

Miles Community College

YEAR SEVEN EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SELF-EVALUATION REPORT



PREPARED FOR:

THE NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Institutional Overview

Miles Community College (MCC), located in Miles City, Montana, is a rural community of approximately 9,000 people in Southeastern Montana. It is one of three community colleges in the state of Montana. In addition, Montana is home to seven two-year colleges that fall under the auspices of either the University of Montana or Montana State University. Seven tribal colleges also operate in Montana and are completely independent of the Montana University System (MUS)¹; however, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) strives to be inclusive of and collaborative with the tribal colleges. The Deputy Commissioner of Academic, Research, and Student Affairs facilitates coordination and collaboration among the two-year and community colleges within the MUS.

Founded in 1939 as Custer County Junior College, Miles Community College operated out of a few rooms in the local public high school for almost 20 years. In 1957, the College moved into the former Milwaukee Railroad Depot building. In June 1967, the College moved into a new building that was constructed after passage of a bond issue by county voters. On April 4, 1970, voters of the district elected the first independent Board of Trustees (Board) for the College. In December 1971, Miles Community College was granted regional accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Miles Community College offers general transfer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, an Associate of Science in Nursing degree (in Candidacy Status with the Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing and operates with the approval of the Montana State Board of Nursing), Associate of Applied Science degrees in a variety of professional-technical fields, Certificate programs, and Community Outreach and Workforce Training. The College also sponsors intercollegiate athletic teams in basketball, baseball, volleyball, softball, and rodeo.

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

¹ "The Montana University System (MUS) is comprised of sixteen public universities and colleges, enrolling more than 40,000 students each semester" (<https://mus.edu/>).

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. Since 2007, the College has done much to upgrade 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 and classroom building; the installation of energy-efficient heating and air conditioning for the administration and classroom building, library and classroom building, and physical education facility; as well as installation of carpeting in the hallways throughout the administration, library, and classroom buildings.

In December 2015 Miles Community College received \$650,000 from Montana Community Development Block Grants – Economic Development funds to purchase the old National Guard Readiness Center (Armory), which sits adjacent to MCC and has Main Street access. MCC also received \$593,000 in Federal Economic Development funds to refurbish the Armory. This facility adds 8,745 sq. ft. of academic space and 2.63 acres to the MCC inventory. This facility currently houses the Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) program by providing more space for hands-on training mixed with simulation and classroom learning.

In May 2016, Miles Community College’s capital campaign to break ground for the construction of the Ag Advancement Center/Champion Arena came to fruition. The Ag Advancement Center/Champion Arena is a 36,000-square-foot facility, which houses three classrooms, a 100-X 200-foot arena, (the Champion Arena), bathroom facilities, public event seating for 500 people plus a mezzanine, an on-site caretaker apartment, three offices for ag and equine faculty and the rodeo coach, concession stand, and an open foyer that offers flexible space for conferences and events. The building has a metal interior finish, is ADA accessible, has an energy efficient HVAC system, and paved ADA parking spaces and entrance access. The Ag Advancement Center is now the home of all Agriculture and Equine Science programs, as well as the Pioneer Rodeo Team. The facility has made it possible for the equine and rodeo programs to train and practice indoors during the bitterly cold Montana winters.

In addition to the development of the physical plant, the College (1) has developed curricular programs that meet the needs of transfer students in a variety of disciplines; (2) has been responsive to place-bound students by expanding its multi-modality delivery of courses for distance learning; (3) has created and modified professional-technical programs that prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce; (4) has refined assessment and placement of students who need additional academic preparation before enrolling in college-level courses; and (5) has been active in identifying appropriate partnerships with industry and other educational institutions to enhance economies of scale.

Preface

Institutional Changes Since Year One Self-Evaluation Report, 2016

- **President:** In January 2020, Ron Slinger became the ninth president of Miles Community College. Prior to taking this position, President Slinger served as Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Strategic Partnerships, and Workforce Solutions at Red Rocks Community College in the Greater Denver, Colorado, area. During his career, President Slinger has successfully led fundraising efforts for capital needs, scholarships, academic program support, and student support services. He has demonstrated an outstanding record in building strategic partnerships that benefit his community, area employers, faculty, staff, and students. President Slinger is actively engaged in public offices and boards of directors. President Slinger holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Defiance College in Ohio, a master's degree in higher education student affairs from Bowling Green State University in Ohio and is in the final stage of completing his dissertation for a doctoral degree in community college leadership from Ferris State University in Michigan.
- **Dean of Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services:** Richard DeShields was hired to fill this newly created (2018) position to enhance student life and oversee the College's auxiliary services and athletic director. He began his doctoral program in 2021 for community college leadership from Ferris State University in Michigan.
- **Director of Institutional Advancement:** Elizabeth Patten was hired in 2020 to provide consistent and concentrated leadership in efforts to advance the College's scholarship, fundraising, and alumni engagement.
- **HR/Accounting Specialist:** Carrie Preller was hired in 2017 to assist the Dean of Administrative Services and Human Resources in ensuring that the College carries out the task of being consistent and compliant with laws and processes related to human resources and accounting.
- **Director of Student Success & Retention:** Anne Anderson was hired in 2017 to oversee efforts to enhance student success and retention, and to serve as the Disability Support Services Coordinator.
- **Director of Institutional Research & Banner Coordinator:** Loren Lancaster was hired to fill this newly created position (2019) to increase access to institutional data to campus stakeholders, including state and federal agencies. Additionally, this position oversees all data mining to assist with the evaluation of institutional effectiveness and strategic planning. This newly created position was developed as a direct result of feedback the College had received from the Spring 2015 Year Seven Peer Evaluator Committee.
- **Marketing and Campus Communications Coordinator:** BeKa Stein Phipps was hired to fill this newly created position (2019) to design and produce marketing materials for internal and external audiences, ensure consistent communication through publications and media releases, and ensure consistency with College branding.
- **Athletic Director:** Jerry Olson (2019) was hired to fill a reinstated Athletic Director position that had previously been filled by coaching staff. The Director oversees all

athletic programs, fundraising initiatives to support the College's teams, develop athletic enrollment strategies, and monitor Title IX requirements in athletics.

- **Ag Advancement Center Grounds Manager:** Jack Oswald was hired to fill this newly created position (2017).
- **Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Regional Director/Coordinator of Workforce Development & Community Outreach:** In 2018, Miles Community College entered a partnership with the Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network and created a hybrid position to serve as the Regional Director and as the College's Coordinator of Workforce Development & Community Outreach. Tracy Baker has been serving in that position to help both organizations fulfill their complementary commitment to strengthening the local economy and to enhance the College's influence in the region. Tracy Baker has been assisted by Sarin Hoppe, who serves as SBDC Business Advisor/COVID Specialist.
- **Addition of Two Intercollegiate Sports:** women's volleyball, women's softball
 - **Women's Volleyball:** In 2017, Chase Soennichsen was hired to create and coach the women's volleyball team.
 - **Women's Softball:** In 2019, Shawna Juarez was hired to create the women's softball team. Her first season was cut short in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic. The 2021 softball team exceeded all expectations, winning several post-season games to advance in the Region XIII by beating long-time Region XIII powerhouse, Dawson Community College.
- **Meat Processing Program Coordinator:** Tina Sackman was hired in 2020, to oversee the newly created Meat Processing Program. This program has been made possible because of the success of several grant applications and the enthusiastic interest expressed by industry.
- **Reinstatement of History Faculty Position:** Dr. Daniel Ferris has been serving in this position since its reinstatement. In 2016, this position, which had been suspended as part of a reduction in force, was reinstated.
- **Reinstatement of Psychology/Sociology Faculty Position:** Andrew Donnelly has been serving in this position for the current academic year. In 2021, this position, which had also been suspended as part of a reduction in force, was reinstated.
- **Addition of Science Faculty Position:** Dr. Daigo Yamamura was hired in 2021, it became necessary to add a full-time science faculty position due to academic priority needs.
- **Nursing Program Director:** Deidre Fitzgerald was hired in 2021. She was preceded by an Interim Director, Maryls Eggum, due to the passing of the prior Nursing Program Director.
- **Nursing Program Faculty:** In the fall of 2021, Jennifer Olmstead and Dani Hudson were hired to fill faculty vacancies in the Nursing Program.
- **Nursing Program Coordinator/Advising:** Kim Helmts was hired for the new Program Coordinator/Advising position 2019. The Nursing Administrative Assistant position was revised and expanded into the Nursing Coordinator role. Additionally, this position advises allied health and pre-nursing majors.

- **Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning:** Sarah Kloewer was hired to fill this newly created position (2018) to provide educational leadership, technical expertise, and quality assurance. Sarah Kloewer, an English and Literature faculty member, began serving in this role part-time via credit release hours with load.
- **Retirement of Long-time Registrar:** After 31 years at Miles Community College, Registrar Lisa Blunt retired at the end of the Spring 2020 semester. Jordan Ulrich served for one year before transitioning out of state. Carla Cummins will serve as the Registrar beginning March 2022.
- **New Programming Initiative-Workforce Solutions Program:** President Slinger has initiated a Workforce Solutions Program that allows the College to assist the business community aggressively “grow their own” in a new, creative, and targeted upskilling pathway. This initiative will continue to grow and thereby enhance the business community and enrollment at Miles Community College.
- **The Miles Community College Strategic Plan:** President Ron Slinger is leading the creation of a new MCC Strategic Plan to provide a sharp vision of the College’s Mission, Commitments, and Goals to define what constitutes mission fulfillment.



STANDARD ONE

1.A Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

1.A.1 The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

Mission Statement

Miles Community College prepares students for success and provides opportunities for lifelong learning through quality programs, community outreach, and partnerships.

