

*Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
Commission on Colleges*

A Full-Scale
Evaluation Committee Report

Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana

October 12-15, 1999

*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Commission on Colleges that
Represents the Views of the Evaluation Committee*

EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOZEMAN, MONTANA
OCTOBER 12-15, 1999**

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INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Team thanks the Montana State University-Bozeman (MSU-Bozeman) faculty, staff, students, Regents, and the Montana Higher Education Commissioner for their hospitality. It was a most congenial and supportive visit. The MSU-Bozeman community went far beyond what is expected to provide us with a most friendly environment in which to conduct the evaluation. As an example of that support, we suspect that few schools have ever provided the computer support we experienced. The meeting room, exhibits, and additional materials were well done. When we needed transportation and access to the computer area during the evenings, they were very accommodating. We thank President Malone, Pamela Hill and her staff, the faculty, staff, Board members and university students for making this a productive visit.

If one is to understand the concerns, recommendations and commendations of the Evaluation Team, it is necessary to review briefly the role of MSU-Bozeman and the context of the changes and problems encountered by MSU-Bozeman between 1988 and 1998.

MSU-Bozeman is Montana's land grant institution and is committed to accomplishing the institutional mission of research, teaching and public service, and to share these accomplishments through the dissemination of information to its constituents. It is classified as a Doctoral II University. It has an enrollment of nearly 12,000 students. Eighty-eight percent of these students are working towards their first bachelor's degree, 8 percent are working towards a doctorate or master's, and 4 percent are taking courses beyond their first bachelor's. Nearly one-quarter of the students are over twenty-five years old. There are over 650 faculty members in residence at MSU-Bozeman. Seventy-five percent hold terminal degrees in their fields, and over two-thirds hold doctorate degrees. The student/faculty ratio is about 19.5 to 1.

Probably the most important change that has affected MSU-Bozeman in the past decade is the decline of the relative financial support of state funding for Montana higher education. During that period, state support per MSU-Bozeman resident student, adjusted for Consumer Price Index inflation, decreased by nearly 18 percent. In absolute dollars, state funding remained virtually constant. The state general fund support now comprises less than 50 percent of all revenues. For peer institutions, state support comprises nearly 70 percent of all revenues. The average level of state support per resident FTE was a little over half of that of its peers. This decline of funding left MSU-Bozeman with uncompetitive salaries, a significant backlog of remodeling, renovation, maintenance problems, depleted operating budgets, and many other shortfalls.

Also, in 1994 Montana's Board of Regents restructured Montana higher education. It created major changes in the structure of Montana higher education. Those changes have had important implications for its Bozeman campus. MSU became MSU-

Bozeman with the lead for management of three smaller affiliates—MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern (Havre), and MSU College of Technology in Great Falls.

In the past decade, the university saw a major change in the student population. The current student population is 15 percent higher than 1990. This growth has been accompanied by a modest reduction in the number of tenure track faculty. Obvious problems have resulted. Added to all this was the 1995 Productivity, Quality and Outcomes Agreement (PQO). The agreement established instructional goals very much in concert with the goals of the Board's restructuring. One outcome of PQO was an increase in faculty workloads.

During the decade, the university's sponsored research capability changed dramatically. Its sponsored contract and grant activity tripled and with that change came new areas of emphasis and additional significant research achievement.

In concluding our introduction, it is important to emphasize that the Evaluation Team was especially impressed with the comprehensiveness of the self-study; moreover, we can seldom recall as candid as self-study as this one. It was quite refreshing. After reviewing the self-study, written records of meeting dates and attendees, writing assignments, and interviews with on-campus and off-campus individuals, it is clear that there was broad-based participation in the self-study process. Appropriate and diverse constituencies were represented on the steering committee and were involved in the collection and analysis of data used in developing conclusions and responses to the self-study items. These constituencies were afforded sufficient opportunities to respond to the steering committee's initial observations, and made aware and provided access to the self-study campus review. Preparation for the review was excellent. We hope the character and extent of participation bodes well for the self-study becoming the beacon for MSU-Bozeman's planning and strategic actions in the months and years ahead.

STANDARD ONE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS

MSU-Bozeman's mission and goals define the institution, including its educational activities, its student body, and its role within the higher education community. There is an official statement, and it was developed with significant participation from faculty, staff, students and the university's publics. It is reviewed every three years, but a recent review has not been completed.

The MSU-Bozeman Office of Institutional Research (IR) coordinates the institutional documentation related to accomplishments of the University's mission and goals. It maintains data histories that are used throughout the campus to support planning and assessment. It provides the outcome assessment to a variety of campus and off-campus groups, the latter includes both the local news media, governor's office, Office of the Commissioner for Montana Higher Education, and the Regents. As to the former, it provides data and analysis support for numerous campus departments. It maintains all this information on the University Committees Web site.

In response to the 1990 NASC review, MSU-Bozeman established the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) in 1993. Their planning process led to the adoption of a MSU-Bozeman Long Range Plan in 1994. The purpose of the plan is to serve as the means to implement the university's mission.

There are other planning and budget groups at work as well. In 1998, the strategic Planning Budget Committee (SPBC) was formed to address budget recommendations in concert with funding priorities, mission and goals of the university. Further, the President's Executive Committee (PEC) considers budget issues as well as a range of other issues. The concern is that there is no clear perception about how the two planning groups, the SPCB and the LRPC, interface as well as to how the recommendations of those two groups are used by the PEC (Standard 1.B.1)

STANDARD TWO EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

General Education

Related instruction is not relevant in this section of the report, since MSU does not offer either associate degrees or certificate programs.

General Education requirements for all students are located in the Core Curriculum, a group of six categories of courses: Communication (verbal and written), Mathematics, Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Science and Social Science. Students are required to complete one or two courses in each of these categories, six credits of which must come from courses designated as multi-cultural/global. The Core Curriculum (CC) is monitored by a Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), which reviews and approves proposals from departments for courses meeting its criteria.

The CCC has regularly monitored its offerings by assessment data and surveys of seniors and alumni, and, commendably, has sought to integrate the course offerings by thinking about their coherence in achieving the goals of general education. Still, with the large number of students to be served, the number of courses grows. Presently some 180 courses are listed to satisfy the six areas. Recently MSU received a grant from the Hewlett Foundation to do a study aiming at reconceptualizing the Core. The study has tried to engage large numbers of faculty (and students) in the process of re-thinking goals and means. This culminated in the design of a “New Core” which seeks not to eliminate the “Old Core” but to offer to many students the alternative of a more integrated set of Core courses that would be taken in the first two years of college, along with a set of courses to satisfy the breadth of distribution requirements.

Seven sections of some of these new Core courses were offered last year and 13 sections this year. The new courses and structures are imaginative and promise to be effective. Whether or not they are able to replace parts of the Old Core, the project exhibits the continued dedication of the faculty to the goals of liberal and general education, and to teaching.

Policy 2.1 of Standard Two is fully met by the Core Curriculum and by this evidence of continued commitment to the goals of General Education.

College of Agriculture

The College of Agriculture (COA) clearly meets all elements of Standard Two with the exception of Standard 2.B (Educational Program Planning and Assessment). While the COA does have some general learning outcomes identified for each degree, they tend

to be somewhat non-specific, and there was minimal documentation in terms of a plan for assessment (Standard 2.B.2). This concern was mentioned by students in the context of curricula changes that have occurred frequently and did not seem to students to have a relationship to the learning outcomes for the degree they were pursuing.

The departments in the COA are using assessment practices to modify the various programs in their departments and to alter practices in their work in areas other than in teaching. The weakness in the assessment efforts was the documentation of evidence to support the changes that had been made (Standard 2.B.3).

Much progress has been made by the COA in assessment during the past five years and with slight modifications they should meet the standard.

Commendations:

1. In the early phases of the development of the Self Study document, the COA identified weaknesses in the college relative to the standards and took action to mediate the concern. This indicates a sound self study process and further reinforces the seriousness in which they undertook the accreditation review process.
2. The general appearance of the facilities on the agricultural farms was excellent and reflected the care and attention provided by the farm managers and staff.
3. Several departments in the COA--especially notable the Department of Veterinary Molecular Biology--have very successfully incorporated undergraduate research experiences in a substantial and meaningful way in their curriculum.

General Comments and Suggestions:

1. There have been five different deans during the past ten years. Such a high rate of change can affect the relationship of the college with commodity groups, agricultural leaders, and elected officials; as well as with on-campus faculty, staff, and students. Competitive salaries for administrators are important for leadership stability.
2. While the COA has met all targets established by the Productivity, Quality and Outcomes (PQO), it has failed to account for the breath of responsibilities that faculty have in the COA. Some faculty expressed that this "straight jacket" approach resulted in the perception that certain faculty were more or less valuable than others. Also, issues of one-on-one faculty-student involvement, teaching outside the classroom and graduate student advising were not valued in the PQO.

It is the understanding of the accreditation review team that the PQO agreement was for four years, and that it has recently become a non-issue with the Board of Regents. Nearly all states are developing, designing or already using some type of work load formula, and it is likely that some system of work analysis will be used in universities for the foreseeable future. The phasing out of the PQO may well be an opportunity for MSU to design a system that takes into account the concerns of the campus.

3. Since the last accreditation review, a system of “charge backs” has been implemented by MSU. This is basically a system that charges costs associated with the use of space and services on campus. Extension specialists and those with Experiment Station projects are now charged for their use of space and services. While I believe this is a common practice with many universities, it would help with communications and campus understanding if some data from peer institutions were collected and discussed with faculty.

College of Art and Architecture

The College of Art and Architecture (CAA) consists of the School of Architecture, School of Art, the Department of Media and Theatre Arts, Department of Music, Montana Public Television and the professional touring company, Shakespeare in the Parks. The College offers undergraduate programs in Architecture, Studio Arts, Art History, Art Education, Graphic Design, Motion Picture/Video/Theatre, Photography, and Music Education. There are Master of Architecture and Master of Fine Arts degrees at the graduate level. The current administration consists of a Dean and Assistant Dean, Directors for both Schools of Art and Architecture, and Department Heads for MTA and Music.

The College seems unified and collegial, energetic and committed to excellent teaching. There are strategic plans and vision and mission statements in place for the College and each of its schools and departments. These have appropriate goals and implementation strategies that are beginning to be exercised effectively. The faculty seems to share in and support uniformly these goals. The College intends to serve, educate and enrich culturally the university community and, through inspired research/creative works and outreach programs, extend to the State and region.

The CAA is educationally healthy and the faculty have increased in quality and creative potential. Reviews of the professional degree awarding units by their respective accrediting boards have been quite positive. There is a strong sense of the College’s mission, and there appears to be respect for its current administration.

The enrollment for 1998-99 is 1347 students, up from 1073 in 1994-95. The student body is bright, excited about their education and involved properly in its pursuit. Student work on the walls, in galleries and in studios is of really high quality. Performance based programs are impressive, extensive and vital to the community. There is a range of experiences for unique

learning opportunities such as excellent internships, individual study mechanisms and overseas study opportunities. There is a good range of younger and older students, providing a balance of ideas and experiences that strengthen any interactive program. There is a good mix of local, statewide and out-of-state students providing the important educational diversity. Instructional effectiveness is very apparent in the response from students who clearly understand the intent of their respective programs and share in its mission to provide exceptional arts education.

Effective assessment processes are already in place in all programs. Along with grades and evaluations, there are often first-year reviews of student work by faculty, portfolio or performance reviews at second and third year and appropriate and well-defined capstone experiences. However, the class sizes can be large for many arts-based program (the norm described by the College Art Association is 16 students while 25 students can be a studio enrollment at CAA). In the fastest growing units, advising has been diminished in quality given the increased numbers of students assigned to each faculty member.

In summation, the educational programs are well structured, diverse and well balanced, providing a mix of theoretical and practical course work. The student work is quite good and poised to meet the challenge of changing technology. The material is delivered through a variety of techniques of lecture, seminar, and studio situations.

The physical facilities of the College of Art and Architecture, adequate some 25 years ago when first built. Performance, studio and work spaces and technical equipment one requires in a professional school are now past their useful limit. The facilities are spread through three separate buildings and have the usual need for more teaching, practice and studio spaces. The increased need for technical equipment is obvious, and especially difficult with integrated electronic and computer equipment becoming an increasingly integral part of the arts; however, the facilities are well maintained and the generous shops appear to be excellent facilities with good safety practice. Student spaces are supportive and well networked as needed in environmental design studios. A unique branch library, which contains a part of the creative arts collection, is within the College building and is heavily used by the faculty and students; however, the arts are not well represented in the limited collection of books and journals. The internal slide collection is good, growing in size, but limited in providing proper coverage of many art topics.

College of Business

The College of Business (COB) at MSU has a clearly stated mission (“to prepare students for leadership roles in a diverse and global business world”), with appropriate general goals (e.g. to educate students so that they will “acquire knowledge of current business practice and theory. . . ,” “develop competencies in critical thinking and problem solving. . . ,” and “become lifelong, self-directed learners. . .”) and more specific objectives (e.g. to assist students to “develop competencies in current technology” [relevant to business]). The College’s primary degree program, in which almost all of

its students are enrolled, is the Bachelor of Science in Business. The College also offers a small, specialized program leading to the Masters of Professional Accountancy (M.P.Ac.) degree. Currently, about 1,000 students are enrolled in the B.S. in Business program and about 35 in the M.P.Ac. program. Thus, the College of Business puts almost all of its efforts into offering high-quality undergraduate education for business.

The COB first achieved accreditation for its undergraduate business degree program in 1981 under the auspices of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the agency for specialized accreditation in business education. The College has retained this status ever since, and its accreditation was reaffirmed most recently in 1997 for another period of years. This action indicates, in effect, that peers in business education at other comparable universities regard the COB's programs as being of appropriate high quality.

