is also notified of a 911 call at the time it is placed. The team can then access the recorded 911 call and immediately take action. This system has been tested with great success.

IP cameras are placed throughout the building as a deterrent to crime on campus and can be reviewed at any time by IT staff if an incident is reported. The campus is expanding its coverage by installing a closed circuit camera system that will monitor the exterior parking lots and walkways on the campus as well as all public entrances. The exterior camera project is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2015.

Additionally, the college uses several computer-based tools to inform and educate employees and students about emergency procedures and to manage emergencies. These tools include the campus website to house the campus emergency response manual; the AlcoholEdu software used to educate students about the risks involved in excessive alcohol consumption; the Haven software designed to provide students with information regarding Title IX compliance; the Maxient software program utilized for staff and faculty Title IX compliance, case management, and student conduct; and the GFC MSU alert messaging system that provides text and email messages to student and employees regarding immediate threats on campus (Exhibit 3.30). In addition, GFC MSU students also participate in drills and have access to emergency procedures via the Student Policy and Procedure Handbook, which is available in print or electronically (Exhibit 3.31). The college has established policies outlining the communication and dissemination of emergencies and crimes on campus (Exhibit 3.32).

The college also recognizes the need for systems to protect data and allow continued operations in the event of a disaster. The campus student information system is located at the MSU campus in Bozeman, Montana. This allows access to essential student, financial, HR, and financial aid information from off campus in the event of a large disaster. Local data are backed up on a regular basis and can be restored to alternative locations if the need arises. The IT department also utilizes virtualization on most of its servers, which offers faster recovery time if a disaster were to occur.

Additional campus safety initiatives also exist. The campus publishes its annual Clery Report online, which is available to the public (Exhibit 3.33). The campus also keeps records of any hazardous materials (HazMat) and makes those records available to the local fire department. Areas with HazMat materials also have additional safety precautions, including wash stations and emergency directions, in order to assist in the event of an emergency.



**“I was nervous because I had been out of school for so long, but you’re never too old to go to college.”**

**DAVID S.**  
NETWORK SUPPORT

# **Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement**



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement

## Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23

### Eligibility Requirement 22. Student Achievement

**The institution identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The institution engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of these learning outcomes.**

All programs at GFC MSU have clearly identified student learning outcomes. The institutional (the Eight Abilities) and program-level outcomes are published in the college catalog. In addition, each course has established student learning outcomes, and those course outcomes are aligned with and support the program-level student learning outcomes. The listing of outcomes and the alignment between the course and program outcomes can be found in every course syllabus in the “Outcomes Assessment Alignment Chart.” The Faculty Senate created a common syllabus template that all instructors use. The chart is part of the template.

### Eligibility Requirement 23. Institutional Effectiveness

**The institution systematically applies clearly defined evaluation and planning procedures, assesses the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, and periodically publishes the results to its constituencies. Through these processes it regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability.**

The College’s Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Committee (CPBAC) is the central shared venue for the planning process. Every year, the extent to which GFC MSU is achieving its mission is examined and published in the college’s Performance Report Card. The Report Card is presented at the State of the College addresses, included in the college’s annual report, published on the college’s website, and printed and distributed to key stakeholders, such as the Executive Advisory Council and the college’s Development Board. Both boards include community and business members. The Report Card contains data and goals for areas related to the college’s core themes and shows whether the goals are met, partially met, or not met. Goals for the individual areas on campus are then set based on the data presented in the Report Card. The Report to the Community includes summaries of other information that may be impacting the core indicators.

## Standards 3.B, 4.A, and 4.B: Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement

### Planning

**3.B.1** Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution’s comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme’s objectives.

**3.B.2** Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.

**3.B.3** Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

### Assessment

**4.A.1** The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

**4.A.2** The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.

**4.A.3** The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

**4.A.4** The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.

**4.A.5** The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.

**4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.**

### **Improvement**

**4.B.1 Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.**

**4.B.2 The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.**

The ultimate goal of the institution is to fulfill its mission. The mission statement, the backbone of all the college does, is as follows:

Our Mission is to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.

The core themes, which support the institutional mission, are as follows:

1. Workforce Development: Through applied programming our students successfully attain a credential leading to life-sustaining careers.
2. Transfer Preparation: Our students complete transfer programming and successfully transfer toward a four-year degree.
3. Academic Preparation: We prepare individuals for success in college coursework through developmental (remedial) education and adult basic education.
4. Community Development: As the community's college we support economic development through outreach, lifelong learning and active partnership.

As a component of this model, the college established a set of measures to assess the achievement of the college's four core themes. These measures, titled Core Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness, support everyday operations and assist the campus in continuous improvement toward mission attainment. The Core Indicators are as follows:

1. Participation and Enrollment (Credit-Bearing)
2. Regional Market Penetration Rates
3. Persistence (Retention)
4. Graduation Rates
5. Demonstration of Eight Abilities: Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Inquiry & Analysis, Aesthetic Engagement, Diversity, Technical Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Effective Citizenship
6. Success of Remedial Students in Developmental Coursework

7. Success of Remedial Students in Subsequent and Related Coursework
8. Workforce Degree Production
9. Job Placement and Earnings
10. Licensure and Certification Pass Rates
11. Employer Satisfaction with Graduates
12. Transfer Degree Production
13. Transfer Rates
14. Performance after Transfer
15. Participation (Professional & Continuing Education)
16. Contract Business Training
17. Success Rate in College Courses

The college uses the core indicators to move towards fulfillment of the core themes, in an effort to document student achievement and college success at fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals. The Year Seven review has shed light upon gaps in the way the college has planned, assessed, and improved upon its core themes. The way the core indicators are linked to core themes can in part be explained by the change in accreditation standards that occurred in 2010. Originally assessment processes were organized by core indicators, but the new accreditation standards placed greater focus on core themes. The college retroactively linked core indicators with core themes. This resulted in multiple core indicators being linked to more than one core theme for assessment and improvement. Therefore, the core themes are not entirely unique in the way they are measured, making it difficult to assess and improve upon individual core themes.

During the change of accreditation standards, GFC MSU was also put on an accelerated accreditation cycle and completed the seven year cycle in five years. This reduction of time is a factor in placing less emphasis on assessing and improving the core themes over time. Furthermore, GFC MSU underwent several leadership changes at the executive level during this same time period, which lead to inconsistency in assessment and improvement of core themes, core indicators, and strategic planning, and in updating the operational plan.

In the following sections, the four core themes will be described, followed by the seventeen core indicators. Then subsequent sections will examine how planning, assessment, and improvement were also conducted through five strategic priorities and an operational plan entitled Common Ground.

## Core Theme 1: Workforce Development

*“We currently have 43 graduates of the GFC MSU program. This represents just over 55% of our current crew of 57 fitters, welders and welder helpers!!!...The proof of your program and staff success as well as our overall confidence and commitment in GFC MSU grads should be clear with this single statistic. Please keep up the good work and we will keep hiring capable welders that will ensure our current and future success.”*

*~ Dan Rooney, General Manager of ADF (major employer in Great Falls, Montana)*

**Objective: Through applied programming our students successfully attain a credential leading to life-sustaining careers.**

Workforce Development directly supports responsiveness to the workforce needs of the greater Great Falls community and the economic growth of the GFC MSU service region. Workforce development includes the completion of any associate of applied science degree, certificate of applied science, certificate of technical studies (previously known as professional certificate), licensure, or workforce training programs. These programs are intended to prepare students for specific work areas by focusing on developing unique skill-sets for different positions. Workforce development also considers the employment of graduates and how successful they are in the workforce. This fulfills an important part of the mission which is “to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.”

### Planning

Planning for this theme is multifaceted and involves creating or adjusting career and technical programs to meet the needs of employers, recruiting and graduating students who are ready for the workforce by maintaining high quality degrees and certificates at a reasonable cost. To do this we must be innovative and enterprising in our planning of workforce development options. This is a process that is led by Division Directors, in coordination with Program Directors and/or Faculty Department Chairs under the supervision of the Chief Academic Officer (3.B.1).

Planning for new programs is done in a comprehensive manner at the local and state levels. Faculty monitor data collection and the achievement of course objectives and program outcomes to ensure that students obtain consistently high quality skills in relation to the Eight Abilities (core indicator 5, described in subsequent section). Faculty and program directors work with advisory committees to ensure that GFC MSU graduates have skills that employers are looking for. Occasionally, this leads to a need for new programs or revisions in current programs (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

Program additions are determined by engaging with industry and researching the local, regional, and national economic conditions. Sources for this research include job and economic projections for the county, state, and nation, provided by the Montana State and National Departments of Labor and other third party vendors, such as Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI). Once a need is determined, then documentation for program requests must include planning for resources, such as faculty, training, equipment, library support, etc., needed (Exhibit 4.01). All new or modified

programs must be submitted to the faculty-led campus Curriculum Committee for a comprehensive review by faculty. New programs must also be vetted by the CPBAC, the Executive Team, and the CEO/dean. Once approved, the proposed program is then submitted to the Board of Regents and must meet the requirements set forth by policy for two-year or certificate requirements as set by the Montana Board of Regents. Workforce programs must align with this core theme, overall strategic priorities, and operational plan, as well as describe any relationship that the program may have with other units of the Montana University System. If the program is a duplication of another system program, then the need must be justified (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

In 2014, GFC MSU aligned its educational programs with Main Street Montana, a governor-initiated project to create dynamic private/public partnerships and build and implement a business plan for Montana by Montanans. GFC MSU combined its core theme of workforce development with one of the five pillars of the Main Street Montana Project: “Train and educate tomorrow’s workforce today.” This pillar has three primary goals, which align to our workforce development core theme (Exhibit 4.02):

- Align education system with the needs of a changing economy,
- Engage private/public partnerships to provide job training, apprenticeship, and professional service opportunities, and
- Provide a lifetime continuum of quality education from pre-school through adulthood.

For the Main Street Montana project, all programs must undergo faculty-led program level assessment and analysis of course outcomes from multiple sources, including degree production, job placement and earnings, licensure, and certification pass rates. Employer satisfaction surveys are also distributed, gathered, and analyzed (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

GFC MSU is, or has been, a participant in the following grants and initiatives that all strive to create industry skills in the workforce:

- Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) Round II, Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO)
- TAACCCT Round III Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana’s Manufacturing and Energy Industries (SWAMMEI), renamed for marketing purposes to RevUP Montana
- Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant
- TAACCCT Round IV, Montana HealthCARE
- Carl Perkins
- Wind Montana

## **CHEO**

CHEO is designed to increase learning opportunities for students by creating online and hybrid classes that will prepare students for careers in healthcare. At GFC MSU, two prerequisite classes for allied healthcare programs have been created in an online or hybrid format through the grant: CHMY 121 Introduction to General Chemistry and BIOH 104 Basic Human Biology. The CHEO grant has been working in tandem with the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO). GFC MSU is one of only three NANSLO nodes in North America. Through remote

web-based science lab technology, distance students can complete remote labs that involve a compound microscope with robotic slide loaders and spectrophotometers with temperature-controlled cuvette holders. More than 250 students have used the lab since September 2014, when it became fully functional. The NANSLO labs have been used in one chemistry and two biology classes for students on and off GFC MSU's campus and at other colleges and schools. Through the CHEO grant, the college recently purchased a high fidelity 3-G simulated mannequin that can be used for remote experiences for students in CHEO-related fields, including nursing, respiratory care, medical assisting, and emergency medical services (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

A grant-funded career coach helps students prepare for jobs in the healthcare fields. The career coach has also been instrumental in reinvigorating the college's Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA) and in organizing a Healthcare Job Connections Fair to connect students and employers. Healthcare students nearing graduation are coached in resume-building and interviewing techniques, prior to meeting potential employers at the Job Connections event (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

### **Strengthening Workforce Alignment in the Manufacturing and Energy Industries (SWAMMEI) or RevUP Montana**

Labor market projections of 24,390 new jobs in manufacturing and more than 6,000 in the energy industry by 2021 led to this statewide project to meet those needs. SWAMMEI or *RevUP Montana* is designed to help two-year educational institutions meet workforce needs by aligning curriculum with industry-recognized credentials and providing opportunities for on-the-job training (Exhibit 4.03). As part of the grant, GFC MSU is expanding its Welding and Fabrication Technology program and working with other two-year institutions to provide welding and fabrication instruction at a distance. The college recently purchased a mobile welding trailer that will become a mobile welding instruction and testing lab to serve Montana students at a distance (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

Through the SWAMMEI grant, GFC MSU hired a workforce navigator to build relationships between unemployed/underemployed workers and businesses needing skilled laborers. Part of the relationship-building is to introduce such workers to training programs, like the Welding and Fabrication Technology program at GFC MSU. The SWAMMEI grant is also providing college coaching to students in manufacturing and energy related programs to help improve their success rate and attainment of a Certificate of Applied Science (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

The changes brought about by this project will result in the following (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3):

- Streamlined funding and support services available to students,
- Enhancement of recruitment and placement in select program,
- Integration of industry-recognized credentials (e.g. American Welding Society and Canadian Welding Bureau) into colleges' traditional curriculum, creating opportunity for students to earn a degree and third-party evaluation of skill-sets, and
- Enhancement of new and existing apprenticeship opportunities for students.

### **EDA Grant Welding Expansion**

Regional industry projections of an overwhelming need for welders to meet the needs of the Bakken oil fields in the United States and the Canadian oil industry led to a GFC MSU grant project, funded

by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the Department of Commerce, to expand the physical capacity of the Trades and Industries Building (Exhibit 4.04). The number of welding booths will be expanded from 20 to 40, serving more students. Because of relationships with the business community, especially established through the advisory committees, GFC MSU was poised to serve the welding instruction and training needs of ADF International, which expanded its steel manufacturing operations to Great Falls. The funding also enabled GFC MSU to train students for both the American Welding Society (AWS) and Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) certification. Such dual certifications are important to the workforce in Great Falls, which is located only 100 miles from the Canadian border (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3). The EDA grant funds are being used to expand the welding program by:

- Increasing student capacity from 20 to 40 students per cohort,
- Purchasing additional welding equipment for the increased student capacity,
- Relocating the carpentry program to the former auto refinishing area, and
- Reconfiguring the former auto refinishing area to contain both the Carpentry and Industrial Technician programs.

## **MT HealthCARE**

Montana Department of Labor predictions that healthcare would add about 1,300 jobs per year through 2022 led to another statewide effort to help fill this workforce need. Montana HealthCARE (Creating Access to Rural Education) grant was awarded by the Department of Labor's TAACCCT program, in October 2014 to a consortium of public educational institutions across the state, including GFC MSU (Exhibit 4.05). Its purpose is to address the statewide shortage of healthcare workers, particularly nurses. Highlights of the grant include the following (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3):

- Addressing healthcare worker shortages, particularly in rural locations where recruitment is difficult,
- Prioritizing unemployed and underemployed workers in Montana,
- Targeting hospitals, primary and ambulatory care clinics, long-term care facilities, veterans care, and healthcare providers under the Indian Health Services,
- Utilizing on-the-job training and internships for clinical experiences,
- Intensively using workforce and industry data to guide decisions and opportunities,
- Partnering with two-year, community and tribal colleges, and
- Featuring prior learning, bridge programs, stackable credentials, and accelerated pathways.

## **Carl Perkins IV**

Carl Perkins IV funding is used to fund workforce development areas. Requests for use of this funding must demonstrate that they align with the purpose of the grant. For example, Carl Perkins funding has been used in the past for professional seminars for Respiratory Therapy to improve study skills for national testing, technical equipment for both Sustainable Energy and healthcare programs, feasibility studies for the dietetic technician program, faculty stipends to improve or create grant-related coursework, and professional development for faculty (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

The college is also actively working with the state Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education under two programs to create pathways from high school through post-secondary. Some Perkins funds are used for this; additionally, the state awarded GFC MSU a Big Sky Pathways grant for startup costs (3.B.2).

Pathways have been created for welding and carpentry students through the dual credit options in those programs. In May 2014, the college graduated its first cohort of dual credit welding students. The students received Certificates of Applied Science in Welding Technology prior to their high school diplomas (Exhibit 4.06). Dual credit carpentry students also worked to complete the college's fifth "college house." Students in the carpentry program at GFC MSU build a house each year for either Habitat for Humanity or Neighborworks. Other pathways rely less on dual credit and more on secondary preparation by giving students a clear understanding of both secondary and post-secondary requirements in various career fields (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

### **Wind Montana**

The Wind Montana Project, funded by the Department of Labor, was a consortium of four Montana two-year campuses, of which GFC MSU was the lead campus, aimed at partnering in an effort to serve the growing wind industry in Montana by establishing standards and developing training programs. The college's Sustainable Energy Technician program was the result of this effort (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

Besides the certificate and degree programs, GFC MSU provides customized training to community businesses and partners to identify and train employees for specific needs. These courses range from improving general software suite skills, such as Microsoft Office training, to more specific needs such as customized training for pipe welding, business safety, and electrical circuits used in specific businesses (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

To summarize this section overall, planning for workforce development is guided by the college's mission, the needs of employers through the use of advisory boards, and graduating students who are ready for the workforce by maintaining high quality degrees and certificates at a reasonable cost.

### **Assessment and Improvement**

GFC MSU uses nine core indicators to assess the core theme of workforce development. This review has shed light upon gaps in the way the college has assessed this core theme. In planning this core theme, some of the core indicators are shared in assessing multiple core themes. As a result, the core theme of workforce development is not entirely unique from the other three core themes, making it difficult to assess and improve this core theme individually (4.A.5).

The campus distributes a Report Card that was created in 2010 after the changes were made to the accreditation standards. It is distributed throughout the college and to other constituents in the community to illustrate GFC MSU performance on the core indicators that respond with each of the four core themes. Those core indicators that are relevant to the workforce development core theme are depicted below (4.A.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.6).

## Workforce Development Core Indicators

Workforce Development is specifically measured by nine core indicators (Core Indicators are discussed in additional detail in the Core Indicator section later in this chapter) and four strategic priorities (Strategic Priorities are discussed in additional detail in the Strategic Priorities section later in this chapter). Below is an example of the latest campus Report Card, showing how the campus has performed on each of the core indicators for the most recent year (AY 14) as well as campus performance historically for the past 5 years (4.A.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.6).

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13	AY 14	Percent Change	Goal	Performance
All	CI 1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE)	1,144	1,313	1,415	1,461	1,407	1,375	-2%	1,430	Partially Met
All	CI 1: Enrollment (Credit-Bearing Headcount)	2,227	2,489	2,569	2,621	2,538	2,579	2%	2,574	Met
All	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (Credit)	1.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1%	2.0%	Partially Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Full-Time Students)	52.0%	60.0%	54.0%	51.0%	54.1%	51.0%	-6%	57.0%	Not Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Part-Time Students)	44.0%	49.0%	49.0%	43.0%	32.2%	42.0%	30%	50.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Full-Time within 3 years)	24.0%	22.0%	23.0%	18.0%	19.0%	22.1%	16%	25.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Part-Time within 5 years)	14.0%	9.9%	10.4%	9.0%	11.0%	9.7%	-12%	17.0%	Not Met
All	CI 5: Demonstration of Abilities	N/A	4.06	4.06	4.06	4.22	4.22	0%	4.00	Met
1	CI 8: Workforce Degree Production (# of Degrees)	156	221	260	271	261	298	14%	280	Met
1	CI 8: Workforce Degree Production (Rate)	20.7%	26.1%	29.1%	29.2%	30.2%	33.9%	12%	32.0%	Met
1	CI 9: In-Field Job Placement Rates	69.2%	70.2%	68.0%	49.4%	62.9%	62.9%	0%	71.0%	Not Met
1	CI 9: Graduate Earnings	13.71	14.67	14.45	16.46	14.97	14.97	0%	15.80	Partially Met
1	CI 10: Licensure and Certification Pass Rates	96.0%	95.0%	94.0%	92.4%	97.0%	97.0%	0%	95.0%	Met
1,2	CI 11: Employer Satisfaction with Graduates	N/A	N/A	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	0%	100.0%	Partially Met

All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (FTE)	575	685	766	754	718	730	2%	723	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Headcount)	1,146	1,279	1,367	1,352	1,260	1,300	3%	1,287	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Degrees)	131	177	194	252	256	305	19%	255	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (% Population)	51.5%	51.4%	53.2%	51.6%	49.6%	50.4%	2%	50.0%	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (FTE)	21	29	26	30	40	59	49%	74	Not Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (Headcount)	115	178	154	167	228	296	30%	206	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (% of Population)	5.2%	7.2%	6.0%	6.4%	9.0%	11.5%	28%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Math)	55.7%	56.2%	55.3%	51.2%	58.0%	58.7%	1%	57.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Writing)	60.3%	64.3%	66.0%	57.2%	56.1%	55.2%	-2%	57.0%	Partially Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Math)	23.6%	22.1%	22.4%	23.2%	23.3%	27.0%	16%	26.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Writing)	29.3%	28.8%	31.7%	40.6%	29.2%	29.2%	0%	34.0%	Not Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (CL Coursework - Fall)	9.4%	9.9%	9.7%	10.4%	9.2%	7.3%	-21%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Math Coursework - Fall)	17.9%	19.9%	21.6%	22.5%	11.3%	10.4%	-8%	10.0%	Partially met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Writing Coursework - Fall)	17.1%	18.3%	14.1%	16.9%	16.7%	5.7%	-66%	10.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (All Coursework - AY)	9.6%	10.3%	10.8%	10.5%	10.1%	6.7%	-34%	8.0%	Met

CI = Core Indicator; SP = Strategic Priority

Changes in workforce development curriculum and learning support are driven by data, as organized by the core indicators relevant to the workforce development core theme, as well as by the campus-wide strategic priorities and operational plan. For example, significant changes have been made in math courses in response to data showing low success rates in math. Data showed that the required math course was obstructing the retention (core indicator 3) and graduation (core indicators 4 and 8) of carpentry and welding students. In response, math faculty collaborated with trades faculty to develop new, focused courses in each discipline using an industry-specific textbook rather than a math textbook: M 191A Special Topics: Math for Carpentry and M 191B Special Topics: Math for Welding (Exhibit 4.07). Both trades programs are delivered in a cohort model, in which students enroll together and take all their classes at the same time (4.B.1, 4.B.2).

The college's involvement in grants has helped to better tailor educational offerings to the needs of the community and region, which includes the college's programmatic area of focus on welding and fabrication. As lead college on the SWAMMEI Grant, now RevUp Montana, GFC MSU has developed new training programs to meet the current and future needs of businesses in two of Montana's key economic sectors (Exhibit 4.08). The grant has enabled the college to expand the welding program so that it includes one cohort focused on dual credit high school students (strategic priority 3) (4.A.2).

A SWAMMEI workforce navigator was hired to help students to be more successful, find funding for college, and complete programs (core indicators 4 and 8, and strategic priority 2), and to place workers in jobs and apprenticeships with local business partners (core indicators 9 and 11). This model is proving to be very successful and has helped us to graduate four cohorts of welding students per year (4.A.3).

Courses with low success rates included in workforce development programs related to health science fields were also modified to include supplemental instruction. For example, Anatomy and Physiology I was modified to have established lab tutors, and the division added a one-hour supplemental instruction and an A&P night where faculty and students combine having fun learning science with program success information. All of these activities are aimed at increasing retention of the difficult course material and helping students to see themselves in the role of a successful healthcare professional, and to find the resources to be successful in this challenging course (core indicators 1, 3, 4, and 8) (4.A.5).

Learning support in the Academic Success Center (ASC) has been re-organized to offer more topic-specific instruction and adjusted hours of operation that support all students, including those enrolled in workforce development programs (Exhibit 4.09). Along with student tutors, faculty now spend regular time in the ASC so students can have access to them while working on assignments or challenging concepts. Lab tutors are available in the science labs to assist students. And the services offered by the ASC are now described in all course syllabi (core indicators 1 and 3 and strategic priorities 4 and 5) (4.A.2).

The CHEO grant program (Exhibit 4.10) has allowed for course modifications in which students can use Internet connections to conduct real-time, remote lab experiments at one of three North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) labs, one of which is located on the GFC MSU campus (Exhibit 4.11). This type of course modification specifically serves the geographical challenges of rural students (core indicators 1, 2, and 3) (4.A.2).

More broadly, a recent workforce development curriculum modification was made in response to anticipated industry growth in relation to general manufacturing – industrial technology and renewable energy. Two tracks have been developed to provide a broader credential that will better prepare students for regional employment (core indicator 10) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.B.1).

As part of the MT HealthCARE grant program, nursing faculty and administrators will work to create seamless paths through the various levels of nursing curriculums. This grant was driven by data showing a shortage of healthcare professionals. The project began in October 2014 and will help the college to expand its nursing programming, create a clear path from the practical nurse to registered nurse credential, and potentially create an accelerated curriculum (core indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.B.1).

Big Sky Pathways and Perkins funding has been used to increase enrollment in workforce development programs. GFC MSU's work as part of the MUS system-wide CTE pathways initiative, Big Sky Pathways, has helped to reduce redundancies between high school and college, allowing high school students an opportunity to earn college credit or a GFC MSU certificate. GFC MSU has nearly 60 Big Sky Pathway agreements in place with school districts all over northcentral Montana (Exhibit 4.12). The college has invested Perkins funds in focused training for the academic division directors and has partnered with the Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) to dually fund positions for high school coaches to work with the high school students, teachers, counselors, and administrators on increasing the navigation of the pathways to college and career options. Directors attended two crucial trainings: The National Career Cluster Institute and the National Career Pathways Network Conference. GFPS administration accompanied the directors to the National Career Pathways Network Conference (core indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8, and strategic priority 3) (4.A.2).

To be certain that students graduate as well-rounded individuals, three of the Eight Abilities – Communication, Diversity, and Critical Thinking – were incorporated in workforce course objectives and workforce program outcomes on the course syllabus for every class (core indicator 5). Prior to the student arriving in the classroom, faculty plan to ensure students success by giving them the tools to be successful in the class. New faculty must attend a mandatory sixteen week training course entitled Foundations of Teaching at Community College (Exhibit 4.13). This class is designed to give faculty practice with student success principles, information about data driven assessment, and the cycle of teaching improvement as well as additional information covering scenarios in the classroom (4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.2).

In these ways and others, GFC MSU uses data to guide in the planning, assessment, and improvement of the core theme of workforce development. Additional information regarding this core theme is also found in a subsequent section outlining the core indicators of workforce development.

## Core Theme 2: Transfer Preparation

*“In December 2014, Great Falls College MSU and Montana State University signed articulation agreements enabling students to complete the first year of the engineering programs at Great Falls College MSU and then transfer to MSU for the remaining three years. The agreements go into effect Fall 2015 and expand on the existing civil engineering 1+3 agreement. MSU’s College of Engineering expressed enthusiasm for the agreements, stating that students have come to MSU having already completed credits at a two-year college are more likely to complete the engineering programs. The articulation agreements include all programs’ offered through MSU’s College of Engineering: Biological Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Construction Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering, Industrial and Management Systems Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering Technology. Such agreements help fulfil the transfer mission of the college by making the transition from GFC MSU to the partner four-year institution more smooth.”*

*~Leanne Frost, Division Director of General Education and Transfer*

**Objective: Our students complete transfer programming and successfully transfer toward a four-year degree.**

Transfer programming supports responsiveness to the educational needs of the greater Great Falls community for transfer toward a four-year degree. Transfer programming includes the completion of any associate of arts degree, associate of science degree, certificate in general studies, posting the Montana University System (MUS) core, developing plans of study for transfer, and transfer articulations. These programs are intended to prepare students for finishing a four-year degree of their choice. This fulfills an important part of our mission, which is “to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.”

### Planning

Planning for this theme is multifaceted and involves creating and maintaining general education coursework and managing program offerings to meet the needs of the transfer students who are ready for the transition to a four-year degree program at a reasonable cost. To do this the college strives to be innovative and enterprising in planning of general education and transfer options for students. This is a process that is led by the division director of General Education and Transfer, in coordination with department chairs under the supervision of the Chief Academic Officer (3.B.1).

The division director monitors data collection and the achievement of course objectives and program outcomes to ensure that students leave with consistently high quality skills in relation to the Eight Abilities (core indicator five, described in subsequent section) (3.B.3).

One of the leading contributors to the success of transfer work at a systems level was an initiative to create common course numbering (CCN) among all of the MUS schools. All campuses offering the same course must use the same prefix, number, and title, and have at least 80% of the learning outcomes in common (Exhibit 4.14). This has led to more effective evaluation of transfer credits to other schools within the system and smoothed the process for creating articulation agreements

(3.B.1, 3.B.2). The GFC MSU general education core follows the core established for the MUS by the system-wide General Education Council. Any changes to the core are approved by the General Education Council (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

GFC MSU maintains partnerships with a number of four-year institutions in order to offer students opportunities to pursue bachelor's degrees. These programs emphasize particular academic or occupational areas and are recommended to students planning careers and further college work in those areas. The curricula outlined for each program must be followed as written in order to meet the requirements set by both GFC MSU and the partner school. The articulation agreements are reviewed by both parties annually and updated as needed (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

Articulation agreements with other institutions are often done on a needs-based approach based on alignment with the college's mission, strategic priorities and operational plan. These articulation agreements represent many hours of planning to ensure that students earning credit or degrees can successfully transfer to these colleges. Most of the articulation alignment revolves around the sequencing of courses or the specification of certain general education classes for particular programs. Such alignment is arranged between the faculty, program directors and department chairs, and division directors with input from the academic advisors on both campuses involved. All articulation agreements must also be approved by the chief academic officer and CEO/dean of the college (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

Planning for transfer preparation is guided by the college's mission and to meet the needs of the transfer students, who are ready for the transition to a four-year degree program at a reasonable cost.

### **Assessment and Improvement**

GFC MSU uses ten core indicators and five strategic priorities to assess the core theme of transfer preparation. This review has shed light upon gaps in the way the college has assessed this core theme. In planning this core theme, some of the core indicators are shared in assessing multiple core themes. As a result, the core theme of transfer preparation is not entirely unique from the other three core themes, making it difficult to assess and improve this core theme individually (4.A.5).

Below is an example of the latest campus Report Card, showing how the campus has performed on each of the core indicators for the most recent year 2013-2014, as well as campus performance historically for the past five years (4.A.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.6).

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13	AY 14	Percent Change	Goal	Performance
All	CI 1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE)	1,144	1,313	1,415	1,461	1,407	1,375	-2%	1,430	Partially Met
All	CI 1: Enrollment (Credit-Bearing Headcount)	2,227	2,489	2,569	2,621	2,538	2,579	2%	2,574	Met
All	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (Credit)	1.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1%	2.0%	Partially Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Full-Time Students)	52.0%	60.0%	54.0%	51.0%	54.1%	51.0%	-6%	57.0%	Not Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Part-Time Students)	44.0%	49.0%	49.0%	43.0%	32.2%	42.0%	30%	50.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Full-Time within 3 years)	24.0%	22.0%	23.0%	18.0%	19.0%	22.1%	16%	25.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Part-Time within 5 years)	14.0%	9.9%	10.4%	9.0%	11.0%	9.7%	-12%	17.0%	Not Met
All	CI 5: Demonstration of Abilities	N/A	4.06	4.06	4.06	4.22	4.22	0%	4.00	Met
1,2	CI 11: Employer Satisfaction with Graduates	N/A	N/A	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	0%	100.0%	Partially Met
2	CI 12: Transfer Degree Production (# of Degrees)	55	69	70	132	168	156	-7%	135	Met
2	CI 12: Transfer Degree Production (Rate)	17.0%	17.5%	15.4%	28.1%	36%	38%	6%	32.0%	Met
2	CI 13: Transfer Rates	30.8%	40.9%	30.8%	32.5%	36%	32%	-12%	35%	Partially Met
2	CI 14: Performance after Transfer (MSUGF Transfer Bachelors Graduates)	79	72	76	73	77	61	-21%	85	Not met
2,3	CI 17: Success Rate in College Courses	76.9%	79.1%	79.1%	77.9%	77.3%	77.7%	0%	80.0%	Partially met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (FTE)	324	394	456	469	471	411	-13%	495	Not Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (Headcount)	621	722	828	853	831	754	-9%	901	Not Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (Degrees)	55	69	70	132	168	156	-7%	135	Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (% Population)	27.9%	29.0%	32.2%	32.5%	32.7%	29.2%	-11%	35.0%	Not Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (FTE)	575	685	766	754	718	730	2%	723	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Headcount)	1,146	1,279	1,367	1,352	1,260	1,300	3%	1,287	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Degrees)	131	177	194	252	256	305	19%	255	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (% Population)	51.5%	51.4%	53.2%	51.6%	49.6%	50.4%	2%	50.0%	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (FTE)	21	29	26	30	40	59	49%	74	Not Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (Headcount)	115	178	154	167	228	296	30%	206	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (% of Population)	5.2%	7.2%	6.0%	6.4%	9.0%	11.5%	28%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Math)	55.7%	56.2%	55.3%	51.2%	58.0%	58.7%	1%	57.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Writing)	60.3%	64.3%	66.0%	57.2%	56.1%	55.2%	-2%	57.0%	Partially Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Math)	23.6%	22.1%	22.4%	23.2%	23.3%	27.0%	16%	26.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Writing)	29.3%	28.8%	31.7%	40.6%	29.2%	29.2%	0%	34.0%	Not Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (CL Coursework - Fall)	9.4%	9.9%	9.7%	10.4%	9.2%	7.3%	-21%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Math Coursework - Fall)	17.9%	19.9%	21.6%	22.5%	11.3%	10.4%	-8%	10.0%	Partially met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Writing Coursework - Fall)	17.1%	18.3%	14.1%	16.9%	16.7%	5.7%	-66%	10.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (All Coursework - AY)	9.6%	10.3%	10.8%	10.5%	10.1%	6.7%	-34%	8.0%	Met

CI = Core Indicator; SP = Strategic Priority

Changes in transfer preparation and learning support are driven by data, as organized by the core indicators relevant to the transfer preparation core theme, as well as by campus-wide strategic priorities and the operational plan. GFC MSU's transfer rate (transferred at any time through Spring 2013) has been between 6% and 16% percent in the past five years. Transfer will continue to be a focus in the MUS performance-based funding model.

The GFC MSU Advising & Career Center has reached out to create stronger partnerships with the four-year universities in the Montana State University (MSU) system. Representatives from GFC MSU met with those from MSU in Bozeman, MSU-Billings, and MSU-Northern last year to create a marketing campaign (One MSU) aimed at increasing transfer rates. Each of the four MSU institutions contributed funding for 1 FTE in the GFC MSU Advising & Career Center and for an MSU transfer marketing campaign. The funds from the transfer marketing initiative were used to produce a brochure highlighting the transfer options to the other MSU schools, to purchase advertising space in area newspapers promoting the transfer options, and to create a billboard featuring the transfer options to the other MSU institutions. In addition, large posters promoting transfer to the MSU schools were hung in student commons areas to advertise transfer possibilities. GFC MSU staff are being more conscientious about discussing transfer options in publications, in presentations to students, and online in the catalog (core indicator 2 and strategic priority 1, 2) (4.A.1, 4.B.1).

Since 2011, each advisor in the Advising & Career Center has been assigned as a liaison to one of the other MSU campuses. As a liaison, they maintain contact with the other campus and specialize in the transfer options from GFC MSU to that campus. These advisors visit their liaison campus regularly, establish rapport with advisors at that campus, are instrumental in reviewing articulation agreements, and arrange a transfer fair for students from GFC MSU who are interested in transferring to visit with MSU contacts or visit MSU campuses (core indicators 1, 3, 4, 12, and 13) (4.B.1).

In Fall 2015, GFC MSU will expand its current 1+3 Civil Engineering articulation agreement with MSU in Bozeman into nine 1+3 articulations for all of their engineering options (core indicators 12, 13, and 14) Another curriculum modification offers students an alternative to the Associates of Applied Science by creating an Associates of Science that transfers to the Jake Jobs College of Business at Montana State University (Exhibit 4.15) (4.A.2). GFC MSU also created and implemented a new Certificate in General Studies that allows a student to receive a Certificate for the MUS Core in hopes to assist a student with transfer to another institution (core indicators 12, 13, and 14) (4.A.4).

Articulation agreements have now been divided between the three academic divisions, based on the GFC MSU program that aligns with the topic area of the transfer option. For example, the articulation agreement in Accounting to MSU Billings is reviewed by the Business, Trades and Technology division while the Health Administration articulation agreement to MSU Billings is reviewed by the Health Science division. Previously, all articulation agreements fell under the General Education and Transfer Division. By placing them under their related division, the faculty in the discipline is more involved in the creation and maintenance of the agreements (core indicator 12, 13, 14) (4.B.1).

