



# YEAR ONE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT



Submitted to  
The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
March 1, 2018

---

---

---

# Table of Contents

Institutional Overview.....	1
Preface .....	3
Institutional Changes .....	3
Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3 .....	4
Authority .....	4
Mission and Core Themes.....	4
Standard 1A: Mission .....	5
Mission and Core Themes.....	5
Objectives and Indicators.....	6
Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment.....	6
Standard 1B: Core Themes .....	8
Core Theme #1: Engage Students Where They Are.....	9
Objectives and Strategies .....	9
Enhance professional advising and support faculty-student mentoring.....	9
Ensure access through flexibility: Reimagine when and where students learn .....	9
Strengthen student support that sets us apart .....	10
Indicators of Achievement.....	11
Rationale .....	11
Core Theme #2: Invest in People .....	13
Objectives and Strategies .....	13
Invest in Leadership .....	13
Invest in Professional Development .....	13
Invest in Relationships .....	14
Indicators of Achievement.....	14
Rationale .....	15
Core Theme #3: Partner With Place .....	16
Objectives and Strategies .....	16
Design student experiences that engage and promote our setting .....	16
Organize a campus hub for community partnerships and sustainable solutions.....	16
Value diversity through place-based partnerships and internationalization .....	17

---

---

Foster a neighborhood alliance: building a bright future for Missoula-UM.....	17
Indicators of Achievement.....	18
Rationale .....	18
Core Theme #4: Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum.....	19
Objectives and Strategies .....	19
Enhance core academic skills throughout the curriculum.....	19
Define the UM academic experience and explore its delivery .....	19
Indicators of Achievement.....	20
Rationale .....	20
Core Theme #5: Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation.....	22
Objectives and Strategies .....	22
Sustain and expand research and creative scholarship in support of academic excellence .....	22
Catalyze innovation and sustainable economic development through entrepreneurship .....	22
Indicators of Achievement.....	23
Rationale .....	23
Conclusion.....	24
Contributors.....	25

---

---

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The University of Montana (UM) was chartered in 1893 with the essential purpose of providing the “best and most efficient manner of imparting . . . a liberal education and thorough knowledge of the different branches of literature, science, and the arts.” Now celebrating 125 years of impact in Montana and beyond, the University of Montana is a state university dedicated to providing excellent undergraduate and graduate educational programs and experiences that emphasize the acquisition and creation of knowledge, critical thinking, personal and social responsibility and integrative problem solving. Additionally, as a doctoral research University, the University of Montana expands the frontier of knowledge through basic and applied research, creative scholarship and outreach activities serving Montana, the nation and the world.

Under the Constitution of Montana, the Montana University System (MUS) is governed by an autonomous board of regents, appointed by the governor, and administered by a commissioner of higher education. In 1994, the MUS was reorganized into two divisions: the University of Montana, with the flagship campus in Missoula; and Montana State University, with the flagship campus in Bozeman. The University of Montana is an affiliation of independently accredited institutions:

- The flagship campus (UM), including Missoula College;
- Montana Tech of the University of Montana, in Butte;
- The University of Montana Western, in Dillon; and
- Helena College, University of Montana, in Helena.

Although the four campuses are administratively one University affiliation, each retains its own distinctive mission, academic programs, procedures, standards, and accreditation. The scope of this report is limited to the activities of the University of Montana flagship institution in Missoula, including Missoula College.



UM thrives in a setting that combines cultural diversity, community engagement, natural wilderness, and scenic beauty. At the University, breadth of programming and a solid interdisciplinary foundation foster the critical thinking and integrative problem solving skills needed by citizens in a dynamic world. Capitalizing on its proximity to the northern Rocky Mountains, the University has developed world-class programs related to the environment. The Health and Medicine Initiative coordinates the many human health and biomedical sciences programs to advance academic healthcare opportunities and the quality of healthcare provided to Montanans. As a major center for the arts and culture in Montana, UM nurtures

---

artists, performers, and writers. Students study a rich array of cultures through academic programs, special institutes, and dozens of student/faculty international exchange agreements. The University of Montana is further committed to meeting societal needs through excellent professional programs in business, forestry, education, journalism, the arts, health, and law. It takes pride in the engagement of its students beyond the campuses. UM maintains an Office for Civic Engagement and is home to the Montana Campus Compact, part of a national coalition dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement and service-learning in higher education. UM has significantly enhanced its research and creative profile, setting institutional records for external funding the past three years; UM researchers were awarded \$88 million in external funding last year. The UM Foundation works with the University to develop private resources for the campus, employees and students, raising more than \$50 million in gifts and pledges in each of the past three years. The University's many outreach activities provide a great resource to the state and community, and include athletic events; art and science events and tours; partnerships with state, regional, and tribal agencies; and involvement with K-12 education.

Enrollment at the University reached 11,865 students in fall 2017. Headcount was 7,550 at the undergraduate level on the four-year campus; 2,542 at the graduate level; and 1,773 in two-year and/or certificate programs. Of incoming UM students, more than 70% are Montana residents, 36.9% of undergraduate students are first-generation college students, and the average ACT score of incoming students is 23.5. In 2017, UM conferred 1,737 baccalaureate, 452 master's, 56 research doctoral, and 349 professional doctoral degrees.

UM provides an array of student services, including residence life programming, award-winning dining services, over 200 student clubs and organizations, advising, counseling, wellness, recreation and intramural sports, Grizzly Athletics, cultural events, tutoring, financial aid, financial education and work-study opportunities.

