

Governance and Administration

6

# Open, Transparent, and Shared Governance





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#### Standard 6.A – Governance System

The institution's system of governance facilitates the successful accomplishment of its mission and goals.

##### Background

Under Article X, Section 9 of the Montana Constitution, the governance and control of the Montana University System (MUS) are vested exclusively in the MUS Board of Regents (BOR). The BOR possesses full authority and responsibility to supervise, coordinate, and manage public higher education in Montana. The MUS consists of the campuses of Montana State University (MSU) and the University of Montana (UM). In addition, the BOR exercises oversight of

Montana's three non-tribal community colleges: Miles Community College, Dawson Community College, and Flathead Valley Community College.

MSU in Bozeman is the lead institution of MSU which is comprised of four campuses: Bozeman (MSU), Billings (MSU-Billings), Havre (MSU-Northern), and Great Falls College of Technology (Great Falls COT). The four units were joined as MSU in July, 1994. This incorporation was part of the MUS restructuring that created a dual university structure with multiple campuses affiliated with MSU and with UM. In 1989, the Legislature amended state statutes to vest general administrative oversight and supervision of public post-secondary vocational-technical education with the BOR. These units subsequently became Colleges of Technology. The presidents of MSU and UM report to the

Commissioner of Higher Education (CHE), who reports to the BOR. The Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of MSU-Northern, MSU-Billings and the Great Falls COT report to the President of MSU.

**6.A.1 The system of governance ensures that the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among and between the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students are clearly described in a constitution, charter, by-laws, or equivalent policy document.**

The MUS is governed first by the Montana Constitution's Article X; that section is then implemented in state statutes, Montana Code Annotated §§ 20-25-101 through 20-25-1310. Article X establishes the governance and control of the MUS in the BOR. The statutes establish the university units, the administration of the university system, including the BOR powers and [duties](#),<sup>1, 12</sup> and other matters related to governance of the MUS.

The BOR also has adopted policies which provide further definition for the governance of the MUS [units](#).<sup>2</sup> Law and policies also delegate substantial authority to the presidents of MSU and UM for the day-to-day operations of their respective institutions (§ 20-25-305 Montana Code Annotated). Finally, MSU has adopted many policies and procedures that define the governance of MSU, including the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among and between the administrators, faculty, staff, and students. MSU's Policy Manual is found [online](#).<sup>3</sup>

**6.A.2 The governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth by the governance system's official documents.**

There are a variety of channels through which roles and responsibilities are communicated to faculty, staff, and students to help them understand their respective roles and responsibilities as provided in law, policies, and procedures.

BOR and MSU policies are posted online. Further, MSU posts all new policies for review and comment before they are [finalized](#).<sup>4</sup> Training is also conducted by legal counsel, Human Resources, and Affirmative Action to ensure department heads and other supervisory personnel are aware of policy requirements.

A new program, Leadership MSU, has been initiated to raise understanding of different units within MSU, what they do and how they work together to ensure MSU fulfills its [mission](#).<sup>5</sup> The program lasts months, with approximately 25 members in each year's class. The curriculum includes information on respective roles and responsibilities.

The recent survey of faculty administered as part of this self-study suggests that many faculty members do not believe that they have sufficient information about some aspects of governance at MSU. Fifty-four percent of respondents did not believe they have adequate information about major MSU decisions and forty-eight percent did not believe they had adequate information about the Commissioner's Office or the BOR.

**6.A.3 The system of governance makes provision for the consideration of faculty, student, and staff views and judgments in those matters in which these constituencies have a direct and reasonable interest.**

MSU has historically embraced shared governance and has reinforced its commitment to shared governance over the past decade. Through this active practice of shared governance, MSU's administration solicits and welcomes faculty, student, and employee input on any topic.

MSU's formal shared governance structure operates through the organizations representing each campus constituency: Faculty Senate, Professional Council, Staff Senate, and Associated Students of Montana State University (ASMSU). The processes through which these organizations participate in the shared governance of the institution are described in **Standards 6D, 6E, and 6F**. Furthermore, representatives from each

constituency meet weekly to communicate shared interests and concerns in a new committee, the Association of Shared Governance Leaders (ASGL).

**6.A.4 In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the central system office and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.**

As described in the background to this section, the BOR possesses full authority and responsibility to supervise and manage public higher education in the state of Montana. As also described above, the MUS is a multi-unit system composed of two units, MSU and UM. BOR policies covering the authority and responsibility between the BOR, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), and the individual institutions and units are found [online](#).<sup>6</sup> Also see response to **Standard 6.A.1**.

As noted earlier, MSU itself is a multi-unit system. Board policy 205.2.1 establishes the reporting relationship of the CEOs of MSU-Northern, MSU-Billings and Great Falls COT to the President of MSU. Often information from the OCHE flows to the campuses through the President and then onto the CEOs of the affiliate institutions. At other times, communications come from the OCHE to the President and the affiliate institutions simultaneously. Note that the various MSU campuses have chosen to apply separately for accreditation.

MUS policies and procedures are established through the BOR's process of review and approval. This process includes three levels of review, conducted at separate, sequential meetings. All meeting agendas are posted in advance, and time is provided at each meeting for comment on the agenda items, both from the campus representatives and the public. Adopted policies are then posted on the MSU website and incorporated into policy training held for campus staff and administrators.

## **Standard 6.B – Governing Board**

The BOR is created by the Montana Constitution Article X § 9, saying it has “full power, responsibility and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana university [system](#).”<sup>2</sup> As part of these duties it selects CEOs, considers the mission of the institutions in the university system, oversees funding, and exercises broad-based oversight to ensure compliance with BOR policies and procedures as described further below.