Core Themes

Four Core Themes, derived from the mission, focus planning and assessment efforts:

1. Student Success
2. Academic Excellence
3. Workforce Training & Partnerships
4. Community Outreach & Lifelong Learning

The mission statement and core themes were approved by the MCC Board of Trustees in 2018. The core themes are integrated in MCC's strategic plan, Vision 2020, which was developed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders (students, employees, community members) and deployed in the fall of 2016.

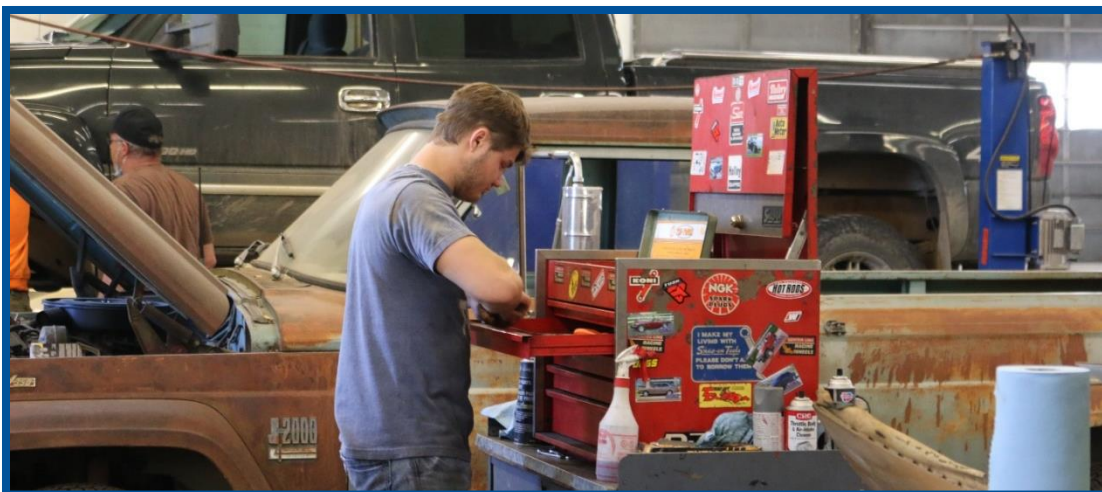
MCC is in the process of modifying our mission statement, moving away from core themes, and developing assessable commitments to guide the college through the next strategic plan cycle with a particular emphasis on equity.

Proposed mission statement:

Miles Community College prepares students for success and provides opportunities for lifelong learning through equitable access, quality programs, community outreach, and partnerships.

Proposed commitments:

1. Workforce Development & Lifelong Learning
2. Institutional Excellence
3. Student Success
4. Building Community Through Outreach and Partnerships
5. Faculty & Staff Support



1.B Improving Institutional Effectiveness

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process of assessing institutional effectiveness, including the assessment of student learning and other support services to facilitate student learning and achievement. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to inform and refine its key processes, assign resources, and improve student learning.

Miles Community College continually assesses institutional effectiveness through a variety of systems and data. Whether it is continual review of institutional data as identified through indicators of student achievement, ongoing assessment surveys and program evaluations, or focus groups and advisory boards, the College utilizes data to inform its decision making for continuous improvement across the entire campus.

MCC values student input and administers a variety of surveys to gather data. The [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (CCSSE) and the [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (SSI) are administered to students in alternating years since 2015 and 2016, respectively. MCC determined that CCSSE had the most relevant metrics to evaluate student engagement and student success, and in 2020 the use of SSI was discontinued. Select questions from the SSI were integrated in institutional surveys as well as questions involving campus safety, maintenance, custodial, information technology, and customer service in various offices. CCSSE data has been used in multiple ways including:

- Using data involving academic advising to create an advising day each semester solely devoted to advising for the following semester.
- Utilized data suggesting one in five students had cut their meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food and 10% of those surveyed identified that they needed food assistance to engage volunteer efforts to support a food pantry. The Pioneer Food Pantry is in a high-traffic hallway in the main campus and is available during campus hours.

- Presented a Faculty and Staff Predictions exercise using CCSSE data to understand perceptions of employees regarding student satisfaction. By doing this, it helped improve the expectations of employees as it relates to students' identified needs.
- Facilitated special focus areas surrounding COVID-19 where data suggested 21% of students did not have reliable internet. Student support areas increased access to technology, including a small number of hotspots.

College Housing annually administers the Skyfactor Resident Assessment survey to students to assess satisfaction in housing and dining. The survey also includes questions about other campus services including general cleanliness of public areas, access to campus computer labs, general customer service in areas across campus (Business Office, Financial Aid, Learning Center, Student Services, etc.). Campus constituents are provided with the results relevant to their area with recommendations for improvement. This has led to establishing a routine replacement of laundry equipment, the continuation of cable television access in the residence halls, and a change in meal plan options to provide more meal choices. MCC was recognized by the MacMillan Learning Group with an [Assessment & Impact Award](#) highlighting the use of data-driven insights to improve the residential experience.

MCC has begun [mapping core area outcomes](#) to course outcomes in the online learning management system Canvas. Course outcomes are mapped to summative assessments that are built in Canvas. Information and instructions on how to import the general education outcomes into a rubric to track and assess measures is available to faculty in a Canvas Faculty Resources course.

Academic excellence, achievement, and programming are also measured to effect change. The Nursing Program receives biannual [NCLEX Program Reports](#) that describe how MCC Nursing graduates performed on several content dimensions compared against other programs both regionally and nationally (Mountain Measurement, Inc.). Through the accreditation process with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), the Nursing Program developed a [Systemic Plan of Evaluation](#) with four assessable end-of-program student learning outcomes (EPSLO) and three passing/completion/placement rate metrics. Data from these reports allows the program to adjust instruction and student support resources such as a dedicated tutor in the Learning Center for nursing students.

Data provided by EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists) through a [2020 Executive Summary](#), identified a gap analysis revealing demand for certain jobs. MCC has been able to utilize this data to create new opportunities for our Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program and the development of partnerships with St. John's United, a provider of senior living and healthcare in Billings, MT, to create additional clinical nursing sites. Campus leadership engaged the Montana Health Network in conversations regarding healthcare related occupations. MCC has partnered with Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, MT to collaborate on a paramedicine program as an Associate of Applied Science degree. After completing prerequisite courses, including a state-approved Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course, students can complete the program at the Miles Community College campus. Finally, the College has developed a meat processing program and developed pathways with Big Sky-High School and their Agriculture

Education Center to enroll students. Agricultural and Food Products Processing has begun addressing workforce shortages.

MCC utilizes internal surveys and data to identify needs as well. Annually, the office of Human Resources assesses employee satisfaction. Results from the [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) 2021 survey included the need for professional development areas. Human Resources responded by creating interactive diversity and inclusivity programming and an optional summer in-service training program.

MCC's office of Institutional Research (IR), established in 2017, facilitates the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data; the Director coordinates the assessment committee² and provides professional development and training to include data collected. The IR committee is a campus-wide group that includes members of the Executive Team who can gather data from collected resources to utilize and inform units within Academic Affairs, Administrative Services and Human Resources, Enrollment Management and Student Support Services, and Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services. Each member also participates in the Planning, Budget, and Assessment process which aligns financial resources with initiatives that support the mission of the College.

Data is shared with multiple stakeholders including Board of Trustee members, Faculty/Staff, Students, and through different formats including board meetings, all employee meetings, student leadership groups, and various committees on campus. Information such as enrollment trends, student profile data, and fiscal spending is also shared externally through different venues.

1.B.2 The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goal to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions.

MCC has demonstrated a strong commitment to the ongoing engagement in campus-wide strategic planning efforts and to the alignment of the College's goals with its mission statement and core themes. Planning efforts have evolved due to new campus leadership and Board direction, but the foundational underpinning remains focused on campus involvement, a comprehensive review, integration in all aspects of the College's educational and operational efforts, and assessment.

Strategic Priorities

The Board of Trustees sets and monitors college strategic priorities through annually reviewed [Major Initiatives and Expectations](#) (MIE). MIE are derived from the college mission, core themes, and strategic plan. To achieve MIE fulfillment, MCC administrators³ and key personnel are tasked individually or jointly with initiatives to accomplish.

² [MCC Committees 2021-2022](#)

³ President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Administrative Services & HR, Dean of Enrollment Management & Educational Support Services, Dean of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services, Director of Business Services

MIE:

1. Remain proactive in development of plans related to the future of eastern Montana community colleges by working collaboratively with the Montana Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) as they review the Community College Funding Formula - *assigned to President.*
2. Implement human and financial resources required to enjoy durable and valuable alumni relations and functions of the MCC Foundation Board by solidifying funding for a dedicated Institutional Advancement position - *assigned to President.*
3. Review academic programs for mission fit and labor market demand while placing emphasis on workforce development and transfer programs to meet student and industry needs - *assigned to VP of Academic Affairs.*
4. Identify academic program categories of distinctions (schools such as Agricultural/Natural Resources, Technology/Energy, Transportation/Construction, Health Professions, Transfer Education) - *assigned to VP of Academic Affairs.*
5. Make available means for continuous quality improvement in the MCC Nursing Program and to sustain high NCLEX pass rates equal to or exceeding all other Montana Nursing Programs - *assigned to President and VP of Academic Affairs.*
6. High impact and visible service projects and community outreach efforts for student, faculty, and staff - *assigned to Dean of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services.*
7. Foster collegiality through an inclusive and socially conscious hands-on learning and living environment for students, faculty, staff, and guests - *assigned to Dean of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services.*
8. Monitor annual facilities long-range master plan and provide an annual list of priorities to the Board of Trustees - *assigned to Dean of Administrative Services & HR.*
9. Increase overall course and program enrollments by focusing branding and marketing initiatives through the implementation of a campus Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system - *assigned to Dean of Enrollment Management & Educational Support Services.*
10. Commence work to build an impact model around the mix of MCC's educational delivery array to ensure conscientious enrollment growth and sustainability- *assigned to Dean of Enrollment Management & Educational Support Services.*
11. Monitor Ag Advancement Center use and all related policies and procedures to better link with the community and ensure a west entrance doorstep to campus - *assigned to President, Dean of Administrative Services & HR, and Director of Business Services.*
12. Complete Athletics Master Plan with an emphasis on defining an effective organizational structure that will ensure fiscal flexibility, high quality student-athlete experience, while using MCC sports as a welcoming tool for the College and Community - *assigned to Athletic Director.*

MIE progress is provided to the Board and the college community via monthly board reports prepared by administrators and key personnel.