Plans are underway to create a coordinated marketing effort to promote articulation agreements. In the past year, advertisements were placed in local high school newspapers, local daily newspapers,

and in promotional mailings sent to high school students promoting the engineering articulation agreement with MSU in Bozeman (core indicators 12, 13, and 14, and strategic priority 3) (4.B.1).

Learning support in the Academic Success Center (ASC) has been re-organized to offer more topic-specific instruction and adjusted hours of operation that support all students including those enrolled in transfer programs (Exhibit 4.16). Along with student tutors, faculty now spend regular time in the ASC so students can have access to them while working on assignments or challenging concepts. Lab tutors are available in the science labs to assist students. And, the services offered by the ASC are now described in all course syllabi (core indicator 1,3,17 and strategic priority 4, 5 (4.A.2). In 2013-2014, the center logged 12,000 visits for assistance in a wide variety of subjects.

To be certain that students graduate as well-rounded individuals, the Eight Abilities were incorporated in general education course objectives and program outcomes on the course syllabus for every class (core indicator 5). Prior to students' arriving in the classroom, faculty plan to ensure their success by giving them the tools to be successful in the class. New faculty must attend a mandatory sixteen week training course entitled Foundations of Teaching at Community College (Exhibit 4.17). This class is designed to give faculty practice with student success principles, information about data driven assessment and the cycle of teaching improvement, as well as additional information covering scenarios in the classroom (4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.2).

In these ways and others, GFC MSU uses data to guide in the planning, assessment, and improvement of the core theme of transfer preparation of students. Additional information regarding this core theme is also found in a subsequent section outlining the core indicators of transfer preparation.

## Core Theme 3: Academic Preparation

**Objective: We prepare individuals for success in college coursework through developmental (remedial) education and adult basic education.**

Academic Preparation supports responsiveness to the educational needs of the greater Great Falls community for success in college coursework through developmental education and adult basic education. Academic Preparation includes partnering with the Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Adult Education program located on the GFC MSU campus, and increasing the rate at which students succeed in developmental coursework (primarily Math and English), enroll in, and successfully complete their first college-level courses in the same disciplines. This fulfills an important part of our mission which is “to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.”

### Planning

The GFC MSU Common Ground operational plan addressed academic preparation through enhancing and strengthening curriculum through pedagogical reforms. Tasks within this goal included redesigning developmental education at the college, implementing enhanced instruction/learning models, and other efforts such as implementing supplemental instruction, learning communities, paired courses, and/or contextualized learning. Another task involved increasing the rate of student success in underperforming courses with low pass rates (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

Other efforts included strengthening student support services and programs including the creation of a student success course and enhancing the student’s first experience with the college. This included establishing a common grade reporting system, mandatory student attendance reporting/tracking, and frequent student progress feedback. Plans also included increasing student preparedness for online and technical courses by developing a systematic means to evaluate incoming students’ basic computer skills, a remedial basic computer skills course, and evaluating the current Introduction to Computers course (CAPP 120) to modify its curricula based upon program needs (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

This is a process that is led by division directors in both Academic and Student Affairs, in coordination with program directors and/or faculty department chairs under the coordinated supervision of the chief academic officer and chief student affairs officer. By aligning these efforts with the mission and reviewing the core indicators, these groups can recommend additions, suggestions, or improvements to current developmental courses or to create new courses (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

Once a need is determined, documentation for course or program requests must include planning for resources, such as faculty, training, equipment, library support, etc. (Exhibit 4.18). All new or modified programs must be submitted to the faculty-led campus Curriculum Committee for a comprehensive review by faculty (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

GFC MSU has participated in the College!Now grant and Complete College America/Montana, a MUS system-wide initiative supported by Governor Bullock. It focused on:

- Increasing the number of Montanans who earn college degrees and certificates.
- Developing specific strategies that move Montana forward in reaching the governor's goal of increasing the percentage of Montanans with a higher education credential from 40% to 60%.
- Supported by Complete College America (CCA), a nationwide, non-profit effort involving an alliance of 34 of other states (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

GFC MSU also supports academic preparation through a partnership with the GFPS Adult Education program located on campus. GFC MSU students who have low placement scores are encouraged to use the Adult Education services to supplement their learning (3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3).

To summarize this section overall, planning for academic preparation is guided by the college's mission and to meet the needs of students who are underprepared but desire to attend college.

### **Assessment and Improvement**

GFC MSU uses eight core indicators and four strategic priorities to assess the core theme of academic preparation. This review has shed light upon gaps in the way the college has assessed this core theme. In planning this core theme, some of the core indicators are shared in assessing multiple core themes. As a result, the core theme of transfer preparation is not entirely unique from the other three core themes, making it difficult to assess and improve this core theme individually (4.A.5).

Below is an example of the latest campus Report Card, showing how the campus has performed on each of the core indicators for the most recent year 2013-2014, as well as campus performance historically for the past five years (4.A.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.6).

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13	AY 14	Percent Change	Goal	Performance
All	CI 1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE)	1,144	1,313	1,415	1,461	1,407	1,375	-2%	1,430	Partially Met
All	CI 1: Enrollment (Credit-Bearing Headcount)	2,227	2,489	2,569	2,621	2,538	2,579	2%	2,574	Met
All	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (Credit)	1.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1%	2.0%	Partially Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Full-Time Students)	52.0%	60.0%	54.0%	51.0%	54.1%	51.0%	-6%	57.0%	Not Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Part-Time Students)	44.0%	49.0%	49.0%	43.0%	32.2%	42.0%	30%	50.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Full-Time within 3 years)	24.0%	22.0%	23.0%	18.0%	19.0%	22.1%	16%	25.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Part-Time within 5 years)	14.0%	9.9%	10.4%	9.0%	11.0%	9.7%	-12%	17.0%	Not Met
All	CI 5: Demonstration of Abilities	N/A	4.06	4.06	4.06	4.22	4.22	0%	4.00	Met
3	CI 6: Success of Students in Remedial Courses (Math)	58.0%	57.7%	59.0%	53.0%	62.3%	60.4%	-3%	65.0%	Partially Met
3	CI 6: Success of Students in Remedial Courses (Writing)	62.2%	63.3%	74.2%	59.2%	57.5%	58.6%	2%	75.0%	Not Met
3	CI 7: Success in Subsequent and Related Coursework (Math)	76.1%	70.5%	77.3%	86.2%	78.2%	69.4%	-11%	80.0%	Not Met
3	CI 7: Success in Subsequent and Related Coursework (Writing)	66.7%	77.3%	70.7%	77.3%	72.7%	65.7%	-10%	80.0%	Not Met
2,3	CI 17: Success Rate in College Courses	76.9%	79.1%	79.1%	77.9%	77.3%	77.7%	0%	80.0%	Partially met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (FTE)	575	685	766	754	718	730	2%	723	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Headcount)	1,146	1,279	1,367	1,352	1,260	1,300	3%	1,287	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Degrees)	131	177	194	252	256	305	19%	255	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (% Population)	51.5%	51.4%	53.2%	51.6%	49.6%	50.4%	2%	50.0%	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (FTE)	21	29	26	30	40	59	49%	74	Not Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (Headcount)	115	178	154	167	228	296	30%	206	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (% of Population)	5.2%	7.2%	6.0%	6.4%	9.0%	11.5%	28%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Math)	55.7%	56.2%	55.3%	51.2%	58.0%	58.7%	1%	57.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Writing)	60.3%	64.3%	66.0%	57.2%	56.1%	55.2%	-2%	57.0%	Partially Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Math)	23.6%	22.1%	22.4%	23.2%	23.3%	27.0%	16%	26.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Writing)	29.3%	28.8%	31.7%	40.6%	29.2%	29.2%	0%	34.0%	Not Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (CL Coursework - Fall)	9.4%	9.9%	9.7%	10.4%	9.2%	7.3%	-21%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Math Coursework - Fall)	17.9%	19.9%	21.6%	22.5%	11.3%	10.4%	-8%	10.0%	Partially met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Writing Coursework - Fall)	17.1%	18.3%	14.1%	16.9%	16.7%	5.7%	-66%	10.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (All Coursework - AY)	9.6%	10.3%	10.8%	10.5%	10.1%	6.7%	-34%	8.0%	Met

CI = Core Indicator; SP = Strategic Priority

Colleges and universities nationwide struggle with improving developmental course success rates and subsequent course success rates. Following recommendations made by the College!Now grant and Complete College America/Montana initiative, the General Education and Transfer division has focused on providing support for and accelerating developmental education courses (core indicators 1, 2, 4, and 6, and strategic priorities 2 and 4) (4.A.1).

Support for students in the developmental math and writing courses includes boosting tutoring in the Academic Success Center for those students. To accomplish that task, some developmental math instructors have elected to award extra credit points to students who utilize the free tutoring service. All math instructors tutor in the Academic Success Center as part of their office hours. Over 50% of student visits to the ASC focus on math, and these interventions are gradually resulting in improved developmental math results (Exhibit 4.19) (core indicators 3 and 6, and strategic priorities 4 and 5) (4.A.2).

To provide additional support, a reading course was implemented in Fall 2013. RD 101 Reading Improvement focuses on content area/textbook reading strategies as well as critical reading skills. The course is recommended for students scoring below an 80 on the reading portion of the COMPASS exam. However, the course is open to any student who would like additional college-level reading support. The effect of the class on students will be tracked using retention and graduation rates of those taking the class compared to the general student population (core indicators 6 and 7, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2).

M 090 Introductory Algebra and M 095 Intermediate Algebra were combined into an accelerated M 098 Introductory and Intermediate Algebra course in Spring 2013. The course is divided into five modules; students must successfully pass each module to receive credit for the entire course. After the initial semester, the success rate in the accelerated course was higher than those in the individual courses – 63% for M 098 compared to 54% in M 095 and 58% in M 090 for 2013-2014; however, that is only one year's worth of data at this point (core indicators 6, 7, and 17, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.1).

The biggest improvement has been seen in the success rates of students in M 065 Pre-Algebra, the college's lowest math course. From a low of 52% in 2007-2008, the success rate in Pre-Algebra has climbed to 65% in 2013-2014. The biggest jump occurred in 2012-2013 when a placement score was implemented for the course. Students scoring below a 26 in the pre-algebra portion of the COMPASS test are referred to Adult Education. The General Education and Transfer division and the math department worked with Adult Education to create a course titled M 094 Math Skills Workshop for those students. By participating in the no charge/no credit class, students build a foundation of math skills before using financial aid. The Math Skills Workshop was designed to act as a regularly scheduled course, as opposed to the normal self-paced Adult Education model, so that the class appears on the students' schedules and on their transcripts as a pass/fail course. Students in the course have the ability to retake the COMPASS test at no charge at the end of the semester to determine placement for the subsequent semester. At this point, students who have completed that course have placed into a developmental math class (core indicators 6 and 7, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.1).

A similar arrangement was made with Adult Education for students in the college's lowest writing class, WRIT 080 Building Basic Writing Skills; however, it is difficult to determine the results as the changes were implemented in Spring 2014. Students scoring below a 5 on the writing portion of the COMPASS e-Write exam are referred to Adult Education's WRIT 094 Writing Skills Workshop course. Similar to M 094, WRIT 094 is a no charge/no credit, pass/fail course (core indicator 6, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.1).

In addition, a WRIT 098 Accelerated Development Writing course was created in Fall 2013. The initial success rate for 2013-2014 was 69%, higher than the 57% in WRIT 095 Developmental

Writing; however, only 16 students were enrolled in the accelerated course. Low enrollment in the course has been an issue. The course was originally designed so that students scoring a 6 or higher on the COMPASS e-Write test could enroll directly into the college-level WRIT 101 College Writing I course with the two-credit support course WRIT 098 as a co-requisite. To increase enrollment, the credits for the support course were reduced from two to one for Fall 2014, and the COMPASS score requirement was waived for Spring 2015. The results of those efforts remain to be seen. In addition, writing instructors have engaged in one-on-one conferencing with all students in order to facilitate a connection and support system (core indicator 6, 7 and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.1).

Both the developmental math and writing online sections continue to have significantly lower pass rates than their face-to-face counterpart sections, as seen in Table 4.5 (4.A.1).

**Table 4.5 Online vs. Face-to-Face Pass Rates**

Course	Online Pass Rates	Face-to-Face Pass Rates
M065 Pre-Algebra	57%	67%
M090	49%	60%
M095	33%	58%
WRIT 095	46%	60%

To increase success rates in the online sections of developmental classes, the division began requiring division director or department chair approval for students to take the classes online. However, that effort seems to have had no effect as the success rates have not increased (core indicator 6 and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2).

Pass rates in subsequent college-level math and writing courses have increased or generally stayed the same since 2009. They did decline between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; however, they still remained above the average for institutional peers (core indicators 6 and 7, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1).

The math and writing departments will be examining the data and strategizing in Spring 2015 to find ways to increase student success rates and college-level preparedness (core indicators 6 and 7, and strategic priority 4) (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3).

To better prepare high school students and reduce the number of high school students entering developmental math at Great Falls College MSU, the college worked with GFPS on three separate initiatives. The first is to have students take the COMPASS placement test while in high school to see where they would place in college. Thus, they are aware of the level of math they need in comparison to their current skill level, and can take steps to increase their math preparedness if needed. The second is to offer an accelerated version of introductory and intermediate algebra in a modular format. Although not counted as “dual credit” because it is at the developmental math level, the course is being taught in the high schools and patterned after GFC MSU’s M 098 Introductory and Intermediate Algebra course. The goal is to have students ready for college-level M 121 College Algebra when they graduate from high school. The third initiative is for students who are already at the M 121 College Algebra level while in high school. Those students have the option of taking M 121 in the high school for dual credit. M 121, although not a developmental math course, has been shown to be an obstacle to students’ math progression. The course was taught as a

concurrent course for the first time at Great Falls High School in Fall 2014, and the results show that 27 of the 29 students enrolled for dual credit passed the class with a C- or higher, meaning they will receive college credit for the course and be able to progress in their studies upon enrolling in any MUS college or university (strategic priority 3) (4.A.1, 4.A.3).

To be certain that students graduate as well-rounded individuals, the Eight Abilities were incorporated in general education course objectives and program outcomes on the course syllabus for every class (core indicator 5). Prior to students arriving in the classroom, faculty plan to ensure students success by giving them the tools to be successful in the class. New faculty must attend a mandatory sixteen week training course entitled Foundations of Teaching at Community College (Exhibit 4.20). This class is designed to give faculty practice with student success principles, information about data-driven assessment and the cycle of teaching improvement, as well as additional information covering scenarios in the classroom (4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.2).

## Core Theme 4: Community Development

*"After high school, many of us lose the opportunity to pick up that instrument, sing in front of an audience, or display art in an exhibit. College Community Choir and other Fine Arts programs through Great Falls College MSU have created an opportunity for us to do this. An opportunity for us to not only display, but to also refine our love and our talent within the arts. I mean how many of us can say we to get the opportunity to sing at Carnegie Hall? Because of the College Community Choir, I can. It's an amazing thing to see how many people will arise, when an opportunity presents itself."*

*~Lindsey Rivenes, Community Member and Choir Participant*

### **Objective: As the community's college we support economic development through outreach, lifelong learning and active partnership.**

Community Development directly supports responsiveness to the community needs of Great Falls and the economic growth of the GFC MSU service region. Community Development includes learning opportunities that provide specific employee training or re-training, business support, and life-long learning. These educational activities are organized under varying instructional formats such as workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, symposia, and short courses; however, they are aligned in their focus on imparting information to community members, employers, employees, and other groups in a high-quality, results-oriented manner. This fulfills an important part of our mission, which is "to foster the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society."

### **Planning**

Planning for new academic programs is accomplished by developing courses for Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) and Community Enrichment (CE) courses and activities at GFC MSU. These activities must meet certain standards. For quality assurance purposes and records keeping, all activities must adhere to the PCE and CE Activity Approval Policy (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

The Outreach Department has established the following elements and procedures required in the process for planning, evaluating, and assessing Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) and Community Enrichment (CE) activities (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

- Needs Assessment  
Needs assessment data are starting to be collected for all planned PCE and CE activities in order to implement meaningful, quality educational content (3.B.3). The collected Needs Assessment information will be used to meet the educational needs for the state of Montana and the greater Great Falls area, in alignment with the mission of the college. The data collected and analyzed will be shared with the GFC MSU administration, the Community Relations and Marketing Division, Joint Directors, Advisory Committees, and faculty for future educational planning (3.B.2, 3.B.3).

- **Purpose, Objectives & Outcomes**  
All PCE and CE activities must identify the purpose, objectives, and outcomes that target improved participant skills, knowledge, and abilities. The purpose, objectives, and outcomes are established to provide known, tangible, and measurable end goals for the activity (3.B.1, 3.B.2).
- **Instructional Design & Classification**  
All PCE and CE activities must develop a quality instructional design to ensure exceptional delivery of the educational content as well as to meet the academic standards of all PCE and CE activities at the college (3.B.1, 3.B.2).
- **Implementation of Learning Activities**  
The Director of Outreach holds administrative responsibility for the coordination and delivery of all PCE and CE activities provided by the college. The Director and PCE Coordinator, with faculty or responsible party input, ensure the successful implementation of PCE activities (3.B.1).
- **Evaluation of Effectiveness**  
All educational activities are evaluated by the Director of Outreach to determine the effectiveness in meeting the identified educational need, intended purpose, objectives, and outcomes, and in improving participant knowledge, skills, and abilities. This review is required for awarding credits or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and aligns with the policies of the college at large (3.B.1, 3.B.2).

To summarize this section overall, planning for community development is guided by the college's mission and to meet the community needs of Great Falls and the economic growth of the GFC MSU service region at a reasonable cost.

### **Assessment and Improvement**

GFC MSU uses seven core indicators and four strategic priorities to assess the core theme of community development. This review has shed light upon gaps in the way the college has assessed this core theme. In planning this core theme, some of the core indicators are shared in assessing multiple core themes. As a result, the core theme of transfer preparation is not entirely unique from the other three core themes, making it difficult to assess and improve this core theme individually (4.A.5).

Below is an example of the latest campus Report Card, showing how the campus has performed on each of the core indicators for the most recent year 2013-2014, as well as campus performance historically for the past five years (4.A.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.6).

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12	AY13	AY 14	Percent Change	Goal	Performance
All	CI 1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE)	1,144	1,313	1,415	1,461	1,407	1,375	-2%	1,430	Partially Met
All	CI 1: Enrollment (Credit-Bearing Headcount)	2,227	2,489	2,569	2,621	2,538	2,579	2%	2,574	Met
All	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (Credit)	1.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1%	2.0%	Partially Met
4	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (PCE)	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	12%	0.5%	Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Full-Time Students)	52.0%	60.0%	54.0%	51.0%	54.1%	51.0%	-6%	57.0%	Not Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Part-Time Students)	44.0%	49.0%	49.0%	43.0%	32.2%	42.0%	30%	50.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Full-Time within 3 years)	24.0%	22.0%	23.0%	18.0%	19.0%	22.1%	16%	25.0%	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Part-Time within 5 years)	14.0%	9.9%	10.4%	9.0%	11.0%	9.7%	-12%	17.0%	Not Met
All	CI 5: Demonstration of Abilities	N/A	4.06	4.06	4.06	4.22	4.22	0%	4.00	Met
4	CI 15: Participation (PCE Unduplicated Headcount)	1,203	1,065	796	1,008	1,150	1,199	4%	1,110	Met
4	CI 15: Participation (PCE Enrollments)	1,971	2,240	1,898	2,455	2,519	2,235	-11%	2,700	Not Met
4	CI 16: Business & Industry Training (Participants)	N/A	1,928	1,588	1,809	1,624	1,223	-25%	2,000	Not Met
4	CI 16: Business & Industry Training (Businesses)	N/A	87	66	59	82	48	-41%	75	Not Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (FTE)	575	685	766	754	718	730	2%	723	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Headcount)	1,146	1,279	1,367	1,352	1,260	1,300	3%	1,287	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Degrees)	131	177	194	252	256	305	19%	255	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (% Population)	51.5%	51.4%	53.2%	51.6%	49.6%	50.4%	2%	50.0%	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (FTE)	21	29	26	30	40	59	49%	74	Not Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (Headcount)	115	178	154	167	228	296	30%	206	Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (% of Population)	5.2%	7.2%	6.0%	6.4%	9.0%	11.5%	28%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Math)	55.7%	56.2%	55.3%	51.2%	58.0%	58.7%	1%	57.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Writing)	60.3%	64.3%	66.0%	57.2%	56.1%	55.2%	-2%	57.0%	Partially Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Math)	23.6%	22.1%	22.4%	23.2%	23.3%	27.0%	16%	26.0%	Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Writing)	29.3%	28.8%	31.7%	40.6%	29.2%	29.2%	0%	34.0%	Not Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (CL Coursework - Fall)	9.4%	9.9%	9.7%	10.4%	9.2%	7.3%	-21%	8.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Math Coursework - Fall)	17.9%	19.9%	21.6%	22.5%	11.3%	10.4%	-8%	10.0%	Partially met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Writing Coursework - Fall)	17.1%	18.3%	14.1%	16.9%	16.7%	5.7%	-66%	10.0%	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (All Coursework - AY)	9.6%	10.3%	10.8%	10.5%	10.1%	6.7%	-34%	8.0%	Met

CI = Core Indicator; SP = Strategic Priority

Changes in community development and learning support are driven by data, as organized by the core indicators relevant to the community development core theme, as well as by campus-wide strategic priorities and the operational plan. For example, even though the Outreach Department has recently met targets with regard to penetration rates in the Great Falls region, GFC MSU still strives to serve the community to a greater degree (core indicator 2). Historically, Outreach and Workforce Development have been combined under a variety of administrative structures since 2008. The department has also had several leadership changes during that time. The result has been

that the department is not as strong as it could be, as demonstrated by the lack of growth in penetrations rates across time. The two departments are now separated into the Business and Community Development Department and Outreach Department (4.A.2). This second department has been relocated to Academic Affairs as an official academic division. The goal is to increase the quality, more carefully align the divisions, and increase penetration rate. This change was discussed at CPBAC and is one example of GFC MSU's efforts to make planned improvements consistently based upon assessment (4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.B.1).

The re-organization will enable the Outreach Department to better offer credit and non-credit classes by using academic standards in hiring faculty and assessing learning outcomes, and to continue focusing on community education and outreach (core indicators 1, 3, 4, 5, and 15, and strategic priorities 2, 4, and 5). One part of the plan is to establish different "academies": one for children and one for seniors. In Summer 2014, the college successfully hosted a summer camp called "Brania Mania" for gifted and talented children. The camp was a successful partnership between the college, the GFPS, and the Baker Foundation. Twelve elementary students and twelve middle school students engaged in a variety of stimulating workshops taught by college and high school faculty, from aeronautical engineering to microbiology and physiology. Outreach plans to continue to research the addition of different "academies" based upon the success of Brania Mania (core indicators 1 and 15, and strategic priorities 2 and 3) (4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.B.2).

The Outreach Department will also be able to serve as an incubator for possible program-related or potential credit-bearing classes. For example, in Fall 2014, GFC MSU started a college/community choir. Participants were able to enroll in the college choir class for credit through the General Education & Transfer Division or for non-credit through Outreach. A total of 66 people signed up for the choir. They gave public performances and forged bonds between community and college members. As evidence of their success, the mayor of Great Falls proclaimed December 11, 2014, the day of the inaugural performance at the college, as GFC MSU College and Community Choir Day and invited the choir to sing at the City Council meeting. The inaugural performance filled the auditorium to standing room only. The choir has been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York in May 2016 in a performance featuring Montana composers. The choir is an example of the type of community/college courses that could be expanded through the Outreach Department (core indicators 1 and 15) (4.A.2).

The Business and Community Development Department will focus on business and industry training (core indicators 15 and 16). Already this second department has been working to establish a welding certification center that will offer certifications and testing for the American Welding Society and the Canadian Welding Bureau. Other current industry training and testing services available at the college include (4.A.2):

- Microsoft certification
- Apple certification
- Cisco certification
- CompTIA certification
- Written National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) testing
- NREMT Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced Life Support (ALS), and Basic Life Support (BLS) Practical Certification Examinations.
- American Heart Assoc. Certifications

- Heart Saver First Aid
- Heart Saver CPR/AED
- Basic Life Support Healthcare Provider
  - Initial & Renewal

In these ways and others, GFC MSU uses data to guide in the planning, assessment, and improvement of the core theme of community development. Additional information regarding this core theme is also found a subsequent section outlining the core indicators of community development.

## Core Indicators

The college uses the core indicators to move toward fulfillment of the core themes, in an effort to document student achievement and college success at fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals. Goals for the core indicators are set internally by members of a CPBAC committee at GFC MSU and are often compared to external benchmarks of peer institutions. If a core indicator measurement meets or exceeds the goal, then the goal is considered to be met. If the indicator is within 10% below the goal statistic, then the goal is considered to be partially met. If the indicator's measurement is more than 10% below the goal, then the goal is considered to be not met. The next section will detail the measurement and progress the institution has made towards meeting core indicators and then will explain how these measurements directly impact core themes.

After completion of this report, it has become clear that a few adjustments to the core indicators need to be made. In the future, the college will review the core indicators to determine whether they are meaningful in the way they are measured, how they relate to core themes, and whether other indicators need to be measured at all.

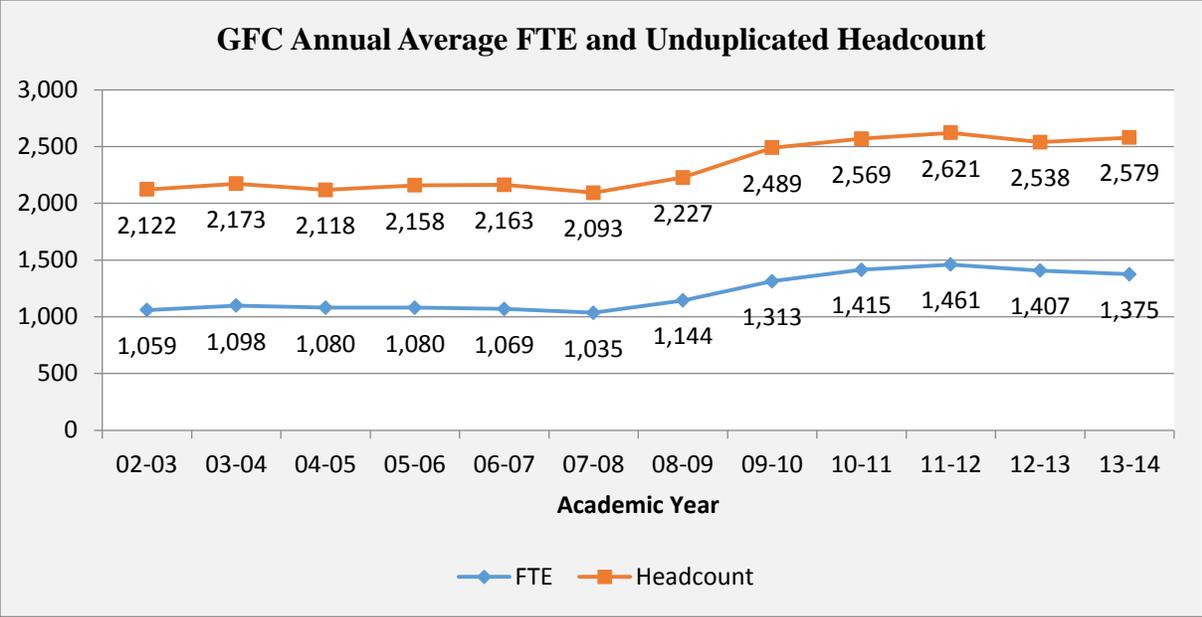
Note for all Core Indicators:

- CPBAC refers to GFC MSU's College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee
- FTE refers to full-time equivalent
- IPEDS refers to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
- NCCBP refers to the National Community College Benchmark Project
- CSRDE refers to the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange
- CCSSE refers to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement

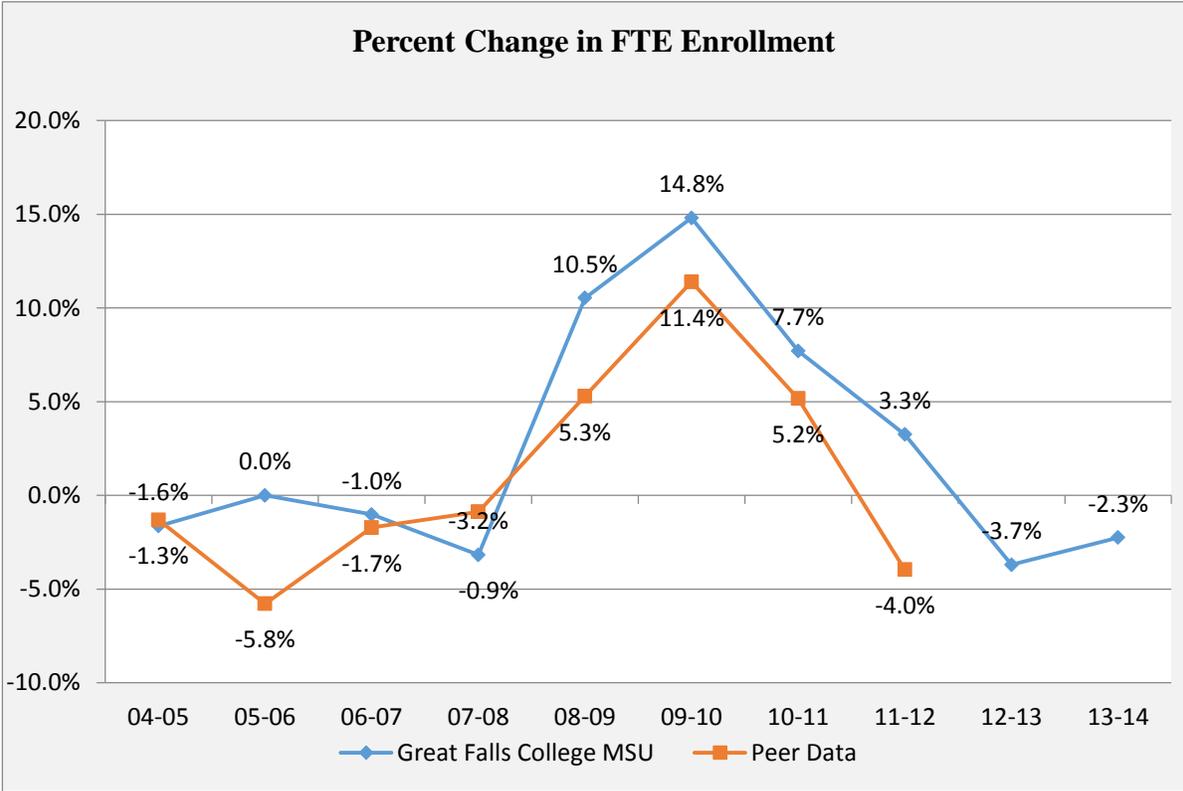
### Core Indicator 1: Participation & Headcount

<b>Definition:</b>	Credit-bearing full-time equivalent (FTE) and credit-bearing headcount
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While average annual full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment at Great Falls College MSU has increased by about 25% over the last ten years, last year's enrollment dropped by about 2%. Unduplicated headcount actually increased from 2,538 students in 2012-2013 to 2,579 in 2013-2014. This difference in direction for headcount and FTE may be explained by the increasing share of the high school student population of dual enrollment who enroll in part-time course loads. Also, experience and data show that the trend of enrollment at two-year colleges declines as the economy improves. Recessionary periods drive enrollment up, often dramatically. These increases are typically followed by periods of "right-sizing." Student may continue their education, but drop to part-time status.



**Academic Year data through 2013-2014**



**Academic Year data through 2013-2014**

The FTE enrollment increase in 2013-2014 was due primarily to tripling the welding enrollment to meet local employer needs and enrolling students in the practical nursing program after a year of the program not admitting new students.

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation 4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Most commonly measured and tracked input across higher education. Represents a raw number coming in, which through core themes, exits sufficiently prepared to succeed.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	At census date of each term, compiled and analyzed at the end of spring semester. Note: This is also gathered and analyzed weekly during registration for ongoing goal assessment (Exhibit 4.21).
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	FTE goal set by CPBAC and considers past performance, present performance, and performance-based funding target level (Exhibit 4.22).  Headcount goal is calculated by multiplying FTE by the average ratio of headcount to FTE over the prior 3 academic years
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum FTE and headcount from the previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: The median of peer institutions for total undergraduate unduplicated headcount and total reported FTE undergraduate student enrollment from IPEDS 12 Month Enrollment.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

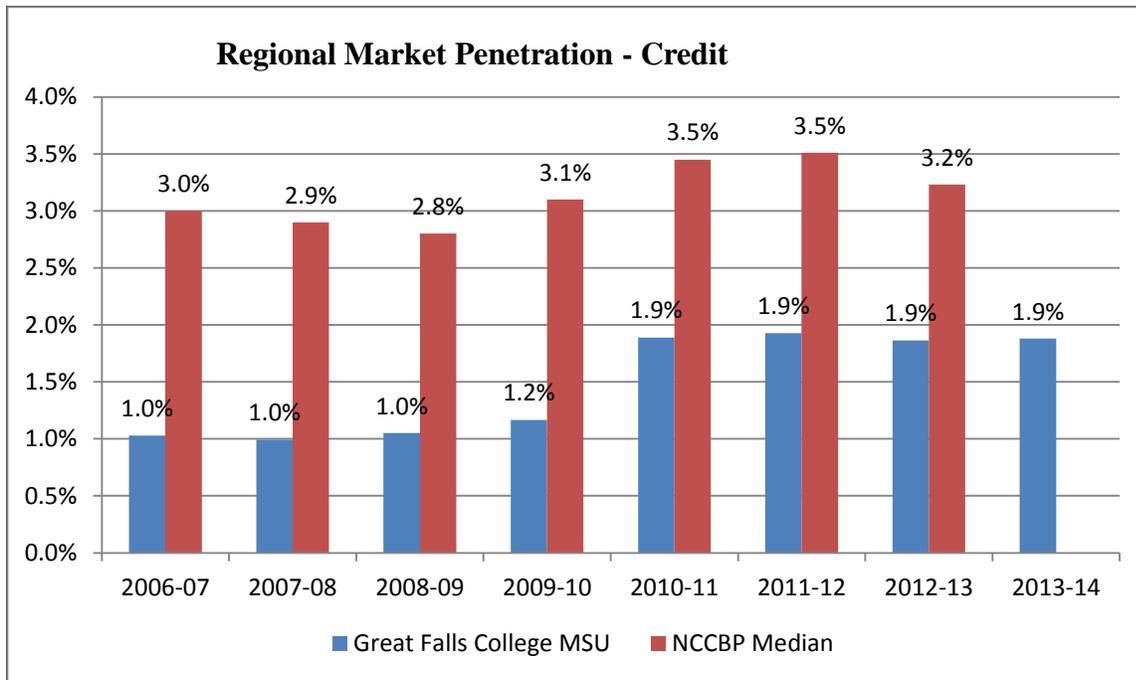
Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	CI 1: Participation (Credit-Bearing FTE)	Partially Met	Met	Partially Met
All	CI 1: Enrollment (Credit-Bearing Headcount)	Met	Met	Partially Met

## Core Indicator 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates

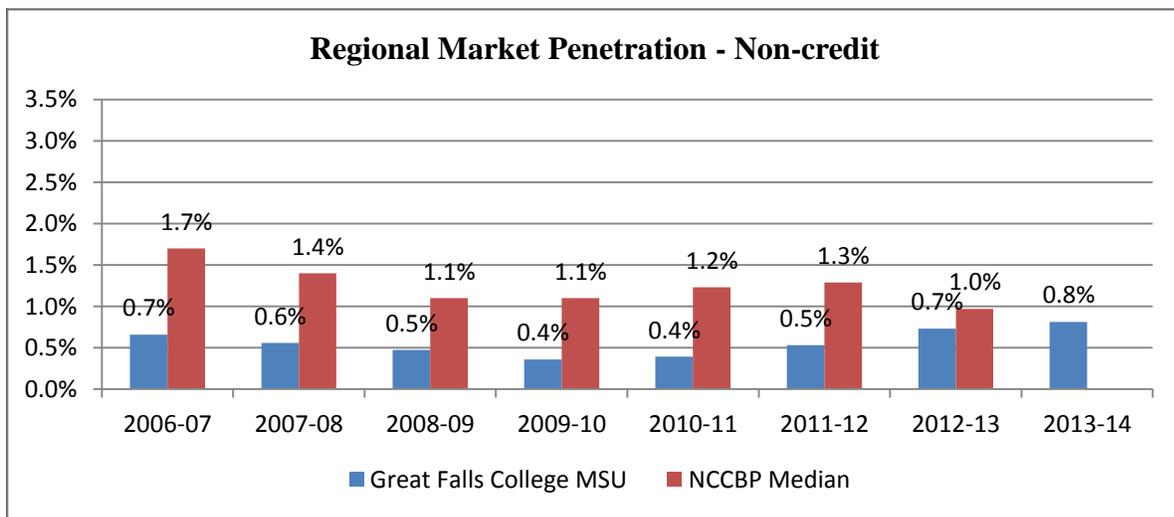
### Definition:

The proportion of the total population of the college's service area that has participated in at least one credit or non-credit college course.