The curriculum of the College appears to be very well planned and constructed. There is a relevant set of pre-business course requirements, followed by a Common Core of business courses required of all majors, and concluding with a set of required courses in one of the four available "options" (accounting, finance, management and marketing). The set of Common Core courses is constantly reviewed for currency and appropriateness, as are the subsets of courses for each of the four "options." With respect to the curriculum, the College has made a number of important changes and innovations in recent years, including the required Freshman Seminar (BUS 101) that provides for extensive interaction of students with faculty in sections limited to 15 students, a corresponding Senior Seminar (BUS 474C) required of graduating seniors, a newly-designed and integrated sequence of courses for the management "option," the launching of a high-quality M.P.Ac. degree in 1995, and the addition of increased opportunities for student exchange experiences abroad with a selected set of foreign institutions. In short, the curriculum in the B.S. in Business program is constantly being updated, revised, and improved.

The quality of instruction in the various courses in the undergraduate business program appears to be high. The faculty individually and collectively have a strong commitment to teaching and, based on interviews with students, their efforts are extremely well received--and appreciated--by their student "consumers." Students (seniors, in this case) were uniformly positive about the quality of instruction they had received and about the opportunity for meaningful interaction with their instructors.

The College of Business expends considerable time and effort in activities relating to assessment of student outcomes. As stated earlier, the College has identified both general and specific objectives for student outcomes in the B.S. program. Further, these objectives are then linked with specific courses or parts of courses so that the College and its faculty can be sure that appropriate curriculum and teaching emphasis is given to each objective. Also, for some of these objectives, specific measurements have been devised to determine students' current status or progress in meeting them.

In addition, the College collects other independent data on how well the objectives are being achieved by students. These other sources of data include periodic surveys completed by alumni and employers and the records for numbers and quality of placements of graduates with employing companies and organizations. By all of these criteria, the COB appears to be doing an excellent job of meeting its objectives related to student outcomes. Furthermore, and especially important, the data collected from these various sources have been used by the College in making changes in individual courses and in curriculum requirements, e.g. modifications in the Core and the recent redesign of the required capstone Senior Seminar course. Thus, not only are appropriate assessments being carried out, but also they are being used as a basis for making changes--something not always common in higher education.

In the area of student advising, the College also has devoted major efforts to improve the process. This has resulted in a so-called "dual model" that involves a centralized administrative office within the College (Office of Student Services) supplemented by faculty advising. This system appears to be working moderately well, but students reported that there remains definite room for improvement. This is especially so with regard to the consistency in the quality of advising of individual faculty members and in the availability and willingness of faculty to engage in substantive--as opposed to superficial and mechanistic--advising. The design of the advising system appears to be good, but its implementation appears somewhat spotty.

The physical infrastructure relating to facilities for instruction (appropriate classrooms, student access to computers, etc.) appears to be generally good, and students had very few complaints in this regard. The recent AACSB accreditation report did note, however, that the College should give attention to increasing the availability of computer-based instructional equipment; in this connection, the College has made some subsequent progress in this area.

The College of Business at MSU has achieved considerable progress in recent years, especially in terms of developing and improving its undergraduate degree program and in maintaining AACSB accredited status. For this, it is to be congratulated and given appropriate credit; however, as is typical with any academic unit in any university, challenges remain. The College (in conjunction with campus administration) is currently beginning a search for a new dean. It is assumed that that new dean will be in place by the beginning of the 2000-01 academic year. Several of the major challenges and issues that will face that dean (and the College) will include: (1) establishing a clear, unambiguous strategic direction for the College for the early years of the 21st century, including a set of shared goals to which both the dean and faculty commit themselves; (2) establishing a set of goals and expectations for college-wide and individual faculty accomplishments in the area of research/scholarship; and (3) developing and obtaining additional resources from a variety of sources so that student educational experiences can be enhanced even further beyond their current level and the faculty's ability to achieve academic accomplishments can be increased. The base has been built for

dealing effectively with these and other challenges, so there is definite reason to be optimistic about the future of the College of Business at MSU.

College of Education, Health and Human Development

The College of Education, Health and Human Development was created in 1987, a combination of Education, Physical Education, and Home Economics. The College is headed by a new Dean who joined the staff two months ago. (The visiting team did not meet with him; he was attending an off-campus meeting.) The College also has an Assistant Dean and two full-time administrative Department Chairs, one for Education and one for Health and Human Development.

Almost all students in the college are in undergraduate programs; teacher preparation is the largest. Graduate programs (both Master's and Doctoral) are offered in the curriculum, adult and higher education, and school administration and account for significant numbers of the doctorates awarded at MSU. About 55 FTE faculty make up the College.

In addition to the new Dean, a number of faculty are new as well. At present, only five faculty are at the full professor level.

A number of issues face the College of Education, Health and Human Development. Some are unique to the College, but many represent more general concerns found throughout the university. New faculty bring new ideas and prospective which are welcomed. In addition new faculty have been recruited from wide geographic area. Yet there is a real concern about the College's ability to provide the resources necessary to support their success. Concerns include mentoring, which, given the number of new hires, will need to be assumed by a limited number of senior faculty. Finally, a lack of funding support, improvements in technology, which faculty need for their own research, as well as to use in class is of concern. Modeling for their students new ways of teaching is a growing concern.

In addition to lack of funding for equipment, operation budgets have also suffered. Not only have there been no increases since the early 90s, in some cases, operations budgets in this College have actually been reduced. Classes in the College are conducted in five different locations on campus and some are judged as less than adequate. Summer School has also presented problems for the College; summer is a time of obvious demand for students in these subject areas, yet administrators feel penalized for offering classes then. Summer is the first semester of the fiscal year, but budgets are often not received until October, long after Summer School has ended.

Faculty hope the new Dean will be able to call attention to these issues and to remedy them. He has announced his goal of developing a strategic plan for the College to address these and other issues. Further, he has indicated there will be a goal to

increase externally funded projects coming into the College. Progress in this area has begun. This past year the Montana University System received a \$12.5 million grant to work with middle school students, especially under-represented populations, to develop readiness for college or other continued education. Nevertheless, faculty and the Dean have had little interaction at this point, given that candidates were brought to campus after the Spring term had ended and given the new Dean's short tenure. Faculty look forward to opportunities for input in committee development, committee membership and development of new directions.

The College of Education, Health and Human Development is involved in assessment. Outcomes for Education have been developed and published. Students are questioned as exiting seniors, one year after graduation and three years after graduation. Focus groups are held with students during their program. A recent survey showed that 90 percent of graduates are in the field for which they were trained and in positions of their choosing.

Despite these concerns, faculty and students in the College remain optimistic about their work, their students and the university. They are encouraged by the enthusiasm of new faculty and the ideas they bring. They feel the College will gain attention under the new Dean, but they recognize many of the issues are university-wide or beyond the control of local university administrators.

Commendations:

1. The College has been successful in recruiting well-qualified faculty from a wide geographic area to fill those positions.
2. The College has begun a more aggressive pursuit of external funding to add resources and support new initiatives.
3. The College has begun some cooperative projects and courses across department lines.
4. The College has developed a strong assessment effort which it has begun to use in its planning and in improving instruction.

Concerns:

1. The College, through its faculty and administrative leadership, need to work with university leadership to address the very real concern of developing the necessary infrastructure to support the College's activities.
2. Other concerns regarding operational, capital budgets and Summer School also require College and university staff to find innovative ways of dealing with them if new faculty are to be retained and are to progress to senior levels.

College of Engineering

As a land grant institution, Montana State University fulfills an important element of its mission through the programs offered in the College of Engineering (COE). The COE is home to five departments including Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, and Computer Science. Undergraduate and advanced degrees are offered in Engineering, Engineering Technology and Computer Science. While carrying on major research efforts, the COE's primary mission is to prepare professional practitioners. As such, there is a very deliberate commitment to the undergraduate program.

All of the undergraduate engineering degree programs (except for Computer Engineering) are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Additionally, all of the Engineering Technology degree programs are accredited by the Technology Accreditation Commission (TAC) of ABET. The undergraduate degree in Computer Science is accredited by the Computer Science Accreditation Commission of the Computer Sciences Accreditation Board (CSAC/CSAB). The program in computer engineering does not have separate professional accreditation through ABET because it is a very recent addition to the COE and must demonstrate successful placement of graduates before it can be reviewed.

The degree programs are well balanced in their content of general education, mathematics, physical science, and engineering courses and meet the ABET criteria on curriculum. The physical facilities are very adequate with the recent addition of 100,000 square feet in the newly occupied EPS building (constructed at a cost of \$22.3 million). The laboratories are well equipped, maintained and supported. The capital equipment budget (\$80,000/year) for the COE is clearly not adequate but, as is the case in other universities, the COE supplements this budget with external gifts and grants to make an enriched laboratory experience for its students. The engineering dean is assisted in his development efforts by a part-time development officer.

In academic year 1998-99 externally funded research at MSU-Bozeman was \$50 million. The COE's part of this was \$8.6 million. This money supports two research centers (the Center for Biofilm Engineering and the Montana Manufacturing Center), four programs (the Western Transportation Institute, the Engineering Experiment Station, the Local Technical Assistance Program, and the Tribal Technical Assistance Program) and other faculty research in the five departments. These dollars support graduate research, of course, but also a surprising number of undergraduate research projects. The Center for Biofilm Engineering is a state-of-the-art research facility established in 1990 by a major grant from the National Science Foundation and is rather unique in its quality and scope. In addition to graduate research, it supports about 40

undergraduate research projects. The COE is commended for its initiative in aggressively creating and sustaining this center.

The COE has a new but comprehensive plan of program evaluation. This document is in its thirteenth revision and has included extensive involvement by the faculty. An important element in the policy is a new requirement that all graduating engineering students sit for the Fundamentals of Engineering exam. This exam is administered by the State Board of Examiners and is the first step in the professional licensing process. Results from the exam provide data on how well MSU graduates perform in the various engineering subject areas as compared to national norms. Construction Engineering Technology graduates have been required to sit for the Certified Professional Constructor exam since 1998. The COE is commended for its commitment to program evaluation.

Overall enrollment in the undergraduate programs of the COE has shown a slow but steady growth over the last ten years, whereas the graduate program experienced a significant increase in 1992. For the fall semester of 1999 the Associate Dean reports an increase of five percent in the undergraduate program. A detailed look by department reveals that some programs grew considerably while others have sustained significant losses. It was reported by the faculty that this shift in enrollment has not been accompanied by a reallocation of budgets. This has left two departments in particular (Civil Engineering and Computer Science) with very heavy teaching and advisement loads and large upper-division classes. This was also reported as problematic by ABET in view of the research expectation of the faculty. The Computer Science department is currently considering capping its enrollment based on its resources. In general, the COE is characterized by heavy teaching and advisement loads. In view of the limited resources available to the COE, it is suggested that the COE address the issue of budget reallocation between departments based on recent dramatic changes in department enrollments.

It has also been learned that the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering voted to close the program in Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology. Currently new students are not being accepted into this program.

The COE is committed to recruiting to its programs greater numbers of minorities (particularly American Indians) and women. This program has met with some evident success, especially in recruiting women.

College of Letters and Science

Behavioral and Social Sciences: The area of the Behavioral and Social Sciences is composed of the Departments of Political Science, Psychology (with options in applied psychology, communication, and psychological science), and Sociology and Anthropology (with options in Anthropology, Justice Studies, and Sociology).

The programs of this area meet the minimum requirements of this section. Descriptions, sample schedules, objectives and student outcomes are listed in multiple places and are easily available to the students. However, as the student FTE enrollment increases and faculty FTE remains constant or declines, some departments have found it necessary to impose ceiling enrollment on courses or to offer needed courses in the major every other year. This may lead to difficulty for students to achieve program objectives in a timely manner. The degree programs demonstrating a coherent design, though prior merging of departments has led to at least one strange combination--that of the communication option in the Department of Psychology. The university is to be commended for its adherence to commission policy for the students in the pipeline, who have been able to complete their program in a timely manner and with minimum disruption. The programs require the use of the library and other information resources. Here again an undergraduate student mentioned that in the preparation of a research paper the library holdings were not adequate. The faculty has a major role in the design, integrity and implementation of the curriculum. The university classrooms are used heavily and the departments try to ensure accessible scheduling.

The preponderance of program assessment at the departmental level is based on survey-type instruments which measure "customer" satisfaction on data related to grades received by students, or student evaluation of instructors and courses. In response to a request for assessment that in turn caused an academic content or pedagogical change, however, there were some examples. The instructor of one class posed some questions at the beginning of a class, and again at the end of the semester in an attempt to gauge the "value added," results which led to modifications in course content. In one department a survey of employers led to substantial changes in course content. There is clear evidence that assessment is no longer a foreign concept at the department level and that the university-wide assessment requirement is being taken seriously.

The degree programs in the Behavioral and Social Sciences are organized to meet this standard and the university clearly portrays the tripartite structure of (1) general education, (2) major and (3) electives in its publications. Undergraduate students who spoke to this evaluator are pleased with their programs and with the quality of the faculty who deliver them.

Humanities Departments: The educational objectives of the four humanities departments are, of course, integral to the mission and nature of MSU, dealing as they do with concerns of liberal and general education. Together, they graduate about 20 percent of the CLS seniors.

They all have assessment programs in place, including designated capstone courses, and at least one of them has used the resulting data already to revise some of its courses.

The Modern Language Department, like those elsewhere, is encountering some difficulties in filling its language classes and majors in French and German, although not in Spanish, and the department has recently begun offering Japanese with a view to supporting a minor in Japanese studies. The language lab needs upgrading, and a study to determine its needs is underway.

The Center for Native American Studies provides study for and about American Indians of Montana and offers a non-teaching minor as well as courses in the Core Curriculum. It is in the process of seeking approval for a master's degree program.

The Department of History and Philosophy also offers courses in Religious Studies, and all three of these fields offer numerous courses in the Core Curriculum. Most of the History majors are in a history teaching option.

The Department of English, the largest of the four, launched a master's degree in English this year, with 13 students. Like History and Philosophy, it offers options in literature and teaching.

Sciences and Mathematical Sciences: The College and the Departments of Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Earth Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Microbiology, and Physics gave indications of a strong commitment to the education of its students in both service courses and courses for majors. Various tracks are offered within the several disciplines to accommodate different needs, e.g. graduate study, professional study or employment, preparation for teaching at the secondary school level and courses suitable for K-8 teachers. Degree objectives and expected competencies are established for each program.