Examples of MIE Progress:

- **2:** The College hired a Director of Institutional Advancement in 2020; Growth in the number of named scholarship funds; Awarded \$25,000 grant from NW Farm Credit Services in support of Meat Processing Program.
- **3:** Additions of Meat Processing Certificate; multiple MOUs with four- year institutions (Diesel with MSU Northern, Elementary Education with Dickinson State University; Medical Lab Tech with Bismarck State University, Pre-Engineering to engineering with Montana Technological University).
- **6:** Four “Year in Service” events scheduled each year; 548.50 hours of community service logged for Fall 2021; Community service opportunities for employees and students; Awarded AmeriCorps grant to develop initiatives including high school-college connections, MCC career services programs, establishing community taskforce of volunteerism
- **7:** Creation of Multicultural & Diversity Student Club; development of [Message of Inclusion](#); implementation of training modules focused on campus climate, microaggressions, and other diversity-related trainings.
- **8:** Electronic lock system installed on campus buildings to increase the health, safety, and security of students, faculty and staff and reduce risk exposure; Creation of mock apartment in the VoTech Building for EMT/Paramedicine program.
- **9:** Significant growth in online courses requests by high school early-admit students for including participation in hyflex-real time delivery courses. Assessing the desire of high schools to have more hyflex-real time delivery options.
- **10:** Funding of large-scale print and paid social media advertising campaign has resulted in significantly higher than industry average on click-through and view-through rates.

Student Success Measures⁴ developed by the Board provide indicators to track annual goal achievement in various areas related to enrollment, retention, graduation, affordability, athletics, and more. The Board receives updates on the measures during Board retreats ([2020-2021](#)).

Vision 2020 document *Pioneering Our Future: A Five-Year Vision* and the Core Themes continue to inform planning and achievement of Mission Fulfillment.

Core Theme objectives include specific measures of achievement using identified data sources. Example of sources include items such as the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) Data Warehouse data, IPEDS graduation rate comparisons, CCSSE Key Findings, faculty action plans, post-event survey information, and concurrent enrollment tables.

Aspirational benchmarks are also identified with each core theme. These goals are articulated in the overall plan.

⁴ Student Success Measures: Enrollment, Dual Enrollment, Retention, Completion, Developmental Education and Gateway Success, NCLEX Success, Transfer Success, Affordability, Athletics

Planning and assessment is informed by the work completed for Vision 2020 and Core Theme exercises including the creation of objectives, indicators, benchmarks for each.

Student Success	
<i>Vision 2020 Key Strategies</i>	<i>Core Themes Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optimize Student Transition to College ○ Engage Students in Academics, Athletics, Student Life, and the Miles City Community ○ Diversify Program and Degree Offerings ○ Expand Online and Distance Delivery of Education and Student Support Services ○ Enhance Counseling and Advising Support Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase student persistence at Miles Community College ○ Increase student completion of credentials.
Academic Achievement	
<i>Vision 2020 Key Strategies</i>	<i>Core Themes Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance Pathways for Achievement ○ Become Regional Leader in Academic Programs ○ Create Optimal Environments for Student Development ○ Emphasize Faculty & Staff Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage in effective educational practices, as identified in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). ○ Provide developmental courses that facilitate students' preparation for college-level courses. ○ Prepare students for entry into the job market through career and technical program completion. ○ Prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges through the College's General Education program.
Workforce Training and Partnerships	
<i>Vision 2020 Key Strategies</i>	<i>Core Themes Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustain and Enhance Industry and Education Partnerships ○ Establish & Grow New Industry & Education Partnerships ○ Expand the Opportunities for Embedded Student Learning Experiences ○ Become Eastern Montana's Center for Workforce Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide workforce training to meet regional needs. ○ Create and maintain partnerships with higher education institutions and industries to provide additional degree program opportunities. ○ Create linkages between secondary and postsecondary education.
Community Outreach and Lifelong Learning	
<i>Vision 2020 Key Strategies</i>	<i>Core Themes Objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optimize the Student Experience through Community Involvement ○ Expand Continuing Education Learning Opportunities ○ Enhance Community Outreach to Meet the Needs of the Community ○ Cultivate and Promote a Culture of Lifelong Learning in the Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer community outreach and personal enrichment opportunities to members of the community.

Strategic Planning

In early 2015, a group of stakeholders came together to formulate a new vision for MCC. The group was made up of students, faculty, staff, administration, and governing board members, as well as vested community champions including business, government, education, and economic leaders, alumni, and potential students. The team analyzed the state of the institution, surveyed community perceptions, and researched emerging trends and nationally recognized best practices in higher education to create the key strategies that eventually would guide Miles Community College's visionary growth through 2021. This resulted in the document, [Pioneering Our Future: A Five-Year Vision](#). Embedded in the plan were key strategies and aspirational metrics to support a student-centered learning environment, to prepare tomorrow's workforce, to increase collaboration, growing opportunities for all ages, and growth in infrastructure. In 2020, the President's Cabinet⁵ analyzed the plan's key strategies and success metrics and identified areas where there were successes and areas where the college did not meet expectations and presented findings to all employees.

Work on a new strategic plan was delayed until 2021 due to the selection of a new President and the COVID-19 pandemic. Summer 2021, President Slinger put out a call to all employees to solicit volunteers to serve on the Strategic Planning committee. In all, eighteen employees and two community members volunteered. To guide the committee through the process, Dr. Landon Pirius, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the Colorado Community College system, led the committee through a series of [exercises](#) including data collection, SWOT analysis, and other strategic alternative matrix exercises, success metric development, and other planning scenarios.

The committee developed a [draft strategic plan](#) with an updated mission statement, new commitments (replacing core themes) goals and strategies. Employee and Board feedback was solicited via an anonymous online survey distributed in late November (2021) and available until early January (2022). The next step was the formation of four outreach committees:

1. **Strategic Partners:** MCC Advisory Boards, Board of Trustees, Workforce, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, State Legislators
2. **Community Leaders:** Miles City Rotary Club, Miles City Kiwanis, Ag. Community partners
3. **Students:** Adult learners, Traditional-aged students, Full-time and Part-time students, online students, high school dual enrolled and prospective students
4. **Alumni:** MCC Foundation, Donors, Individual Alumni

1.B.3 The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

MCC engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive institutional planning and strives to ensure that all members of the College are offered opportunities to participate in the processes.

⁵ [MCC Committees 2021-2022](#)

MCC is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of seven locally elected members. The President is accountable to the Board for the execution of policies, rules, and regulations. The Board meets monthly, and all meetings are open to the public and employees are encouraged to attend. Meeting materials and reports submitted to the Board are shared with all employees prior to the meeting. As detailed in 1.B.1, area leads (Enrollment Services, Student Engagement, Athletics, Administrative Services, Academic Affairs, President's Office) report on the MIE tasked to them. MCC policies are contained in the [Board Policy Handbook](#) and are reviewed regularly to ensure relevancy and currency. Most policies were reviewed in 2021-2022.

Governance structures at the College include the Faculty Association, Staff Group, and the Associated Students of Miles Community College (ASMCC). Representatives of these groups serve on the President's Cabinet, an Administrative Committee⁶ that meets monthly. The purpose of this committee is to "support the campus' commitment to shared governance, as a means for sharing information, reviewing policies and procedures, and communicating other campus matters." Subcommittees of the President's Cabinet are the PBA (Planning, Budget, and Assessment) Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Facilities Planning Review. Additional employees may be added to these subcommittees as needed.

Alignment and prioritization of initiatives and their relationship with annual budget allocations through the college is facilitated through the PBA Committee. As mandated by Board Policy "alignment and prioritization of initiatives and their relationship with annual budget allocations throughout the college is facilitated through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment Committee" ([§800.1.1](#)). The PBA Committee is entrusted with ensuring funding priorities align with our strategic plan, core themes, and annual goals. Units, departments, and programs submit [annual plans](#) that include mission alignment, environmental scanning information, strategies, goals and objectives, action plans for the funding cycle, and identified resources needed.

Campus committees provide employees and students the opportunity to work together to fulfill college mission, goals, and initiatives. Committee charges vary from operational⁷ to advisory. For example, Labor/Management is an operational committee that meets twice a semester. It consists of three representatives from the faculty association and three representatives from administration. The committee's purpose is to "investigate, study, and discuss possible options to mutual issues affecting labor-management relations. To maintain open/transparent and a good labor relationship between the mutual parties." The group utilizes the [Master Agreement](#) to inform its conversations.

The Student Senate (the legislative body of the ASMCC), meets weekly to advocate for student issues and promote student engagement. The group is part of campus conversations including

⁶ Administrative Committees: Executive Team, President's Council, Academic Standards & Curriculum.