The University is led by President Seth Bodnar, who joined UM on January 2, 2018. His executive leadership team includes vice presidents for academic affairs (provost), administration and finance, enrollment and student affairs, and research and creative scholarship. All vice presidents sit on the [President's Cabinet](#), along with other executive leaders such as the chief information officer, athletic director, legal counsel, and shared governance leaders. The President's Cabinet brings a common vision to the responsibilities and endeavors that characterize the institution, promoting collaboration and support among the sectors and advancing the goals and outcomes of UM both internally and externally.

UM plans and allocates resources through a proactive and participative process known as the [Planning-Assessment Continuum](#), allowing for resource management critical to the University's ongoing success. The University Assessment and Accreditation Committee contributed to the preparation of this report, and includes representatives from the faculty, staff, students and administrators.

---

## PREFACE

The following progress report is submitted on behalf of the University of Montana, and has been written in response to the NWCCU Year One Self-Evaluation Report guidelines. The University participated in a Demonstration Project in 2017 to assess student learning outcomes as a measure of mission fulfillment. No formal recommendations were given to UM to address in this report.

## INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES



Seth Bodnar became the 19th president of UM in January 2018. Sheila Stearns served as the interim president the year before President Bodnar's arrival, after Royce Engstrom resigned in December 2016.

In late January 2018, President Bodnar hosted separate campus community meetings with faculty, staff, and students. In these meetings he noted, "UM is at a pivotal juncture as we mark the institution's 125th year. We have the opportunity, and the imperative, to build on the University's historic strengths in the sciences, arts, and professional programs. A UM education provides an interdisciplinary, broad base of knowledge that enables today's graduates to think critically, tackle tough challenges and navigate dynamic complexity" (see the [UM President's blog](#)).

Additional changes in the administration have occurred, as outlined below:

At the cabinet level:

- Beverly Edmond became interim provost and vice president for academic affairs;
- Rosi Keller became interim vice president for administration and finance;
- Cindy Williams became president and CEO of the UM Foundation.

At the dean's level:

- Adrea Lawrence became interim dean of the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences;
- Clint Reading became acting dean of Missoula College.

---

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 2 AND 3

### Authority

The University of Montana is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the Montana Board of Regents (BOR). [BOR policy 320.2](#) states that the campuses of the Montana University System and the community colleges under the supervision of the Board of Regents must maintain accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

### Mission and Core Themes

UM operates under a clearly defined mission and core themes and offers a [diverse array of academic degree programs](#), from certificates to doctoral degrees. In January 2018, the Board of Regents endorsed the [University's mission statement](#) and core themes.

---

## STANDARD 1A: MISSION

### MISSION AND CORE THEMES

#### The University of Montana mission statement

The University of Montana—Missoula pursues academic excellence as demonstrated by the quality of curriculum and instruction, student performance, and faculty professional accomplishments. The University accomplishes this mission, in part, by providing unique educational experiences through the integration of the liberal arts, graduate study, and professional training with international and interdisciplinary emphases. The University also educates competent and humane professionals and informed, ethical, and engaged citizens of local and global communities; and provides basic and applied research, technology transfer, cultural outreach, and service benefiting the local community, region, State, nation and the world.

Foundational to the University's mission are its five core themes, through which institutional priorities and objectives will be achieved. These core themes are derived from the strategic opportunities identified in the [University's Strategic Vision 1.1](#).

#### The University of Montana's Core Themes

1. Engage Students Where They Are
2. Invest in People
3. Partner with Place
4. Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum
5. Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation

In April 2016, UM began a full-scale reexamination of its vision and strategic goals. The Strategic Planning Coordinating Council (SPCC) committed to an inclusive process to gather feedback from stakeholders to identify core themes that will best propel UM forward to achieve our mission. Over 1,600 individuals participated in SPCC engagement events and over 1,000 individuals participated in the Neighborland online platform. The resulting vision was presented in May 2017 and contains the five core themes outlined above. The University's mission was not changed during this process. President Bodnar's arrival has precipitated a review of UM's mission to reflect his vision of the University as a flagship institution committed to educating students for a complex, dynamic world; promoting social mobility; and advancing the frontiers of knowledge to answer society's big questions.

---

---

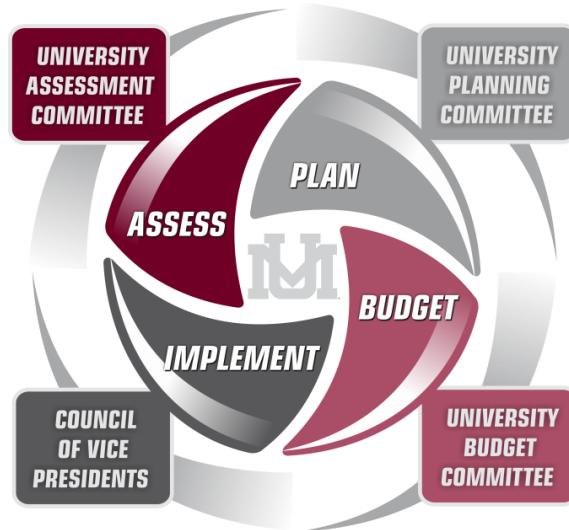
## OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

The objectives drawn from the core themes will inform and direct the activities that the University performs to fulfill its mission. Strategies, objectives, and indicators have been delineated for each core theme. For example, the core theme of *Engage Students Where They Are* has encouraged the University to work to increase summer school and online registration. Specific implementation of each core theme will be adapted to our new president's vision for the direction of the University.

Indicators include direct and indirect assessments of how well the institution is meeting its objectives. Indicators monitored at UM range from participation rates in various activities, to achievement of program-level learning outcomes, to survey results that address employee engagement and participation in leadership and professional development trainings. The University has narrowed the number of indicators to two or three for each objective and identified a key indicator for each core theme. We will continue to track other indicators and include these data in the annual Institutional Assessment Report and Report Card, but some indicators were not selected as primary measures for reasons such as availability (e.g., NSSE and CLA results are obtained on a three-year cycle). Nevertheless, each objective is addressed and evaluated by more than one indicator or type of evidence, permitting systematic and holistic triangulation of data.