**6.B.1 The board includes adequate representation of the public interest and/or the diverse elements of the institution’s constituencies and does not include a predominant representation by employees of the institution.**

Membership on the BOR is established by the Montana Constitution and statutes (Montana Constitution Article X § 9 and § 2-15-1508, Montana Code Annotated). The board consists of seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Montana Senate. Not more than four may be from one congressional district<sup>8</sup> and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party. One of the members of the board must be a registered, full-time student at a unit of higher education under jurisdiction of the BOR and appointed by the governor. BOR members serve for staggered terms of seven years except for the student member who serves for a term of one year; the student member may be reappointed for successive terms if re-nominated by a BOR-designated student organization and approved by the Governor. The student membership is not subject to the congressional district or political party constraints referred to above. The chair is chosen from the appointed members by vote of the BOR. Vacancies are filled for the remainder of an unfilled term. The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and CHE are ex-officio, non-voting members of the BOR. Other than this role of the Commissioner, there are no MUS employees on the Board, nor have there

been historically. If a vacancy occurs, the Governor appoints an individual to complete the remainder of the unfilled term. Current members of the BOR are found [online](#).<sup>2</sup>

**6.B.2 The board acts only as a committee of the whole. No member or subcommittee of the board acts in place of the board except by formal delegation of authority.**

The creation, membership, and operating rules of the BOR are listed in its [bylaws](#).<sup>10</sup> The bylaws establish the board's mode of operation: it operates through meetings using Roberts Rules of Order. Items before the BOR are decided by majority vote of the members present, and a quorum consists of a majority of the appointed members. Items are brought before the BOR in accordance with procedures in the bylaws. Agenda, agenda items, minutes, and summaries of BOR meetings can be reviewed on the BOR [website](#).<sup>11</sup> There are four standing committees of the Board: Academic and Student Affairs; Administrative, Budget, and Audit Oversight Committee; Staff and Compensation Committee; and Workforce, Research, and Economic Development Committee. Committee assignments of the BOR are found [online](#).<sup>12</sup>

**6.B.3 The duties, responsibilities, ethical conduct requirements, organizational structure, and operating procedures of the board are clearly defined in a published policy document.**

The Montana Constitution, Article X creates the BOR to be responsible for the “government and control” of the university system. State [statutes](#)<sup>13, 13.2</sup> further define the duties and responsibilities of the BOR. The BOR Policies and Procedures Manual provides more detail, covering the following subjects: governance and organization, academic affairs, research and public service, student affairs, planning, personnel, compensation, financial affairs, physical plant, athletics, and information [technology](#).<sup>14</sup> The BOR has a code of expectations that is based on valuing service above self, and a code of conduct that will reflect honor upon the MUS. The code was approved in 2003, and can be found [online](#).<sup>15</sup> The manual also includes the BOR Conflict of Interest Policy, which includes references to the Montana State Ethics Statutes applicable to state employees, including employees of MSU.

The BOR conducts public meetings every other month, with two of the meetings held after the Board of Education meeting, which is comprised of the BOR and the Board of Public Education. Meetings are held in Helena, on campuses of the MUS, community colleges, and tribal colleges.

The meeting schedule is posted [online](#).<sup>16</sup>

In each meeting, the BOR has specific times scheduled on the agenda to meet separately with faculty representatives, student representatives, and staff representatives from each of the campuses. In addition, each meeting includes a public comment time for additional input from members of the public. All meeting agendas and minutes of the BOR are posted on the MUS [website](#),<sup>17</sup> as are the reports and submission documents that support agenda items.



**6.B.4 Consistent with established board policy, the board selects, appoints, and regularly evaluates the chief executive officer.**

Under state constitutional mandate, the BOR appoints a CHE as the chief administrative officer of the MUS; the policy for appointing the Commissioner is located [online](#)<sup>18</sup> and is publicly accessible. The responsibilities of the Commissioner are also enumerated [online](#).<sup>19</sup>

The President of MSU is appointed by the BOR, on recommendation of a Presidential Search and Screening Committee and the advice of the Commissioner, as indicated by BOR [policy](#).<sup>20</sup> The BOR and OCHE are responsible for the supervision of the CEO, and they annually evaluate the performance of the President in accordance with BOR Policy § 702.5.

**6.B.5 The board regularly reviews and approves the institution's mission. It approves all major academic, vocational, and technical programs of study, degrees, certificates, and diplomas. It approves major substantive changes in institutional mission, policies, and programs.**

BOR Policy § 219<sup>21</sup> requires the BOR to review each MUS campus's Mission Statement every three years. Further, the BOR must approve any changes in the Mission Statements and maintain current copies of such statements.

All major academic program changes, including degrees, certificates, and diplomas, are forwarded to the Commissioner, who then formulates a recommendation to the BOR. BOR approval is also required for substantive changes in institutional mission, policies, and programs.

BOR Policy § 303.1 provides detailed requirements for any curriculum proposals as follows: all new post-secondary educational programs (i.e., degrees, majors, minors, options, and certificates), substantive changes in those programs, delivery of programs in a distance format, changes in organizational

structure, and revision of institutional mission must be reviewed and approved by the BOR. The amount of review and approval shall be determined by the Level I and Level II procedures adopted by the board; that review begins with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the [board](#).<sup>22</sup>

The Policy contains detailed procedures for presentation to the board. Academic degree programs are reviewed by each unit every seven years or as needed. The CHE coordinates such reviews and reports findings to the BOR. The Board Policy and Procedures [Manual](#)<sup>23</sup> provides protection to students whose programs are terminated. Should a program be terminated, provisions are made to ensure that students who began majors in that program can complete them. A program moratorium may be imposed, so that the program remains in the catalog, but the institution suspends admission to the program. In some cases a program may be withdrawn, so that the program is not mentioned in the catalog, but advisors continue to work with current students to enable them to complete the course of study they began.