Support for students in lower-level courses is offered in the form of various help laboratories, in mathematics through calculus, and in general chemistry, for example. Physics also has help sessions for students. These laboratories are staffed by advanced undergraduates, graduate students, adjunct faculty and, in some cases, by regular faculty, depending on the level of the course. Remedial mathematics courses are offered to students who do not get a high enough score on any of several standardized tests to qualify for a regular mathematics course. Some courses are offered on the MSU campus by the MSU-Great Falls Technology College through a mechanism too complex to explain here.

Appropriate courses are offered often enough for students to complete the programs within a reasonable time. Prerequisite requirements are clearly spelled out. There is a concerted effort on the part of faculty to involve undergraduates in research as early as possible. This is more difficult to accomplish in biology than in the other disciplines because of the high number of majors.

The faculty in these departments are well qualified by training and experience for their teaching assignments. Most are active teacher/researchers and are following through on MSU's mission statement, "...to integrate instruction with research and creative activity." This was underscored by an interview with a sophomore student who is already involved in a research project with possible biomedical significance. This experience, and having been positively challenged in two freshman seminars, has made this student enthusiastic and convinced that one can get a really good education at MSU.

Teaching loads vary depending on the curriculum needs and the research commitments of the faculty. Graduate assistants are available for assisting faculty with very large introductory courses and for supervising laboratory sections. There is a full-time demonstrator in Physics. In some areas there are not enough graduate assistants for these tasks which places a heavier load on the instructor. There is no formal acknowledgement of advising graduate students involved in research as being part of a faculty member's teaching load. The classrooms and laboratories (some of which are quite old) are adequate, and funds for remodeling some of the older facilities have become available. Funds for instructional supplies are very short. There are some "smart classrooms," and the equipment is kept in working order.

Assessment: All of the departments have assessment plans, but evidence of full implementation is skimpy in most cases. Microbiology appears to have the most fully developed plan, and it relies on scores in standardized tests such as the MCAT, GRE, and DAT. Students are interviewed just prior to graduation and five years after graduation. In one sampling, seven of eight of the graduates in the Clinical Laboratory Sciences track were reported to be working in the field and, although no specific numbers were given, feedback from those in other tracks was reported to be "positive." Biology has one measure of program effectiveness in that data are available in the form of MCAT test results for those students who take this exam, which does not include many of the majors. In 1998 MSU students scored above national averages in the verbal, physical sciences, and bio-sciences parts of the test.

Considerable use is made of students' performances in upper-division and capstone courses to determine whether degree objectives are being met and the desired competencies are being developed. Problem-solving exercises give insights into students' abilities to synthesize what has been learned in course work. More generally, the courses and research projects that require a substantial amount of writing and oral presentations give the opportunity to assess oral and written communications. The degree of satisfaction with communication skills varies from one department to another. Chemistry/Biochemistry, Physics and Microbiology are the most satisfied; the other three departments are less so. The least satisfied departments, Biology and Earth Sciences, are convinced that more emphasis placed on assignments requiring writing and speaking will improve the communication skills of their students. Written assignments and oral presentation have to be graded and feedback given, all of which

require faculty time. The highest numbers of majors are found in Biology and Earth Sciences, and the ratio of majors/faculty is substantially higher in these disciplines than it is in the others. Thus, requiring more faculty-intensive assignments will be harder to accomplish in these departments.

Implementation of the assessment plans is somewhat spotty on the basis of evidence presented in departmental exhibits. As a consequence, not much evidence was presented that assessment has precipitated changes that would improve the programs. There are, however, indications that the departments have at least begun to think about making changes.

Advising: Advising of students who are majors is handled in a satisfactory manner and is done by faculty in all departments. The load is distributed among faculty but is still very high in Biology and Earth Sciences because of the large number of majors. Biology assigns new freshmen to new faculty members and new transfer students are assigned to experienced faculty members.

College of Nursing

The number of faculty in the College of Nursing (CON) is adequate to teach the clinical courses with an 8:1 to 10:1 ratio, which is typical for teaching clinical nursing courses. The CON has a research office to support the scholarly work of the faculty. The budget increased 14 percent in the last five years. All faculty have computers and access to printers, and tenure track and research active faculty all have printers in their offices. Faculty on all campuses are well connected, which allows ease of information transfer among faculty. (Standard 2.A.1)

The mission of the CON reflects that of the university, as its outreach activities reflect MSU's mandate for outreach education to rural areas within the state. The CON has a strategic plan which is periodically updated, and the goals and objectives are derived from those of the university. (Standard 2.A.2)

Both undergraduate and graduate programs are developed by the CON faculty and are monitored by the undergraduate and graduate academic affairs committees (UAAC and GAAC). They meet the requirements of this standard. (Standard 2.A.3) The degree designations of BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) and MN (Master's in Nursing) are the appropriate professional degrees in nursing and are consistent with the program content. (Standard 2.A.4) The college's practices are consistent with programs in nursing as described in the catalog. (Standard 2.A.6)

Faculty clearly have a major role in designing the curriculum. The UAAC and GAAC oversee the curriculum and are responsible to the faculty. This was verified by a review of annual reports of the curriculum committees. (Standard 2.A.7)

The class schedule for courses leaves little opportunity for flexibility because of the large number of clinical practicum hours. This is typical for schools and colleges of nursing. Montana has a Model Articulation Plan, endorsed by the Board of Regents, calling for the formation of partnerships among nursing education programs to improve access to nursing education within the state. The dean of the College of Nursing has been involved in this effort. (Standard 2.A.9)

The CON provides several options for credit for prior learning for Registered Nurse students. They can take CLEP or departmental challenge exams for non-nursing courses. Validation of prior nursing experience can be done by portfolio or by taking NLN Mobility exams for nursing courses. The CON is considering articulation agreements as the number of RNs applying to the BSN program is not as high as they could be. (Standard 2.A.10) The UAAC and GAAC have a systematic plan for course review at all levels, which was documented by minutes of those committees. (Standard 2.A.11)

Student evaluations are in place. There are several measures used by the CON for the evaluation of program effectiveness, which include the California Critical Thinking Test, the NLN Comprehensive Achievement Test for baccalaureate Nursing Students, graduation rates, NCLEX-RN licensing exam results and program satisfaction data collected for employers of graduates of both programs. A program evaluation sub-committee is in place. It is worthy to note that NCLEX-RN pass rates have consistently been 95 percent, and 100 percent of the graduates of the Family Nurse Practitioner program are certified. Graduation rates for students admitted to the upper-division nursing program between 1994 and 1996 have remained relatively stable. It is harder to track students initially enrolled in lower-division nursing because not all of those students will meet the criteria for admission to the upper division. (Standard 2.B.1)

In summary, the assessment plan is well thought out, which includes key elements, examples of evidence and the individuals responsible for the plan. However, it does not include benchmarks, nor is there data to show that assessment data have been used to confirm that activities in place have been successful or to make changes for those that have not. (Standard 2.B.1)

The standards of the profession of nursing are published in the catalog. The comprehensive assessment plan of the CON include data that students who have completed the program meet expected learning outcomes. (Standard 2.B.2)

The CON requires 41 non-nursing courses which are published in the catalog, including courses that support the major, such as communication skills, mathematics, (elementary statistics) social science, and natural sciences. (Standard 2.C) Students are also required to take the University Core Curriculum, which requires three credits in fine arts and six in humanities. Six credits must be designated as multicultural perspectives and global issues. (Standard 2.C.3)

Procedures for CON transfer students are clearly stated in the catalog. (Standard 2.C.4) There is an extensive advising system resulting from the very complicated placement process for nursing students on all campuses. An advising coordinator for the college works with the nursing advisors on all campuses. (Standard 2.C.5)

A review of curriculum vitae shows that the faculty are adequate for the educational levels. (Standard 2.C.7)

The Family Nurse Practitioner graduate program meets the MSU mission to provide graduate education and to meet the health care needs in the state. (Standard 2.D.1) They are guided by objectives developed by the college and are in keeping with national guidelines for Nurse Practitioner programs. A review of syllabi at both the undergraduate and graduate level validated that the level of study of similar content +at the graduate level has more depth than similar undergraduate courses. (Standard 2.D.2)

University and CON block grants give faculty “seed” money to develop small research grants in anticipation of submitting a larger grant. Faculty commitment to nursing research strengthens the graduate program. (Standard 2.E.1)

While the CON is supported fully by the university, the budget is the same amount as given the previous year. However, indirect cost funds from grants were added which go back to the college. In addition, the CON is able to hire master’s prepared nurses on the tenure track with the commensurate salary. Maintenance of this salary rate assists them as they recruit faculty with doctoral degrees. (Standard 2.E.2) While only 29 percent of the faculty have doctorate degrees, all of the Core nursing courses at the graduate level are taught by faculty with a doctorate. The clinical courses are all taught by certified nurse practitioners. This meets the standard expected for graduate programs in nursing that prepare nurse practitioners. (Standard 2.E.3)

Three times a semester all graduate students and faculty travel to Bozeman to meet and sit together in graduate classes. In addition, they are all on the Bozeman campus for orientation and all take a health assessment course taught in an intensive format in Bozeman. Discussion with students validated that they have good communication with other students and faculty. There was good two-way interaction among students during a distance learning class which used two-way, audiovideo technology. Students communicate with faculty and other students in the distance education program via e-mail. (Standard 2.E.5)

Admission information is published in the MSU catalog, and all policies are available on the web on-line. (Standard 2.F.1)

The CON graduate academic affairs committee reviews GREs, GPAs, letters of recommendation and telephone interviews when making admission decisions. Recommendations are then made to the College of Graduate Studies. (Standard 2.F.2) A member of the College of Nursing sits on the Graduate Council where decisions are made. (Standard 2.F.3)

The College of Graduate Studies has established policies related to numbers of years in which the degree must be completed, the minimum number of credits for the degree and acceptable GPA. The CON makes decisions related to the number of credits and courses students need to meet professional standards for the MN degree. (Standard 2.F.4)

Commendations:

1. The CON has a strategic plan that guides the efforts of the college.
2. The CON educational programs (BSN and MN) meet the need for nursing education throughout the state.
3. The CON meets the health care needs of many of the citizens of Montana throughout the state.
4. The distance education program for the MN program is very successful and meets the needs of place-bound RNs who would otherwise be unable to earn a master's degree.

Recommendations:

1. The CON needs to further address articulation plans for RN/BSN students to increase enrollment.
2. The assessment plan needs to include benchmarks and feedback loops for improvement based on evaluation of the plan.

Graduate Programs

MSU has developed some innovative graduate programming and interdisciplinary activities in response to societal needs, while capitalizing on institutional strengths. These include the Master of Science in Science Education, the Center for Biofilm Engineering, and the Complex Biological Systems program. (Standard 2.B)

Faculty members are discussing ideas for new graduate programming. While rigorous review of proposed programs had not uniformly occurred historically, the new Graduate Dean, hired in January 1999, plans to work closely with departments to ensure that future program proposals meet institutional needs, conform to the university's long

range plan and can be supported both in terms of a student base and resources. (Standard 2.B)

Although there are no graduate program review guidelines in place, the Graduate Dean plans to initiate program review efforts in the near future that will both serve to aid the university in rigorously screening new graduate programs and continuing programs alike. (Standard 2.B.1)

The data available for analyzing graduate affairs is scant. The Graduate Dean is aware of the need to develop longitudinal studies for understanding admissions and retention activities, developing data bases, as well as creating an alumni satisfaction surveys to aid in the assessment activities and program review area. (Standard 2.B.2)

Teaching assistants at MSU can be instructors of record in courses. Graduate students expressed the concern that they were undercompensated in some areas, despite being expected to perform at the same level of competence as faculty members. Further, as there is no pedagogical training available to teaching assistants, graduate students are thrust into instructional situations for which they may not be prepared. We suggest a review of teaching assistant responsibilities and the creation of a university-wide training program for teaching assistants. (Standard 2.C.7)

Teaching assistants who do not speak English well are a matter of concern to the institution. The university has set higher English competency standards for admission of international students who will be awarded assistantships and for those who will not. In spite of this, administrators expressed concern that a problem persists. In consequence, it is suggested that MSU develop screening procedures that ensure the desired level of English language competency for graduate assistants from abroad. (Standard 2.C.7)

The graduate programming at Montana State University is consistent with the stated mission of the institution. (Standard 2.D)

Degree-seeking graduate students at Montana State constitute 11 percent of the overall student population. The majority of graduate students are enrolled in science and education fields. During most of the past decade there has been little growth in graduate degree completion. Coincidentally, there has been no permanent graduate dean during the period. The consequent absence of steady and permanent leadership in graduate affairs created a vacuum in the graduate arena. Departments and colleges did not follow a uniform set of graduate policies or standards. During this period, the Graduate Council seems to have served as a curriculum approval committee. With the appointment of the new Dean, the decline in Graduate fortunes appears to have reversed. (Standard 2.E.2)

The Dean and his very able and knowledgeable staff are intent upon ensuring that the academic standards are enforced uniformly and are strengthened institutionally. To this

end, the Assistant to the Dean and her associates have prepared an College of Graduate Studies (CGS) policies and procedures manual distributed to all departments and available on the MSU web-site. The development and publication of this document is commendable. It allows the graduate community full access to all CGS policies and procedures governing their degree programs. (Standard 2.E.2)

It is the intention of the Graduate Dean and the Provost to transform the Graduate Council into a decision-making body to aid the Graduate Dean in such areas a program development and program review. (Standard 2.E.2)

Because of the lack of attention to graduate affairs during the past decade, the place of graduate studies in the university's planning and priorities has been neglected at best. Only with the appointment of the new Dean has any money been allocated for operating funds for the College, a change that will enable the Graduate Dean to begin to assist departments with recruiting, advertising, and other appropriate activities essential to promoting and enhancing graduate education at MSU. (Standard 2.E.2)

As the awarding of teaching assistantships is a major form of graduate student recruitment and retention, the stipends and benefits should be adequate to support graduate students. Stipends are lean at MSU and should be increased to at least a level that keeps pace with the cost of living. (Standards 2.E.1 and 2.E.2)

Graduate students complained about the lack of current scientific publications in the library and noted that this is a severe impediment to their research activities. They further noted that the library itself is not a commodious place in which to study or conduct research as it is overcrowded and noisy.