⁷ Operational Committees: Admissions Safety and Security, Advising Taskforce, Banner User Group, Behavior Intervention Team, Blue & Silver/Employee of the Semester, Calendar, Career & Technical Division, Campus Safety, Enrollment Action Team, Event Management, Financial Aid & Student Account Appeals, General Education Division, Hall of Fame, Institutional Research, Institutional Review Board, Labor/Management, Nursing Admissions Taskforce, Nursing Division, Scholarship, Social, Technology, Website, Wellness.

budget, room and board rates, and strategic planning. They are governed by the [Constitution of the Associated Students of Miles Community College](#), last reviewed in April 2021.

The campus also has other opportunities to allow for transparency, involvement, and to gather feedback including all-employee meetings and faculty meetings. All-employee meetings are scheduled each month, typically before the monthly Board of Trustee meeting. These meetings provide information sharing and gathering, as well as professional development. One upside to the pandemic is the use of online meeting platforms; the all-employee meetings are now virtual, which allows employees to join the meeting anywhere. The meetings are also recorded and access to the recording is provided to employees.

President Slinger joined the College in January of 2020. Almost immediately, he began meeting individually with all faculty and staff. Four questions were asked:

- What do you like about working at Miles Community College?
- What are any “pain points” that create challenges at the campus?
- What can we do better as a college?
- What can President Slinger do better as the College President?

While this project was delayed slightly due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the President was able to meet with approximately 70 employees and compiled the feedback and shared with stakeholders across campus. Some of the feedback included items such as needing better IT support and systems, employee involvement in the community, increased onboarding of staff, and expanding articulation agreements. Campus leadership has begun working on many items discussed within the campus. Examples include hiring a consultant to perform an IT Assessment and Audit, the development of a new Human Resources webpage, identifying strategies in the newly drafted Strategic Plan, and the development of new partnerships with academic institutions to develop articulation agreements.

Immediately upon arrival on campus, the President established the practice of emailing a “Friday Memo” to all employees and the Board. The memo is an informal communication method where the President shares important campus updates. The memo has been well received by employees as it provides a concise, weekly overview of campus events and ongoing projects.

The College values involvement from community partners. Many academic units have established advisory boards. Local leaders, including the CEO of SCL Health (a comprehensive acute-care hospital in Miles City) and the Miles City Unified School District Superintendent, serve on critical committees such as the strategic planning committee. Local agriculture leaders have served on the Ag Advancement Center committee to help with continued fundraising of a new state of the art facility and arena. During the past few years, foundation leaders and donors have participated in the selection of the College President and served on committees to select athletic coaches.

Examples of Improvement in Institutional Effectiveness

Miles Community College relies on multiple constituents and campus partners to identify the needs of the college, prioritize resources, and improve overall effectiveness. Ongoing

assessment informs planning and the alignment of limited resources. Through the PBA process, key personnel have been added to better meet institutional objectives, core themes, key performance indicators, and outcomes.

An example includes the creation and funding of an Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning in 2018. After reviewing data that identified an increased demand for online learning it became clear that the college needed to deploy diverse modalities of instruction. This position oversees distance learning training, instructor development in areas of online and hybrid classroom curriculum design, implementation of secured online testing tools, and daily operations of online courses.

To further ensure focus on issues of retention, the college created the Director of Student Success and Retention position to further develop academic supports such as tutoring, developing pathways for transfer education, advising, student at-risk programs, transition to college programs for adult learners, and high school equivalency programs. The college continues to maintain solid retention numbers including an over 85% fall-to-spring retention rate for first-time, full-time students and 54% first-time, full-time fall-to-fall retention rate.

Both positions serve important roles in the ongoing support of students that directly support important college success measures.

The College, as well as individual Faculty and Staff members, have been recognized for the work done to advance the mission of the college. Examples include:

1. Miles Community College was recognized by St. John's United as Partner of the Year
2. Miles Community College was recognized by Skyfactor Benchworks (a MacMillan Company) with the 2021 Assessment and Impact Award for High Performance Sustainability
3. President Ron Slinger was named an ASPEN Fellow
4. Professor Dr. Molly Magestro was named a Montana University System Teaching Scholar in 2020-2021
5. Professor Sarah Kloewer was named a Montana University System Teaching Scholar in 2021-2022
6. Dean of Student Engagement Richard DeShields was named the 2021 Community College Professional of the Year by NASPA, Region V
7. President Ron Slinger was named to a 3 year appointment with the Small and Rural College Commission with the American Association of Community Colleges

1.B.4 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such finding to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

Miles Community College has ongoing review throughout the entire college. It utilizes institutional data, information provided through the Montana University System dashboard, and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to monitor and determine trends in enrollment data, graduation and transfer rates, retention and completion, and

program enrollments and completion. This data informs many decisions within the College and is presented in numerous ways such as Board of Trustee meetings, employee meetings, and with community stakeholder groups. Analysis of this data impacts the development of strategies to better support our mission and core themes.

Additionally, the college uses other surveys to respond to changes on the campus. The College created surveys to assess information technology infrastructure needs for remote instruction and learning. Examples include the [Campus Technology and Furniture Needs/Classroom Hardware](#) survey and the [Classroom Hardware, Software, and Furniture Needs Survey](#), which was distributed shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed for the prioritization of various federal funds to purchase technology to support the campus. Following the review of the data, the college upgraded some classrooms with tools to provide additional hybrid workspaces. Lastly, the campus recently hired a consultant to identify priorities for campus information technology needs. This report, [Miles Community College IT Assessment](#), identifies key challenges and opportunities with recommendations for the next steps. Areas addressed include information security, stabilizing service reliability, staff hiring needs, technology governance, budgeting for capital renewal, training, and shadow support. MCC will utilize this report in selecting a new leader for the unit and begin implementing key findings in late 2022.

Core Theme Fulfillment

Student Success

Miles Community College continues to build on the successful programs already established, while also engaging students as they progress through their programs.

In 2017, the college developed a position on campus that would promote student engagement on campus, Dean of Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services. As national data indicated, students who get involved on campus are more likely to persist to completion in college. The Dean of Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services was hired for the Fall 2018 semester and began developing a strategy of assessment to measure student engagement for all first-year students and for overall satisfaction with students living in the residence halls on campus.

The College implemented the [Benchworks New Student Assessment](#) survey in Fall 2019 and had a 43.9% response rate of all students new to MCC. The purpose of the survey was to understand key insights from students to identify factors to improve the first-year student experience. Survey questions included non-cognitive concepts like academic adjustment, educational goals, social connections, and residence life experiences, while also identifying issues and opportunities for interventions and interactions that broadly facilitate student success. The data gathered assisted with campus conversations regarding retention. A 2019 CCSSE report, [A Mind at Work: Maximizing the Relationship Between Mindset and Student Success](#), provided additional data and insight. Based on the Benchworks survey results and the CCSSE report, MCC developed faculty training to discuss the data. Outcomes from these discussions resulted in recommended mindset best practices and the addition of lectures in the College Studies (COLS 101) course pertaining to homesickness, test anxiety, financial needs, and academic self-efficacy. Additionally, the college was able to provide outreach to students

through the Behavioral Intervention Team committee of those identified at risk of leaving the College.

In 2020, Miles Community College, much like the rest of the world, was impacted with COVID-19 which caused some shifts in strategies that would continue moving the college forward. Data collected from CCSSE and through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for the Montana University System (MUS) identified a significant need for increased mental health programs. The College developed a [Counseling Services](#) webpage for students to understand campus services and links that include instructions on scheduling counseling sessions, suicide prevention resources, self-help resources, and consultation and referral resources. [YouMatter MUS](#) is an initiative that “...provide supports to students and employees that are available remotely. These supports include a mental health and wellness app (You at College), an online referral platform Thriving Campus), and a virtual mental health literacy and suicide prevention training (Kognito). MCC has implemented all three programs. The College also partnered with a local medical provider that also offers mental health services to provide on-campus counseling utilizing fees approved by the Student Senate.

Through the PBA process, the College prioritized funding and implemented a customer relationship management (CRM) tool. Fireworks CRM allows the campus to better integrate data and communications across the full recruitment and admissions cycle and to streamline communications with students. In addition to allowing recruitment and admissions personnel to create customized communication plans based on many prospective student and applicant traits, the CRM allowed the campus to link online enrollment forms, like those for admission, information requests, and campus visit and orientation registrations, directly into existing prospective student or applicant data.

To better support college transfer, Miles Community College joined the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) [Interstate Passport](#) program, a national initiative that enables seamless block transfer of lower-division general education attainment based on an agreed-upon set of learning outcomes rather than on specific courses and credits. The program is based on four guiding principles: student-focused, faculty-driven, institutional autonomy, and quality assurance. MCC developed a dedicated [webpage](#) to guide students through the process. The [Interstate Passport Timeline and Implementation Worksheet](#) identifies steps the college has taken and will continue to work on. Miles Community College is the first institution in Montana to join the WICHE Interstate Passport.

The Associated Students of Miles Community College and the Student Activities Board conduct periodic student interest surveys to better plan events and activities, as well as to assess program quality. Specific surveys have included evaluations of the annual Welcome Wagon week of activities and an interest inventory to gain student feedback about desired programs on campus.

The College has also been intentional to support the development of our student athletes. An [Athletic Strategic Plan](#) prioritizes the direction of the Athletic Program and was developed by a group of campus and community stakeholders. The plan will be incorporated into the new campus-wide strategic plan once it is developed. A Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) serves

as liaison between athletics and academics. The campus also created a [Student Athlete Code of Conduct](#) that corresponds to the [Student Conduct Code](#) but identifies specific expectations of student athletes. Finally, the campus also created a Student Athletic Council (SAC) that is made up of two students from each sport on campus. This group is advised by the Athletic Director. These initiatives specifically address the campus goals of maintaining a strong athletic enrollment, engagement in the campus community, and promoting academic success. Student athletes are a major contributor to civic engagement and volunteer opportunities in the community.

