DRAFT: Montana State University Mission and Core Themes

The following items have been drafted over several months and much iteration by the MSU Planning Committee with participation from many individuals via an open forum, and on-line comments. We appreciate all of the input. This DRAFT is still in the comment phase, and we invite additional comments. The Mission and Core Themes will form an integral part of the University’s Year One Self-Study report which we hope to have completed by September 1, 2011.  

The Mission of Montana State University

Montana State University, the State's land-grant institution, educates students, creates knowledge and art, and serves communities, by integrating learning, discovery, and engagement.

Our Vision

Our vision for Montana State University is to build an institution as remarkable as our location. The beauty of our mountain home is a constant reminder that we are to be stewards of this place, and the people entrusted to our care.

We seek to be a community of scholars where students, faculty, and staff learn and grow together; where the discovery of knowledge and the creation of works of art are pursued; and where the campus boundaries do not define the limits of the communities we serve.

Our goal is to build upon our strengths, to strive for excellence and to achieve national recognition as the institution of choice for those seeking a student-centered environment distinguished by the integration of learning, discovery, and engagement.

Core Theme 1: Educate students

Two simple words in the mission statement are used to describe a vast array of educational efforts at Montana State University.

Educates Students

Montana State University provides courses of study for over 60 majors and many more programs. Over 14,000 students are enrolled on our campus. But the educational opportunities provided by the institution go far beyond resident instruction. Our students include people in communities across the State and around the globe. Some examples are:

- Montana State University has Extension Agents in every county in Montana who seek to serve their communities, in part, by bringing educational opportunities to the citizens of the State.
- The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center and the Jake Jabs Center for Entrepreneurship for the New West help develop businesses across the State and region.
• The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has partnered with Montana State University to reach communities through the Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program.
• The MSU Water Center partners with the Montana Watercourse, a statewide water education program that supports water resource decision making and stewardship.
• MontanaPBS operates from Montana State University (KUSM) and the University of Montana (KUFM) to provide public broadcasting coverage to over 150 communities in the State.
• Since 1997, student work-study and volunteer tutors have served over 2500 children in area schools through the MSU America Reads*America Counts program.
• Montana Shakespeare in the Parks has brought the greatest works of Shakespeare and others to Montana and neighboring states for 39 years.
• MSU’s National Teachers Enhancement Network (NTEN) offers online, graduate-level science courses to science teachers across the country.
• MSU empowers Native American individuals and communities.
  o The Indian Leadership Education and Development (I LEAD) Project is sponsored by the Department of Education.
  o MSU hosts the Native American Heritage Day in the fall and the Pow Wow in the spring to celebrate Native American culture.
• Students in MSU’s Engineers Without Borders group educate communities in Kenya on how to develop and sustain clean drinking water and sanitation facilities.
• Gallatin College Programs provide two-year programs in aviation, drafting, interior design, welding technology, bookkeeping, and medical assistant.

And education implies far more than just imparting knowledge. We strive to help our students become critical thinkers capable of making informed ethical decisions, ready to become active citizens and community leaders.

A. Traditional, Classroom-Based Instruction

Objective: Our entering students will complete degree programs.

Indicators:
- Proportion\(^1\) of students completing degree requirements.
- Student retention rates.

Objective: Our graduates will have achieved mastery in their major disciplines.

Indicators:
- Performance on standardized exams, such as professional exams, GRE scores.
- Performance on end of program assessments.
- Proportion of students completing degree requirements.

\(^1\) Indicators referencing “Number of students” have been replaced by “Proportion of students” throughout this document to account for overall enrollment changes.
Objective: Our graduates will be ready to become active citizens and leaders.

Indicators:
- **Performance on embedded assessments in selected courses.**
- Proportion of students completing campus leadership programs.
- Number of student hours on service activities.
- Proportion of students completing ethics training (or courses) for research.
- Change in score on select NSSE items between first year and senior student respondents.

Objective: Our graduates will have a multicultural and global perspective.

Indicators:
- **Performance on embedded assessments in selected courses.**
- Proportion of students participating in international learning experiences.
- Proportion of students earning International certifications.
- Change in score on select NSSE items between first year and senior student respondents.

Objective: Our graduates will understand the ways that knowledge and art are created and applied in a variety of disciplines.

Indicators:
- **Performance on embedded assessments in selected courses.**
- Number of courses taken outside student’s major discipline (transcript analysis).
- Scores on select NSSE items.

B. Out-of-the-Classroom Education

Objective: We will reach students across the globe through distance-delivered instruction.

Indicators:
- **Number of distance delivered courses.**
- **Number of non-degree (e.g., certificate) programs available via distance delivery.**
- Proportion of students taking distance-delivered courses.
- **Number of students outside Montana taking distance-delivered courses.**

Objective: Communities and external stakeholders benefit from collaboration partnerships with MSU.

