NWCCU Mid-Cycle Report
University of Montana-Missoula

Submitted August 24, 2026

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III. Mission Fulfillment

Context

As we prepared for this mid-cycle review, the University of Montana (UM) navigated a significant leadership transition: President Bodnar's departure in February 2026 and the recruitment and appointment of President Jeremiah Shinn, who joined the University in July 2026. The stated goal of the presidential search was to identify a leader who would sustain momentum in research growth, enrollment recovery, student achievement, and collaborative shared governance, areas where UM has made meaningful gains and where continuity of direction is essential.

UM's mission, vision statements, and core values, called Priorities for Action (PFAs) have remained the same since our last accreditation visit. The mission statement articulates UM's identity as a high-access, public research institution, and the vision statement focuses on "*fostering inclusive prosperity and democracy while creating new knowledge and ways of learning."* The vision statement and PFAs have been the cornerstone of our identity and drivers of our institutional strategy.

From the start of his tenure at UM, President Bodnar identified the need to establish a mechanism to drive rigorous execution of institutional priorities as well as the need for a predictable, annual operating rhythm that would emphasize continuous improvement in the planning, budgeting, implementation, and assessment components of the University's efforts toward mission fulfillment. The Office for Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI) was established in December 2021 and oversees the strategic operating rhythm (SOR), a defined set of planning, budgeting, implementation and assessment interactions that together advance UM's operating performance. OSPI coordinates efforts across the various offices and committees involved in each aspect of the cycle, aligning institutional processes and decision points. The SOR has largely remained the same since the last accreditation cycle, with small adjustments noted in the sections below.

Planning

UM and Sector Playbooks

UM has deliberately chosen an iterative, annual approach to strategic planning, as expressed in our Annual Playbook, a key component of the SOR. The Playbook names UM's institutional objectives, developed in response to challenges and opportunities identified internally (unit-level Strategic Outlooks) and externally (Education Advisory Board (EAB) State of the Sector report) that support the University's mission, vision and PFAs. Each institutional objective has a set of projects associated with it. Each project has stated outcomes and progress indicators to help track their evolution. The institutional objectives and projects in the Annual Playbook help drive tangible progress toward mission fulfillment, as measured by the University's key performance indicators

(KPIs).

As the strategic planning process expressed in the Annual Playbook has become engrained in our institutional culture, various Vice Presidents have developed playbooks for their sectors to ensure adequate attention is given to sector-specific work that aligns with our institutional direction. Academic Affairs and Research & Creative Scholarship have both developed Playbooks they continue to iterate, and the Operations & Finance sector is actively working on developing one.

Budgeting

Process and Timeline Adjustments

Several adjustments are underway to clarify budgeting processes within the SOR. OSPI worked with the Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis to adjust the timing of budget planning and allocations, as well as to develop a budget scenario planning process to help campus leaders productively anticipate and address budget uncertainties. Allocation decisions are being made while the president and executive team are developing the following year's Playbook to ensure these decisions are aligned.

Scenario Planning

Budget scenario planning asks sector leaders and deans how they would handle both budget surplus and reduction situations over a three-year period. The exercise asks leaders to connect each proposed action to address the reduction or surplus back to UM's PFAs to indicate how these decisions connect to institutional strategy. Two years ago, the planning period moved from spring to the fall semester to separate the process from budget allocations and allow more time for discussion before decisions are made. This process proved to be extremely valuable this past year when UM lost its president halfway through the academic year. The vice presidents were able to make allocation decisions collectively.

Role of the University Budget Committee

The University Budget Committee's (UBC) role in providing input on budget processes is more clearly defined. The committee reviews the Vice President's budget prioritizations and recommends where funds could be added/reallocated and/or cut, depending on the situation, to the president as he considers funding allocations. Representatives from the UBC also sit on the Flagship Fund Advisory Group who advise on the allocation of these strategic funds.

The Flagship Fund

A small strategic investment fund, the Flagship Fund supports proposals put forth by

UM staff and faculty that support a given theme that aligns with an institutional priority. Last year's call for proposals invited initiatives that "prioritize wellbeing, civic engagement, and career readiness as critical components of the UM student journey." Over the past four years, the Flagship Fund supported 24 proposals (15 from Academic Affairs and nine from Student Affairs and Enrollment Management).

Implementation and Assessment

Playbook Project Implementation

Each institution-level project featured in the Annual Playbook is assigned one or more project leads and an executive sponsor. OSPI staff work closely with project leads in developing and carrying out an implementation plan for their project. The implementation plans include outcomes and progress indicators, which connect to our institutional KPIs. In addition to taking actions to achieve outcomes, project leads reflect and report on achievements, barriers, adjustments and lessons learned. A mid-year review by Vice Presidents and senior leadership and an annual report on Annual Playbook projects helps decision makers and the campus community understand the status of each project undertaken in the past year.

Strategic Enrollment Planning

UM conducted a Strategic Enrollment Planning process in 2021-2022, which resulted in the development and funding of eight new or enhanced academic programs and two co-curricular strategies. We continue to assess the results of these investments and regularly report the results to the University Assessment and Accreditation Committee (UAAC) and University Leadership Council. At the end of the third year of implementation, the academic programs have an unduplicated net impact on overall enrollment of 659 students against a target of 419, and six of the eight met or exceeded their net overall enrollment targets. The co-curricular strategies have an unduplicated net impact on overall enrollment of 149 students against a target of 97, and both met or exceeded their targets.

Key Performance Indicators and Metric Trees

In the past two years, we have reexamined and revised UM's institutional KPIs. Updates reflect a prioritization of indicators that connect to our mission, vision and PFAs: total headcount, degrees and certificates awarded, research expenditures, employee turnover, operating margin and community engagement (see Appendix B). We have built data dashboards to track each KPI, apart from the last one which is a Carnegie elective designation.

In addition to KPIs, we've also developed KPI metric trees (see Appendix B) to be clear about the top leading indicators to track progress toward improving our KPIs. We have developed dashboards from some and continue to build data assets where appropriate.

As we begin to socialize the metric trees with the campus community, we are designating key leaders to track progress so we can be more agile in our decision-making and strategic responses.

Peer Institutions

Also in the past two years, we revisited and updated our list of peer institutions. The UAAC conducted a rigorous selection process using UM's newly established KPIs (headcount, degrees awarded, and research expenditures), a set of metrics tied to our vision (Pell eligible, race/ethnicity, and part-time), Carnegie Classifications (Social and Economic Mobility, R1, and Community Engagement), and several basic institutional characteristics (e.g., size, mix). The process resulted in the selection of 10 universities representing regional and national, as well as comparable and aspirational, institutional peers (see Appendix B):

- New Mexico State University-Main Campus
- South Dakota State University
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
- University of Idaho
- University of Louisville
- University of Maine
- University of Maryland-Baltimore County
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of Wyoming
- Wright State University-Main Campus.

We are now deliberating on how we might use this set of peer institutions given the proposed change in NWCCU accreditation standards. Selecting these peer institutions helped us define what is important for us to measure and how we can use national metrics and classifications in our self-assessment of student achievement.

IV. Student Achievement

Context

The University of Montana evaluates student achievement as part of a continuous institutional commitment to assessment, self-reflection, planning, and improvement. Consistent with NWCCU standards, UM identifies meaningful indicators of student success, publicly reports key measures, disaggregates outcomes to better understand equity gaps, and uses evidence to inform decision-making, strategic planning, resource allocation, and the development of student support initiatives. Student achievement data are not viewed as compliance measures alone. They provide important information for understanding institutional effectiveness and identifying opportunities to better serve students.

UM's student achievement profile must be understood in light of its dual identity as both a R1 university and a high-access public institution with an embedded two-year college (Missoula College) that falls under UM's accreditation. Carnegie classifies UM as "Research 1: Very High Research Spending and Doctorate Production" and places the institution within the "Higher Access, Medium Earnings" category. This combination is central to UM's mission and distinctive among public universities. UM advances research, scholarship and graduate education, conducts workforce development for the state and region and offers the people of Montana and beyond broad access to quality education at the certificate, associate's and bachelor's levels. The institution serves substantial numbers of Montana residents, including first-generation students, Pell-eligible students, Native American students, veterans, transfer students, adult learners, and other students who have historically faced barriers to educational attainment.

UM does not interpret student achievement data solely through the lens of institutional selectivity or student characteristics. Rather, the institution examines achievement indicators as measures of how effectively its educational environment supports student learning, progression, persistence, degree completion, and post-graduation success. UM uses data to evaluate whether institutional systems, advising structures, academic pathways, financial supports, and student success initiatives help students navigate their educational journeys and achieve their goals. This approach reflects UM's commitment to educational excellence and equitable opportunity. We recognize that student achievement is shaped not only by who students are when they arrive, but also by the quality of the support, opportunities, and experiences they encounter while enrolled.

Student Achievement Measures

UM's public-facing Office of Institutional Research website publishes student achievement information including Key Performance Indicators, Common Data Set and Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange reports, census enrollment reports, dashboards, benchmarking and peer pages, and Montana University System

dashboards. These sources include enrollment, retention, graduation, degree and certificate completion, demographic composition, and selected post-graduation outcomes.

11,064 **Total Headcount** *Fall 2025, two-year + four-year*	**3,178** **Degrees & Certificates Awarded** *FY2025*	**$150 million** **Research Expenditures** *FY2025*
77% **First-Year Retention** *Fall 2024 cohort into Fall 2025*	**53%** **Six-Year Graduation Rate** *Fall 2019 first-time, full-time cohort*	**44%** **Pell Six-Year Graduation Rate** *Fall 2019 cohort*

Current published indicators can be found in Appendix B.

UM uses these measures in institutional planning, accreditation reporting, student success strategy development, advising reform, program review, enrollment planning, and executive-level monitoring. Since 2024, UM has expanded publicly available dashboards and has continued building internal Tableau and Edify infrastructure to move from static reporting toward more timely, actionable institutional data availability, analysis and use in decision-making.

Disaggregation and Equity Gaps

UM disaggregates student achievement indicators by institutionally meaningful categories such as race/ethnicity, gender, Pell status, first-generation status (when available), residency and year of study. Publicly available UM and Montana University System (MUS) sources support analysis by race/ethnicity, Pell status, gender, degree level, institution, and major.

The clearest publicly available equity gap appears in completion by financial need (Pell). For the fall 2019 first-time, full-time bachelor's cohort, UM's six-year graduation rate was 53% overall; Pell recipients graduated at 44%. UM's student body composition makes these gaps especially mission critical. In fall 2025, 33% of the student body were first-generation students, 31% of undergraduate students were Pell-eligible, 69% of students were Montana residents, and 817 Native American students were enrolled, as measured using state-level categories. Native American enrollment has increased by more than 40% since 2018.

These data suggest that UM's student achievement work should continue to focus on the points where access and completion diverge: first-year retention, academic credit momentum, gateway course completion, advising consistency, removing financial barriers, academic recovery, transfer pathways, adult learner re-entry, and culturally responsive support. Through a combination of improved dashboards, advising reforms,

and program-level analyses and action plans, UM will continue striving to improve Pell student graduation rates (as in this example) and continue using student achievement data to identify trends and develop solutions.

When we compare UM's student achievement data to those of our revised set of peer institutions, we conclude that UM is distinctive because we combine R1 research status with a high-access mission. Peer comparisons should thus not normalize lower outcomes, but sharpen institutional questions like: where is UM outperforming institutions with similar access profiles, where is it underperforming, and what institutional practices explain the differences?

Post-Graduation Success

UM uses multiple sources to understand post-graduation success, including the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First-Destination survey, public online data sources, Steppingblocks, program-level reporting, and emerging Edify-linked data infrastructure. UM's public career outcomes page follows First-Destination conventions and reports outcomes within six months of graduation.

We acknowledge the limitations of these data. The Experiential Learning and Career Success public-facing UM Student Career Outcomes webpage states that response rates vary significantly across years and that the data may not accurately represent the entire graduating population. That limitation is not unique to UM, and it affects how confidently the institution can make claims about longer term employment, salary, graduate school enrollment, and experiential learning outcomes.

Since 2024, UM has made progress by strengthening career outcomes infrastructure, connecting Steppingblocks data to programs through Edify, and developing better program-level information for academic units. This is especially important in the context of forthcoming federal regulations, where programs increasingly need reliable information about student debt, earnings, completion, licensure, and employment outcomes.

UM's next stage of work in graduate outcomes is to: 1) improve survey response rates, triangulate survey data with administrative and public-source data, and 2) make post-graduation outcomes more usable for program review, graduate program planning, advising, career readiness work, and institutional decision-making. Our current post graduate outcome data show:

	Post Graduation Placement		Wage Premium
2019	71% employed within 6 months	HS	$32,000 median starting salary
2025	91% employed within 6 months	UM	$50,000 median starting salary

Top Industries Among Alumni

Healthcare	Education	Information Technology	Government	Finance

The UM graduate median starting salary is $50,000 compared to $32,000 for high school graduates, an $18,000 median wage premium. The average annual salary for all living alumni is $85,000. It is important to note that of our nearly 65,000 living alumni, one-third live in Montana, a low-wage economy with a relatively large share of skilled trades, construction, agriculture, natural resources and public-sector employment.

V. Programmatic Assessment

In 2024, the University of Montana received the following recommendation from our EIE:

> *Develop an inclusive and integrated University-wide framework to assess student learning outcomes at the program and degree level that is distinct from the use of student achievement data and metrics (Std. 1.C.7)*

At the time programs engaged in program assessment at the department level with varying levels of attention to programmatic student learning. Connections between program learning outcomes and institutional goals were limited, and program learning assessment was separate from the broader student achievement metrics the university tracked for accreditation and accountability purposes. Assessment of the General Education Program was similarly underdeveloped, with no coordinated framework for measuring student learning in gateway or writing-intensive courses. Institutional Learning Outcomes had not yet been defined, and the infrastructure needed to support faculty-led, sustainable assessment across academic programs (clear procedural guidance, professional development, and integration with the course catalog) was not yet in place.

Since then, UM has undertaken three major initiatives to improve our approach to programmatic assessment and to address Recommendation 2 from our last accreditation visit.

- The revision of three assessment and review processes under the banner of the Integrated Assessment and Review Framework.
- The development and adoption of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) as a measure for the broad assessment of our General Education Program (in progress).
- The development and publication of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for all programs listed in the UM course catalogs.

