Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report

Miles Community College

Miles City, MT

April 22 – 24, 2015

Table of Contents

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Introduction

Miles Community College (MCC), in Miles City Montana, is a two-year institution serving Custer County. Founded in 1939, MCC was the first community college in Montana. MCC celebrated its 75 anniversary in 2014. In the fall semester of 2014, 421 students attended MCC. MCC employs 39 full-time staff and 21 full-time faculty.

The College has undergone several key staffing changes since the Year Three Evaluation including hiring a new President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Success, and a new Library Director. Currently, a search is underway for a new Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance.

A great deal of planning and focus on enrollment is occurring across the College as well as a 3 million dollar capital campaign for a new Ag Advancement Center. The College enjoys a high graduation rate and a very committed faculty and staff who have great pride in the success of their students.

This visit encompasses the Year Seven requirements as well as the institutional response to recommendations during its Year Three Peer Evaluation. The evaluation was conducted on site and peer evaluators used MCC's self-study, electronic and paper exhibits, observations, panels and in-depth interviews to conduct their work.

Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and support materials

The evaluators were appreciative that MCC provided an email version of its self-evaluation prior to the committee receiving hard copies in the mail. Included with the materials was a thumb drive with hundreds of support materials. A written response for standard – 4.B.3 was missing in the MCC self-evaluation report. There is evidence that the institution does document assessment of student achievement (reference in the internal H-drive). The evaluation of this standard was made through interviews and review of provided evidence.

Response to the Previous Recommendations

Miles Community College received the following recommendation in their Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report:

> "The evaluation committee recommends that the College establish core theme outcomes and indicators of achievement that provide direct evidence of results rather than process, and which form the basis of evaluating the objectives of the core theme (1.B.2) Further, the committee recommends that the College strengthens its definition of an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment (1.A.2)."

The evaluation committee for the Year Seven Peer Evaluation recommends that the College continue to work on developing indicators of achievement that provide direct evidence of results and strengthen its definition of an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment by incorporating student learning outcomes within its core themes.

Report on Standard One - Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Mission

Miles Community College's mission is accurately and widely published in a variety of formats to include the College's web site, catalog and student handbook. It was approved by the College's Board of Trustees on April 28, 2014. The College community understands the mission statement as all employees were given an opportunity to provide feedback. The mission and core themes have been integrated into the strategic planning process for the college.

The college has established a benchmark of successfully completing 70% of indicators of Core Theme Objectives to serve as the basis for determining mission fulfillment.

Core Themes

The College has four core themes – student success, academic excellence, resource management, and community enrichment and partnerships. As a whole, the core themes are consistent with the stated mission and values of the college, and work in concert with Miles Community College priorities and initiatives to define the college's work. Based on an NWCCU Year Three recommendation, the College thoroughly reviewed the established core theme objectives, outcomes and indicators of achievement. College teams worked to revise the key indicators for the core theme to ensure that each indicator is more meaningful and assessable and verifiable, and to ensure that indicators serve as a solid basis for evaluating accomplishment of the core theme. While that work resulted in some changes, significant challenges remain, particularly in the relationship between the indicators and outcomes. In some instances, indicators lack well-defined, assessable criteria that can be used to set goals, evaluate institutional performance, and inform improvement efforts, such as Core Theme 4, objective #2, Indicator 2.A, "Collaboration and coordination take place with higher education and industry partners as the need and appropriate opportunities present themselves." The lack of verifiable indicators creates inability to evaluate accomplishments of objectives.

Concern
- Some of the indicators developed to assess for Core Theme objectives lack measurable criteria. In reviewing the College's strategic plan, there appears to be stronger indicators that have more definable assessment structure that could be used.

Standard 2.A

Governance

Shared governance at MCC is centered on broad and balanced stakeholder participation in the committee structure of the college. The College President annually assigns faculty, staff and students to 25 campus committees. The role and scope of the committees are clearly defined. The evaluation team found that the vast majority of students, staff and faculty understood the organizational structure and decision making processes at the College.

Compliment
- The evaluation team was impressed by MCC communication to faculty and staff through monthly all-employee meetings, college convocations, and weekly radio programs.

Governing Board

MCC has a functioning board of seven elected board of trustees. Trustees must disclose any contractual, employment or any financial interest annually on a conflict of interest form. The board appears to be high functioning and united on the success of the College. The board acts as a committee of the whole. The board adopts, reviews and revises institutional and board policies on a regular basis. The board conducts an annual evaluation on their performance.

The board hired MCC's current President Stacy Klippenstein in 2014 and is preparing his first performance evaluation.

Compliment
- The MCC Board of Trustees has done an effective job of hiring the last two College Presidents whose strengths and experiences helped address the challenges facing the college at the time.

Leadership and Management

MCC is staffed by eight administrators on the President's Cabinet who have appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability and who are charged with planning, organizing and managing the institution. MCC enjoys a strong collaborative environment among managers and willingness to take on multiple roles given the size of the college. Currently, the College is engaged in a search for a Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance.

Policies and Procedures

Academics

There are several sources where students, staff and faculty can find academic policies. Many areas of the College refer to "policies" that are actually processes. The term "policy" is not used consistently in any of the documents (other than the board handbook). Student processes are found in both the catalog and the student handbook, and are identified as either policy or "general information". The Faculty Master Agreement does have some "policies" but, they lack any reference to the actual board policy number.

Concerns
- There is an inconsistent use of the term policy. It would be very helpful to identify procedures with a reference back to the actual policy.

- While the student handbook is a resource that is given to all incoming students, there is some inconsistency in "policy" between the student handbook and catalog. Although the meanings are fairly consistent, the differing descriptions are confusing, and there is no single student resource that contains all the academic policies.

The Library Policy 300.10 does describe the access and resources. The student handbook mentions that the library provides a print and non-print collection that supports instructional programs, but it does not reference the actual policy. There is no obvious policy under academics that speaks to information resources. The new library director has revised many library practices and policies to be less restrictive, particularly those regarding access to and use of library resources. For example, relaxing the food policy, the noise policy, and removing restrictions on use of the media collection. However, the new policies have not yet been documented or published.

The college transfer policy (Montana Board of Regents Policy 302.10) is clearly defined and can be found in both the catalog and the student handbook.

Compliment
- The General Education Transfer Policy is readily available and thoroughly defined. All students have easy access to this policy and it is clearly identified as a Montana Board of Regents Policy.

Students
Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities are accessible and well-articulated across the campus community. Students' rights and responsibilities are disseminated through the student handbook--given to every new student—and are also clearly conveyed in the course catalog. Electronic versions of the handbook can also be found on the Miles Community College web site. The College's Student Services employees present and provide guidance to students during mandatory Student Orientation Advising and Registration (SOAR) sessions and during the First Year Pioneer courses. While the First Year Pioneer courses are not mandatory, students engage in a more in-depth presentation of students' responsibilities during these courses.

Student Services clearly articulates and disseminates policies regarding admission and placement for courses and programs. Admissions requirement and academic standards policies are clearly conveyed and articulated in both the Student Handbook and the college catalog. Both exhibits

can also be found on the Miles Community College web site. Hard copies are also readily available in the Student Services Office.

<u>Concern:</u>
- While the College deems SOAR as mandatory, there contains no policy language that if students fail to attend a SOAR session that there will be a hold put on their accounting, rendering them unable to register for classes. This needs to be clearly stipulated in policy language.

Miles Community College provides a variety of student co-curricular activities. Co-curricular clubs and activities are clearly articulated in the Student Handbook and the course catalog and both can also be found on the Miles Community College web site. Hard copies are also readily available in the Student Services Office. The Student Senate By-Laws clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of students in collaboration with the College.

<u>Human Resources</u>
Personnel practices of the College are consistent, fair, and equitable. Human resources policies and procedures are clearly published in the Board Policy Handbook and are available in the Human Resources Office. The Faculty Master Agreement also consistently captures Human Resources policies and procedures, and is also posted on the H Drive.

Additionally, new employees are introduced to Human Resources policies and procedures during New Employee Orientation which occurs annually. Employees are also given an opportunity to engage in Human Resources policies and procedures using an online modality. New and existing employees engage in online trainings such as FERPA, Sexual Harassment, Organizational Change and Development, and Cultural Competence.