## INTERPRETATION OF MISSION FULFILLMENT

For each core theme, the University has established objectives and defined the metrics (i.e., indicators) to evaluate the extent of their accomplishment. UM views the achievement of these objectives and indicators as the fulfillment of its mission. Progress toward the indicators for each objective will be tracked, analyzed, and reported as part of the Planning-Assessment Continuum that follows a cyclical process for planning, budgeting, implementing, and assessing.



---

In the core theme sections that follow, objectives and strategies outline potential action steps we will be implementing to achieve progress on the core themes. Then, in table format, targets for an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment are given for each indicator under the “2020 Target” heading. The current state (or data point) is given in the rightmost column. For progress to be deemed acceptable, the trajectory from the current state toward the target must be positive. Static performance or a decline is unacceptable, although ceiling effects may obscure some advances in areas where the University is already performing at high levels. In some cases, new indicators have been adopted; for example, while UM has tracked certain professional development opportunities provided internally, the *Invest in People* core theme will require measuring more about the employee experience and support provided by the University.

The objectives and indicators across the five core themes clearly outline the priorities for our institution. Objective measures of student success, such as retention and graduation rates, allow for trend analyses and comparison to national benchmarks and provide longitudinal data to measure program improvement. Surveys and other instruments that capture faculty, staff, and student perceptions help assess engagement, the most accurate predictor of student success, while co-curricular opportunities and support services offered by UM indicate the degree to which the University is marshaling its resources to add value to the student experience and facilitate desired student outcomes. From our participation in NWCCU’s Demonstration Project, we recommend that the analysis of mission fulfillment should involve a balance of indirect dashboard indicators as well as learning outcome assessment data.

---

## STANDARD 1B: CORE THEMES



1. Engage Students Where They Are
2. Invest in People
3. Partner with Place
4. Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum
5. Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation

---

## CORE THEME #1: ENGAGE STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

We firmly believe that quality education requires students-first, engaged, supportive relationships and structures. All undergraduate, graduate, and professional students should have access to first-rate programs, robust academic support services, and relevant professional development opportunities. We will flexibly respond to students' needs, aspirations, and potentials at all stages of their educational journeys because we understand that excellent student performance and increased participation, retention, and graduation rates are byproducts of high-quality student experiences. Integral to our promise for the future is a series of commitments to improve student access, support, and overall wellness. We will provide high-quality advising and faculty-student mentorship, flexible course delivery, accessible pipelines into two- and four-year education, cross-disciplinary student support structures, and user-friendly student service pathways. We will commit to providing our students—full-time, part-time, residential, distance, transfer, undergraduate, graduate, professional, underrepresented, domestic, and international—accessible learning pathways that meet their needs and improve retention and graduation rates.

### OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

#### Enhance professional advising and support faculty-student mentoring

- Ensure students receive first-rate, timely, and consistent advising by investing further in a holistic professional advising model. This model will provide more uniform coverage of professional advisors across academic units.
- Provide training opportunities and career ladder pathways for staff to become professional advisors.
- Move toward a professional advising model in the long term while continuing to improve current advising practices in the short term. Use the advising certificate opportunity to train staff and faculty as excellent advisors.
- Encourage faculty to more frequently integrate student mentoring with teaching and research as advising responsibilities shift to professional advisors.
- Develop clear incentives to promote high-quality professional advising and faculty-student mentoring.
- Invest in people who can implement new technologies that support student learning and retention.

#### Ensure access through flexibility: Reimagine when and where students learn

- Increase our number of dual bachelors/masters degree programs.
- Invest in two-year education:
  - Promote two-year education as an affordable and accessible route to a college certificate or degree; develop flexible “return-to-learn” pathways that foster workforce development; define coordinated pathways from two-year campus programs to Mountain Campus four-year programs.
- Expand online and hybrid offerings, through faculty consultation, emphasizing areas of high student demand and enhancing educational access.
- Design a curriculum, through faculty consultation, that allows students to complete General Education Requirements online.

- 
- Increase the number of fully online degree programs. Use a revenue sharing model to incentivize departments to develop online degree programs.
  - Explore alternatives to our traditional academic sessions to provide scheduling flexibility and timely degree completion. Develop a residential-based, block system summer session to promote focused learning.

#### Strengthen student support that sets us apart

- Perform a comprehensive student services assessment to understand students' admissions-to-graduation experience and to identify potential obstacles. This comprehensive assessment will include a team of staff who shadow students as they navigate institutional systems. Use this assessment to recommend efficiencies and technologies that support self-service.
- Implement programming that empowers students to achieve health in all aspects of wellness. Recognize the promotion of wellness as a campus-wide responsibility.
- Expand cross-disciplinary academic support systems that meet undergraduate student learning needs across students' academic tenures. Tailor these support systems to our students' differentiated needs (e.g., co-requisite learning models and individualized tutoring).
- Support informed career decision making through career- and major-related experiences. For example, promote experiential learning, internship opportunities, career-related assessments, and four-year career development.
- Integrate library instruction across the curriculum to address undergraduate and graduate students' changing needs and to develop an educated citizenry.
- Build a more robust support network for graduate and professional students to ensure a quality graduate experience.
  - Foster supportive faculty-student mentorship and research guidance. Expand career support and professional development opportunities through Professional Preparation Workshops. Be responsive to varied career goals, recognizing that not all doctoral students pursue work in academic fields. Connect graduate students to career-related services, and provide opportunities for travel funding. Expand opportunities for graduate and professional students to become better teachers, writers, researchers, innovators, and citizens.
- Establish a President's Teaching Fellows program to recognize graduate students who commit to effective teaching. Award a Graduate Instructor Certificate as one indication of these students' commitment to and proficiency in undergraduate teaching.