Integrated Assessment and Review Framework

The Integrated Assessment and Review Framework arose from an extensive redesign of our seven-year cycle of Program Review required by MUS Board of Regents Policy (BOR) for the 2026-2027 academic year. This redesign was in response to both internal needs for more frequent reviews and revisions to state policies and procedures. UM's new Program Review process is now composed of the following formative reviews:

- Academic Portfolio Review (APR) monitors the health of all programs in our academic portfolio via enrollment and completion data.
- Student Learning Assessment (SLA), formerly known as Program Assessment,

asks academic units to review student learning across their programs to ensure students are meeting PLOs.
- The Montana University System is using UM's APR as a model as the Board of Regents (BOR) considers revising program review system-wide.

Learning Outcomes

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In 2024-2025, UM's Provost initiated a process to develop Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that articulate core learning goals for all undergraduate students at UM. Draft ILOs were developed collaboratively with the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC), drawing on existing Program Outcomes, General Education Outcomes, and mapped to Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Value Rubrics to test assessment. Broad campus input was sought, including stakeholder outreach asking what skills were key for UM students, regardless of major.

The AAC engaged in an iterative prioritization process to arrive at the current proposed set of outcomes with the intention of seeking Faculty Senate endorsement in fall 2026. The final set of ILOs are organized under three overarching outcomes, each supported by specific pillars and assessed through General Education course groups:

Inquire and Analyze

- AAC&U Rubric Pillars: Creative and Critical Thinking; Information Literacy; Quantitative Literacy
- Assessed through: Mathematics; Literary and Artistic Studies; Historical Studies; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences (Gen Ed Groups II, V, VI, VII, XI)

Communicate and Create

- AAC&U Rubric Pillars: Problem Solving; Ethical Reasoning; Technology Literacy
- Assessed through: English Writing Skills; Expressive Arts; Ethics and Human Values (Gen Ed Groups I, IV, VIII)

Connect and Participate

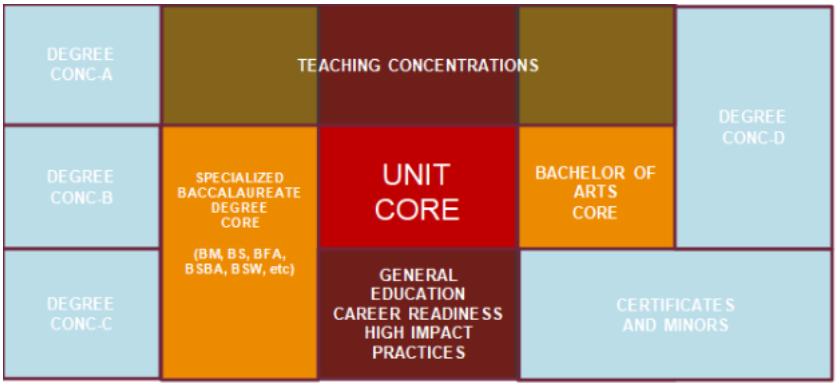
- AAC&U Rubric Pillars: Civic Engagement; Global Learning; Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- Assessed through: Modern and Classical Languages; Democracy and Citizenship; Cultural and International Diversity (Gen Ed Groups III, IX, X)

Once the Faculty Senate endorses the ILOs, part of the SLA will involve mapping them to general education and program outcomes.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Since 2024, UM has been working hard to articulate PLOs for publication in our course catalog. The previous program assessment framework requested that academic units develop outcomes at the degree level, not for each academic program. In fall 2025, the faculty of each academic unit were tasked with collaboratively creating PLOs for all programs that reflect assessable shared disciplinary outcomes that reflect the values of their unit. These will be published in the 2027-2028 catalog after the completion of the first round of SLA in spring 2027.

To develop distinct PLOs for each program they teach, units were encouraged to review their most recent Assessment Report from 2022 on the Department Reports page. Specially accredited programs were asked to submit the outcomes required by their accrediting body. We also encouraged them to consider how PLOs might be shared between programs. The image below illustrates the suggested approach to overlapping learning outcomes across an academic unit with examples of how each program contributes to the shared outcomes.



The unit core outcomes represented by the central red box anchors the shared PLOs of the unit derived from the unit's mission and values. The orange boxes represent unique outcomes of different degrees or majors in the unit with PLOs that are unique to each. The light blue boxes demonstrate how concentrations, minors, and certificate outcomes can nest within the unit's larger portfolio. The top horizontal band shows how outcomes from other units might overlap and reinforce learning across programs. This example includes a teacher preparation concentration (for example, History Education) and participation in general education. The layout emphasizes that programs share connections within the unit and externally, while also having outcomes that make the program distinct.

Student Learning Assessment

Analyses, Self-Assessment and Reflection

Analysis and reflection in response to NWCCU Recommendation 2 (July 2024) related

to NWCCU Standard 1.C.7 (2020) were led by university assessment personnel and conducted through the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) and the University Assessment and Accreditation Committee (UAAC). Additional campus stakeholders involved include academic officers, Faculty Senators, Office of Strategic Planning & Implementation staff, and faculty and program directors responsible for biennial assessment reporting. Participants reviewed the standard and recommendation and the previous biennial departmental assessment process. Subsequent discussions clarified NWCCU expectations, identified disciplinary themes in assessment approaches impacting the measurement of student learning outcomes and faculty engagement in campus processes, and recognized the need to redesign biennial assessment efforts to focus on academic programs rather than academic units and to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to assessment of learning outcomes.

As the result of this review process we:

- refocused biennial departmental assessment as biennial SLA rooted in PLOs rather than broad departmental outcomes for an entire academic unit
- developed new narrative templates and revised the curriculum map template that comprise the Assessment (see Appendix D),
- piloted the revised process and documents with two assessment cases (see Appendices), and
- revised review sheets to provide programs feedback from the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC).

The SLA provides a structured opportunity for program directors and faculty to collaboratively examine how well students are achieving PLOs and how effectively the program curriculum supports achievement over time. Ongoing curriculum mapping and reflection support this new assessment practice.

The curriculum map template asks programs to list their PLOs and to identify for each required course where students learn the content and where the outcome is assessed using the framework keys detailed below. To accommodate disciplinary differences, the template supports both mastery and creating innovation learning frameworks. Previously mastery was the only framework option in the curriculum map template. The template also now requires programs to indicate Institutional Learning Outcomes covered by their required courses and provides the option to indicate alignment of core curriculum courses with campus career readiness competencies. These competencies were adopted by Faculty Senate in 2024 for required application of one to three competencies in general education courses, and the optional adoption of competencies throughout the curriculum. Examples of the curriculum map and narrative templates developed to accommodate the practices and methodologies of different disciplines can be found in Appendix D.

The AAC has updated its review process to provide more granular and useful feedback aligned with the new SLA process and documents. For example, reviewers are now

asked, “Are the PLOs aligned with the unit mission and the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes?” An internal notes section was added for the AAC to identify longitudinal themes in assessment.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: School of Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training (IPAT)

The IPAT Bachelor of Science in Integrative Physiology, Health and Exercise Science program is at an active moment of self-examination: it underwent substantial curricular redesign beginning in fall 2024, consolidating four undergraduate concentrations into a single pathway, and adopted revised PLOs in fall 2025. These PLOs were published in the 2026-2027 edition of the catalog as an example of how future editions will display outcomes for all programs. As a result, the pilot assessment reflects a program in early-stage implementation of both a new curriculum and a new set of PLOs, and the evidence gathered is correspondingly foundational rather than longitudinal.

This program’s assessment was completed using the Professional and Clinical narrative template, submitted by program director Valerie Moody in April 2026. The program completed the revised required curriculum map alongside the narrative, together comprising the full SLA submission. The curriculum map for the BS in Health and Exercise Science documents PLO coverage across required core courses and was completed using a modified format that reflects IPAT's highly experiential, laboratory-based curriculum. The map identifies course-level assessment strategies and benchmarks for each of the six PLOs and aligns required courses with all three areas of UM's proposed Institutional Learning Outcomes: Inquire and Analyze, Communicate and Create, and Connect and Participate.

All six PLOs were represented across multiple required courses, and all courses were mapped to at least one proposed ILO area, with many courses aligned to all three. The curriculum map also documents Career Readiness Competency (CRC) coverage across both required core curriculum and elective courses, with instructor-identified and student-perceived alignment reported separately. This parallel documentation of faculty and student perceptions, drawn from fall 2025 course evaluations, represents an early attempt to triangulate coverage data, though response rates were low enough that the program acknowledged the data should be interpreted with caution.

Assessment evidence gathered for the pilot was limited in scope but meaningful as a baseline. Direct evidence of student learning was drawn primarily from fall 2025 course-level assessments like unit projects, quizzes, capstone projects, group presentations, clinical testing, literature reviews, and portfolio selections. Overall, initial findings indicate that students are performing at or above benchmark levels across all PLOs assessed, and the program noted that direct and indirect evidence showed general alignment between faculty and student perceptions of which outcomes were addressed in courses.

Faculty engagement with the process was genuine and candid. The narrative reflects substantive faculty reflection on both the limits of the current evidence base to assess PLOs and the program's trajectory. The program director acknowledged that assessment data collection had been paused for the previous two years during the curricular redesign, that course evaluation response rates were too low to draw firm conclusions, and that the connection between assessment evidence and program improvement decisions is still developing. This level of transparency is consistent with the reflective intent of the new narrative template. Faculty also identified several concrete next steps, including integrating PLOs and Career Readiness Competencies into standard syllabus language, developing rubrics for capstone-level assignments, and building a more intentional and consistent annual data collection cycle. The program also signaled that expanding the assessment framework to include the MS and PhD programs in Integrative Physiology is a near-term priority.

Based on findings from the pilot, the program identified several directions for the next two-year assessment cycle. These include establishing a clear schedule for collecting and analyzing course-level assessment data, deepening the analysis of internship survey results to more directly address PLO attainment, and continuing to monitor PLO and CRC coverage as integration into syllabi matures. The program also noted its intention to pursue Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accreditation for the BS program in the coming years, which it expects will significantly shape and formalize the assessment process going forward.

One component under active consideration as part of the revised Integrated Review Framework is a faculty expertise audit embedded in the curriculum map during the culminating seven-year Program Review. The existing curriculum map template includes a column for programs to document which tenure-track faculty are qualified to teach each required course. IPAT's pilot submission did not complete this column, as it is not yet required. However, if institutionalized, this feature would allow programs to document the relationship between faculty depth and curriculum coverage over time, surface potential gaps in instructional capacity as faculty transitions occur and support long-term planning. Given IPAT's acknowledged concern about anticipated faculty retirements and the program's ambitions toward external accreditation, this component may be particularly useful for the program in future cycles.

Case Study 2: General Education Mathematics

The General Education mathematics program was selected because its courses are multi-section and high enrollment, taken by students from nearly every degree program, across both the mountain and Missoula College campuses and in asynchronous online sections.

Two terms are used throughout this section and they are not interchangeable. *General education mathematics* refers to the program: the courses approved to satisfy the

University's Group II Mathematics requirement and the outcomes that requirement certifies. *Gateway mathematics* refers to the courses themselves: the entry-level, college-level mathematics courses that carry the Group II designation and serve as the first, and for most students the only, college-level mathematics course their degree program requires. For this pilot, general education mathematics is the program under assessment, and the gateway courses are where its outcomes are taught and measured.

Although all general education designated math courses meet the Group II Mathematics outcomes, approaches to curricula vary between individual instructors, academic units (UM Math Department and Missoula College), and institutions across the Montana University System using common numbered courses, producing specific course-level student success markers. This variability made gateway math both a more complex assessment context and a more important one: the courses serve as a foundational requirement for students across programs, meaning that gaps in student learning or inconsistencies in curricular design have institution-wide consequences for student persistence and success.

Two additional factors made the timing of this pilot well suited to the revised SLA framework. UM was beginning a process of reviewing and revising how it assesses general education courses, and math was among the first programs selected for that conversation. Additionally, campus leaders in mathematics spent the 2025-2026 academic year engaged in a state-level math pathways project aimed at aligning math requirements by major across Montana University System campuses to improve credit transfer. That project was different from this assessment pilot, but the two overlapped: both took a close look at mathematics learning outcomes, one across the system and the other within UM. Because the same person led both efforts, the pilot was positioned to build on the pathways work. While the pathways project focused on course content, determining with discipline faculty what mathematics courses each major requires, the assessment pilot took up the next question: not what the courses should contain, but how well they work and for whom.

The assessment process for gateway math was structured around a central inquiry: what pedagogical strategies are already in place in gateway math courses, are they working, and for whom are they working? To explore these questions, the project team engaged gateway math coordinators in iterative conversations about outcomes and course design, obtained and analyzed disaggregated DFW rates (students who received a D, F, or withdrew) and completion data, designed and distributed student attrition surveys, and gathered qualitative data from instructors about students who did not successfully complete their courses.

A foundational step in the assessment process was developing shared learning outcomes across gateway math courses. Working with coordinators from both the Mountain Campus (four-year and doctoral) and Missoula College (embedded two-year), the project team reviewed existing course outcomes for alignment with Montana University System Common Course Numbering outcomes, General Education

outcomes, and other relevant frameworks. The team also examined how the stated outcomes related to the material actually taught in courses and to the values coordinators held about what students most need from gateway mathematics. Through an iterative drafting and revision process, coordinators arrived at a set of three to four unified student learning outcomes for general education mathematics. Because general education mathematics is a program of study requirement rather than a degree program, these function as the program-level outcomes for general education mathematics and as shared course-level outcomes across the gateway courses. These outcomes then served as the foundation for a curriculum map and a SLA narrative template designed for gateway math, structured in parallel with the revised SLA framework being developed for institution-wide use. Coordinators will complete these documents in academic year 2026-2027.