**6.B.6 The board regularly evaluates its performance and revises, as necessary, its policies to demonstrate to its constituencies that it carries out its responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner.**

The BOR periodically evaluates itself. For example, in September 2008, a full-day session of the board led by a nationally-recognized facilitator was held for the purpose of self-evaluation. The board also periodically reviews its policies to determine whether they need to be modified. The CHE initiated a full review of all BOR policies in October 2008, for completion in 2009.

In addition, in 2006, the BOR adopted a comprehensive strategic [plan](#)<sup>24</sup> that sets forth the priorities of the board. This plan guides key decision making by the board, including the development and prioritization of budget requests for each legislative session. The BOR periodically reviews and revises the strategic

plan, which is used as a tool to which actual performance may be compared. In 2004, the BOR adopted a set of Shared Leadership Goals, which were developed through an extensive process of collaborative efforts with policy and community leaders across the state. These goals have been adopted by the interim Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget subcommittee (PEPB), and continue to serve as accountability measures for the MUS. These goals (which are currently in the process of being updated) are found [online](#).<sup>25</sup>

**6.B.7 The board ensures that the institution is organized and staffed to reflect its mission, size, and complexity. It approves an academic and administrative structure or organization to which it delegates the responsibility for effective and efficient management.**

The designation and purpose of MSU is established by statute in §§ 20-25-221 through 224, Montana Code Annotated (2007). The statutes establish the basic organization of the institution. BOR policy § 218, Governance and Organization, further establishes BOR oversight of the institutional organization. With regard to staffing, the BOR oversees the budget of [MSU](#),<sup>26</sup> which includes staffing levels and compensation costs. In recent years, because of very low unemployment in the Bozeman area, many vacant or new positions at MSU were difficult to fill—particularly lower-level classified positions. This staffing concern is discussed in more detail in **Standard 6.C.9**.

**6.B.8 The board approves the annual budget and the long-range financial plan, and reviews periodic fiscal audit reports.**

The BOR approves the biennial and annual budgets for each campus and the periodic fiscal audit report, as provided in the BOR policies on fiscal [affairs](#).<sup>27</sup>

**6.B.9 The board is knowledgeable of the institution's accreditation status and is involved, as appropriate, in the accrediting process.**

The BOR is kept informed of the accreditation process. The self-study document is submitted to the CHE, along with all evaluation reports. The CHE is also notified of all site visits by accreditation agencies. A report to the BOR on the self-study document and subsequent findings is prepared by the CHE.

## **Standard 6.C – Leadership and Management**

The current President of MSU initiated a new strategic planning process in 2001 with a two-day retreat of senior and middle management, representatives of the student body, faculty, professional and classified staff, and leaders within the local community. The product of this retreat was then expanded into a detailed Five-year Vision Document with actions, timelines, and performance measures. The plan is revised every year in a progress review process conducted by the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). The Five-year Vision Document serves as a guide in MSU's decision-making process, and focuses campus efforts on the priority goals. The plan is posted on the [MSU website](#).<sup>28</sup> President Gamble devoted his Spring Campus Address in 2008 to highlighting the plan and asking the MSU community to consider new ways they can support the plan and contribute to goal accomplishment in the short term along with realizing MSU's vision in the long term.

President Gamble has consistently placed a high priority on a number of guiding principles, which he has emphasized routinely and consistently through his talks and public statements. They have been characteristic of his decision making and have become embedded in the fabric of MSU. They are as follows:

- The land-grant mission, including the Montana Agricultural Experiment Stations (MAES) and Extension, will be recognized as essential and as playing a critical role in MSU's ability to serve the state of Montana.
- Budgeting will not be based on miracles; MSU will have cash in hand before projects are begun.
- Decisions will be informed by data. MSU will hold itself accountable to the public, and operations and decision making will be transparent to the public.
- The university will value the contributions of all employees, wherever they work.
- The entire university community will be responsible for working with the President to support the success of every student.

As a part of the work to institutionalize shared governance, the President created the University Planning, Budget, and Analysis Committee (UPBAC), which meets periodically and makes recommendations to the President on MSU's operating budget and suggests revisions as necessary during the budget year. A description of UPBAC's mission, staffing, and operations are found [online](#).<sup>29</sup> MSU senior leadership maintains close contact with the faculty, professional, and staff senates. The Provost and Senior Vice Provost regularly attend Faculty Senate meetings, and weekly meetings are held between Faculty Senate leaders, the President, and other senior leaders. In addition, the President's Executive [Council](#)<sup>30</sup> meets weekly, and is composed of MSU leaders who report directly to the President. The President meets twice a year with the President's Advisory Council (PAC), which is composed of three Executive Board members appointed by the Governor and other community leaders in Montana. The President also meets twice a year with the Council of Elders, which is composed of tribal leaders from across the state. Each college also has advisory councils, as does MAES, Extension, Museum of the Rockies, and a number of individual MSU research centers. All of these external advisory groups serve to

inform the MSU leadership with insights and perspectives that are representative of public constituencies.

The senior leadership of MSU consists of the Provost and Vice President for (VP) Academic Affairs; the VP Research, Creativity, and Technology Transfer; the VP Student Affairs; the VP Administration and Finance; the VP Planning and Chief Information Officer (CIO); and the VP Communications and Public Affairs. The Provost serves as the CEO when the President is [unavailable](#).<sup>31</sup> This group meets weekly with the President and Legal Counsel. Over the last four years, MSU has also been engaged in the development of an Integrated Marketing Plan. Initial work was done with a consultant to articulate the values of MSU, define its culture, and identify its strengths that can become a point of differentiation from other universities. The process involved soliciting input from students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, and community leaders. The result was the articulation of MSU's brand promise—the integration of learning and the discovery of knowledge.