The market penetration rate for credit-bearing students during the academic year has remained flat at 1.9% for the last three years. Non-credit penetration rates at Great Falls College MSU have also stayed flat for the last two years (0.7%). Regional market penetration of both credit and non-credit courses for Great Falls College MSU are lower than the benchmarks provided by the NCCBP.



Academic Year data through 2013-2014



Academic Year data through 2013-2014

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation 4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Since one of the core themes of Great Falls College MSU is community development, and because community development includes identifying and reaching out to underserved populations, this indicator becomes a valuable mechanism for identifying gaps in service. It also provides a measure of how well the college engages the community and measures the community participation. Both of those activities, within their respective programming, contribute to preparing students for success.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring semester for credit and non-credit courses
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Credit: Increase by .2 points each year Non-credit: Increase to half of the NCCBP median rate
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum penetration for our local market from past previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: NCCBP median value of credit and non-credit market penetration

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

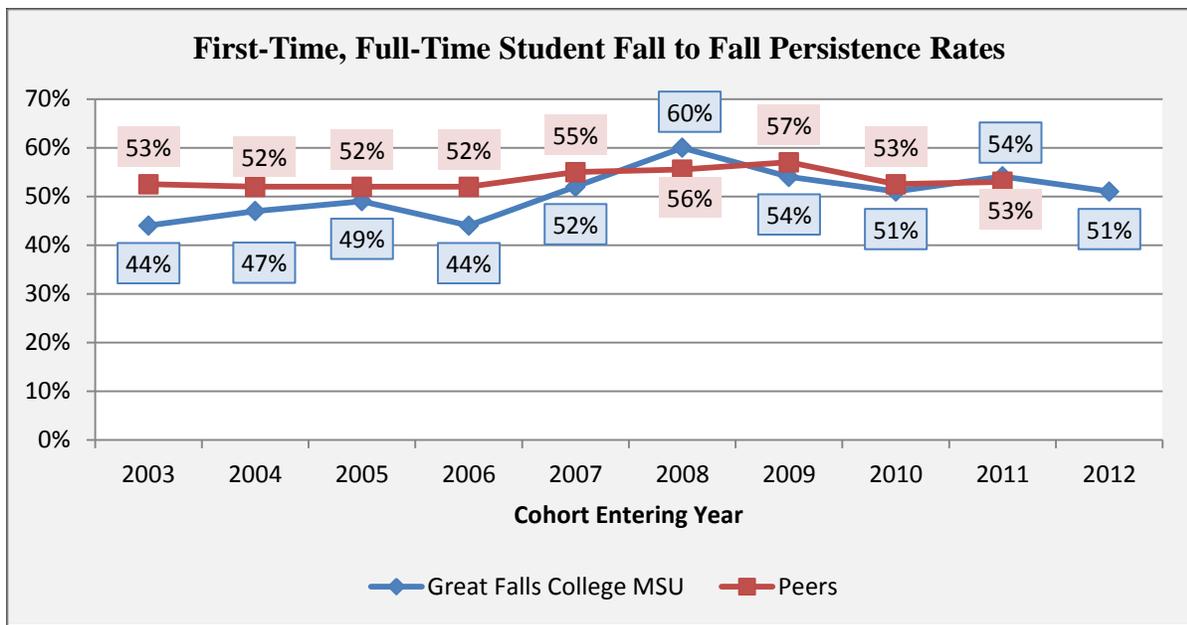
Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (Credit)	Partially Met	Met	Partially Met
4	CI 2: Regional Market Penetration Rates (PCE)	Met	Met	Not Met

### Core Indicator 3: Persistence (Retention)

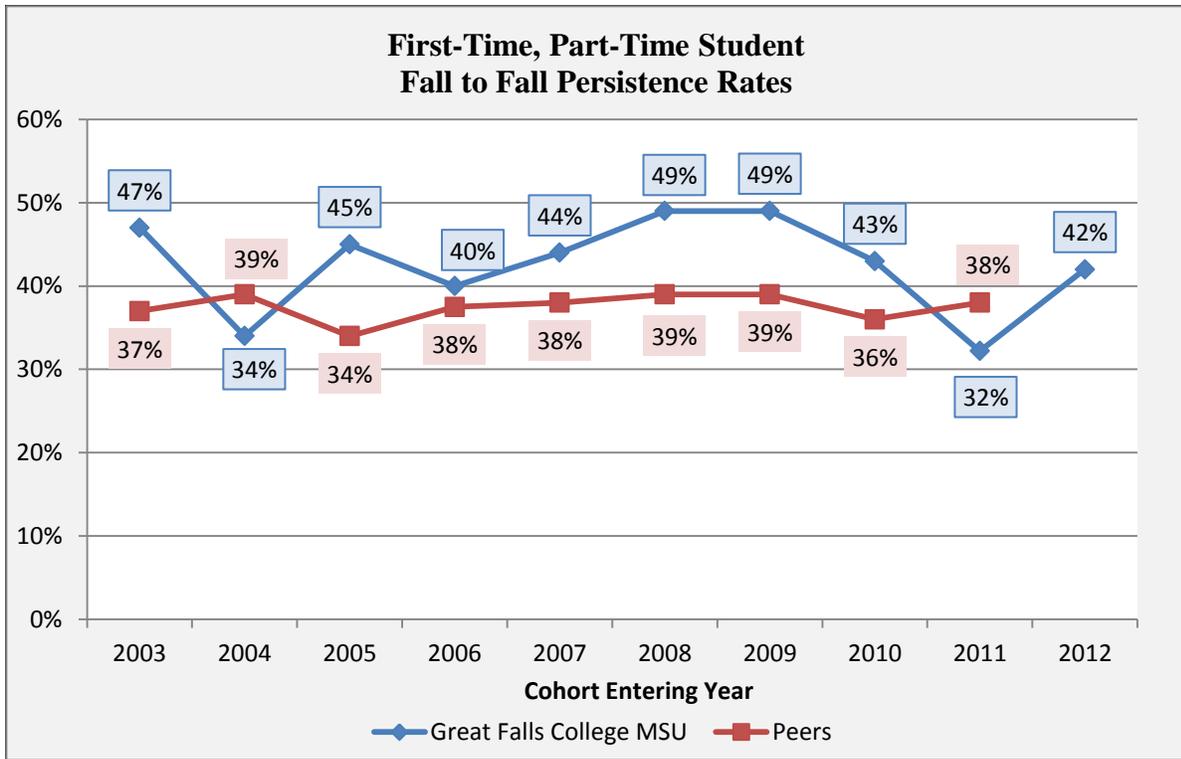
<b>Definition:</b>	The proportion of new first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students and new first-time, part-time, degree-seeking students who enrolled at the beginning of fall term and who 1) were still enrolled for at least one credit as of census date in the fall of the next academic year and 2) had not completed a degree or certificate
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The persistence rates for both full- and part-time students vary from year to year, in part because of the relatively small cohort sizes. The full-time rate was 51% for the Fall 2012 cohort, and the part-time rate was 42%. Compared to the IPEDS peer group data, Great Falls College MSU has similar persistence rates when comparing the peer median to the three-year averages for both full- and part-time cohorts.

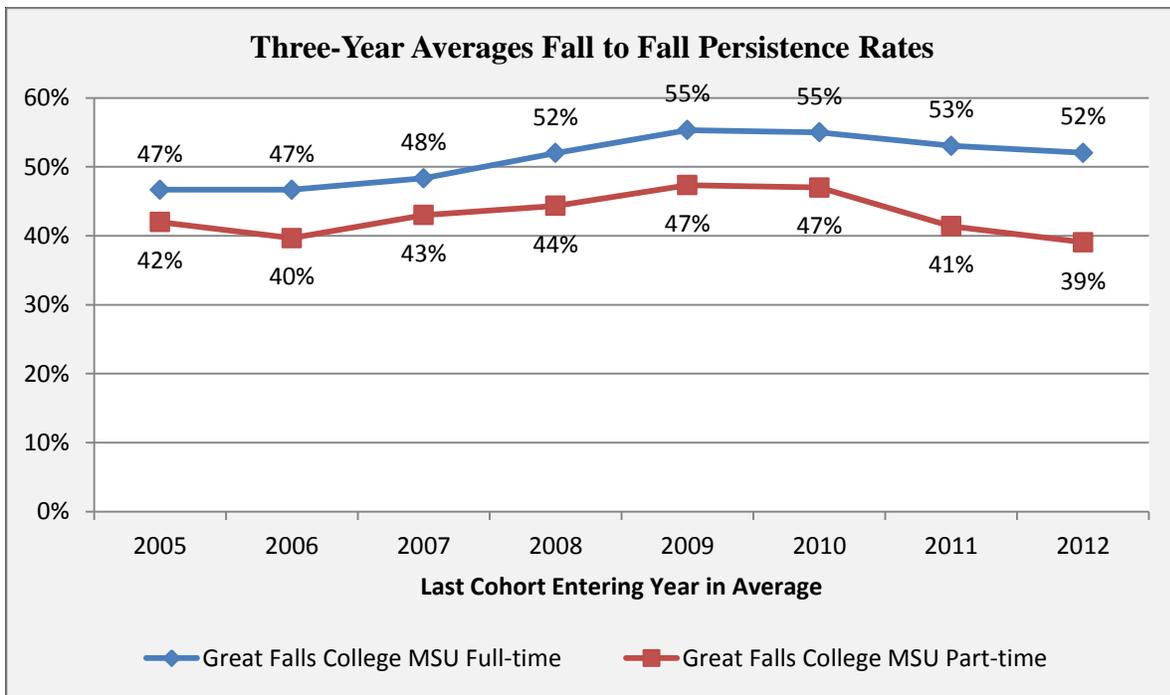
The SWAMMEI grant (now RevUP Montana) is also providing college coaching to students in manufacturing and energy related programs to help improve their success rate and attainment of a Certificate of Applied Science.



**Academic Year data delayed due to one year needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**



**Academic Year data delayed due to one year needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**



**Academic Year data delayed due to one year needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	The college cannot ensure students effectively achieve their educational goals if it is ineffective at keeping them enrolled to completion. Monitoring and measuring how many students return to the college in the following academic year is essential to sustaining student momentum to completion, the college’s ability to fulfill the core theme, and fulfilling the college mission. In the face of changing workforce and educational requirements, the need to retain more students will only intensify. Low persistence rates waste human talent and resources, and threaten the nation’s economic future, as more jobs require a postsecondary education. In addition, retaining current students helps an institution’s sustainability.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Fall Semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase by 2-3% if goal achieved in prior year; increase by 1-2% if goal not achieved. Note: This measure may be impacted by the statewide performance-based funding model.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum persistence from previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: IPEDS median value of peer institutions first-time full-time student cohorts and first-time part-time student cohorts.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Full-Time Students)	Not Met	Partially Met	Not Met
All	CI 3: Retention (First-Time, Part-Time Students)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

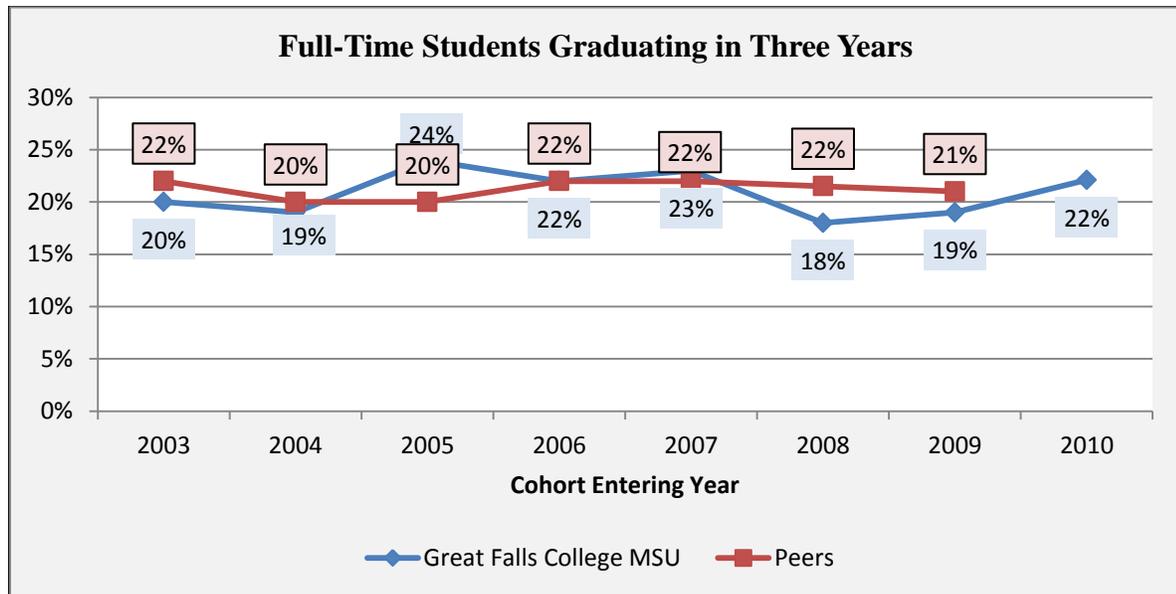
## Core Indicator 4: Graduation Rates

### Definition:

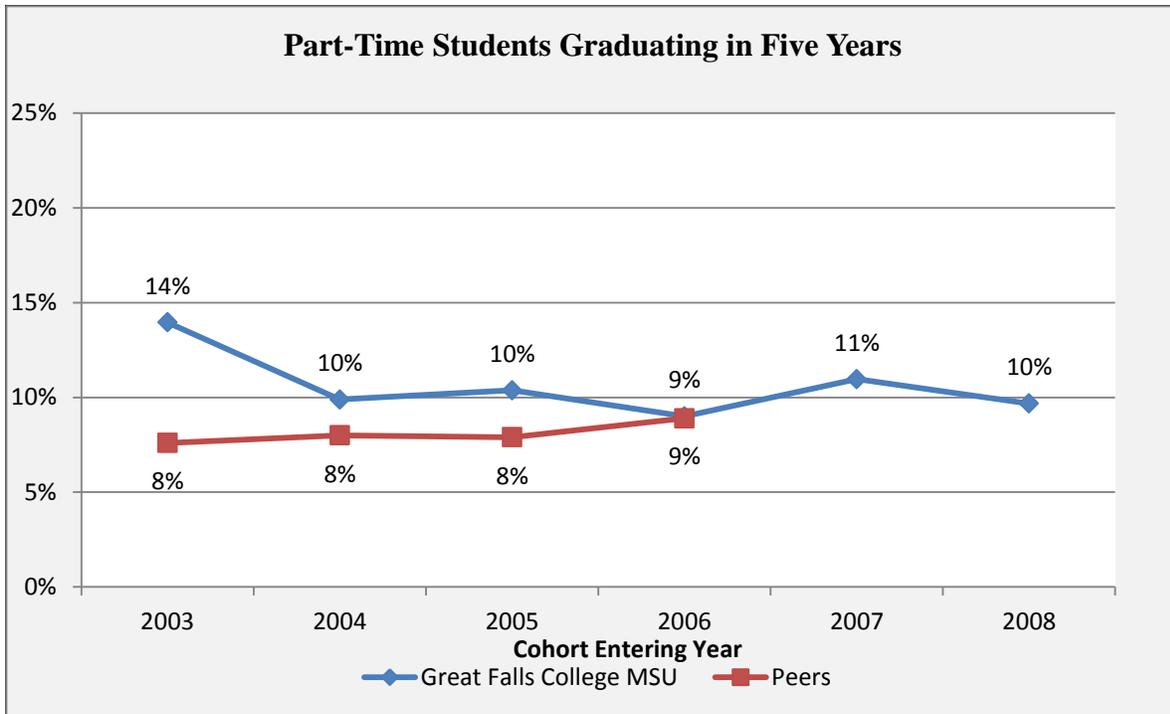
The proportion of new first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who enrolled in and subsequently completed a degree or certificate program in three years.

The proportion of new first-time, part-time, degree-seeking students who enrolled in and subsequently completed a degree or certificate program in five years.

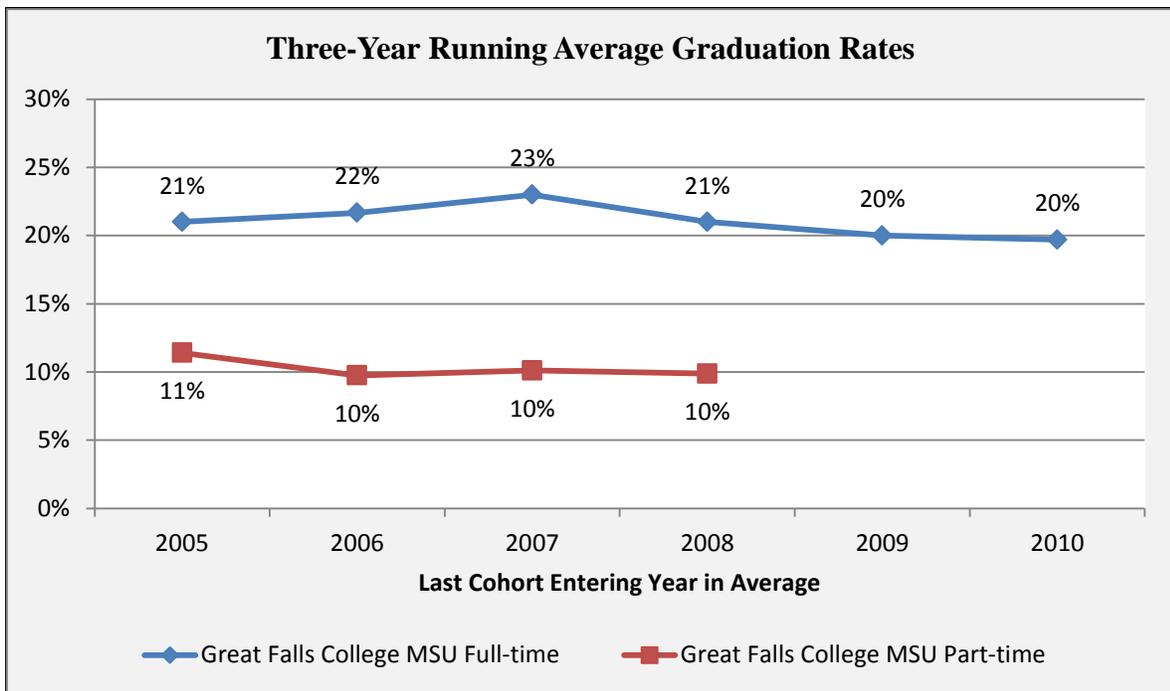
For the 2010 full-time entering cohort, 22% graduated within 150% of the normative timeframe for their programs. Graduation rates for Great Falls College MSU first-time, full-time students have averaged about 20% over the last three years. The small sizes of entering cohorts at Great Falls College MSU cause variation in the graduation rate from year to year. The last available 3-year running average for part-time students is 10%. Compared to the IPEDS peer group data, Great Falls College MSU has comparable full-time graduation rates. Compared to CSRDE peer group data, GFC has slightly higher graduation rates for part-time entering students.



**Academic Year data delayed due to three years needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**



**Academic Year data delayed due to five years needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**



**Academic Year data delayed due to three and five years needed for measurement to take place and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	The majority of students at the college are degree seeking. Thus, the proportion of those students who successfully complete their credential within an expected timeframe is a quality indicator of institutional performance of this core theme. One of the fundamental outcomes necessary for the fulfillment of the college's mission is student attainment of educational goals.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Fall semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase graduation rate goal by roughly 2% per year for full-time and part-time (if goal achieved) - otherwise keep at current goal. For 2013-2014, full-time goal is 25%; part-time goal is 17%. Note: Varies by cohort intake and overall population.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum persistence from previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: IPEDS median peer value for first-time, full-time graduates; CSRDE for first-time, part-time graduation rate peer group data. Note: IPEDS does not collect part-time graduation rates. NCCBP does, but gives part-time students only 3 years to complete degree, not the 5 used by GFC MSU.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s)		Core Indicators		
		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Full-Time within 3 years)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
All	CI 4: Graduation Rates (First-Time, Part-Time within 5 years)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

## Core Indicator 5: Demonstration of Abilities

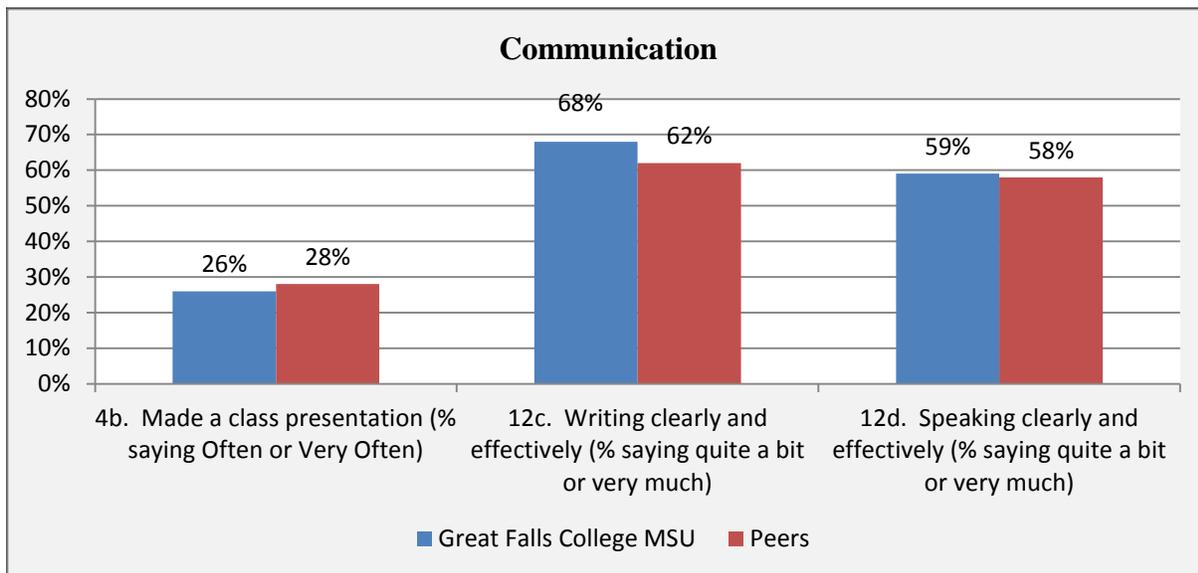
### Definition:

The proportion of students who demonstrate competency in the college's Eight Abilities (Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Inquiry and Analysis, Aesthetic Engagement, Diversity, Technical Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Effective Citizenship) upon graduation and/or exit from the college. Currently using items from the CCSSE survey as proxy measures of these abilities; as outcomes assessment becomes more entrenched at the school, the measures used will change to more direct measures of the abilities.

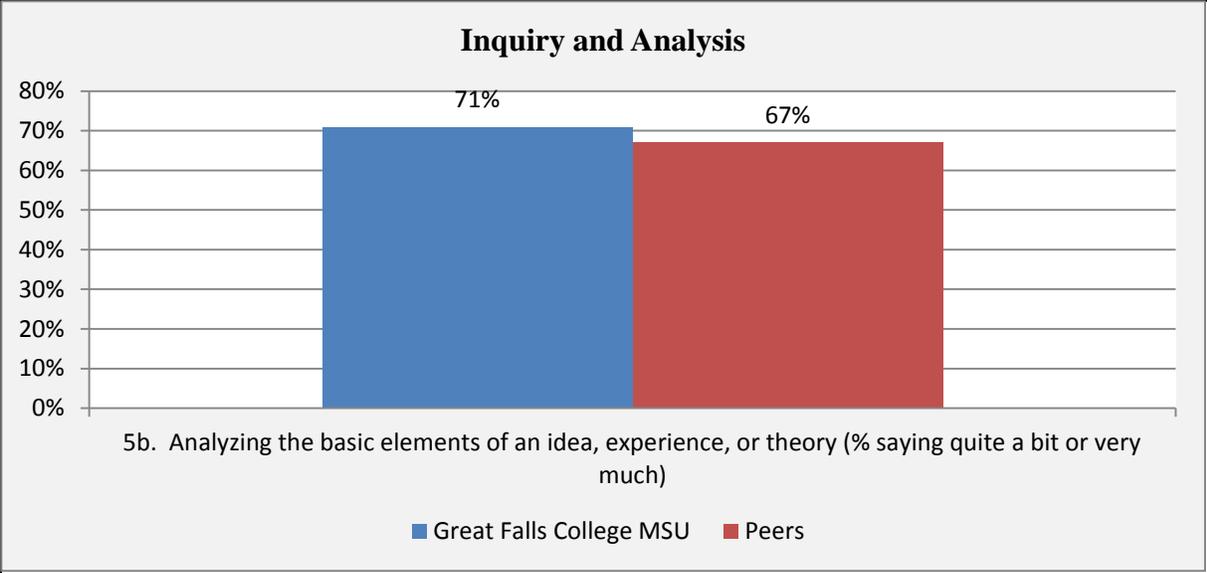
Great Falls College MSU students responded similarly to respondents from the peer institutions in the 2012 CCSSE report. See graphs below for any differences.

To better inform students and faculty of the Eight Abilities, GFC MSU formed an abilities committee. The Eight Abilities were also added to each syllabus and discussed with students in every class. The Eight Abilities were aligned with course objectives and program outcomes on the course syllabus for every class. Currently the Academic Senate has a committee forming to review a plan for systemic analysis of this indicator; however, certain programs already have students creating portfolios that show the Eight Abilities.

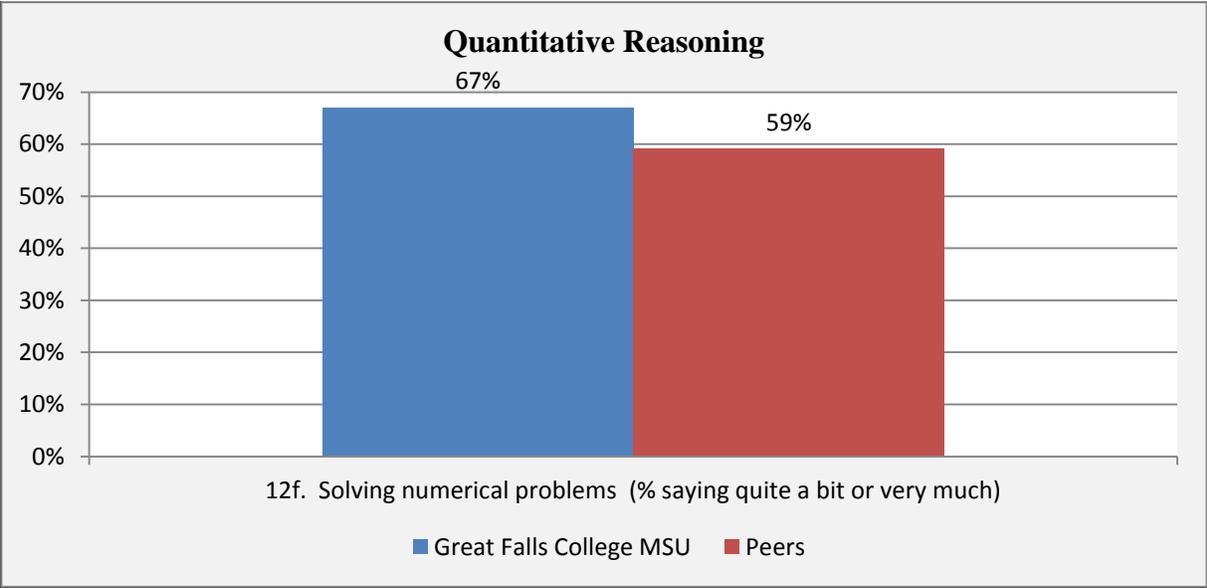
For the Main Street Montana project, all programs must undergo faculty-led program level assessment and analysis of course outcomes from multiple sources, including degree production, job placement and earnings, licensure, and certification pass rates. Employer satisfaction surveys are also distributed, gathered, and analyzed.



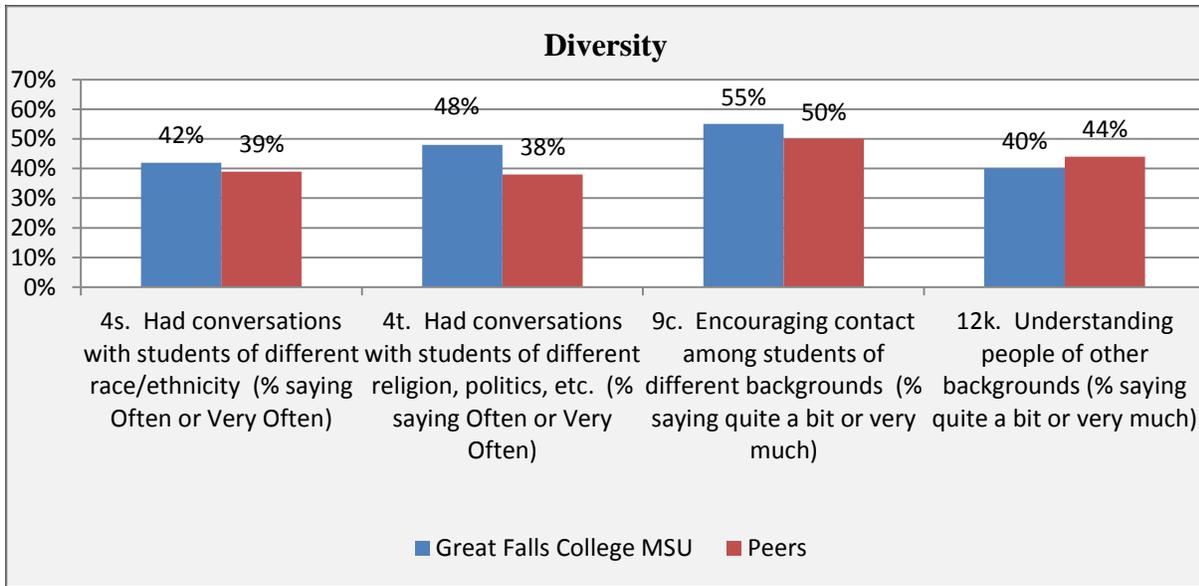
**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



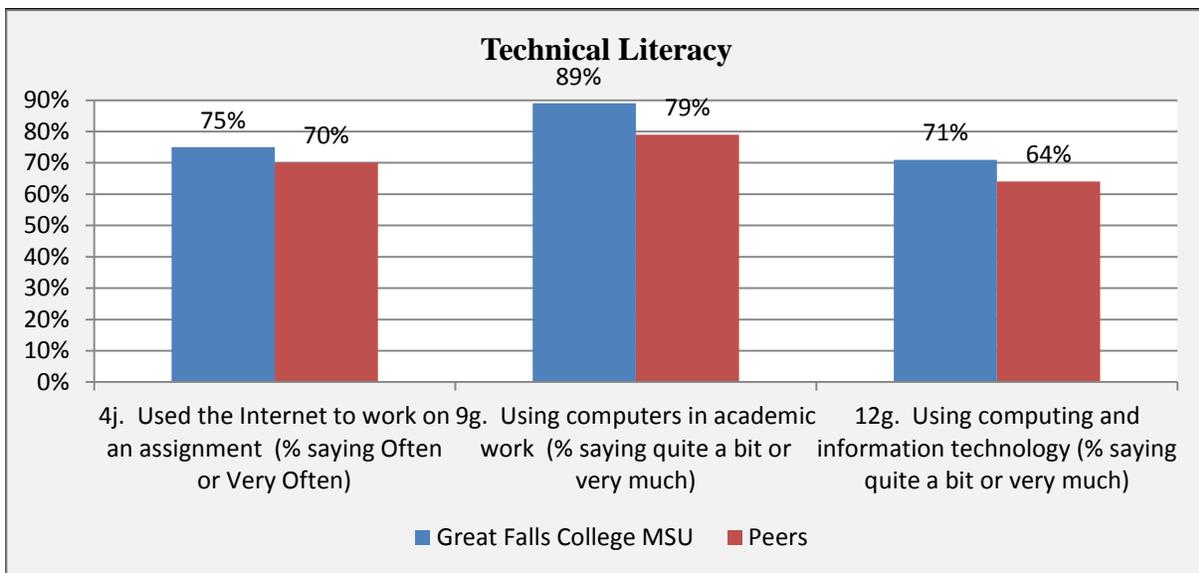
**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



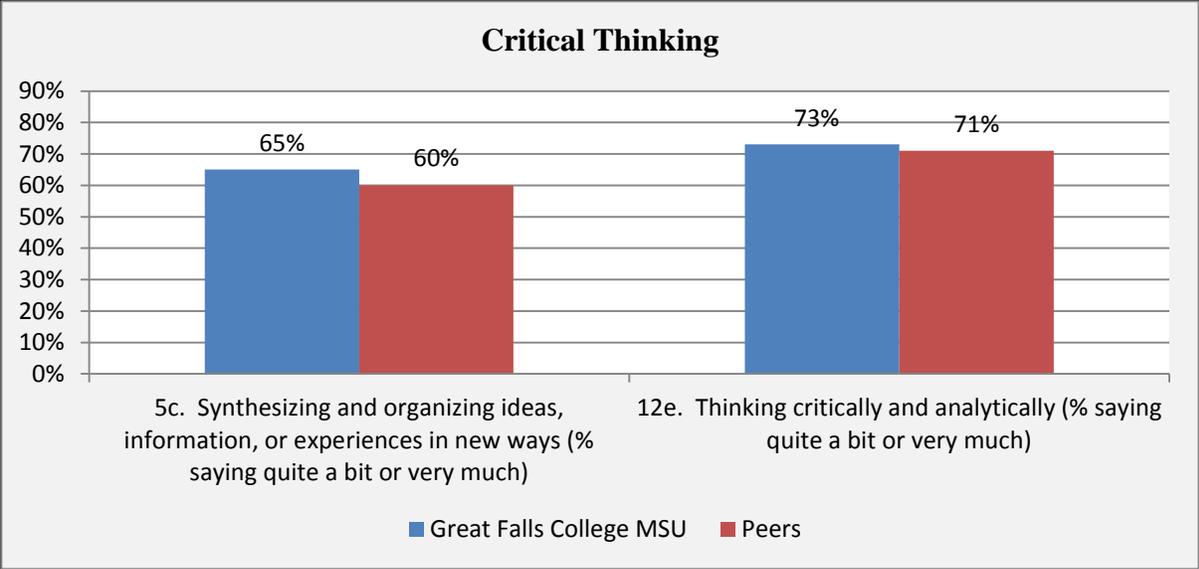
**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



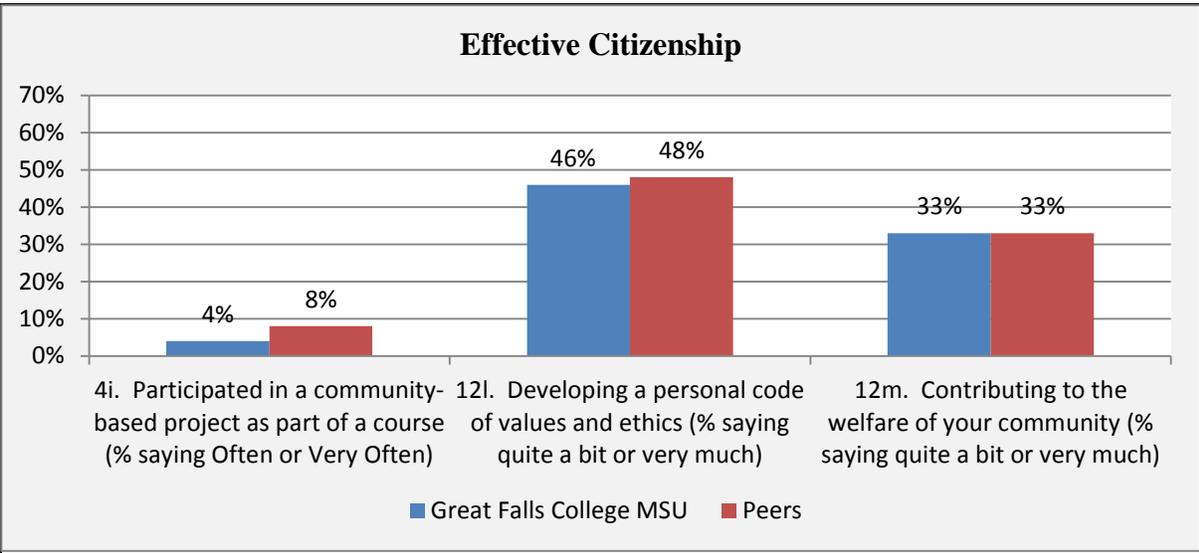
**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



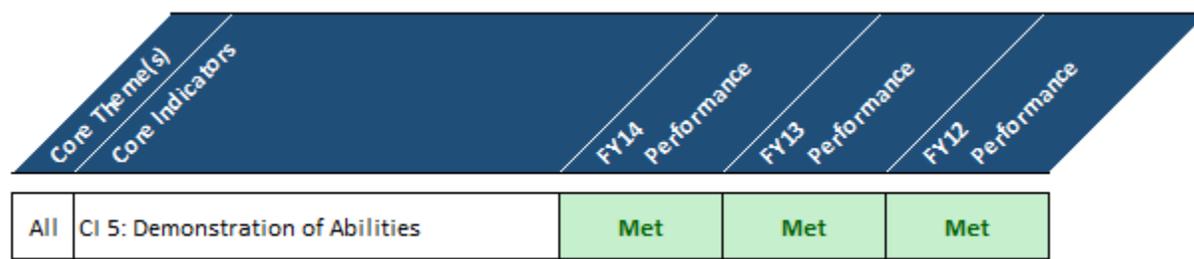
**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**



**GFC MSU students measured to 2012 CCSSE peers**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Higher education is more than training. The college’s mission states, “we ensure students are prepared to succeed in a global society.” To do so, graduates need more than occupational skills, or even competency in core academic areas. They must possess abilities in the areas of problem solving, communication, critical thinking, etc. This measure will assess how well the college develops these abilities in our students, in tandem with academic and occupational skills and knowledge.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	The CCSSE survey is administered to students at Great Falls College MSU in randomly selected courses every third spring term. The next scheduled administration is Spring 2015.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	This is a proxy measure - for 2013-2014, keep at same value as last year (4.00).
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum weighted/aggregated score from the CCSSE questionnaire over the historical measurement period of every two years to measure the eight abilities.  EXTERNAL: CCSSE peer group percentages

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.