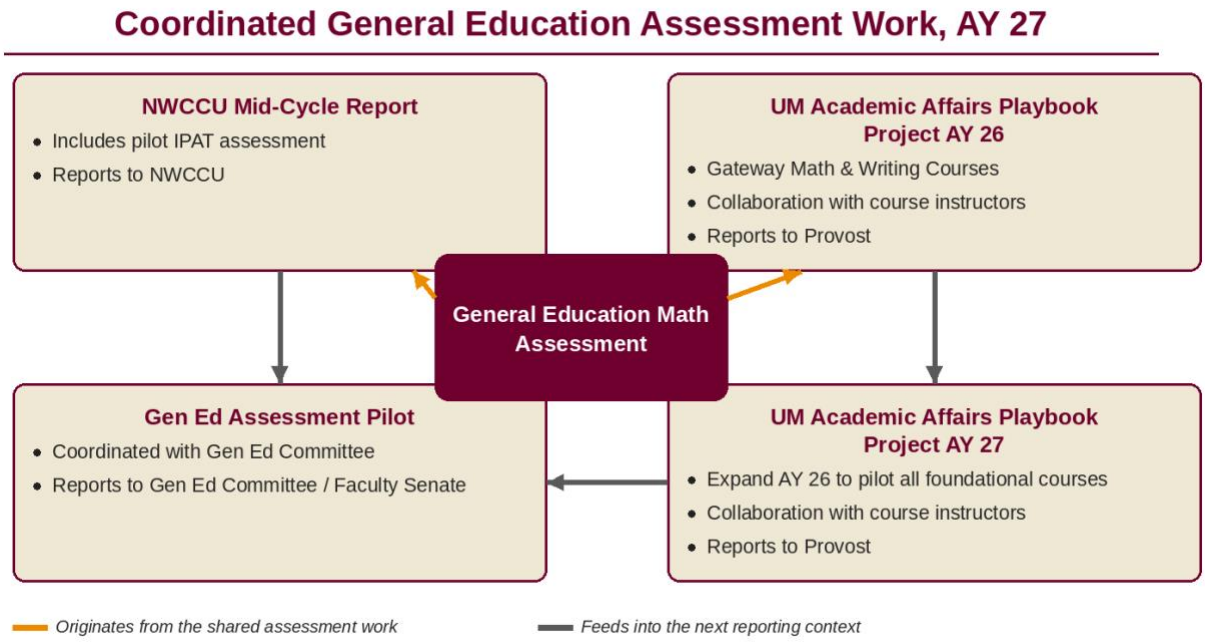
Because the development of initial, unified Student Learning Outcomes for gateway math was the initial part of the assessment process, evidence gathering happened alongside, not in response to, the SLOs; the hope was that the evidence would help guide the team's understanding of the DFW rates in those courses. The evidence gathered through the project revealed significant findings about where and for whom the courses are and are not working. Analysis of disaggregated data for fall 2025 examined 131 students who received a D, F, or withdrew from gateway math courses. The most consequential finding was a 48-percentage-point gap in academic standing between Missoula College and Mountain Campus students earning DFWs: 81% of MC students who did not successfully complete gateway math were also not in good academic standing overall, compared to 33% of Mountain Campus students. This campus disparity was the largest identified across all gateway course data in the project. Triangulating this quantitative data with 95 detailed faculty narratives about non-completing students, the project team found that the challenges driving DFWs at MC are primarily behavioral and circumstantial rather than foundational.

In faculty descriptions, 58.5% of Missoula College students had stopped attending, 35.4% attended but did not complete homework or coursework, and 27.7% were experiencing significant life circumstances. Student attrition survey responses, while modest in volume at a 13.7% response rate, reinforced this picture: mental health and life circumstances accounted for 33% of self-reported barriers, course design issues for 47.9%, and academic preparedness for only 7.4%. These findings reframe where intervention resources should be targeted, suggesting that content-focused support alone is insufficient and that embedded supplemental instruction paired with holistic advising and early-alert follow-through would be better matched to the nature of student challenges, particularly at MC.

Findings across sections were synthesized through a combination of quantitative cross-tabulation, thematic analysis of instructor narratives, and structured conversations with coordinators. The project team shared data with coordinators as it was gathered throughout the year, a process that sustained engagement and allowed findings to be refined through coordinator feedback before final conclusions were drawn. This

approach also meant that by the time the full dataset was available at the end of the academic year, coordinators had already been in conversation with the emerging findings and were positioned to connect them to their own observations about curriculum and student experience.

Based on findings from the pilot, several next steps have been identified. The drafted curriculum map and SLA narrative template will be completed by coordinators in 2026-2027, establishing the first full assessment cycle for gateway math under the revised framework. The attrition survey process will continue into spring and future semesters to build a longitudinal data foundation and to improve response rates over time. The project team also identified the need to develop comparison data on successful students in future cycles, as the current dataset captures only students who struggled, limiting the ability to calculate risk ratios or draw firm causal conclusions. Longer-term, the work positions gateway math to contribute to UM's broader general education assessment review as that process develops.



This diagram was redesigned using Claude AI assistance to improve accessibility (color contrast, typography) and align with UM's brand template. Content and structure are based on an original diagram created in Microsoft Word. It was reviewed for accuracy by the Office of the Provost prior to publication.

VI. Moving Forward

This mid-cycle report and evaluator visit have offered a timely opportunity to take stock of our institutional approach to mission fulfillment and continuous improvement. Onboarding a new president, reflecting on where we have been, navigating the external pressures facing higher education, and preparing for the coming updates to NWCCU standards together present real opportunities for how we approach our work as we move into the next phase of our accreditation cycle. While there is always room for continuous improvement, our mission fulfillment processes are well established.

Since our last EIE, we have improved the ways we measure post-graduation outcomes and have a better sense of how to collect, analyze, and use this information in the future. We continue to face challenges. Retention and graduation rates remain below institutional aspirations, equity gaps persist for Pell-eligible students and other underserved groups, and post-graduation outcome data are incomplete. There will likely be changes to some of the leadership structure and committees, which may require adjustments to some of our processes.

Addressing the shifting challenges related to assessing student learning will continue to be a priority over the remainder of this cycle. Both media coverage and informal discussions among faculty highlight increasing concerns about academic integrity as the use of artificial intelligence has become widespread among students. These concerns are particularly acute in the online education space, where proctored, in-person assessments are not the norm. They are not unique to the University of Montana, and as of now, there is no consensus within the academic community about how universities should respond. UM's Faculty Senate has made one of its priorities for AY2026–27 to initiate a campus-wide inquiry into AI and academic assessment. Faculty Senate will engage with academic administrators, including the Provost's Office, college leadership, and the Office of Educational Initiatives and Innovation, and will survey selected faculty to better understand the scope of the issue and approaches to ensuring validity (see Appendix E). Faculty Senate will report to the administration its findings and any recommendations that emerge.

President Shinn's arrival presents an opportunity to revisit our vision and values. In doing so, we must explicitly address the trust deficit in higher education by engaging with internal and external stakeholders to demonstrate how the University of Montana is meeting the needs of the state in teaching, research, and community engagement. As we look to our next Policy, Regulation, and Financial Review and Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (PRFR) and EIE under the revised 2027 NWCCU Standards, we must ensure we are demonstrating value rather than simply proving our worth.

To do so, we have identified institutional priorities that align with our current mission, vision, and Priorities for Action (PFAs). This list is by no means exhaustive, and it will evolve as our new administration settles into its priorities.

- Assess student services to document how they contribute to a positive student

experience and outcomes and streamline relevant faculty and staff processes to reduce the navigational capital students must expend on operations and administration and to improve the campus experience for both employees and students.

- Set explicit, public targets and a concise student achievement scorecard for first-year retention, four- and six-year graduation rates, and reduction of the Pell graduation gap, signaling a data-driven, accountability-oriented approach to student success that spans retention, credit momentum, gateway course completion, degree completion, equity gaps, and post-graduation outcomes.
- Complete the fall 2026 Student Learning Assessment (SLA) rollout, a near-term milestone supported by faculty communications and training resources developed in response to NWCCU evaluators' mid-cycle feedback. Sustained guidance will be needed so faculty see SLA as a tool for improvement rather than compliance, and so it connects explicitly to Program Review as part of one integrated framework.
- Map the 2027 NWCCU standards, particularly the new standards on Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) for distance education, non-credit and workforce program quality review, dual and concurrent enrollment requirements, and return-on-investment evaluation, to our current and future Annual Playbook projects.
- Address AI proactively: provide academic direction, develop shared principles, identify risks and opportunities, and recommend guardrails that align AI use in teaching, research, and academic operations with UM's academic mission and commitments to sustainability.

VII. Appendix A: Outstanding EIE Recommendations

A.1 Recommendation 1

Fully integrate Academic Affairs into the Strategic Operating Rhythm (SOR) planning and evaluation process to inform and refine the institution's effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement (Std. 1.B.1).

Context

Reviewers noted that UM's Academic Affairs sector appeared to operate alongside, rather than within, UM's Strategic Operating Rhythm. They noted Academic Affairs appeared to lack formal participation in its governance structures, and college-level strategic planning was not systematically connected to university-wide priorities or resource allocation decisions. Since that evaluation, the following steps have been taken to address concerns regarding integration.

In 2024, Academic Affairs was actively developing an Academic Affairs Playbook that operates alongside the University's Annual Playbook in support of the University's defined institutional objectives. Each year since, the Provost, in consultation with Academic Officers, has defined priorities and worked with shared governance channels for the sector. In addition, the Research and Creative Scholarship Playbook, was introduced in fall 2025 to expand awareness and engagement among faculty and research directors. Linking these playbooks ensures that teaching, research, and resource planning operate within a single strategic framework. This integration aims to align faculty development, research investment, and student learning outcomes with institutional objectives, creating a unified decision-making process that strengthens both academic and operational effectiveness.

Strategic Outlooks and the Planning Cycle

The annual Strategic Outlook process is managed by OSPI and directors and sector leaders across campus participate. In Academic Affairs it is led by each dean and academic officer with varying degrees of chair, faculty, and staff participation depending on the unit, to anchor college-level planning. Each Strategic Outlook identifies annual priorities and a three-year projection of needs and opportunities. As we seek to enable more robust faculty participation, we moved the start of the Strategic Outlooks cycle from May to March.

Deans meet individually with the Provost to connect each college's Strategic Outlook priorities to measurable leadership objectives for each dean. This ensures alignment between:

- **College Strategy** – academic and financial priorities;

- **Leadership Accountability** – deans' goals linked to outcomes; and
- **Institutional Integration** – aggregated Strategic Outlooks annually inform the next year's development of the University's Annual Playbook.

Since Summer 2025, each dean has presented their Strategic Outlook at a daylong retreat with university leadership including all Vice Presidents and their direct reports, and the UM Foundation. The purpose of these presentations is to:

- Provide appreciation for and understanding of each college's planning work
- Promote cross-college awareness of opportunities for collaboration
- Promote cross-sector awareness of opportunities to support and collaborate with Academic Affairs.

This process closes the planning loop: colleges set goals, deans operationalize them, and the Provost evaluates progress and uses the strategic outlooks and fiscal planning scenarios alongside the Budget Allocation Model and Principles to allocate general fund budgets.

Budget Process and Timeline for Resource Allocation

The budget planning calendar has been restructured so that the Provost reviews Academic Affairs budget scenarios against projected revenues before the President considers all sectors simultaneously. One of the Provost's goals is to improve the visibility of instructional and support staffing as well as fiscal resources are distributed across Academic Affairs. New dashboards are under development to provide deans with real-time access to standardized data (student credit hours, faculty FTE, student revenue, course information, retention, degrees awarded, and research productivity), which will inform decisions about instructional capacity, student success, and resource allocation.

We have refined the budget planning timeline to ensure the SOR is aligned with Academic Affairs' processes, Faculty Senate procedures, and contractual obligations to faculty and staff. Colleges and the overall Academic Affairs sector are integrated into the institution-wide process that includes fall budget scenario planning and winter/spring next-year budget planning. Mid-fall budget review meetings between the Provost, deans, and fiscal managers now synchronize Strategic Outlooks, three-year forecasts, enrollment trends, and workload data to connect academic and financial planning.

In addition, the University Budget Committee has been restructured to clarify governance and ensure academic representation. Deans and shared governance leaders participate in ranking sector requests for new funding tied directly to the University's Priorities for Action. This committee structure represents a meaningful improvement from prior practice, and the university continues to refine meeting cadence, advanced distribution of budget materials, and cross-sector budget transparency to strengthen the committee's effectiveness.

Connection to KPIs

These changes have strengthened the connection between Academic Affairs and institution-level planning, budgeting, and assessment. Future Academic Affairs Playbooks will align with the KPIs that measure student learning, retention, completion, and engagement, ensuring that Academic Affairs initiatives directly advance the indicators used to assess mission fulfillment. Dashboards are being developed to visualize progress toward these KPIs and to support continuous improvement. They will allow deans and faculty to:

- Adjust offerings to meet demand;
- Balance faculty workloads; and
- Track student outcomes.

These dashboards are part of a broader effort to build a transparent data ecosystem that connects program planning with institutional priorities.

Moving Forward

UM is committed to deepening the integration of Academic Affairs into the Strategic Operating Rhythm as it evolves under President Shinn's leadership. Priorities for the coming year include:

- Further involving deans in drafting the Academic Affairs playbook for AY26-27;
- Expanding faculty awareness of and engagement with the Academic Affairs and Research Playbooks;
- Further aligning the budget planning calendar with the academic employment decision timeline to support timely college-level planning;
- Improving the University Budget Committee's transparency and cross-sector visibility; and
- Ensuring that KPI-based performance measures are operationalized at the college level through dashboards and annual reporting cycles.

A.2 Recommendation 2

Develop an inclusive and integrated University-wide framework to assess student learning outcomes at the program and degree level that is distinct from the use of student achievement data and metrics (Std. 1.C.7)

This recommendation is addressed in Section V: Programmatic Assessment.

A.3 Recommendation 3

Implement an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed, and ensure that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy. (2.G.7)

Context

At the time of the Year Seven evaluation, the University of Montana had adopted the following policies and guidelines related to standard 2.G.7 but had not yet implemented a comprehensive identity verification system for distance education students.

- UM Policy 301: Student Location Determination Policy
- UM Policy 1901: Identity Verification Policy for Distance Education
- Regular and Substantive Interaction Guidelines at UM

The evaluation team noted the absence of documented policies and procedures for confirming that the student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who participates and receives credit, as well as a lack of clear protocols addressing student privacy protections within the verification process. The university had also not yet established a mechanism for notifying students at the time of registration of any charges associated with verification. The evaluation team acknowledged that UM was actively working toward an identity verification solution, and this recommendation reflects that work in progress rather than a finding of inaction.

Since then, UM has implemented a multi-phase identity verification strategy that combines policy, technology, and course-level implementation to ensure secure and privacy-respecting identity confirmation for all students enrolled in distance education programs. Identity verification occurs through a combination of targeted admissions procedures, IT Service Desk protocols, instructional-level checkpoints, and dedicated identity verification technology, ensuring a comprehensive and layered approach before students can fully participate in the academic environment.

Identity Verification at Time of System Access

Admissions currently uses Slate's ID Verification tool for all Missoula College distance-only students. The two-year campus sees the highest number of attempted fraudulent enrollment consistent with national trends at two-year campuses. Mountain campus applicants are only asked to use the tool if they are identified as suspect by the state or campus evaluations team. Students flagged as potentially fraudulent may be marked with an RR hold In Banner and their accounts (NetID, Microsoft 365, Canvas) are suspended.

In parallel, updated protocols at the *IT Service Desk* reinforce these protections. As of Summer 2025, a government-issued photo ID is now required for any identity-sensitive support (e.g., password reset, account recovery). Over-the-phone verification is no longer permitted. We are aware that advances in AI-generated video and deepfake technology present evolving challenges to video-based verification; these protocols will continue to be reviewed and updated as the threat landscape changes, and additional authentication layers are under evaluation.