---

## INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

KEY INDICATOR: Retention rate; six-year graduation rate		
Objectives and Indicators	2020 Target	Current
<b>Enhance professional advising and support faculty-student mentoring</b>		
• Faculty and staff advisers completing certification coursework	150	82
• Four-year graduation rate	26%	24%
• Six-year graduation rate	46%	44%
• First to second year retention rate	76%	73%
• Students earning 15+ credits each term	44%	42%
• Student involvement in Education Abroad, National Student Exchange, Civic Engagement, internships, and undergraduate research	54%	52%
<b>Ensure access through flexibility</b>		
• General education courses offered online	40	33
• Number of undergraduate and graduate students taking online courses	10,800	10,604
• Summer enrollment (headcount)	2,800	2,493
<b>Strengthen student support that sets us apart</b>		
• Students across disciplines seeking academic support services offered by Study Jam, Writing and Public Speaking Center and Math tutoring programs	12,500	11,356
• Students participating in Curry Health Center Wellness	4,000	3865
• Students with individual counseling appointments with Career Services	1,800	1,767

## RATIONALE

For the *Enhance professional advising and support faculty-student mentoring* objective, a focus on professional advising includes holistic consideration of students' personal, social, financial, emotional, developmental, and cultural issues, in addition to class scheduling and program requirements. Tracking and reporting numbers of faculty, staff, and administrators who have completed advising training will provide a yardstick of progress. Through enhanced advising, students will be encouraged to take 15 or more credits per semester, more than the minimum for full-time status (12 credits), to graduate in four years and take advantage of plateaued tuition. Current credit-load benchmarks exist for comparison with targeted results. Persistence and graduation rates will increase by promoting academic enrichment activities across campus, and connecting students with faculty mentors and opportunities to bridge academic studies to career goals, thereby promoting graduation.

For the objective of *Ensuring access through flexibility*, the focus on general education requirements stems from the bottleneck of providing enough general education courses for UM's students who are enrolled in online-only degrees. The number of online general education courses and students are easily tracked, and give us solid benchmarks for the progress UM would like to make in expanding our distance education

---

---

markets. Similarly, UM needs to increase its summer enrollments, and the target for this third indicator is an achievable benchmark as we increase our summer marketing efforts.

UM strives to always improve its student support in academic, wellness, and career-development areas, and tracking the number of student engagements with each program will give us solid benchmarks for the progress UM would like to make in strengthening these three areas.

---

## CORE THEME #2: INVEST IN PEOPLE

We recognize our employees as our greatest strength. We will work to address financial, technological, and organizational challenges by supporting and expecting excellence in our employees and by building an organizational culture that reflects our core principles. To this end, we will invest in our employees' leadership abilities, professional development, and relationship building opportunities, aiming to become a "recognized institution" by the Chronicle's "Great Colleges to Work For" program. By investing in our people, we will promote an organizational culture that best supports students.

First, empowering people to do their best work requires that we support their leadership potential. Leaders operate in the best interest of those they serve and with clarity about the institution's larger mission, vision, and principles. Every employee can and should exercise leadership behavior.

Second, empowering people to do their best work requires a commitment to continual professional development. Rather than viewing people as holders of jobs, we will care about the career path and development of every individual we hire. We will hire people who want to learn, we will expect them to pursue excellence through professional development opportunities, and we will support their growth.

Third, empowering people to do their best work requires that they collaborate with others who bolster their strengths, mitigate their weaknesses, and keep them accountable to the institution and the people they serve. Building an innovative and adaptive organization requires that we connect people to identify creative and efficient solutions, regardless of hierarchical reporting structures or funding sources.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

### Invest in Leadership

- Develop opportunities for employees and students to develop leadership abilities. Emphasize that effective leadership promotes an organizational culture that is creative, adaptive, learning-oriented, highly collaborative, and student-focused.
- Provide educational opportunities for all employees to learn how to manage projects, programs, and people.
- Expect employees in current leadership roles to participate in these educational opportunities, and encourage the development of future leaders.

### Invest in Professional Development

- Expand and improve professional development programming:
  - Provide more integrated professional development opportunities, allowing for micro-credentialing of abilities.
  - Support faculty members to develop national and international standing in their fields and excellence in teaching.
  - Offer career planning for employees and succession planning guidance for units.
  - Facilitate mentor-mentee relationships.
- Improve employee orientation and familiarize new employees with our mission, vision, principles, and expectations for collegial work across organizational boundaries.

- 
- Pay all UM employees a living wage at a minimum. Work toward offering competitive wages and incentives for professional development as a way to recruit and retain talented employees.
  - Offer flexible scheduling options to promote job satisfaction, support gender equity, increase productivity, reduce turnover, and attract employees without costing more money. This includes options for alternative work scheduling, remote work, compressed work schedules, job sharing, and reduced schedules.

### Invest in Relationships

- Support internal connection and communication through interdisciplinary and cross-functional activities that elevate employees' understanding of our shared vision and that promote shared knowledge and effort.
- Support the successful Staff Ambassadors program to effectively expose employees to our vision, while connecting them to colleagues across the institution.
- Offer job-shadowing opportunities to employees who work in complementary or overlapping areas to increase understanding, appreciation, and networks of support across organizational boundaries.
- Encourage all employees to see themselves as educators and mentors in support of our students.

## INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

KEY INDICATOR: Employee engagement		
Objectives and Indicators	2020 Target	Current
<b>Invest in Leadership</b>		
• Employee engagement	45%	new indicator
• Managers completing leadership training	20%	new indicator
• Non-manager employees completing leadership training	10%	new indicator
• Employees exercising leadership behavior	60%	new indicator
<b>Invest in Professional Development</b>		
• Employee turnover rate	10%	11.3%*
○ Faculty turnover rate	3%	3.3%*
○ Staff turnover rate	12%	13.5%*
○ Contract professionals turnover rate	11%	12.6%*
• Employees completing professional development	75%	new indicator
○ Staff completing professional development	80%	new indicator
○ Faculty completing professional development	90%	new indicator
○ Contract professionals completing professional development	75%	new indicator
• Employees reporting professional development improved their job performance	80%	new indicator
<b>Invest in Relationships</b>		
Recognition in <i>The Chronicle's "Great Colleges to Work For" Report</i> *	4 categories	new indicator
Employees participating in Staff Ambassadors program	20	14*

\* five-year average

---

## RATIONALE

*Investing in leadership* should result in an engaged workforce that takes ownership and interest in their work and the mission of the University. Employee engagement is the key indicator for this core theme, as engagement has proven to be a holistic measure of these objectives. The Society of Human Resource Management Foundation states, “In fact, the evidence is clear: employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations give companies crucial competitive advantages, including higher productivity and lower employee turnover.” The percentage of employees who identify as engaged will be determined through an employee survey that will measure behaviors proven to be correlated with engagement.

All employees are expected and encouraged to exercise leadership, which is defined as: demonstrated actions that inspire performance and achievement among staff that extend beyond what is reasonably expected. The cumulative percentage of employees completing leadership training in the previous five years will be tracked, and this percentage should increase over time. We expect that leadership training will be done in small, intensive groups and include personal coaching, which is why the target percentages are low. This strategy is new and targets are set to be realistically achievable.

*Professional Development activities* are broadly defined as: attending or presenting at a conference; writing articles, books, or professional blogs; on-campus trainings (including DiverseU, staff and faculty development offerings, compliance training, IT short courses); taking or auditing courses at UM or other institutions; pursuing new credentials or degrees; online training, courses, or MOOCs; building new skills through collaborations, study, or mentoring relationships. Staff professional development could include any of the activities listed above as well as staff sabbaticals, Staff Ambassadors, and Staff Senate. A 2015 Staff Senate survey shows a high proportion of employees are expected to participate in professional development so we have set the target at 80 percent. Faculty professional development could include any of the activities listed above as well as sabbaticals, international exchange, fellowships, and Faculty Senate. Since the faculty evaluation system requires this type of work, we have set the target at 90 percent.

Employee turnover rates will determine if we are developing employees, improving orientation, increasing job satisfaction, and encouraging career-planning efforts. Current retention rates are already competitive, so we aim to maintain that accomplishment and decrease turnover slightly in some areas. Participating in the “Great Colleges to Work For” survey will provide a measure of the *Investment in relationships*. This survey provides measures of indicators such as communication, respect and appreciation; and faculty, administration, and staff relations.

Many of these indicators will rely on a self-report survey of employees. This in itself is seen as valuable, demonstrating to employees that the University values and responds to their feedback.

---

## CORE THEME #3: PARTNER WITH PLACE

Our historic relationships with our natural and human settings differentiate our institution and foster globally relevant education and knowledge. We not only respect our spectacular natural setting and celebrate our expertise in environmental and ecological studies, we also stress the importance of collaborative partnerships that enact sustainable solutions for social and ecological challenges. These partnerships have led to our regional preeminence in the arts, business, health, law, medicine, and sustainability studies as well as to robust workforce development pathways.

As a premier partnership University, we will enhance our connection to place, bring cultural and economic value to our region, and develop in our students the ability to lead in an interconnected, global world. Partnering with place includes a promise to diversify our campus and integrate global perspectives that benefit students and the citizens of Montana. We will continue to support education and research abroad, and we will vigorously promote new efforts to internationalize our campus by attracting students, faculty, visiting scholars, and international events to Missoula from around the globe. By recognizing our setting as a magnet for international partners, we will enhance global perspectives on campus, thereby maximizing the efficiency and impact of our efforts.

First, pursuing an unparalleled partnership with place offers students experiential learning opportunities that emphasize our exceptional urban, rural, and natural settings. Second, our commitment to place compels us to promote community and civic engagement, generate and make visible research and creative scholarship that benefit our region, and advance strong public-private partnerships. Third, we recognize that diversity, equity, and increased access enrich our communities and campus. We aim to be the first choice among all Montanans including underrepresented, marginalized, and historically vulnerable populations, and we commit to diversifying our student body, faculty, and staff by attracting people from across the globe. Finally, we will nurture a symbiotic relationship with the City of Missoula and Missoula County through collaborative and strategic long-range planning that fosters a mutually beneficial future for citizens.

### OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Design student experiences that engage and promote our setting

- Develop curricula, internships, certifications, and micro-certifications that study the nature and sustainability of western Montana as a place.
- Support place-based collaborations with statewide land-management organizations, cultivating these relationships to situate research in Montana's human and ecological systems.
- Provide incentives for faculty who seek to connect students with Montana's environment.
- Publicize our place-based research and student engagement as points of distinction.
- Develop experiential learning opportunities that turn our communities into classrooms and that prepare our students to be engaged citizens committed to improving their future homes.

Organize a campus hub for community partnerships and sustainable solutions

- Become a dedicated community partner by establishing a coordinated system that brings the community, private sector, state, and two- and four-year campuses together through cross-disciplinary research and creative scholarship that directly address issues facing Montanans.