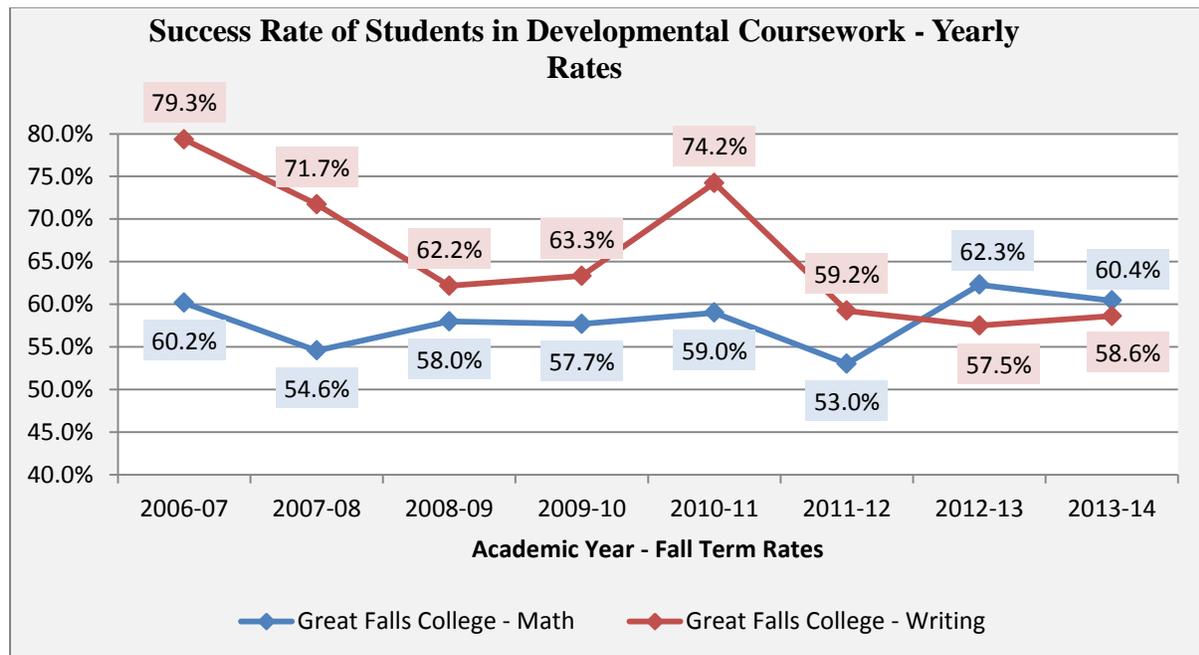
## Core Indicator 6: Success of Remedial Students in Developmental Coursework

### Definition:

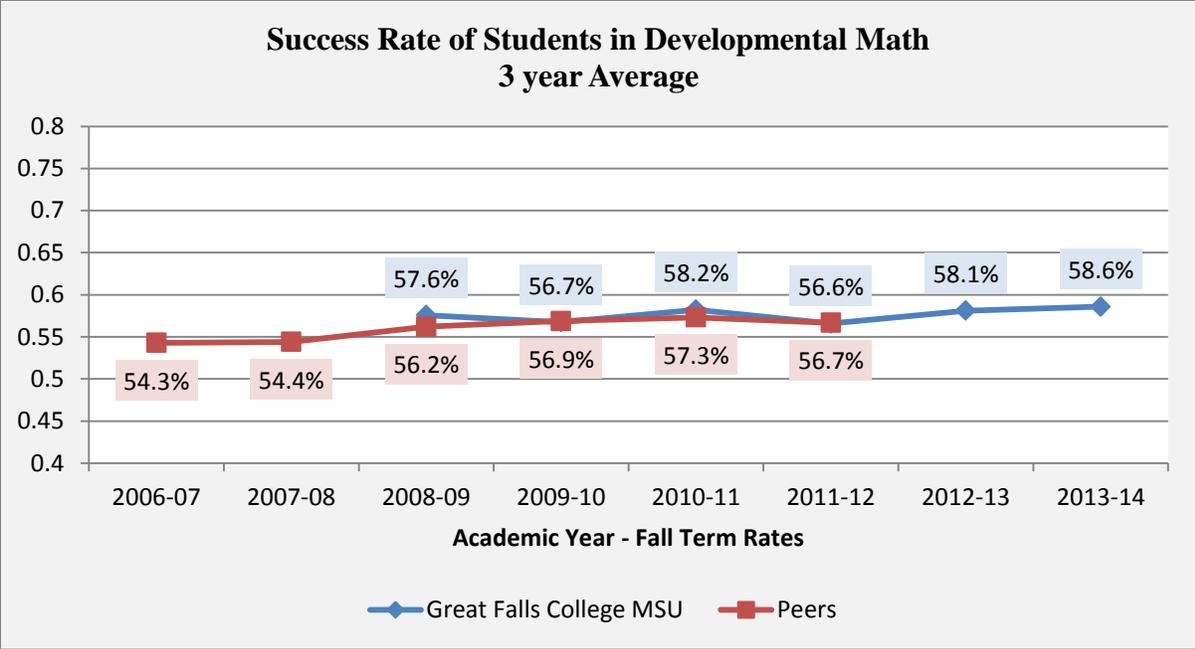
The proportion of students enrolled in developmental math and writing coursework in fall term who earn a grade of C- or better in those courses.

On average, 59% of the GFC MSU students who enrolled in developmental math courses in the last three years successfully completed the course with a C- or higher. The rates in math developmental coursework at Great Falls College MSU are similar to the median rate of NCCBP institutions. About the same percentage of students at GFC MSU succeeded in developmental writing courses; over the last three years about 59% of students in these courses have been successful. GFC MSU has seen a lower success rate of students in developmental writing compared to peer institutions.

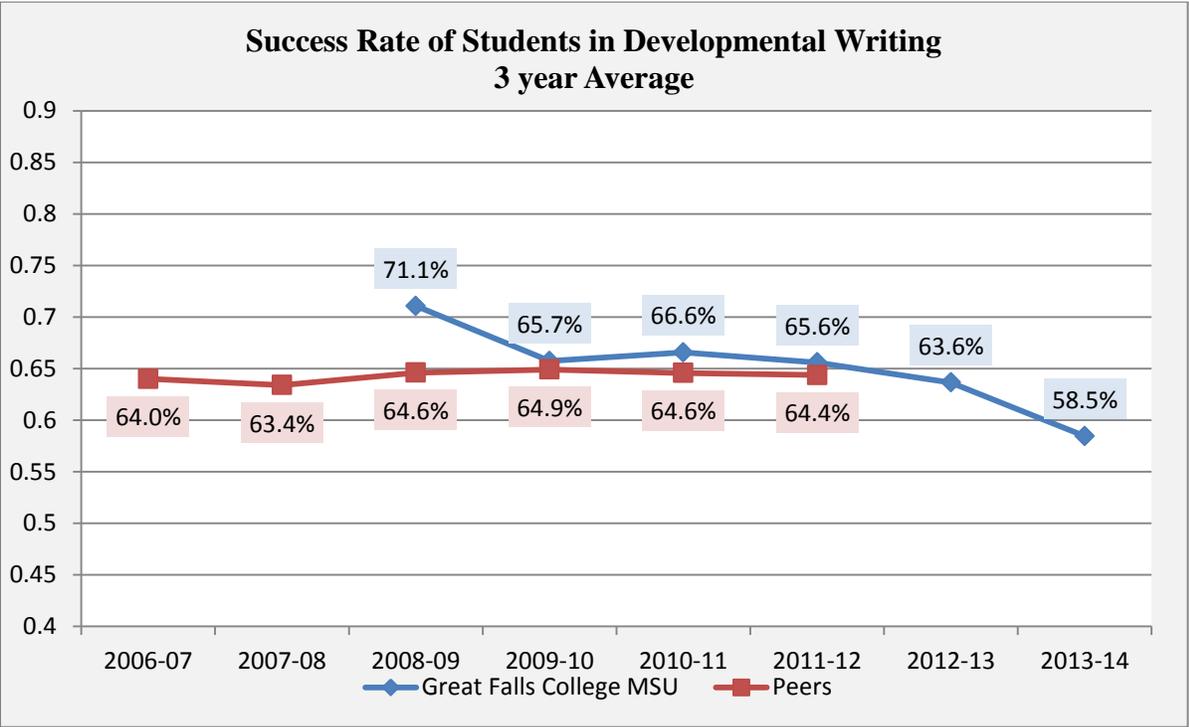
The success of the developmental and subsequent course pass rates have been shared with the math and writing faculty. The math department and writing department will be examining the data and strategizing in Spring 2015 to find ways to increase the success rates and college-level preparedness.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 with a two year delay in order to compute a three year average. Peer Academic Year data delayed due to NCCBP reporting schedule.**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 with a two year delay in order to compute a three year average. Peer Academic Year data delayed due to NCCBP reporting schedule.**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Success in developmental math and writing has been demonstrated to increase likelihood of persistence to goal attainment and/or completion of a college credential. This indicator measures how effective the college is in moving students through developmental coursework.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Collected annually at the end of Fall Semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase success rate goal by roughly 2% for math and 1% for writing each year (if goal achieved in prior year) - otherwise keep at current goal. For 2013-2014, math goal is 65%; writing goal is 75%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: NCCBP peer institution median values

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

		Performance		
		FY14	FY13	FY12
Core Theme(s)	Core Indicators			
3	CI 6: Success of Students in Remedial Courses (Math)	Partially Met	Partially Met	Not Met
3	CI 6: Success of Students in Remedial Courses (Writing)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

## Core Indicator 7: Success of Remedial Students in First College-Level Coursework

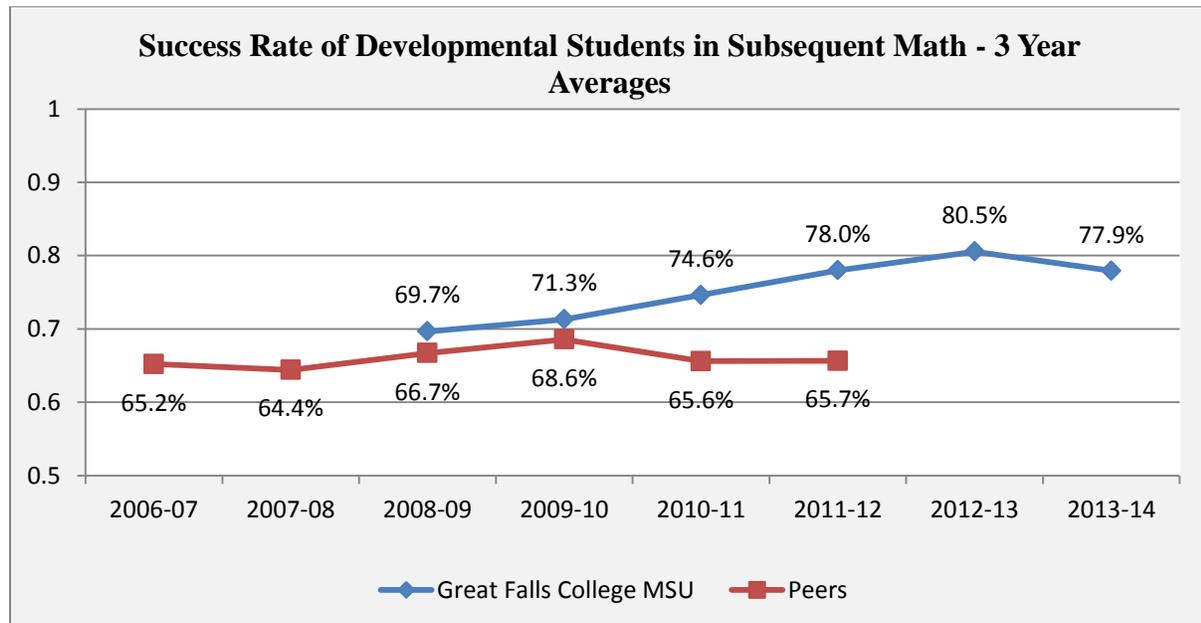
### Definition:

The proportion of students who successfully complete the highest level developmental coursework, then enroll in and earn a grade of C- or better in the college-level course.

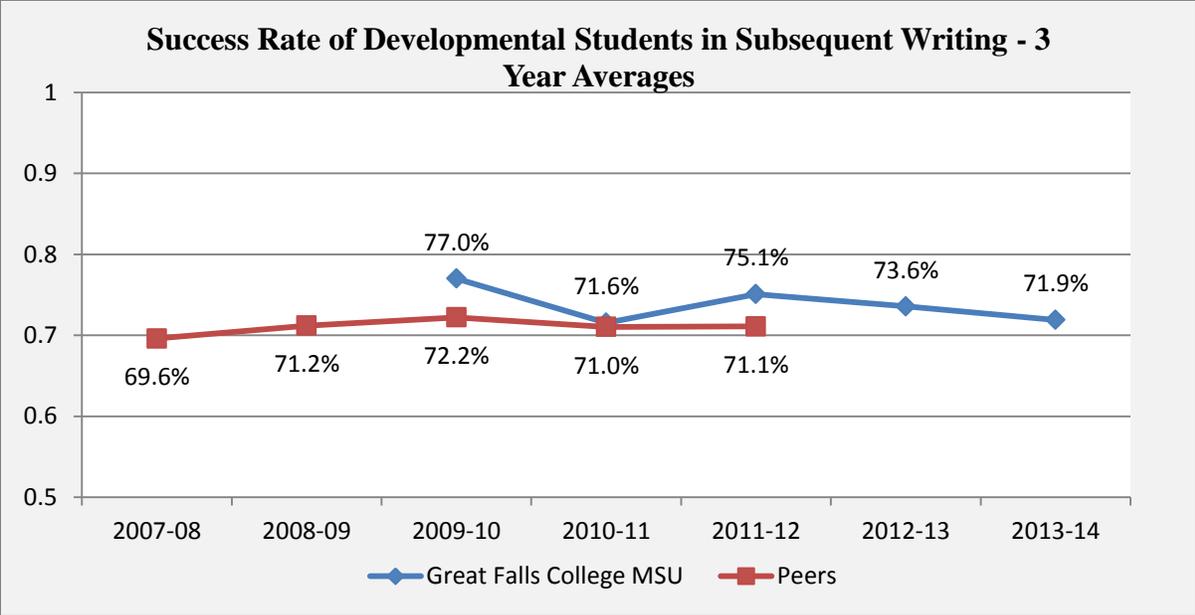
Although the success rates of developmental students in both college-level math and college-level writing courses declined from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, the three-year average has been more consistent. With relatively small sample sizes, the success rates of enrollees in developmental courses vary year to year. In general, GFC MSU has performed slightly better than the NCCBP peer institution median rate. For example, the success rate for developmental writing courses over the last three years averages 72%. This is slightly more than the most recent median success rate for the NCCBP cohort of 71%.

Pass rates in subsequent college-level math and writing courses have generally increased or stayed the same since 2009. They did decline between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; however, they still remained above the average for institutional peers.

The success of the developmental and subsequent course pass rates have been shared with the math and writing faculty. The math department and writing department will be examining the data and strategizing in Spring 2015 to find ways to increase the success rates and college-level preparedness.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 with a two year delay in order to compute a three year average. Peer Academic Year data delayed due to NCCBP reporting schedule.**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 with a two year delay in order to compute a three year average. Peer Academic Year data delayed due to NCCBP reporting schedule.**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Successfully moving students through developmental coursework is but one component of academic preparation. Students’ subsequent success in their first related college-level coursework tells the college if the developmental course was aligned with preparing students for entering college level courses. Whereas Core Indicator 6 illustrates how well the college successfully moves students through remedial coursework, this indicator illustrates how effectively that coursework prepared students for college-level studies.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Fall semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	For 2013-2014, math goal is 80%; writing goal is 80%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: NCCBP peer institution median values

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
3	CI 7: Success in Subsequent and Related Coursework (Math)	Not Met	Partially met	Met
3	CI 7: Success in Subsequent and Related Coursework (Writing)	Not Met	Partially met	Met

## Core Indicator 8: Workforce Degree Production

### Definition:

The number and proportions of applied degrees (AAS), certificates (CAS) and certificate of technical studies (CTS) granted annually by Great Falls College MSU.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, the number of workforce degrees granted increased at Great Falls College MSU by 14% (37 degrees). The production rate for this year was 34%. Comparisons between Great Falls College MSU and peer institutions are limited to the number of workforce degrees only, since FTE of applied programs only is not available for peer institutions. The goal for number of applied degrees in 2013-2014 was 280; both this goal and the goal for degree production rate were met.

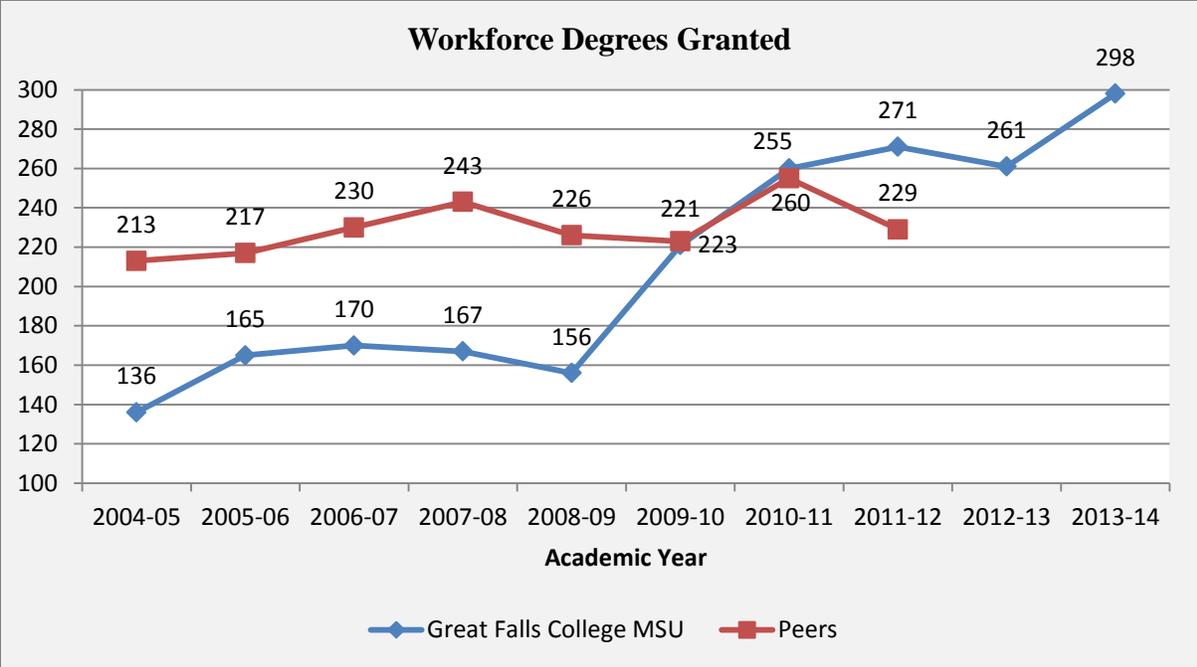
The number of degrees awarded is an important indicator for the performance-based funding (PBF) model adopted in the state of Montana, piloted during the 2014-2015 academic year. A revised PBF model is expected to be approved for the 2015-2016 academic year within the next few months.

Working under the CHEO grant, the Health Sciences Division created pathways for students, including a pathway from a phlebotomy certificate of technical studies to a medical assisting associate of applied science degree program, and from an emergency medical technician (EMT) certificate of technical studies to a paramedic associate of applied science degree program. College-ready students are able to earn a working credential in as little as one semester as a phlebotomist or EMT (Exhibits 4.23 and 4.24).

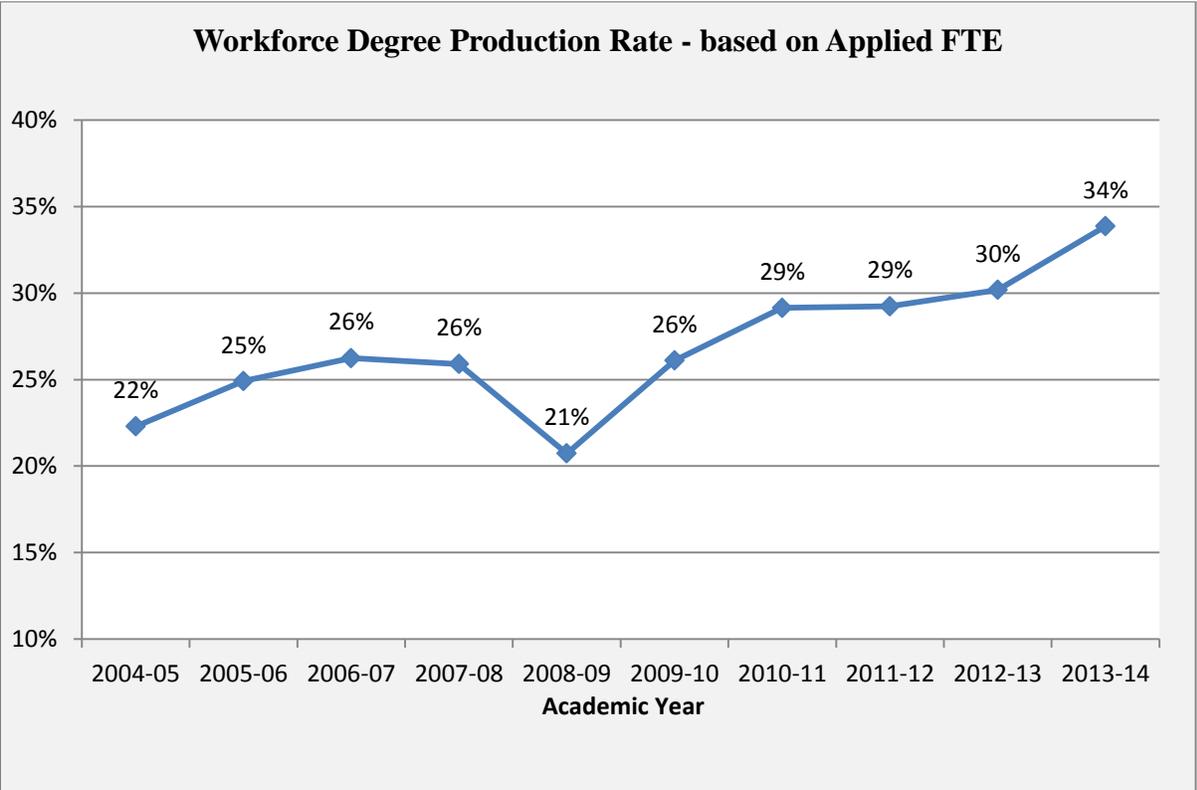
The SWAMMEI grant (now RevUP Montana), for which GFC MSU is the lead college, is designed to help two-year educational institutions meet workforce needs by aligning curriculum with industry-recognized credentials and providing opportunities for on-the-job training (Exhibit 4.25). As part of the grant, the Welding and Fabrication Technology program has created stackable credentials geared toward workforce needs.

The Montana HealthCARE grant was awarded in October 2014 to a consortium of public educational institutions across the state, including GFC MSU (Exhibit 4.26). Its purpose is to address the statewide shortage of healthcare workers, particularly the shortage of nurses. One of its charges will be to create stackable credentials to meet this shortage.

The Wind Montana Project, a consortium of four Montana two-year campuses of which GFC MSU was the lead campus, was aimed at partnering to serve the growing wind industry in Montana by establishing standards and developing training programs. The college's Sustainable Energy Technician and Industrial Technician programs were the result of this effort.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**



**AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Applied programs and the credentials awarded through them are intended to prepare students for entry or advancement in occupational areas. Therefore, the number of applied or workforce credentials is a good indicator of how well the college is providing potential employees to meet the community's workforce needs. The calculation of a production rate, taking the number of credentials as a percent of the total student FTE seeking a workforce credential, allows the college to monitor the annual success rate of students in obtaining these credentials and measures how well the college is providing potential employees to meet the community's workforce needs.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring Semester. Degree production derived from the number of degrees and certificates awarded annually divided by the average annual FTE in applied programs for the same academic year.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase number of applied degrees goal by increase in enrollment for the year, plus an additional 1%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from past previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: The median value of IPEDS peers for number of applied degrees. No comparable peer data at this time for degree production rate.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
1	CI 8: Workforce Degree Production (# of Degrees)	Met	Partially met	Met
1	CI 8: Workforce Degree Production (Rate)	Met	Met	Partially Met

## Core Indicator 9: Job Placement Earnings

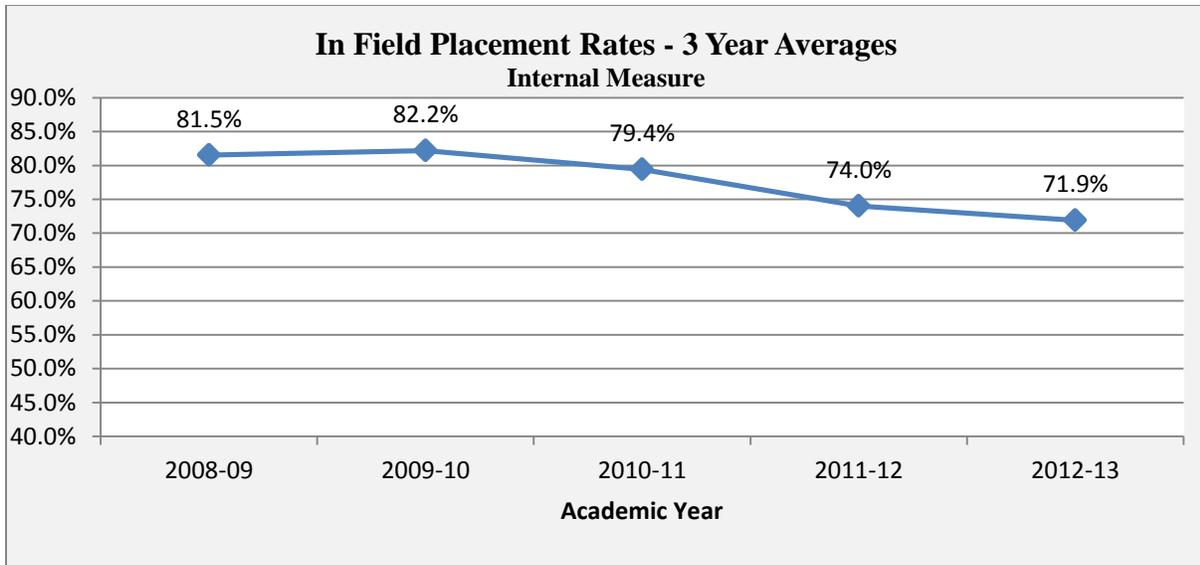
<b>Definition:</b>	<p>In-field job placement rates: The proportion of GFC MSU graduates earning a degree or certificate intended for immediate employment responding to the GFC MSU graduate survey who report being 1) employed in their field or 2) employed in their field and continuing their education.</p> <p>Graduate earnings: The average hourly wage for all graduates employed for all four quarters in the year following their graduation.</p>
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Internal measures of job placement rates have a three-year average of about 72%. Comparative in-field placement rates at Great Falls College MSU have been higher than the median rate at NCCBP peer institutions. The external three-year average at Great Falls College MSU has been around 60%. Average hourly wages for graduates, however, are lower than the average hourly wage for all of Montana. There may be a number of reasons for this: For instance, the wages of recent graduates will be less than the average wages of all employed Montanans together, some of whom may have many years of experience in a field; and all career fields are included in the average hourly Montana rate shown.

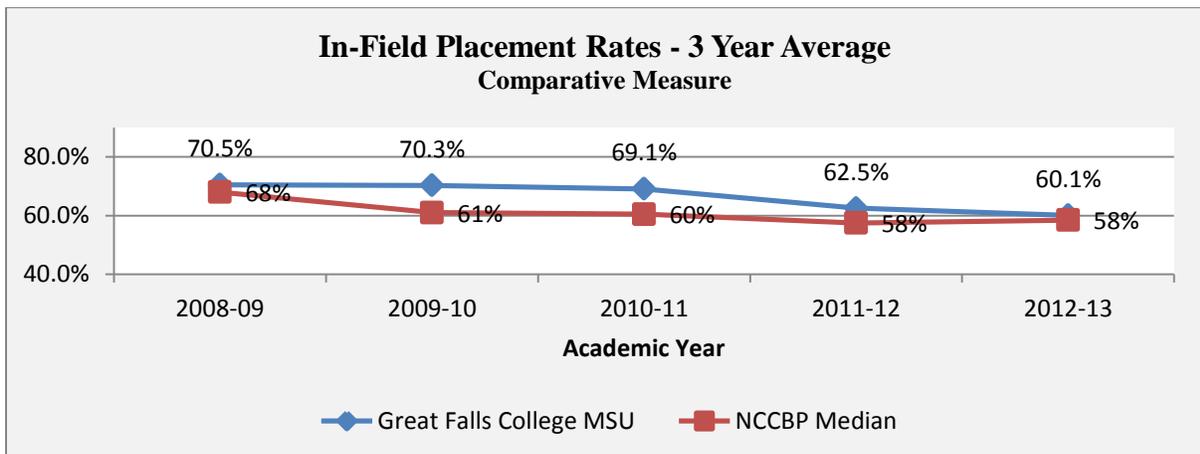
Due to low response rate to the graduate survey, the way this indicator is measured will change. In the future, the indicator will be assessed using hourly wage data received annually from the Montana Department of Labor, typically in the fall, via the Office of the Commissioner of Education (OCHE) in Montana. This change will also be reflected in how programs are assessed during Program Review and annually in the programs 'snapshot.'

A CHEO grant-funded career coach helps students prepare for jobs in the healthcare fields. The career coach has also been instrumental in organizing a Healthcare Job Connections Fair to connect students and employers. Healthcare students nearing graduation are coached in resume-building and interviewing techniques, prior to meeting potential employers at the Job Connections event.

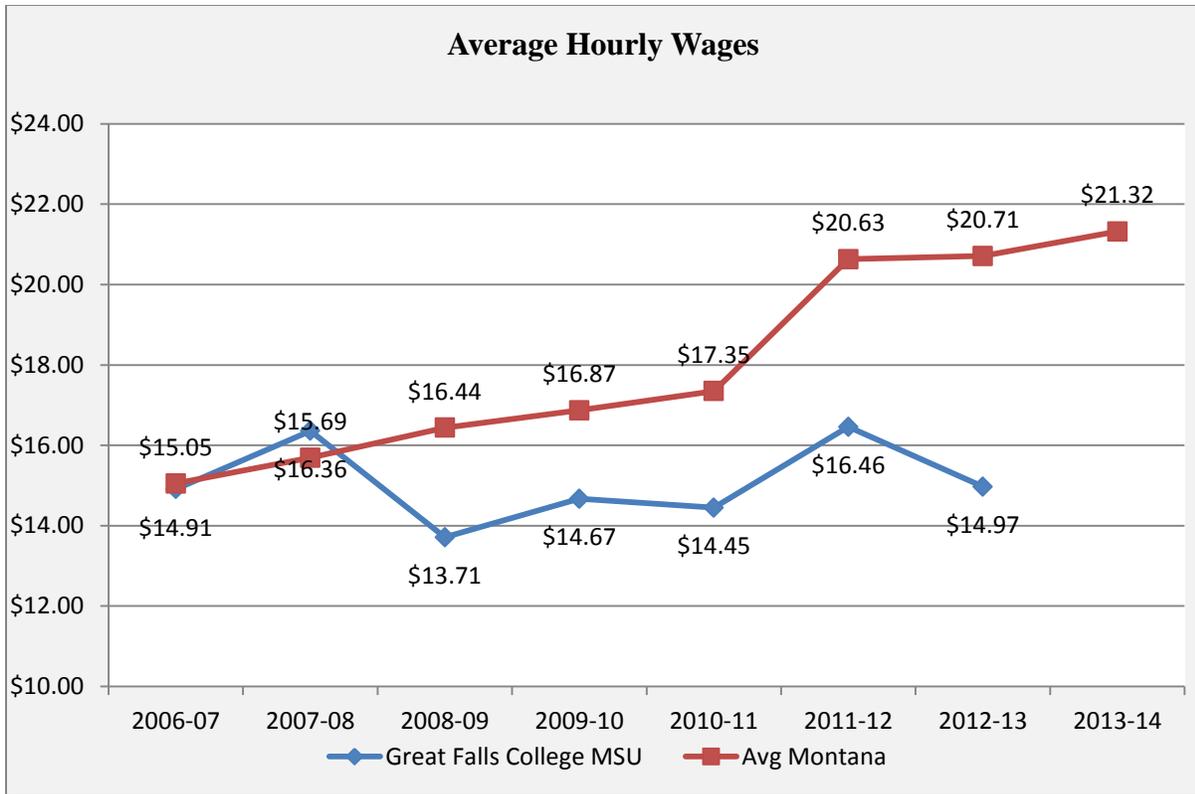
Through the SWAMMEI or RevUp Montana grant, GFC MSU hired a workforce navigator to build relationships between unemployed/underemployed workers and businesses needing skilled laborers. Part of the relationship-building is to introduce such workers to training programs, like the Welding and Fabrication Technology program at GFC MSU.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data delayed due to year needed for measurement to take place**



**Academic Year data delayed due to year needed for measurement to take place**



**Montana Academic Year data to AY13-14 and GFC MSU is delayed due to not implementing a graduate survey for one year**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Numbers of degrees alone do not indicate the value of the degree, or credential, to the employer or community. Graduates' knowledge and skills must align with community needs, which may be best identified through employment opportunities. Therefore, the rate at which the college's graduates become employed within their field of study or expertise is a sound indicator of both the quality, and appropriateness, of the programming the college offers and its fit with community workforce needs.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Graduate survey distributed end of Fall Semester. Hourly wage received annually from the Montana Dept. of Labor, typically in the fall, via the Office of the Commissioner of Education (OCHE) in Montana.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase job placement rate by roughly 1% each year; modify if needed for any macro-economic changes. For average hourly wage, multiply the Montana minimum wage for current year (\$7.90 in 2014, \$8.05 in 2015) by 2.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from past previous 5 years.  EXTERNAL: NCCBP peer institutions median values for career program completers employed in a related field. Data for Montana's average individual earnings is presented for informational purposes only; it is not benchmarked against the hourly wages.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance    FY13 Performance    FY12 Performance		
1	CI 9: In-Field Job Placement Rates	Not Met	Partially Met	Not Met
1	CI 9: Graduate Earnings	Partially Met	Partially Met	Met

## Core Indicator 10: License and Certification Pass Rates

### Definition:

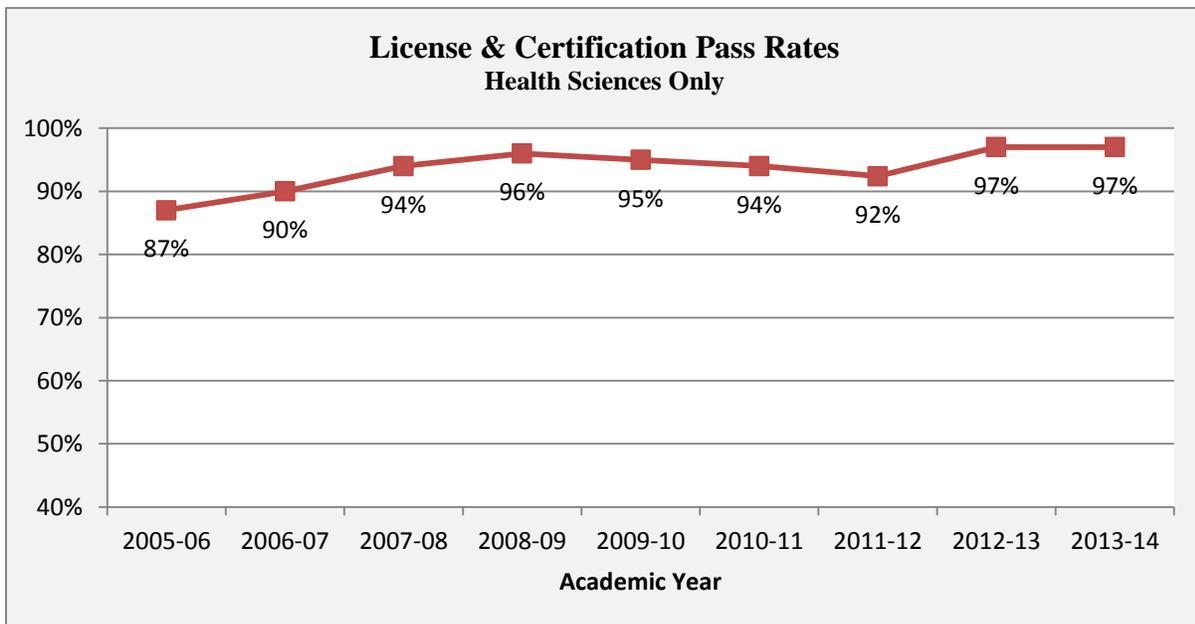
The proportion of GFC MSU students who attempt an industry license or certification exam and successfully pass, earning an industry recognized/required credential.