The University uses *Canvas* as its enterprise learning management system. Canvas integrates with UM's NetID authentication system, which provides secure, role-based access to courses and related student systems. All users are responsible for maintaining the security of their credentials, and unauthorized access to another user's account or data is prohibited under the Student Code of Conduct (page 14, Article V.A Acts of Dishonesty).

Course-Level Verification and Participation Monitoring

In fall 2025, UM piloted a *Required Student Identity Verification Assignment* in asynchronous online courses. This assignment served as a second checkpoint, verifying that the student accessing the LMS was the same individual who was admitted and intended to complete the course. Students were asked to record a short video introducing themselves, stating their student identification number and course name, and showing a photo ID with sensitive information obscured.

If a student failed to complete the assignment or raised identity concerns, the faculty member was instructed to raise an early alert using EAB Navigate our student success platform. The student's advisor then followed up to confirm enrollment intentions and referred the case to the Office of the Provost, Financial Aid, or the Registrar's Office as needed.

In spring 2026 the assignment was renamed "Confirm Your Participation Profile" and redesigned based on faculty feedback to expand submission options, specify alternative verification pathways for students with accessibility or privacy concerns. The assignment is now automatically embedded in the Canvas course shell during provisioning for all asynchronous courses. In addition, faculty are encouraged to adapt and align the assignment with ongoing course activities that support regular and substantive interaction, including orientation modules, introductory discussions, advising meetings, or reflection assignments.

Dedicated Identity Verification Technology: Verity

In Summer 2026, the University of Montana received an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) grant from the Montana University System, designated for online student identity verification. UM will use these funds to license *Verity*, a platform designed specifically

for student identity verification in online learning environments. Verity provides a secure, FERPA-compliant verification process that can be integrated directly with Canvas and does not require proctoring or surveillance of the full exam session, preserving student privacy while establishing identity.

Verity enables instructors and administrators to confirm that the student completing coursework is the same individual enrolled, through secure identity capture at the point of course access and assignment submission. The system is configured to protect student data, and its use is documented in updated enrollment and course information materials. There are no additional charges to students associated with Verity at this time.

Moving Forward

UM's approach is anchored by internal procedures and cross-functional collaboration, including Legal Counsel, IT Security, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, and the Office of the Provost. Ongoing priorities include:

- Deploying Verity and evaluating integration with Canvas assignment workflows
- Conducting a compliance review specific to identity verification including data governance
- Monitoring developments in AI-generated media and updating authentication protocols accordingly
- Embedding identity verification into a broader framework of online course quality, consistent with UM's Regular and Substantive Interaction standards.
- Developing resources to orient students to credential security expectations, the role identity verification plays in academic integrity, and the risks of account sharing while enrolled.

This work reflects UM's commitment to instructional integrity, student trust, and institutional compliance. The university will continue to evolve these practices in response to technological change and to deepen the integration of identity verification with its broader online learning quality framework.

VIII. Appendix B: Mission Fulfillment

B.1 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Headcount	Unduplicated count of students enrolled in all degree levels at Missoula College and University of Montana. (fall semester census)	10,106	9,955	10,327	10,811	11,064
Degrees and Certificates Awarded	Degrees awarded (all levels including certificates). Students who completed an academic program at any level during the summer, fall, and spring semesters. Main Campus, Missoula College, Graduate School, and Law School. (fiscal year)	3,075	3,136	3,063	2,887	3,178
Research Expenditures	Annual grant and contract expenditures for the university and affiliated research organizations as reported to the NSF Higher Education Research and Development Survey. (fiscal year in millions)	$121.6	$125.6	$134.0	$143.8	$150.0
Employee Turnover	(# of separations over past year/average # of employees reported last year and this year) x 100. Turnover rates are expressed as a percentage and are based on headcounts. Temporary staff are excluded.	17.5%	18.9%	15.9%	16.5%	15.7%

	(fiscal year)					
Operating Margin	The ratio of revenues divided by expenses as reported in the University of Montana Financial Report (fiscal year)	-0.8	4.6	0.8	6.7	4.3
Community Engagement	Measured using the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement. (Status approved through 2031)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

B.2 KPI Metric Trees

Total Headcount

Leading Indicators	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
# of new students enrolled (undergrad new and transfer)	• # of inquiries • # of applications • # of admits • Admitted student yield
# of new students enrolled (grad)	• # of admits • Admitted student yield
FTFT First-to-Second Year Retention Rate	• % of cohort ≥ 2.5 first semester GPA • % of cohort with unmet need ≥ $10,000 • % of cohort who attempt 15 credits per semester or 30 per year • % of cohort ≥ 3.0 HS GPA
Persistence Rate: year over year, all undergrad students	• Fall to spring persistence rate, all students • % of students registered • # of courses with ≥ 25% DFW rate (with enrollments of 25 or more) • Ratio of credits completed to credits attempted

# of continuing students (grad)	• # of students registered disaggregated by program

Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Leading Indicators	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
Ratio of credits completed to credits attempted	• % of first-year students completing ≥30 • # of courses with ≥ 25% DFW rate (with enrollments of 25 or more)
% of FTFT cohort completing gateway course by end of first year	• # of cohort students who pass WRIT 101 and Math 105, 115, and 121 at the institution. • # of cohort students who earn equivalent credit through AP/IB, dual enrollment, or transfer. • # of cohort students who place into a higher-level course that bypasses the gateway.
% of all students with unmet need	• % of undergraduates with unmet need • % of graduate students with unmet need • % of undergraduate students with unmet need at or above $10,000 • % of students who file the FAFSA
Total Headcount*	See leading indicators above
FTFT First to Second Year Retention**	See progress metrics above
Persistence: year over year, all students**	See progress metrics above

*KPI

**Also a leading indicator for Total Headcount

Research Expenditures

Leading Indicators	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
$ of direct expenditures	
$ of F&A	
$ of NSF HERD Survey (other components)	
Research award volume	• Number of funded proposals • Value ($) of funded proposals

	• Value ($) of federal initiatives awarded
# of research proposals	• Number of proposals submitted • Value ($) of proposals submitted • Number of PIs submitting proposals
$ of external graduate student funding	• Number of doctoral students funded on external grants • Number of master's students funded on external grants • Average doctoral student stipend (externally funded) • Average master's student stipend (externally funded

Operating Margin

Leading indicator	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
State appropriations	• Resident headcount
Net tuition revenue	• Resident headcount • Non-resident headcount • WUE headcount • Scholarship expenditures • Tuition rate
Auxiliary revenue	• Residence hall capacity
Grants and contracts revenue	• # of grant proposals submitted • # of grant proposals awarded • Research expenditures • Total indirect cost recovery rate
Gifts and investment income	• Contributions • Investment income
Compensation and benefits expenses	• Number of employees • Pay plan determined by State • Benefit costs determined by State

Pension expenses	Actuarial assumptions: • Investment rate • Wage growth assumptions • Inflation • Postretirement benefit increases • Mortality rates
Auxiliary expenses	• Utility costs • Food costs
Other operating expenses	• Cost/usage of supplies (including laboratory supplies) • Maintenance/repair • Consulting & professional services

Employee Turnover

Leading indicator	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
% of employees who responded to the employee experience survey	• # of responses • % of completion by sector • Comparison to past survey.
% of employees with positive and negative responses to key questions on employee experience survey: • I would recommend UM as a great place to work. • Within the past year, I have seriously considered leaving my current position at UM. • I receive recognition for my good work. • I feel included in the UM community. • In the past year, I have completed one or more professional	• Responses by sector, employee type, demographics • Comparison to past survey and national data.

development activities.	
# of employees attending learning and development offerings from People and Culture Sector. % of attendees who rate offerings as useful to their current or future work	• # of offerings • # of employees sector participation
% of non-faculty employees receiving a performance review	• % of completion by sector • % of completion by employee type
% of new employees/hires fully pre-boarded by Day 1	
% of (invited) new hires who complete the online orientation % of (invited) new hires who complete the in-person orientation	• % of completion by sector

Community Engagement

Leading indicator	Progress Metrics/Data Analysis
# of courses related to civic engagement • Service-Learning designation • Community and Global Engagement Competencies • Democracy and Citizenship General Education designation	• # students enrolled • # of departments that offer • # of faculty who teach

UM provides additional evidence to support the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.

B.3 Peer Institutions

"Y" indicates the peer matches UM's classification (ACE data tables) or is within 20% of UM's value (IPEDS data tables). KPI Count and IP Count tally the number of "Y" matches across each respective group. An em dash (—) indicates no data available.

Institutional Characteristics

Institution	Institutional Characteristics (ACE Data)				
	Institutional Classification	Award Level Focus	Academic Mix	Grad. Program Mix	Size
The University of Montana	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
University of Idaho	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
University of Maryland-Baltimore County	Y	Y	Y	Mixed	Y
University of Northern Colorado	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
University of Wyoming	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wright State University-Main Campus	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
South Dakota State University	Professions-focused UG/G-Doctorate Medium	Y	Professions-focused	Y	Y
University of Colorado Colorado Springs	Mixed UG/G-Master's Large/Medium	Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's	Y	Y	Y

Institution	Institutional Characteristics (ACE Data)				
	Institutional Classification	Award Level Focus	Academic Mix	Grad. Program Mix	Size
University of Louisville	Mixed UG/G-Doctorate Large	Y	Y	Y	Large
University of Maine	Mixed UG/G-Master's Large/Medium	Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's	Y	Y	Y

Mission-Aligned Indicators and Key Performance Indicators

Institution	Mission-Aligned Indicators (ACE Data)			Key Performance Indicators (IPEDS Data)				
	Access & Earnings Class	Research Activity	Community Engagement	Degrees Awarded	Headcount (all students)	Total Operating Revenues	Research Expenditures	KPI Count
The University of Montana	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	4
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—	Y	2
University of Idaho	Y	Y	—	Y	Y	Y	Y	4
University of Maryland-Baltimore County	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—	Y	1 (3 asp)
University of Northern Colorado	Y	R2	Y	Y	Y	—	—	2
University of Wyoming	Lower/Medium	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	4

Institution	Mission-Aligned Indicators (ACE Data)			Key Performance Indicators (IPEDS Data)				
	Access & Earnings Class	Research Activity	Community Engagement	Degrees Awarded	Headcount (all students)	Total Operating Revenues	Research Expenditures	KPI Count
Wright State University-Main Campus	Y	R2	Y	Y	Y	—	—	2
South Dakota State University	Lower/Medium	R2	—	Y	Y	—	Y	3
University of Colorado Colorado Springs	Y	R2	—	Y	Y	—	—	2
University of Louisville	Higher/Higher	Y	Y	—	—	—	—	0
University of Maine	Lower/Medium	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	3

Inclusive Prosperity Metrics and Peer List Source

Institution	Inclusive Prosperity Metrics (IPEDS Data)				
	% UG Pell	% Non-White	% Part-Time	IP Count	Peer List Source
The University of Montana	Y	Y	Y	3	—
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	—	—	—	0	OCHE
University of Idaho	Y	Y	Y	3	NWCCU
University of Maryland-Baltimore County	Y	—	—	1	IPEDS

Institution	Inclusive Prosperity Metrics (IPEDS Data)				
	% UG Pell	% Non-White	% Part-Time	IP Count	Peer List Source
University of Northern Colorado	Y	Y	Y	3	OCHE
University of Wyoming	—	—	—	0	OCHE
Wright State University-Main Campus	Y	Y	Y	3	—
South Dakota State University	—	—	Y	1	—
University of Colorado Colorado Springs	Y	Y	Y	3	—
University of Louisville	Y	Y	Y	3	IPEDS
University of Maine	—	—	Y	1	IPEDS

B.4 Academic Affairs Draft Budget Principles

> *"Budgets should not remain stagnant silos of funding by divisions, colleges, departments, and central support services each year. The dynamic nature of strategic plans, resource allocations, operating expenditures, and investments typically result in differential year-to-year budgets to support a vibrant and evolving institution. No two budget years will be identical, and opportunities may occur some years for one-time strategic investments to enhance instruction, address research needs, and/or upgrade equipment, service centers, or facilities."*

Donald H. DeHayes, *Substance over Style: A Field Guide to Leadership in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: BRG Scientific, 2024), 247.

Budget Premise

Efficient use of our limited resources is paramount and needs to reflect an orientation toward: 1) accessible student learning, 2) high-quality academic programs, 3) student program completion, 4) knowledge creation, and 5) a meaningful life.

Budget Principles

1. Only after examining existing programs for their viability will additional resources be considered. Additional investment should be aligned with strategic priority areas for the college and the university and may depend on the phasing out of some programs. As such, the strategic outlooks that each college updates annually will help guide allocations.
2. Resource allocations will be made to ensure delivery on the mission of the University and, when possible, enhance the colleges' strategic priorities and values. In order for this to be true, the allocations must be balanced against unit productivity, which includes but is not limited to teaching cost-effectiveness, majors, student credit hours, student degree completion, faculty-to-student ratio, publications and creative scholarship, and externally-funded research.
3. Faculty positions, both tenure track and non-tenure track, will revert centrally upon faculty departure so that positions can be re-deployed where they are most needed.
4. The Academic Affairs budget is 98% personnel, 80% of which is faculty. Faculty hiring decisions are some of the most important financial decisions that we make, particularly since the majority of them are long-term commitments. Deans of colleges must make hiring and workload determinations within the context of their current year allocation in order to preserve sustainability for their unit. Approval of a faculty hire request is not a promise of additional resources, nor is it a mandate to hire. Deans must ultimately make staffing decisions based on available resources.
5. Across the board resource reductions or adjustments, hiring freezes, or spending

freezes will be avoided except when mandated by the state, e.g., COVID hiring freeze, legislatively mandated salary increases.

6. Startup packages for new faculty should include investment from the college/academic unit before approaching the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship for investment. College and academic unit startup contributions should be noted in hiring requests that are made each spring.
7. Colleges are expected to live within their annual budget. Budgets may include general fund, program tuition, recovered F&A, designated funds, and allowable foundation funds. Each fund must be neutral or positive at the end of each fiscal year.
8. Annual general fund surpluses will be recovered centrally to create a central reserve for one-time-only expenses or investments.
9. Current-year salary savings should be preserved and balanced against the expected end-of-year outcome for the entire Academic Affairs sector. Colleges may request permission from the Provost Office to re-allocate salary savings to other expense categories within a given fiscal year. To request permission, the Dean should email the Provost and Assistant Vice Provost for Finance and Personnel with the projected surplus number and proposed reallocation, along with a justification.
10. Interdisciplinary teaching and research should be visible, and interdisciplinary work should not be penalized in budget allocations.