Indicators:
- **Number of technical and professional conferences held on the MSU campus.**
- **Number of Extension programs, publications and workshops.**
- **Number of community partnerships.**
- Proportion of students and volunteers participating in America Reads*America Counts program.
- **Number of cities visited by Montana Shakespeare in the Parks.**
- **Number of training events sponsored by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center.**
Core Theme 2: Create Knowledge and Art

One of the purposes of any university is to be a place where the boundaries of human knowledge are continually being expanded, and Montana State University certainly has a strong focus on the creation of knowledge through research and discovery. We also support the scholarly work associated with the creation of art, acknowledging the significant role of the arts in society.

Objective: Students, faculty, and staff create knowledge and art that is communicated widely.

Indicators – Faculty and Staff (e.g., research and extension staff):
- Number of peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations.
- Number of juried exhibitions, performances, creative readings, or other shows.
- Magnitude of externally funded research expenditures.
- Number of Extension publications and workshops.

Indicators - Students:
- Number of student research and/or creative experiences (e.g., enrollments in Undergraduate Research or Guided Research courses, participation in Undergraduate Scholars Program, number of paid undergraduate laboratory workers.)
- Number of undergraduate and graduate student publications and presentations.
- Number of graduate theses and dissertations produced.
- Self-reported participation in research as reported in NSSE.

Core Theme 3: Serve Communities

When the Extension Service was established in 1914, the focus was on getting research on new methods in agriculture communicated to rural communities. The idea that the scholarly work of the institution needs to be applied to solve real problems is still at the heart of community service, but the scope of the service activities has expanded significantly, and even the definition of “community” is evolving. At Montana State University we embrace a broad definition of community, and are eager to find ways to see our students engaged with those communities.

In 2009 Montana State University was listed on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement. In 2011, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has awarded Montana State University its community engagement classification.

Recent examples of community service activities include:
- The Montana Agricultural Extension Service continues to use the results of agricultural research to benefit farmers (and a whole lot more).
• Since 1997, student work-study and volunteer tutors have served over 2500 children in area schools through the MSU America Reads*America Counts program.\(^2\)

• Thousands of MSU students provide service to hundreds of Bozeman area non-profit, school and governmental organizations each year. This effort is coordinated by the MSU Office for Community Involvement (www.montana.edu/comminv/index.html).

• The Early Childhood Education Distance Partnership program helps Head Start teachers and early childhood educators in tribal communities throughout Montana complete bachelor's degrees from MSU.

• Bobcat student athletes have logged over 14,000 hours of community service through the A.L.L. (Academics, Leadership, Life Skills) Challenge program.

• The Western Transportation Institute uses research to find solutions to problems and improve transportation in rural areas. WTI also sponsors the Bridges and Dams outreach program to demonstrate engineering principles to elementary school students, and partners with the MSU Engineers Without Borders student chapter to conduct workshops in elementary school classrooms.

• MSU Science Saturdays provides kids aged 8-13 with hands-on science and research activities. More than 900 Montana children have participated since 2008.

• The Fire Services Training School trains community and volunteer firefighters from all of Montana.

• The Agricultural Marketing Policy Center provides applied research and education on agricultural marketing and related policy issues for farm and ranch managers and public decision makers.

• MSU's TechLink helps organizations commercialize new technologies.

• The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center helps Montana manufacturers increase profits by improving business processes.

Note: Many of the examples listed here have been extracted from much larger lists at:

• www.montana.edu/about/outreach/communityengagement.html
• www.montana.edu/about/outreach/k12.html

A. Education as a Public Service

Objective: Degree programs are available to all qualified students.

Indicators:

• Proportion of students who receive need-based financial aid.
• Growth in Gallatin College program enrollments.
• Increase in on-line educational opportunities offered.
• The percentage of students with financial need that have 90% or more of the need met through grants and loans.

\(^2\) This bullet item appeared in Core Theme 1 as well. There is significant overlap between the Core Themes of Educate Students and Serve Communities – but repetition has been minimized in this document for the benefit of the reader.
• Enrollment of resident students.
• Enrollment of veterans.
• Number of transfer students.

**Objective:** We provide a wide range of educational opportunities to a variety of students.

Indicators – Formal Education:
• Proportion of enrolled students from underserved populations.
• Proportion of graduates from underserved populations.
• Proportion of students enrolled in distance education courses.

Indicators – Informal Education:
• Number of programs offered in underserved communities.
• Number of Extension programs offered.
• Number of participants in Extension programs.
• Number of outreach activities to Montana communities reported by faculty.

**B. Service to the MSU Community**
**Objective:** Our students, staff, and faculty reach in to build the university community.