Notification of conditions of employment, work assignment, and rights and responsibilities are clearly articulated and conveyed in Section 600 of the Board Policy Handbook for all employees, excluding faculty.

Notifications of conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities are clearly articulated and conveyed in Section 600 of the Board Policy Handbook and in the Faculty Master Agreement.

Criteria and procedures for performance evaluation processes are articulated in Section 600 of the Board Policy Handbook. Faculty evaluations are clearly conveyed and articulated in the Faculty Master Agreement.

<u>Institutional Integrity</u>
MCC has a centralized system through the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Success to ensure the accuracy and consistency of institutional publications. The college catalog is the primary method for communicating academic programs and services.

The college has developed intellectual property policies around distance education. Instructors who develop a course online without compensation on their own time and equipment retain ownership of the class.

Evidence supports that the College maintains high ethical standards in operating the institution and in its interactions with the public. MCC accurately represents its accreditation status.

Academic Freedom
The college has in place a clear, board-adopted policy regarding academic freedom. Faculty report the latitude to design course content and present information to their students without either internal or external pressure. Students express confidence in their ability to offer a wide range of perspectives in a safe and supportive learning environment. Appropriate citations and acknowledgement of information sources (professional and personal) are evident in written records of the college.

Finance
Board policy and reported business practices support a conclusion that the institution adheres to appropriate financial management and oversight. Audit reports also reflect appropriate financial oversight is in place.

Standard 2.B - Human Resources

The College implements ethical and standardized recruiting processes to attract qualified permanent faculty and staff. The Human Resources department utilizes an employee requisition form, a position audit process and an Employee Search Checklist to ensure consistent hiring standards for the College. It is suggested that the full EEOC Policy be included in all job announcements.

The College is committed to creating learning and working environments that prevent discrimination, promote diversity, ensure safety, and encourage individual wellness, both physical and emotional. These initiatives are support by regular and systematic employee evaluations and grievance policies. All full-time employees are mandated to participate in online compliance training comprised of ethics, sexual harassment, FERPA and other related policies, followed by assessment evaluation follow-up on knowledge (80% or better). In addition, employees participate in other modalities of training and professional development toward compliance.

Compliment:
- The evaluators commend the College for its active and compassionate engagement in articulating its expectations to employees on its sexual harassment policies, and grievance procedures.

Concern:
- Student employees, RAs (anyone being paid on scholarship or stipend), and volunteers are not included in mandatory training such as discrimination, harassment, and Title IX training, and mandatory reporting training.

The College provides opportunities for professional development to permanent full-time faculty and staff. Professional development opportunities are clearly articulated in the Faculty Master Agreement, including (but not limited to) requirements for attending four (4) days of professional development opportunities per academic year.

The evaluators observed that not all employees have engaged in mandatory training and noticed that the mandatory training does not include ethics as a mandatory component at this time.

A structured framework deployed by Human Resources for the purposes of search and selection processes sufficiently hires and retains qualified faculty to achieve the College's educational objectives, oversee academic policies, and assure integrity and continuity of academic programs.

There is a strong correlation between expectations of faculty responsibilities and workloads and institutional expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation. Consistent with the Faculty Master Agreement and Section 600 of the Board Policy and Procedure Handbook under Faculty Responsibilities, policies and procedures clearly articulate contract days, pursuant to the academic calendar and consistent with assigned responsibilities, teaching, office hours, preparation, advising, orientation activities, grade reporting, professional development, and committee/accreditation assignments.

The faculty evaluation and performance remediation process is comprehensive and clearly articulated. College faculty are routinely and consistently evaluated. Faculty evaluation forms clearly reflect the core competencies capture in the job duties and responsibilities.

Faculty evaluation documentation procedures from the Office of the Academic Affairs and Human Resources appear to be inconsistent. For example, the Faculty Evaluation Procedures originated from Human Resources state an overall rubric, where evaluators assign a numeric value of 4 to 1, depending upon the response to the questions. The Faculty Evaluation and Planning Form does not contain this information, nor does it contain an evaluation process (as stipulated by the Human Resources version of the Faculty Evaluation Procedures).

Standard 2.C Education Resources

Consistent with its mission, Miles Community College offers academic transfer and professional technical programs that result in Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate in Applied Science degrees as well as certificates and applied certificates. Degrees and certificates contain appropriate content and rigor in accordance with Commissioner of Higher Education of the Montana University System. In most programs student learning outcomes are clearly stated in the college catalog. Course syllabi include expected student learning outcomes and are provided to students in written and electronic formats.

MCC documents the achievement of learning outcomes by the award of degrees and certificates, in addition to the inclusion of general education learning outcomes and professional-technical outcomes specific to each credit course taught. MCC is to be recognized in providing a breath of transfer degree options for their students. The college catalog clearly displays the institutional

philosophy of general education and outcomes for most degrees offered and related instructional programs. The learning outcomes are identifiable and assessable which relate to college mission and program outcomes. The committee through campus interview confirmed and examined evidence of assessment of general education outcomes and encourages the College to include such examples of evidence in future reporting.

Degree programs at MCC are appropriate in breadth and depth as described on the MCC web page and catalog; degree designators are consistent with program content. Credits and degrees reflect accepted learning outcomes for higher education. Course content is consistent with the requirements for similar degrees and certificates at peer institutions and is clearly defined in the self-evaluation report, on the MCC web page and in the catalog.

Sequencing appears appropriate, with graduation requirements clearly defined. Each of the transfer degrees includes a core of general education recognized by four-year colleges and universities, providing MCC students with junior standing upon transfer. Associate in Applied Science and Technical Certificates meet industry standards and include required related general education components as defined by the State of Montana.

MCC admission and graduation requirements are clearly published on the MCC website and in the catalog.

Compliment
- The evaluation team compliments the college on successfully guiding students through the admissions process and through to graduation as demonstrated by student graduation rates.

Faculty involvement in curriculum revision, design and implementation is clearly defined. Ownership for the design and approval of curriculum resides with faculty who initiate all proposals for change or deletions. The process begins at the division level and moves to the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee, with final approval by the President. In addition to faculty, the Academic Standards & Curriculum Committee includes members from college administration and student services. Faculty are involved in selection of new or adjunct faculty and actively involved in fostering and assessing learning outcomes with the most notable example demonstrated in the Summative Case Study process used to assess outcomes for general education.

Faculty report a high level of support from the new library director, improved communication and willingness to collaborate. While the development of an information literacy program incorporating active collaboration with faculty is an element of the library's action plan, at this time there is no systematic integration of library and information resources into the learning process. Several examples of integration of library resources within the learning process were offered during the campus interview and the campus is anticipating additional opportunities. The evaluation committee encourages the college to establish outcomes, and to document, and analyze assessments related to those opportunities.

Miles Community College follows NWCCU standards in awarding credit for prior experiential learning as demonstrated during campus interviews and explained in the self-study. Accessing the process is explained in the college catalog. Additionally, the MCC catalog clearly defines how MCC credits transfer to other institutions and how MCC accepts transfer credit.

Related education requirements for the applied degrees and certificates are clearly indicated and described in each of the program offerings. Course descriptions and expected related education courses (English, math, etc.) are clearly indicated and described with appropriate qualified faculty overseeing them.

Any continuing education courses for credit must meet the same standards under Academic Standards & Curriculum Committee as college level courses for degrees or certificates. Both continuing education and non-credit community enrichment courses offered by MCC are monitored and assessed for student achievement or satisfaction. Records of community-enrichment non-credit courses are kept for fiscal year review and longitudinal review.

Compliments
- There is a clear and well defined curriculum approval process that illustrates the primary role of faculty.
- The processes for evaluation and awarding credit for prior learning is well designed reviewed and implemented.
- General education portfolio and review process is well designed and highly functional.

Concerns
- The lack of assessment for learning outcomes combined with no apparent clear mapping between course, program, and institutional assessment is a cause for concern. Campus interviews found little or no evidence of consistent use of assessment for continued quality instructional improvement.