IX. Appendix C: Student Achievement

This appendix presents a peer benchmarking analysis of UM's student success metrics against a ten-institution panel of public, four-year universities, using federal IPEDS data for AY 2024-25 (provisional). It is intended to give evaluators comparative context for interpreting UM's completion and retention outcomes alongside the structural and resource differences that distinguish UM from most members of its peer set: the highest share of American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) enrollment in the panel, a substantially narrowed Pell equity gap, and among the lowest instructional spending per FTE.

Figures throughout this appendix were compiled from a peer benchmark report generated using a third-party IPEDS query agent. Spot checks against published IPEDS and institutional data (e.g., UM's fall 2024 total enrollment and first-year retention rate) are consistent with the figures presented here. As with any AI-assisted data compilation, Institutional Research should verify the full data set against the IPEDS Data Center prior to final submission. All figures are provisional AY 2024-25 releases and are subject to revision in the final IPEDS release.

Drafted with AI assistance (Claude, Anthropic) to reformat the IPEDS peer benchmark data into the Mid-Cycle Report's document style and WCAG 2.1 AA-accessible table structure; reviewed by Director of Institutional Research.

Executive Summary

This report benchmarks the University of Montana against 10 peer public universities across all available IPEDS student success metrics for AY 2024-25. The peer set was specified by UM. Data reflect the IPEDS dataset, with every figure sourced to its exact table, field, filter, and cohort year (see Appendix D.2, Data Methodology and Source Notes).

1. **3.2% AIAN Enrollment —** highest in the peer set (342 students); the next closest peer is New Mexico State University at 2.6%.
2. **49% Six-Year Graduation Rate —** ranks 9th of 11 peers; the peer median is 55% (fall 2018 entering cohort).
3. **11-Percentage-Point Pell Equity Gap —** down from 22 percentage points in AY 2023-24; at or below the peer median.
4. **$10,436 Instruction Spending per FTE —** second-lowest in the peer set; peer range is $10,257–$17,639.

UM's raw completion metrics rank in the lower third of this peer set. However, three structural input factors materially distinguish UM from most peers and are essential context for any accreditation review.

First, UM enrolls the highest share of American Indian/Alaska Native students in the peer set — 3.2% of total enrollment (342 students), nearly 2.5 times the next closest peer. Eight of the eleven peers are below 1.3% AIAN enrollment. AIAN students nationally complete degrees at rates below the overall student population, and UM's mission explicitly includes serving Montana's tribal communities. A reviewer comparing raw graduation rates without accounting for this input difference would be making an unlike-to-unlike comparison.

Second, UM operates under a resource constraint. Instruction spending of $10,436 per FTE is the second lowest in the peer set. Wyoming and Louisville — two of the highest-performing peers — spend 68–69% more per enrolled student. UM is producing its current outcomes with significantly less instructional investment than most comparators. Third, UM's Pell equity gap has narrowed substantially. The gap between Pell and non-Pell six-year graduation rates fell from 22 percentage points (AY 2023-24, fall 2017 cohort) to 11 percentage points (AY 2024-25, fall 2018 cohort). At 11 points, UM's gap is at or below the peer median and better than U Maine (22pp), Wright State (26pp), and South Dakota State (17pp).

C.1 Student Profile and Input Characteristics

Input metrics describe the students each institution enrolls. Acceptance rate, Pell share, AIAN share, and part-time proportion are the primary drivers of differential outcomes across this peer set. All figures: IPEDS AY 2024-25 (provisional).

C.1.1 Enrollment Size and Access Profile

Table C.1. Enrollment size and access profile across the 11-institution peer panel.

Institution	FTE Enroll.	Total Enroll.	Full-Time	Part-Time	PT %	Accept %	Yield %
Univ. of Montana	8,826	10,811	7,607	3,204	29.6%	96%	19%
NM State (NMSU)	13,160	15,408	11,733	3,675	23.8%	89%	21%
South Dakota State	9,992	12,056	8,653	3,403	28.2%	98%	34%
UC Colorado Springs	9,261	11,354	7,934	3,420	30.1%	97%	13%
Univ. of Idaho	10,330	12,286	9,074	3,212	26.1%	76%	20%
Univ. of Louisville	19,006	23,065	16,397	6,668	28.9%	79%	25%
Univ. of Maine	9,691	12,029	8,226	3,803	31.6%	97%	15%
UMBC	12,324	13,906	11,339	2,567	18.5%	72%	22%
Univ. Northern Colorado	7,076	8,869	5,976	2,893	32.6%	86%	13%
Univ. of Wyoming	9,347	10,813	8,430	2,383	22.0%	97%	24%
Wright State	8,394	10,603	7,030	3,573	33.7%	96%	20%

Sources: fall_enrollment_metrics (FTE, total, full-time/part-time); admissions_rates (acceptance %, yield %). Part-time % = part-time ÷ total enrollment.

C.1.2 Financial Need and Pell Grant Participation

Table C.2. Pell grant participation, average aid, and student-faculty ratio.

Institution	Pell Recipients %	Avg. Pell Award	Avg. Fed. Loan	Student-Faculty
Univ. of Montana	33%	$5,446	$5,306	17:1
NM State (NMSU)	46%	$5,968	$3,503	16:1
South Dakota State	21%	$4,967	$5,147	17:1
UC Colorado Springs	30%	$5,308	$4,979	15:1
Univ. of Idaho	30%	$5,425	$5,068	18:1
Univ. of Louisville	40%	$5,656	$5,376	14:1
Univ. of Maine	29%	$5,081	$5,221	15:1
UMBC	29%	$6,019	$5,058	17:1
Univ. Northern Colorado	33%	$5,598	$5,368	14:1
Univ. of Wyoming	21%	$5,601	$4,975	13:1
Wright State	43%	$5,726	$5,188	16:1

Sources: student_financial_aid (Pell recipients %, Pell average amount, federal loan average amount); fall_enrollment_retention (student-faculty ratio).

C.1.3 Racial and Ethnic Enrollment Composition

Table C.3. Racial and ethnic enrollment composition across the peer panel.

Institution	AIAN %	AIAN Count	Hispanic %	Black %	White %	Women %
Univ. of Montana	3.2%	342	6%	1%	68%	61%
NM State (NMSU)	2.6%	397	59%	2%	26%	58%
South Dakota State	1.1%	136	3%	1%	81%	56%
UC Colorado Springs	0.4%	50	19%	5%	60%	54%
Univ. of Idaho	1.3%	162	8%	1%	71%	50%
Univ. of Louisville	0.1%	27	8%	15%	60%	56%
Univ. of Maine	1.0%	121	4%	2%	78%	51%
UMBC	0.1%	12	9%	22%	27%	46%
Univ. Northern Colorado	0.2%	22	25%	4%	61%	68%
Univ. of Wyoming	0.6%	61	10%	1%	73%	55%
Wright State	0.1%	13	4%	10%	61%	54%

Sources: fall_enrollment_race (AIAN count and total; filter: enrollment_level = "All students total," line_label = "Total enrollment"); fall_enrollment_metrics (Hispanic %, Black %, White %, Women %). AIAN % = AIAN count ÷ total enrollment. Racial proportions are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

C.2 Student Success Outcomes

Outcome metrics measure degree completion and year-to-year persistence. All graduation figures apply only to first-time, full-time bachelor's-seeking students; transfer and part-time students are excluded from the graduation rate denominator. The 8-year

award rate provides a broader view that includes stopout and return pathways.

C.2.1 Six-Year Graduation Rates — Fall 2018 Entering Cohort

Table C.4. Six-year graduation rates, overall and disaggregated by Pell status; ranked highest to lowest.

Institution	Overall 6-Yr %	Pell 6-Yr %	Non-Pell 6-Yr %	Pell Gap (pp)	Prior-Year Gap (AY24)
UMBC	69%	68%	72%	4pp	5pp
South Dakota State	62%	52%	69%	17pp	11pp
Univ. of Louisville	61%	52%	68%	16pp	20pp
Univ. of Wyoming	59%	50%	62%	12pp	18pp
Univ. of Idaho	57%	49%	65%	16pp	9pp
NM State (NMSU)	55%	50%	62%	12pp	12pp
Univ. of Maine	55%	42%	64%	22pp	18pp
Univ. Northern Colorado	51%	43%	58%	15pp	10pp
Univ. of Montana	49%	42%	53%	11pp	22pp
UC Colorado Springs	47%	39%	51%	12pp	13pp
Wright State	42%	28%	54%	26pp	25pp

Source: graduation_rates table. Fields: grad_rate_bachelors_6yr, grad_rate_pell_150pct, grad_rate_non_pell_150pct. Cohort: first-time, full-time bachelor's-seeking students. AY 2024-25 reflects fall 2018 entrants; AY 2023-24 reflects fall 2017 entrants. Pell gap = non-Pell rate minus Pell rate; higher values indicate a wider equity disparity.

C.2.2 First-Year Retention Rates (AY 2024-25)

Table C.5. First-year, fall-to-fall retention rates by enrollment status; ranked highest to lowest.

Institution	Full-Time Retention %	Part-Time Retention %
UMBC	85%	56%
South Dakota State	84%	60%
Univ. of Maine	83%	52%
Univ. of Louisville	81%	53%
Univ. of Wyoming	80%	54%
Univ. of Idaho	76%	18%
Univ. Northern Colorado	76%	33%
Univ. of Montana	75%	43%
NM State (NMSU)	73%	4%
Wright State	68%	38%
UC Colorado Springs	68%	38%

Source: fall_enrollment_retention table. Fields: retention_rate_fulltime_pct, retention_rate_parttime_pct. Reflects first-time, degree-seeking students returning the following fall, reported as of fall 2024.

C.2.3 Eight-Year Award Rates (AY 2024-25)

Table C.6. Eight-year award rates for all first-time, full-time students and for Pell recipients; ranked highest to lowest.

Institution	8-Yr Award Rate (All FT)	8-Yr Award Rate (Pell)
UMBC	72%	64%
Univ. of Louisville	64%	55%
Univ. of Idaho	62%	54%
Univ. of Wyoming	62%	46%
South Dakota State	61%	51%
Univ. of Maine	56%	46%
NM State (NMSU)	53%	49%
Univ. Northern Colorado	53%	47%
Univ. of Montana	46%	38%
Wright State	45%	33%
UC Colorado Springs	44%	37%

Source: outcome_rates table. Fields: outcome_ft_award_rate_8yr, outcome_pell_award_rate_8yr. Covers first-time, full-time students tracked for 8 years from initial enrollment.

C.3 Institutional Resources and Affordability

Resource metrics contextualize outcome differences. Instruction spending per FTE directly affects the quality and intensity of academic support available to students. Net price data reflects what students actually pay after grants and scholarships.

C.3.1 Instruction Spending and Endowment (AY 2024-25)

Table C.7. Instruction expense and endowment per FTE; ranked highest to lowest instruction spend.

Institution	Instruction Expense/FTE	Endowment/FTE
Univ. of Wyoming	$17,639	$86,034
Univ. of Louisville	$17,552	$55,139
Univ. of Idaho	$14,991	$44,450
UMBC	$14,455	$16,504
Univ. of Maine	$12,786	$51,356
NM State (NMSU)	$12,132	$7,092
UC Colorado Springs	$11,886	Not reported
Wright State	$11,536	$19,286
Univ. of Montana	$10,436	$34,034
Univ. Northern Colorado	$10,378	$16,623
South Dakota State	$10,257	$28,070

Source: finance_metrics table. Fields: instruction_expense_per_fte_gasb, endowment_per_fte_gasb (GASB-reporting institutions). UC Colorado Springs endowment not reported in source data.

C.3.2 Net Price by Family Income Band — In-State Aid Recipients (AY 2024-25)

Table C.8. Net price after all grants and scholarships, by in-state family income band; ranked lowest to highest for the $0–30K band.

Institution	$0–30K Income	$30–48K Income	$48–75K Income
NM State (NMSU)	$9,712	$13,477	$14,003
Univ. of Wyoming	$10,360	$15,371	$16,670
UC Colorado Springs	$13,732	$19,981	$20,802
Univ. of Idaho	$13,517	$16,279	$18,948
Univ. of Montana	$15,107	$17,134	$18,787
Univ. of Maine	$15,617	$20,076	$21,303
Univ. Northern Colorado	$15,568	$17,742	$21,739
Wright State	$15,997	$19,892	$21,166
South Dakota State	$17,639	$19,922	$19,922
Univ. of Louisville	$17,760	$22,684	$23,520
UMBC	$18,469	$23,162	$24,473

Source: cost_net_price table. Fields: net_price_instate_income_0_30k, net_price_instate_income_30_48k, net_price_instate_income_48_75k. Covers degree-seeking undergraduates receiving Title IV aid, living on campus. This is the first year these in-state-specific income-band columns are available in IPEDS.

C.4 Key Observations for Accreditation

The following observations are drawn directly from the data above and are intended to support narrative framing in this and future accreditation self-study documents.

UM's AIAN enrollment distinguishes it structurally from most peers.

At 3.2% (342 students), UM's American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment share is the highest in the peer set and nearly 2.5 times the next closest institution (NMSU, 2.6%). Eight of eleven peers fall below 1.3% AIAN enrollment. UM's two nearest comparators on this dimension — NMSU and South Dakota State — both operate in regions with significant Indigenous populations and face similar structural completion challenges. AIAN students nationally complete bachelor's degrees at rates significantly below the overall student population. Any accreditation reviewer comparing UM's raw graduation rates to peers without accounting for this enrollment composition would be making an unlike-to-unlike comparison.

The Pell equity gap has narrowed substantially — and is now at or below the peer median.

UM's Pell gap (non-Pell minus Pell six-year graduation rate) fell from 22 percentage

points in AY 2023-24 (fall 2017 cohort) to 11 percentage points in AY 2024-25 (fall 2018 cohort). At 11pp, UM's gap is at or below the peer median and better than four of ten peers: U Maine (22pp), Wright State (26pp), South Dakota State (17pp), and U Idaho (16pp).

UM's six-year graduation rate ranks 9th of 11 — but resource context is essential.

UM's 49% six-year graduation rate ranks 9th of 11; the peer median is 55%. However, among the five peers with higher graduation rates than UM that are also highly accessible (90%+ acceptance rate), UM spends substantially less per FTE on instruction: Wyoming ($17,639), SDSU ($10,257), U Maine ($12,786), and UCCS ($11,886). UM's $10,436 instruction spend per FTE is 40% below the peer that serves a comparable AIAN population under similar access conditions (NMSU, at $12,132, which achieves 55%). This resource differential is a legitimate factor in the completion rate difference and merits explicit acknowledgment in any accreditation response.