Pass rates for the health sciences are high. Over the last six years, this rate has been at least 90%. Currently data for license and certification rates are only available for health sciences.

This metric is used to evaluate programs during their Program Review, which takes place every five years. Based upon the program's performance on these indicators, recommendations for improvement are made to the Program Director.

Funding from the EDA, governor, and local industry also enabled GFC MSU to train students for both the American Welding Society (AWS) and Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) certification. Such dual certifications are important to the workforce in Great Falls, which is located only 100 miles from the Canadian border.

The pass rates of licensure and certification exams is an optional metric for the performance-based funding (PBF) model adopted in the state of Montana, piloted during the 2014-2015 academic year. A revised PBF model is expected to be approved for the 2015-2016 academic year within the next few months.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Two rationales are provided for this measure. First, the success of graduates in many applied fields must be measured by more than just graduation rates. Many occupations, especially in healthcare (in which the college has strong programming), require licensure to practice or enter the workforce. Thus, measuring the success of students in passing licensure and certification exams is a critical indicator of success in developing a qualified workforce. Second, not all students who come to the college are seeking a degree. Some leave with the requisite skills and knowledge developed in key coursework. Often the coursework or activities that help develop these skills lead to industry-recognized certifications that provide added assurance to success in employment, professional advancement, or both. Thus, this indicator provides another mechanism for measuring success in preparing students to enter the workforce.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Collected annually, typically in the fall, through a survey of academic program directors who track and report the licensing and certification pass rates of their students.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 is 95%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: No external benchmark at this time; however, many external agencies use 80%.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

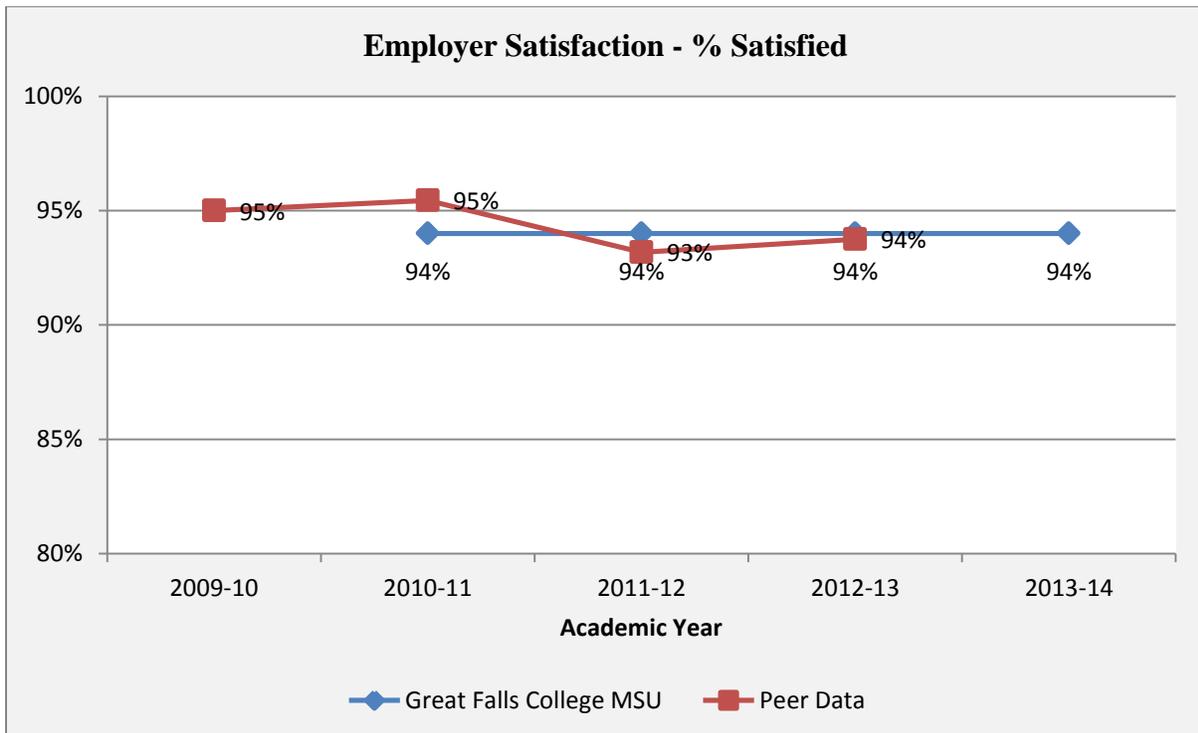
Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
1	CI 10: Licensure and Certification Pass Rates	Met	Met	Partially Met

## Core Indicator 11: Employer Satisfaction with Graduates

### Definition:

The proportion of employers responding to the college's employer satisfaction survey that report 1) having hired a GFC MSU graduate and 2) report that they are "somewhat," "very," or "extremely" satisfied with the graduate's preparation.

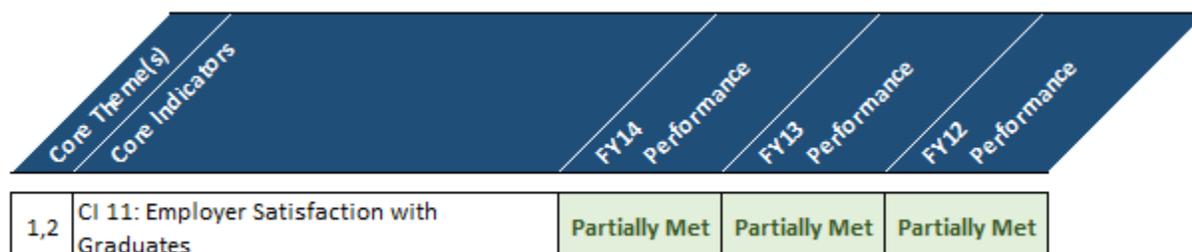
Ninety-four percent of surveyed employers who had employed Great Falls College MSU graduates indicated they were satisfied with the overall preparation of these employees. This is about the same as the satisfaction rate reported by NCCBP peer institutions.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 (employer satisfaction survey first implemented in the 2010-11 academic year) and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	It is not sufficient to simply graduate students from applied programs. Similar to tracking job-placement, additional measures of workforce development are critical to assessing the efficacy of the college in achieving this goal. Asking employers how well they believe the college's graduates perform in relation to all of their employees provides an additional perspective on the success of the workforce core theme.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Spring semester via a survey administered to known employers of the college's graduates
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	AY 13-14 goal is 100% satisfaction
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from past previous 2 years.  EXTERNAL: Median score of NCCBP's values on employer satisfaction

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.



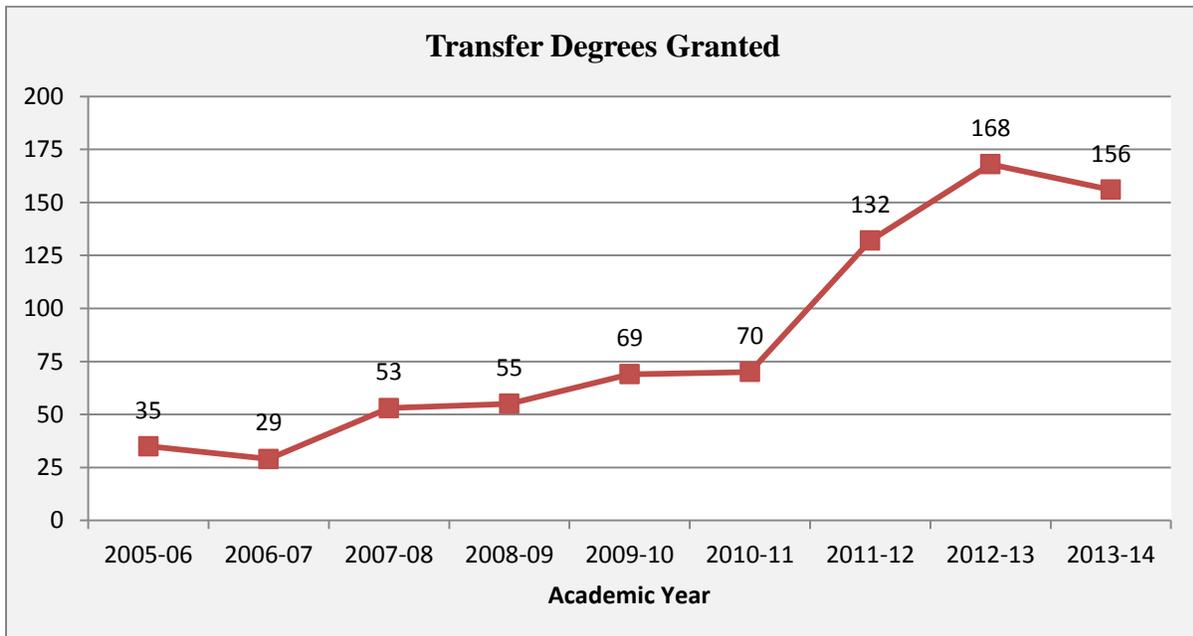
## Core Indicator 12: Transfer Degree Production

### Definition:

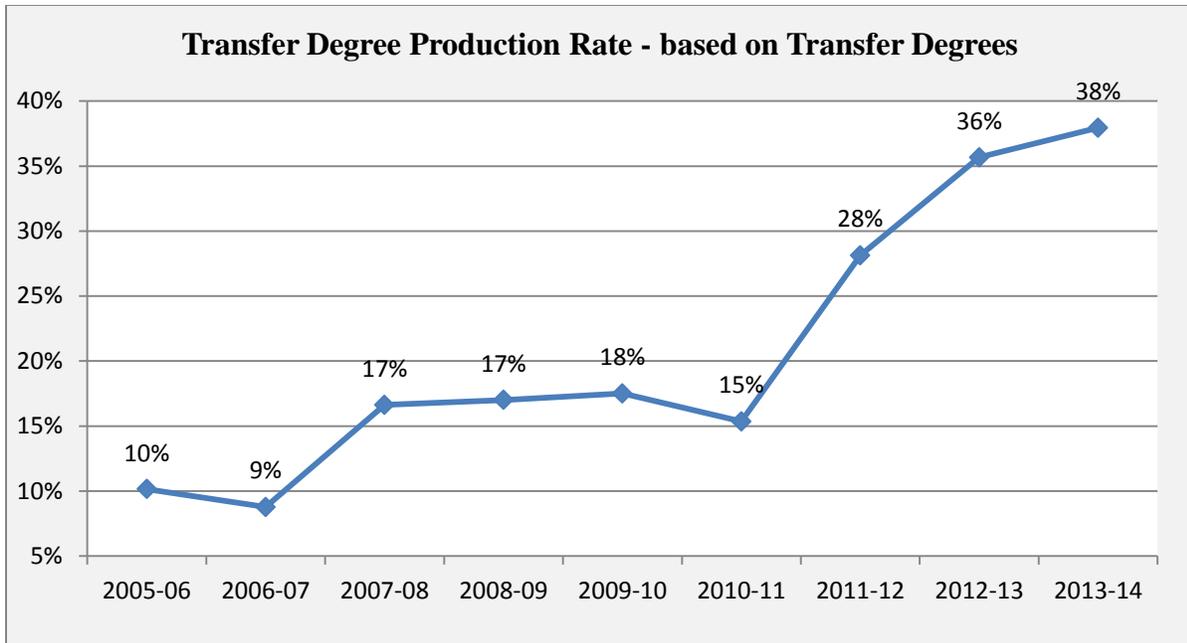
The number of transfer degrees (AA and AS) granted and MUS Gen. Ed. Cores transcribed annually by GFC MSU. The proportion of transfer degrees granted and MUS Gen. Ed. Cores transcribed annually by GFC MSU as a percentage of annual transfer program student FTE.

There were 12 fewer transfer degrees awarded in 2013-2014, compared to the previous year. However, the goal for number of transfer degrees awarded was exceeded, as was the goal for the degree production rate.

The number of degrees awarded is an important indicator for the performance-based funding (PBF) model adopted in the state of Montana, piloted during the 2014-2015 academic year. A revised PBF model is expected to be approved for the 2015-2016 academic year within the next few months.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	2: Transfer Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	The transfer programs at the college and the credentials awarded through them are intended to prepare students to transfer to a four-year institution and toward a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the number of transfer degrees awarded is a good indicator of how well the college is providing potential transfer students for other four-year campuses. The calculation of a production rate, taking the number of credentials as a percentage of the total student FTE seeking a transfer credential, allows the college to monitor the annual success rate of students in obtaining these credentials.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Increase number of transfer degrees goal by increase in enrollment for the year, plus an additional 1%. For 2013-2014, goal for number of degrees is 135; goal for degree production rate is 32%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: No comparable peer data at this time. This is tracked for MUS schools internally by OCHE and is being made available for the purpose of PBF.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
2	CI 12: Transfer Degree Production (# of Degrees)	Met	Met	Met
2	CI 12: Transfer Degree Production (Rate)	Met	Met	Met

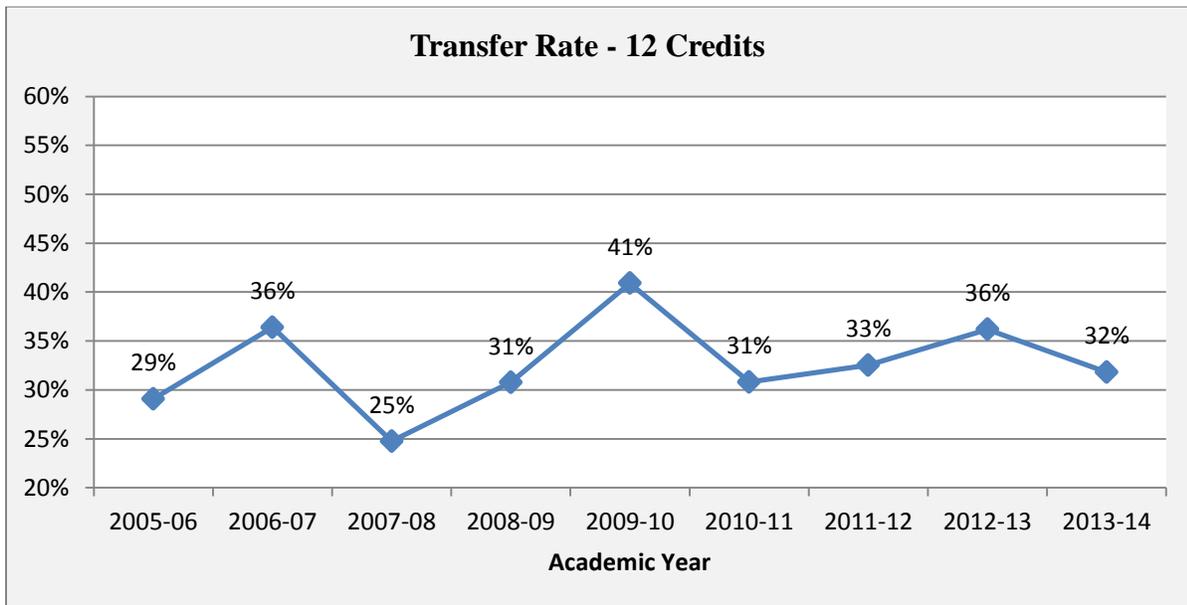
### Core Indicator 13: Transfer Preparation and Matriculation Rates

**Definition:**

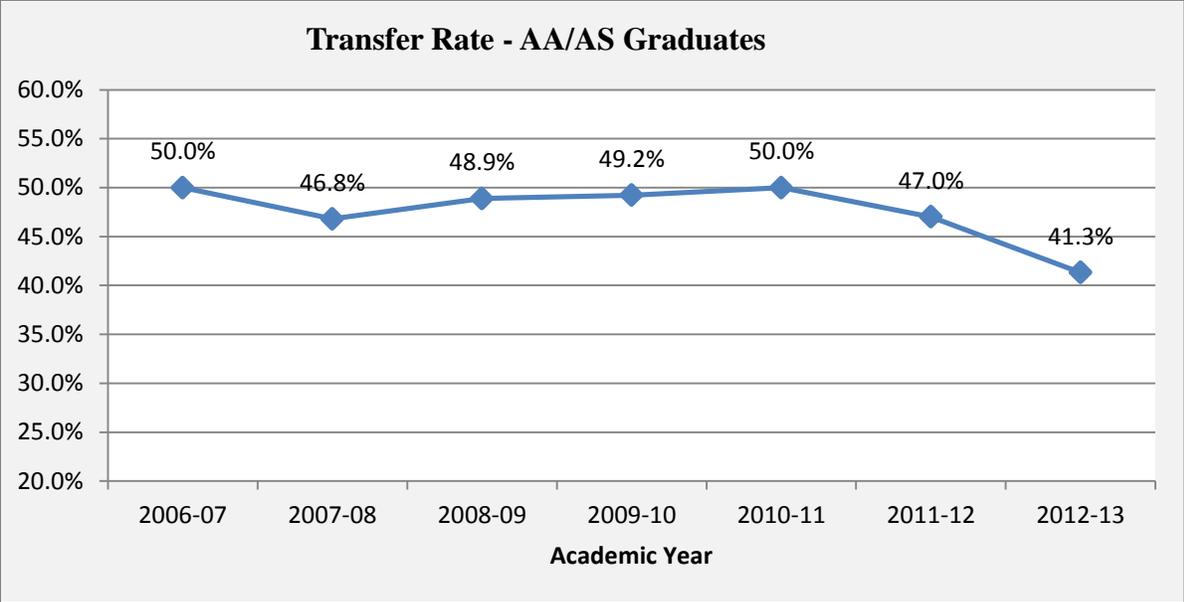
The proportion of students who at the completion of the previous academic year 1) had completed at least 12 credits at GFC MSU, 2) had been enrolled in a transfer program, 3) are not enrolled at GFC MSU in fall semester, and 4) are enrolled at a four-year campus.

The transfer rate for 2013-2014 was 32%. One of Great Falls College MSU’s strategic priorities is to increase the number of students in transfer programs; this goal has been accomplished.

GFC MSU has many articulation agreements to allow a student to start a four-year degree at GFC MSU and then transfer to another institution. These agreements are continually being reviewed and created to better assist with transfer. For instance, in Fall 2014 the college had one 1+3 articulation agreement with Civil Engineering at MSU in Bozeman and for Fall 2015 the college will have nine such articulation agreements for all of the engineering options at MSU.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	2: Transfer Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Not all students who enroll at GFC MSU have plans to complete an associate’s degree prior to transfer. In many instances these students intend to complete a specific selection of general education coursework and then plan to transfer to a four-year campus without completing an associate’s degree or even the MUS core. This indicator allows the college to track the success of these students by assessing those individuals who are enrolled in a transfer program, complete a significant number of credits, but do not return to GFC MSU.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	15th day of Fall semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Add 2% to the average of the last three years. Goal for 2013-2014 is a rate of 35%.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: No comparable peer data at this time.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s)	Core Indicators	FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
2	CI 13: Transfer Rates	Partially Met	Met	Partially Met

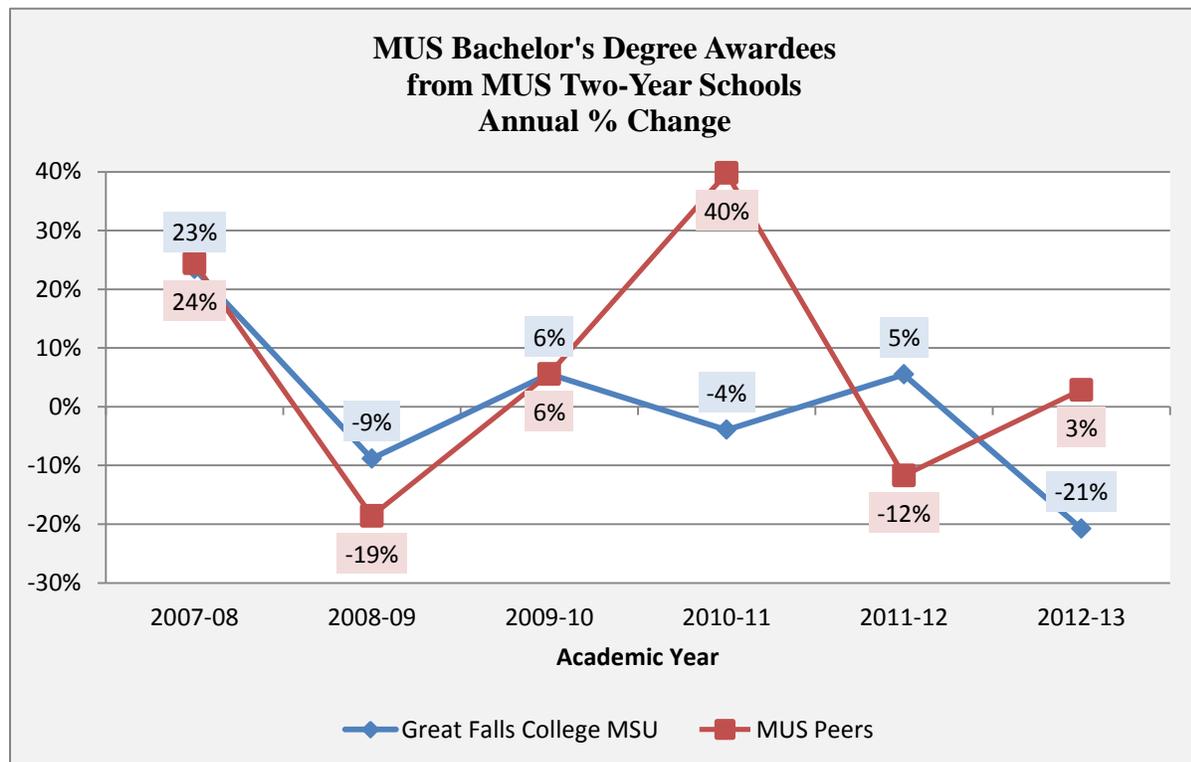
### Core Indicator 14: Performance after Transfer

<b>Definition:</b>	The number of students earning a bachelor's degree from a four-year MUS institution who reported GFC MSU as the last institution they attended.
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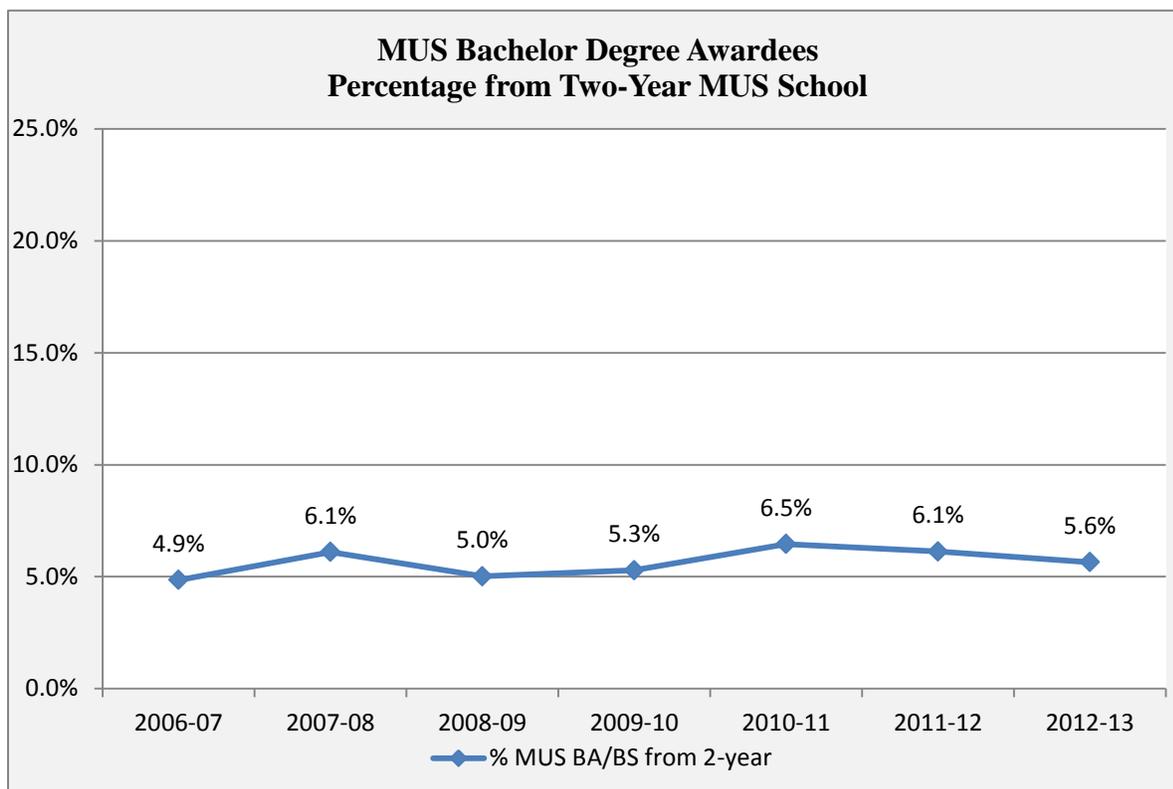
Great Falls College MSU is producing more transfer students who go on to complete their bachelor's degrees at an MUS institution than all other MUS two-year institutions, with the exception of Flathead Valley Community College. In the 2012-2013 academic year, all MUS two-year institutions produced about 6% of the bachelor's degree recipients at all MUS four-year institutions.

AY	PEER DATA							GFC MSU
	Miles CC	Dawson CC	FVCC	City College	Helena College	Highlands College	Missoula College	
2006-07	37	32	69	0	13	7	2	64
2007-08	33	22	107	1	25	4	7	79
2008-09	36	18	70	2	29	5	2	72
2009-10	24	22	91	2	19	8	5	76
2010-11	36	27	118	0	42	5	11	73
2011-12	42	22	99	3	20	8	17	77
2012-13	39	26	87	4	46	4	11	61

Academic Year delay due to OCHE reporting schedule



Academic Year delay due to OCHE reporting schedule



**Academic Year delay due to OCHE reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	2: Transfer Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Tracking the success of transfer students requires more than simply assessing their progress before or at the time they leave the college. The college wants to know that these students successfully matriculate at a four-year university and achieve their bachelor's degree. This indicator allows the college to track its transfer students' success in bachelor degree attainment with the MUS system.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Fall semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 is 85 students.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: None at this time. This is tracked for MUS schools internally by OCHE and is being made available for the purpose of PBF.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
2	CI 14: Performance after Transfer (MSUGF Transfer Bachelors Graduates)	Not met	Partially Met	Partially met

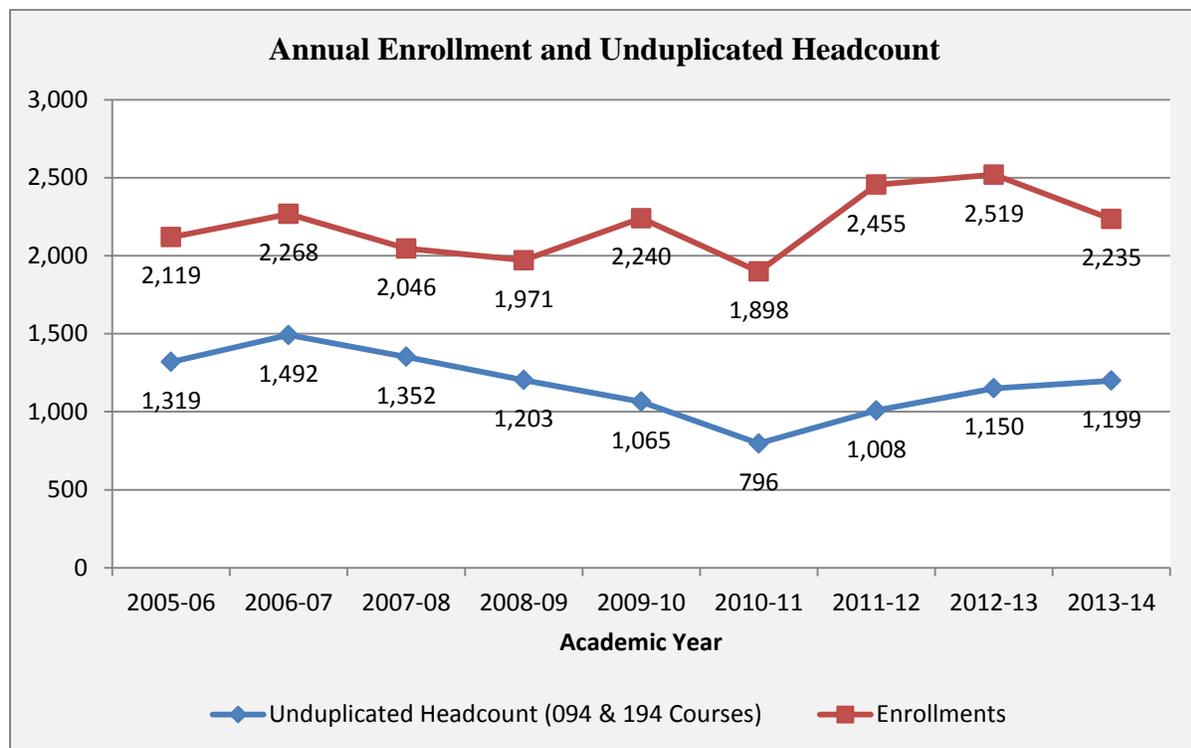
## Core Indicator 15: Participation (Professional and Continuing Education)

### Definition:

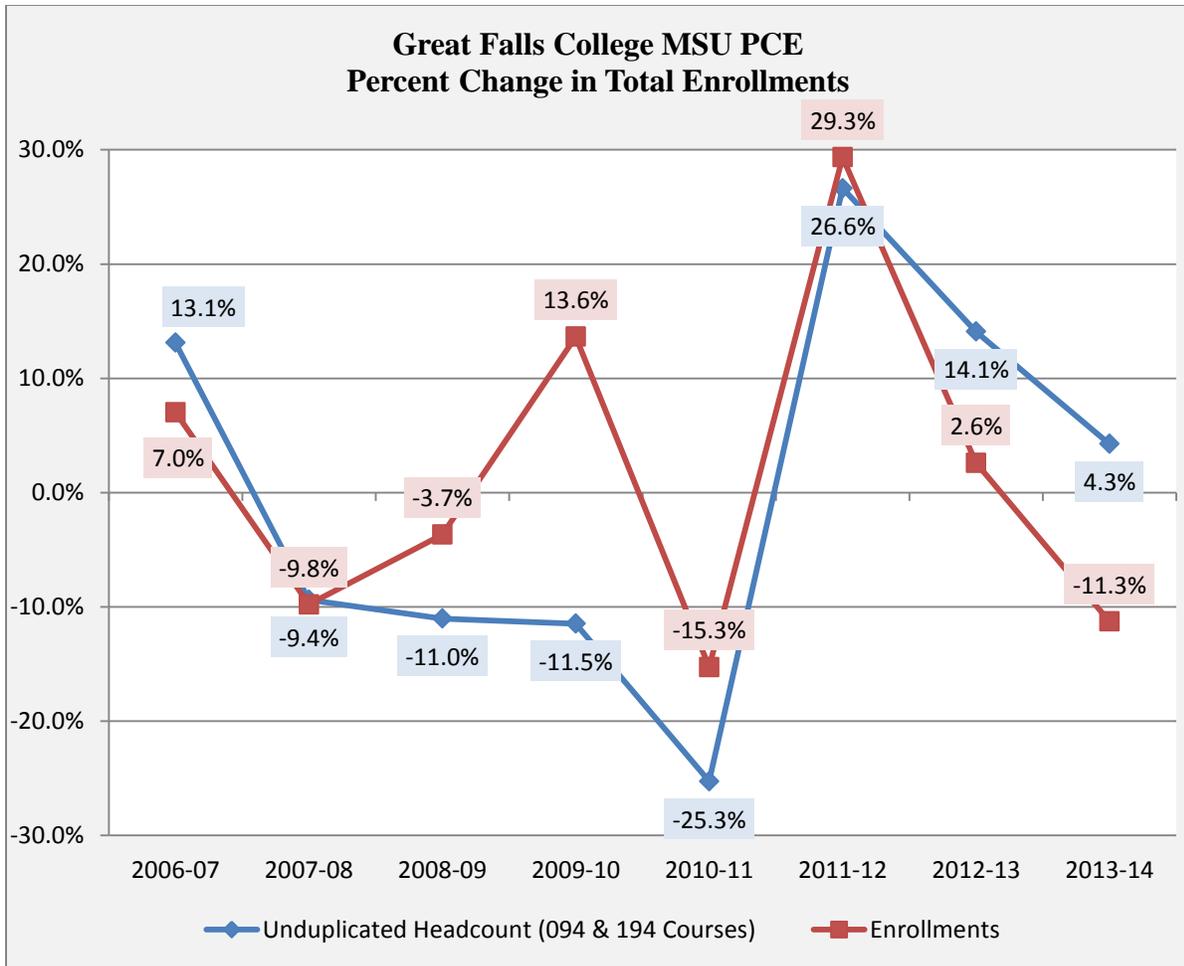
The total, unduplicated, annual student headcount and total number of student enrollments in professional and continuing education coursework at GFC MSU.

Enrollments decreased in 2013-2014, while unduplicated headcounts increased slightly. Enrollments per unduplicated headcount were slightly lower than last year; on average each enrollee is taking about 1.9 courses.

The Outreach Department has experienced a series of changes in leadership and oversight over the past few years. An interim director was appointed in Spring 2015, and discussions are underway regarding enrollment growth, including a new registration and payment software.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Community colleges are known for serving large constituencies through non-credit and continuing education coursework. At Great Falls College MSU, nearly one out of every five students on campus is enrolled in these types of courses. The college, through its professional and continuing education offerings, provides numerous and diverse opportunities for community members of all ages and backgrounds to further themselves professionally and individually. Tracking the total participation, both by individuals and enrollments, is a good indicator of how well the college is developing the community's professional and continuing education capacity.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	For 2013-2014, unduplicated headcount goal is 1,110; enrollment goal is 2,700.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: None at this time.