Standard 2.D Student Support Resources

The College provides program and support services to meet the needs of diverse student learners across the campus. The College provide Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) sessions--a daylong event of activities designed to provide students with tools and information about the college experience. An online version of the SOAR experience is available to students in a WordPress Blog format. The College's First Year Pioneer course is a credit bearing first year seminar course designed to provide a deeper learning experience for students. The HiSET boot camp is a program designed to prepare students to take the HiSET exam. The College is currently in the processes of implementing and scaling EdReady (in math portion only) for Fall 2015. The College's Early Alert system functions to increase communication with faculty, students, and Student Services for the College's marginalized and vulnerable student population.

Concern:
- Formal learning outcomes do not appear to be developed and aligned with the College's core themes for support services such as SOAR and the College's First Year Pioneer course.

Evaluators noted that students, faculty and staff desire to participate in the co-creation and development of student learning outcomes, comprehensive assessment and evaluation measures to help inform student achievement beyond the current student satisfaction surveys.

Even though reported crime at the College is low, employees and students have made great strides in providing a safe learning environment for all students. Close circuit cameras provide continuous monitoring to ensure safety and possible deterrence of criminal activity. Miles Community College maintains excellent partnerships with Mile City Fire and Rescue and the Miles City Police Department to ensure rapid response. The Eventlink System notifies students about situations of concern as needed. Students, parents, and employees are able to retrieve messages via e-mail and/or cell phone in the event of an emergency.

Concern:
- While the Clery Act Report is filed annually and is posted on the College's web site, communication protocols need to be clearly established at MCC and vetted to campus and community partners, identifying thresholds for situations of concern, emergency response and mitigation, as well as post-incident recovery. Also, Campus Security Authority employees need to be identified and properly trained in accordance to state and federal regulations concerning campus safety.

Student Services clearly communicate program elimination to students as well as provides program moratorium guidance in collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs.

The college catalog is widely available for students and employees both digitally and in the Student Services Office upon request. The course catalog contains accurate information on eligibility requirements for national and state licensure and provides comprehensive and descriptive information for students to consider when applying for a program of study.

In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the College provides safe and secure retention and maintenance of all student records. Student files are kept in locked filing cabinets. Comprehensive FERPA training is provided for most employees, particularly for new employees (presented at New Employee Orientation). The evaluation team suggests that a systematic and comprehensive FERPA training program be mandatory for all college employees including all work study, student employees, and faculty.

The College provides a variety of opportunities for students regarding financial aid assistance, and in accordance with state and federal financial aid regulations and standards including (but not limited to): grants, loans, scholarships, and work study opportunities. Availability of student financial opportunities are transparent, accessible, and posted in a variety of locations, including the Admissions Application Packet, college catalog, the College web site, Student Handbook, high school counselors, Student Services Office, Job Service, and Vocational Rehabilitation sites.

The College has continued to make great strides in placing greater emphasis on exit counseling and financial aid literacy for students. As a result cohort default rates continue to drop, peaking at 13% in 2011 and stabilizing at the current cohort default rate of 11%.

Academic advising is readily available for all students. Program requirement sheets are transparent and available to all students and faculty. Undecided students work closely with the Student Services Academic Advising team are able to navigate the courses necessary for their degree or certificate.

Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institutional mission, core themes, and programs. The Student Senate of the Associated Students of Miles Community College coordinates co-curricular activities for the college. Shared governance structures are developed and implemented to allow for input, feedback, and process improvement from multiple constituency groups across the Colleges.

Auxiliary services support the institutional mission. Employment satisfaction and student satisfaction surveys indicate that the services are comprehensive and are meeting the needs of students.

Intercollegiate athletics and co-curricular programs are robust and inclusive. The College provides a broad range of opportunities for participation in student athletics. The intercollegiate athletics and co-curricular programs are consistent with the College's mission and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) eligibility requirements and standards.

The College provides clear and relevant information regarding Distance Education policies and procedures, including protection of privacy, FERPA, and student success in online learning. The Distance Education Director works closely with faculty and students to ensure a safe, secure and informed testing environment and also provides training, guidance, and technical support to both students and faculty in navigating the online learning platforms for the college.

Concern:
- Additional assessment and evaluation components (beyond the Student Satisfaction Survey) are needed to align core themes with student learning outcomes that addressing student success and persistence.

Student grievances are housed in the Office of the Vice President for Student Services. One (1) student grievance was reported last year. Student grievances are currently captured on paper and are being uploaded to the H Drive. The Executive Director of Human Resources, the Dean for Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services, and the Vice President for Student Services are the only individuals who have access to these student grievance files. The College is currently implementing a campus wide student conduct and Title IX software program entitled Maxient to address that issue.

Standard 2.E Library and Information Resources

The new library director is committed to a user-centered approach to library services. When she arrived at the college, the majority of library users were members of the public, and the student and faculty use was low. She has created a welcoming environment for students and faculty by relaxing food and noise policies, placing reasonable limits on usage of library resources by the public, allowing the media collection to circulate, piloting a speaker series, and holding movie nights. Additionally, the librarian is working to establish the library as a center of on campus student activity.

The physical space has been reorganized and includes seating for individual and group study as well as comfortable and attractive lounge furniture. Twelve computer workstations are available to library users. Group study rooms are also available for students. Stacks were moved to create more open space to accommodate presentations and social interaction in the library.

The majority of the library collection is arranged by Dewey Decimal classification. A small fiction collection was recently reorganized by author to increase browsability. The physical collection has an appropriate level of currency, depth and breadth to support the college's mission and programs. In large part, the collection is aligned with the curriculum, though there are areas of imbalance. While establishing a collections policy is listed in the library strategic plan, at present there is no documented collection development policy.

The physical collection is complemented by electronic resources that have been acquired through strategic partnerships. Access to over 10,000 ebooks is available through MontanaLibary2go, though the majority of the ebook collection is fiction, with few CTE-relevant titles. The library participates in the Montana Shared Catalog Consortium, which supports a shared ILS, SirsiDynix and provides access to the collections of 170 Montana libraries, including 6 academic libraries. Students are aware that the library will obtain books from other Montana libraries if needed. The Montana State Library provides access to EBSCO databases to all Montana libraries, including Academic Search Elite, with an excellent collection of full text journals. The library director is actively assessing the relevance of the databases to college instructional programs. She recently added a statistics database. Other new database subscriptions include Gale Virtual Reference Library, Academic OneFile and Opposing Viewpoints in Context. The librarian intends to assess usage of these databases after a year, to determine ongoing database subscriptions.

The library director presents information about library services and resources at SOAR and in First Year Pioneer sessions. Information about the library resources and services is included in every eCollege course. The library website is linked on the Campus Services menu on the college homepage. Currently, the library website is minimal; information about the library is limited to hours and contact information. The library director has focused on expanding information about library resources through the library catalog link, which is a customized instance of the Montana Shared Catalog. Links to database resources have been added to the catalog page with the aim of making them more visible to students.

The new library director has established a library development team that includes faculty and administrators. She has developed the beginnings of a strategic plan. The initial elements of the

plan include (1) collection development and engaging students in using library resources, (2) developing instructional information and tutorials on library resources and (3) embedding information literacy in instructional programs collaboratively with faculty. The elements of this plan are being shaped with the input of the library development team. The library employs work-study students and the director solicits their input on student needs.

Faculty report a high level of support from the new library director, improved communication and willingness to collaborate. While the development of an information literacy program in collaboration with faculty is an element of the library's strategic planning, at this time there is no systematic integration of library and information resources into the learning process. The librarian has begun creating tutorials and guides to obtaining and using library and information resources that she will make available to faculty to use and integrate into their courses. The first guide focuses on citation styles and resources.

Having been in her position less than a year, the library director has not had the chance to follow through on the stated intention of publishing an annual state of the library report. The director notes in the self-evaluation that while data are currently collected to evaluate use of the library, including circulation and traffic counts, these measures don't capture the multitude of ways the library impacts the college community and supports learning.

Compliments
- In her short time at the college, the library director has done an exceptional job of establishing a welcoming, supportive, student-centered environment in the library.

Standard 2.F - Financial Resources

Financial planning/budgeting is focused on the near future. The comparison of budgeted amounts for 2014-15 with actual results through April 22, 2015 reveals realistic projections, inclusive of the available resources

Commercial insurance policies transferring all risks of loss, except for relatively small deductible amounts, are purchased for property and content damage, employees' torts and professional liabilities, and workers' compensation. Settled claims have not exceeded commercial insurance coverage in any of the past five fiscal years.