Further, students and faculty alike noted the adverse effect of the university's policies governing residency on time to degree. By being constrained to reduce credit elections to conform to the policy, the average length of a graduate program increases substantially. (Standards 2.E.1 and 5)

An area where lines of authority are unclear involves the relationship of the Bozeman campus to the other MSU campuses at the graduate level. It appears that while the Graduate Dean, situated in Bozeman, has responsibility from programming throughout the system, the other campus graduate communities act at times unilaterally. Through the MSU system-wide Graduate Council, the Dean hopes to rectify this problem. One of the problems resulting from this situation is confusion concerning what credits may be counted toward a graduate degree in Bozeman when elected at one of the other campuses. (Standards 2.E.3, 2.E.5, 6A)

Advising is an uneven process at the graduate level. Some departments do this well; others, not so well. Where advising is inadequate, graduate students are not treated as junior colleagues in training and are not mentored well, particularly at the doctoral level.

The Graduate Dean is taking steps to remedy this by holding workshops for faculty and department officers to promote better advising, greater collegiality and stronger mentorship activity. (Standard 2.E.3)

There is much institutional pride in the research-related accomplishments of faculty and staff and much enthusiasm for further growth. The administration and a large number of faculty have set as their objective the attainment of at least Research II standing for MSU. Associated with this is the desire and need for a larger graduate student component and still greater research activity. (Standard 2.E.4)

If the institution's mission is to include a greater emphasis on research and graduate study, given the current stated commitment to undergraduate education, MSU will have to balance carefully its resource allocations to ensure that the undergraduate mission is met. Some faculty fear that emphasizing research and graduate study will result in a decrease of funding for undergraduate programming. (Standard 2.E.4)

While the CGS has produced a study based on departmental input concerning departmental capacity for graduate students shows that a substantial increase is possible without the need for increased resources. The fact that graduate assistant stipends are not competitive, and that there is a need for increased out-of-state fee waivers in the face of the State's policy governing residency eligibility, means that there is a risk of resource diversion. There is scant evidence of in-depth planning for the growth of graduate programming and its impact on programming and faculty loads. In consequence, it is suggested that broad institutional review occur to assure all constituencies the opportunity to contribute to the change process. Once elected, a thorough planning process should be put in place to drive graduate programming. (Standard 2.E.4)

The curricular side of the graduate programming is generally sound. However, use of 300-level courses collateral with a limited number of graduate degree programs points to a possible lack of understanding concerning the nature and depth of what graduate programming ought to be. The practice of using 300-level courses in partial fulfillment of graduate degree requirements should be discontinued. (Standard 2.F.4)

Thus it appears that it is not clear that all faculty of MSU share the same values concerning what constitutes graduate level programming. (Standard 2.F.4)

Special Instruction Continuing Education and Distance Delivery

The extended and distance learning programs offered by Montana State University-Bozeman relate directly to the university's mission of providing educational programs

needed by people in Montana and the Bozeman area. Extended Studies courses are staffed by faculty from appropriate academic units.

Extended Studies courses and programs are organized in response to specific program or departmental initiatives, external audience demand, and available funding opportunities in a somewhat ad hoc pattern of development. Because courses and programs seem to follow an entrepreneurial pattern driven primarily by external funding, continuity of offerings may be a question mark, especially for degree-seeking students.

Delivery of degree programs and courses to off-campus audiences appears to be minimal for a land-grant institution with the particular program array and mission of this campus. Special student services delivered at a distance that are convenient for working adults with time and other constraints appear to be relatively underdeveloped and uncoordinated for the institution as a whole. While some students are provided with services, others are not, and this seems to be a function of individual programs.

A clear exception to the previous point is the MSU Library. The Library has developed an array of services specifically designed to be of service to off-campus students and clients. These services are being utilized also by on-campus students. The Library serves as a model for inter-campus cooperation within the MSU System and for organized support of distance learning.

Credit and distance learning courses currently offered by MSU are primarily individual courses rather than full degree program offerings and are generally self-funded. With notable exceptions such as Nursing, they are not as connected to departmental missions, campus program priorities, and designated statewide student needs as they might be with greater campus focus, advocacy, and leadership. This is not to say that the quality of many of these programs is not high; in some cases, programs are clearly both of excellent quality and designed to meet important needs of students located away from the Bozeman campus. An excellent example is the Masters of Science in Science Education program offered nationally, the National Teachers Enhancement Network, and the MN program, all of which are exemplary models of which MSU should be justifiably proud.

Typically, again with Nursing as an exception, faculty teach in off-campus courses and programs as an addition to load, or they must generate outside funding to pay their salary. Tuition charged through Extended Studies can be variable according to a number of factors such as cost, special delivery charges, market demand, and audience characteristics.

Courses that are funded through regular academic budgets are considered state supported and are generally offered to students resident within the state. When out-of-state enrollments do occur, students are charged out-of-state tuition. This can result in a significant disincentive to the development of online and distance learning programs

serving the state of Montana. The campus is urged to address this policy matter at the appropriate level and resolve it in a way that promotes the faculty and departmental ownership of curriculum, coordinated campus-wide student services designed for adult students, and effective technological support, program evaluation and quality control.

Distance learning video networks link the Bozeman campus with other higher education institutions in Montana through the MetNet system, NorthNet and Vision Net. These systems are funded differently, managed by different groups, utilize different technologies, and serve different communities and organizations. Several of these networks link to rural K-12 schools but appear to be used minimally by the university. At the present time, the need for separate networks that do not interconnect is unclear. Of greater long-term importance, maintaining and supporting two classroom structures, equipment, and teaching platforms, both underutilized at the present time, may be both cost-prohibitive and a serious deterrent to the willingness of faculty to invest extra effort in learning to use these technologies effectively, especially without adequate encouragement from their departments and colleges.

MSU-Bozeman is increasing its experimentation with web-based instruction. The university, through its National Teacher Enhancement Network, has a history of supporting faculty who teach online courses on a national basis. This represents a strong foundation from which to build comprehensive support of faculty teaching via the Internet and the web.

However, professional development for faculty needs to be provided, and support for students accessing courses at a distance needs to be substantially improved. Currently students needing assistance have no one they can call or contact during the evenings or on weekends, both peak times for accessing courses, and no way of accessing a range of services that must be available to students enrolled at a distance.

Library support for distance learning is provided through the campus library. The Library has recently improved its processes for using technology. The creation of a single library entity and linkages with the other campus libraries has greatly improved the library's support of distance learning, the Bozeman campus community, and the overall capacity of the library to provide services to its off-campus and campus constituencies.

The replacement of and addition of new equipment for the Burns Telecommunications Center must rely upon external gifts and grants. No capital funding structure is built in for operations and equipment replacement.

Commendations:

1. The quality of selected Extended Studies and Distance Learning programs is exemplary. In several cases, programs are clearly highly innovative, of excellent quality, and designed to meet important needs of students located away from the

Bozeman campus. An excellent example is the Masters of Science in Science Education program offered nationally, the National Teachers Enhancement Network, and the Masters of Nursing program, all of which are exemplary models of which MSU should be justifiably proud.

2. The Burns Telecommunications Center is a state-of-the-art telecommunications system designed to support interactive video distance learning.
3. The staff of Extended Studies and the Burns Telecommunications Center are well qualified and have achieved national recognition for innovative program development such as the National Teacher Enhancement Network.

Recommendations:

1. MSU-Bozeman has a number of existing and emerging opportunities to deliver degree programs and courses at a distance. To take advantage of these opportunities, MSU-Bozeman needs to organize, coordinate, and deliver more effectively special student and academic services for students enrolled in off-campus degree programs and credit courses, especially those offered through distance learning. These services should address student needs such as general advising, registration, admissions, technology assistance and other types of support in modes and times that are convenient and accessible for working adults with time and other constraints, as specified in policy 2.6. Specific responsibility for developing, organizing, and providing these services.
2. With respect to web-based courses, professional development for faculty needs to be provided, and support for students accessing courses at a distance needs to be substantially improved.

Extension Services

While the Self Study (historical context section) omitted the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension Service as significant in its legislative summary of MSU, it is clear from county and campus visits that the Extension Service provides community outreach and knowledge transfer to the citizens of the state. Almost half of the efforts of Extension are focused on production agriculture with less but still significant involvement in youth programs, family and consumer sciences, and community development. The allocations of effort are appropriate and reasonable for Montana's economy which is dominated by agricultural/ranching enterprises with a strong rural focus. Many county agents do an outstanding job in "brokering" the capabilities of the state's land grant university to bear on the problems and issues of commodity groups, constituents, and the general public. With extremely limited numbers of agents and specialists relative to the service expectations, there is clearly a good working relationship between county offices and the MSU campus.

A potential concern was expressed by some on campus that some users of extension services “bypass” the counties and call directly to a faculty member--some calls are to faculty who do not have extension responsibilities. While there is a philosophy to help there are other time commitments that occasionally affect the response time and can lead to misunderstandings.

The Extension Service meets all elements of Standard Two.

Educational Assessment

Montana State University began their assessment activities in 1995 at the time of their mid-term review by the Commission. Their first effort was to inventory existing assessment activities and to establish an Assessment and Outcomes Committee. That committee is made up of the Director of Institutional Research, the Assistant Provost, the Assistant Deans from each of the Colleges, representatives from Faculty Council, the Big Sky Institute/Hewlett Group, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Teaching/Learning Committee, and student representatives and is chaired by the Assistant Vice Provost. The committee has focused on Standard II, and has asked Colleges to define specific competencies and to plan how to access this information on the web. In general, assessment has moved on a two-year cycle based on the university’s calendar of producing a catalog every two years and that any curricular change generated as a result of assessment should be reflected in the new catalog.

MSU assessment efforts seem genuinely aimed at the improvement of instruction. Yet, to date, assessment at MSU has enjoyed varying rates of success. The focus has primarily been on undergraduate programs so far, and no efforts have been made in support services, student services, graduate programs or distance education. In many programs, assessment efforts have been strongly influenced by professional accreditation. The most successful examples include education, engineering, business, nursing, which have professional accreditation. Officials also recognize that many informal assessment activities exist throughout the university.

To date, two rounds of assessment have been completed. An institutional requirement to develop a capstone course in every major has been accomplished. This course is intended to provide a summative evaluation of the major. In history, for example, courses have been revised as a result of assessment information.

Continuous assessment and feedback to students, focusing on the individual, is accomplished through “gates” established in the curriculum: at the end of the first year, prior to entering graduate school, etc. For example, business developed acceptable writing standards for each year’s level, and the faculty involved in those courses engage in holistic grading to assure common standards are applied.

Although MSU has given attention to the importance of assessment and has achieved much in this area, a number of issues remain. The university expects to develop a formalized program review in the near future, to add department information (as well as institutional) to existing senior and alumni surveys. Career Services does a survey regarding graduates satisfaction with job preparation, but this information is not always of use to departments and is not always fed back to them. Additional funding for assessment activities is sought by the Assessment Committee, not only for the activity itself, but to develop models for use elsewhere in the university. Little evidence exists that assessment activities have influenced resource allocation at the university. Some departments have made changes in curriculum and teaching methods based on information gathered through assessment. Yet these are notable exceptions; no systematic use of assessment results exist throughout the university. Decision-making has been influenced in some departments by assessment activities, but this is not yet the case for all departments. Nor is there evidence of assessment information moving through the organizational decision-making structures.

Montana State University is moving toward compliance with Policy 2.2 but has not yet fully achieved it, despite its considerable accomplishments. Continued efforts need to be made in extending assessment throughout the university community, to mid and end program assessment, to alumni satisfaction, to dropouts and non-compellations, and to reporting more fully on employer satisfaction. These efforts need to be expended throughout the institution in a systematic and even way.

Commendations:

Montana State University has made significant progress in developing a program of assessment. Evidence of commitment exists throughout the university and most notably in the university's leadership.

Concerns:

MSU should continue to pursue aggressively a systematic assessment, expanding the present activities and feeding information back to the departments and throughout the organization's decision-making structure to gain improvement of programs and instruction to meet fully Policy 2.2 requirements. Further, no evidence that assessment has influenced decision-making and resource allocation throughout the decision-making structure could be found.

STANDARD THREE STUDENTS AND GENERAL STUDIES

Purpose and Organization (Standard 3.A): Student Affairs mission statement, programs and services support the mission and goals of the institution. The programs and services provided by Student Affairs contribute to the growth and development of the students both in and out of the classroom. The staff are well qualified, knowledgeable, and dedicated to serving students. There are both seasoned and new professionals and this mix of talent is an asset. The staff meet regularly to ensure collaboration and good communication in helping shape the learning environment for students.

Since the 1990 accreditation review, student affairs has increased its presence in the central administration ensuring that student issues are addressed. The Vice President actively participates in the governance of the institution and shares responsibility for decisions. The Vice President also provides direction for institution-wide efforts in enrollment management, including recruitment and retention activities.

The General Studies Program, reporting to the Provost, helps shape some of the academic and non-academic experience for students.

General Responsibilities (Standard 3.B): Student needs are assessed in a variety of ways and programmatic changes or policy changes were initiated to better meet the needs of students. Staff in the division convene on a regular basis to ensure information is shared and appropriate departments are involved as needed.

The admissions policies are clearly stated in the University Bulletin and are available on the web, as are those for readmission and transfer of credit. Academic requirements for each degree, and other items pertinent to enrollment or withdrawal are also available in the same formats.

There are many ways students are involved in the governance of the institution as well as in decisions affecting student life, from serving on committees to discussing issues with the staff, Vice President, or President. Students report that their issues are taken seriously and that they are actively consulted on many issues affecting student life, the institution as a whole, and the state and its role in higher education.