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
4	CI 15: Participation (PCE Unduplicated Headcount)	Met	Met	Met
4	CI 15: Participation (PCE Enrollments)	Not Met	Not Met	Met

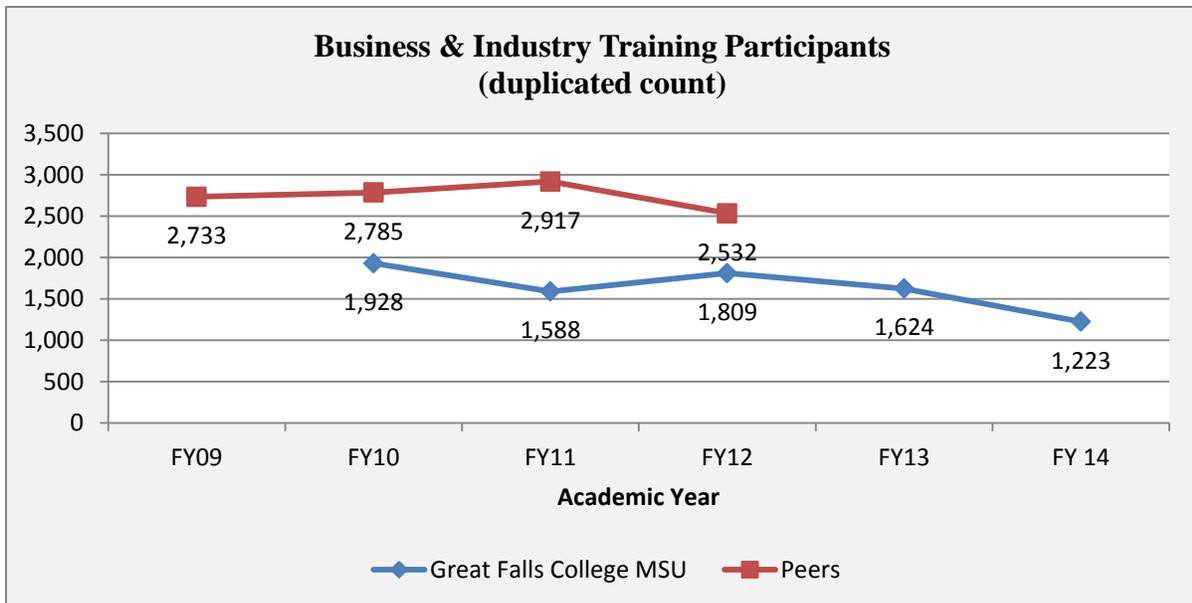
## Core Indicator 16: Business and Industry Training

### Definition:

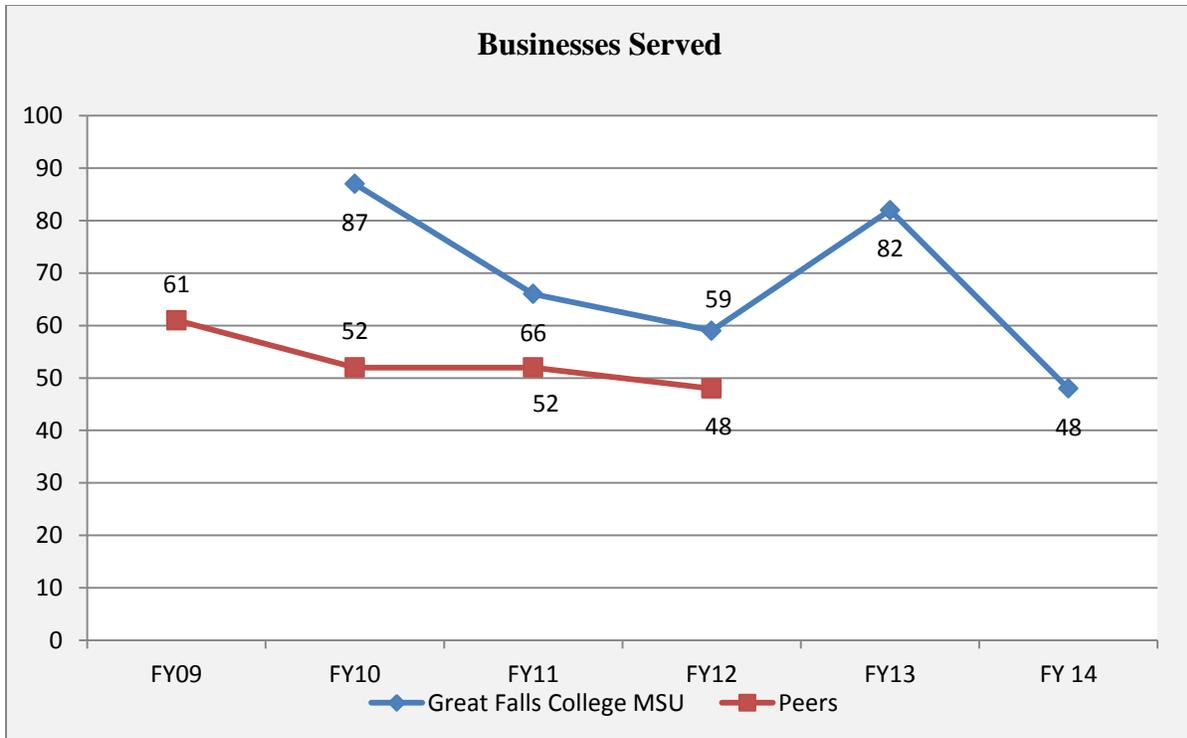
Total duplicated headcount of participants in non-credit business and industry trainings offered by the college in an academic year. Total number of businesses served through business and industry training in an academic year.

The number of participants in business and industry training decreased in fiscal year 2014. However, Great Falls College MSU generally serves more businesses than the median NCCBP institution.

GFC MSU provides customized training to community businesses and partners to identify and train employees for specific needs. GFC MSU plans these items by actively engaging the community, state, and businesses to identify and provide the training needs of these constituents. These courses range from improving general software suite skills, such as Microsoft Office training, to more specific needs such as customized training for pipe welding, business safety, and electrical circuits used in specific businesses.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to FY14 (tracking first implemented in the 2009-2010 fiscal year) and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to FY14 (tracking first implemented in the 2009-2010 fiscal year) and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	The strengths of any community are evidenced by its social and economic health. GFC MSU plays a vital role in developing both aspects. Contract or customized training is an effective mechanism for the college to work directly with business and industry to develop their workforce and enhance company success. Measuring both the number of participants, and the numbers of businesses served, provides valuable insight as to how well the college is contributing to this economic aspect of community development which is a core theme of the institution.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of the fiscal year
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	For 2013-2014, participant goal is 2,000; businesses served goal is 75.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: NCCBP peer institution median value of duplicated headcount business and industry productivity and total number of companies served

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
4	CI 16: Business & Industry Training (Participants)	Not Met	Not Met	Met
4	CI 16: Business & Industry Training (Businesses)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

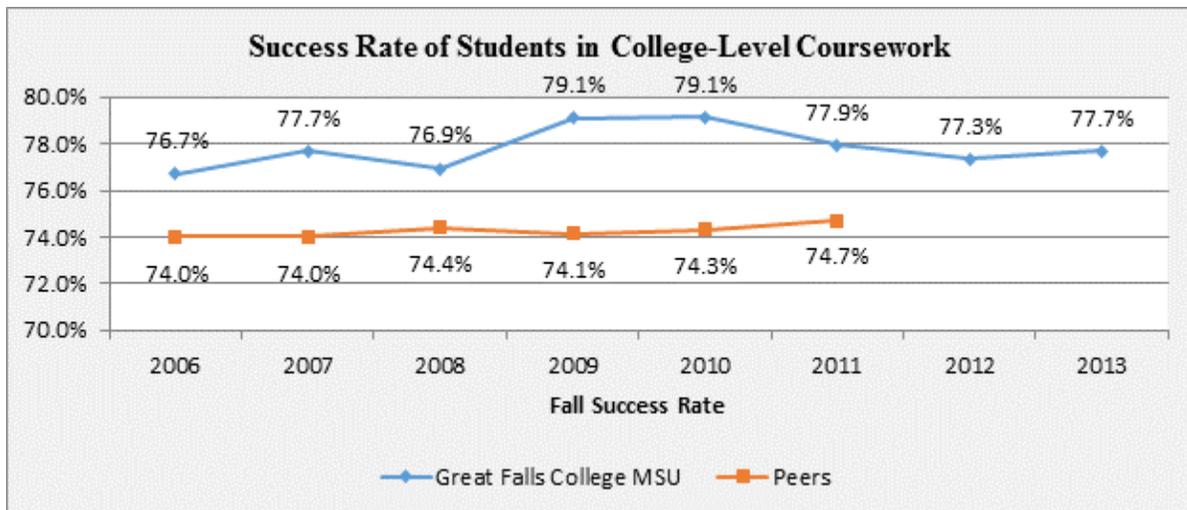
## Core Indicator 17: Success Rates in College Courses

### Definition:

The proportion of students who earn a grade of C- or better in all credit-bearing, college level coursework.

On average, the success rate for students in credit-bearing, college-level coursework during the fall term has been about 78%. The success rate at Great Falls College MSU is about three to four percentage points higher than the median value for NCCBP institutions.

Starting in 2010-2011, GFC MSU started tracking the ten courses with the lowest success rates. The unsuccessful students in these courses are on average about 25% less likely to return the following semester than students who passed those courses. The ten most unsuccessful courses are now tracked annually and shared with the academic divisions for review and follow-up.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to 2013 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Most students mark their path to achievement of educational goals by completing individual courses. Monitoring and assessing the overall success rates of students in individual courses provides an indication of how well the college is moving and helping students along this path. It also shines the light on courses that may need different methodology to help students succeed.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Fall semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The 2013-2014 goal is 80% success rate.
<b>Benchmark</b>	INTERNAL: To achieve the maximum success rate from previous 5 years. EXTERNAL: NCCBP peer institutions median values

Performance on this indicator in relation to its benchmark has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
2,3	CI 17: Success Rate in College Courses	Partially met	Partially met	Partially Met

## Strategic Priorities

The college uses the strategic priorities to move towards fulfillment of the core themes, in an effort to document student achievement and college success at fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals. The next section will detail the measurement and progress the institution has made towards meeting strategic priorities and will then show how these measurements impact core themes.

After having completed this report, it became clear that a few adjustments to the strategic priorities need to be made. In the future, the college will review the strategic priorities to determine whether they are meaningful in the way they are measured, how they relate to core themes, and whether other strategic priorities need to be measured entirely.

Currently the college is planning for a mission revision and strategic planning process. A review of the strategic priorities will occur as part of this process to move the college closer to its goal of mission and core theme fulfillment.

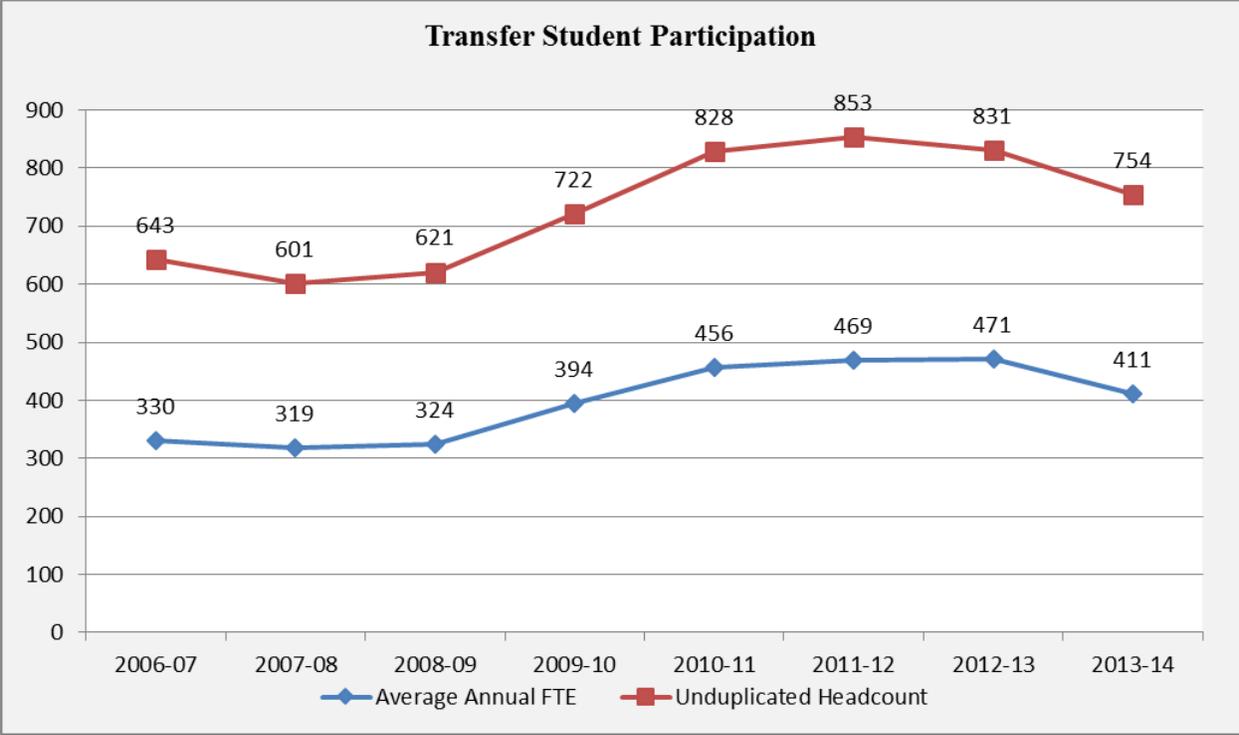
### Strategic Priority 1: Increase Transfer Participation

*"I'm very grateful for the amount of money I was able to save [with the 1+3 articulation agreement]. It was close to \$14,000."*

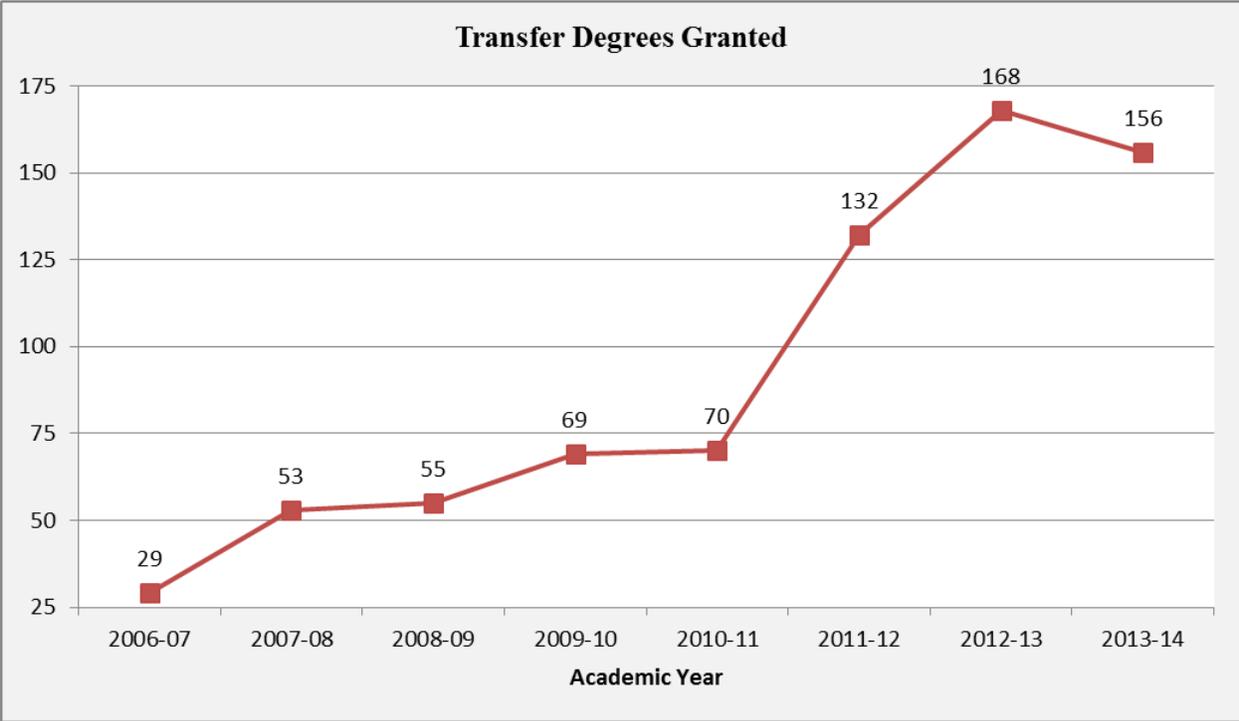
*~Justin Meyer (Civil Engineering student)*

<b>Definition:</b>	The average annual FTE and unduplicated headcount of transfer students. The number of transfer degrees (AA and AS) granted and MSU Core's transcribed annually by GFC MSU.
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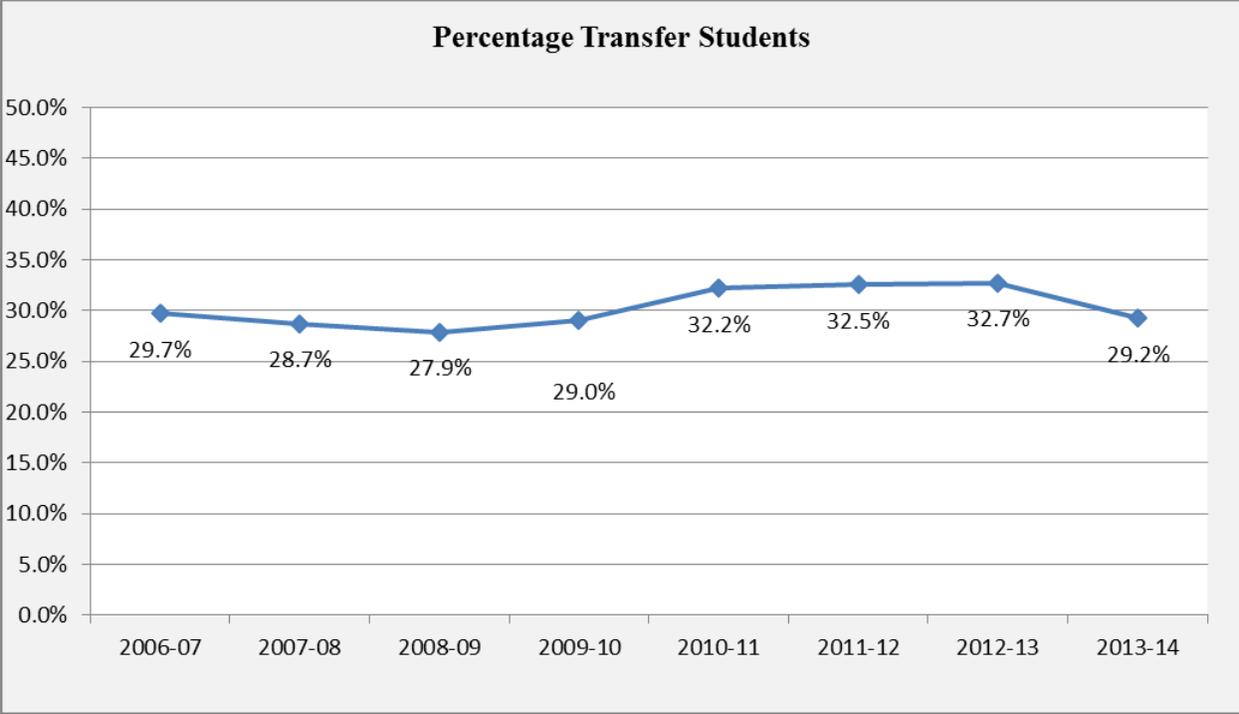
Overall numbers for FTE and unduplicated headcount of students in transfer degree programs decreased for 2013-2014.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	2: Transfer Preparation
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	In comparison with other states, Montana’s two-year colleges are being under-utilized by students for transfer to bachelor degree programs. Enrollment in and completion of transfer programs at GFC MSU account for roughly one-third or less of the college’s total headcount compared with 50% nationally. The college has capacity for additional students in transfer program courses; filling this capacity without additional institutional expense will have a positive impact on the college’s budget.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Degree production data are collected annually at the end of Spring semester. Degree data are derived from the number of Associate of Science degrees, Associate of Arts degrees, and MUS Cores awarded annually. Most of these data can be found in Core Indicator 12.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 goal is that 35% of degree-seeking students be enrolled in a transfer degree program.

Performance on this strategic priority in relation to its benchmarks has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (FTE)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (Headcount)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (Degrees)	Met	Met	Met
2	SP 1: Increase Transfer Student Participation (% Population)	Not Met	Not Met	Partially Met

## Strategic Priority 2: Increase Adult Participation

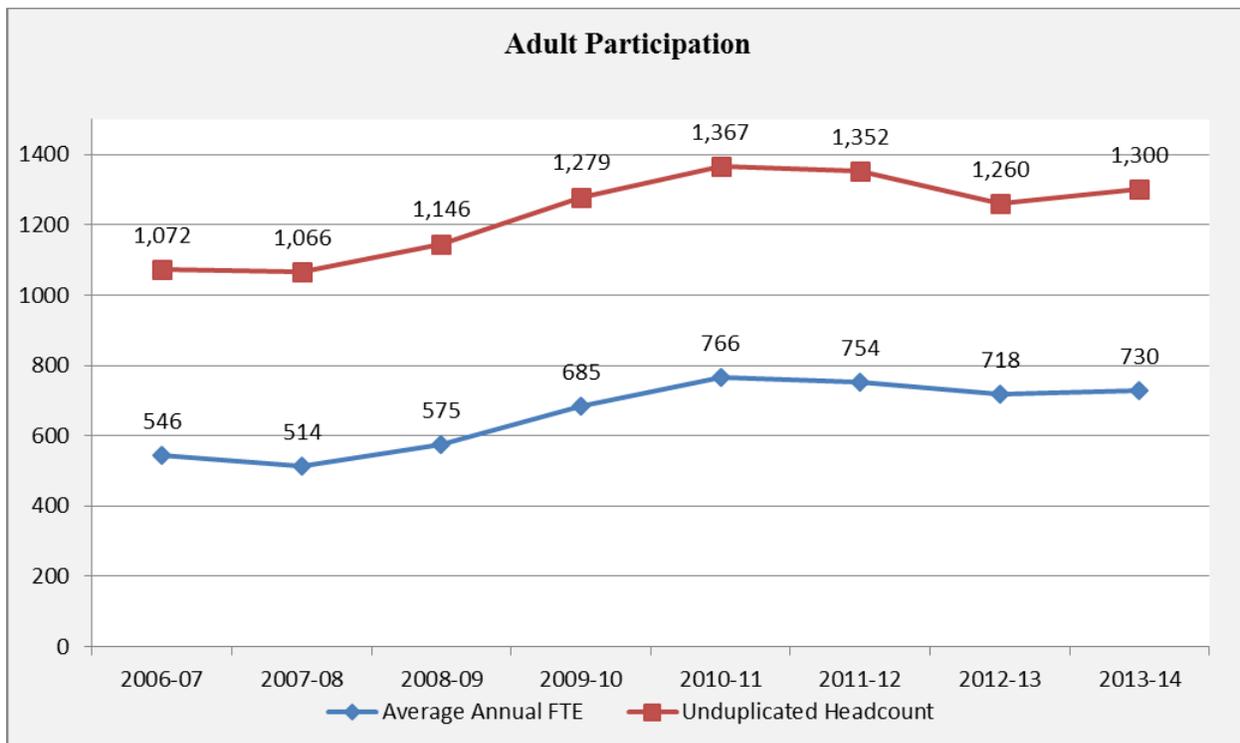
*“Going back to school in my 50s has changed my life. All non-traditional students worry about returning to school and I was no exception. I wondered how I would handle the academic rigors. I wondered how the professors would accept a student of my age and I wondered how the younger students would react to me. Thankfully, at Great Falls College MSU, I found that my age was not a factor in any of those areas. Professors and administrators have been welcoming and supportive and the younger students are all very accepting, positive and kind. Here the non-traditional students fit in as well as the traditional students...As I have continued in my education I have also found great support and help at the Academic Success Center. At first I went in to use the computers but instantly fell in love with the atmosphere there. I started going there to do my homework and found it a perfect place to get help when I was stuck on a problem. Now I work there as a tutor and still regard it as my favorite campus location when not in class. It is a wonderful collection of tutors, professors and students all helping each other.”*

~Teri Adams

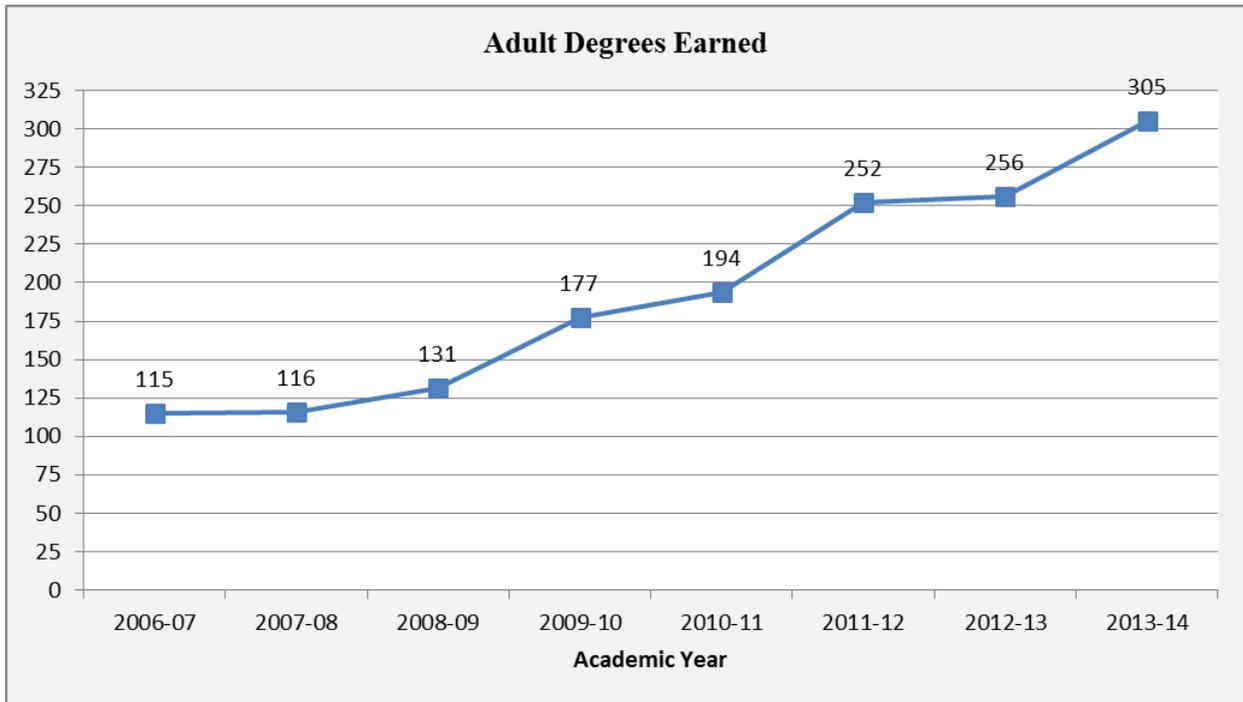
### Definition:

The average annual FTE and unduplicated headcount of credit-taking adult (25 and older) students. The number of degrees and certificates granted annually to adult students by GFC MSU. The percentage of adult students in the total student population.

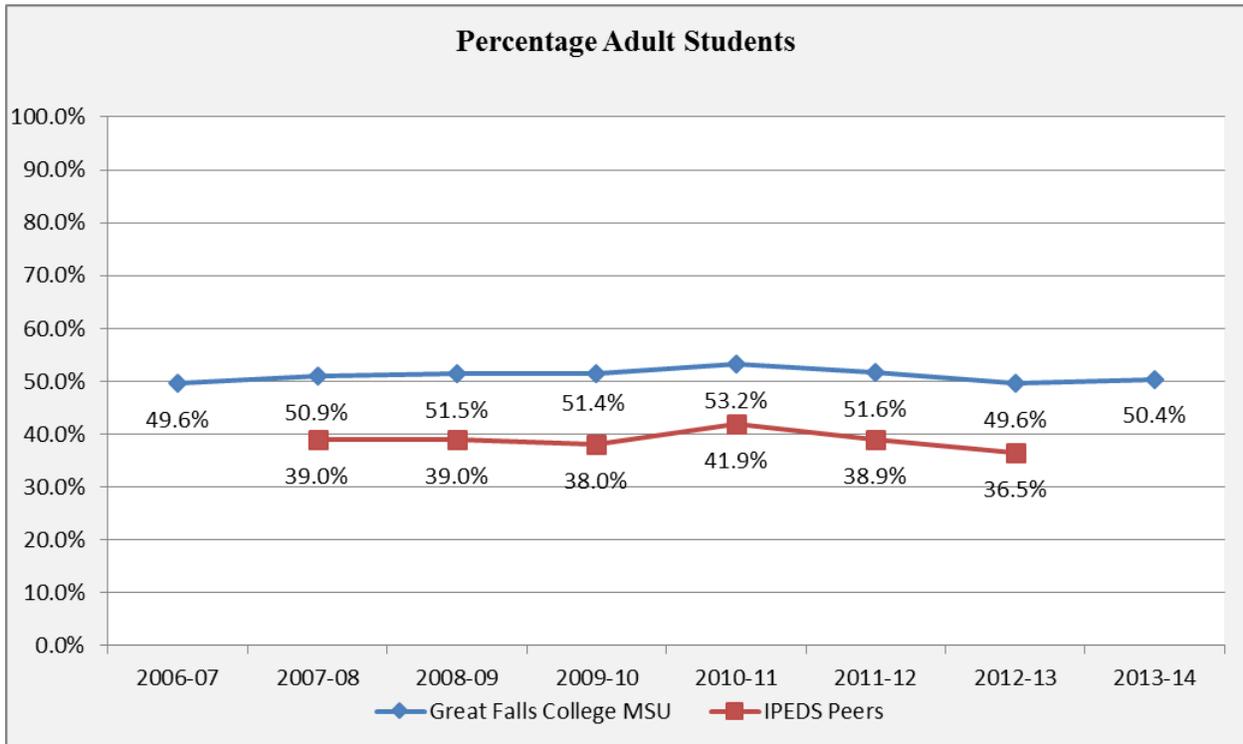
In academic year 2013-2014, adult student participation and the number of degrees awarded to adult students at GFC MSU increased. Fifty percent of the total headcount are adult students.



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 and delay in IPEDS reporting schedule**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation 4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Montana ranks last in the West and near last in the nation for the number of adults in higher education. According to Census data, there will be an increase in adults through 2017. At the same time, the number of students graduating from high school will continue to decrease. The increase in the adult population offers the college an opportunity to recruit non-traditional-age students to respond to emerging workforce needs. Great Falls College MSU has performed well on this indicator in the last few years; in fact, the percentage of adult students is about 10 percentage points higher than that of our IPEDS peer institutions.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	FTE, unduplicated headcount, degrees earned, and percentage of adult students are calculated at end of Spring semester. Adult students include those who turn 25 at some point in the academic year.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 is that 50% of the student population be adult learners.

Performance on this strategic priority in relation to its benchmarks has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s)		Core Indicators		
		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (FTE)	Met	Met	Partially Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Headcount)	Met	Met	Partially Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (Degrees)	Met	Met	Met
All	SP 2: Increase Adult Participation (% Population)	Met	Met	Met

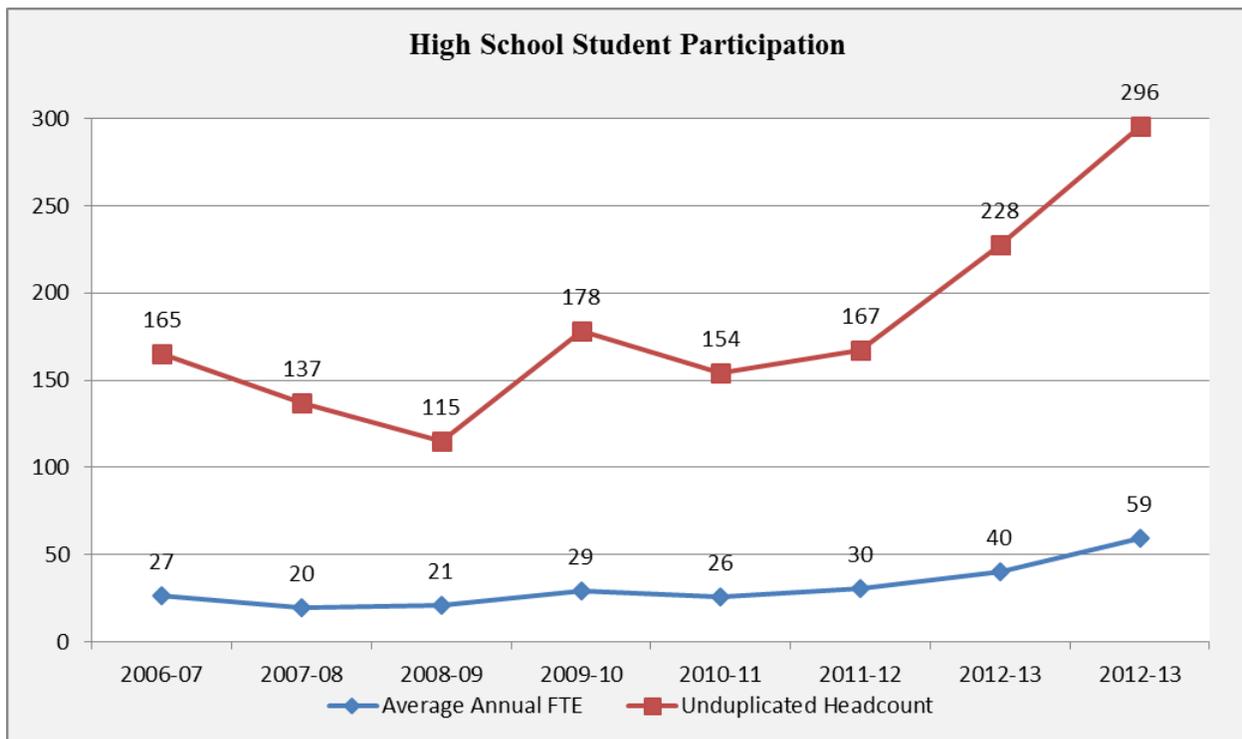
### Strategic Priority 3: Increase High School Student Participation

*“Fall semester of Math 121 dual enrollment experienced a wonderful success rate. I’m proud of the work the GFH math department, along with our high school curriculum, did to prepare the kids to place into the course. Working with GFCMSU to provide this opportunity for our students has been an opportunity I’m honored to be a part of. My students truly enjoyed learning and working with MyMathLab. Our combination of lecture/discussion days paired with teacher supported lab days to address individual needs provided an excellent learning environment.”*

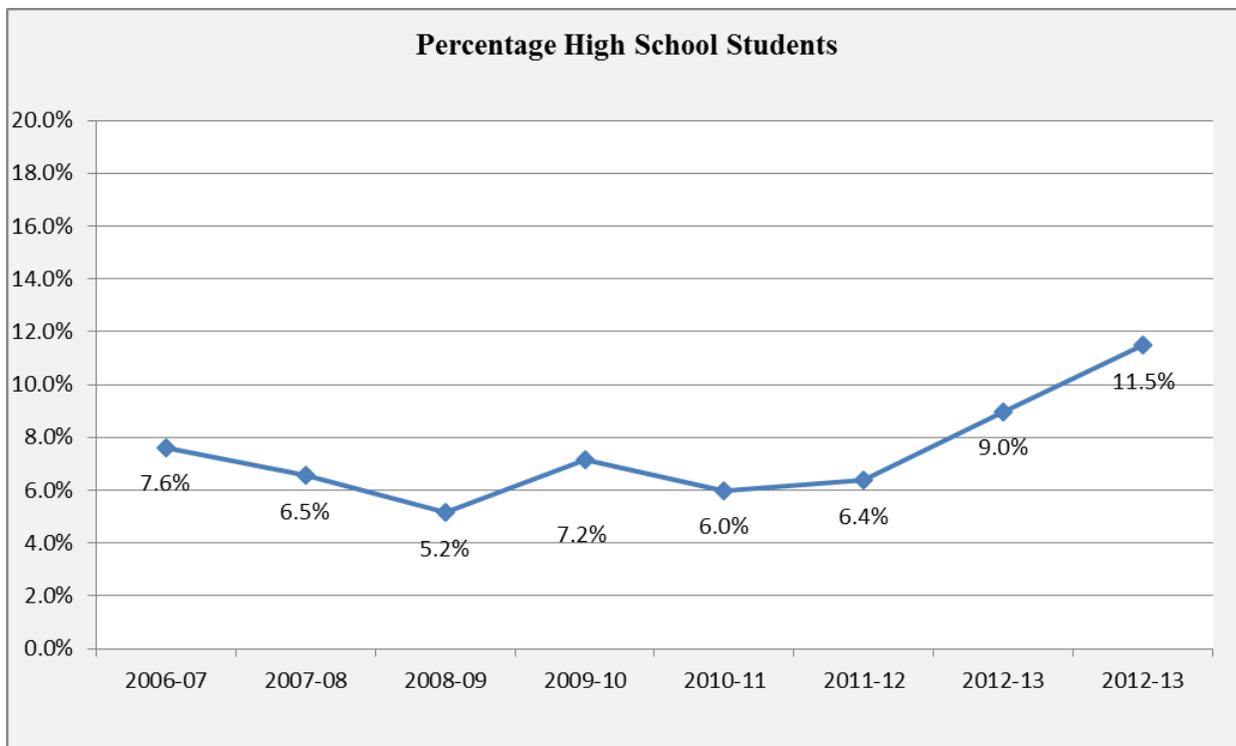
*~Michelle Brown, Dual Enrollment Instructor at Great Falls High School*

**Definition:** The average annual FTE and unduplicated headcount of high school students. The percentage of high school students in the total student population.