The College has stayed current on the repayment of its long-term liabilities and includes the required repayments in their budget. Principal and interest due in fiscal year 2015 is $203,212 and the amount due in fiscal year 2016 is $203,138.

MCC has developed a process to build the budget and allow opportunities for participation by its stakeholders. The budgetary process typically starts with the Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance and the Budget Committee soliciting and gathering feedback from faculty and staff regarding upcoming budget needs and spending priorities. This information is gathered, placed in a worksheet, and reviewed by the Budget Committee. This worksheet is then used as the guideline for establishing priorities when developing budgets for the various departments, either at the general or specific fund level. During the budget planning process, a

budget scenario worksheet is developed and initially reviewed by the Executive Budget Committee. Scenarios are developed based on potential funding levels from state allocations, changes in tuition increases and enrollment, and budget investments as identified from the worksheet. This allows the Executive Budget Committee to analyze potential reductions, review and decided on tuition levels, decide on which investments to move forward, and establish a balanced and healthy budget. Once this has been vetted, the President then meets with various committees and hosts an open forum to discuss various scenarios, provide legislative funding (state) updates, and collect additional feedback. After additional changes have been determined by the President and the Executive Budget Committee, the preliminary budget is then presented to the Board of Trustees for review in May or June. Questions and feedback are provided at a public hearing conducted by the Board. Needed changes are made between first and second reading by the Trustees, and a final budget is presented to the Board of Trustees in July for final approval, in accordance with MCA 20-15-309.

The Board minutes contain evidence of the budget adoption and regular reporting of key financial information and activities.

The budget spreadsheet for the 2015-16 fiscal year was reviewed. Budget requests are submitted among the following categories: personnel, facilities, programs, equipment/supplies, and other. The spreadsheet includes a priority ranking, the purpose/intended benefit, the assigned division, and the projected cost. Though not detailed there is a column that indicates whether or not the budget request is aligned with the mission.

The College budgets and reports auxiliary operations separate from the General Fund. The College maintains separate auxiliary funds for the following areas: The Campus Store (Pioneer Mercantile), Centra (athletic facility), Dining & Food Services, and Student Housing. There are no interfund borrowings reflected on the financial records. The General Fund supports the Auxiliary Funds in indirect ways (custodial and maintenance support, technology support etc.) Pioneer Mercantile has been in operation since the 1970s. Within the last ten years, however, the bookstore has seen over a 60% drop in the revenue from book sales. This loss in revenue has eliminated the margins that have allowed the bookstore to keep staff and generate profits for future expansion and service needs. This drop in revenue is consistent industry-wide and is exacerbated by the declining enrollment on campus. For the past three years, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Team have chosen to budget for the General Fund to pay for the labor and other miscellaneous costs associated with the operations of the bookstore. By doing so, they have given bookstore personnel the opportunity to try other operational ideas (e.g. rentals and expanded clothing lines) that could help replace some of this loss. To date, this change has been small and the bookstore manager position has turned over three times in three years due to retirement and moves.

Dining Services: The Café, like the bookstore, has been in operation since the 1970s to meet the needs of the student body and employees. Over the years, the cafeteria operated like a traditional cafeteria-style operation, but it was also open to the public and has seen revenue from both meal plans and private-pay consumers. In 2009, The Café underwent a comprehensive remodel to improve and modify the dining experience for the students and users. Surveys have generated very positive feedback regarding the use of dining services. There are occasional requests for

different food and an ongoing debate regarding weekend dining. These issues have been addressed, or they have been tried and have failed to become financially self-supporting. Generally speaking, dining services has been able to break even, with some years losing some money and other years making some money. Within the last three years, a concerted effort has been made to plan strategically for inflationary increases, manage labor and food costs, and start the focus on long-term planning. These efforts are positive moves in maintaining the dining auxiliary for our students and employees, and thereby providing a vital service to help them to succeed.

Student Housing: Pioneer Village has been in various forms of existence since the 1960s. Currently, the residence halls consist of the Quads, built in 1997, and Pioneer Hall, built in 2003. For operational purposes, the dates associated with these buildings have additional importance as they also reflect the loan obligations that have been in place and serviced by the halls since their construction. Since the time of the first dorm to the current day, the rural nature of the region and housing options in Miles City have resulted in a need for on-campus housing for students. Each facility was built to service the needs of the students and thereby assisted in providing an environment to allow students to live at and succeed in school. Student Housing is responsible for the repayment of debt issued to construct the facilities as well as for major renovations such as the installation of air conditioning.

Student Athletic Center: The Centra was built in the early 1980s as a community recreation center to be shared with students and community members. Businesses, the City of Miles City, and Custer County committed to sharing the costs of the Centra at first, but that commitment didn't endure long due to changing needs, priorities, and available revenue. That resulted in the Centra's being funded and operated by the College with revenue from student fees and community memberships. Until 2013, the Centra was the only fitness center in town. In 2013, a new 24-hour gym was opened and has resulted in a large loss in community memberships.

The accounting system employed by Miles Community College is Banner, the conversion to which was mandated and (at least partially) paid for by the State in 2010. Banner is an information management system for students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Training on the new system is ongoing.

Concern:
- Individual departments are not yet capable of generating their budget reports on demand but do so through a request to the Business Office.

The conversion to Banner was not seamless as evidenced by the following auditor comments taken from the combined 2011 and 2012 audit report. The audits for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 were delayed with the audit opinion being dated 12/9/2013 and including the following findings/recommendations from the auditors:

> The College did not always post transactions or perform balancing procedures on a timely basis. They fell behind during a computer software conversion and again with accounting staff turnover. The financials for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011 and June 30, 2012 were not available until 2013.

Recommendation: We recommend the College post and balance transactions monthly.

Miles Community College underwent a campus wide system conversion July 1, 2010. This conversion resulted in programmatic delays associated with the posting, balancing, and subsequent preparation of financial statements for June 30, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Additionally, the College experienced over 100% turnover in accounting personnel which contributed to the delay. Currently, the College has replaced the accounting staff, developed training processes, and incorporated new reports into the system that allow the College to stay up to date on postings and reporting. The State of Montana has elected to allow Colleges to perform federal audit on a biennial basis as authorized in OMB Circular A-133 section 220 (Frequency of audits). OMB Circular A-133 section 320 requires reports to be issued within nine (9) month of the end of the fiscal year. For the Fiscal year ended June 30, 2012 the report submission was required by March 31, 2013.

Concern:
- While the audits for 2011 and 2012 were eventually completed the lack of timeliness of the information limited its relevance and usefulness (2.F.4, 2.F.7).

The audit reports for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 indicate that these concerns have been addressed and did not have any additional findings or recommendations. Based in part on the review of recent external audit reports, the evaluators have concluded that the accounting system and related processes follow generally accepted accounting principles and that the College has adequate internal controls.

While the internal controls are currently adequate the college remains vulnerable to the threat of staff turnover. The development of accounting procedures manuals are underway, and should be completed, to help insure smooth transitions and to maintain the consistency and timeliness of information.

Miles Community College has a memorandum of understanding with the Miles Community College Endowment to memorialize the agreement of the parties concerning their ongoing relationship. The Endowment is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) corporation organized and existing under Montana law. The Endowment is a component unit of the College and is subject to annual audits.

The mission of the Endowment is to assist the college with fundraising and to promote community awareness of campus needs to increase the flow of resources to support excellence in education.

A review of the applicable Board policy, a review of the most recent independent audits, and a conversation with the College's administrators suggest that fundraising is conducted in a professional and ethical manner.

The Endowment is in the midst of a major campaign to raise funds for an Agriculture Advancement Center. When completed, it will be an indoor learning center that will provide an opportunity to increase enrollment within the Agriculture and Equine programs and become the epicenter of learning for southeastern Montana Agriculture and Equine students. The Endowment has already received pledges for half of the needed $3 million in funding.

Standard 2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure

As noted in the evaluators Year Three Evaluation Report Miles Community College has a facilities master plan that was last updated in 2005. As the plan precedes the 2010 NWCCU Standards for Accreditation, it is not surprising, therefore, that the facilities master plan does not directly address the core themes or objectives presented elsewhere in the College's Self-Evaluation Report.