The promotion of the Integrated Marketing Plan has focused on engaging the MSU community in reinforcing the key messages and the brand promise in “word and deed.” Points of Excellence are maintained on the MSU website and used as a source of material for speeches, talks, and written pieces—all to reinforce the image and reputation of [MSU](#).<sup>32</sup>

### **6.C.1 The chief executive officer's full-time responsibility is to the institution.**

The CEO of MSU is the President, who is appointed by the BOR according to procedures outlined in Section 205.1 of the BOR Policies and Procedures. The President also holds this title for the other three MSU campuses—Billings, Northern, and the Great Falls COT. The chancellor of each of these MSU campuses reports to the President. The President serves in this capacity full time. The CHE and the BOR provide oversight and perform an annual evaluation of the President to assess his fulfillment of this role. Additionally, the



BOR has policies that require prior approval by the CHE before MUS presidents, chancellors, vice-presidents, vice-chancellors, provosts, vice-provosts, deans, or legal counsel may serve on any outside for-profit board of directors. These administrators must report any such outside service annually to the [CHE](#).<sup>33</sup>

**6.C.2 The duties, responsibilities, and ethical conduct requirements of the institution’s administrators are clearly defined and published. Administrators act in a manner consistent with them.**

The duties and responsibilities of each administrative position are reviewed when the position is vacant and plans are made for advertising the vacancy. For senior-level positions, a national search is typically conducted, and the position duties are defined in the published vacancy announcement. The responsibilities are directly tied to the search and selection criteria, and are the focus of discussion with potential candidates. The orientation of a newly appointed administrator involves clarifying the responsibilities. Performance evaluations of administrators are based on the individual’s ability to successfully carry out the responsibilities. Position descriptions are revised when significant changes occur in the assigned responsibilities.

MSU administrators are subject to Montana ethics laws, which apply to all Montana state employees. These laws regulate gifts, use of state resources for personal benefit, self dealing, lobbying, and political activities (§ 2-2-101 et seq. Montana Code Annotated). The BOR and MSU have Conflict of Interest Policies that apply to all MSU employees. The MSU policy includes an annual disclosure obligation to identify any potential conflicts of [interest](#).<sup>34,35</sup>

**6.C.3 Administrators are qualified to provide effective educational leadership and management. The chief executive officer is responsible for implementing appropriate procedures to evaluate administrators regularly.**

The institution’s senior leadership is well credentialed and Curriculum Vitae are available [online](#).<sup>36</sup>

President Gamble’s statement about accountability and performance review is published [online](#).<sup>37</sup> MSU policy requires that all full-time employees be evaluated [annually](#).<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, the President annually reviews the performance of the Provost, each Vice President, and other administrators who report directly to him. He conducts a more comprehensive “360 review,” involving a wide variety of people who have need to interact with the administrator being evaluated, as often as he feels necessary. In turn, the Provost and Vice Presidents are delegated responsibility for annually evaluating the performance of the administrators reporting to them. Whether or not to conduct “360 reviews” divisionally is discretionary. Input from professional and classified employees is solicited at the discretion of the person conducting each dean or department head’s evaluation.

In 2007, Faculty Senate improved the content, process, and use of its confidential review of the MSU administration—department heads through vice presidents. Questions were expanded and improved; a web-based survey replaced paper surveys; and policy was revised to mandate that the results of the survey be taken into account in administrator evaluations.

The President himself is reviewed [annually](#)<sup>39</sup> by the BOR with a comprehensive evaluation occurring every other year. Though not required by policy, President Gamble has also arranged his own “360 performance review,” conducted by an external facilitator; the first was conducted in 2004, the second in 2007.

**6.C.4 Institutional advancement activities (which may include development and fund raising, institutional relations, alumni and parent programs) are clearly and directly related to the mission and goals of the institution.**

Thirty five percent of the alumni population will be actively engaged in a meaningful and lasting relationship with Montana State University. That involvement includes efforts to recruit new students as well as advancing the reputation of MSU and promoting awareness of achievements of individual faculty, students, alumni, and MSU as a whole.

The Alumni Association Strategic Plan reflects areas of MSU’s Five-year Vision Document where alumni can be of influence and impact. The Alumni Association provides a lifelong connection of alumni to MSU. The association recognizes and communicates MSU’s accomplishments to alumni and friends. This communication takes place through personal interactions, print and electronic media, as well as events that bring alumni together. Well-informed alumni are loyal, dedicated, and supportive of MSU and its needs.

The independent MSU Foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation serves MSU as its primary fundraising organization. Fundraising priorities are established by the President of MSU, in consultation and collaboration with the Provost and senior academic administrators as well as the President and CEO of the MSU Foundation. Development professionals who solicit gifts and work with alumni and parents are managed by the foundation in collaboration with the deans and directors of the constituent units via

memoranda of understanding. In this manner, a “checks and balances” system is provided to ensure that institutional advancement activities are in alignment with, and guided by, the mission and goals of MSU.

**6.C.5 Administrators ensure that the institutional decision-making process is timely.**

MSU policies and procedures typically include deadlines and timelines to ensure efficient decision making. Grievance and complaint procedures laid out in both the Faculty Handbook and the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, for instance, include specific time frames within which a response is required. Budget decisions are driven by a schedule developed by the Governor’s budget office and the BOR, to ensure timely consideration and acceptance. There is a schedule of deadlines for requesting increases in the operating budget and for long-range building projects. Similarly, decisions concerning academic programs, faculty promotion and tenure, and other academic matters generally have policies and procedures associated with them that include timelines for decision making.

**6.C.6 Administrators facilitate cooperative working relationships, promote coordination within and among organizational units, and encourage open communication and goal attainment.**

The President has fostered a culture of openness and inclusiveness within all levels of governance. Fostering this culture is a clear expectation of VPs, deans, and other university administrators. Evidence of this culture can be seen in the creation of several significant committees subsequent to President Gamble’s appointment. These include the SPC and the UPBAC. In addition, the University Leadership Committee, composed of deans, directors, and department heads, is convened by the President shortly after each BOR meeting for the purpose of informing and discussing with these leaders the actions

of the BOR and any other important matters. A more comprehensive list of these and other key MSU committees and their roles may be found in **Standards 6.D** and **6.E**.

