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*Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

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A Full-Scale  
Evaluation Committee Report

Montana State University - Bozeman  
Bozeman, Montana

October 5-7, 2009

*A Confidential Report Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
That Represents the Views of the Evaluation Committee*

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The funding constraints have resulted changes in the allocation of F&A revenues and have also caused a reliance on student enrollment for bonded revenue and equipment replacement. There is little flexibility in the plan should either student enrollment or research funding falter in a significant way.

### **Standard Nine – Institutional Integrity**

It is the expectation of Commission Standard Nine that an institution will adhere “...to the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public; in its teaching, scholarship, and service; in its treatment of its students, faculty, and staff; and in its relationships with regulatory and accrediting agencies.” In the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, compliance with these principles is a vigorous and sustained commitment on the part of all parties. The University’s own policies and procedures have been revised in light of new requirements – especially conflict of interest matters – established by the Board of Regents. In turn, MSU has provided training to nearly 800 of its employees, has put in place appropriate protocols for the reporting of potential breaches of policy, and has established mechanisms for the resolution of such issues. In all appropriate areas, the University is setting very high standards. Indeed, the Evaluation Committee repeatedly commented on the “culture of integrity” that characterizes the institution.

### **Commendations – MSU Bozeman**

1. Acknowledging the University’s attainment of the highest classification for research universities by the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching, the Evaluation Committee commends the faculty, staff, and administration for their extraordinarily high level of productivity and effectiveness. This represents creative and innovative use of resources particularly in light of the current fiscal challenges facing the University
2. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its stated and demonstrated commitment to undergraduate research and its effective efforts to increase annually the percentage of the student body that has this experience.
3. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its extraordinarily pervasive culture of collaboration across departments, units, and programs. This widespread and sustained commitment of faculty and staff offers rich and truly distinctive educational opportunities for students, teaching opportunities for faculty, and promising new areas of research and funding.
4. The Evaluation Committee commends the University for its development in 1992 of the “Facilities Condition Inventory” that tracks the variable condition of campus buildings. Not only

has this provided an objective, consistent, and systematic evaluation of the general condition and deferred maintenance profile of buildings at MSU Bozeman, it has been adopted elsewhere in Montana and has been recognized nationally as a best practice. (Standard 8.A.4)

### **Recommendations – MSU Bozeman**

1. The Evaluation Committee, recognizing the University's stated commitment to further development as a "Very High Research" institution (consistent with its mission), notes with concern the increasing tension between critical needs and available resources. It acknowledges that in any college or university, and particularly one aspiring to ever higher levels of achievement and recognition, there will always be a perceived lack of adequate funds or at least a perceived mismatch of allocated funds. Nonetheless, the Evaluation Committee respectfully recommends that either additional resources be generated to support such areas as research, graduate education, undergraduate research, faculty and staff development, and facilities management or that strategic reallocations be made to ensure such support and that the process by which this is achieved be consultative, participatory, and transparent consistent with the University's own commitment to those values. (Standard 7.B.1).
2. The Evaluation Committee acknowledges the steps that have been taken since the 2004 Regular Interim Report to clarify the mission, role, and operations of the affiliated campuses, but it recommends, nonetheless, that the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner to achieve better articulation among these campuses and to take advantage of possible efficiencies through standardization of processes, realignment of programs, and coordination of schedules. (Standards 6.A and 6.B)
3. Consistent with recommendations from the 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation Report and the 2004 Regular Interim Report, the Evaluation Committee again recommends the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner to develop comprehensive compensation policies and practices that will ensure competitive salaries and benefits for the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and administrators. This will, in turn, will serve to maintain the current high quality of operations as well as support further fulfillment of the University's stated goals. (Standards 4 and 7)
4. The Evaluation Committee acknowledges that significant progress has been made university-wide to define and publish expected student learning outcomes (especially in some professionally-oriented programs), but notes that this is, at present, still a largely decentralized and uneven process. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that further steps be taken promptly to ensure that the importance of educational assessment is communicated effectively

across all academic departments and programs (including the Core 2.0) and that steps be taken to ensure that all are: (a) defining and publishing expected student learning outcomes, (b) evaluating student achievement, (c) analyzing the results, and (d) providing evidence that changes in student learning experiences are made as needed. (Standard 2.B and Policy 2.2)