Indicators:
• Proportion of students choosing theme floor (community) options in on-campus residences.
• Proportion of students participating in Undergraduate Scholars Program.
• Number of faculty participating in Undergraduate Scholars Program.
• Proportion of students participating in campus athletic programs.
• Number of faculty participating in Freshman Convocation.
• Number of faculty teaching University Seminar courses.
• Number of faculty and staff participating in move-in day activities.

**C. Service by the MSU Community**
**Objective:** Our students, staff, and faculty reach out to engage and serve communities.

Student Indicators:
• Number of hours served by Bobcat athletes through the A.L.L. Challenge.
• Proportion of students taking Core courses identified as offering engagement opportunities.
• Proportion of students participating in identified groups focused on meeting societal needs.
• Number of identified student groups focused on meeting societal needs.

Faculty and Staff Indicators:
• Number of faculty indicating community service activities in the Faculty Activity Database.
• Number of faculty and staff participating in community outreach activities.
• Number of organizations assisted through TechLink and MilLink.
• Number of organizations assisted by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center.
Core Theme 4: Integrate Learning, Discovery and Engagement

In the past Montana State University set a goal to include a research experience in each student’s undergraduate experience to help our students experience knowledge acquisition, synthesis and analysis. We now want to extend this to include engagement with communities as well. We seek to increase opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in ways that serve others, and we intend to build learning, discovery, and engagement into courses across the curriculum.

Objective: Each graduate will have experiences that integrate learning, discovery and engagement.

Indicators:
- Number of Core 2.0 courses that are updated to include engagement activities.
- Number of programs requiring Core 2.0 courses that include engagement activities.
- Number of majors requiring integrative capstone courses.

Objective: Outreach activities will educate students and address the needs of the communities we serve.

Indicators – Students:
- Proportion of students completing service learning courses.
- Number of identified Core courses offering engagement opportunities.
- Proportion of students taking Core courses identified as offering engagement opportunities.
- Number of identified student groups focused on meeting societal needs.
- Proportion of students participating in identified groups focused on meeting societal needs.

Indicators – Faculty and Staff (e.g., research and extension staff):
- Number of faculty serving as conference session chairs (as reported in Faculty Activity Data)
- Number of Extension programs offered.
- Number of outreach activities to Montana communities reported by faculty.
- Number of faculty offering service learning courses.
- Number of faculty assisting student groups focused on meeting societal needs.

Objective: Students, faculty, and staff create knowledge and art that addresses societal needs.

Indicators – Faculty and Staff (e.g., research and extension staff):
- Number of community partnerships.
- Number of Extension publications and workshops.

Indicators - Students:
- Proportion of students completing identified courses that offer engagement opportunities.
- Number of identified student groups focused on meeting societal needs.
- Proportion of students participating in identified groups focused on meeting societal needs.

Objective: MSU is a community characterized by synergistic relationships within and across disciplines, roles and functions.
Indicators

- Number of opportunities for faculty/student interaction and engagement.
- Number of undergraduate research projects reported in Faculty Activity Data.
- Number of undergraduate student publications and presentations
- Number of Core courses enhanced to include engagement activities.

Core Theme 5: Stewardship

The people of Montana have a passion for the land because of its agricultural resource, its recreational opportunities, and its beauty. That passion to sustain this place is only amplified by the scars that remain from past exploitative land use practices. At Montana State University we not only enjoy an inspiring location, but a place where creative minds can come together for discovery. Our motto, Mountains and Minds, is a succinct description of what we love about our institution. Core Theme #5 focuses on what we need to do to be good stewards of this remarkable place.

A. Stewardship of the public trust.
Objective: The public trusts the institution to operate openly and use resources wisely.

Indicators:
- Number of University committees and councils with one or more members from the community.
- Number of faculty engaged in public outreach (communications) programs about the University.
- Amount of Annual Fund donations.
- Number of University committees and councils with publicly posted agendas and minutes.

B. Stewardship of public resources.
Objective: Our publicly provided resources are used efficiently and effectively.

Indicators:
- Degree of alignment of budget and planning.
- Faculty productivity indicators (e.g., comparison with Delaware data set).
- Student performance measures such as time to degree, retention rate, and graduation rate.

C. Stewardship of human resources.
Objective: The faculty and staff are well-qualified and supported.

Indicators:
- Percent of faculty with the terminal degree appropriate to their field.
- Ratio of average MSU faculty salary to national peers.
- Number of participants in faculty/staff development programs.
- Number of faculty awards reported in Faculty Activity Data.

D. Stewardship of natural resources.
Objective: Resources are used efficiently and sustainably.
Indicators:

- Annual energy savings estimates due to energy conservation projects.
- Number of energy conservation projects.
- Number of water conservation projects.
- Number of students, faculty, and staff participating in campus sustainability programs (e.g. ASMSU Sustainability Center)