Each of these committees, particularly UPBAC and SPC, are led by senior administrators who actively facilitate open communications across major organizational units of MSU. However, the results of the recent employee surveys done for this self-study reveal dissatisfaction with participation in the planning and budgeting process by all groups of employees.

**6.C.7 Administrators responsible for institutional research ensure that the results are widely distributed to inform planning and subsequent decisions that contribute to the improvement of the teaching-learning process.**

The Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA) supports MSU's leaders and strategic planning processes by providing objective, accurate, and timely information, analysis, and advice to inform decision-making and resource allocation processes. In addition, OPA conducts studies that describe, analyze, and evaluate the operations and outcomes of MSU and maintains an electronically accessible database of institutional trends. (See **Standard 1.B**, for OPA's Institutional Assessment information.) OPA provides substantive reports, studies, trends, and data analyses [online](#).<sup>40</sup>

**6.C.8 Policies, procedures, and criteria for administrative and staff appointment, evaluation, retention, promotion, and/or termination are published, accessible, and periodically reviewed.**

MUS policies are reviewed at the MUS [level](#)<sup>41</sup> while the Operating Policies and Procedures for Montana State University Campuses [document](#)<sup>42</sup> provides guidelines for policy and procedure review at the campus level.

Policies, procedures, and criteria for administrative and staff appointment, evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination

are largely contained within the Personnel Policies and Procedures [Manual](#).<sup>43, 44</sup>

Retention and promotion for administrative and contract professionals are addressed in policies that allow for the creation of career ladders or progression plans. In addition, ad-hoc salary adjustments can be made—with approval from the CHE—specifically for retention or promotion [purposes](#).<sup>45</sup>

Retention and promotion of most classified staff are described in the MUS Staff Compensation Plan (Pay Rules), last updated in January [2008](#).<sup>46</sup>

**6.C.9 Administrators' and staff salaries and benefits are adequate to attract and retain competent personnel consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.**

Over the last five to ten years, MSU's historical problems with low (sometimes frozen) salaries and compensation in general, have been compounded by significant local economic expansion. In the 2009 legislative session an increased pay bill was proposed for state government that provided no salary increase but provided a \$450 one-time bonus to employees making less than \$45,000 per year. Over this period MSU has lost employer competitiveness in both local and national markets, and found it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain employees in all types of positions.

Business growth within the Bozeman area has not only driven up wages among classified titles but also created potential employment alternatives for some MSU professionals and faculty members willing to apply their discipline within the local private sector. At the same time, sustained low unemployment—1.4% in Gallatin County in September 2007—forced an extremely competitive, applicant-driven employment market, especially in lower salary positions, the 2008-09 recession has changed this. Provision of benefits, once MSU's trump card, is now commonplace. For example, through Montana Chamber of Commerce initiatives,

businesses with as few as two employees may offer benefits, including health insurance.

At the same time, the local community saw crippling sharp increases in the cost of housing. MSU salaries are insufficient in this arena and severely impact the success of recruitment and retention at MSU. Some applicants from outside the area have withdrawn from searches when they discover they cannot qualify for a mortgage; local hires and existing employees often need jobs that pay more, are forced to supplement their MSU salaries by working more than one job, or must relocate to make ends meet.

The inability to effectively recruit and retain competent employees exists, in one form or another, across the MUS. Compared to other campuses, however, and despite changes resulting from recent national economic events, MSU's situation remains difficult. Administrators and shared governance partners—ASMSU, Faculty Senate, Professional Council, Staff Senate—work hard in collaboration with community leaders, and across the MUS, in search of solutions. The BOR has responded. In fall 2006, BOR [policy<sup>47</sup>](#) was amended to provide for internal, regional, and market competitiveness in the salaries of the Commissioner and campus CEOs. Further, a similar approach to other employee groups' compensation was encouraged within the MUS. In September 2007, a Recruitment and Retention Task Force, called for by the BOR to address such problems system-wide, reported its findings and recommendations. Each institution's unique circumstances and niche is recognized and assessment and solution of issues is recommended on a campus-by-campus basis. Currently, the board is pursuing initiatives suited to the university system as a whole. Several other proposals intended to improve recruitment, retention, and employer competitiveness are under consideration, but funding remains a constraint. Difficulty in recruiting and hiring have eased in Bozeman in the past few months related to increasing unemployment, consistent with national trends.

Despite efforts to improve the situation, administrator salaries were only 73%, and mid-level administrators were 82% of the comparable College & University Professional Association (CUPA) 2008 mean. The trend has been a movement away from the CUPA medians, not a movement to close the [gap<sup>48</sup>](#).

Compensation concerns are clearly shown in the self-study survey data from all groups of employees. Almost half of the classified staff respondents disagreed with the statement that their salary was comparable to salaries of employees working elsewhere in Montana performing comparable work. More than half (55%) of professional respondents disagreed that their salary was appropriate compared to employees at similar universities doing similar work.

## Standard 6.D – Faculty Role in Governance

After becoming President of MSU in 2000, Geoff Gamble articulated the view that faculty must play a key role in shared governance. Thus, he has stated, “Input from all campus constituencies, the faculty (Faculty Senate), professional employees (Professional Council), classified staff (Staff Senate), and students (ASMSU), provide advice, direction, and perspective to the institution's administrative leadership about issues, policies, and procedures that impact the direction and quality of MSU's instruction, research/creative activity, and service programs.”