Increasingly, the expectation is that an institution's mission, vision, core themes, objectives, strategic plan, financial plan, facilities master plan, information technology master plan, capital plan, and annual budget are individual elements of an integrated whole. The evaluators suggest that planning be performed in an integrated manner and at a level of detail that addresses total life-cycle costs (2.G.3, 2,G.4, & 2.G.8).

Concern:
- The evaluators noted in the Year Three Evaluation Report that the College intended to update its facilities master plan and attendant capital plan in FY2013. This update still has not taken place and remains in the preliminary planning phase.

The 2016 budget spreadsheet does include plans for facility expenditures including soundproof curtains for rooms 316/317/322, mobile Lab for CDL/HEO, Real Fire Drills/ Campus attack, sprinkler system repairs, classroom space - split classrooms, Phase I of the dormitory air conditioning project, and the Facility Master Plan consultant.

The College has not issued any new debt in over five years. The principal amount of outstanding debt is $2,093,431 at the end of June 30, 2014. The college is current on debt repayments and amounts budgeted for debt repayments are sufficient to meet the principal and interest requirements. There are currently no plans for the issuance of new debt. The General Fund obligation for principal and interest is less than $25,000 per year with the balance being paid for from the Student Housing Fund.

The campus has grown and developed over the years since its 1967 move to its current location. From 1971 to 1972, the College constructed a student center that houses the cafeteria and bookstore. In 1977, the College received a grant of $1.5 million from the Montana Coal Board for the construction of a vocational building and a library/classroom building. The College then constructed a physical education facility in 1980. In August 1997, the College built three student residential buildings and a commons building. In October 2003, the College completed a $2.3 million residence hall. Starting in 2007, the College has significantly upgraded its facilities, including an extensive remodel of the cafeteria and bookstore; the retrofitting of a classroom as an additional science lab; the installation of energy-efficient windows in the

administration/classroom building; the installation of energy-efficient heating and air conditioning for the administration/classroom building, library/classroom building, and physical education facility; as well as installation of new carpeting in the hallways throughout the administration, library, and classroom buildings.

A walkthrough of the campus and buildings found the buildings and grounds to be well-maintained, and the campus to be well-lit and safe.

Communication at the student, faculty and staff forums and interviews with Ross Lawrence, the Facility Manager, and Don Warner, the IT Director, indicate satisfaction with the adequacy of equipment to meet their needs. This was also confirmed in question 10 of the employee satisfaction survey with 88.9% of respondents in agreement that the college provides the equipment needed to do their job.

The book value of buildings at June 30, 2014 was $9,319,870 with $4,158,248 of accumulated depreciation. The book value of machinery and equipment at June 30, 2014 was $2,157,008, with $1,028,131 of accumulated depreciation. The book value of library inventory at June 30, 2014 was $87,114 with $59,181 of accumulated depreciation. The college does not have up-to-date facility master plans, technology plans, or equipment replacement schedules. The college will need to continue to incorporate facility and equipment needs into its planning and budgeting processes to meet the sustainability needs of the future.

Currently the College maintains its own local access network (LAN). Internet access is provided through two vendors, Century Link and Midrivers, for the academic buildings and residence halls. Wired and wireless Internet access is available in all campus locations. Microsoft Outlook software is used to provide email accounts for all faculty, staff, and students as requested. MCC also maintains its own phone system, multiple servers, an offsite network attached storage system, and an interactive television system (ITV).

Miles Community College designed and actively maintains its own website. Besides providing an interactive portal for prospective students, it also provides access to faculty and student email, online classes, and to Banner, the new integrated student and finance management system.

Miles Community College features four computer labs on campus, housing 80 computers. An additional dozen computers are available in the library. Each classroom has its own computer and ceiling mounted projectors with speakers. Several classrooms are equipped with televisions and DVD players as well.

At the student forum the students reported feeling safe and felt comfortable in reporting to appropriate staff if that safety was threatened. The Clery report has reported one sexual offense in the past three years, and a total of 4 drug abuse violations and 13 alcohol abuse violations. The College does not maintain a public safety officer but works closely with local law enforcement when an incident occurs. Flip charts outlining emergency procedures are posted prominently throughout the facilities.

The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.
The College has established procedures for the identification, use, handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. Material Safety Data Sheets are maintained and easily accessible in appropriate areas (science labs, automotive etc.). Individual departments are responsible for maintenance of MSDS sheets and there is no central database or inventory. Materials awaiting disposal are stored in a locked storage area and are disposed of through an outside contractor. There was no evidence of recent fire marshal or OSHA complaints or corrective actions.

Miles Community College employs one information technology director, two full-time technicians, and some part-time technicians. The IT director works closely with the full-time technicians to assist students, faculty, and staff as needed. The College utilizes automated HelpDesk software to report issues and track repairs. This software also tracks inventory, thereby assisting with the replacement program in the technology plan. The technicians are also available via phone. When issues arise or help is needed, they provide one-on-one assistance. As changes in technology occur, the IT personnel also provide personal training. Part-time technicians are also on campus to assist faculty with classes that are delivered via interactive television.
When a major change in technology occurs that will affect a large number of campus constituents, the IT personnel host training sessions to help ease the transition. Upgrades are common with information technology, so these items are typically scheduled at a time that will have the least impact on end users.

The IT department tries to anticipate future needs and prepare a direction that will serve the campus in the most useful, cost-effective manner possible.
The helpful nature of the technology staff was a recurring refrain in the forums and meetings with staff.

As part of the budgetary process, input is sought from all constituents relating to personnel, facilities, programs, equipment/supplies and other miscellaneous issues. Items relating to technology and infrastructure are identified and prioritized. All requests outside of the established technology plan relating to new software or software upgrades must be presented to the IT planning committee before January of the academic year preceding the implementation. Requests must also include software/hardware specifications, cost analysis, and rationale for the software. The IT planning committee then evaluates the purchase based on the information submitted, current industry standards, and budgetary needs of the college.

Technology budget requests for 2016 include: update ITV, update the technology plan, Autocad software upgrade, additional printers and copiers, Proxima projectors for ITV rooms, and website redesign.

Report on Standard Three - Planning and Implementation

Standard 3.A Institutional Planning

The College historically has had a strong annual planning process. Long range planning appears to be limited in the past. With new campus leadership, campus constituents are being engaged in longer range visioning for MCC. The current planning process is called Vision 2020. Early indications of the Vision 2020 process appear that the College will be meeting 3A standards for institutional planning in the future. The evaluation team felt that had the visit occurred in another year, we would find stronger evidence of longer range institutional planning and the process to develop the plan.

Concern:
- Although under development, the College does not have a long-range institutional plan.

The college has transitioned from planning around strategic initiatives to building its annual planning and strategic planning efforts around its four core themes. The annual planning process is ongoing, purposeful, integrated, systematic, and comprehensive. Communication around planning and progress on priorities occurs at College Convocations each semester, monthly employee meetings, and Board of Trustee meeting materials.

The college utilizes eleven sources of information to inform its planning efforts including student focus groups, feedback from advisory boards, and satisfaction surveys. The College plans to utilize results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in its strategic planning process this year.

The College has developed an Emergency Procedures Document to plan for potential emergencies and has been reviewed during campus convocations. Computer systems and the learning management systems have redundancy built it.

Standard 3.B Core Theme Planning

Student Success Core Theme
Faculty, staff and management commitment to the core theme and to planning support activities that enhance student success and safety is clearly evident in interviews across a variety of teams and in the culture of student services and instructional staff. As the varying interviewees described activities, answered questions, and provided examples of strategies, their commitment to the core theme as a guiding principle was clear. For example, staffing changes are being made to add additional support to the student life/activity planning and scheduling process. The highlighted program components align with core theme efforts and will contribute effectively to the identified goals and outcomes.

The college has a robust and well developed partnership with student government to support, plan and direct a variety of student activities on campus. This is particularly important because of the relatively large number of students who are dorm residents, and clearly illustrates the

college's commitment to providing a wide variety of activities. Additionally, student services staff has effectively guided the student government to expand its role in student leadership and advocacy in college operations and structures.

Compliment
- The evaluation committee would like to compliment the college on its effective and positive partnership with student leadership.