- 
- Convene an advisory board to explore ways to better coordinate and make visible our existing place-based, interdisciplinary inquiry. Participants will include but not be limited to local community representatives, area Native American tribes, campus students, faculty, and staff.
  - Develop partnerships that support Missoula County, the City of Missoula Mayor's Office, and the State of Montana. Integrate undergraduate and graduate students into this hub as an opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary, applied research.

#### Value diversity through place-based partnerships and internationalization

- Build a culture of inclusive excellence by actively seeking and valuing diversity in all forms, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, ideological, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ability, and other group-identity differences.
- Value diversity by learning from and developing knowledge and best practices with tribal communities, colleges, and people, and by becoming a premier institution for Native American education, scholarship, and engagement.
  - Design place-based faculty, staff, and student semester abroad opportunities with our state's tribes.
- Continue to internationalize campus as a way to prepare our students to serve their local and global communities.
  - Invest in international recruitment efforts to bring full-time international students to campus; promote intercultural interactions and competency among students, faculty, staff, and administrators; expand access to study and research abroad opportunities; promote scholarly work of global importance; and expand the diversity recruitment funding pool to attract diverse faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Implement curricular development awards to recognize academic programs that adopt inclusive pedagogical approaches.
- Establish a position under the Office of the President to oversee coordinated cross-campus efforts to create an inclusive environment and to promote intercultural and intercommunity outreach. Ensure this person is afforded the power and resources to affect systemic change in support of a diverse and inclusive campus.

#### Foster a neighborhood alliance: building a bright future for Missoula-UM

- Institute a joint Missoula-UM team to build on our long-standing symbiotic partnership. This team will develop a long-range plan for a shared and mutually beneficial City of Missoula, Missoula County, and UM future.
  - Plan for and respond to city-university growth, housing, transportation, K-12 education, and sustainability needs; boost city-focused innovation, economic development, and social mobility, turn our city and county into a classroom for students and the campus into a community hub for cultural and educational experiences; recommend and help to develop two- and four-year workforce education programs that address the needs of our community.
- Work with community partners to promote cradle-to-career support, to close persistent opportunity and achievement gaps for Missoula's next generation, and to ensure college and career readiness. With these community partners, further an evidence-based, collective-impact approach to help the next generation of Missoulians thrive.
- Increase the number of employees who serve on Missoula boards and the number of employees and students who engage regularly in volunteer opportunities.

---

## INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

KEY INDICATOR: Place-based academic experiences		
Objectives and Indicators	2020 Target	Current
<b>Design student experiences that engage and promote our setting</b>		
• Place-based academic experiences (e.g. internships, partnerships, practicums, civic engagement, service learning)	400	353
<b>Organize a campus hub for community partnerships and sustainable solutions</b>		
• Missoula businesses that partner with UMoney	25	20
• Students involved with sustainability focused internships	20	15
<b>Value diversity through place-based partnerships and internationalization</b>		
• Racially diverse students (non-Caucasian)	30%	25%
• Number of international students	700	646
<b>Foster a Neighborhood Alliance</b>		
• Faculty, staff, and administrators involved in community service	50%	new indicator
• Students involved with service learning/volunteer projects	3500	3464
• Students involved in ASUM neighborhood ambassador program	13	10

## RATIONALE

For *Design student experiences that engage and promote our setting*, we will leverage the experiences with our natural and physical setting that help to foster student recruitment and retention. UM is located in the heart of the Northern Rockies of western Montana. The main campus is located at the center of five intersecting valleys and three major rivers. Students engaged in placed-based academic experiences will help to increase enrollment and retention at UM.

*Organize a campus hub for community partnerships and sustainable solutions* will establish a coordinated system that will bring the community, private sector, state, and two- and four-year campuses together through interdisciplinary research and creative scholarship that directly address issues facing Missoulians and Montanans. Relevant data is available to track the progress of community partnerships and sustainable solutions. UM will be the established leader for unifying the surrounding community and providing a network for new partnerships and opportunities for growth.

*Valuing diversity through place-based partnerships and internationalization* will increase the number of students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and regions. This includes the calculation of international students and students' self-identifying ethnicity.

Lastly, *Foster a neighborhood alliance* will enhance our relationships with our immediate community – Missoula. The data provided by the UM Strategic Vision noted the lack of opportunities for the city and county of Missoula to collaborate directly with students. A neighborhood alliance is a mechanism to bridge relationships between the University and nearby communities with tangible data available showing student involvement.

---

---

## CORE THEME #4: SUPPORT EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN THE CURRICULUM

At the University of Montana we have long provided the state's preeminent undergraduate academic experience rooted in the integrative tradition of a liberal education. Our position as the flagship liberal arts institution in Montana, our strengths in STEM fields, and our premier professional programs empower students to flourish professionally, intellectually, and civically in a free society. In each major in every school and college, we expose students to broad content knowledge while nurturing vital intellectual capacities: skillful communication, analytical and creative problem solving, critical thinking, and effective collaboration.

At this confluence of our existing strengths in undergraduate education, we will reimagine our model of general education to better use new strategies, new technologies, and new interdisciplinary emphases. A new, more integrated approach to delivering general education at UM will emphasize innovation, design, and interdisciplinary, cohort-based learning. This approach, designed and led by faculty, will distinguish UM as a national model of excellence in student-centered undergraduate education.

### OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Enhance core academic skills throughout the curriculum

- Support critical thinking and communication skills throughout the curriculum by enhancing partnerships with the Writing and Public Speaking Center.
- Support faculty opportunities for developing academic activities exercising core academic skills throughout the curriculum.
- Emphasize the connections among career success, the core skills we develop in our students, and the academic strength of our programs in the humanities, social sciences, arts, STEM, and professional areas. Communicate the value of the UM academic experience to prospective students and parents, current students, and alumni.