Growing directly from this view, numerous opportunities for constituent involvement in shared governance at MSU have developed. For faculty the MSU Faculty Senate and its [committees<sup>49</sup>](#) are central. However, in view of a vote by faculty in April 2009 to unionize, it is possible that aspects of what is described below may change. The role of faculty in shared governance, as well as other faculty rights and responsibilities, are detailed in the Faculty Handbook ([FH](#)).<sup>50</sup> The FH also describes faculty representation on strategic

planning, budget planning, and other MSU committees. According to FH section 220.00:

*The Faculty Council (now Faculty Senate) is the chief governance body of the faculty of Montana State University in Bozeman and, together with Professional Council, is a constituent of the University Governance Council. Within the authority and constraints of the Montana University System powers as described in the Constitution of the State of Montana, Faculty Council has authority to frame policy and standards that foster a climate of academic freedom throughout the University; promote equity in tenure, promotion in academic rank, workload, and salary; and uphold standards and procedures of accountability concerning faculty ethics and responsibilities.*

Faculty Senate provides a means for faculty and administration to interact and discuss MSU business, including long-range and strategic planning, budgeting, curriculum, accreditation, and graduation requirements.

Faculty Senate develops policies and standards promoting MSU values, such as

- effective and efficient use of MSU resources;
- general economic well-being of faculty;
- professional development of faculty through leave programs and other beneficial activities;
- quality educational resources such as facilities, laboratories, and creative activity equipment and services; and
- optimal learning environments across campus.

The MSU faculty is represented on committees dealing with the full spectrum of university work including governance issues such as strategic planning, budgeting, curriculum development and revision, accreditation, and developing graduation requirements. The faculty is also represented on committees dealing with hiring, grievance, research,

student life, and student appeals. The faculty have historically also played a major role in university-wide decision making through voting membership on the University Governance Council Steering Committee, which in the current FH policy consists of members of the Faculty Senate and representatives from Professional Council, the Staff Senate,<sup>51</sup> and ASMSU.<sup>52</sup>

Faculty members have also played a major role in university-wide decision making through the Faculty Senate and through the University Governance Council, which consists of members of the Faculty Senate and representatives from Professional Council.<sup>53</sup>

In order to facilitate communication and coordination among the various representative bodies on campus, a new communication committee was recently created. This group, which has tentatively taken the name of Association of Shared Governance Leaders (ASGL), consists of two to three leaders from each of the main campus constituencies: Faculty Senate, Professional Council, Staff Senate, and ASMSU. The ASGL meets weekly during the regular academic year, and monthly during the summer, to share concerns and ideas and to offer suggestions and recommendations that need to be addressed through other committees and discussions with administrative leaders. The ASGL does not vote, but instead provides information on relevant issues to its constituents and brings issues, when necessary, to the attention of central-administrative leaders. As a matter of practice, administrative leaders have made regular meetings and discussions with the ASGL representatives of all four of these constituencies a regular occurrence.

The Faculty Senate chair (FS Chair) and chair-elect (FS Chair-elect) typically meet weekly with the President and the Provost during the academic year and monthly during the summer, to discuss the full range of issues that concern faculty or involve faculty interests in MSU governance. Work by the FS Chair and FS Chair-elect is supported by the institution through a .60 FTE salary release for the FS Chair and a .35 FTE salary release

for the FS Chair-elect to “compensate for the time commitment demanded of these positions.” In addition, partial summer support (.11 FTE) is provided to both the FS Chair and FS Chair-elect, and the Faculty Affairs Committee (a Committee of the Faculty Senate) Chair receives a 10% workload reduction during the academic [year](#).<sup>54</sup>

The importance of the MSU faculty’s role in institutional governance and decision making is recognized and strengthened through faculty membership on the following major planning committees:

### Institutional Committees & Shared Governance<sup>55</sup>

- Strategic Planning [Committee](#)<sup>56</sup>
- University Planning, Budget, and Analysis [Committee](#)<sup>57</sup>
- Information Technology Governance [Council](#)<sup>58</sup>
- Space Management [Committee](#).<sup>59</sup>

In addition, MSU faculty members are represented on most of the following committees through ex-officio membership by the FS Chair, the FS Chair-elect, or faculty members elected by FS.

### Other Governance Committees and Councils<sup>60</sup>

- Academic Affairs Committee of Faculty [Senate](#)<sup>61</sup>
- Graduate [Council](#)<sup>62</sup>
- President’s Executive [Council](#)<sup>63</sup>
- University Governance Council Nominating [Committee](#).<sup>64</sup>

The results of the recent self-study faculty survey, however, show that responders generally do not believe they have a sufficient role in some aspects of MSU’s governance. The majority of responders were dissatisfied with their role in budgeting and with information about major university decisions.

## Standard 6.E – Student Role in Governance

*The role of students in institutional governance, planning, budgeting, and policy development is made clear and public; students are supported in fulfilling that role.*

The MSU administration and faculty have provided many opportunities for effective student input into the operations of the institution. ASMSU serves as the elected voice of the students. See **Standard 3.B** for full information on ASMSU.

The ASMSU administrative officers and student senate leadership meet regularly with MSU’s President and other administrators to discuss campus, MUS, and legislative issues. Current practice provides seats for students to serve on all major MSU governance, planning and budget committees, and search committees for major academic and administrative positions. ASMSU is charged with filling those seats, with moderate success. A large part of the problem in providing effective student representation stems from the short duration of terms and conflicts with students’ class schedules and meeting times.

As noted earlier, the BOR is required to include a student among its members, thus providing direct student input at that level.



Additionally, ASMSU represents its students at the BOR level, through participation in the Montana Associated Students (MAS). This organization gathers information, establishes positions on issues, and communicates the needs of students to legislators, the Governor, and the BOR. MAS representatives meet with the Governor and the BOR at most BOR meetings and submit concerns directly to the student regent. Three student regent candidates are nominated by MAS, and their names are sent forward to the Governor each spring. The MAS have input regarding proposed student costs such as fees or tuition increases prior to BOR action. The student voice is not always cohesive, however, and there is often a difference between the priorities of students from large and small campuses.