UM's net price for the lowest-income students is mid-range — above two peers that achieve better outcomes.

UM charges in-state students from families earning $0–30K a net price of $15,107 after aid. Two peers that outperform UM on graduation rates — NMSU ($9,712) and Wyoming ($10,360) — are substantially more affordable for the lowest-income band. This price sensitivity matters given UM's 33% Pell recipient rate; NMSU's dramatically lower net price for low-income students likely contributes to both its higher Pell retention and its stronger Pell graduation rate despite a similarly open-access profile.

The 8-year award rate extends the graduation picture for non-traditional students.

UM's 8-year award rate is 46% for all first-time, full-time students and 38% for Pell recipients. These figures include students who stop out and return, providing a more accurate picture of eventual completion for a student population with higher rates of part-time enrollment (29.6%) and financial disruption. The gap between UM's 6-year rate (49%) and 8-year rate (46%) is smaller than at several peers — suggesting that delayed completion is not a significant pathway at UM, and that most students who leave before six years do not return within eight.

Peer Set Note: UMBC Is a Statistical Outlier and Should Be Framed Carefully

UMBC is the most selective institution in this peer set (72% acceptance rate versus UM's 96%), and has the lowest Pell gap (4pp), the highest six-year graduation rate (69%), and the highest 8-year award rate (72%). Its student profile — 22% Black enrollment, 29% Pell, 18.5% part-time — is structurally different from UM's. UMBC's exceptional performance on equity metrics reflects both institutional investment and a

more selective incoming class. For accreditation benchmarking, UMBC is better framed as an aspirational reference point than a direct peer comparator.

C.5 Institution Registry

All UNITIDs are drawn from the IPEDS institutions table, AY 2024-25. Sector confirmed as public, four-year or above, for all institutions.

Table C.9. Peer institution registry with IPEDS unit identifiers.

UNITID	Institution Name (IPEDS)	City	State
180489	The University of Montana	Missoula	MT
126580	University of Colorado Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs	CO
127741	University of Northern Colorado	Greeley	CO
142285	University of Idaho	Moscow	ID
157289	University of Louisville	Louisville	KY
161253	University of Maine	Orono	ME
163268	University of Maryland-Baltimore County	Baltimore	MD
188030	New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Las Cruces	NM
206604	Wright State University-Main Campus	Dayton	OH
219356	South Dakota State University	Brookings	SD
240727	University of Wyoming	Laramie	WY

C.6 Data Methodology and Source Notes

The table below documents the exact IPEDS table and field used for each metric category in this appendix, consistent with UM's practice of citing data provenance in accreditation materials.

Table C.10. Data methodology by metric category.

Metric Category	IPEDS Table(s), Fields, and Notes
Data platform	Federal IPEDS dataset, retrieved via a third-party IPEDS query agent (CollegeVine IPEDS Insights Agent). The source report represents all figures as live queries against the federal database, with no estimation or interpolation.
Reference year	AY 2024-25 (IPEDS year code 2025). Provisional release; figures may be revised in the final IPEDS release.
Graduation rates	graduation_rates table. Fields: grad_rate_bachelors_6yr, grad_rate_pell_150pct, grad_rate_non_pell_150pct. Population: first-time, full-time bachelor's-seeking students. AY 2024-25 reflects the fall 2018 entering cohort; AY 2023-24 reflects fall 2017. Transfer and part-time students are excluded from the denominator by IPEDS design.
Retention	fall_enrollment_retention table. Fields: retention_rate_fulltime_pct, retention_rate_parttime_pct, student_faculty_ratio. First-time degree-seeking students returning fall-to-fall.
8-year outcomes	outcome_rates table. Fields: outcome_ft_award_rate_8yr, outcome_pell_award_rate_8yr.

Metric Category	IPEDS Table(s), Fields, and Notes
	Broader completion measure including stopout/return pathways.
Admissions	admissions_rates table. Fields: admit_rate_pct, yield_rate_pct.
Enrollment / composition	fall_enrollment_metrics table (FTE, total, full-time/part-time counts, gender and race percentages); fall_enrollment_race table (AIAN counts; filter: enrollment_level = “All students total,” line_label = “Total enrollment”; AIAN % = amerindian_alaskan ÷ total).
Financial aid / Pell	student_financial_aid table. Fields: pell_recipients_pct, pell_avg_amount, fed_loan_avg_amount. Full-year aid recipients.
Net price	cost_net_price table. Fields: net_price_instate_income_0_30k, net_price_instate_income_30_48k, net_price_instate_income_48_75k. In-state degree-seeking undergraduates receiving Title IV aid, living on campus. New COST2 income-band structure, first available in AY 2024-25.
Finance	finance_metrics table. Fields: instruction_expense_per_fte_gasb, endowment_per_fte_gasb (GASB-reporting public institutions). UC Colorado Springs endowment not reported in source data.
Age distribution	Not included. The source report's age table encodes categories using raw IPEDS variable codes without a reliable semantic mapping and was excluded to preserve data accuracy.

X. Appendix D: Program Assessment

D.1 Curriculum Map Template

Underwater Basket Weaving *

Required Course (Name, Subject, and Number)	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	ILO 1	ILO 2	ILO 3
UWBW: 101 Submerged Beginnings: Orientation to the Aquatic Loom							
UWBW: 101 The Art of Kelp-Twining: Foundations in Lubricated Structure							
UWBW: 101 Buoyancy Weaving and Regulator Management							
UWBW: 201 Bubble-Locking and the Physics of Buoyant Form							
UWBW: 201 Current Compensation and Drift-Stitching							
UWBW: 201 Materials of the Deep: Ghost Net Fiber and Synthetic Eelgrass							
UWBW: 301 Barnacle Binding and Tidal Tensioning							
UWBW: 301 Advanced Knots of the Abyss: Poseidon Knot and Mask Clearance Knot							
UWBW: 401 Capstone Dive: Integrated Subaquatic Basket Construction							

Key A	Key B
I: Outcome concepts are introduced D: Outcome concepts are developed/reinforced, with opportunities to practice M: Students demonstrate mastery of outcomes concepts A: Assessment evidence collected	I: Concept or idea introduced D: Developing through practice C: Creating / innovating A: Assessment evidence collected

Program Learning Outcomes for Underwater Basket Weaving	ILO: Institutional Learning Outcome
1. Execute core subaquatic weaving techniques with control and precision 2. Evaluate and select aquatic materials for function, sustainability, and performance 3. Integrate buoyancy, environmental dynamics, and craft technique 4. Design, construct, and finish an original subaquatic basket with professional craftsmanship	1. Inquire and Analyze 2. Communicate and Create 3. Connect and Participate

** This example curriculum was created in Claude using a series of assessment-oriented AI prompts.*

D.2 Narrative Templates

This assessment template is designed to support sustained, meaningful inquiry into student learning across a two-year cycle. It provides a structured opportunity for program directors and faculty to collaboratively examine 1) how well students are achieving your Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and 2) how effectively your curriculum supports that achievement over time.

This template is intended for programs accredited under the university's NWCCU institutional accreditation. Programs with specialized external accreditation may submit artifacts from their programmatic accreditation process in lieu of portions of this report. Programs are asked to respond to all areas shaded in gray and the program curriculum map as an appendix. All Programs are asked to provide the following information:

- The Mission Statement of the academic unit administering the program(s).
- Program context for reviewers unfamiliar with the discipline to understand the Program Learning Outcomes and the pedagogical approaches central to the field.
- Program Learning Outcomes as they appear in the university catalog
- Discipline-specific curriculum overview—Arts and Humanities, STEM and Social Science, or Professional/Clinical (see below).
- Discipline-specific Assessment narrative—Arts and Humanities, STEM and Social Science, or Professional/Clinical (see below).
- Results and modifications for each Program Learning Outcome, describing any curricular, pedagogical, or assessment modifications made in response to evidence.
- Future plans for continued assessment in the next two-year cycle. What questions, tensions, or areas of inquiry will guide your attention to student learning?
- Appendices that include, at a minimum, the program Curriculum Map. Additional appendices may include rubrics, assessment instruments, data reports, or accreditation artifacts.

The discipline-specific templates provided below ask programs to use the questions below as a guide, provide a narrative that addresses the overall coherence, communication, and ongoing stewardship of your curriculum. Not every question is relevant to every program and so faculty are instructed to respond to those most relevant to the program's current context and priorities and reference the required Curriculum Map as appropriate.

D.2.1 Arts and Humanities Template

Curriculum Overview

- How does the curriculum demonstrate appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing,

and synthesis of learning from introductory methods and theory through advanced inquiry or creative practice?
- How are program learning outcomes and associated intellectual, creative, or professional competencies communicated to students (e.g., syllabi, advising, program handbooks, studio critiques)?
- How has the assessment of student learning informed changes to the program since the program was last reviewed?
- How are course offerings planned and coordinated to support the transition to biennial scheduling and timely student graduation, including any capstone, thesis, exhibition, or recital requirements?
- If the program includes asynchronous or synchronous distance components, how do you ensure instructional quality, regular and substantive interaction, and equivalent learning outcomes across delivery modalities?
- For programs offering minors, concentrations, or certificates, how do they align with current OCHE definitions, credit ranges, and intended purpose such as transfer or applied knowledge and skills?

Assessment Narrative

Using meaningful evidence gathered across courses and program experiences, describe how well students are meeting your PLOs and what the evidence reveals about curriculum design, teaching practices, and student achievement. Address the following as relevant to your program:

- What is working well in student attainment of critical, creative, or communicative learning outcomes? What evidence supports this?
- How well are students meeting PLOs related to interpretation, argumentation, artistic practice, or cultural analysis? What evidence informs your conclusions?
- How does the curriculum map reflect progression from introductory methods and theory through advanced inquiry, original research, or creative practice?
- Where are the gaps or areas for continued attention in student preparation for graduate study, creative careers, or civic and professional roles?
- How clearly are PLOs defined, observable, and aligned with disciplinary norms and the university's Institutional Learning Outcomes?
- What evidence-informed modifications are planned or underway to strengthen student learning, creative development, and program coherence?

D.2.2 STEM and Social Sciences Template

Curriculum Overview

- How does the curriculum demonstrate appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning across foundational, applied, and advanced coursework?
- How are program learning outcomes and associated technical or professional competencies communicated to students (e.g., syllabi, advising, program

handbooks)?
- How has the assessment of student learning informed changes to the program since the program was last reviewed?
- How are course offerings planned and coordinated to support the transition to biennial scheduling and timely student graduation, including any lab, clinical, or field-sequence bottlenecks?
- If the program includes asynchronous or synchronous distance components, how do you ensure instructional quality, regular and substantive interaction, and equivalent learning outcomes across delivery modalities?
- For programs offering minors, concentrations, or certificates, how do they align with current OCHE definitions, credit ranges, and intended purpose such as transfer or applied knowledge and skills?

Assessment Narrative

Using meaningful evidence gathered across courses and program experiences, describe how well students are meeting your PLOs and what the evidence reveals about curriculum design, teaching practices, and student achievement. Address the following as relevant to your program:

- What is working well in student attainment of technical and disciplinary learning outcomes? What evidence supports this?
- How well are students meeting PLOs related to qualitative, quantitative, analytical, or experimental competencies? What data inform your conclusions?
- How does the curriculum map reflect progression from foundational concepts to applied skills to capstone-level mastery?
- Where are the gaps or areas for continued attention in student preparation for Social Science or STEM careers or graduate study?
- How clearly are PLOs defined, measurable, and aligned with disciplinary standards and the university's Institutional Learning Outcomes?
- What evidence-based modifications are planned or underway to strengthen student learning and program coherence?

D.2.3 Clinical/Professional

Curriculum Overview

- How does the curriculum demonstrate appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning from foundational professional knowledge through supervised clinical or practicum experience?
- How are program learning outcomes and associated professional competencies or licensure benchmarks communicated to students (e.g., syllabi, advising, clinical orientation, field placement handbooks)?
- How has the assessment of student learning -- not just student achievement data -- informed changes to the program since it was last reviewed?
- How are course offerings and clinical placements planned and coordinated to

support timely student graduation, including any sequencing constraints or site-capacity bottlenecks?
- If the program includes asynchronous or synchronous distance components, how do you ensure instructional quality, regular and substantive interaction, and equivalent learning outcomes across delivery modalities, including clinical simulation?
- For programs offering minors, concentrations, or certificates, how do they align with current OCHE definitions, credit ranges, and intended purpose such as transfer or applied professional knowledge and skills?

Assessment Narrative

Using meaningful evidence gathered across courses and clinical or practicum experiences, describe how well students are meeting your PLOs and what the evidence reveals about curriculum design, teaching practices, and student learning. Address the following as relevant to your program:

- What direct evidence -- drawn from clinical evaluations, rubric-assessed performance, capstone work, or other program-level assessments -- shows how well students are meeting each PLO?
- How well are students meeting PLOs related to evidence-based practice, ethical decision-making, or clinical performance? What evidence informs your conclusions?
- How does the curriculum map reflect progression from foundational coursework through supervised practice to entry-level professional competency?
- Where are the gaps or areas for continued attention in student preparation for licensure, certification, or professional employment?
- How clearly are PLOs defined, measurable, and aligned with professional standards, accreditation expectations, and the university's Institutional Learning Outcomes?
- Where student achievement data (grades, pass rates, licensure exam results) are cited, how do they connect to -- or differ from -- what the direct evidence of student learning shows?

D.3 Case Study – Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training (IPAT)

D.3.1 Curriculum Map

This map is broken into four tables so that the full assessment narrative fits legibly across landscape pages: two tables for Program Learning Outcomes and two for Career Readiness Competencies. Each table repeats the full outcome text on the left so a reader can move between tables without losing track of which outcome is being addressed.