Based on an assessment of local data and after review of best practice, the college orientation model was also changed. Students who are undeclared or undecided on a course of study are required to enroll in a freshman seminar orientation (First Year Pioneer), a one credit course, split into two sessions. Additionally, the college requires first year degree seeking students to participate in a mandatory student orientation and advising program (SOAR). The orientation model is a promising practice and appears to have a solid foundation for future growth. While several hurdles need to be overcome, the college has the necessary structures including a well prepared and well-resourced plan - and strong, committed leadership - to effectively overcome those hurdles. While minimal data was reported regarding the long term impact on student achievement, the orientation program seems to be a very promising strategy, has already impacted student and college culture, and is expected to continue to expand.

Compliment
- The evaluation committee would like to compliment the college on the adoption and development of the mandatory orientation model.

Management, staff and faculty reported that the resources available to them adequately support the practices and activities in the student success core theme. The one exception is that the small number of faculty makes it challenging to schedule a wide enough offering of FYP to ensure that students can access the course in relation to the rest of the college course schedule.

Concern:
- Although there is strong alignment between the core theme and the larger college strategic priorities and initiatives, the selected indicators at times do not align with or adequately address the expressed objectives. Selection of data indicators does not have a direct supporting relationship to the stated objectives.

Academic Excellence Core Theme
The self-study reflected that some indicators were better than others, and that some indicators were challenging assess and difficult to use as meaningful data points for program improvement. Care should be taken to insure data is appropriate to the core theme, reflects accurate comparisons, and leads to the documentation of core theme progress and improvement. Ongoing, systematic review should take place to assess longitudinally all indicators.

While ample evidence of curricular planning was found at MCC, evidence that planning is directly tied to the institution's comprehensive plan and/or the Academic Excellence core theme was not consistently found. For example, careful review is taking place to assess that general education outcomes are evident in student learning longitudinally, but there was not any

evidence that this informed program goals, long range planning or strategic initiatives or objectives. Discussions with the administration and faculty suggested that planning is tied to interpretations of community demands, but the selection of offerings is based primarily on institutional enrollment needs. There is insufficient evidence to determine if programs are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.

Because there isn't a long range planning document, the reviewers were unable to establish that planning for programs and services as it relates to Academic Excellence is guided by alignment with intended outcomes. There was some inconsistency between the objectives covered in the Self-Study and those in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan with additional indicators provided in the strategic plan. Without confirmation of the relevant mission and core themes, consistent planning is neither possible nor verifiable.

Vision 2020, a new long range plan is being developed by the college with wide constituent and community participation. A tracking program for program review recommendations should be established that allows for systematic sharing of program advisory reviews on a consistent basis. It was noted that a small degree of inconsistency occurs across programs related to tracking how improvements are implemented and the program review "loop is closed". Following up on recommendations of advisory committees that result in program changes needs to be assessed beyond enrollment data. Currently, the annual strategic planning document is the only long-term planning piece and it appears to function more as an annual priorities document. The implementation of the Vision 2020 plan will contribute to redefining the appropriate data for evaluating the achievement of the goals in this core theme.

In reviewing the measures from the current objectives in the self-study, reviewers found little evidence that the collected data serves as the basis for benchmarking, and there was insufficient rationale for the use of the percentage and percentile "expectations" that will determine whether planning for those objectives had been successful. The absence of a comprehensive, multi-year strategic plan with regard to resources precludes the ability of MCC to demonstrate that Academic Excellence core theme planning is consistent, aligned, and contributing to core theme accomplishments. Long-range resource planning documents must be created, consistent with a comprehensive plan, to align resources with future educational endeavors.

Resource Management Core Theme
The 2014-15 strategic plan goals and the Resource Management core theme align where the same indicators of achievement are identified. However, the methods of assessment do not appear to align with the described performance indicators of the strategic plan. There needs to be a more obvious relationship between the objectives and methods of assessment as described in the strategic plan – which appears to be more assessment orientated. For example, the strategic plan references legislative action, grant allocation, fund raising, and review of budgeting process (improving transparency and timeliness).

Although the assessment appears to be disconnected, the processes do appear to be in alignment. Within the body of the self-study there is evidence that the performance indicators of the strategic plan are being addressed.

In general there appears to be alignment between core theme planning and supporting programs and services in so much as there are assigned activities with reporting agencies. How services are developed to support the goals identified in the strategic plan is unclear. Duties appear to be assigned as needed by the College to support the core themes, but whether or not there is a related process to plan for necessary infrastructure support services needs is not identified.

There is a general lack of described "data" throughout Core Theme 3. Bench marks are identified as "processes completed" and are either reached or not. Consequently the accomplished objectives for Core Theme 3 are easily observed, but there is no true evaluative nature to assessment of the supporting programs or services; evaluation is based on whether or not the objectives were met, and does not include any analysis of effectiveness.

Community Enrichment & Partnerships Core Theme
A review of monthly Board Reports from Academic Affairs and the Workforce Development and Community Outreach department indicate that the college is actively engaged in discussions with industry on workforce training needs and potential customized training projects. The self-study outlines recent changes in roles and restructuring of the Workforce Development and Community Enrichment division. The new Interim Dean for Workforce Development and Community Enrichment has been meeting with area employers, academic program advisory boards, chambers of commerce and community development organizations. Interviews with the Dean and his team indicate an emphasis on more organized planning, with regular meetings to review program enrollments and discuss potential projects. The Dean has spent the past year working on substantive changes to systems and processes. The department had operated in a reactive, "more is better" mode in terms of offerings. The team is now working on establishing baseline information to inform future directions. On the workforce side, priorities are industry driven, so the Dean has developed a proactive model, focused on engaging groups of employers in an industry, rather than individual employers. The college recognized that resource limitations make it crucial to strategically reorganize workforce development efforts around the TAACCCT and SWAMMEI grants.

On the CE side, they are developing feedback loops from users. The Dean analyzed the past four years of offerings. Many courses offered did not run, so the team is focused now on responding to community interests. One of the recent successes of the community education program has been the "Welding for Women" course, which has filled and run multiple times.

Board reports also document active engagement with high schools on concurrent enrollment and Big Sky Pathways options. In interviews, the Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that planning for partnerships and initiatives related to objectives 2 and 3 has two drivers. Externally, there are statewide initiatives such as the push for dual enrollments, with strong proponents such as the governor, the commissioner of higher education and the Board of Regents. Internally, staff and faculty involved in advising hear directly from students about their needs and pass that information along to Academic Affairs leadership to inform their plans.

The Community Education Team uses a program planning and tracking report that facilitates analysis of the success of course offerings. An Economic Impact Study and Program Gap Analysis were completed in December 2014. The Gap Analysis data will be used to inform

planning for workforce training. Other than these examples, data collection to inform core theme four planning and evaluate accomplishment of objectives was not evident in the self-evaluation. The self-evaluation report does not clearly explain the planning processes that guide activities and initiatives that support core theme objectives.

Report on Standard Four - Effectiveness and Improvement

Standard 4.A Assessment

Student Success Core Theme
The college systematically gathers and assesses verifiable data (CCSSE; local student records, surveys and conduct infraction data; Cleary report, etc). Methods and sources are appropriate and the data is adequately represented in the report.

The Student Success core theme has two objectives: 1 – Equip students with the basic knowledge needed to navigate the educational process. 2 – Provide a quality student experience. The objectives are supported by four indicators of achievement. Benchmarks were established from identified baselines, thresholds, and data points. Assessment of the core theme objectives is based on meeting or exceeding those benchmarks. Targets were conservative and moderately oriented toward growth (70% of students agree that MCC provides a wide variety of activities). In one case (graduation rate of students participating in FYP is equal to or greater than students not participating), the target seemed to lack appropriate rigor.

Additionally, the alignment of indicators with the stated objectives is problematic. While there is data that implies achievement – i.e. successful completion of orientations, availability of activities – there is little direct student success data (GPA, degree completion, pass rates) that the college has identified to verify that the activities are positively impacting student achievement. For example, Indicators 1.A - The College holds mandatory Student Orientation, Advising and Registration sessions; and 1.B - The College requires successful completion of the First Year Pioneer freshman seminar... both identify benchmarks that imply a connection between participation and student achievement. However, neither indicator addresses actual student achievement data. We don't know, for example, if the students who successfully participate in an orientation program are succeeding academically (GPA, degree completion) at a rate different than their peers, or if students in FYP have accessed resources more frequently than their peers and if that access resulted in improved academic success for that student. Consequently, it will be difficult for Miles CC to evaluate and then assert that the participation requirements have directly improved students' ability to successfully access support systems - and perhaps more importantly - if student learning has been extended.