## **Standard 6.F – Staff Role In Governance**

*The role of staff in institutional governance, planning, budgeting, and policy development is made clear and public; staff are supported in fulfilling that role.*

The term “staff” is broadly used when referring to all non-faculty, non-executive employees of MSU. Commonly, this group is identified in two parts: professional contract employees and classified staff. When used alone, the word “staff” is more usually understood to refer specifically to the classified work force.

Classified- and professional-contract-employee representation in institutional governance is spearheaded by the Professional Council and Staff Senate. Each organization is involved in ensuring constituent participation in planning, budgeting, and policy development, for example, through coordination of committee representation. Staff Senate, Professional Council, and campus committee proceedings are public. Minutes and other documentation, when not accessible online, may be obtained from the appropriate chairperson.

Staff [Senate](#)<sup>65</sup> is a respected organization within MSU and at the MUS level, and is a

leader in the promotion and practice of shared governance. It focuses on connecting classified staff priorities to the mission, goals, and strategies of MSU, the MUS, and the BOR. Staff Senate meets weekly with its shared governance partner organizations—ASMSU, Faculty Senate, and Professional Council—and has access to MSU’s administration as necessary. Interactions with administrators, and among ASGL, are strongly collaborative and provide a medium for resolving problems and pursuing mutual goals.

Staff Senate actively involves its local and remotely-located constituents, and offers leadership among its peers through the self-initiated MUS Staff Associations (MUSSA). MUSSA works collaboratively and effectively, drawing from the shared governance model, and meets regularly with the BOR, on a schedule similar to that of its faculty counterparts.

Inclusion of each constituent group in the function of MSU is increasing, and campus awareness and appreciation are growing. Employee participation in Staff Senate and other elements of shared governance is hampered by the budget, staffing, and workload pressures experienced by staff as a result of MSU’s recruitment and retention challenges.

The recent classified staff and professional contract employee self-study surveys show some areas of dissatisfaction with their role in governance. Similar to the faculty, many of the responders did not believe they had sufficient voice in budgeting or sufficient information about major MSU decisions.

## **Policy 6.1 – Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination**

MSU is an equal-opportunity institution in providing full access to all phases of the employment process, facilities, academic programs, and public use of campus facilities. The Director of the Office of Human Resources and Affirmative Action (HR/AA) has the responsibility to ensure compliance with MSU’s equal opportunity policies, including the development of an Affirmative

Action Plan and dissemination of the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity (AA/EO) [policy](#).<sup>66</sup>

The HR/AA office works closely with administrative, faculty, research, and contract professional employee search committees to ensure compliance with equal-opportunity laws, regulations, and policies; to provide the President and administrative officers with regular progress reports; to maintain up-to-date work force and utilization analyses; and to design and implement auditing and reporting systems that evaluate progress towards goals. The policies and procedures for administrative, faculty, research, and contract professional hiring are outlined in the Recruitment and Hiring [Manual](#).<sup>67</sup> For classified employees, these policies and procedures are managed by the Office of Human Resources/Personnel and Payroll Services ([HR/PPS](#)).<sup>68</sup>

The HR/AA Director serves as liaison between MSU and federal government regulatory agencies, organizations for women and minorities, and community groups. The HR/AA office informally mediates and resolves equal-opportunity complaints whenever possible, and when necessary, conducts formal investigations. In addition, the HR/AA office is responsible for discrimination and sexual harassment training.

The Director of HR/AA meets regularly with the President and Provost and when necessary with other administrative leaders. The Director is a member of the President's Executive Council, Salary Review Committee, Faculty Affairs, University Shared Governance Steering Committee, the Council of Elders, Indian Program Directors, and the Research Compliance Committee.

## Policy 6.2 – Collective Bargaining

At MSU, there are 11 collective bargaining units representing approximately 822 of 1,092 classified and skilled-craft employees. Each collective-bargaining agreement is available [online](#).<sup>69</sup> OCHE selects a chief nego-

tiator who acts on behalf of, and coordinates, collective bargaining for the [MUS](#).<sup>70</sup> Collective-bargaining agreements are negotiated every two or four years. In the case of Montana Public Employees Association's (MPEA) four-year contract, there is a reopener after two years to renegotiate wages. Two-year contracts run concurrently with the legislative biennium. Some contracts include employees in other units of the MUS.

All classified employees are paid in accordance with the MUS Staff and Compensation Plan established by the MUS. Because of the constitutional autonomy granted to the university system, the BOR has some latitude to deviate from the State Pay Plan. MUS employees are on a different classification and pay system than other state employees; however, annual pay increases are traditionally comparable in amounts. MSU's bargaining units and the number of employees represented are as follows:

- MPEA is the largest union and represents the greatest cross section of employees (553), including administrative support, accounting, laboratory and research technicians and specialists, and police officer positions.
- Laborers (92) represent primarily custodians, as well as grounds keepers, maintenance workers, and equipment mechanics.
- Teamsters (110) represent custodial and food-service worker positions.
- Skilled craft employees include carpenters (16), electricians (7), MSU Motor Pool (3), operating engineers (14), painters (5), and plumbers (8)
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represent employees (14) at the Agricultural Research Center in Miles City including farm and ranch hands, equipment mechanics, equipment operators, maintenance workers, and administrative support.
- Nurses in the Student Health Service (3) are represented by the Montana Nurses Association (MNA).

At the MSU campus, faculty members have not been represented by a collective bargaining unit. However, in April 2009, faculty members voted for union representation of two bargaining units—one for tenured and tenure-track faculty members and the other for adjunct faculty members who are greater than .5 FTE. Faculty members on other campuses in the MUS are represented by collective-bargaining agreements.