Define the UM academic experience and explore its delivery

- Develop a more streamlined, integrated approach to general education to initially exist as an alternative to our current general education model. Design this new approach through faculty direction and in partnership with shared governance bodies. Delivery of this new approach to general education will include the initiatives below.
- Develop a Shared Academic Experience:
  - Design a sequence of courses emphasizing collaborative work from multiple perspectives that foster problem solving, adaptability, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and ethical reasoning through interdisciplinary topics (core skills).
  - Create a cohort-based academic experience that reconciles existing disparate first-year programs and integrates innovative approaches to practicing core skills, in order to develop a shared academic experience.
  - Ensure broad exposure to multiple disciplines through interdisciplinary, team-taught courses.

- Engage in faculty-led assessment of the shared academic experience to determine its impact, effectiveness, and adjustments necessary for widespread adoption as a shared academic experience for all students.
- Online Academic Portfolio
  - Provide students with the opportunity to develop an online academic portfolio. Students will collaborate with faculty from departments across campus to curate this portfolio that—in a distinctive way—demonstrates broad content knowledge, core competencies, and the importance of these competencies to their fields and professional goals.
- The shared academic experience approach will begin as an experimental effort based on integration of existing academic units. If successful, this approach will attract campus faculty who embody the teacher-scholar ideal, who pursue cross-disciplinary scholarship and engage in collaborative instruction, and who place innovation at the heart of their teaching. As the approach gains traction, faculty and students will engage the wider campus to explore the appropriate structural manifestation of the approach, be it an institute, center, degree program, or even a standalone college.

## INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

<b>KEY INDICATOR:</b> <b>Faculty participation in programs and workshops supporting teaching development</b>		
<b>Objectives and Indicators</b>	<b>2020 Target</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Enhance core academic skills throughout the curriculum</b>		
• In-class writing workshops led by Writing and Public Speaking Center	170	154
• Scores of University-Wide Program-Level Writing Assessment (UPWA)	39% score in 3-4 range; 45% in 2-3 range.	34% scored 3-4; 50% scored 2-3
• Faculty participation in programs and workshops supporting teaching development.	50%	new indicator
• Student improvement on UPWA linked to contact with enhanced writing instruction (either through in-class workshops conducted by Writing Center or faculty participating in teaching workshops sponsored by Faculty Development Office, etc.)	75%	new indicator
<b>Define the UM academic experience and explore its delivery</b>		
• Courses focused on interdisciplinary topics, engagement in service learning, or other student-centered pedagogies.	15%	new indicator
• Courses contributing to pilot program of the shared academic experience offered Fall 2021 (minimum 3–6 cohorts; 5–10% of incoming class) based on interdisciplinary, team-taught classes applying the core skills.	10 team-taught classes proposed	new indicator

## RATIONALE

For the objective to *Enhance core academic skills throughout the curriculum*, the University-Wide Program-Level Writing Assessment (UPWA) provides an opportunity to assess student ability in written communication skills across the curriculum, rather than within specific academic programs. By correlating the results of the UPWA and courses taking advantage of in-class writing workshops, we will be able to

---

better tailor writing instruction to improve successful acquisition of core writing skills. Surveying faculty participation (in terms of disciplines, professional rank, etc.) in the variety of workshops led by faculty and/or sponsored by the Faculty Development Office will also allow us to determine the efficacy of University efforts to support teaching, identify gaps in professional development, and improve workshops on core academic skills.

For the objective to *Define the UM academic experience and explore its delivery*, surveys will provide a baseline of the current general education system. A series of surveys in the first two years of the accreditation cycle will build a database to ask more structured questions in the next period. By taking advantage of college graduate surveys, surveys as part of the graduation application process, and the vested interest of the faculty, UM will identify the strengths of the current general education system and what merits maintaining in a revised shared academic experience. While such a series of surveys is not itself an indicator for this objective, it will provide the necessary foundation for exploring a coherent shared academic experience based on core competencies crossing disciplinary boundaries. The development of such a complex curricular project depends on assessing the current state of general education at UM in terms of the classes contributing to that system, as well as additional activities vital to core competencies but which fall outside of the framework of the general education system. A census of courses on interdisciplinary topics will allow an assessment of current resources that can transition into a shared academic experience. Furthermore, ten additional courses will allow UM to develop a pilot program for a new general education system.

---

## CORE THEME #5: FOSTER KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND INNOVATION

Research and artistic creation at UM embody our commitment to knowledge creation, creative activity, and innovation that matters. Engaged research and creative scholarship are responsive, agile, innovative, and far-reaching. They improve our human and environmental systems, attract world-class scholars and artists to Montana, provide undergraduate students with experiential learning opportunities, and promote a mutually beneficial relationship between research and teaching. The broader impacts of this inquiry, creation, and ongoing discovery act as drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship, and public service both locally and globally. We are an epicenter for knowledge and art that stimulate our region's economic and cultural health. We will grow our research and creative enterprise, respond to identified needs, communicate widely the benefits of that research and creative activity, and engage faculty and programs to encourage innovation.

### OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Sustain and expand research and creative scholarship in support of academic excellence

- Continue our commitment to achieving the Carnegie R1: Doctoral University – Highest Research Activity classification through the following actions:
  - Expand research activity and creative scholarship by adding academic programs in fields that have both significant external funding potential and high student demand.
  - Develop the number and quality of doctoral completers across the curriculum through internal and external funding of graduate students as well as through more robust academic support at the dissertation writing stage. Recognize that research excellence is not solely defined by success in securing external funding but also by thriving graduate programs.
  - Provide research mentoring, proposal development support, and other internal support mechanisms across disciplines.
  - Support library instruction and collections to meet undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty research needs.
- Establish a clear and relational resource allocation system to ensure that as the research enterprise grows in externally-funded areas there are mechanisms that trigger a corresponding increase in the pool of internal grant money.
- Communicate the broader impact of UM research and inspire Montana K-12 learners about the bright futures that await them in higher education and the workforce.