Another example is in Objective 2. The college's rationale for Indicator 2.A states "retention rates are higher for students who are involved in campus activities". However, the indicator of achievement is focused on the college providing a wide variety of opportunities, as measured by 70% or more students. While the availability of a variety of options is, of course, a important component of a vibrant student experience, it does not in fact measure the participation or involvement of students.... and it is the participation and involvement - not the availability of activities - that the rationale and the research identify as the key to enhancing student success.

Concern
- The evaluation committee is concerned about the relationship between core theme objectives and the selected indicators (4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.A.6).

The committee recognizes that both examples – mandatory freshman orientation and strong student participation in extra-curricular activities are well-researched and appropriate best practices and additionally, the committee noted the commitment and effort that the college has shown to effectively roll out both programs. Nevertheless, there does not seem to be a data point or indicator that demonstrates the connection between the two objectives and measurable student success.

Academic Excellence Core Theme
Evidence presented from data collection and use regarding resources forms a very limited data set to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives and/or program services in some areas. As stated in the self-study, MCC is unsure if all indicators are meaningful, assessable and verifiable. Some of this is due to limitations of the collections methods. For example, in Objective #4 it is focuses specifically on limitations and difficulties using the Banner data system to measure achievement. However, the discussion is not about developing other other meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators, but instead remains focused on how to overcome data collection challenges.

The analysis of limited or incomplete data makes it difficult to ensure that changes are systematically tested and are not primarily reactionary. The evidence to support the alignment, correlation, and integration of the resources needed achieve the core theme objectives and program outcomes was not made clear. Evidence to support the adequacy or need for improvement of resources was provided for specific areas, but a comprehensive means to identify resource needs across the institution does not appear to be in place.

In both on-site interviews and the self-study, it appears that the institution is engaged in a continuous process of reviewing assessment methods related to the Academic Excellence core theme. MCC adjusts assessment plans and methodologies as result of measuring objectives and indicators. It is evident that there is strong and sincere interest at MCC in developing a robust assessment plan. Care should be taken to insure data is appropriate to the core theme, reflects accurate comparisons where warranted, and leads to the documentation of core theme progress and areas for improvement – simply adding additional indicators fails to address the appropriateness of measures and the lack of longitudinal trend lines.

Compliment
- Effective use of indicators, assessment and planning aligned with resource allocation to address Academic Excellence through a redesign of development education curriculum.

Resource Management Core Theme
The method of collecting data is not systematic. There is varying evidence that "some" sources are available to provide quantitative and/or qualitative data, but sources are mostly limited to survey formats that are fairly limited in scope and do not provide much in the way of feedback. There are many opportunities that can lead to more functional methods of data collecting and are mentioned in areas of intended improvement. In further discussions with staff it is clear that there is a shift more in the direction of data collection and use, which is primarily centered

around the change of administration. The new President is much more data driven and assessment savvy. It is expected that methods of data collection and use will be improved (and is improving). The addition of Banner, other sources of data collection (Clearinghouse, IPEDs, in-house retention data, demographic data, Veterans, First-time students and State data that will provide residency information) are beginning to be used to help with planning. This is a "process" in the works, but there does appear to a more heightened awareness of data.

In interviews with faculty and administration it is clear that faculty have the primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services. There is evidence that assessment and evaluation is occurring. However, connecting that assessment to continuous quality improvement and mission fulfillment is still lacking in Core Theme 3.

The evaluation of alignment of programs and services is based on the successful completion of benchmarks. There is no clear evidence that there is an evaluative process in the alignment between programs and services and the accomplishment of the Core Theme 3. There is an awareness of the importance of training, and there are excellent training opportunities available to faculty and staff (in fact professional development is definitely embraced as a college wide priority). However, evaluating the success of that training as part of the ongoing assessment of Core Theme 3 is disconnected.

In general there is very little evidence of planning alignment presented in the self-study. This standard is difficult to interpret based on the material provided, furthermore there is no "assessment of program and services (other than the meeting of the objectives – which are not assessment based, rather "completion" based. For example some of the attributes of meeting the indicator of achievement is the implementation of Banner. However, there is no discussion on how this decision was made, what was the decision was in response to, and what were the initial plans to implement this new program.

"The College operates within its available financial resources during its current fiscal year and engages in planning to ensure its solvency for the foreseeable future" has elements of assessment potential (engaging in planning to ensure solvency for the foreseeable future), and in discussions thought out the campus there is evidence that planning is occurring, however there is little evidence to show that assessment of the planning is occurring.

There was no direct assessment provided for the majority of the objectives associated with core theme 3. The only example of an assessment method being used is the use of employee satisfaction survey and student satisfaction surveys. In one example (although there may be others) the result of these satisfaction surveys did lead to improvements in the food options in the cafeteria. These surveys are used as the sole assessment piece for determination that auxiliary services are meeting the needs of the campus stakeholders. To that end it is an authentic assessment tool that is used to make improvements.

For Core Theme 3 the only example of authentic assessment is the student and employee satisfaction surveys (although a CSSSE survey was administered in the current spring semester, which will provide more detailed data by the summer). There is no obvious review of the assessment process provided, which is unfortunate since this type of analysis could result in a

strategy to achieve more robust participation in both satisfaction surveys, such as ways to administer the survey in a more effective manner. As it is currently designed, these surveys provide the only means for assessing axillary services; it is superficial and limited in scope. It is recommended that the survey be specifically reviewed as an assessment tool should be more robust to provide better means of determining core theme attainment.

In reviewing the annual strategic plan there is included a goal outcome for reviewing the budget planning process. This is not actually identified as part of a core theme, however this action plan does speak to the need to review assessment processes. There are other examples of process that are in direct alignment with accreditation standards, but are either not documented or not widely communicated. In the case of the budget planning, discussions with staff demonstrate an understanding that budget planning and prioritization process must bet tied to the strategic plan (which supports the objectives of the Mission and the long range goals of the Facilities Master Plan). However, it does not appear that this process is documented. There is evidence within the strategic planning documentation that the process of evaluation is possible based on expressed goals and action items. Understanding the process of evaluation and how that translates to the core theme appears to be missing.

Community Enrichment and Partnerships Core Theme
Assessment of core theme four objectives largely consist of documenting activities such as meetings with area employers, records of custom training contracts, transfer articulation agreements, Big Sky Career Pathways agreements and marketing activities. The college acknowledges the limitations of this type of benchmark, noting in the discussion of objective 2, "[T]hese assessments are not as effective in capturing the significant scope of ongoing partnership development and enhancement efforts, which occur regularly through various formal and informal means as faculty, staff, and administrators actively engage in community outreach and enrichment activities. … often the individual programs and departments may appear [to] be operating independently, and without a systematic means to assess and evaluate the combined efforts of the campus as a whole, which can limit the organization's overall ability to identify opportunities for synergy, integration and enhancement of some partnership opportunities."

Though students are the focus of almost all the indicators of achievement for core theme four objectives (customized training opportunities, continuing education courses for renewal credits, Big Sky Career Pathways, concurrent enrollment agreements, and personal enrichment courses), none of the benchmarks or methods of assessment described in the self-evaluation address student learning or the impact on students, with the exception of recording renewal unit/credit awards for continuing education courses. In interviews, the Interim Dean for Workforce Development and Community Enrichment commented on the need to refine measures of student success and more effectively track student success on the non-credit side.

Some data related to assessment of core theme indicators are only available to the college at the aggregate, state level, for example the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education shares an analysis of the performance of students in dual enrollment programs; however data specific to MCC students isn't available.

Overall, there was no evidence in the self-evaluation of holistic evaluation of accomplishment of core theme objectives, or goals or intended outcomes of programs or services.