Academic Credit and Records (Standard 3.C): All courses for credit are carefully screened for academic rigor, and academic policies and procedures are clearly stated and widely publicized.

Student records are securely stored and backed by duplicates in the Registrar's Office.

Student Services (Standard 3.D): Combined under one administrative unit, Admissions and the Registrar's Office manage student applications for admission, student records, transfer evaluations and the monitoring of university policies. The reorganization has provided for a more efficient flow and processing of the paperwork and for the monitoring of university policies.

Technological innovations include a degree audit system that gives students access to their academic records, as well as CATLINE, a phone registration and grade-access system that increases flexibility for students. The new Banner system will provide even greater access to academic and other information. Staff are not able to use the technology effectively and on-site technical assistance for the division should be considered.

The Office of New Student Services has developed a marketing plan, including recruiting students and orienting students and their families to MSU. There is a special emphasis on recruiting students from within the state, including an emphasis on Native American students and other students of color. There is also a need to increase the number of students from other states as well as from other countries throughout the world.

The staff work closely with General Studies, the Office of Retention and other student affairs departments to assure that new students and their families have the information they need to help students be successful. For example, New Student Services worked with Financial Aid to make financial information more readily available to new students. Collaboration is a key value apparent in the work of these departments.

Other innovations came from listening to the complaints of transfer students regarding the length of orientation; to respond to their needs, various options for transfer orientation are in place. Assessment has also resulted in an expanded meal card system and installation of a branch bank in the Student Union. Changes result from satisfaction surveys, written national surveys, staff meetings, focus groups, and other forms of assessment. Sharing this information with faculty may benefit faculty and students.

Assisting students to engage in the exploration of their interests, the pursuit of their goals, and the development of their knowledge and skills is the under the purview of the General Studies Program. This program reports to the Provost and works collaboratively across departmental lines to ensure student success. The program provides many services: undergraduate academic advising, primarily to undeclared freshmen and sophomores; the coordination, training of faculty, and teaching of the General Freshman Core Seminar, including the training of peer assistants; health professions advising; information about National Student Exchange; and supervised internship opportunities for graduate students. The office is active in working with teaching faculty on advising issues and strategies.

The office also engages in assessment to evaluate their programs. One positive result is that the GENS students who participated in the Freshman Core Seminar during fall term of their freshman year have a higher retention rate than students not participating in the program. Students indicate they appreciate the care and attention provided by the staff. The success of the Freshman Seminars Program is to be commended.

The Dean of Students staff provides general assistance on a wide-range of issues: serving the students in an ombudsman role, providing advice and referral on any questions, conducting exit interviews for students who withdraw, and administering the judicial system.

Many college deans, faculty, staff and students are involved in retention activities that help ensure student success. A recent emphasis on the importance of student success resulted in the Office of Student Retention. The office uses a variety of assessment data to take the pulse on student interest and needs, and works collaboratively across the campus to design, implement, and evaluate short- and long-term programs.

The university has an effective financial aid program for students and parents. While the number of applications has doubled in the last ten years, there has been a decrease in base budget funding and a decrease in staff. Nonetheless, the staff have developed innovative procedures for assisting new borrowers and borrowers entering repayment status. Even being short-staffed, the office provides an incredibly fast response to student and parent inquiries about loans (within 24 hours). The office also monitors the student loan program and the institutional default rate.

Career counseling and placement services are provided. There has been a dramatic increase in technology-based student services, including the Career Center web-site and e-mail. There is also a dramatic increase in students seeking information about careers through participation in career fairs, with employer involvement increasing as well. The Career Survey yields useful data in helping the institution respond to changing student needs.

Students are indicating an ever-increasing interest in community service. The office of Career Services also supervises programs that foster community involvement in more than 60 local non-profit or service-oriented agencies. These opportunities provide for students' academic and personal growth as well as career development.

With a dramatic increase in the use of Career Services, the serious staffing and funding shortages are apparent.

Satisfaction surveys of residence hall students indicate a high degree of satisfaction noting the residence halls to be clean, safe, well administered and well staffed. The

new residence halls are designed with the needs of today's student in mind and are very popular. Every room or house is wired for computer access.

Throughout the campus, students find a wide variety of venues for food service. MSU manages and operates its own food service in a variety of settings, including the residence halls. The Strand Union also offers extensive food service that students, faculty and community members appreciate.

Co-curricular programs take many forms from that of leadership training to peer academic advising to working at the multicultural center. Students note it is very easy to be involved in campus activities or off-campus internships. Many are employed at the university. Students view this involvement as one of the most positive features of MSU-Bozeman.

The recreational program, in addition to intercollegiate athletics, is among the best in the region. The programs or activities are adapted for traditionally under-represented groups. Some of the newer or remodeled sports facilities include a field house, a renovated stadium, a new weight room, all with adequate financing for maintenance. Students have an active role in all aspects of the program including program management, use of fees, and in selecting and evaluating personnel. Students indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the recreation program.

The Bookstore is a non-profit corporation owned and operated independently from the university. The Bookstore is widely used and the team was impressed by the stock, layout, and general environment. The university is well-served by the store.

Intercollegiate Athletics (Standard 3.E): The goals and financial operations of Intercollegiate Athletics are consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution. Intercollegiate Athletics is a member of the NCAA and in complete compliance with Title IX and gender equity.

The program prides itself on being one of seven programs that offer football and has achieved proportionality (gender equity). The completely refurbished facilities meet gender equity and ADA standards. The institution is also proud of the graduation rates for athletes, which are among the highest in the conference.

Funding continues to be of concern, though a plan is in place to increase money raised from donors to decrease reliance on state funding.

Commendations:

1. The staff of Student Affairs and the staff of General Studies are commended for their exceptional commitment, dedication and hard work toward making "student centered" services a reality, especially in a time of budget constraints.

2. Student Affairs is to be commended for implementing a variety of assessment techniques, discussing the information, and for utilizing it to implement new, positive changes affecting the quality of life for students.
3. Student Affairs and General Science are commended for their positive efforts to create and sustain supportive educational and social programs that successfully integrate first-year students into the larger university community. The “front-loading” of these services is critical to ensure student success.
4. Student Affairs and General Studies are commended, as students report extremely positive relationships with administrators and staff in these areas. Students feel that staff members are extremely accessible and provide needed assistance for academic, social and personal needs.

Recommendations:

1. The team recommends that the division develop and implement a plan for providing on-going, on-site technical computer support. Without timely and adequate technical support, Student Affairs is unable to provide efficient and effective assistance to students in critical academic and financial areas.
2. With increasing demand for services in Financial Aid and Career Services, and the documented decreasing capacity to meet these critical needs, the committee recommends a systematic analysis of the staffing, financial and budgetary needs of the Offices of Financial Aid and Career Services that would result in the implementation of a plan that ensures the delivery of these important services to students.

STANDARD FOUR FACULTY

Faculty at MSU are generally well-qualified for the character and mission of the institution (indicated by the fact that three-quarters of the roughly 480 full-time regular faculty hold terminal degrees in their field) and appropriate for the kind of institution it is (indicated by the fact that about 90 percent of tenure track appointments are promoted to tenure). Morale is good, overall, and a sense of collegiality is the complement to a widespread sense of identification with the university and its goals.

Thanks to the Productivity, Quality and Outcomes (PQO) agreement in 1995, faculty salaries have risen 6.9 percent per year since then, and although that Agreement has now formally expired (and what lies ahead is under discussion), the improvement in the faculty situation no doubt accounts in part for the increase in morale. There is no faculty union at MSU (unlike four of the five other Montana University System four-year campuses), but the faculty have increased the average number of credit hours taught from 15 to 16.4 (in 1998-99). However, this average increase affects colleges and departments within colleges differentially so that significant disparities exist in large part because of the formula presented to calculate teaching loads. This remains a disputed subject across the university. A major part of the problem is that the formula used to calculate teaching loads did not take into account faculty responsibilities to students outside the classroom, such as advising, directing graduate (and undergraduate) students' research, etc.

It is the understanding of the accreditation review team that, as indicated above, the former agreement and its formula for teaching loads can be replaced. Nearly all states are developing, designing, or using already some type of work load formula, and the completion of the PQO may well be an opportunity for MSU to design a system that takes into account the concerns of the campus.

There are about 200 adjunct instructional faculty, a number doubled over the decade but fairly stable for the last five years. Some 30 percent of the adjunct faculty hold doctorates and 60 percent have master's degrees. Not unusual, the proportion of adjuncts in the instructional faculty varies from college to college, being highest in the College of Nursing.

It may be suggested that the university consider developing a formal policy on the number, hiring and evaluating of adjunct faculty. For example, at present there is no uniform policy on whether such teachers are subject to student course evaluations, although all regular faculty are.

Faculty participation in academic planning and advising is broad. Professors serve on university long-range planning committees, strategic planning and budget committees, and the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee. Faculty advise the students

majoring in their department, although the time involved in this varies for individual teachers according to the numbers of students in each program. There is a Faculty Council with representatives from each of the 36 academic departments which discusses and makes recommendations on budget, facilities and salary increases.

Academic freedom does not appear to be a problem, to judge from the response of a large majority (75 percent) in the faculty survey and the absence of any complaints to the Provost's Office. There is an annual evaluation of all faculty by departments and a three-year review of tenurable faculty members, culminating in promotion and tenure review. These annual and triennial reviews employ, among other data, the student course evaluations required for all regular faculty.

A suggestion related to this is that the university consider designing and using a uniform student course evaluation instrument with a variable section that could be adapted to the different disciplines. Such an instrument could provide a basis for comparative data that presently does not exist.

The largest source of faculty discontent is the stringent financial situation of MSU, which results (in the absence of outside grants) in minimal internal support for faculty research, creativity or development, including travel budgets for attending professional conferences, purchase of research materials, sabbatical leaves, equipment for classrooms, laboratories and studios, etc. Last year only nine sabbatical leaves were awarded, less than two percent of the faculty, although official state policy states that a faculty member is eligible for a sabbatical leave every eight years. In the absence of any increment in state funding, it does not appear that this situation will change in the near future; however, present practice in these matters is not consistent with Standard 4.B.5.

Also, it is not concordant with MSU's aspiration to increase its research dimension. Since the last accreditation visit, there has been a significant increase in the amount of grants for research and in research activity in some areas. But increasing the research dimension of any institution invariably generates certain problems and tensions such as the following:

- the suitability of library and learning resources to support that growth,
- impact on the quality of undergraduate teaching, real or perceived,
- capacity of the campus infrastructure to support the change,
- costs to support the research enterprise,
- allocation models for the distribution of indirect cost funds, and
- some tensions between departments and faculties who compete for large grants versus those who have access only to limited funding.

During the visit each of the issues arose on several occasions. It is very important to recognize that these concerns are normal and reasonable for a campus that is undergoing such changes. Faculty care deeply--and differently--about these issues,

and the campus of MSU will need to discuss openly, debate carefully, and reach compromises to avoid the problems that can polarize a campus around issues of research and (undergraduate) teaching.

Standard Four is met by the institution, with the exception of 4.B.5.

College of Agriculture

Since the past accreditation visit, there has been a dramatic increase in focus and success by MSU in the area of scholarship, research, and artistic creation. When such rapid changes occur in a university community, issues such as the following invariably arise.

Concerns:

1. Suitability of library and learning resources to support such growth,
2. Capacity of the campus electronic infrastructure to support the change,
3. True impacts and perceptions on the quality of undergraduate teaching,
4. Faculty availability to advise and work with students,
5. Costs to support the research enterprise,
6. Relationship between graduate student growth and increased levels of sponsored program activity,
7. Allocation models used for the distribution of indirect cost funds,
8. Use of space and facilities--classroom and teaching facilities converted to research space,
9. Some polarization among faculty who have "resources" verses those who do not have grants and contracts,
10. Nature of certain disciplines that can compete for external funds while others have a much reduced opportunity due to limited funds in certain areas,
11. Status of policies and procedures to protect faculty and the university in areas such as intellectual property and license agreements, and
12. Capacity of a campus to sustain growth in grants and contracts since some basic instructional and operating costs become dependent on external sources.

During the visit each of these issues arose on several occasions. It is very important to recognize that these concerns are normal and reasonable for a campus that is undergoing rapid change. Faculty care deeply about these issues and the campus will need to openly discuss, carefully debate, and reach compromises to avoid problems that can polarize a campus relative to scholarship, research, and artistic work.

All elements of Standard 4.B are being met. Concern was expressed by several departments and colleges about what was perceived as limited opportunities for renewal through sabbatical leaves or similar programs. While policies of the Regents and MSU allow such leaves, there have been few sabbatical opportunities for MSU faculty. As MSU continues to pursue Carnegie II status, such special leave opportunities will become more important and necessary to sustain faculty growth. Suggest that MSU carefully review their sabbatical leave policies and procedures to ensure that Standard 4.B.5 is fully addressed.

Faculty evaluation processes are somewhat unevenly applied on campus. Some units are quite thorough and their annual reviews meet the post-tenure reviews that require the use of multiple indices (Standard 4.1). Some units, however, use a rather limited scope review that does not meet Standard 4.1 (policy).

College of Arts and Architecture

The faculty are educated appropriately with experience in both research and creative practice. They constitute a good mix of mature and younger faculty. Teaching is done with seriousness of purpose, with faculty seeking to stay on the leading edge of contemporary thought. Salaries for the faculty exist below national norm and clearly less than is needed for effective and competitive faculty recruitment, especially when attempting to increase the number of women and minorities. Recruitment of new faculty is carried on thoughtfully with the region's highly desired lifestyle as a strong factor in appeal.

Faculty morale seems to be based on good feelings about their respective programs and a sense of expectation for funding improvement through grants and from a new funding agreement with administration based on increased enrollment and the continued sharing of research agendas. The increased enrollment will come from removal of some self-imposed undergraduate limitations based on studio availability and the addition of three new programs--an MFA, MTA graduate level and an innovative architecture program that takes students from freshman level to masters seamlessly in five years.