Academic Achievement

Miles Community College shares the same core curriculum standards with all accredited Montana institutions of higher learning; however, one of the aspects that differentiates the academic experience at MCC is the individualized investment in students that faculty make. The College is committed to fostering the continued development of our campus by enhancing pathways for achievement through the expansion of student learning opportunities. To do this, the College must be flexible and respond to emerging patterns, trends, and expectations.

In 2019 MCC participated in the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' (NWCCU) Academy for Retention, Completion, and Student Success. MCC identified guided pathways to graduation as the project to apply mission fulfillment best practices. As a college, we began identifying measures in the college that promoted pathways to completion. Some of the changes made include an update to the Catalog (Academic Catalog & Student Handbook) that includes embedded definitions, eases navigation, includes hyperlinks to other campus resources, aligns the scope and sequence program pages to fillable advising sheets, and includes general education core tags and online delivery tags in the course description areas.

The MCC Nursing program continually assesses data to improve overall quality as part of the campus' accreditation review for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). This review is documented in the [2021 ACEN Accreditation Self-Study Report](#). The program reviews its mission, guiding principles, organizing framework, and end-of-program student learning outcomes annually. To assist with the required levels of achievement, the faculty implemented a robust intervention program that includes additional Kaplan Secure Predictor and Diagnostic Exam protocols when students cannot meet the benchmarks on initial testing. If a student does not meet the Kaplan-established benchmarks on the Secure Predictor exam, the student will be issued a newly created [Temporary "T"](#) grade. Students then will develop a study plan in conjunction with faculty which must be followed before they are given the opportunity to re-test. Additionally, the faculty has increased the number of simulation exercises for students to gain more hands-on experience. Because of this increase, the College has prioritized the need for a new Simulation Coordinator that will serve in an administrative role to prepare simulation exercises with the PBA Committee. This allows faculty to focus on ensuring course outcomes are met and supported. Finally, the program modified two courses' lengths based on assessment data. A key modification is a change to course length of both NRSB 256 Pathophysiology and NRSB 230 Pharmacology and the accompanying lab, NRSB 231. At this time, all courses are offered in a 15-week format with NRSB 256 Pathophysiology in the second semester and NRSB 230 Pharmacology and the accompanying lab, NRSB 231, during the

third semester. Based on several course assessment tools including course exams, Kaplan exams, and student and faculty feedback, it has been determined that the large amount of information contained within both courses is difficult for both instructors to deliver in a detailed manner and students to retain for later application. For this reason, steps are being taken to extend the course delivery time from 15 to 30 weeks for both courses. The content and credits of the courses will not change, only the course lengths.

As previously identified, the college responds to gap analyses (EMSI 2020 Executive Summary) to develop new academic programs and partnerships and responds to local, regional, and national employment needs in the development and ongoing review of our program offerings. In 2021, MCC began making changes to the Commercial Driving License (CDL) program based on the pending implementation of new mandates related to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations. The ELDT regulations set the baseline for training requirements for entry-level drivers of commercial motor vehicles. MCC, somewhat unique in offering a credit-bearing CDL program, shifted its 8-week CDL program into a 15-week program to ensure sufficient coverage and assessment of the topics required in the ELDT theory curricula and behind-the-wheel training. This one-semester program can then stack into a new, one-year (two-semester) Certificate in Basic Transportation Entrepreneurship. As many drivers in our CDL programs express interest in purchasing their own trucks or truck fleets or working for smaller local industry-related businesses, the opportunity to continue studies and take courses in business or human resources or even vehicle maintenance through the College's own Automotive Tech or partnership classes in Diesel Technology through Montana State University-Northern is an appealing path of study that meets individual student career goals as well as industry needs. Beginning Fall 2022, an Associate of Applied Science in Technical Studies will be offered, which allows various career and technical program students, like those in the CDL or Basic Transportation Entrepreneurship, Automotive Technology, or Meat Processing, to complete a two-year degree. The objective of the individual, the occupational experience, and the needs of the workplace will be considered in selecting courses that meet program outcomes for the degree.

Miles Community College utilizes advisory boards in the following areas to help inform program needs:

- Agriculture
- Automotive
- Business
- Community Outreach
- Equine
- Heavy Equipment Operators/Commercial Driver's License
- Information Technology
- Medical Lab Technician/Phlebotomy
- Nursing

Additionally, EMSI data provided the opportunity to perform a rural healthcare analysis. President Slinger met with the Montana Health Network to discuss the role MCC could play in

further education for the medical areas. This led to outreach meetings with leaders of hospitals and medical districts in Eastern Montana.

The [Miles Community College Flower Library](#) expanded its access to library resources in 2017 by joining the Treasure State Academic Information and Library Services (TRAILS) consortium of libraries in Montana. The library also responded to the impacts of COVID-19 by updating the website to be more accessible to students 24 hours, seven days a week with online research and recreational resources.

The College responded quickly to COVID-19 impacts in its teaching modalities. MCC quickly procured systems and processes to support online and eLearning. The campus developed resources using Zoom technology, and purchased new equipment as identified in the technology services survey. It was determined that some of the previous modalities of teaching in online environments could be transitioned to these newly acquired technologies and MCC developed a new [eLearning Modality Guide](#). The Technology Fee Committee assessed campus data and developed the [MCC Distance Education Fee History](#) and the [eLearning Fee Proposal Data Overview](#) involving participation in the identified modalities and determined that the college could reduce the current online fee and develop a reduced fee. The [eLearning Fee Structure Proposal](#) was recommended to the PBA Committee and the Associated Students of Miles Community College. It was subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2021.

MCC joined the MUS eLearning Advisory Committee (EAC), “composed of MUS eLearning leaders who collaborate to benefit learners and to align campus eLearning efforts” ([§303.7](#)). The committee has defined online and blended program types and identified five course modalities: Internet or Online, Videoconferencing, Blended, Hybrid-Flexible, Other Distance. The committee also recommended faculty training and development of courses or programs to ensure [core principles of quality online course design](#).

Miles Community College has partnered with the Montana University System in a program entitled the [Montana Virtual Campus](#). Through this partnership, powered by course-sharing program, Quottly, a course search and registration platform, students may find and register for online transferrable courses more easily. Current participants in this project include Helena College, Miles Community College, Montana Technological University, and the University of Montana. This connection allows our students to work with their advisor to find an alternate course section at another participating Montana institution. This helps students across the state find available courses. There are multiple examples of how this helps our students, e.g., it allows a student to take a course when the sections are full on our campus or if it is not offered in the sequence that the course is taught. Advisors help ensure that the course will count towards the general education requirements.

The College also expanded conversations surrounding equity and diversity based on data in CSSE and in the Benchworks Assessment instruments. Focus groups were developed with faculty and staff surrounding campus climate and increased professional development through training. Additionally, a student group, the Multicultural and Diversity Club, increased student engagement opportunities. The group organizes diversity socials, promotes activities that celebrate different cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles, and supports places for students to gather

and socialize. The campus also provided support for English as a second language individuals in the community through the Learning Center. Finally, the College provides outreach to students, including local high school students on FAFSA completion and scholarship opportunities.

Finally, the College continued promoting academic excellence in our student athletes. Many individual teams developed study tables in the library and in the Learning Center. Academics were prioritized in the Athletic Strategic Plan. The campus celebrated students who had a 3.5 grade point average or better at events on campus. The campus started documenting student athlete achievement and in 2021 the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) recognized the work of our student athletes:

- Women's Basketball: #2 in the country with a 3.66 cumulative GPA
- Men's Basketball: #5 in the country with a 3.37 cumulative GPA
- Softball: #6 in the country with a 3.71 cumulative GPA
- Baseball: #11 in the country with a 3.47 cumulative GPA
- Volleyball: #37 in the country with a 3.47 cumulative GPA

Additionally, 12 student-athletes were recognized as 1st Team Academic All-Americans (4.0 GPA), 20 student-athletes were recognized as 2nd Team Academic All-Americans (3.8-3.99 GPA), and 15 student athletes were recognized as 3rd Team Academic All-Americans (3.6-3.79 GPA). These GPAs continue to be strong.



Workforce Training and Partnerships

Through workforce training and partnerships, Miles Community College provides services of both a non-credit and credit nature that addresses local and regional industry needs in

workforce training programs, workshops, and courses. Partnerships with local and regional industries also support experiential learning within academic programs through internships, practicums, and clinicals. These services form support and collaboration between the college and area industry needs. Because these needs are ever changing, the college must be willing to adapt and modify the work we do.

MCC has developed a Workforce Solutions Program that works with business partners to upskill their employees. Employers create a guided pathway to their employees using courses in the college curriculum. Once the employee finishes the course requirements, the company then issues a micro-credential or badge indicating completion. The intent of the program is to provide skills that could lead to upward mobility in the company. For the college, this allows us to better meet the workforce needs, it creates additional enrollment opportunities for the workers to move into a degree pathway, and it provides for much needed adult education in our community and region. The College is in its first semester of this program and currently has additional interest from other companies in the medical and banking sectors.

The College has strong enrollment with high school students in a variety of [early college programs](#) including dual enrollment (Pioneer Express), concurrent enrollment, and Free 2 Explore. The Pioneer Express program allows eligible Montana high school students to take MCC courses on-campus or online. Concurrent enrollment allows eligible students to take MCC courses taught by credentialed high school teachers at partner high schools. Free 2 Explore offers dual enrollment students the opportunity to receive two free courses at MCC. These classes may be on-campus, online, or in the high schools. Miles Community College must remain flexible with this program as credentialed teachers are not consistent within the different school districts, and this may impact overall enrollment.