Despite these gaps, it's clear the college has developed partnerships and programs that positively impact the community. The committee interviewed several representatives of partnering organizations. Uniformly, these community partners expressed appreciation for the collaborative work of the college and the impact on their constituencies. The Vice President of Strategy at the Montana Health Network turns to the college to help address staffing shortages for the 17 independent health care providers it represents, including a distance learning program for nursing and a short term non-credit CNA program to get people working as quickly as possible. The principal at Powder River County High School worked with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to re-establish dual credit classes after the retirement of participating instructors. She commented on how easy the Associate Dean made the process; a face to face meeting with him and the VP for Academic Affairs to review the whole catalog expanded what they were looking at offering. The Director of Prairie Educational Service Area was approached by the college to co-sponsor a Fall Educator's Conference in 2014. The collaboration was very successful; attendance at the conference more than doubled from the previous year.

Concerns
- Indicators of Achievement and Benchmarks established for Core Theme Four don't provide a meaningful basis for evaluating the accomplishment of core theme objectives and impacts on student achievement (4.A.1).

Standard 4.B

Student Success Core Theme
Despite the mismatch between objectives and indicator data, Miles CC routinely uses the results of on-going informal anecdotal and/or formative assessments, including student S.W.O.T. and satisfaction surveys, to inform programmatic and learning-support planning. The programs launched under core theme 2 (SOAR, FYP, student safety and activities plans, etc.) are strong efforts and as assessment structures improve, will continue to positively impact student achievement.

The use of assessment results for core theme improvement seems somewhat challenging. The current indicator set does not seem aligned enough with the core theme to effectively inform college-wide improvement models. Some college faculty and administration acknowledged that data sets may lack clear alignment with intended outcomes, and that focused revision work will be needed on the core theme assessment indicators as the projects solidify over time. The college's commitment to continue - and to improve - that work was clearly evident in each interview and appeared ongoing even as we were meeting with staff.

The foundational work that has been done in new student orientation, the First Year Pioneer program, and clear and powerful commitment to engaging students in meaningful and safe extra-curricular activities, will serve the college well as it moves forward in its work. As indicators

become more aligned with objectives, and as the college fleshes out its assessment models, the college improvement planning should be both straightforward and more measurable.

Academic Excellence Core Theme
The institution demonstrates that Academic Excellence core theme assessment analysis and findings have caused changes in the deployment of developmental education, specific career-technical program changes and creation or refinement of programs or services designed to contribute to the achievement of program and service goals and outcomes, core theme objectives, and mission fulfillment. It is unclear from evidence that these changes have resulted in improvement.

Intentional analysis of the outcomes and indicators assessed in the Academic Excellence Core Theme with a complete and complementary strategic plan will make core theme assessments more meaningful for planning, decision making, and resource allocation. An example would be Objective #3 indicator, "Students who begin their studies at MCC earn an academic credential". Several programs have been implemented (GRIP and Early Alert Lists are two) to address the decline in students earning a degree, but there is no evident systematic assessment. Without an assessment plan in place, it will be a challenge to know if programs are effective and to effectively allocate resources to those programs.

Campus interviews and a lack of a comprehensive holistic assessment plan indicate that MCC has not regularly and systematically reviewed its assessment processes given the multiplicity of changes in leadership.

Resource Management Core Theme
The inherent problem with Core Theme 3 is the lack of meaningful assessment. Assessment measures were designed to document completion of the objectives, rather than providing feedback on the outcomes.

For example in Objective 3 of Core Theme 3, the method of assessment is to maintain a copy of the infrastructure improvement worksheet in the office of the Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance. A more effective method would be to assess the development process to determine if the annual infrastructure improvement worksheets are accurately demonstrating the facilities master plan (or strategic plan).

Another example from the self-study was to successfully complete audits, prepare budgeting spreadsheets and projections, and show soundness of the College in its debt obligations and overall management of its resources through its Board of Trustees minutes and reporting processes. Although this information is well distributed throughout the college, there is no information on how this has led to informed planning or assessment of the process.

Community Enrichment and Partnerships Core Theme
Activities related to core theme four objectives are reported to the President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. However, there is no evidence of how these reports inform decision making and allocation of resources used to improve programs or services.

In interviews, the Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that currently the focus of improvements related to core theme four is on process. He expects to see some changes in the indicators in this core theme. His observation is borne out in the self-evaluation, with much of the discussion of improvements related to objectives 1, 2 and 4 focusing on the restructuring and reorganization of the Workforce Development and Community Enrichment Division, hiring the Interim Dean of Workforce Development and Community Outreach, and formation of the Community Education Team. Similarly, the discussion of improvement related to objective 3 focuses on restructuring, designating the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Interim Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education as co-coordinators in meeting with regional high school officials regarding dual credit and concurrent enrollment and Big Sky Career Pathways.

Concerns:
- The evaluation committee is concerned about the mismatched and/or misaligned relationship between outcomes, indicators and data (3.B.3, 4.A.2, 4.A.3, 4.A.6).

Report on Standard Five - Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Standard 5.A Mission Fulfillment

Miles Community College states that their mission is to promote student success and lifelong learning through accessible, quality programs, community enrichment, and partnerships. With the current mission statement, the College would have to determine mission fulfillment by the extent to which it could measure promotion and the objectives, indicators, and thresholds of successful promotion. Measuring mission fulfillment would be easier if the College mission was focused on ends versus a means statement – "promotion". An end statement such as to increase student's knowledge and skills through accessible, quality programs, community enrichment and partnerships might help the College set up how the mission is fulfilled and how the core themes are operationalized with objectives, indicators, and thresholds.

Concern:
- The current mission statement is means focused which makes measuring mission fulfillment challenging.

While the structure of determining mission fulfillment by achieving a threshold of at least 70% of the indicators of achievement of the Core Theme Objectives is sound, the quality of the current indicators make it hard to determine quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment. The College would benefit from a centralized process of assessment to ensure that the process is systematic across are core theme areas and is self-reflective.

While the self-study described several data collection methods to inform mission fulfillment, more analysis on what these data sources are indicating to the College is needed.

Standard 5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability

The adequacy and allocation of resources is under constant scrutiny, particularly by the Executive Budget Committee, which consists of the President, the three Vice Presidents, the Executive Director of Human Resources and Compliance, and others, as invited. These individuals meet regularly and review the status of the College's enrollment and the impact of enrollment and other variables on the budget. In addition, they review the personnel needs to evaluate and ensure the adequacy of financial and human resources to accomplish the College's Mission, Core Theme Objectives, and strategic goals and priorities. The outcomes of these discussions are shared with the Board of Trustees during their monthly meetings via the President's and Vice Presidents' written and oral reports to the Board.

The College has shown flexibility in adjusting the budget to meet changing economic realities and the challenges of declining enrollment. Facility maintenance and equipment replacement efforts have been supplemented by the Miles Community College Endowment and grant opportunities.

While financial planning efforts are in place they are focused on the near future and are most evident in the annual budgeting process. There is no evidence of financial projections beyond

the next fiscal year. The Facilities Master Plan was developed in 2005 and has not yet been updated. The Technology Plan is has also not been updated. While equipment replacement is considered during the budget process a formal equipment replacement schedule was not produced. Auxiliary services lack updated business plans. Crisis planning and disaster recovery plans are developing and not yet formalized. The implementation of the Banner system remains ongoing with distribution of financial information performed by the Business Office and not by end users. In order to maintain sustainability and consistency the College will need to strengthen the long-range planning efforts.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations
1. The Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students are to be commended for their intentional relationship building and for fostering a culture of belonging that supports and encourages student success.

2. The College is to be commended for effectively using assessment to redesign developmental Math and English pathways.

3. The College is commended for its commitment to providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

4. The administration at the College is to be commended for deliberate, effective, and diverse methods of internal communication.

Recommendations
1. It is recommended that the College improve the timeliness and consistency of business processes (Standard 2.F.4 and Standard 2.F.7).

2. It is recommended that the College update long range plans for facilities, technology and equipment replacement (Standard 2.F.5, Standard 2.G.3, Standard 2.G.4, and Standard 2.G.8).

3. It is recommended that the College centralize institutional research efforts including data collection and analysis (Standard 4.A.2).

4. It is recommended that the College systematically assess student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level (Standard 4.A.3 and Standard 4.A.6).

5. It is recommended that the College use the results of its assessment of student learning to inform planning and practices in all areas of the College (Standard 4.B.2).

6. It is recommended that the College engage in a system of evaluation of its programs and services in order to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment (Standard 1.B.2, Standard 4.A.2, and Standard 5.A.2).