The faculty seem to understand that they need to be innovative in devising strategies for increased support. Toward that goal, they have just hired a CAA development officer and appear to be willing to extend effort toward reaching new funding goals. There is good community outreach through Community Design Centers, music and art programs and the public television station.

The faculty, however, remain cautious about their relationship to the central administration. They express need to continually reaffirm and reassert their importance or place in community and suggest that creative work is not seen as equal in importance to traditional scientific research.

They are also cautious of the central administration's ability to honor its commitment of funding given a record of what were characterized as broken promises, delayed increases and uncertainty of support for increased enrollment.

Recommendations:

Faculty support, in terms of continued increased salaries, operating funds, space and opportunity for sabbatical leaves, must be addressed to maintain the quality of the educational mission.

Process should be developed to improve and ensure communication, confidence and renewed trust between the College and central administration.

Commendations:

The CAA commitment to providing a rich array of performing arts, visual arts and media as outreach to the community, state and region is impressive. Such programs, such as ArtsLink, Shakespeare in the Park, public television KUSM, are but a few representative efforts. Faculty support, in terms of continued increased salaries, increased operating funds, space and opportunity for sabbatical leaves, must be addressed to maintain the quality of educational mission.

College of Business

The faculty in the College of Business have appropriate educational qualifications for their instructional responsibilities. All full-time faculty members have the appropriate terminal degree, as do almost all of the part-time instructors. There is a systematic process of faculty evaluation within the College (consistent with the university's guidelines) that is well understood and accepted by the members of the faculty, specifically including the non-tenure junior faculty members. Faculty performance in the area of teaching appears to be very high. As previously noted, students were quite positive in their evaluations of the quality of teaching they received. This is a tribute to both the skills and the efforts of the members of the COB faculty. In the area of research and scholarship (the area that the accrediting agency, AACSB, refers to as "intellectual contributions"), the quantity and quality of faculty efforts are more problematic. It is clear that in the context of a heavily undergraduate-oriented institution such as Montana State University, and, in a College of Business that focuses almost exclusively on undergraduate education, it would not be expected that faculty would have the equivalent amount of time and resources to devote to scholarship that would be the case in more graduate- and research-oriented universities. Nevertheless, it appears that the research and scholarly output of the COB faculty could be improved

and expanded. This was identified in the 1997 AACSB report as an area that needed attention, and this is also the view of the current NASC evaluation visit. Recognizing that current resources for research (especially release time from teaching for this purpose) are virtually absent, still it would appear possible for there to be improvement in this area. First, however, the College and its faculty need to decide collectively what their objectives as a College are in this area. Those were not apparent in any of the documents provided for this site visit. Second, and especially in light of the fact that a decision has been made at the university-wide level to advance MSU to the status of a Research II institution, it would seem incumbent on the faculty and administration of COB to devote effort and attention to how to reach objectives in the area of increased research/scholarship and to how to secure additional resources to facilitate that effort.

College of Education, Health and Human Development

Faculty in the College of Education, Health and Human Development are well qualified to teach in their assigned areas. Approximately 55 FTE positions, along with some adjunct faculty, make up the College.

Faculty feel teaching loads in the College are heavier than in many other areas. Heavy loads impact the time of senior faculty and junior faculty who need to show a record of publishing to attain promotion and tenure. Low salaries are also a concern. The average faculty salary for ranks at MSU is \$52,000; in this College, department chairs could identify only two faculty of the 55 who make that amount. All others are paid below the university average.

Another issue of significant concern is the university policy not to award workload credit for advising graduate students. This policy along side the stated goal of increasing research efforts to achieve a Carnegie II ratings shows a dichotomy faculty find puzzling.

At the same time, faculty morale seems good and faculty are pleased to be a part of Montana State University.

Commendations:

Faculty seem pleased with their affiliation with the university

Concerns:

1. Teaching loads and salary differences are not generally understood by faculty and, if unaddressed, could lead to increasing discontent among faculty.
2. The policy offering no recognition of the significant workload involved in advising graduate students preparing thesis and dissertations deserves review.

College of Engineering

The faculty are well qualified to fulfill the instructional and research mission of the College of Engineering (COE). Additionally, there is a very evident faculty commitment to sustain a first-class program in spite of inadequate budgets and heavy teaching and advisement loads. Most but not all faculty have active research programs which result in technical papers or books. The level of research is appropriate for the size of the graduate program.

“Replacement hiring” is reported in the self-study as a matter of concern. This practice involves filling vacant positions with overly specialized faculty lacking the broader and more balanced capability to deal with undergraduate instruction. This tension is evident as the COE attempts to advance its research position with faculty replacements. This issue will need to be resolved by the faculty and administration consistent with the mission of the COE and the university.

Narrative information from students and faculty verify that teacher evaluations are conducted in all classes in the college. Students are not sure that anything constructive comes of this exercise, while the faculty, on the other hand, are concerned that there is an over dependence on the numerical data from these evaluations influencing the annual review. The COE has a formal policy for advancement in rank and tenure review. This policy meets Standard 4.A.5 as detailed in Policy 4.1. After tenure is achieved there is an annual review by the department chair which includes participation by the faculty person to provide data on research and publication, grant income, a self-assessment, and student evaluations. This review is for the purpose of setting salary increases and does not include peer participation in the review.

The COE faculty demonstrate a high level of altruism and dedication to their rolls as teachers and advisors. They express a desire for more resources to assist them in realizing their professional commitment to the students.

College of Letters and Science

Behavioral and Social Sciences: The area of the Behavioral and Social Sciences is composed of the Departments of Political Science, Psychology (with options in Applied Psychology, Communication, and Psychological Science), and Sociology and Anthropology (with options in Anthropology, Justice Studies, and Sociology). Since 1990 the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, particularly in its Justice Studies option, and Psychology, especially in its two Psychology options, have shown marked increases in student interest. The Communications option in Psychology had only a single student in Fall 1998, while the other options in Sociology have maintained their numbers. Political Science enrollment has decreased during the same period, though they have initiated a graduate program. All three programs contribute courses which form part of the university Core.

All three departments have professionally qualified faculty with primary commitment to the teaching, research and service mission of the university. The faculty are involved with academic planning and curriculum development and regard the curricular process as efficient. Academic advising is available in all areas and is not intrusive, so that often a student has to take the initiative to seek out appropriate faculty members. Faculty course loads are normally two classes per semester with the pressure to take on a third. However, in conjunction with a lack of graduate assistant support, funds for travel and other faculty development, concerns were expressed by both department heads and tenure-track faculty that sufficient time and resources to support professional growth and renewal were not available regularly. A faculty member with full responsibility for a large introductory course, with minimal grading help and a complete lack of departmental travel funds, faces a real problem when participation in professional organizations is one measure for the award of tenure. The promotion and tenure guidelines for the College of Letters and Science took effect in July 1997. Concerns were expressed by faculty that changes in promotion and tenure criteria from those in effect at the time they were hired could disadvantage them. The university should carefully consider the circumstances of faculty whose probationary period crosses different promotion and tenure documents, so that it is clear to faculty as they progress towards tenure what the requirements are and will be. Part-time and adjunct faculty are fully qualified and are not used excessively in these areas; however, there have been enrollment increases in both Sociology and Anthropology, and Psychology during the last ten years with a steady staff of permanent faculty. If enrollment growth is a priority, attention will have to be paid to what the desired absolute number of adjunct faculty are and to ensure that the central teaching mission and goals of the department are fulfilled.

In general, the faculty of the three departments are very productive in their research areas consistent with the mission and goals of the university. However, there are some concerns about the provision of appropriate financial and information resources to support scholarship and research. The operations budgets at the departmental level have seen a decrease in terms of real dollars, and in some cases last year led to the elimination of any university-supported faculty travel. This year's travel funds have been restored but not to the level to which a faculty member can expect a substantial amount towards a fully paid annual trip. The charge-back system for technology support and the need for normal maintenance on other equipment, in the circumstances of limited operating funds, lead to delays for the faculty and extended down time. However, the faculty are pleased generally with the level of technology available, in both hardware and software categories. Information resources which support research are deficient in certain categories. The faculty and students are lavish in their appreciation of the efforts made by the staff of the library to furnish the needed material. But again, both students and faculty find the monograph collection inadequate for their needs, particularly in materials from the last seven to ten years, and the interlibrary loan wait time is overly long. As the university proceeds towards its research goal, attention must be given to improving these two areas. One student mentioned a concern with the emphasis on research in a primarily undergraduate setting. Perhaps a clear message

about the relationship of research and teaching as phrased in the accreditation handbook for this standard might quiet concerns.

Although there has been an extended period in which operations budgets have not grown, there is a marked enthusiasm among the faculty as they speak of their students and their own scholarship. The faculty of the departments in the area of Behavioral and Social Sciences meet Standard Four.

Humanities Departments: The four departments that compose the humanities section of the CLS are strongly oriented toward teaching, although, of course, research and creative activity are required of their faculties as part of the university-wide evaluation of all faculty. Their scholarly activity is evidenced in their reports of publications, papers at conferences, etc. However, they are disproportionately affected by the lack of sufficient library funds to acquire the journals and books that are necessary for research in the humanistic disciplines.

The humanities departments, like their counterparts elsewhere, generally lack access to large research grants with monies for equipment, travel, publications, research assistants, etc. One exception to this is Native American Studies, which has sought and won grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other sources for its programs and research.

The faculty of these departments also teach an incommensurate proportion of the Core Curriculum courses, which accounts in part for the emphasis on teaching referred to above.

Sciences and Mathematical Sciences: Faculty members are evaluated annually by their Department Heads. The evaluation occurs by April 10 or another date specified by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and covers the performance for the preceding calendar year. The faculty member prepares a report on the year's activities in the areas of assigned duties such as teaching, research and creative activity, and service. One of the factors in evaluation of teaching is student evaluations which are administered some time beyond the midpoint of the semester. The front of the form is a bubble chart on various factors relating the course, including content, means of presentation, testing and grading; the back of the form has space for respondents to write comments. The front of the form is machine graded by a central office and a numerical score emerges. The frequency of responses on each item of the form can be recorded. At some time after grades are turned in, faculty members receive the information and the written comments.

This procedure meets the standard.

Research and creative activities are evaluated on the basis of material such as books or articles in refereed publications, grant proposals submitted and proposals funded, or

other material pertinent to document the creative activity of the faculty member. Service is documented by activity on committees, public service or outreach, or other activities appropriate to the university's mission. This report is submitted to the Department Head who assigns a rating which is placed on a card, which is read and signed by the faculty member being reviewed, and forwarded to the dean. Disagreements with the rating must be submitted in writing to the dean within 10 days of signing the rating card. Often, the Department Head discusses the review with the faculty member in a face-to-face conference.

College of Nursing

The College of Nursing faculty are required to hold a master's degree in a clinical nursing specialty; 29 percent hold doctoral degrees. The Dean reported that one of the CON's Strategic Directions is to determine the appropriate mix of faculty. Since they are preparing graduates for a practice profession, the need for certified clinicians is as great as the need for doctoral faculty. here is a recruitment plan in place; however, it is difficult to recruit doctoral, certified nurse practitioner faculty nationally. If the CON is to continue its research mission, it is imperative that they recruit more faculty with doctorates. (Standard 4.A.1)

It is important to note that the number of faculty on each campus are sufficient to deliver quality instruction and to provide close clinical supervision to students at all levels in the CON programs. (Standard 4.A.1) Faculty from the remote campuses participate on university-wide committees, e.g. promotion and tenure; however, unless the conference phone in the College of Nursing building is used, they must drive to Bozeman. (Standard 4.A.2)

The CON faculty are exempt from the PQO requirements because nursing is a practice profession and the number of contact hours per credit for clinical courses cannot be computed in that system. Faculty are supported in their scholarly and research activities. This was verified by a review of the scholarly productivity of the faculty and the number of research and education grants submitted from 1996-98. Interview with faculty who are research active noted that they have received some time within their workload for scholarly activity; however, there was agreement that some of this activity occurs during the summer (all faculty have nine-month academic appointments). (Standard 4.A.3)

Faculty salaries are at or above the mean salaries for academic year full-time nurse faculty in public institutions in the Western region as reported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) guidelines for the region. Interviews with faculty verified that they believe their salaries are competitive at the university and among nursing faculty at other institutions. (Standard 4.A.4) Each faculty member does a self evaluation each year and shares it with the campus director who completes an administrative review and distributes it to each faculty member. (Standard 4.A.5)

The college has an orderly process of recruitment. (Standard 4.A.6)

The faculty have support from the college and university for their research mission. A Nursing Office of Research was established to facilitate research and scholarship and to focus on increasing funded research. The Dean has funded this endeavor with indirect cost monies and with monies provided by the Vice President for Research. The increase in funded research during the past two years validates that the CON meets this standard. Faculty stated that they were pleased that the Dean has taken the leadership in restructuring the research support they receive. That effort is still being worked out. (Standard 4.B.7)

Commendations:

1. CON salaries are above the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) mean for the Western region.
2. The faculty are enthusiastic and dedicated to their work. They are well qualified to teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Recommendations:

1. The number of doctoral-prepared faculty needs to be increased to address the research mission of the College.
2. Telephone conferencing equipment should be made available in areas of the university outside of the CON so that it will be easier for faculty to participate on university committees.
3. The faculty need to further address articulation plans for RN/BSN students to increase enrollment of that group.

Graduate Faculty and Related Resources

MSU meets the minimum standards for accreditation in terms of graduate faculty.

A great deal of authority is vested in the Graduate Dean. He is increasing the responsibility of the Graduate Council, thereby giving this body authority in the policy-making arena. This will enhance faculty participation in graduate affairs.

There is no formally established graduate faculty at MSU. Consequently, there is no mechanism by which to assure that students receive adequate and appropriate mentoring and advising from faculty. Many faculty provide excellent mentoring, some do not. The new Dean hopes to create a formal process which involves formal appointment to the graduate faculty that will include credential review and periodic review following membership to ensure that only those faculty actively involved in graduate education

are permitted to serve on graduate student committees and teach graduate level courses.