Table 1 — Program Learning Outcomes: Assessment Measures

Program Learning Outcome	Measure 1: Course	Measure 1: Assessment Strategy	Measure 1: Benchmark & Outcome	Measure 2: Course	Measure 2: Assessment Strategy	Measure 2: Benchmark & Outcome
1. Analyze theoretical foundations of integrative physiology and athletic training and evaluate their influence on contemporary health and exercise science practices.	KIN 205	Unit Project 1	70/73 students received 90% or higher on Unit Project 1	KIN 201	Quiz #1	73/82 students scored 80% or higher on Quiz #1
2. Critically appraise and evaluate current research that promotes health, exercise, performance, and disease prevention.	KIN 499	Capstone presentation	100% of students successfully completed the capstone requirements	KIN 447	Presentation	14/23 scored 90% or higher (20/23 scored 80% or higher)
3. Conduct valid and reliable assessments of physical fitness, movement, and health indicators, and interpret results to inform exercise prescriptions.	KIN 201	Lab Report #1	72/82 students scored 80% or higher on lab report 1	KIN 484	Clinical testing	Spring 2026
4. Effectively communicate health and exercise science concepts, program recommendations, and outcomes to diverse audiences using oral, written, and digital formats.	KIN 447	Literature review	17/23 scored 90% or higher (20/23 scored 80% or higher)	KIN 499	Capstone abstract and presentation	100% of students successfully completed the capstone requirements
5. Collaborate effectively with peers and interdisciplinary professionals, applying leadership and teamwork skills to achieve shared goals in health and exercise settings.	KIN 484	Clinical testing	Spring 2026	KIN 321	Final group presentation on selected topic	8/10 students scored higher than 80% on the group presentation
6. Integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills in experiential learning settings (e.g., laboratories, internships, fieldwork).	KIN 498	Internship portfolio	100% of students successfully completed the portfolio requirements	KIN 460	12-lead ECG practical exam	48/58 students scored higher than 80% on the exam

Table 2 — Program Learning Outcomes: Course and ILO Coverage

Program Learning Outcome	Courses Identified by Students that PLO Was Addressed (Fall 2025)	ILO 1: Inquire & Analyze	ILO 2: Communicate & Create	ILO 3: Connect & Participate
1. Analyze theoretical foundations of integrative physiology and athletic training and evaluate their influence on contemporary health and exercise science practices.	KIN 205, KIN 320, AHAT 479	x	x	x
2. Critically appraise and evaluate current research that promotes health, exercise, performance, and disease prevention.	KIN 205, KIN 320, KIN 447	x	x	x
3. Conduct valid and reliable assessments of physical fitness, movement, and health indicators, and interpret results to inform exercise prescriptions.	KIN 460, KIN 320	x	x	x
4. Effectively communicate health and exercise science concepts, program recommendations, and outcomes to diverse audiences using oral, written, and digital formats.	AHAT 479, KIN 460, KIN 447	x	x	x
5. Collaborate effectively with peers and interdisciplinary professionals, applying leadership and teamwork skills to achieve shared goals in health and exercise settings.	KIN 205, KIN 447	x	x	x
6. Integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills in experiential learning settings (e.g., laboratories, internships, fieldwork).	KIN 460	x	x	x

** Low number of courses evaluated by students in Fall 2025.*

Table 3 — Career Readiness Competencies: Instructor-Identified Courses

Career Readiness Competency	Courses Identified by Instructors (IPAT Core)	Courses Identified by Instructors (IPAT Elective Menu)
1. Career and Self Development — Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.	KIN 205, KIN 320, KIN 321, KIN 483, KIN 484, KIN 425, KIN 426, KIN 498, KIN 499	AHAT 479, AHMS 144, KIN 310, KIN 410, KIN 460, NUTR 411
2. Communication — Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.	KIN 201, NUTR 221, KIN 320, KIN 321, KIN 447, KIN 483, KIN 484, KIN 498, KIN 499	AHAT 210, AHAT 213, AHAT 324, AHAT 325, AHAT 479, COA 405, HTH 465, KIN 310, KIN 322, KIN 323, KIN 410, KIN 440, KIN 441, KIN 460, NUTR 411
3. Critical Thinking — Identify and respond to	KIN 201, NUTR 221, KIN 320, KIN 321, KIN 447, KIN 483,	AHAT 210, AHAT 213, AHAT 324, AHAT 325, COA 405,

Career Readiness Competency	Courses Identified by Instructors (IPAT Core)	Courses Identified by Instructors (IPAT Elective Menu)
needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.	KIN 484, KIN 498, KIN 499, KIN 205, KIN 330, HTH 475, KIN 425, KIN 426	HTH 465, KIN 310, KIN 322, KIN 323, KIN 410, KIN 440, KIN 441, KIN 460, NUTR 411
4. Equity and Inclusion — Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in antiracist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.	KIN 205, HTH 475, KIN 483, KIN 484, KIN 498	HTH 465, KIN 460
5. Leadership — Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.	KIN 483, KIN 484, KIN 498, KIN 499	COA 405, HTH 465, KIN 440
6. Professionalism — Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.	KIN 205, KIN 321, HTH 475, KIN 425, KIN 426, KIN 498, KIN 499	AHAT 210, HTH 465, KIN 310, KIN 410, KIN 440
7. Teamwork — Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.	KIN 201, KIN 447, KIN 483, KIN 484, KIN 498, KIN 499, KIN 205, HTH 475, KIN 425, KIN 426	AHAT 210, AHAT 213, AHAT 324, AHAT 325, COA 405, HTH 465, KIN 310, KIN 322, KIN 323, KIN 410, KIN 440, KIN 441, NUTR 411
8. Technology — Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.	KIN 201, NUTR 221, KIN 330, KIN 320, KIN 321, KIN 484, KIN 425, KIN 426, KIN 498, KIN 499	AHAT 479, AHMS 144, KIN 410, KIN 460, NUTR 411
9. Community and Global Engagement — Participate in meaningful and beneficial ways with local and global communities as a culturally competent, engaged citizen of the world.	None identified	None identified
10. Creativity and Innovation — Identify goals or common problems, empathize within context, imagine and test novel solutions to adaptively convert what you have into what you envision.	KIN 320, KIN 321, HTH 475, KIN 484, KIN 425	HTH 465, KIN 410, KIN 441, NUTR 411

Table 4 — Career Readiness Competencies: Student-Identified Courses

Career Readiness Competency	Courses Identified by Students (Fall 2025 Evaluations)	Courses Identified by Students (Spring 2026 Evaluations)
1. Career and Self Development — Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.	AHAT 324, AHAT 479, KIN 460, KIN 205, KIN 320	Not yet available at time of this map

Career Readiness Competency	Courses Identified by Students (Fall 2025 Evaluations)	Courses Identified by Students (Spring 2026 Evaluations)
2. Communication — Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.	AHAT 324, AHAT 325, AHAT 479, KIN 205, KIN 447	Not yet available at time of this map
3. Critical Thinking — Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.	KIN 460, KIN 320	Not yet available at time of this map
4. Equity and Inclusion — Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in antiracist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.	KIN 320	Not yet available at time of this map
5. Leadership — Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.	None	Not yet available at time of this map
6. Professionalism — Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.	KIN 460, KIN 447	Not yet available at time of this map
7. Teamwork — Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.	AHAT 324, AHAT 325, AHAT 479, KIN 205	Not yet available at time of this map
8. Technology — Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.	KIN 447	Not yet available at time of this map
9. Community and Global Engagement — Participate in meaningful and beneficial ways with local and global communities as a culturally competent, engaged citizen of the world.	None identified	Not yet available at time of this map
10. Creativity and Innovation — Identify goals or common problems, empathize within context, imagine and test novel solutions to adaptively convert what you have into what you envision.	None identified	Not yet available at time of this map

** Low number of courses evaluated by students in fall 2025. Spring 2026 course-evaluation data was not yet available at the time this map was compiled.*

Program-Specific Key

X: outcome addressed A: assessment information available ILO: Institutional Learning Outcome (for use with undergraduate programs)
1. Inquire and Analyze 2. Communicate and Create 3. Connect and Participate

D.3.2 Narrative

Professional and Clinical Program

Student Learning Assessment Narrative

Integrative Physiology & Athletic Training

Two-Year Assessment Cycle: __May 2026_____ to _____May 2028_____
Submitted by: _____Valerie Moody_____
Date: ___April 15, 2026_____

About This Template

This assessment template supports sustained, meaningful inquiry into student learning across a two-year cycle. It provides a structured opportunity for program directors and faculty to collaboratively examine how well students are achieving the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) you have defined, and how effectively your curriculum supports that achievement over time.

This template is intended for programs accredited under the university's NWCCU institutional accreditation. Programs with specialized external accreditation may submit artifacts from their programmatic accreditation process in lieu of portions of this report, as described in Section 8.

Please respond to all areas shaded in gray. This document will be posted online and must be accessible electronically, including all appendices.

1. Mission Statement

Vision

To be a leading educational destination for research and educational programs focused on empowering the next generation of professionals to enhance health and physical activity for a diverse society.

Mission

The School of Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training (IPAT) offers comprehensive, cutting-edge curricula which prepares a diverse student body for a wide range of careers in healthcare, wellness, and exercise. We strive for excellence and inclusiveness to serve our students and communities by leading innovative research, engaging our communities to improve health, and educating students to develop as leaders, critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

2. Program Context

Share information about your program, keeping in mind that readers may be unfamiliar with your field. Provide the context necessary to understand your Program Learning Outcomes and the pedagogical approaches central to professional and clinical preparation.

Since the Academic Portfolio Review process in 2024, IPAT has streamlined its curricular pathways and is now home to:

- BS Integrative Physiology, Health and Exercise Science (not currently accredited, but will be pursuing accreditation through CAAHEP)
- MS Integrative Physiology, Exercise Science
- MAT Master of Athletic Training (accredited by the Commission of Accreditation of Athletic Training Education, CAATE through 2032-2033; self-study due July 2032)
- PhD Integrative Physiology and Rehabilitation Sciences

IPAT is home to 342 students marking a near 30% increase in enrollment since 2021. This report will not include the MAT program since it is externally accredited. The focus for this assessment plan is on the bachelor's program.

3. Program Learning Outcomes

List your Program Learning Outcomes as they appear in the university catalog. Program Learning Outcomes should be published and made available to students through syllabi, advising materials, clinical orientation, and field placement handbooks.

IPAT Undergraduate
New Program Learning Outcomes (Fall 2025)

1. Analyze theoretical foundations of integrative physiology and athletic training and evaluate their influence on contemporary health and exercise science practices.
2. Critically appraise and evaluate current research that promotes health, exercise, performance, and disease prevention.
3. Conduct valid and reliable assessments of physical fitness, movement, and health indicators, and interpret results to inform exercise prescriptions.
4. Effectively communicate health and exercise science concepts, program recommendations, and outcomes to diverse audiences using oral, written, and digital formats.
5. Collaborate effectively with peers and interdisciplinary professionals, applying leadership and teamwork skills to achieve shared goals in health and exercise settings.
6. Integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills in experiential learning settings (e.g., laboratories, internships, fieldwork).

4. Curriculum Overview

Using the prompts below as a guide, provide a narrative (~250 words) that addresses the overall coherence, communication, and ongoing stewardship of your curriculum. You do not need to answer every prompt; write a cohesive response that reflects how the curriculum is designed, communicated to students, and thoughtfully maintained. Reference your required Curriculum Map (included as an appendix) as appropriate.

IPAT began its redesign of curricular offerings in the fall of 2024 to enhance curricular efficiency and create streamlined pathways for students. We reduced four different Bachelor's degree concentrations down to one, Health and Exercise Science. The structure of the curriculum is such that foundational coursework is emphasized in the 55 credits of core course requirements. Students are afforded the opportunity to select 15 credits of IPAT elective courses based on academic interests. The remaining 50 credits to the Bachelor's degree completion allow flexibility for students to complete pre-requisite requirements for professional programs such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, pre-medicine, athletic training, and physician associate. This curricular flexibility also allows students the opportunity to pursue certificates and minors, such as the sport psychology minor we offer, which has evolved into one of the most popular minors on campus. Most of the coursework in IPAT is highly experiential in nature (laboratory based, hands on learning), and students also complete a culminating research capstone or internship experience prior to graduation.

The program assessment process in IPAT has been paused for the past two years as we worked to revise curriculum and redefine our program learning outcomes. Program learning outcomes are published on our website and in the course catalog. Concurrently, we have been working towards explicitly mapping career readiness competencies to our IPAT course offerings. We are currently in the process of integrating PLOs and CRCs into syllabus language and this process is in its infancy. Additionally, we have added our PLOs and CRCs to IPAT course evaluations this year, asking students' perception regarding which PLOs and CRCs were addressed in the course. Our next step is now to collect data on course level assessments that occur to support evaluation of our new PLOs.

5. Assessment Narrative

Using meaningful evidence gathered across courses and clinical or practicum experiences, describe how well students are meeting your PLOs and what the evidence reveals about curriculum design, teaching practices, and student learning. Address the following as relevant to your program:

We have identified course level assessments in our revised curriculum map and provide data (albeit limited) from the fall 2025 from course assessments. Additionally, data from course evaluations on PLOs and CRCs identified in courses taught/evaluated is provided (also quite limited). It is important to note that our response rates are quite low overall for course evaluations, limiting the value of PLO and CRC data thus far. As we continue to build out our revised assessment plan, we anticipate more robust assessment of PLOs with more data points over time.

Data collected thus far demonstrates congruency between faculty and students' perceptions of PLOs addressed in courses. Students did identify additional courses in which they perceived PLOs were addressed and this will be examined in more detail as we continue to collect data. Similarly, when analyzing data regarding the CRCs addressed in IPAT courses, largely students and faculty aligned with CRCs addressed in

courses. However, there were a few instances where CRCs (i.e., Leadership) were identified as an area of focus for a course, but students did not perceive that as being addressed in the course. Ultimately monitoring this over time with more data points will be helpful before any major adjustments are made.

It does appear that our assessment strategies thus far are aligned with our PLOs/ILOs and that students are performing quite well on direct and indirect assessment measures. Culminating experiences such as the internship and research capstone foster meaningful, high impact practice experiences for our students. 100% of the students enrolled in either capstone or internship demonstrated successful completion of the culminating projects. These experiences encompass all aspects of UM ILOs and IPAT PLOs requiring foundational knowledge in contemporary health and exercise science, critical analysis of evidence-based practices, communication with professionals practicing in the field, testing and assessment in a variety of environments, and collaboration with others.

Summarize key findings for each Program Learning Outcome and describe any curricular, pedagogical, or assessment modifications made in response to evidence. The results column should reflect direct evidence of student learning wherever possible. Add rows as needed.

Student Learning Outcome Results	Modifications Made to Enhance Learning
PLO #6: 100% of Internship students completed their portfolio assignment. This assignment entails inclusion of documentation of meeting with a site supervisor to establish expectations and goals for the experience, documentation of achieving learning goals, journal reflections, skills learned in the experience, and a survey to assess the experience (this survey already includes an assessment of the CRCs- ie how well the internship experience addressed each CRC).	In addition to ensuring successful completion of the portfolio experience, we will explore the opportunity to add questions to the internship survey to more explicitly address how well the students felt the PLO was met. We need to examine the survey data more closely (historically, this has not been consistently analyzed as part of the IPAT assessment plan)
PLO #5: 80% of students performed well on the group presentation in the Exercise Physiology Lab.	We will continue to monitor progress on the group presentations. Additionally, spring 2026 we will be collecting additional data on the KIN 484 lab Clinical Testing requirement which requires students to interact with patients in a team-based model of testing.
PLO #4: Students successfully met the benchmark of 80% or higher on the ability to communicate.	Continue to monitor progress beyond one semester of data points for both KIN 499 and KIN 447. Consider developing a rubric to assess the abstract and presentation quality in KIN 499.
PLO #3: Less than 10 students scored lower than 80% on the first lab report in KIN 201.	So many of the IPAT classes are laboratory based and could address this specific PLO. As we continue to further develop our assessment plan, we will continue to refine measures analyzed for this PLO.
PLO #2: The vast majority of students demonstrated the ability to appraise and evaluate research through a variety of assessment measures.	Continue to monitor progress beyond one semester of data points for both KIN 499 and KIN 447. Consider developing a rubric to assess the abstract and presentation quality in KIN 499.