The impact of the collective bargaining currently practiced is by no means detrimental to the quality and effectiveness of the university. Governance practices run smoothly with a mix of employees collaborating effectively regardless of union affiliation. The OCHE Recruitment & Retention Task Force is a prime example of constituencies (including unions) working together for the common good. As a result, pre-budget bargaining will take place within the MUS for the first time ever.

## Standard 6 – Summary and Analysis

### Strengths

- Shared Governance has been a feature of decision making at MSU for many years, but has received renewed emphasis over the past decade. It continues to develop, evolve and affect key decision making on critical university issues.
- The governance structure of the MUS has evolved and solidified over the past decade, as a result of the system-wide reorganization which was just in the initial phase of implementation during the last accreditation review.
- MSU's vision and strategic planning processes have provided a strong framework for planning at many levels within the university.

### Challenges

- Adequate salaries for faculty, staff and administration at all levels has become a growing challenge for the university, particularly in light of the rising cost of living in the Gallatin Valley. Recruitment, retention, and morale are all showing the effect of this issue.
- Though Shared Governance has been broadly implemented, many employees do not recognize its impact. MSU will work harder to communicate how the Shared Governance process at MSU works and what the impact has been, particularly in the budgeting process.
- Though MSU has had several communication activities that focused on the Five-year Vision Document, there still exists a need to better inform the campus community so it understands the role strategic planning is playing in the university's accomplishment of its priority goals.
- With two new faculty bargaining units, it will be important for the administration to establish a strong solid working relationship with the union bargaining team, and work effectively to develop a collective bargaining agreement that is both fair and reasonable.
- There exists a continuing need to further refine the working relationships between the Bozeman campus and the other MSU campuses, to take greater advantage of possible efficiencies through standardization of processes, programs and schedules.

## Standard 6 – Supporting Documentation

### Required Documentation

1. Board of Regents membership: <http://mus.edu/board/BORmembers.asp>
2. Organizational charts: <http://www.montana.edu/opa/orgcharts/>

### Required Exhibits

1. BOR bylaws: <http://mus.edu/borpol/bor200/201-7.pdf>
2. Board Policy Manual: <http://mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>
3. BOR meeting minutes: <http://mus.edu/board/meetings/minutes.asp>
4. Administrative Policy Manual: <http://www2.montana.edu/policy/>
5. Administrative position descriptions: [http://www.cupahr.org/surveys/files/salary0708/AdComp08%20Positions\\_%20Final\\_082807.xls](http://www.cupahr.org/surveys/files/salary0708/AdComp08%20Positions_%20Final_082807.xls)
6. Faculty/Staff Handbook: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwpn/Personnel/HiringRangeOnly07.pdf>
8. Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual: <http://www2.montana.edu/policy/personnel/>
9. Collective-bargaining agreements: <http://mus.edu/hr/cba/collbarg.asp>
10. Bylaws of Staff Senate: <http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/bylaws.pdf>
11. Staff Senate meeting minutes: <http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/minutes.html>
12. MSU committees: <http://www.montana.edu/opa/coms/>

### Other Materials

1. President's communications: <http://www.montana.edu/president/prescomm/>
2. Constitution and Bylaws of the Associated Students of Montana State University: <http://www.montana.edu/accreditation/accredLinks/st6/AsmsuBy-Laws.pdf>  
<http://www.montana.edu/accreditation/accredLinks/st6/ConstitutionAsmsu.pdf>

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### Endnotes for Standard 6

- <sup>1</sup> <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/25/20-25-301.htm>  
<http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/25/20-25-302.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www2.montana.edu/policy/>
- <sup>4</sup> [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/operating\\_policy/](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/operating_policy/)
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.montana.edu/leadershipmsu/>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/205-2-1.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://data.opi.state.mt.us/BILLS/mca/Constition/X/9.htm>
- <sup>8</sup> Note: At present, Montana has only one congressional district
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/board/BORmembers.asp>
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/201-7.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/board/BORinfo.asp>
- <sup>12</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/board/committees.asp>
- <sup>13</sup> <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/25/20-25-101.htm> through  
<http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/25/20-25-1310.htm>
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>
- <sup>15</sup> [http://www.mus.edu/board/Code\\_of\\_Expectations.asp](http://www.mus.edu/board/Code_of_Expectations.asp)
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.montana.edu/accreditation/accredLinks/st6/mus.edu/board/meetings/MeetingDates+Locations07.pdf>
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/board/BORinfo.asp>
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/204-2.pdf>

- 19 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/204-3.pdf>
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- 26 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/204-3.pdf>
- 27 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor900/bor900.asp>
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- 29 <http://www.montana.edu/upba/>
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- 31 <http://www.montana.edu/opa/orgcharts/President.pdf>
- 32 <http://www.montana.edu/brandtoolkit/pdf/integratedmarketingguide.pdf>
- 33 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor700/760.htm>
- 34 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/conflict\\_of\\_interest/coi\\_policy\\_04\\_2008.htm](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/conflict_of_interest/coi_policy_04_2008.htm)
- 35 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor700/770.htm>
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- 38 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/performance\\_evaluation\\_policy.htm](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/performance_evaluation_policy.htm)
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- 44 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/recruit\\_hiring/](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/recruit_hiring/)
- 45 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/salary\\_adjustment\\_guidelines\\_06\\_03\\_08.htm](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/salary_adjustment_guidelines_06_03_08.htm)
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- 47 <http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor800/802-8.pdf>
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- 49 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/faculty\\_handbook/fh200.html#220.00](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/faculty_handbook/fh200.html#220.00)
- 50 <http://www.montana.edu/level2/facultystaff.php>
- 51 Exhibit 1.15, Classified Employees Personnel Advisory Committee
- 52 Exhibit 3.26, ASMSU.
- 53 [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/faculty\\_handbook/fh200.html#220.00](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/faculty_handbook/fh200.html#220.00)
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