Faculty are, in general, adequate to graduate programming needs. However, it is hoped that MSU will look carefully at the number of regular faculty needed to mount and sustain a high-quality graduate program. Overloading faculty with advisees or teaching responsibilities is the downside of this issue.

Graduate education at MSU has been an institutional stepchild. With low graduate enrollment, graduate study has not been an institutional priority. Even so, MSU has strong programs and innovative activities. At the same time, it must repair the damage caused by a decade of neglect, decide its priorities and plan.

Special Instruction
Continuing Education and Distance Delivery

Faculty who teach in off-campus and distance learning courses are approved by the appropriate academic department, as specified in 4.A.8 and 2.6.g. Montana State University meets the standards for accreditation.

STANDARD FIVE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

This report focuses primarily on the main library at Montana State University Bozeman campus (Renne Library) and its one branch, the Creative Arts Library. In addition, the report discusses the Information Technology Center (ITC) which is housed in the Renne Library. The Renne Library suffers from chronic underfunding and is an increasingly overcrowded facility. Since plans are underway to renovate the Renne Library, this report will focus on other aspects of Standard 5.

Collections: Inadequate funding for the library is manifested in its static growth and by ongoing cuts in its journal budget. In 1991 the library was buying 4,259 books yearly. By 1999 they were buying 5,524 books yearly, an increase of only 1,265 titles. In addition, since 1985, the library has cut over 1200 journal titles. While the library has directed some of its resources towards the purchase of electronic databases, these are primarily aimed at serving the needs of the undergraduate student populations. This leaves graduates and research faculty working with a collection that is unable to support their research and teaching needs, and while the library has tried to compensate for this through interlibrary loan and document delivery; this is not an adequate solution.

Comments from faculty at informal meetings and conversations with the Dean of Libraries and library faculty suggest that for the library to adequately meet the research needs of faculty and graduate students, it must provide more electronic access to scholarly information and databases. The lack of ongoing financial support for collections is at odds with the university's goal of increasing its research presence in the state of Montana. In 1999, the university has increased library support by \$100,000. This is good but does not address the long-term inadequacies of the library's collection.

Holdings at the CLA branch are adequate for that branch.

Concern: While it is clear that the university knows that the library is underfunded, it is not clear that it sees the connection between its aspirations to be a Research II university and inability of the library to support such a goal.

Technology: Computing access within the library for library staff and faculty is good. Desktop equipment is up-to-date and maintained by the library's staff of three technical support people. The library's online system is modern and easily accessible to students, faculty and staff both on campus and at remote locations. The library provides computers for students to access information online and, in slow times, to do e-mail. The Information Technology Center maintains a small student computer laboratory within the library to provide access to desktop applications. Conversations with the Director for Information Services as well as the Director for Information Technology Center indicate the computing relations with the library are good. Regular meetings

provide the library and computing people opportunities to discuss issues and work through potential difficulties.

Access to Collections: The library, although suffering from lack of space, is easily accessible to students and faculty. New titles are processed in a timely manner and current titles are reshelved within 36 hours. The collections are arranged logically and seating, though limited, is available on each floor.

Personnel: Although library administration has reduced staff, they have increased salaries for library faculty. This has resulted in an active, committed and involved faculty. Clearly, they love their jobs. The library provides ample opportunities for professional development. Conference attendance is encouraged and supported as is participation in out-of-country consulting programs. Having these opportunities has been a boost to library faculty and seems to compensate for their discouragement over poor funding.

Faculty and classified staff input to governance is evolving as the library explores a more collegial way of decision-making and organization.

Concern: Classified salaries are low.

Faculty/Student Input: The library has several ways to receive faculty and student input on services, collections and any other item of general interest. The Dean of Libraries schedules weekly lunch meetings for faculty and graduate students to attend. Each week a different department is invited to discuss any issues relating to library service. Department are also asked to appoint a faculty liaison to communicate departmental concerns to the library and to bring back to the department information on library services. Students and faculty have the opportunity to recommend book or journal titles for library purchase. Library faculty connect with students through class presentations, as well as course instruction. Finally, the campus has exit interviews with graduating students and one section of the form is to ask about library services.

Concern: Although the library is represented on the Undergraduate Studies Committee, the library has no representative on the University Curriculum Council. This potentially reduces the amount of library input into discussions related to new courses and, as a result, courses may be offered for which there is not adequate library support.

Facilities: The library needs a new building and is in the process for making this happen. There is currently a proposal to renovate the existing structure. The library does have a state-of-the-arts electronic classroom, which is used not only by library faculty for teaching but is also available to other teaching units on campus.

Information Resources: Information Resources for the Bozeman campus are under the leadership of the Executive Director of Information Services/Vice Provost for Outreach.

Under this office is the Information Technology Center and the Burns Telecommunication Center. The campus is working hard to meet the technology needs of faculty and students. This evidenced by its Internet2 connection as well as the high tech facilities of the Burns Telecommunication Center. The role of the Information Technology Center to is to outfit and maintain student computer labs as well as to provide computing support for campus users. Unfortunately, connectivity on campus is not uniform, resulting in a wide disparity of departments' abilities to access information.

Clearly, the university needs to devote more resources to the library particularly for electronic access to information. To not do so will prevent them from truly becoming a Research II institution.

Concern: There is no formal feedback mechanism for faculty and staff to share desires and concerns with the Executive Director of Information Services or the Director of the ITC.

STANDARD SIX GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

As its self-study suggests, MSU-Bozeman is the lead of Montana State University. MSU is composed of MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern, and Great Falls College of Technology. The four MSU units were joined as the MSU organization in July 1994. This incorporation was part of a Montana University System (MUS)-wide restructuring that created a dual university structure with multiple campuses affiliated with MSU and the University of Montana. As a consequence of this action, the president of MSU-Bozeman is responsible for the other three units of MSU. In addition, several MSU-Bozeman organizations are responsible for the academic, financial and administrative activities of MSU, as well as those responsibilities of MSU-Bozeman.

The MUS Regents established a series of policy papers that help define the MUS restructuring. However, concerns remain about the boundaries regarding governance. MSU-Bozeman faculty and staff worry about the possible diversion of resources from Bozeman to the other three units. MSU-Bozeman alumni worry about the erosion of the reputation of their campus when confused with other campuses. MSU-Bozeman faculty and staff have similar worries.

Under Article of X of the Montana Constitution, the governance and control of MSU and MSU-Bozeman is vested exclusively in the Board of Regents. The Board appoints a chief administrative officer. However, the division of authority and responsibility of MSU-Bozeman for the management of MSU and its relationship with the Board of Regents, is not clearly defined and specified (6.A.1 and 6.A.4). As an example of this problem, as yet, there is no clear policy on the financial responsibility of MSU-Bozeman for other schools in the system. In addition, there is no clear process for how program and curriculum issues will be managed within the MUS system. This may be especially troublesome as demographic factors within the state change and new interests develop requesting programs and curriculum. The recently established MUS system is replete with ambiguities that have caused and may cause MSU-Bozeman more difficulties in the days ahead. For example, it is unclear as to what MSU-Bozeman's financial responsibilities are for the other three affiliates in the MUS system. Should one of the affiliates experience financial problems, is MSU-Bozeman responsible for that problem? Are the other affiliates? It is unclear in some cases as to which MSU-Bozeman functions are system-wide responsibilities. For example, why is the financial staff at MSU-Bozeman responsible for some of the financial and budget staff work at the affiliates and the MSU-Bozeman Affirmative Action Office not responsible for the MSU system as well.

The Board does adopt broad institutional policies and delegates to the MSU-Bozeman president responsibility to implement and administer its policies. While state funding has been limited the Board understands the funding difficulties and has acted to increase support in recent years. For example, the Board approved a policy to increase

faculty salaries seven percent per year for the past four years. This action brought MSU-Bozeman salaries into a far more competitive situation than earlier in this decade.

As to the MSU-Bozeman president, his responsibilities are now directed to both Bozeman as well as to the other three units. Thus, there is some ambiguity in his responsibility for MSU-Bozeman (6.C.1.).

There is also continuing concern about the competitive salaries for MSU-Bozeman administrators (6.C.9). The 1990 NASC concern about the problem of administrative turnover has gone unsolved. Key positions such as provost, vice president, and deans continue to have rapid turnover. While the university seems to have stemmed the rapid turnover in the professorial ranks, and certainly the significant increase in salaries during the past four years was a factor in this, the senior leadership positions continue to change. This creates continuity problems for the university. The lead salary in any change will need to be that of the president of MSU. Currently the compensation for that position is significantly lower than that of his peers. While the turnover in the president's position as determined by length of service has been less than the national average, the low president's salary limits vice presidents', deans' and other senior administrators' salaries and thus contributes significantly to the continuing administrator MSU-Bozeman turnover problem. The president's salary is an issue to be addressed by the Board of Regents and is necessary before the institution can address the low salaries of the other senior administrators.

STANDARD SEVEN FINANCE

Financial Planning (Standard 7.A): Montana State University-Bozeman has developed its budgets in order to meet its mission. The university has adopted a general revenue strategy suited to its environment, taking into account both State funding and enrollment and tuition strategies. The university is funded through the Montana University System, which is currently considering minor revisions to its inter-campus funding formulas. MSU financial staff is concerned that this will result in reducing the allocation of state appropriation funding to MSU-Bozeman.

The university has a new budget process that is informally linked to its planning efforts through the President's Executive Council and the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee. The budget process involves various campus constituencies on a formal basis in a relatively short time span. Decisions seem to be made in the late spring for the upcoming year. There is a practice of dealing with budget requests on an incremental basis, preserving the base budget whenever possible. Budgeting focuses on the expenditures supported by appropriation and tuition rather than on all funds. There is not a formal tie between the institution's strategic plan and its budget. The budget is published annually.

Debt is tracked carefully. Its use has increased substantially in the past few years. The outstanding indebtedness of the university has nearly doubled since 1996, and the use of bonds has been extended from self-supporting facilities, e.g. housing, to technology improvements (the hardware and software for the recently completed installation of new administrative systems) to expansion of athletics facilities. In addition, a recent issue cross-pledged the income from several MSU campuses. The university plans another building bond issue this year. These changes will lead to reduced debt service ratio coverage and a larger share of the institution's income and resources being pledged as potential security for debt service. The financial staff know of no Board of Regents policy guiding the use and limit of debt; however, the Board must approve the issuance of all bonded indebtedness.

There is not a plan or funding strategy for technology investments. The university's ability to plan and budget for capital construction and major maintenance is constrained by lack of state resources, resulting in improvements being made in areas for which non-state funds can be identified or when the state is able and willing to issue bonds.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Montana State University develop a formal and open linkage between its planning and budgeting efforts in a way that provides clear opportunity for all interested members of the university community to understand and help shape the institution's priorities and future.

Adequacy of Financial Resources (Standard 7.B): Montana State University-Bozeman has increased its spending to meet enrollment growth, inflationary increases, limited investments in new equipment and programs, and faculty salary improvements without concomitant increases in state appropriation support. Tuition rates and income have increased markedly as has income from gifts, grants and contracts. The university has been able to live within its means and to sustain current operations on this basis. However, there is general concern on campus about the paucity of resources for travel, professional development, and other non-personnel support items in departmental budgets. The university has adequate resources to meet its debt service requirements in the next few years if there are not major shortfalls of revenue from any source.

The university has a long-standing practice of charging auxiliary enterprises for central services and has not increased those charges except for inflation and usage. The auxiliaries generally appear to be in very good financial condition but these net revenues are needed to fulfill debt service coverage requirements due to pooling of sources used to back a variety of recent bond issues.

The university has virtually no reserves available for its educational and general program. It has been able to budget its tuition income accurately and conservatively so that it has not been in deficit. However, with the impending decline of Montana high school graduates and increased competition for nonresident students in many of the states in which the university recruits, administrators are cautious about the future. They believe uniformly that tuition cannot be increased rapidly despite the relatively low prices the university still charges. This is due to Montana tradition and the state's relatively low median family income and the perception of a price sensitive market for nonresidents. Therefore, they believe the university must step up its recruitment of nonresident students and find ways to retain them better.

The state formerly funded the anticipated operating costs of new facilities. However, recently the state has reduced its funding level to 50 percent of the estimated operating costs. Since the university has plans to add other facilities in the future, this change in state policy could further constrain resources.

The combination of low reserves, the necessity of increased reliance on nonresident students and their tuition, changes in state policy, and increased debt service requirements makes the university's financial picture more precarious than it might have been in earlier times.

It is unclear to what extent Montana State University-Bozeman is responsible legally or practically for other campuses and stations within the MSU system except with respect to the cross-pledged revenue bonds, some coordination and central reporting, and the management and funding distributions made within the College of Nursing.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Montana State University-Bozeman engage in a full and inclusive process, involving all elements of the campus community, focusing on the nature of its mission and the changes that increased research emphasis is bringing. This should result in an academic and financial plan detailing how the university will obtain and provide resources adequate to meet its mission.

Financial Management (Standard 7.C): The university recently completed a rapid but successful installation of a new suite of administrative software systems (BANNER 2000). These systems ultimately should provide improved and more timely financial and management information. However, reports are not available yet to all end users and managers and full functionality and responsibility have not been provided to all departments. Work is underway now on user training and customized reporting.

The controller prepares financial reports on a timely basis. Certain expenditures have been recategorized but all expenditures and income appear to be reflected accurately in the books of the institution.

Internal controls are being examined in light of some isolated difficulties but, generally, no systemic problems with controls were uncovered.

Staff anticipate increased workload due to the implementation of the new software system and to the creation of the MSU System. Work that formerly had been performed for and at another campus of the system apparently now must be taken on at MSU-Bozeman due to budget reductions at that campus.

Fundraising and Development (Standard 7.D): The President and the President's Executive Council set the fundraising priorities of the institution. The MSU Foundation, a separate 501c(3) corporation, is the custodian of most of the funds raised and most of the endowments. It also focuses on fundraising and provides funding to the university to support part of the salaries of the constituent development officers assigned to the colleges, the athletic department, and the information services entity. The Foundation Board is independent of the university and oversees the investment activity of the Foundation. The Foundation is tied with the other non-profit corporations affiliated with the university.