High school student participation increased substantially in the 2013-2014 academic year. The unduplicated count of high school students was 296 in 2013-2014, an increase of almost 30% from the previous year. The average annual FTE for the current academic year was 119, a three-fold increase. Dual enrollment students made up a larger part of the overall student population, up to nearly 12% this year from 9% in 2012-2013.



GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY12-13



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY12-13**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation 4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	Montana ranks low regionally and nationally in the number of high school students enrolled in credit-bearing college classes, with only 2.3% of 15-17 year olds enrolled compared to 7.3% nationally. According to Census data, there will be fewer high school graduates in the future; therefore, the college must engage them earlier. Early college courses can reduce the cost of higher education and time to degree. It also prepares high school students for the transition to higher education and to make better career choices.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	FTE, unduplicated headcount, and percentage of high school students are calculated at end of Spring semester. High school students are defined to be those with student types "H" and major codes "DC" (dual credit) or "EA" (early admit). Also includes students in welding and carpentry cohorts.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 goal is that 8% of enrolled students be high school students.

Performance on this strategic priority in relation to its benchmarks has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (FTE)	Not Met	Not Met	Partially Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (Headcount)	Met	Met	Partially Met
All	SP 3: Increase High School Participation (% of Population)	Met	Met	Partially Met

## Strategic Priority 4: Increase Success Rate for Students in Developmental and Subsequent Coursework

*“Developmental courses have always been a stumbling block for our students. Our new math class that does two development courses in a module format is such a great option to help students move more quickly through the process. More importantly, the students are doing great in it.”*

*~Claire Flood, Math Faculty*

### Definition:

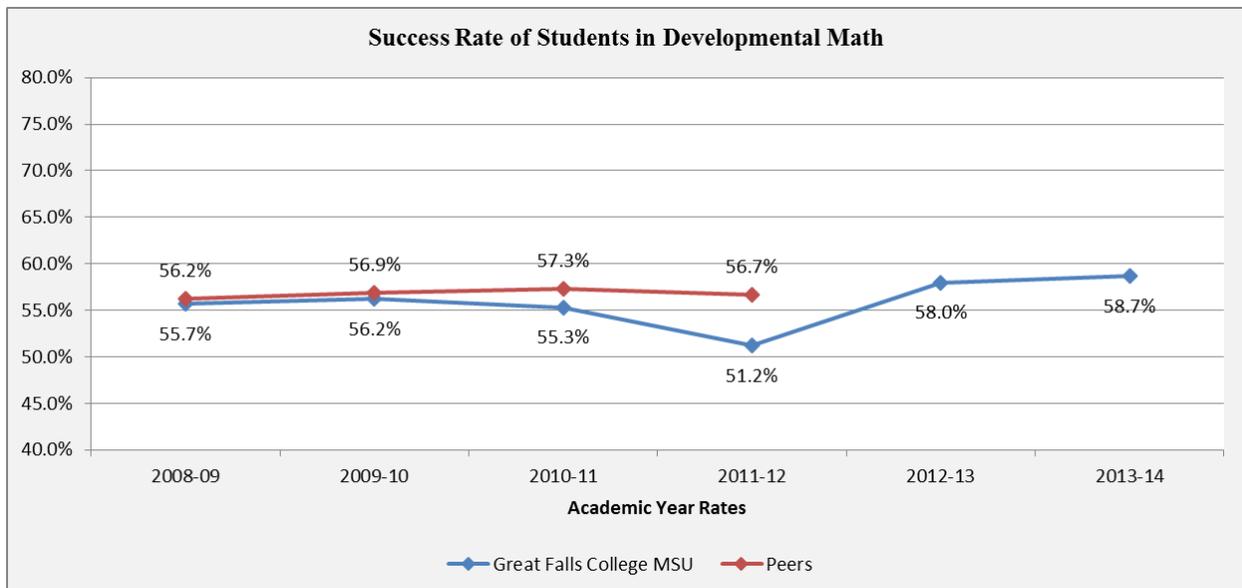
The success rate of students enrolled in developmental math and writing coursework. The percentage of those students who enroll in their first college-level course in the same discipline, and the success rate of those enrollees.

Success rates in developmental math increased slightly in 2012-2013; however, success rates in developmental writing dropped.

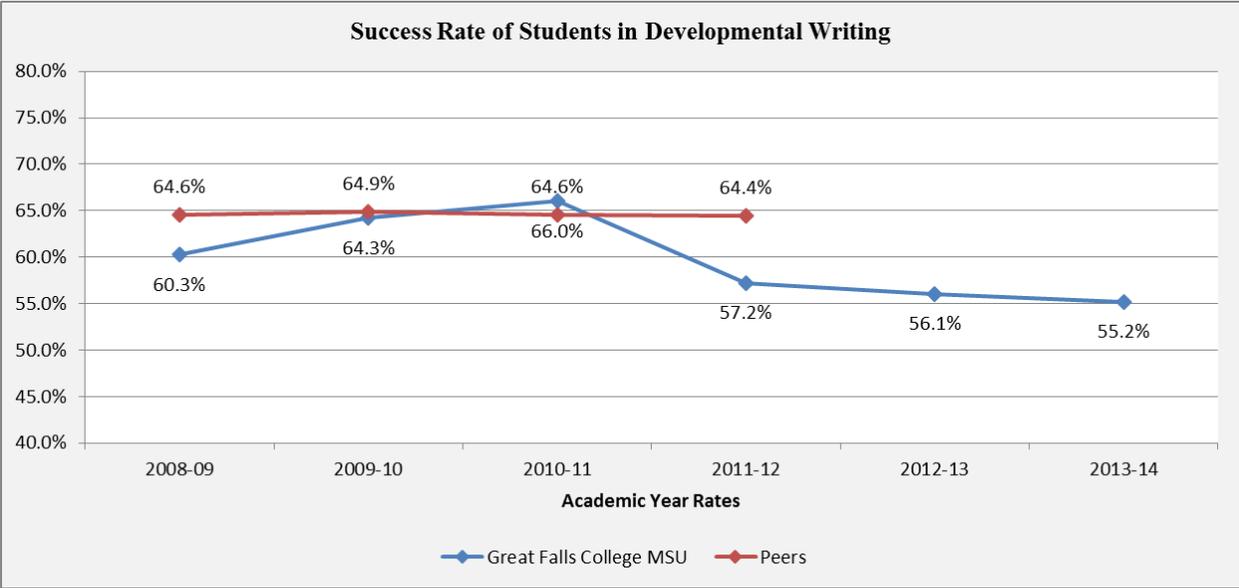
For the past three years, about one-third of developmental math students enrolled in a college-level math course within two academic years. About one-fourth of the original cohort of developmental students were successful in a college-level math course in that time-frame.

For the past three years, fewer than half (46%) of developmental writing students enrolled in a college-level writing course within two academic years. About one-third of the original cohort of developmental students were successful in a college-level writing course in that time-frame.

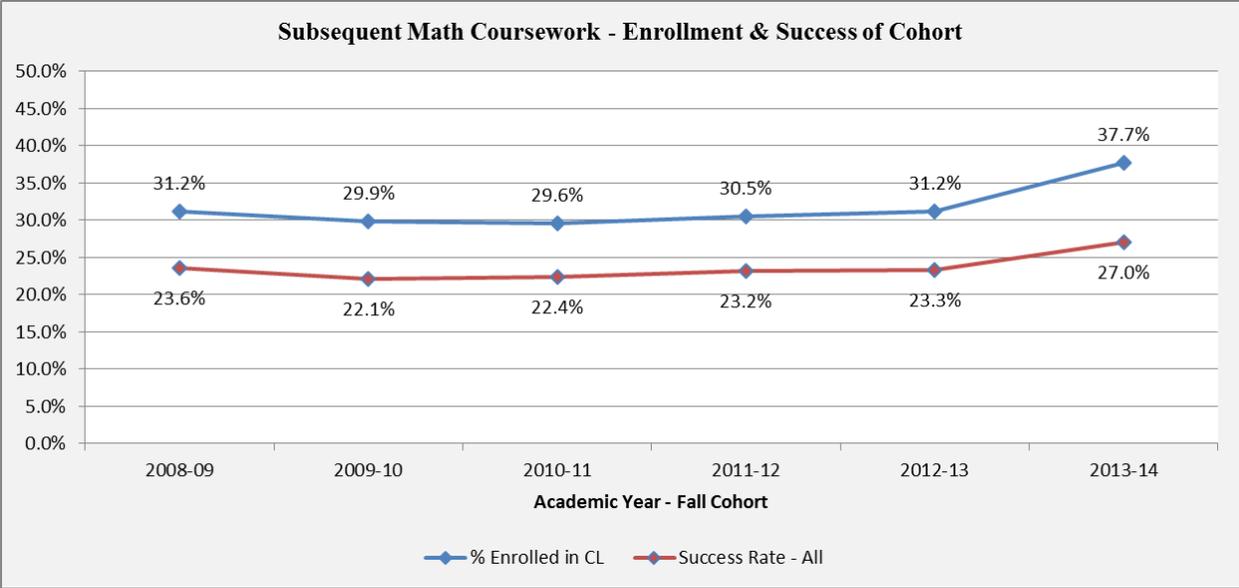
The pipeline graphs below show the attrition of developmental students who enrolled in and were successful in either college-level math or writing coursework. These graphs show the pipeline for the Fall 2012 cohort of developmental students; following them forward for two academic years.



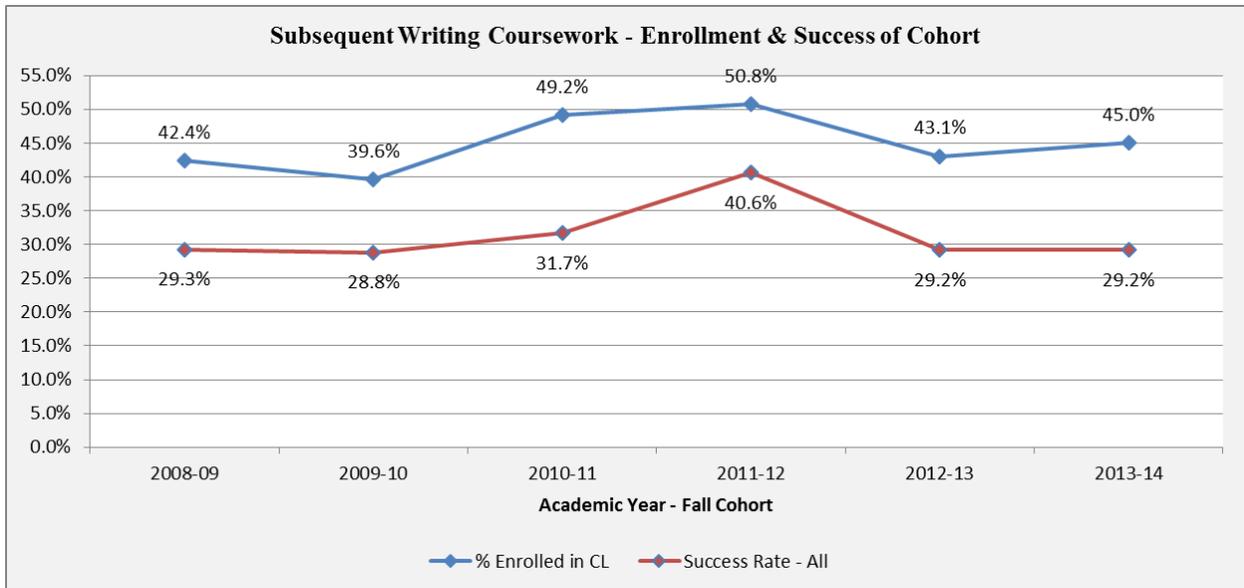
**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



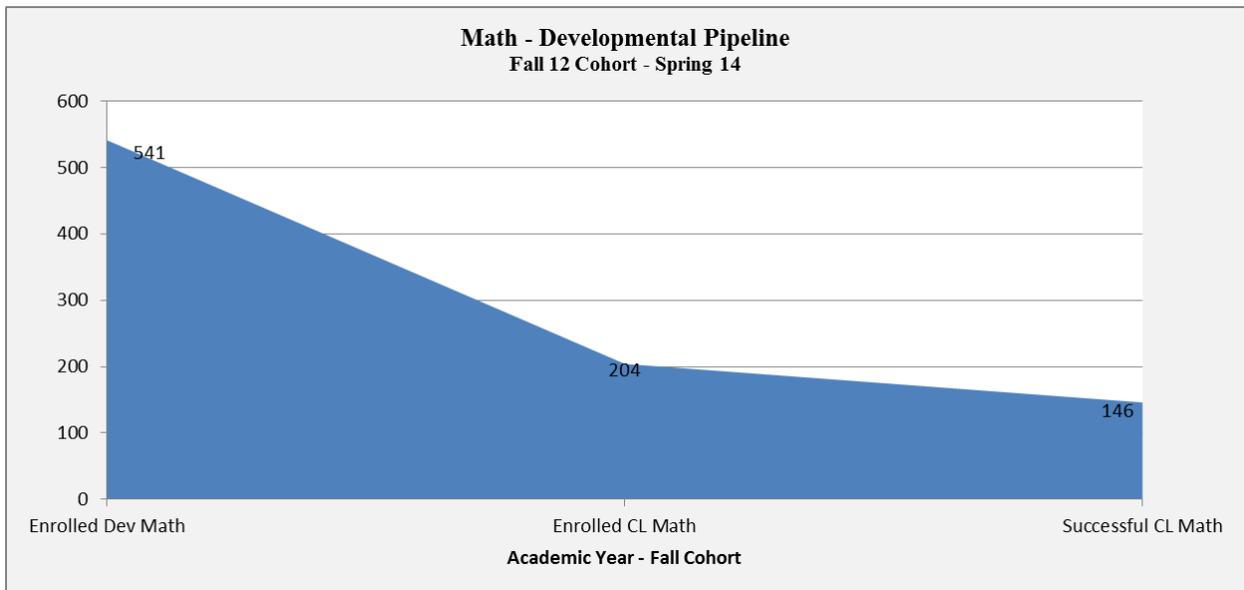
**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



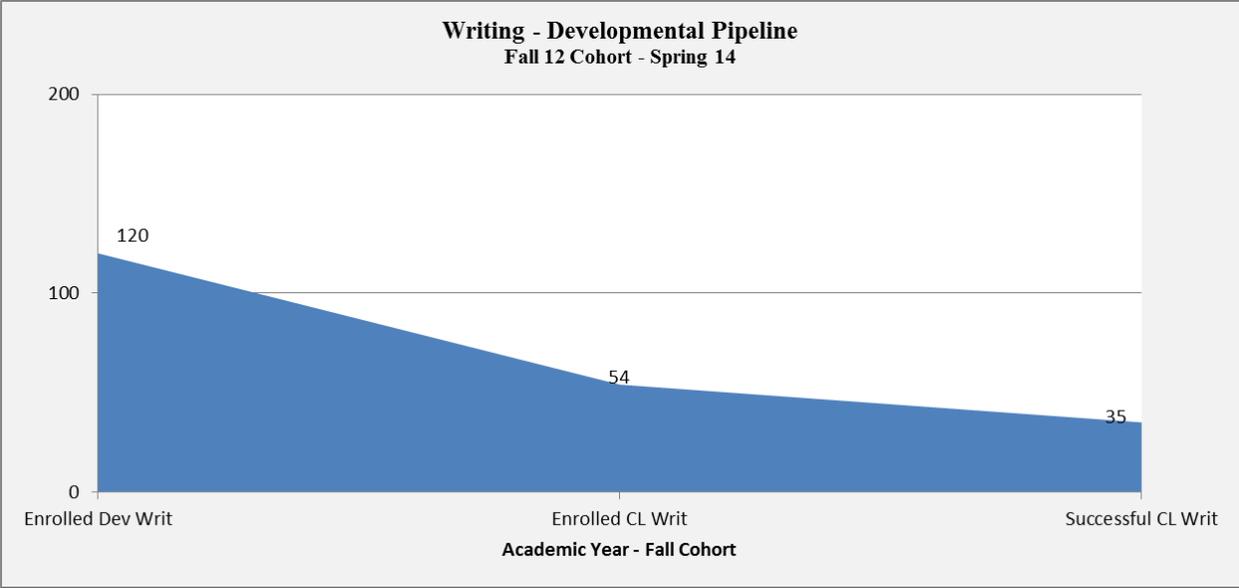
**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to date**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to date**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Workforce Development</li> <li>2: Transfer Preparation</li> <li>3: Academic Preparation</li> <li>4: Community Development</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	<p>It is becoming increasingly obvious that the gatekeeper to student persistence and ultimate success in the community college is a student's ability to succeed in developmental education. While those developmental students who do enroll in college-level coursework have reasonable success rates (72% in college-level math and 65% in college-level writing), too few of these actually enroll in college-level coursework (only 38% in math and 46% in writing).</p>
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring semester
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	Goals for 2013-2014 are 57% success rate in developmental math, 26% in college level math, 57% in developmental writing, and 34% in college level writing.

Performance on this strategic priority in relation to its benchmarks has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Math)	Met	Met	Partially Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (Dev Writing)	Partially Met	Partially Met	Not Met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Math)	Met	Met	Partially met
All	SP 4: Increase Success Rate in Dev & Sub Courses (CL Writing)	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

**Strategic Priority 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rate (informally added in 2012)**

*“I love the new withdrawal policy! I had a student come and speak with me about dropping and I refused to sign his drop card. I told him he could do this. We worked on a plan and sure enough he did it. He is now over at UGF and has almost completed his Bachelor’s degree. I think that the new withdrawal policy kept him from dropping out... and he learned he could do it.”*

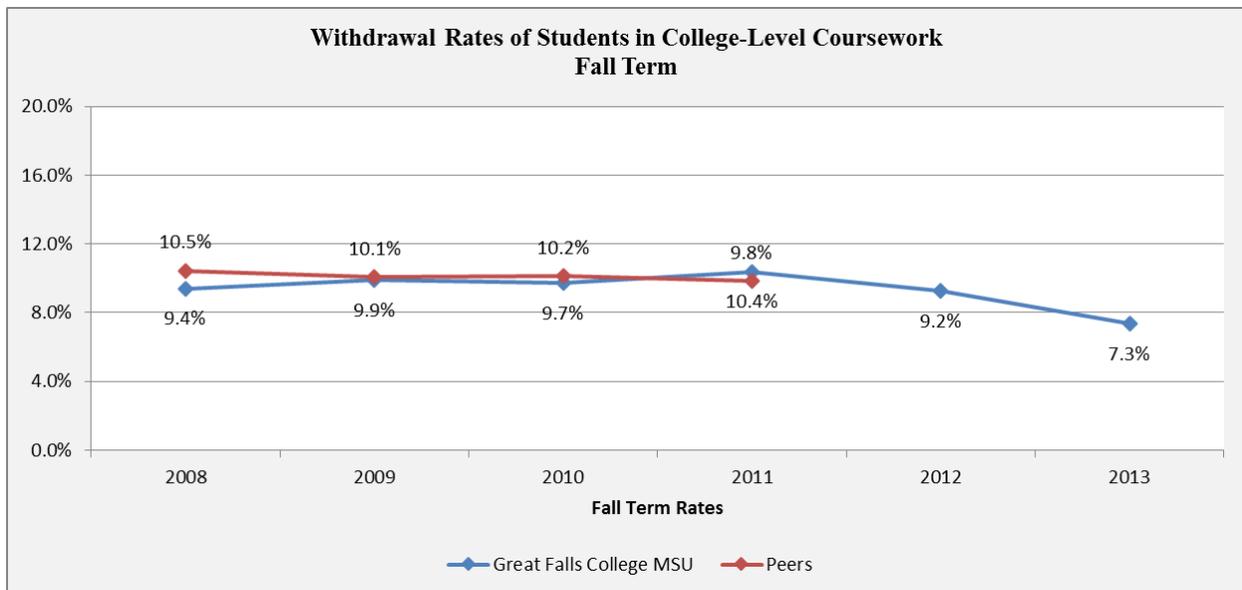
*~Teresa Rivenes*

<b>Definition:</b>	<p>The withdrawal rate of students in college-level coursework in fall term.</p> <p>The withdrawal rate of students in developmental math in fall term.</p> <p>The withdrawal rate of students in developmental writing in fall term.</p> <p>The overall withdrawal rate for the academic year.</p>
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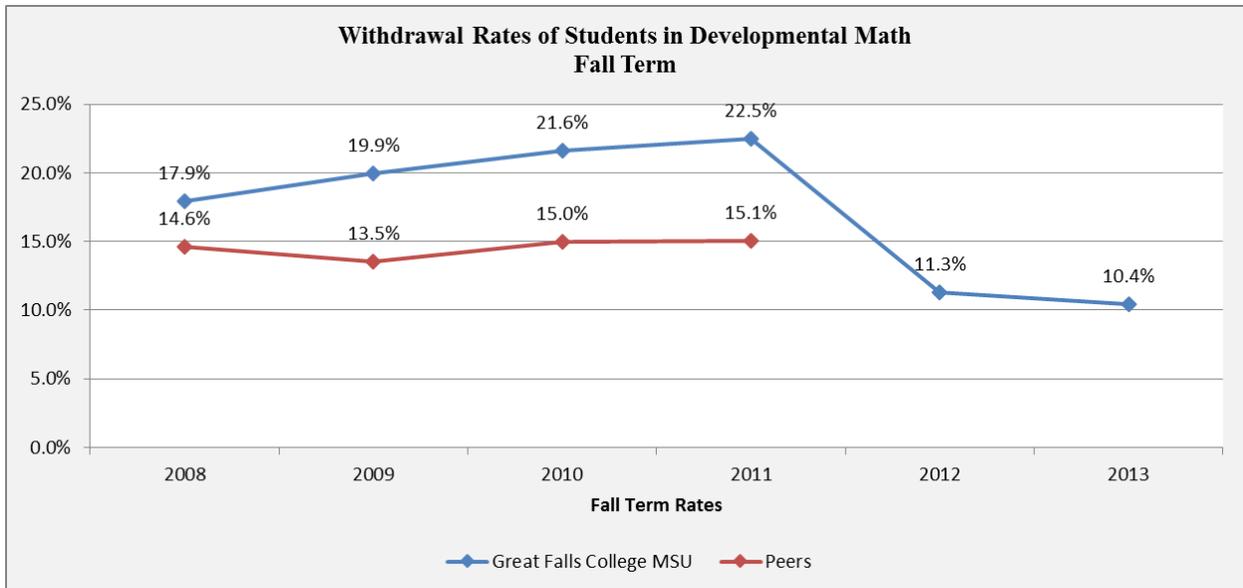
The overall academic year withdrawal rate, as well as rates in developmental coursework and college-level coursework for Fall term, all dropped in the 2013-2014 academic year.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the withdrawal rate for college-level coursework dropped from 9.2% to 7.3%. In addition, the rate in developmental math coursework dropped. The rate in developmental writing coursework dropped substantially from 16.7% to 5.7%.

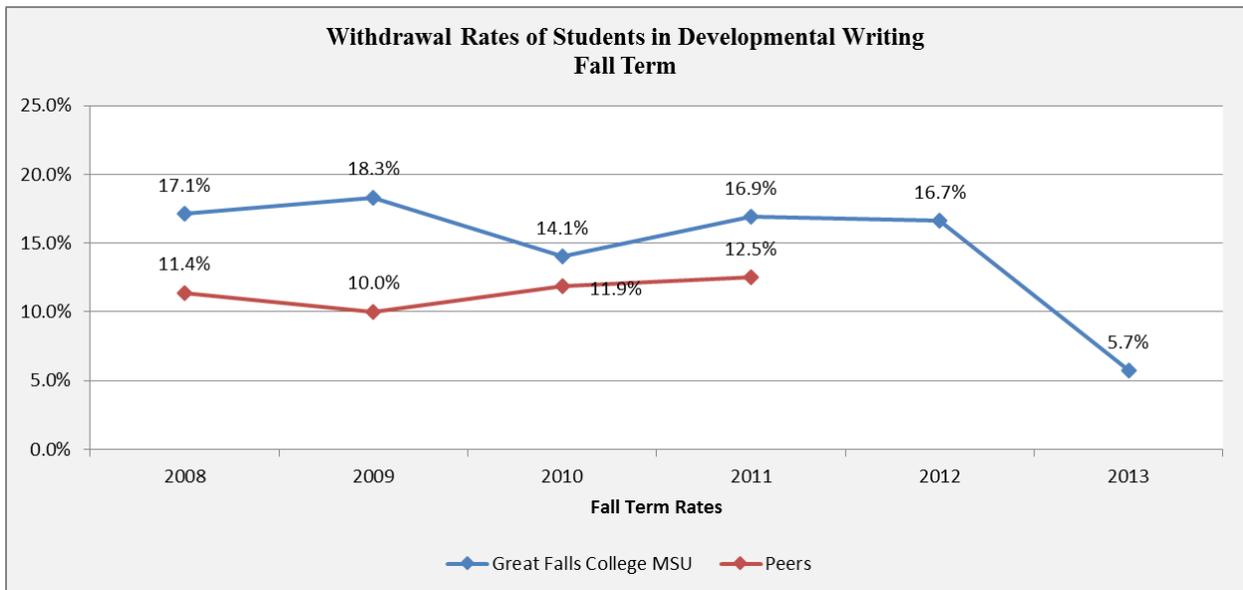
The overall withdrawal rate at GFC MSU for an entire academic year decreased from 10.1% in the 2012-2013 academic year to 6.7% in 2013-2014. This metric does not have a comparator.



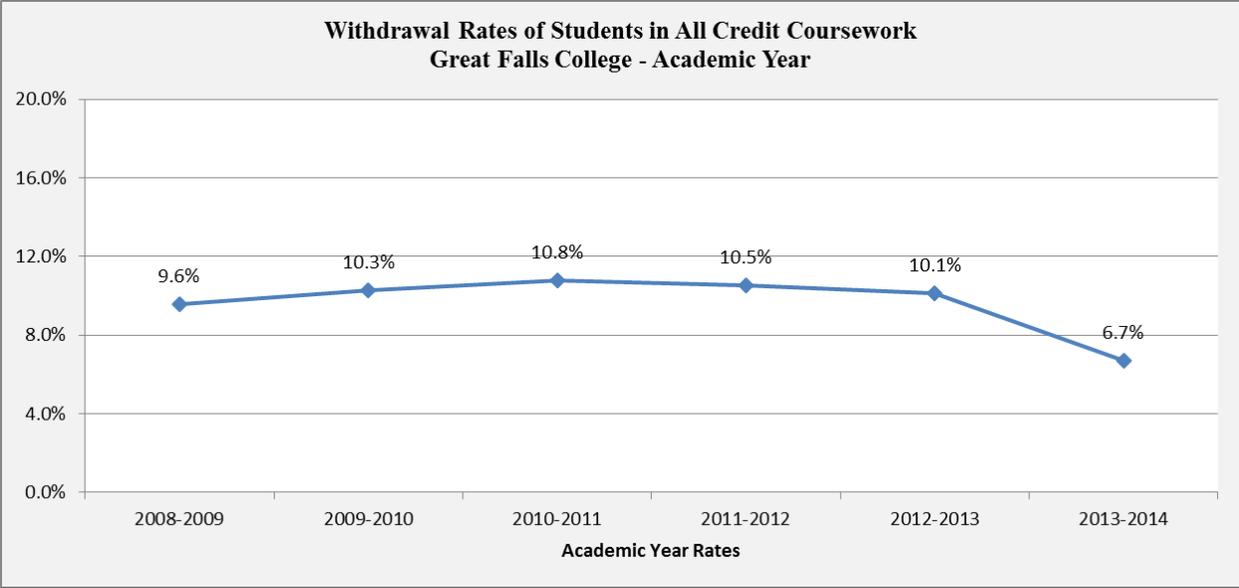
**GFC MSU Academic Year data to 2013 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to 2013 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to 2013 and delay in NCCBP reporting schedule**



**GFC MSU Academic Year data to AY13-14**

<b>Contributes to the following Core Theme(s)</b>	1: Workforce Development 2: Transfer Preparation 3: Academic Preparation 4: Community Development
<b>Rationale &amp; Implications</b>	High withdrawal rates late into the academic term do not support the college's values of retention and academic success for students. The high rates are also indicative of inefficient and ineffective uses of financial aid, college and state human and fiscal resources, and decreased opportunities for other students who need or want to be enrolled in the classes. In effect, these numbers are the college's drop-out rate.
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	End of Spring semester.
<b>Academic Year Goal</b>	The goal for 2013-2014 is 8%. This number is comparable to the rates of other two-year MUS institutions.

Performance on this strategic priority in relation to its benchmarks has been tracked across time; the graphic below shows how GFC MSU has performed. Benchmarks are considered “partially met” when performance on the indicator is no more than 10% below the benchmark.

Core Theme(s) Core Indicators		FY14 Performance	FY13 Performance	FY12 Performance
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (CL Coursework - Fall)	Met	Met	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Math Coursework - Fall)	Partially met	Partially met	Partially met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (Dev Writing Coursework - Fall)	Met	Met	Met
All	SP 5: Decrease Withdrawal Rates (All Coursework - AY)	Met	Met	Met

## Common Ground

The final section of this chapter will examine how planning, assessment, and improvement were also conducted through an operational plan entitled Common Ground.

In 2006, GFC MSU was at a midpoint in a decade of transformative change that positioned the college to be centered on the common ground of student success. After establishing the foundation and restructuring the college to tackle the tasks ahead, the path to improving student success was focused into six primary areas. The *Common Ground* plan articulated these areas into six goals, with accompanying tasks addressed by interdisciplinary teams of faculty and staff.

The Community College Research Center's (CCRC) Assessment of Evidence Series builds the foundation for continued efforts. The CCRC's work provides four general recommendations to guide the college. These include:

- Colleges should ensure broad engagement of all faculty becomes the foundation for policies and practices to increase student success, including active faculty involvement in student support programs and services.
- Colleges should work to simplify the structures and bureaucracies that students must navigate.
- Colleges should be encouraged to align course curricula, define common learning outcomes and assessments, and set high standards for those outcomes.
- Colleges should collect and use data to inform a continuous improvement process.

In the spring of 2006, GFC MSU began its transformation towards an institution designed for, and focused on, student success. Since 2006, the college's faculty, staff, and community have completed many goals and tasks of the operational plan, Common Ground (described below).