Catalyze innovation and sustainable economic development through entrepreneurship

- Become a dynamic hub where research and development support entrepreneurship and drive a resilient regional economic ecosystem.
- Facilitate regular meetings with state and industry leaders to articulate our successes and initiatives; to identify local, statewide, and regional needs; and to promote sustainable economic development through research.

- 
- Continue to develop an innovation pipeline that translates research and original ideas into start-up businesses and non-profits. Expand our ability to support existing local organizations and businesses as they work to become sustainable.
  - Create a mechanism for businesses and organizations to give back in support of our on-campus entrepreneurial efforts.

## INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

<b>KEY INDICATOR: research expenditures; doctoral completers</b>		
<b>Objectives and Indicators</b>	<b>2020 Target</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Sustain and expand research and creative scholarship in support of academic excellence</b>		
• Research expenditures	\$100M	\$88M
• Doctoral completers	85	56
• Broader Impacts Group brings STEM and higher education and career pathways programming to K-12 students and their families.	250K	236K
• Annual inflationary increases for collections for Mansfield Library	3%	0%
<b>Catalyze innovation and sustainable economic development through entrepreneurship</b>		
• Local businesses indicating support services provided by the University	1000	700
• Start-up businesses and non-profits initiated through the University	30	25

## RATIONALE

The objective *Sustain and expand research and creative scholarship in support of academic excellence* is directly in line with the University's vision of becoming a Carnegie Research Very High Activity, or "R1", institution. The metrics used in the R1 calculation are the campus research expenditures as reported in the NSF HERD Survey and the number of doctoral completers. Expansion of research activity also includes a necessary increase in the library collections budget. A key product of an active research program is indicating the impact of that research to the broader community, hence the metric related to the Broader Impacts Group which tracks contacts with K-12 students and their families during outreach events.

The objective *Catalyze innovation and sustainable economic development through entrepreneurship* is also a key aspect of the Strategic Vision. The number of business contacts is reported yearly through the University's AccelerateMT program. AccelerateMT provides business support services for both start-up existing local businesses through a variety of units including a Small Business Development Center, a Procurement Technical Assistance Center and a World Trade Center. Each unit tracks the number of business contacts which provides a key metric for local economic development. The number of start-up companies resulting from University research and creative activities is a direct measure of innovation and entrepreneurship leading to economic development.

---

## CONCLUSION

As illustrated throughout this report, meaningful and intentional assessment of UM's initiatives is a strong part of the culture of our institution. UM benefited greatly from participation in NWCCU's Demonstration Project focusing on mission fulfillment and general education assessment, and learned several best practices that we will continue to use. These include:

- Recognizing that there are no “silver bullets” for assessment, we will implement a broad range of direct assessments, indirect assessments, curricular assessments, co-curricular assessments, embedded assessments, programmatic assessments, and standardized assessments.
- The involvement of faculty, staff, and students will occur in all stages of the assessment process.
- The Planning-Assessment Continuum for connecting planning, budgeting, implementation, and assessment will continue to be refined and improved.
- We will translate our assessment findings into concrete action steps for continuous improvement.

We look forward to building upon these practices as we prepare for the Year 3 Report. The multifaceted efforts to enhance student success are a key priority for the coming years. We will do all we can to improve student recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation. The mission, core themes, objectives, and indicators described in this document give us a roadmap for tremendous achievements. As President Bodnar shared in his initial message to campus, “We are strongest when we share a mission, work closely together, and recognize the contributions of every member of the organization.” We truly are at a “pivotal juncture,” and guided by the metrics outlined in this report, we anticipate many bright years ahead.

---

# CONTRIBUTORS

**University Assessment and Accreditation Committee**

Nathan Lindsay, Office of the Provost, Chair and Accreditation Liaison Officer

Braden Fitzgerald, ASUM

Tom Crady, Enrollment and Student Affairs

Shawn Grove, VETS office

Reed Humphrey, College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences

Jasmine Zink Laine, Office of the Provost

Brenna Love, ASUM

Cheryl Minnick, Academic Enrichment

Rebecca Power, Office of the President

Gilbert Quintero, Department of Anthropology

Dawn Ressel, Data Office

Sara Rinfret, Public Administration program

Matt Semanoff, Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Roch Turner, Bitterroot College

Scott Whittenburg, Research and Creative Scholarship

Shali Zhang, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library

**Additional Faculty, Staff, and Administrators**

Pope Ashworth, Data Office

Mary-Ann Bowman, School of Social Work

Cathy Burleson, Data Office

Elizabeth Dove, School of Art

Joran Elias, Data Office

Doug Emlen, Division of Biological Sciences

Braden Fitzgerald, ASUM

Sam Forstag, ASUM

Amy Kinch, Faculty Development Office

Genevieve Lind, Graduate and Professional Student Association

Wilena Old Person, Native American Center of Excellence

Gordy Pace, Information Technology

Zoë Phelan, Office of the Provost

Stella Phipps, Academic Enrichment

Mario Schulzke, Integrated Communications

Rachel Smith, Graduate and Professional Student Association

Brock Tessman, Davidson Honors College

Holly Truitt, Broader Impacts Group

Arlene Walker-Andrews, Office of the Provost (emeritus)

Kelly Webster, Writing and Public Speaking Center

**Photography**

Todd Goodrich, Photographer