With the need to process local meat at an all-time high and a workforce to help, the College partnered with the Montana Meat Processors Association and the Montana Farm Bureau to create a meat processing certificate.

Miles Community College has also partnered with Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) to offer a paramedicine program. MCC partnered with FVCC to apply for GEER grant funds in 2020 to remodel space in our Technology Building to accommodate “mock” apartment and lab for EMT and Paramedicine instruction. Students can complete the program through FVCC without leaving Miles City. This is intended to help with a statewide and nationwide shortage of emergency medical service providers and paramedics.

Montana is impacted by teacher shortages; however, unlike many other states, Montana’s teacher shortages are being driven by the inability to find qualified applicants, especially in rural schools. MCC has developed an agreement with Dickinson State University that provides a 2+2⁸ transfer articulation agreement that allows students to complete a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education without leaving Miles City. By creating these types of partnerships, the College is responding to the demands in our region of the country.

⁸ 2 years at a community college + 2 years at a university = 4 years (bachelor’s degree)

The college has partnered with the University of Montana to develop a 2+2 transfer articulation in Social Work. This partnership is intended to meet the urgent need of the state for rural social workers. Finally, MCC has created an agriculture education and leadership pathway that creates a transfer degree into Montana State University's Agricultural Education and Agricultural Leadership Programs. This assists with some of the shortages in ag education throughout the state, region, and nation.

The state of Montana supports partnerships and funding to engage colleges and industry partners to better serve student learning and placement into the industry workforce. The Office of Public Instruction awards Perkins V grants that "supports the partnerships and funding to make sure that schools are coordinated and working with industry. It provides a strong school-career pathway to ensure students can meet Montana's labor market needs" ([Perkins V](#)). In 2021-2022, Miles Community College received over \$91,000. Funds helped offset the purchase of equipment, online curriculum, and other [program costs](#) for the Meat Processing Certificate program and the welding courses. New Perkins V grant applications will be submitted in May 2022 for the 2023- 2024 funds. The Director of Institutional Advancement oversees the Perkins V grant and is currently working with the with MCC Career & Technical Education (CTE) division and the Vice President of Academic Affairs to seek out new projects in the MCC CTE programs/courses for this 2023- 2024 Perkins Grant application.

Additionally, MCC works with our industry partners such as Holy Rosary Healthcare to apply for Holy Rosary Foundation grants to assist our Nursing Program and in 2021 was awarded funds to purchase patient simulators at off-campus clinical sites that are utilized in training our ASN students and these clinics also utilize these in on-going skills assessment for their staff and nurses. (See [award letter](#) and [application](#))

Community Outreach and Lifelong Learning

Miles Community College both provides support to and receives support from the community through a dynamic mutually beneficial relationship. The college is committed to further growing a philanthropic atmosphere on campus and in the community.

MCC is dedicated to integrating students into the community to enrich their educational experience. Similarly, the campus coordinates community outreach and services in the Miles City region. This programming serves a wide range of ages, expertise levels, and interests. Because of this, the college adapts to community needs.

Miles Community College hosts a [Workforce and Community Outreach Center](#). The office promotes corporate training, continuing education, and "Kids Kollege" activities. The office also partners with the Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program at the Montana Department of Commerce. The SBDC provides access to business development resources, supporting the entire region and strengthening the economy. This program is funded, in part, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. In 2021, this office completed its program accreditation and submitted its [Montana Small Business Development Center Self Study](#).

Certain academic programs connect students with internships in the community. For example, the Phlebotomy program includes an internship off-site at a clinical facility. The College works

closely with agencies such as Holy Rosary Health Care in Miles City in offering sites for students. Another example is our newly established Meat Processing certificate. In this program, there are 4 internship levels that begin with basic training and safety requirements and culminate in advanced meat processing and cutting skills. The internships take place in Montana meat processing plants.

In 2019, MCC created a “year of service” to give back to the community through community service. The College created a [volunteer log form](#) on its website where college members could log their service hours. During that year, the college contributed 1724 hours of logged service. In 2020, MCC logged only 579 hours of service. This reduction was primarily in response to COVID-19 and moving to online learning for a semester and social distancing requirements. Numbers in 2021 are rebounding but engagement in service has not completely been restored due to COVID-related illness and spikes in the community. The College has created at least two large community service days of giving to support local agencies each semester. One of the highlights for students has been a hosted Halloween Trick-or-Treat event. In its first year, the College hosted a large carnival and over 750 children participated in the event. In 2021 and 2022, the students adapted this program and created a “reverse trick-or-treat” program where they delivered candy to the doors of children who registered. These two years impacted about on average 560 children in the Miles City area. These activities are important to the college as they connect our students with the community in important work. For example, our students helped move the local foodbank from one location to another in the community. Our students volunteer with the local domestic violence agency, Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault (CNADA) and engage with children in the Raising our Children’s Kids (ROCKS) program in crafts and other projects. MCC also connects our students with service-learning opportunities. Examples include connecting our art students with students in writing classes, discussing poetry, and linking the two together, or students working to map and photograph small one-room schools of the region for the state historical society. Volunteerism and service help our students understand their place in the community and in our global society. Finally, the College has partnered with the Montana Campus Compact in recognizing and engaging students. The College annually awards a student-athlete-in-service award and a student of service award. Additionally, MCC students have been successful in receiving statewide civic engagement awards.

Miles Community College, through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment process prioritized resources for the development of a newly hired Director of Institutional Advancement. The campus identified the need to provide a liaison with the MCC Foundation. By developing relationships in the community, the College believed that this position would intentionally develop additional resources for the college to better further the college mission and goals. Since the creation of this position, the College has developed additional named scholarships and identified processes to improve organizational planning of campus-wide fundraisers in the community.



1.C Student Learning

1.C.1 The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials and include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

Miles Community College offers six degree and certificate options:

- [Associate of Arts degree \(A.A.\)](#)
- [Associate of Science degree \(A.S.\)](#)
- [Associate of Science in Nursing degree \(A.S.N.\)](#)
- [Associate of Applied Science degree \(A.A.S.\)](#)
- [Certificate of Applied Science \(C.A.S.\)](#)
- [Certificate programs \(C.\)](#)

MCC is authorized by the State of Montana Board of Regents to offer these programs as outlined in policy [301.12-Undergraduate Degree Requirements](#).

Currently, MCC offers sixteen A.A. and A.S. pathways and emphases⁹. A pathway is a guide to a career or discipline and an emphasis is a focused curriculum that adds specialization within a

⁹ A.A.: Education, Equine Management, Health & Physical Education, Human & Social Services. A.S.: Agribusiness, Agricultural Education & Leadership, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Allied Health- Pre-Professional Programs, Animal Science- Livestock, Animal Science-Pre-Vet, Business, Computer Technology Management, Med Lab Tech, Natural Resources & Rangeland Management, STEM, Wildlife & Fisheries Biology.

program. Pathways and emphases are noted on the transcript but not on diplomas. Twenty A.A.S., C.A.S., and Certificate programs¹⁰ provide professional-technical education opportunities.

Degree and programs are clearly identified in the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook and on the MCC website, [Degrees and Programs](#). Student learning outcomes are identified for most programs, culminating in degrees or certificates. Degrees and Certificates are appropriately identified on student transcripts consistent with professional and academic standards. Courses and programs are offered in a variety of delivery formats with degree and certificate-appropriate content, consistent with the mission. Faculty have primary responsibility for assessing and validating student achievement of these learning outcomes.

Faculty members are responsible for developing appropriate, high quality curricular programming that meets accreditation and professional standards and follows the College's curriculum and program plan. As identified in the Faculty Master Agreement, [§11.7 Curriculum Responsibilities](#), faculty members are required to annually submit course curricula and syllabi for all courses taught, including overloads, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee. The Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for having the syllabi files reviewed. Additionally, each of the Associate of Applied Science degrees and Certificate programs has an advisory board to review and recommend the content of the programs.

The Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC) upholds the academic standards of the college through review of all program and course proposals and changes. ASCC also reviews new course syllabus to verify that clearly stated student learning outcomes and approved assessment techniques are included. The College Calendar Committee is responsible for ensuring that the academic calendar allows for sufficient class sessions when preparing the academic calendar. The responsibilities of the Academic Standards Curriculum Committee and the Campus Calendar Committee are identified in [Board Policy §300.3 Course Credits](#). Following the committee's recommendation, the Board of Trustees then approves or denies the request for a new program or program change.

Upon College approval, it is presented to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the Montana Board of Regents (BOR) for approval. Information provided to OCHE and the BOR includes an overview and description of the program whereby the program is listed exactly as it will appear in the Catalog. The College must specify the need for the program and anticipated demand. Resources needed to offer the program in the form of faculty, staff and or other associated costs must be listed. The program needs to illustrate its fit within the college and system, along with addressing the program differences relative to other closely related programs in the College. The program information must also address how the program will be measured for success, along with the process used to develop the program that

¹⁰ A.A.S.: Accounting Technology, Agriculture Production, Equine Studies, Information Technology-Graphic, Information Technology-Networking, Office Administration & Technology, Radiologic Technology, Small Business Management. C.A.S.: Agriculture, Automotive Technology, Entrepreneurship. C.: Accounting, Agriculture & Equine Studies, Basic Transportation Entrepreneurship, CDL, PC Maintenance Assistant, Graphic Design Assistant, Meat Processing, Networking Technician, Phlebotomy.

specifically includes how faculty, students, community members, potential employers and accrediting agencies were involved.