PLO #1: Students successfully met the benchmark of 80% or higher on the ability to analyze theoretical foundations of IPAT.	Continue to monitor after collecting more data to determine if additional assessment measures are warranted to support this PLO.

7. Future Plans for Continued Assessment

Summarize your plans for continued assessment in the next two-year cycle. What questions, tensions, or areas of inquiry will guide your attention to student learning? If your program is working to develop stronger direct assessment practices, describe that work here.

The first step for IPAT will be to establish what achievement measures and student learning assessments best reflect our PLOs and map out a clear cycle of collecting and analyzing data on a consistent basis (more frequently than every few years!) We will continue to evaluate how students perceive courses meeting our PLOs and CRCs. We will work towards implementation of PLOs and CRCs into standard syllabus language and more intentionally reflect on how to use these data to inform continuous program improvement. Lastly, we need to expand our assessment planning and framework to include the MS & PhD programs in Integrative Physiology. Draft framework is included as a separate attachment.

8. Accreditation Context

The University of Montana is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The 2027 NWCCU Standards -- which will take effect in January 2027 -- place particular emphasis on systematic assessment and reporting on student learning (1.C.4), using assessment results to inform continuous program improvements (1.C.6), and ensuring that program learning outcomes are published and accessible to students (1.C.3). This section asks programs to reflect on questions that are central to UM's ability to demonstrate meaningful assessment to its accrediting body.

> *On the distinction between student learning and student achievement: student achievement data (grades, GPA, licensure exam pass rates, retention, graduation) tells us whether students succeeded. Student learning evidence tells us what students can actually do or understand relative to your PLOs: a rubric-scored clinical evaluation, a capstone assessed against program competencies, a portfolio review. Both matter, but they answer different questions. The questions below are designed to help programs articulate that distinction clearly and build a stronger evidence base over time.*

Respond to each question in the table below. Two to four sentences per question is sufficient. Honest, partial answers are more useful than complete answers that overstate where the program is.

Question	Program Response
How are this program's learning outcomes published and made available to students -- and does that	Program learning outcomes are made available to students on our website and published in the course catalog.

communication go beyond listing them in a syllabus?	
What direct evidence of student learning is included in this report, and how does it differ from evidence of student achievement?	All IPAT graduates must complete a culminating capstone experience- either through KIN 498 Internship or KIN 499 Research Capstone. Student learning is assessed in KIN 498 via portfolio review and KIN 499 is completion of a written research abstract and presentation. 100% of students who took these courses in the fall 2025 successfully completed the portfolio or presentation. Historically, IPAT has not prioritized examining assessment data beyond what has been submitted to the Provost office. Additionally, more analysis is needed to fully understand how these experiences support student achievement measures such as job placement, graduate/professional program preparedness, completion GPA, alumni surveys, etc.
How have the results of assessing student learning led to a specific, identifiable improvement in this program?	We have work to do! We need to develop a more intentional plan to collect data on a variety of assessment measures to inform program improvement. Given our growth in enrollment the past couple of years, and that we anticipate changes in retiring faculty, having more structure to this process will be helpful for future curricular planning (particularly if we are to seek accreditation of the BS program).
If your program holds specialized external accreditation, how does that accreditation process interact with this university-level assessment report?	Not applicable to the BS program currently. However, we do intend to seek accreditation of the Health and Exercise Science program in the next couple of years. We expect that this will drastically influence and standardize the assessment process.
How does this program's assessment work connect to the university's Institutional Learning Outcomes, and does it contribute to institution-wide understanding of student learning?	While not explicitly stated anywhere in our IPAT documents, it is evident that our PLOs support UM's ILOs. Historically, the assessment plans have been completed in silos (i.e,, program-level data not used to inform School/College level assessment planning).

> *These responses are reviewed by the Assessment Advisory Committee and the Office of the Provost in aggregate across all programs. They are not an evaluation of individual programs or faculty. They help the university understand where assessment practices are strong, where they are developing, and where institutional support is needed.*

Appendices

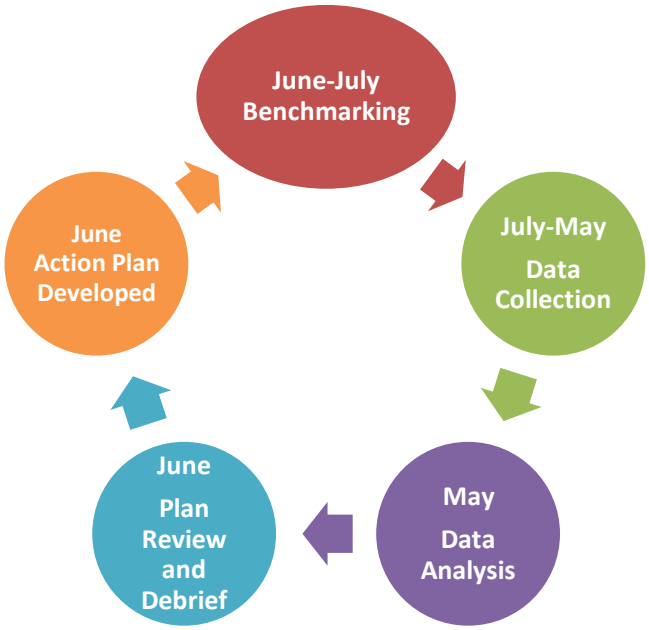
List all attached appendices below. At minimum, include your Curriculum Map. For programs with specialized accreditation, include relevant accreditation artifacts and note which sections of this report they address.

#	Appendix Title / Description

1	Curriculum Map
2	Draft Assessment Framework for IPAT

D.3.3 Draft Assessment Framework for IPAT

The program assessment plan is a living document that will be updated throughout the year to evaluate progress toward meeting benchmarks. Program assessment occurs year-round using both formative and summative assessments. The plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis.



Timeline

Summer	Fall	Spring
• Course Evaluations • Internship Survey • Course specific outcomes • Retention rates • Job placement data	• Course Evaluations • Internship Survey • Course specific outcomes	• Course Evaluations • Internship Survey • Graduate exit survey • Course specific outcomes • Graduate rates

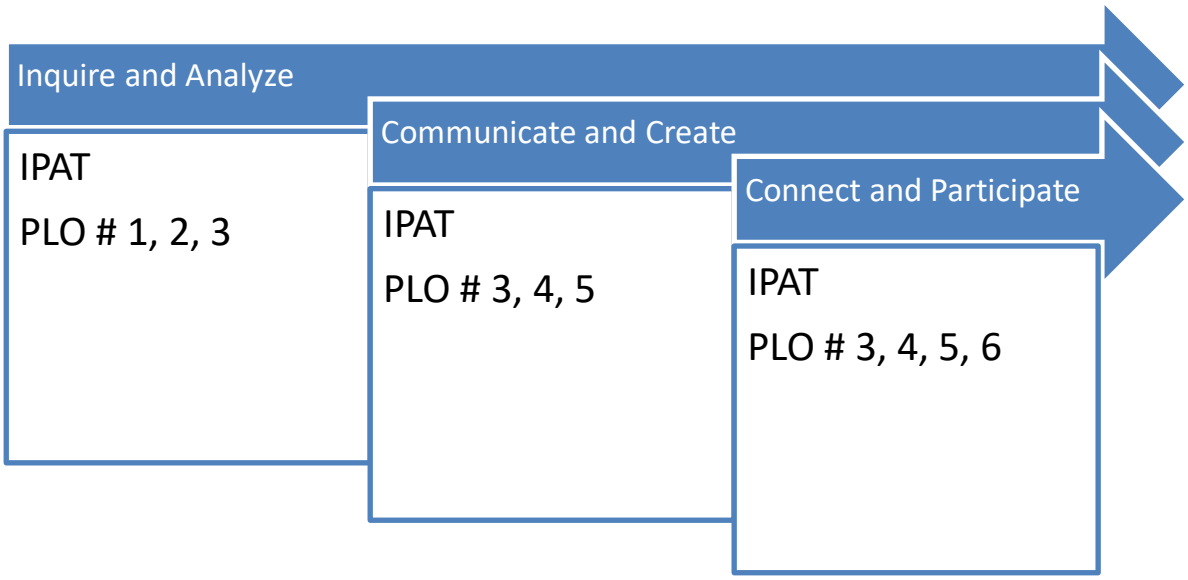
Program Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze theoretical foundations of integrative physiology and athletic training and evaluate their influence on contemporary health and exercise science practices.
2. Critically appraise and evaluate current research that promotes health, exercise, performance, and disease prevention.
3. Conduct valid and reliable assessments of physical fitness, movement, and health indicators, and interpret results to inform exercise prescriptions.
4. Effectively communicate health and exercise science concepts, program recommendations, and outcomes to diverse audiences using oral, written, and digital formats.
5. Collaborate effectively with peers and interdisciplinary professionals, applying leadership and teamwork skills to achieve shared goals in health and exercise settings.
6. Integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills in experiential learning settings (e.g., laboratories, internships, fieldwork).

Program Assessment Measures

Quality of Instruction	Program Effectiveness	Program Learning Outcomes	Quality of Experiential Learning
•Course evaluations •Course outcome measures	•Graduate exit survey •Student achievement measures (graduation rate, retention rate, GPA) •Job placement •Professional school acceptance	•Course evaluations •Specific course learning outcomes •Career readiness competencies	•Course evaluations •Internship survey •Career readiness competencies

Alignment with Institutional Learning Outcomes



XI. Appendix E: Moving Forward

E.1 Faculty Senate AI & Assessment Survey

This is the August 13, 2026 draft of the survey prepared in Qualtrics.

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q15 The purpose of this survey is to get a sense of the perceptions, experiences, and responses of Faculty Senators to student use of AI, focusing on assessment. Responses will be shared with Senate and the administration.

Q4 My college:

- ○ Humanities & Social Sciences (1)
- ○ Science (2)
- ○ Arts & Media (3)
- ○ Education (4)
- ○ Business (5)
- ○ Forestry (6)
- ○ Health (7)
- ○ Missoula College (8)
- ○ Law (9)
- ○ Library (10)

Q1 In the past year, I taught courses that were (click all that apply):

- ☐ Fully in person (1)
- ☐ Hybrid (in person with online students) (2)
- ☐ Fully online (synchronous) (3)
- ☐ Fully online (asynchronous) (4)

Q5 My syllabus policy on AI use:

- ○ No statement (1)
- ○ Prohibited for all purposes (2)
- ○ Permitted for some tasks with disclosure (3)
- ○ Broadly permitted (4)
- ○ Required or integrated into assignments (5)

Q6 In the past academic year, how often did you suspect a student had used AI in a way contrary to your stated instructions or expectations?

- ○ Never (1)
- ○ 1-5 times (2)
- ○ 5-20 times (3)
- ○ 20+ times (4)

Display this question:
If In the past academic year, how often did you suspect a student had used AI in a way contrary to y... != Never

Q7 When you suspected AI use, what did you rely on (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Writing style or voice inconsistent with prior work (1)
- ☐ Content errors or writing style characteristic of AI (2)
- ☐ Detection software (3)
- ☐ Student admission (4)
- ☐ Other (5)

Display this question:
If In the past academic year, how often did you suspect a student had used AI in a way contrary to y... != Never

Q8 Of the instances you suspected, how many did you substantiate to your own satisfaction?

- ○ None (1)

- ○ Some (2)
- ○ Most (3)
- ○ All (4)
- ○ Did not attempt to confirm (5)

Display this question:
If In the past academic year, how often did you suspect a student had used AI in a way contrary to y... != Never

Q9 How many did you formally report through the student conduct process?

- ○ All (1)
- ○ Only the most egregious/obvious (2)
- ○ None (3)

Display this question:
If In the past academic year, how often did you suspect a student had used AI in a way contrary to y... != Never

Q10 If you suspected but did not report, why? (Click all that apply.)

- ☐ Insufficient proof (1)
- ☐ Too burdensome (2)
- ☐ Concern for student (3)
- ☐ Uncertainty about reporting process (4)
- ☐ Doubted process would result in anything meaningful (5)
- ☐ Other (6)

Q11 Have you changed your assessments in response to AI? (Click all that apply.)

- ☐ Moved to in-person, hand-written exams (1)
- ☐ Added proctoring (2)
- ☐ Added oral components (3)

☐ Shifted weight to in-class work (4)

☐ Redesigned assignments to incorporate AI use (5)

☐ Added process requirements (e.g., showing drafts, source notes, version history, etc.) (6)

☐ None (7)

Q13 What would help most from the administration? (Rank in order of importance.)
_____ A campuswide baseline policy (1)
_____ Model syllabus language faculty can adopt or modify (2)
_____ Clearer conduct-process standards for AI allegations (3)
_____ Detection tools and guidance on their limits (4)
_____ Assessment-redesign support (5)
_____ Funding for proctoring or exam infrastructure (6)
_____ Institutional support for faculty who permit AI use (7)

Q14 Anything else you would like the Senate and/or Administration to know?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

XII. Institutional Certification Form

APPENDIX J:
INSTITUTIONAL REPORT CERTIFICATION FORM

Please use this certification form for all institutional reports (Self-Evaluation, Annual, Mid-Cycle, PRFR, Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness, Candidacy, Ad-Hoc, or Special)

NWCCU
NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Institutional Report Certification Form

On behalf of the Institution, I certify that:

- ☑ There was broad participation/review by the campus community in the preparation of this report.
- ☑ The Institution remains in compliance with NWCCU Eligibility Requirements.
- ☑ The Institution will continue to remain in compliance throughout the duration of the institution's cycle of accreditation.

I understand that information provided in this report may affect the continued Candidacy or Accreditation of my institution. I certify that the information and data provided in the report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

University of Montana

(Name of Institution)

Jeremiah Shinn

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

Jeremiah Shinn

Digitally signed by Jeremiah Shinn
Date: 2026.08.24 14:50:44 -06'00'

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

08/24/2026

(Date)