STANDARD EIGHT PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Instructional and Support Facilities (Standard 8.A): Montana State University-Bozeman has done a creditable job of providing facilities for instruction and research. In recent years, most new construction has included funding from grants and private sources in addition to state dollars. These facilities have focused primarily on areas of research growth within the university.

Instructional laboratories are in need of modernization and technology enhancements in classrooms are required.

The appearance and functionality of buildings and grounds are very good. The student recreation facilities and the student union are attractive, in good condition and well used by students. The university has managed to make many needed investments in maintenance despite sporadic funding from the state. Safety, accessibility, and quality are important considerations in construction and maintenance/operations of facilities.

Concern was expressed about the reduction of state support for the operation and maintenance of new facilities. This could lead to erosion of the campus condition over time.

Equipment and Materials (Standard 8.B): Instructional equipment is in need of replacement and upgrading, especially in laboratories and in areas needing new technology; however, the university has made efforts to keep as current as funding has allowed. There is no equipment replacement fund or plan and seems to be no plan to integrate new technologies into instruction either at the campus or for remote locations.

Equipment and materials handling appears to be performed very well.

Physical Resources Planning (Standard 8.C): Montana State University-Bozeman does not have a standard campus master plan. Further, its construction and renovation of facilities has been opportunistic, based on funding availability for specific projects, rather than guided by stated institutional priorities or considerations of disciplinary need. However, the university prepares a six-year Long Range Building Plan for submittal to the Board of Regents and the state. Further, MSU has kept in mind the infrastructure needs of the entire campus and has been able to make substantial improvements in utilities, irrigation, and other infrastructure areas during the 1990s. The university also appears to be guided by the results of a 1996 campus master planning workshop. The Board of Regents must approve every major project. The university is mindful of accessibility needs in its project designs and in the projects it undertakes to renovate and maintain buildings. There does not appear to be any systematic planning for modernizing instructional spaces.

The university has design and other standards to guide campus development. The Facilities Department insists that building remodeling also upgrade applicable electrical and mechanical systems so that these systems are not jeopardized by individual projects. This has resulted in improving the subsystems in some major buildings. There is some customer dissatisfaction with charges and services.

The university has an excellent set of automated facilities systems which permit the tracking of facilities conditions, repairs and improvements made, occupancy and use, and work order accounting. The Facilities staff are dedicated and creative which has established priorities for maintenance projects and sought funding for the operation of new buildings. Noteworthy in this regard is the set-aside in the budget of a proposed privately funded facility of an amount to endow half the facilities' maintenance costs.

Although the university has a deferred maintenance backlog, it has a good understanding of its needs and the priorities among the items that comprise that backlog, which gives it a basis for careful programming of the \$500,000 or so per year set aside to address deferred maintenance issues.

The university has proven adept at managing its utility costs in light of the increasing emphasis on laboratory research and the harsh climate of Bozeman. However, there is concern that deregulation of utilities could lead to higher costs in this relatively remote part of the United States.

Montana State University-Bozeman has made its automated systems and management techniques available to other MSU campuses and serves as technical advisor to staff at those campuses on many matters related to facilities operation.

STANDARD NINE INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

MSU-Bozeman adheres to the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public. Both its public documents and the perceptions of the institution by faculty, staff and students indicates that the university conveys and demonstrates its commitments to the ideas associated with its charter and the best expectation of American higher education. For example, they publish and emphasize policies of academic freedom, conflict of interest, and policies that guarantee fair treatment of faculty, administration, staff, and students. Printed and electronic materials associated with faculty tenure, promotion and merit policies are easily accessible. In addition, codes of conduct and ethical behavior are both printed and electronically accessible.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data and reviewing the interviews, the Evaluation Team has six concerns. The **first concern** is that of Planning and Effectiveness (Standard 1.B). In response to the 1990 NASC review, MSU-Bozeman established the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) in 1993. Their planning process led to the adoption of a MSU-Bozeman Long Range Plan in 1994. The purpose of the plan is to serve as the means to implement the university's mission.

There are other planning and budget groups at work as well. In 1998, the Strategic Planning Budget Committee (SPBC) was formed to make budget recommendations in concert with funding priorities, mission and goals of the university. Further, the Presidents Executive Committee (PEC) considers budget issues as well as a range of other issues. The concern is that there is no clear perception about how the two planning groups, the SPCB and the LRPC, interface as well as to how the recommendations of those two groups are used by the PEC.

The **second concern** focuses on educational program planning and assessment (Standard 2.B). MSU-Bozeman has made significant progress in developing a program of assessment. However, the institution has not yet aggressively pursued a systematic assessment policy that feeds information back to departments and throughout the organization's decision-making structure to gain improvement of programs and instruction to fully meet Standard 2.B requirements. There are examples in some colleges that assessment has influenced decision-making. However, there was no evidence that assessment has influenced decision-making and resource allocation on a systematic basis throughout the organizational structure.

The **third concern** is that of distance education and the provision of student and academic services. MSU-Bozeman has a number of existing and emerging opportunities to deliver degree programs and courses at a distance. To take advantage of these opportunities, MSU-Bozeman needs to more effectively organize, coordinate, and deliver special student and academic services for students enrolled in off-campus degree programs and credit courses, especially those offered through distance learning. These services should address student needs such as general advising, registration, admissions, technology assistance and other types of support in modes and times that are convenient and accessible for working adults with time and other constraints, as specified in policy standard 2.6.m. Specific responsibility for developing, organizing, and providing these services needs to be designated.

The **fourth concern** is governance and administration. This concern is related to standard 6A and 6B. The restructuring of the Montana higher education created an ambiguous situation for MSU-Bozeman and the MUS system in Montana. As an example of this problem, as yet, there is no clear policy on the financial responsibility of

MSU-Bozeman for other schools in the system. In addition, there is no clear process for how program and curriculum issues will be managed within the MUS system. This may be especially troublesome as demographic factors within the state change and new interests develop requesting programs and curriculum. The recently established MUS system is replete with ambiguities that have caused confusion. This may cause MSU-Bozeman more difficulties in the days ahead. For example, it is unclear as to what MSU-Bozeman's financial responsibilities are for the other three MSU affiliates. Should one of the affiliates experience financial problems, is MSU-Bozeman responsible for that problem? Are the other affiliates? It is unclear in some cases as to what MSU-Bozeman functions are system-wide responsibilities. For example, why is the financial staff at MSU-Bozeman responsible for some of the financial and budget staff work at the affiliates and the MSU-Bozeman Affirmative Action Office not responsible for the MUS system activities in these areas as well?

Another dimension of this problem concerns the diploma situation. For example, among MSU-Bozeman and its affiliates there are many similar educational programs. They are likely to be confused by the public assuming when they see all the affiliates using the brand name of MSU. Programs at MSU-Bozeman may suffer erosion of reputation and credibility as other programs among the affiliates adopt the MSU brand name.

The need for greater state financial support is the **fifth concern**. This concern is related to standard 7B, i.e. the Adequacy of Financial Resources. MSU-Bozeman with the support of the Montana Board of Regents has made major progress in addressing the competitive salary issue raised in the 1990 Accreditation Report and the 1995 Interim Report. Funding issues remain in other areas, however. Given the university's strategic goal of becoming a Research II institution, there are significant infrastructure needs to be addressed. The library was identified (Standard 5) in the last accreditation review as a major concern. The situation has not improved and thus is more critical now given MSU-Bozeman's Research II goal. In addition, the information technology infrastructure is inadequate with several important buildings not yet wired and the current network unable to deliver Internet 2 to the faculty. Internet 2 will be a key network for research universities in the near future. The university will need to address these concerns if it is to sustain its research initiative.

Another element of our concern is operating dollars. While a number of departments and research groups have increased their operating expenditures in recent years, largely from the distribution of the Indirect Cost Return, there remains a problem for some those departments as well as those departments without contract and grant activity or other support. Many departments and units not associated with the research initiative play important roles in other aspects of the university mission and goals. For the university to achieve these other goals as articulated in their long-range plan, increased operating dollars for these programs are necessary.

While, the university has just completed a 28 percent increase in faculty salaries over the past four years, one group of employees did not participate in the increased salary allocation--the classified staff. The inclusion of MSU-Bozeman's classified staff in the state employees group explains the difficulty that Montana higher education and MSU-Bozeman in particular have had addressing this issue. The decision by the Board of Regents and the university to break ranks and provide staff salary increments above the other state employees will significantly improve the morale in MSU-Bozeman's classified ranks and the retention of these valuable employees.

Another example of the type of problem created by the flat state budgets is faculty enhancement (Standard 4.B.5). Of the peer institutions identified by MSU-Bozeman, the university supports the smallest number of sabbaticals. This creates significant difficulties for faculty in non-sponsored research areas interested in scholarship or creative arts.

Finally, equipment replacement budgets and classroom modernization budgets are a major concern at the institution (Standard 8.A and 8.B). The absence of sufficient funds in this category, especially for areas outside the normal contract and grants opportunities, creates special difficulties for institution.

A **sixth concern** is that of senior administrative turnover (Standard 6.C.9). The 1990 NASC concern about the problem of administrative turnover is unsolved. Key positions such as provost, vice president, and deans continue to have rapid turnover. While the university seems to have stemmed the rapid turnover in the professorial ranks, and certainly the significant increase in salaries during the past four years was a factors in this, the senior leadership positions continue to change. This creates continuity problems for the university. The lead salary in any change will need to be that of the president of MSU. Currently the compensation for that position is significantly lower than that of his peers. While the turnover in the president's position as determined by length of service has been less that the national average, the low president's salary restricts the vice president, dean and other senior administrator salaries and thus contributes significantly to the administrator turnover problem. The president's salary is an issue to be addressed by the Board of Regents, but is necessary before the institution can address the low salaries of the senior administrators.

Recommendations:

As consequence of our evaluation of the MSU-Bozeman self-study and our accreditation visit we arrived at six concerns. We are making the following institutional recommendations:

1. The Evaluation Team recommends (Standard 6.A and 6.B) that the MSU-Bozeman administration work with the Montana Board of Regents and Commissioner of Montana Higher Education take actions to clarify relationships among the MSU

affiliates. Also, we recommend that the MSU-Bozeman work with Regents and the Commissioner to ensure that MSU-Bozeman does not bear financial and administrative burden of the management of both MSU-Bozeman and the MSU affiliates. In addition, the Team recommends that the Board, Commissioner, and MSU administration develop criteria to determine what management functions are centralized and what are decentralized. Finally, the Team recommends that the MSU administration along with the Regents and Commissioner explore the problems associated with development of new programs and courses within MSU. It is recommended that the institution provide a progress report to the Commission in written format by December 1, 2001.

2. It is recommended (Standards 1.A, 1.B, 4.B, 5.A.2, 7.A, 7.B) that MSU-Bozeman engage in a full and inclusive process, involving all elements of the campus community, focusing on the nature of its mission and the changes that increased research emphasis is creating. This process should result in an academic and financial plan detailing how the university will obtain and provide resources adequate to meet its mission. Analysis should focus in part on the roles of undergraduate and graduate education in MSU-Bozeman's changing environment.
3. The Evaluation Team recommends (Standard 6.C.9) that the MSU-Bozeman administration, working with the Regents and Commissioner, to address the competitive salary problem for MSU-Bozeman's senior leadership positions.
4. It is recommended (Standards 1B, 7A) that MSU-Bozeman develop a formal and open linkage between its planning and budgeting efforts in a way that provides clear opportunity for all interested members of the university community to understand and participate in shaping the institution's priorities and future. It is recommended that the institution provide a progress report to the Commission in written format by December 1, 2001.
5. The Evaluation team recommends (Standard 2.6.o) that MSU-Bozeman needs to more effectively organize, coordinate, and deliver special student and academic services for students enrolled in off-campus degree programs and credit courses, especially those offered through distance learning. These services should address student needs such as general advising, registration, admissions, technology assistance and other types of support in modes and times that are convenient and accessible for working adults with time and other constraints. Specific responsibility for developing, organizing, and providing these services needs to be designated.

Commendations:

1. The Evaluation Team found (Standard 4.A) a committed, dedicated, entrepreneurial faculty and staff who have maintained high morale in light of fiscal challenges and budgetary uncertainties.

2. The Evaluation Team commends (Standard 4.B) the MSU-Bozeman faculty for its exceptional success in garnering outside financial support for research. This increase has been accompanied by an increased recovery of indirect costs. The faculty's success comes at a time of declining state revenues for higher education. As a consequence, MSU-Bozeman faculty translated this success into improved instruction, and enhanced facilities, equipment and educational experiences. One of reasons for the institutions increased research success in the past decade is the MSU-Bozeman's improved ability to recruit and retain outstanding faculty. (Standard 4.A.4)
3. The Evaluation Team found (Standard 2.C) there was strong evidence from many departments that faculty are engaging undergraduate students in the creative discovery process that is often more typical of graduate level students. MSU has very successfully incorporated substantial and meaningful scholarship, research, and artistic opportunities for undergraduate students. The richness and quality of these experiences deserve special recognition and commendation.
4. We commend the university's persistent pursuit (Standard 2.C) of improving of the Core Curriculum's coherence and substance. In particular we commend the planning and implementation of a new Core and the broad vision it embodies.
5. The evaluation team commends Montana State University (Standard 8.A) on the overall appearance of their attractive, well-planned campus and for its effective utilization of the facilities that serve the academic community. While experiencing substantial growth and change, the campus has retained its character defining features and unique spatial qualities, thoughtfully achieved during a period of diminished funding.
6. The Evaluation Team commends MSU-Bozeman (Standard 2.A.2) for its commitment to providing outreach education to its citizens and playing a key role in serving the needs of the rural state in which it is located. Several of the colleges and programs within the university excel in fulfilling this mission. For example, there are outreach educational programs established by faculty that improve significantly the quality of life of the citizens of Montana. These activities meet which is part of the general requirements of the educational program and its effectiveness.