Upon receiving approval from OCHE and the BOR, the degree program is placed on the [Academic Degree Program Inventory](#) with the Montana University System. The program is then recognized as eligible for enrollment, state funding, and the authority to confer the degree to students.

MCC also maintains transfer agreements with many state and regional partners, including Montana State University, Montana State University Billings, Montana State University Northern, Highlands College, Flathead Valley Community College, Montana Technological University, the University of Montana, Dickinson State University (ND), and Bismarck State College (ND).

Examples of these agreements:

- [Dickinson State University, Bachelor of Science in Education](#)
- [Montana Technological University, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering](#)
- [University of Montana, Bachelor of Arts in Social Work](#)

1.C.2 The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

All degree and certificate programs have a dedicated scope and sequence page (available in the Catalog and on the website) outlining program and course requirements, learning outcomes, and time to completion based on a full-time course of study. The scope and sequence format provides a semester-by-semester outline that details program completion and a visual representation of which terms classes are offered and the order in which students should take classes to ensure appropriate pre-requisite progression. Credit hours and cumulative GPA requirements are detailed in the Catalog ([Degree and Certificate Information](#)) as are policies for course [credit](#) and [grading](#).

MCC courses and their descriptions are listed in the Catalog. [Course descriptions](#) contain the course code, name, description (including pre-/co-requisites), credit hours, and any applicable designations (online availability, General Education courses, Passport program courses). Under development is the inclusion of what term the course is offered, which will provide additional guidance on course-sequencing for non-full-time students. MCC participates in the Montana University System (MUS) common-course numbering policy to ensure “that equivalent courses at different campuses will have the same title, number, and prefix, and that all such equivalent courses will be accepted in transfer as if they had been taken at the receiving campus” (mus.edu/transfer/transfer).

The program page scope and sequence format supports College and statewide work in identifying time to degree, credits to degree, and/or academic maps as part of the [Complete College America Alliance](#). An example of the work done at MCC is in our agriculture programs. Work has been done to align the first year in two-year ag programs with one-year ag programs. Work has also been done to build 2+2 articulation agreements between MCC’s Associate of

Science agriculture programs and other 4-year degree programs. Currently, Miles Community College has three 2+2 agreements with Montana State University and the College is working with Dickinson State University to develop additional agreements.

MCC requires that each course's syllabus contain learning outcomes and information as to how the achievement of outcomes will be assessed. Before the start of each semester, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs ([Board Policy 300.5](#)) collects, reviews, and archives syllabi to ensure that all required components are present including course assessment, assignments and evaluation criteria encompassing how the final grade will be determined. To facilitate this, a standardized format ([Syllabus Template](#)) and [boilerplate content](#) (required institutional policies) are provided to instructors. Each syllabus must contain course information, term, meeting times, room number, instructor information, required materials, course prerequisites, course description, general education outcomes if it is a general education course, and specific course outcomes that are concise and measurable. During COVID-19, faculty also added a section on their individual protocols regarding face coverings, modality needs, and social distancing expectations.

Additionally, certain academic programs have program accreditations. Examples of these programs include the Associate of Science in Nursing degree which is currently in candidacy with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the Phlebotomy Program which is accredited through the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).

- [Nursing Accreditation Self-Study for ACEN](#)
- [Phlebotomy Accreditation 2021 Annual report with NAACLS](#)

1.C.3 The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

Program pages detailing program learning outcomes are published in the [Catalog](#) and on the [website](#). As stated above, [course information](#) and [academic credit and grading policies](#) are available in the Catalog. It is required that students enrolled in an MCC course be provided with the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester. Syllabi for online courses are uploaded to the Canvas course and available to enrolled students.

1.C.4 The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

Admission and graduation requirements are published in the Catalog, [Admission and Registration](#), [Graduation Requirements](#). As described above, all academic programs identify the credit requirements and approximate time to completion through a defined scope and sequence.

Admissions

Miles Community College subscribes to a philosophy of a comprehensive community college, including an "open door" admissions policy designed to encourage all adults to continue their education. An open-door admissions policy is defined as providing all eligible students with

access to an appropriate educational offering at MCC. Anyone over the age of 18 is admitted to the College if they have a high school diploma, state-approved high school equivalency certificate or diploma (GED, HiSET, or TASC), or satisfactory ACCUPLACER scores.

Admission to MCC does not necessarily imply eligibility to enroll in a course with established pre-requisites or to enter a program that has a limited number of spaces and minimum entrance requirements.

Students applying for the nursing program must have completed Human Anatomy and Physiology with lab, Introduction to General Chemistry with lab, College Math for Healthcare, and College Writing with a B- or better prior to applying for the program and a 70% or better on the Kaplan entrance test. Students can find information about the application on the MCC Website: [Nursing Application Process](#). As part of the admission process, the MCC Registrar will complete the [Nursing Selective GPA process](#) of all program applicants prior to the review, and the Nursing staff review all applications for eligibility prior to an interview. Once interviewed, applications are reviewed and placed in rank order based upon a [point system](#).

Graduation Requirements

Students enrolling at MCC must complete the program requirements listed on the website and printed scope and sequence dated and maintained in their advisor's file at the time of entry into the College, provided graduation requirements are completed within five years. Students have the option of meeting program requirements in a later catalog, provided all requirements of the later catalog are met.

At least 15 credit hours must be earned through Miles Community College to obtain an associate degree from the College. A maximum of seven elective credits of "D" grades in elective courses will be applicable towards degree or certificate requirements. Core classes and pre-requisite courses require a "C-" or higher.

Students must make formal notice of intent to graduate with the Registrar the semester prior to anticipated graduation date ([Application for Graduation Form](#)). Graduate submission deadlines are published on the Academic Calendar.

Students may monitor their academic progress towards completion in the student information system, Banner Self-Serve. Additionally, the college has provided advising sheets that correlate with course requirements for each degree and program. These links are on the MCC website under [Planning and Advising Sheets](#). MCC developed an [Academic Student At-Risk Report](#) where faculty are requested to submit at-risk reports on a secure form submission should a student display concerning behaviors or lack of course participation or course work submission. The at-risk form submission is an early alert process to assist students exhibiting behaviors that may inhibit the student's achievement of learning outcomes. The Director of Student Services and Retention and the Dean of Student Engagement monitor these reports and provide resources to the students and share information with academic advisors so they, too, can better support students. Mid-term grades are required to be submitted by faculty in the College record system (Banner) for reporting and students can access their student banner records as well as Canvas course records to monitor their course grades. Final course grades are submitted by faculty in the student records system by the third business day after finals week.

Faculty keep their grades on file for a period of one year or more in the event of any grievance or final grade appeal.

1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

Processes of student course evaluations, program outcomes and meetings held within each division (General Education, Career & Technical, Nursing) support faculty in the review and new curriculum development processes.

Academic program reviews are conducted, at a minimum, every seven years. The Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC) reviews and approves all curricular changes. These changes must then be approved by the Board of Trustees and OCHE/BOR for final adoption. Programs with professional accreditation such as Nursing and Phlebotomy conduct annual reviews that assess program outcomes to professional standards. The results of these annual reviews can also provide information for faculty to initiate course or program changes. The ASCC is chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and made up of division chairs, and representatives from faculty, staff, and various departments across campus; e.g., financial aid, admissions, library, registrar.

General Education, Career & Technical Education, and Nursing division chairs assist in the formulation of general education requirements, course development, new program development, and assist division faculty with the development of student learning outcomes.

While no formal system of evaluation has been developed, The Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning works with faculty to periodically review program scope and sequence pages. All Associate of Arts and Associate of Sciences program pages were formally reviewed in Spring 2019 as part of the General Education Core revision project.

Course proposals and changes are reviewed by the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee for consideration and approval. The proposal must include the course outcomes and how achievement of the outcomes will be assessed. After a course has been approved, if an instructor changes more than 50% of the learning outcomes or changes how assessment will be accomplished, the course must be resubmitted to the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Students are provided the opportunity to evaluate all courses they are enrolled in through [Student Course Evaluations](#). Instruments are provided to students through Canvas. Results are analyzed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and then submitted to faculty for review.

The Vice-President of Academic Affairs provides feedback and evaluation to full time faculty per the Faculty Master Agreement, section 12: Evaluation of Members and through the [Board Policy Handbook, Section 600.10.2 Faculty Evaluation](#). The Nursing Director is responsible for reviewing the nursing faculty on an annual basis per the State Board of Nursing and ACEN requirements.

In 2017, Miles Community College joined statewide conversations regarding Academic Program Prioritization. The prioritization process includes identifying the academic direction of the college. Informed by a common reading of “Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance” by Robert C. Dickeson, the college developed an academic program prioritization process. The resulting [Academic Program Prioritization - Process Overview](#) details the campus plan for 2017-2023.

Progress of the plan was assessed during the 2021-2022 academic year and additional next steps in the Academic Program Prioritization Process were identified. General Education, Nursing, and Career & Technical Education division chairs led their divisions in the review of the program prioritization master report to establish a review report for 2021-2022.

- [General Education Prioritization Process Review](#)
- [Nursing Prioritization Process Review](#)
- [Career/Technical Education Prioritization Process Review](#)

These reports reflect the status of those program prioritization master plan items regarding completion, progress status, or any changes made to the item plans. Along with the yearly program review by faculty, the division chairs ensure the following occurs: assessment of the program and course outcomes (i.e., Canvas course mapping in general education courses); enrollment, retention, and graduation reports (campus enrollment key performance measures); course student surveys (each course, each semester) and advisory boards (applicable to CTE and Nursing programs).