### Common Ground Goal 1

**Set and Achieve Institutional and Student Success Goals: We will establish clear, measurable goals for improved student success and institutional effectiveness. These will be communicated broadly and measured consistently.**

In the Tables below, IP = In Progress, PM= Partially Met, OG = Ongoing and continuing to measure, and MET = Complete

### Task 1A

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.27)	
Establish a new indicator that directly measures students' success through the analysis of successful course completion, looking at the percent of students who earned a C- or higher in coursework.	Core Indicator 17 was developed and directly measures the percentage of students who earned a C- or higher in all coursework. This can be seen in the core indicator section of this report.	<b>MET</b>

### Task 1B

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.28)	
Using historical data, comparative peer data, and aspirational targets, establish FY12 goals for the college's core indicators of institutional effectiveness. Communicate these via a special focus IR newsletter during early fall term, with continued communication through a variety of modes (blurb in Weekly News, video screens, Facebook, etc.)	Goals for the core indicators have been set, and they can be found in the core indicator section of this document. These are communicated annually via the Performance Report Card and annual Report to the Community. This information is also available at the end of every term through the Institutional Research office and website (Exhibit 4.29). Information is also available to the Development Team and other constituents.	<b>MET</b>

### Task 1C

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.30)	
Identify the "Top 10 Underperforming classes" with the smallest percentage of successful student completions, and the primary gatekeeper courses with below-average rate of student success (institutional average in FY10 was 77%), and establish multi-year goals for improvement in these rates.	Each term, the top ten underperforming courses are identified and made available through the IR website (Exhibit 4.31). Division Directors use these data to set goals and make improvements. Division Directors meet daily for stand-up check-in, weekly for meetings that are often problem solving in nature, and monthly for strategic meetings that involve working on division goals and priorities, including addressing the top ten underperforming classes (Exhibit 4.32). A multi-year goal for improvement has not yet been developed. In part this is due to the fact that GFC MSU was without an Institutional Researcher to analyze the data for trends. With a strong Institutional Researcher now on board we can proceed with this goal.	<b>OG</b>

### Task 1D

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.33)	MET
<p>Create and maintain a SharePoint site where institutional reports (e.g. core indicator reports, enrollment reports, survey reports, etc.) can be shared with the campus community. Institutional Research will also start a documentation process for all reports so that any data used in reports can be replicated.</p>	<p>A SharePoint IR site and database have been developed (Exhibit 4.34). GFC MSU was without an Institutional Researcher in 2013-2014 while an aggressive search for the appropriate candidate was in progress. During that time, GFC MSU demonstrated its commitment to data collection and analysis by sub-contracting the most critical pieces of IR out to the Institutional Researcher who previously vacated the position. In 2014 a new Institutional Researcher was hired and has been working diligently to collect and analyze data for the purpose of planning and improvement.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

## Common Ground Goal 2

**“Close the Loop” on the Assessment of Student Learning: We will systemically align institutional/ instructional expectations, instructional activities, and the assessment of student learning, and institutionalize a process for capturing and analyzing student learning data.**

### Task 2A

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.35)	MET
<p>Finalize/verify the establishment of common student learning outcomes (course objectives) for all courses at the college (e.g. all ANTH 100 courses have common outcomes regardless of instructor or modality of delivery).</p>	<p>All courses at GFC MSU have common course objectives that have been aligned with the program outcomes, or conform across the MUS system to common course numbering, so that students achieve a core set of information regardless of instructor or modality. The course objectives and outcome alignment chart can be found on the syllabus for each course and are required by the syllabus template and checklist (Exhibit 4.36). Faculty review the syllabus in detail with students at the beginning of each course, as well as periodically during the term.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

### Task 2B

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.37)	
<p>Identify and/or design common assessment protocols for measuring student learning on the established student learning outcomes (e.g., all ANTH 100 courses would employ the same assessment protocols for measuring student achievement of the common learning outcomes within that course).</p>	<p>Many courses and programs utilize common assessments for measuring student learning. Several examples include the GFC MSU math department, which maintains common assessments for math. The Health Science Division has also developed a standardized assessment process for each of its programs. For example, the nursing program uses ATI standardized testing throughout the curriculum. Students must meet minimum scores to progress, and are simultaneously prepping for the NCLEX boards. Paramedic students must pass multiple certification exams, both skill- and knowledge-based, in order to progress through the curriculum. Several health programs include capstone courses that ensure cumulative knowledge and skills before students can graduate. The Business, Trades, and Technology Division has also moved to competency-based skill assessment in the trades. While not every program and course has adopted common assessment practices, many have or are in the process of developing them.</p>	<p><b>IP</b></p>

### Task 2C

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.38)	
<p>Utilizing an institutionally adopted format (e.g., Phase IV Learning Outcome Assessment form) create rubrics for assessing the various levels of student learning common outcomes for every course and program offered at the college.</p>	<p>The Phase IV Learning Outcomes Assessment form has been created and is utilized in every class across the GFC MSU campus. This document contains rubrics that consider objectives, outcomes, the Eight Abilities, assessment, and degree of objective/outcome achievement, reflection, and purposeful planning (Exhibit 4.39).</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

### Task 2D

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.40)	
<p>Research, identify, and employ a college-wide system for storing student learning outcomes data and longitudinally tracking those data to guide instructional improvement and target needed interventions to improve student learning and success.</p>	<p>Extensive research went in to finding a product to track learning outcome assessment information longitudinally. Tk20 was purchased and all faculty, program, and division directors were trained on its use (Exhibit 4.41). After piloting the software for two terms it became apparent that Tk20 was not as robust as initially thought. Data could be stored, but not correlated and analyzed by section level, course level, instructor level, objective level, and outcome level. Given the system restraints, faculty voted to make the use of Tk20 optional. Those who do not use Tk20 instead store, track, and monitor progress via the Phase IV Learning Outcomes Assessment form. An additional column was added to this form in order to ensure that reflective change with continual analysis, based on data, is being implemented from term to term. Faculty are responsible for maintaining these data, but Division Directors also store and track them for quality and compliance (Exhibit 4.42). The next goal is to develop a homegrown system that will more fully meet the needs of faculty and administration.</p>	<p><b>IP</b></p>

### Task 2E

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.43)	
<p>Implement the process for conducting assessments, recording student achievement of learning outcomes, and reporting those results.</p>	<p>The Phase IV Learning Outcomes Assessment form has been created and is utilized in every class across the GFC MSU campus (Exhibit 4.44). This form is the primary process for reporting student achievement, collecting assessment data, and making informed improvement via purposeful planning. While the faculty are responsible for this, the process is overseen by the Division Directors for quality and compliance. All faculty submit the Phase IV Learning Outcomes form when they submit grades, which has created a process that is consistent and easily remembered. The Phase IV Learning Outcomes form is used by the Division Directors in program and faculty evaluations.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

### Common Ground Goal 3

**Strengthening Student Support Services and Programs: We will establish intrusive student support mechanisms that will (1) create social relationships for students, (2) help students clarify aspirations and enhance their commitment, (3) develop the “College- Know-How” in students, and (4) help make college life feasible for our students.**

**Task 3A**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.45)	
<p>Catalyzed by the establishment of a new advising center, redesign the advising process so that it is intrusive, streamlined and personalized. The new advising process should be designed to utilize all campus resources, including faculty, as well as be tied to a student early alert system.</p>	<p>The new advising center has developed processes that ensure the advising process is intrusive, streamlined, and personalized. Every student must meet with an advisor, in person or by phone, prior to registration each and every term. During the advising session students are given a code that allows them to register, so they cannot register without receiving advising services. The advising office maintains an advising syllabus that outlines the intrusive measures in further detail (Exhibit 4.46). Advising has also launched a new early alert software known as Grades First (Exhibit 4.47). Faculty use Grades First to alert the advising center of concerns such as excessive absences, low performance, or missing assignments, and advisors follow up with the students (Exhibit 4.48). Faculty are trained in this process every term via email, handouts, and video. Use continues to grow each term as more than 350 alerts are processed and completed each term (Exhibits 4.49 and 4.50).</p> <p>Advisors also make use of DegreeWorks, a web-based degree audit and tracking system helping students and advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. DegreeWorks provides an accessible, convenient, and organized way for students to know where they are academically and how they can plan their college career.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 3B**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.51)	
<p>Building from the COLS 102 Pilot Course, design and implement a mandatory student success course, tied to orientation and advising, for all students new to the college. This course should include components modeled after best practices such as the development of an academic and career plan to be utilized in the advising process.</p>	<p>The course COLS 103 Becoming a Successful Student was developed in 2012-2013. This 8-week course became mandatory for all new students effective Fall 2013. The components of the course are modeled after best practices and include team building, building a study plan, introduction to school resources, and more (Exhibit 4.52). The objectives, outcomes, and assignments are standardized across all COLS 103 classes. The primary faculty include the advisors and the Director of Academic Success, who was hired to provide oversight for all COLS classes and the Academic Success Center. Each term a pre-term training is held to ensure all instructors understand the philosophy and requirements of the course (Exhibit 4.53). A meeting is also held at the end of each semester to discuss student success, achievement, and to provide purposeful planning. The course is now trying new models such as a veterans-only section to build student camaraderie. The course is offered both the first and second eight weeks of the term onsite and online. The course has been so successful that a faculty version, Foundations of Teaching at Community College, has been developed.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 3C**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.54)	
<p>Improve the “front door” experience through innovations including a mandatory, extended, and expanded orientation, tied to advising and the student success course that includes such things as orientation to placement testing, financial literacy education.</p>	<p>Mandatory orientation/registration sessions provide the opportunity for students to come to campus, learn how to navigate campus as well as the website, meet with an academic advisor, and receive assistance with their registration process. Orientation and registration are conducted jointly by the admissions office and the advising office. Students walk out with their schedule in hand, as well as a list of their textbooks. Essential Start is an expanded orientation course that students enroll in while attending their orientation/registration appointment. The Essential Start course occurs during the month that the semester begins and covers what it means and takes to be successful in college; creating a single login and password for computers, email, and Banner Web; navigating and understanding D2L; and meeting with financial aid to complete entrance counseling. Both sessions are available online and available through eLearning.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Common Ground Goal 4**

**Enhance & Strengthen Learning Process through Reform: Teaching is central to our mission, and thus it plays the largest role in whether or not our students succeed. We will reform and innovate in those areas with the greatest need and potential increases for student success.**

**Task 4A**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.55)	
<p>Building from current research, reform and redesign the developmental education offerings to increase percent of students who are successfully remediated for college-level coursework and at the rate in which they succeed in this process.</p>	<p>GFC MSU uses data in many ways to guide improvements. For example, significant changes have been made in math courses in response to data showing low success rates in developmental education. Students who began in the lowest level faced several semesters of developmental math before they could even take a college-level math class. Clearly, this was an impediment in college retention and program completion. As a result, the curriculum has been restructured so students can complete two developmental math courses in the same semester. Students who test into the lowest level of math are referred to the Adult Education program, which is housed on the GFC MSU campus, for free assistance to raise skills to the developmental level. Likewise, developmental writing has been experimenting with blended classes and flipped models to work towards better success. Rates for math have improved, but not for writing. Additional efforts are being researched and piloted.</p>	<p><b>OG</b></p>

**Task 4B**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.56)	OG
<p>Implement enhanced instruction/ learning models and other reforms, including, but not limited to Supplemental Instruction, learning communities, paired courses, and/or contextualized learning, to increase the rate of success in gatekeeper and “Top 10 Underperforming Courses.”</p>	<p>First, improvements were made in the old Learning Center, and it was rebranded the Academic Success Center (ASC). Hours for tutoring were changed from appointment based to drop in, resulting in a 150% increase in use. Second, the center addressed quality and became CRLA accredited, ensuring that all tutors are well trained. Next, with assistance from writing faculty, the center opened an online writing lab for assistance with papers and research. The ASC has tutors in every subject and all of the top 10 underperforming classes. Tutors have started assisting in labs, are holding events for underperforming classes (e.g., A&amp;P Jeopardy, Pi and Mole Day, etc.), and have increased supplies (all textbooks, TI calculators, iPads, laptops, and over 15 anatomic models are available for student use in the ASC). In Fall 2014 the center added Grades First documentation. This means that faculty and advisors can see which students have attended tutoring, what students are seeking help in, which classes have the most students in need of tutoring and more. Ultimately these data will provide an invaluable resource for purposeful planning. Numbers in the ASC have doubled to 12,000 since 2014.</p> <p>Together the Director of Academic Success and the Director of General Education and Transfer researched, designed, and proposed a Learning Community based upon field best practices. This was submitted to the Executive Team in the summer of 2014. The project is still under review (Exhibit 4.58).</p> <p>Other best practices include addressing adjunct training, addressing faculty training, creating paired classes, and co-founding GRADE (Greater Rockies Association for Developmental Education) where the Director of the ASC serves on the Executive Board as Editor of the J-Grade publication.</p> <p>Perhaps this is best documented through the words of GFC MSU Biology faculty:</p> <p><i>“The one hour supplemental class allows me to spend more time reviewing exams and quizzes with students. I can provide more time explaining how to write answers to essay questions and resolving misconceptions. The time allows me to do extra formative and summative assessments and better tailor my course to improve student success and retention.” ~Roger Peffer</i></p>	<p><b>OG</b></p>

**Task 4C**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.59)	
<p>Establish mechanisms for predictive analysis of student success and to target intervention. This includes the establishment of a common grade reporting system, mandatory student attendance reporting/tracking, and frequent student progress feedback (e.g. quarterly grades or academic progress reports).</p>	<p>Mechanisms for predictive analysis have been put into place with the purchase and implementation of Grades First (see goal 3). Policies have also been strengthened and procedures put into place for withdrawals, midterm grading, and drop for non-attendance and no shows.</p> <p><b>Withdrawal Policy Changes</b>            The campus started by examining the data and the demographics of the population that withdraws over three fall terms from 2010-2012, and the number of withdrawal (W) grades awarded. The campus also looked at the number of students represented (students that have more than one W, the percentage with two or more, and the percentage of all students). This led to an updated policy and procedure (Exhibit 4.60).</p> <p><b>Updating Policies to Address Attendance, No Shows and Drops</b>            The campus decided that an attendance and no show policy would help the not-passing, withdrawing, and incomplete (DFWI) percentages if the non-attenders were removed early in the semester. The campus looked at the critical nature of tracking and reporting “No Shows.” Policies from other campuses were researched. In the past, if a student had all F’s or F’s and W’s, faculty looked at last day of attendance with a focus on return of financial aid. The campus determined that it was critical that faculty report if a student is attending and the difference between if a student is a no show vs. failing (Exhibit 4.61). The policy now requires faculty to report an “X” (no show) grade by noon on the 15th day of the term, when students who did not attend are dropped administratively (Exhibit 4.62). Faculty must also attempt to contact the student in an effort to engage them.</p> <p><b>Add/Drop</b>            Several faculty reported that some students were dropping classes when they had an opportunity to pass the course. The goal was for students to have better discussions with faculty and their advisor to discuss options and consequences before making a decision to drop. The Advising and Career Center director, in tandem with Division directors and faculty, met to discuss this issue and revised the process.</p> <p>The Pre-requisite policy was also updated to better support student success (Exhibit 4.63)</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 4D**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.64)	
<p>Increase student preparedness for online and technical courses through the development of a systematic means to evaluate incoming students' basic computer skills, a remedial basic computer skills course, and by evaluating the current Introduction to Computer course (CAPP120) in order to modify its curricula based upon program needs.</p>	<p>This goal has been met in a couple of ways. First, the COLS 103 class discussed above has piloted the use of new Smarter Measures software. This software gives a thorough self-assessment to students in terms of computer savvy, comfort with technology, and readiness for online instruction. Course feedback has suggested that this has provided students with needed self-analysis (Exhibit 4.65).</p> <p>Second, the CAPP 120 course was completely redesigned for Fall 2014. Access, an area where learners typically struggle in this basic class, was removed and Power Point was added. Initial qualitative data indicates this has been a welcome and positive change.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 4E**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.66)	
<p>Research and develop a Certificate of General Studies credential and curriculum, and shepherd it through the approval process for implementation.</p>	<p>A 31-credit certificate in the MUS System Core was developed and implemented (Exhibit 4.67). This certificate is a momentum point that recipients do not have to apply for or declare. When the requirements are met it is automatically awarded, transcribed, and sent to the recipient. This certificate is transferable across the entire MUS system.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 4F**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.68)	
<p>Research and develop a Certificate program or credential to recognize the completion of pre-requisite coursework for Health Science programs.</p>	<p>Under a new Director of Health Sciences all healthcare classes have been cross-walked in an attempt to identify a common healthcare core. The possibility of a health science core certificate was researched. However, because it would not lead to an employable certification, and thus was not a stackable credential, it was not approved. Currently, the DOL Montana HealthCARE grant includes the development of a common healthcare core curriculum at the state level. It is likely that a CAS will be the next logical step in that process.</p>	<p><b>IP</b></p>

**Common Ground Goal 5**

**Strengthen External Linkages with K12 & University Partners: We will work to improve the relationships and interconnectivity between the college and our primary partners in the K12 and four-year university sectors.**

**Task 5A**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.69)	
<p>K12- through partnership with the Great Falls Public Schools, hire and deploy Pathway advisors to: (1) offer college placement test orientation and testing in the high schools; (2) assist with college and financial aid applications and literacy; and (3) provide orientation and college support services to college, college planning and dual credit.</p>	<p>The college hired two Pathways advisors/High School Career Coaches who are funded equally between Great Falls Public Schools and GFC MSU. They work in both Great Falls high schools with dual enrollment and pathways to a career. HS Career Coaches do COMPASS testing in the local high schools. They also hold FAFSA filing events for students. Monthly Bridging Opportunities meetings are held to discuss how to best work with all K-12 partners. The campus has dual enrollment MOUs with 34 high schools Exhibit 4.70). Enrollment has grown from 167 in 2010-2011 to 296 in 2012-2013.</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Task 5B**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.71)	
<p>Universities- establish more formalized articulation agreements to provide opportunities for general education students intending to transfer that leads them effectively into a program of study early on.</p>	<p>GFC MSU has made a great deal of progress in this area. Each academic division is responsible for their own articulations, which are monitored following the academic division calendar (Exhibit 4.72). To date, multiple articulations have been made with a number of other local and MUS system schools (Exhibit 4.73).</p>	<p><b>MET</b></p>

**Common Ground Goal 6**

**Identify Key Points of Student Success & Challenges for Students: We will establish interdisciplinary teams to track cohorts of entering students (first-time and transfers) along the continuum of initial engagement to student success to identify where students face irrevocable challenges in their educational journey.**

**Task 6A**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.74)	
<p>Utilizing AACC’s Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), identify key success points along the continuum of student success (e.g., pre health students, students of color, transfer students, traditional and non-traditional, etc.) and have teams follow their progress to identify areas where students struggle.</p>	<p>After researching AACC’s framework and other best practices, GFC MSU chose not to use AACC. The success points continue to be an ongoing goal. GFC MSU is constantly in pursuit of better data to inform decision making. For example, the data showed several groups more prone to withdraw: American Indian students, the 18-24 age group, new students, and General Education and pre-health sciences students. The campus also reviewed any differences related to students on financial aid: those with W grades received more financial aid than those who did not (Exhibit 4.75). As a result those groups were targeted as being more likely to withdraw. Based on these data, the campus changed processes to initiate better communication with students such as having discussions with faculty, advisors, and financial aid to discuss all options and consequences, updating academic plans, and appeal options prior to making any decisions about withdrawing. Current efforts have turned to predictive measures to implement more intensive intervention and an award program to reward engagement.</p>	<p><b>OG</b></p>

**Task 6B**

Tasks	Evidence (Exhibit 4.76)	
<p>Taking the findings from above, make recommendations for improvements to services, processes or protocols to the appropriate individual or areas. Implement changes to improve student outcomes along the continuum of student success.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing process, but progress is made and exhibited through CPBAC meeting minutes, Division Director Meeting Minutes, and Joint Director meeting minutes</p>	<p><b>OG</b></p>



**“I didn’t know where to go  
or what to do – I just knew  
I had to get started.”**

**ELLEN N.  
ASSOCIATE OF ARTS  
AND ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE**



**Mission Fulfillment,  
Adaptation & Sustainability**

**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

## Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement 24

### Eligibility Requirement 24:

**The institution demonstrates that its operational scale (e.g., enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure) is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.**

GFC MSU conducts on-going evaluation of its resources and works to allocate those resources appropriately. Academic and administrative programs are assessed regularly in order to meet the mission of “fostering the success of our students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society.” During the summer/fall of each year, quantitative information on each program’s metrics is released. Those data are considered by the College Planning Budgeting and Assessment Committee (the CPBAC), a shared governance committee, and used as a foundation for the budgeting process (Exhibits 5.01, 5.02, 5.03, 5.04).

Though this is discussed in further detail in Standard 3.B of this report, one example of the way GFC MSU has demonstrated innovation and balance is through the use of grant funding. In a time of tightening resources, GFC MSU has been able to continue to offer innovative and flexible learning opportunities to a wide variety of people through grant opportunities (see Standard 3.B). However, GFC MSU is fully aware that grants and their financial resources come to an end. CPBAC regularly reviews grant funded resources, data collection, and assessment to determine the viability and feasibility of continuing these programs after the grant period. Currently, GFC MSU is exploring ways to continue the CHEO/NANSLO position subsequent to external funding. The Issksiniip grant is also coming to an end shortly. The college has elected to utilize existing resources to incorporate the work of this grant. GFC MSU is aware of the need for a balanced approach that is sustainable and supports our mission of innovative and flexible learning opportunities well into the future.

Two additional examples of fiscal responsibility and programmatic responsiveness are the utilization of three-year budgets and the curricular profitability statements. During the creation of the FY 2016 budget, each department will submit a three-year budget. The second and third year numbers will reflect anticipated changes within the department, including personnel expenses no longer funded by grants, programmatic restructuring, and any other deviations that could have a substantial effect to expenses. The CPBAC also reviews instructional departmental profitability statements. These statements include tuition and fee revenue associated with the department, enrollment, expenses, and the fiscal impact of each department.

## **Standard 5.A Mission Fulfillment**

### **5.A.1 The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.**

The college is operating under the 2009-2013 strategic plan, which was extended in 2012, as college leadership changed and a new CEO/dean was installed into office (Exhibit 5.05). The college's mission statement, vision statement, and core indicators of institutional effectiveness were approved in 2009. The 2011-2016 operating plan *Common Ground* is also still in effect and has provided the backbone of the strategic planning and operations since its development in 2010-2011 (Exhibit 5.06). Rather than implement a new strategic plan in the middle of a current operational plan and accreditation cycle, the new CEO/dean and her team elected to continue with the 2009-2013 strategic plan and 2011-2016 *Common Ground* operational plan. At the time of this report, the college is gearing up for the mission revision and strategic planning process. As is appropriate for year seven of the accreditation cycle, the majority of initiatives from the current strategic and operational plans have been met and institutionalized (see Chapter Four).

The college gathers evidence annually in relation to the mission, strategic plan, operational plan, core indicators of institutional effectiveness, and core themes. Annual data are gathered, analyzed, and published in both the annual Performance Report Card and the annual Report to the Community (Exhibits 5.07 and 5.08). The college then uses these data to make decisions on resource allocation and funding along with implementation of new strategies, operational items, or factors to assist low performing areas.

The college utilizes these data on both a micro and macro level. At the micro level students, faculty, staff, departments, programs, and divisions utilize these data to assess, measure, plan, and improve all aspects of faculty and student achievement. This is tracked through course level objectives, program level outcomes, student evaluations, faculty evaluations, and program reviews (see Chapter 4). On the macro level, the college utilizes the CEO's Executive Council, the Development Board, and the various programmatic advisory committees to distribute information and gather relevant information necessary for the college to continue being a vital component of the central Montana region. The college also uses Montana University System data and national benchmarking data to conduct comparative analysis. These processes are essential to the continued improvement of the success in student outcomes, responsiveness to community needs, employee satisfaction, and efficient internal operations.

Throughout this self-evaluation, it has become apparent that the college has made great strides in assessment and utilizing assessment data to make evidence-informed decisions and demonstrate evidence-based improvement. It has also become apparent that the college has work to do in the area of data-informed planning. To address this, planning duties have been more explicitly defined under the current Chief Information Officer. Twenty-two informational sessions have been held to gather input for the mission revision process for year one of the accreditation cycle. GFC MSU looks forward to great things to come in the areas of linking direct and specific measurement processes to the indicators, themes, and strategic processes in a manner designed to ensure the sustainability of GFC MSU well into the future.

**5.A.2 Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institutions uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.**

Great Falls College MSU reviews, updates, and publishes its Performance Report Card annually. This report card contains a historic record of the core indicators of institutional success and percent of change from the previous academic year. This report card also indicates the college's annual goal for each core indicator and whether the college has met, partially met, or did not meet that goal from the previous year. Core indicators are reviewed annually and new goals are set each academic year. Those core indicators measure the overall performance of the college and whether or not the college has achieved its mission. This provides the foundation of the data, analysis, discussion, and dissemination pieces used for determining quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment.

Each core indicator is analyzed by the Research Analyst and made available to the college faculty, staff, and administration by way of file share or SharePoint from within the campus network infrastructure. This information is then used by departments and divisions to build an understanding of the entire college's performance and its interdependence on campus departments, divisions, and students.

Each core indicator contains information on why the indicator is measured, the frequency the data are collected, a recommended method of data collection, external benchmark analysis data (where feasible), goals, core theme groups, and a data summary. These data are analyzed and used to develop the institution's overall annual Performance Report Card. The Performance Report Card provides evidence that GFC MSU engages in ongoing, systematic, and evidence-based assessment of its work and accomplishments. Once the data have been collected and analysis completed, the Performance Report Card and the annual Report to the Community are published on the campus website and referenced in presentations to campus stakeholders.

Although there are clearly areas identified for improvement, the data and ratings across all core theme indicators are evidence that GFC MSU is fulfilling its mission. In addition to the annual Performance Report Card, GFC MSU engages in regular assessment of mission fulfillment through the Mission Fulfillment Report that is sent to the Office of the Commission of Higher Education and the Montana Board of Regents bi-annually, most recently in 2015. GFC MSU received commendations for its Mission Fulfillment Report, and is proud of its accomplishments and is continuing toward mission fulfillment even as it moves into a new planning cycle.

In the Report Card, the score for each core theme is displayed. Each core theme is broken into core indicators and subsequent objectives. Historical data, goal, and status are also detailed, resulting in an overall institutional grade. The current institutional grade is a "B." This is above average, but the college strives to improve. There is clearly room for improvement, but overall the core indicators, core themes, and strategic plan are resulting in mission fulfillment. For a more in-depth discussion of this graph, see the individual components in Chapter 4 (Exhibit 5.09).

## **5.B Adaptation and Sustainability**

**5.B.1 Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.**

The entire college has adopted a data-driven culture of continuous quality improvement, which includes regular evaluation of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations designed to accomplish goals and fulfill the mission. In an effort to become more performance-based in the allocation of resources, the college has created and is committed to an integrated, continuous, mission-centric model of evaluation emanating from the CPBAC process (Exhibit 5.10).

GFC MSU examines physical, fiscal, and human resources and operations effectiveness on an annual basis. This is done in a variety of ways including curricular and co-curricular snapshots (Exhibit 5.11), CPBAC planning meetings minutes (Exhibit 5.12), budget and position planning documentation (Exhibit 5.13), room utilization reports (Exhibit 5.14), academic program review documentation (Exhibit 5.15), enrollment reports (Exhibits 5.16 and 5.17), and campus Performance Report Cards.

GFC MSU uses decision strategies based upon data analysis. Any new resource needs, such as a budgetary increase or new personnel request, are taken to CPBAC for review and discussion (along with alignment with strategic considerations). Recommendations are made to the Executive Team (ET) and CEO/Dean for final decision.

Budgeting decisions are based on estimated budget forecasting and current state level funding. GFC MSU is funded by the State of Montana on a biennial budget cycle. Appropriations are set every two years by the Montana Legislature and then allocated by the Montana State Board of Regents through the Montana State Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). OCHE divides its allocation between the two flagship campuses (Montana State University and the University of Montana), who then allocate to each of their college and university units (Exhibit 5.18). This allocation is then assigned to campus departments and divisions based on the campus budget as approved by CPBAC and the campus Chief Finance Officer (CFO) who presents it to ET. If the state allocation is lower than expected, CPBAC, CFO and the CEO/Dean will review the campus budget and make adjustments as needed.

Based on an agreement between the Montana governor and Board of Regents, the Montana University System has implemented a performance-based funding model. The performance-based funding model allocates a percentage of the state funds according to a formula that measures institutional performance in student retention and completion, which are core indicators of Great Falls College MSU (Exhibit 5.19). PBF is tied to the GFC MSU performance process in that success is rewarded and resources are tied to exhibiting progress and improvement.

Internal academic program review is a process by which every academic program at GFC MSU is reviewed once every five years (Exhibit 5.20). Program directors collect fiscal, retention and completion, and industry data for the previous five years and analyze the data in terms of program

sustainability and responsiveness to change. These data are presented to the Academic Program Review Committee along with a presentation by the program director. The committee meets and lists commendations and recommendations. The program director responds with an improvement plan. The improvement plan is monitored by the Academic Program Review Committee; results are reported to that program director's division director and the campus Chief Academic Officer. Decisions on the sustainability of academic programs are based on the analysis of the academic program review and successful completion of any improvement plans (Exhibits 5.21, 5.22, and 5.23).

**5.B.2 The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.**

Great Falls College MSU collects and stores all committee meeting agendas, minutes, and presentation documentation. This is part of the essential decision-making data collected by the institution. All documentation is available to institution stakeholders through the website or shares drive.

Budget reports are sent to division directors monthly through the CFO's office. Expenditures are monitored, tracked, and justified at this level monthly (Exhibit 5.24). Divisions and departments are not authorized to spend beyond the budgeted amount. Occasionally needs arise that require a reallocation. This process occurs through discussion and decision making at CPAC.

There is a gap in the utilization of CPBAC for the analysis described in this section from 2011-2013. This is due to an extensive change in personnel, including the chief executive officer/dean, chief financial officer, Research Analyst, and chief student affairs officer. The current CFO began at the college in January of 2012. After a year of reflection and campus consultation, the Executive Team decided to resume the activities of CPBAC (see Chapter 3). In 2013, the budgeting roles became fully functional. In the spring of 2014, the committee began the analysis and planning tasks as well (Exhibit 5.25).

It is through the CPBAC process that data are analyzed, discussions are held, and decisions about changes, additions, or removal of resources occur. As an example, CPBAC is now fully engrossed in the budgeting. Divisions and departments are asked to justify increases to their budgets with the alignment of strategic priorities. Further, in preparatory planning, new position requests and fees have been discussed, prioritized, and documented so that they are ready to move forward to BOR as soon as the process is opened in Spring 2015. Because the budgeting process occurs every two years, it is crucial that GFC MSU be well prepared and ready to address current needs and foreseeable future needs. This year, each department and division is being asked to prepare a three-year budget for better planning (Exhibit 5.26). The state of Montana does not allow public institutions to exceed their budgets; thus, this process is closely and carefully monitored. The fiscal year is almost 60% concluded, and as the illustration below depicts, GFC MSU is on track with spending. Careful planning, supported by Montana BOR and OCHE policy, ensures institutional sustainability. The Montana University System has adopted a performance-based funding model for all its units to encourage attention to specific metrics. (Exhibit 5.27).

FY 15 Year to Date Expenditures				
	<u>FY15 Budget</u>	<u>FY15 YTD Expenses</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Percent Used</u>
<b>Total Instruction</b>	\$6,338,963.00	\$3,614,506.00	\$2,724,457.00	57.02%
<b>Total Academic Support</b>	\$1,509,372.00	\$759,790.00	\$749,582.00	50.34%
<b>Total Student Services</b>	\$1,590,276.00	\$792,358.00	\$797,918.00	49.83%
<b>Total Institutional Support</b>	\$2,779,532.00	\$1,646,759.00	\$1,132,773.00	59.25%
<b>Total Facilities</b>	\$1,459,513.00	\$877,371.00	\$582,142.00	60.11%
<b>Total Grants</b>	\$6,990,806.00	\$1,527,088.00	\$5,463,718.00	21.84%
<b>Total Auxiliary</b>	\$1,893,125.00	\$1,576,002.00	\$317,123.00	83.25%
<b>Grand Total--All Budgets, All Funds</b>	<b>\$22,561,587.00</b>	<b>\$10,793,874.00</b>	<b>\$11,767,713.00</b>	<b>47.84%</b>

**5.B.3 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.**

GFC MSU monitors internal and external environments in a number of ways. Internally, data are collected from advisory committees, student surveys, faculty surveys, and program surveys. These data are collected and stored on the website and shares drive through meeting minutes and presentations. The data are then used, through CPBAC and other venues, to review and inform mission fulfillment. Just one example of this standard in action is the close relationship between the Health Science programs and community partners. The Health Science division goes to great lengths to solicit feedback from industry health partners, which considers the performance and skills of our graduates (Exhibit 5.28). Once collected, data are used to guide development and achievement of core themes, core indicators, and strategic planning, which is reported through the annual Performance Report Card and annual Report to the Community.

The college collects common peer institution data and compares them to like data collected for GFC MSU. The results are used to develop benchmarks to core indicators of institutional effectiveness that can be seen on the annual Performance Report Card.

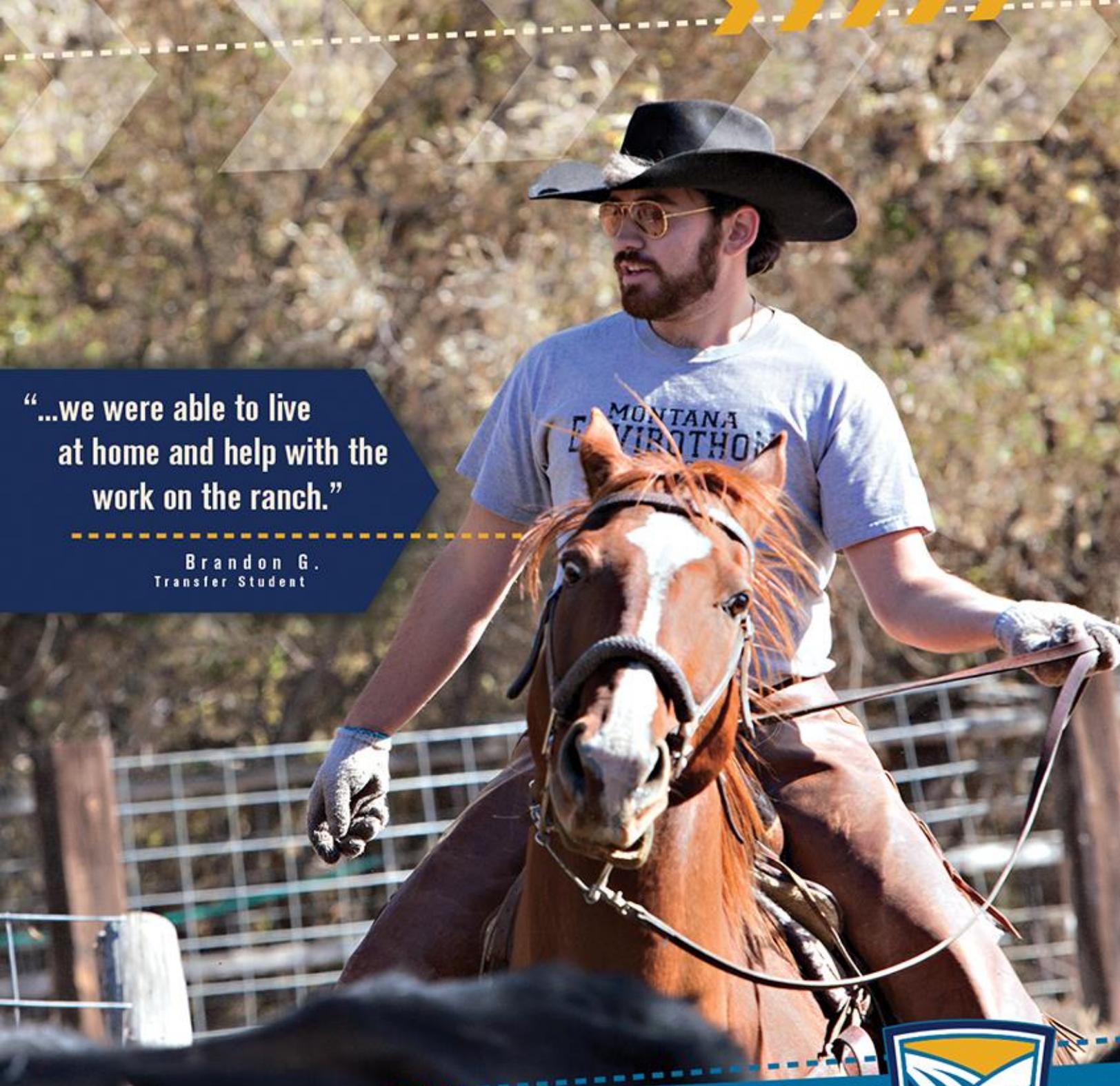
The college uses survey data collected from nationally normed surveys such as the SENSE and CCSSE, along with many internally developed surveys (Exhibits 5.29 and 5.30), some of which measure:

- Employer satisfaction with graduates
- Employee satisfaction within the Great Falls College organization structure
- Equal opportunity and non-discrimination survey (on behalf of student government)

- Faculty development
- Faculty technology use
- Reactions to the rebranding of the college logo

GFC MSU has also recently participated in an economic impact and return of investment on education study. This study was administered and evaluated through a third party analyst, but was an excellent overview of external conditions and the role GFC MSU plays in the Great Falls economic region. These are all examples of GFC MSU's awareness and responsiveness to the patterns and trends in the external and internal environments.

Additional evidence of the college's close relationships in the community includes its intensive response to the workforce needs of ADF International, which located its operations in Great Falls. ADF and other new industries were predicting the need for a significant number of welders. College representatives met with industry representatives numerous times to determine the best way to meet that need. The college, with the support of the governor's office, submitted an application for funding from the Economic Development Authority to expand the physical space for the welding program. Governor Bullock mentioned the welding program and its response to industry in his State of the State Address as an example of success in Montana.



“...we were able to live  
at home and help with the  
work on the ranch.”

Brandon G.  
Transfer Student

# Conclusion



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## Conclusion

This Year Seven Report represents the culmination of a decade of change for Great Falls College Montana State University, all of it built on the common ground of student success. Since the 2005 Full-Scale Evaluation, the college has experienced incredible growth and significant change. To date, the college community has been focused on a myriad of modifications to the organization's foundational structures and processes. These have all been built on the philosophy of continuous improvement. Although changes have been both big and small, they have all been purposeful and significant. The college has:

- Established a faculty-led Curriculum Committee (June 2006);
- Reorganized the growing academic departments into academic divisions (September 2006);
- Hired the first division directors (September 2006);
- Hired a chief student affairs officer (August 2006);
- Provided professional development to all faculty on student learning outcomes assessment, including attendance at Alverno College's workshop series (2006 and 2007);
- Formed the College Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee, or CPBAC; (September 2007);
- Established New Mission, Vision and Value Statements (May 2008);
- Created a Faculty Senate (December 2008);
- Created the Dean's Advisory Council (April 2010);
- Piloted the first attempt at a new budget development and planning model (September 2007);
- Formally established Core Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness (May 2008);
- Adopted the four Core Themes to meet the new NWCCU standards (May 2008)
- Institutionalized an integrated model of planning, budget, and assessment of institutional effectiveness (September 2008);
- Published the first MSU-Great Falls Performance Report Card (April 2010);
- Established the Office of Institutional Research (January 2011);
- Implemented an innovative new Academic Program Review protocol (June 2011);
- Constructed and created the college's Student Central (January 2008);
- Finalized a faculty-developed four-phase student learning outcomes assessment process (2008);
- Piloted the College Studies 102 course titled Navigating MSU-Great Falls (January 2011);
- Established the Great Falls College MSU Veterans Center (January 2011);
- Formally institutionalized the Great Falls College MSU Development Board to increase student scholarships and support (May 2011); and
- Merged the Library and Distance Learning into the new Division of eLearning and Library Services (May 2011).
- Formed the Bridging Opportunities group comprised of school counselors, post-secondary student support personnel, and community members to build a college-going culture in Great Falls (September 2008);
- Moved the Adult Education program from Paris Gibson Education Center to MSU-Great Falls (December 2009);

- Expanded the Learning Center to an Academic Success Center that includes faculty development for all faculty on campus;
- Joined the Lumina-funded MUS College!Now initiative to expand the two-year college mission in Montana (2011);
- Received campus-wide training in Strategic Enrollment Management (2013); and
- Melded the SEM plan and the Academic Master Plan (2014).

The college’s present leadership is committed to strengthening the campus-wide culture of planning and assessment by a reappraisal of the mission statement, values, and core themes, and by identification of enhanced ways of measuring the progress through the core indicators. This will happen to support the creation of the Year One Report for spring of 2016. Additionally, the Strategic Enrollment Management and Academic Master Planning processes will engage the entire college community in enrollment management. In this way, the assessment of mission fulfillment becomes a day-to-day practice for all.

It is clear that GFC MSU is thriving, even with all the challenges the college faces and will face in the coming years. How these challenges are approached will determine what mark GFC MSU leaves. To come full circle and close the loop on this Year Seven Report, it is important to note that the words that began the report, “*Changing lives; Achieving Dreams,*” are more than the words that form a tag-line. They are reality for many students. Focus for a moment on the thoughts of Mark Cook, a transfer student at GFC MSU:

*“Never has there been a time that my purpose seems so sure, and my vision clear, than now as I attend Great Falls College. As a student I strive to excel; this an example set forth by the faculty and staff that readily make themselves available. The community that exists here at Great Falls College is fostered through the care and attention given to each student that, in reciprocity, replicates the good nature to fellow students. I am amazed at the level of interaction that each professor has with their students, which for me is the linchpin to success as a student. I love school, revere its professors and am thankful for the experience that I found while attending this school.”*

*~Mark Cook, student planning to transfer to a four-year institution*