MCC also works with the Montana University system annually to provide the institution’s academic direction and prioritization of academic programs. [Priority and Planning Statements](#) are located on the Montana University System webpages. In addition to these plans, MCC also submits any “Request to Plan” proposals when state approval is needed.

In Fall 2021, Miles Community College, in alignment with the Montana University System, developed a Principles of Quality review for non-face-to-face modalities of teaching, replacing a 2004 edition of the Quality Matters rubric. This process provides feedback to the faculty regarding recommendations or enhancements to the student learning and engagement of the course. As part of this process, there is a 5-phase approach to review new online courses:

1. Identification of need for a course to be offered online by faculty, division chair, Associate Dean, or Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean for Instruction and eLearning will confirm the need with appropriate parties.
2. Confirm budget lines and establish a timeline to build the course. A faculty peer review committee would be informed of the timeline.
3. Faculty will finalize the course development and submit it to the Associate Dean for initial review.
4. A course shell will be developed in the learning management system, Canvas and then submit to the faculty review team. The team will utilize the [Core Principles of Quality](#) established with the Montana University System reviewing:
 - Course Design and Introduction

- Learning Outcomes
 - Assessment and Measurement
 - Instructional Materials and Technology
 - Learner Engagement and Support
5. The faculty will make any revisions recommended by the peer review, budget finalized, and the course is added with an online availability in the catalog and scheduled.

1.C.6 Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes, and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

MCC believes that educated persons tend to be inquisitive about all aspects of life. They strive to seek, validate, and implement information so that they can make informed, responsible, and socially conscious decisions as they confront their complex and ever-changing personal, professional, and environmental challenges. In order to meet their challenges successfully, students need to have a well-rounded and firmly grounded education beyond their intended academic specialty.

Therefore, it is the primary objective of the [General Education Program](#) to ensure that students who earn their Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree develop a knowledge base in the core areas of:

- **Oral and Written Communications:** The ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively
- **Humanities & Fine Arts:** Knowledge and understanding of human cultural traditions as expressed in art, music, theater, language, literature, philosophy, or religion
- **Mathematics:** The ability to apply mathematical principles and to communicate quantitative information effectively
- **Science:** The knowledge and application of scientific principles, methodology, terminology, questioning, and reasoning
- **History & Social Sciences:** The ability to understand, interpret, and analyze human behaviors within the context of history and the social sciences

Each core area has an overarching outcome, vision, and general outcomes.

The MCC General Education Division conducted a full review and revision of the [general education core](#), completed Spring 2019. The updated 30 credit core was in place in the Catalog starting Fall 2019. All Associate of Arts and Associate of Science scope and sequences underwent a full review through the process. Core general education requirements are embedded in the course outcomes for the general education core program courses. The General Education Program and course outcomes are mapped via the campus learning management system, Canvas.

All associate degrees including the Associate of Applied Science and Certificate of Applied Science also include general education courses to assure skills related to our general education

core. At minimum, the programs include the communications, math and/or science areas along with the applied content area within the credit range applicable for an Associate of Applied Science or Certificate of Applied Science degree.

MCC is committed to facilitating the ease of undergraduate transfer, particularly general education. MCC's general education curriculum aligns with the Montana University System (MUS) [Transfer Core Transferable General Education Curriculum](#). The college follows the [301.10-General Education Transfer Policy](#). All courses that transfer from MCC are aligned with the [MUS Common Course Numbering System](#).

MCC is a network partner of the [Interstate Passport](#) program, "the only nationwide network of two-year and four-year non-profit colleges and universities dedicated to the block transfer of lower-division general education attainment based on multi-state faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria." Outcomes are aligned at both the course level and with the overarching outcomes of each core area to assemble the following WICHE Interstate Passport Block, which is largely identical to the MCC General Education Core:

INTERSTATE PASSPORT AREAS	MCC GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES
Oral Communication	Oral Communication Core Area
Written Communication	Written Communication Core Area
Quantitative Literacy	Mathematics Core Area
Creative Expression	Humanities and Fine Arts Core Area
Human Cultures	Humanities and Fine Arts Core Area
Natural Sciences	Science Core Area
Human Society and the Individual	History and Social Sciences Core Area
Teamwork and Value Systems	The learning outcomes for Teamwork and Value Systems are embedded through the general education program.
Critical Thinking	The learning outcomes for Critical Thinking are embedded throughout the general education program.

Differences between the Passport Block and the MCC General Education core include:

- The MCC General Education core does not separate the two types of humanities courses.
- While several A.A. and A.S. programs do require courses in both life and physical sciences, the MCC General Education core does not; however, the Interstate Passport does.
- MCC General Education core courses require a C- or higher following Board of Regents Policy 301.1 (Passport courses require a C or higher).

These differences must be communicated when advising A.A. and A.S. General Studies students planning to complete the Interstate Passport to aid in transfer out of state. The MCC Interstate Passport Block is available on the [website](#).

The Academic Program Prioritization process described in 1.C.5 establishes a framework and set of processes that clarify institutional purposes and setting academic priorities. This process,

yearly review, and cycle from 2018 through 2023 can be referenced in the [Academic Program Prioritization - Process Overview](#).

1.C.7 The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

MCC values continuous improvement in all areas of campus and provides multiple evaluation methods to ensure a quality academic and learning-support environment for students and that the College meets and improves student learning outcomes.

As noted in 1.C.5, student course evaluations are collected and reviewed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The evaluations are then distributed to faculty for review to identify trends, strengths, weaknesses, and student thoughts on ways to improve the course. Full-time faculty are evaluated by the Vice President of Academic Affairs on a three-year rotation. Additionally, as part of this process, peer evaluations are conducted through classroom observation and a syllabus review of the classes or labs taught.

- [Faculty Evaluation-Summary Form](#)
- [Faculty Evaluation-Classroom Observations](#)
- [Faculty Evaluation-Goals and Self-Evaluation](#)

MCC participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) every two years. Analysis of the data has led to a variety of campus improvements. In 2018, the College looked at advising weaknesses to develop campus resources and supports and created an Advising Day. Advising Day is a day set aside (no classes) each semester solely for the purpose of advising. Advising worksheets were created to better assist students in tracking courses needed to complete their individual certificate or degree ([Planning and Advising Sheets](#)). MCC also designed offerings for students intending to transfer with access to four-year universities and sessions on student support with the Director of Student Services and Retention. Finally, an [advising syllabus](#) was created that identifies the responsibilities of the student and of the advisor, as well as student learning outcomes so that students and advisors could all share common expectations of advising.

CCSSE data has also been used in other campus life areas including student mindfulness training, steps to assist with food insecurity, and development of additional resources for mental health outreach.

Work on the Academic Program Prioritization process was delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 but resumed in 2021-2022. The review resulted in progress reports to the 2017 program prioritization assessment in each of the three divisions (see 1.C.5). Division chairs worked with faculty in each of their areas regarding the identified priorities, specifically, master plan items regarding completion, progress status, or any changes made to the item plans.

MCC has implemented a Canvas course to program outcomes mapping project that attaches general education core area outcomes to summative assessments in the Canvas Learning Management System. Faculty import core area outcomes in the general education outcomes to the summative assessments of each course. This allows a rubric to show in canvas where the faculty can identify if the student has met expectations, attempted, not yet mastered, or not

attempted. Faculty are provided [instructions](#) on how to create the rubric in the Faculty Resources Course in Canvas.

As part of the Complete College America Alliance review, the college identified clearer methods of communicating math pathways. A review of data clearly indicated the need to move from a pre-requisite to a co-requisite math progression model to support student learning. Three math pathways were developed: Career & Technical, Non-Algebra, and Algebra-Based, with supportive student-facing materials developed to make the pathways and related degree options clearer to students. The Algebra-Based pathway is the only pathway without a fully developed one semester co-requisite option.

- Career & Technical Math Pathway
- M111 or M108
- Non-Algebra Math Pathway & Progression
- M105 or 105S → STAT216
- Algebra-Based Pathway & Progression
- M095 or M095+NC019 → STAT216 or M121 or M140/S
- M121 → M151 or M161 → M171 → M172

All developmental reading and writing courses have been built into a system of co-requisite writing courses that makes it possible for all students to enter the writing course designated by their program in the designated semester. For nearly all programs, this is the first semester of being enrolled. All sub-100 level developmental education reading and writing courses have been retired. A multiple-measure system of placement is used. The Accuplacer is no longer being used for any writing placement.

The College developed a clear placement matrix for Math and Reading/Writing pathways:

- [Math Pathways and Writing and Math Placement Grids](#)
- [Writing Placement Chart and Scripts](#)
- [Student Orientation, Advising and Registration Placement Guide for Staff](#)
- [MCC Placement Information and Guidelines for Students](#)

1.C.8 Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.

MCC has clearly defined policies regarding transfer credit and credit for prior learning, published in the Catalog. The Catalog is available on the MCC website on a variety of pages including Admissions, Academics, and Student Life.

Transfer Policies

Miles Community College welcomes transfer students who pass courses from regionally accredited higher education institutions with a “C-” grade or higher that are applicable to their program of study. These courses will be recorded on their Miles Community College transcript. Transfer grades will not be calculated in the MCC grade-point average. Courses passed with a

“D” grade will not be accepted. Courses numbered below 100 do not transfer. Lab sections may not transfer independent of their co-requisite course. A “C-” or higher must be recorded for both the lab and classroom section of a co-requisite course, for a lab section to be recorded on the transcript as a transfer course.

Students wishing to transfer to the MCC Nursing Program from other Schools of Nursing should contact the Nursing Program Director. Transfer admission is dependent on space availability.

Additionally, MCC supports the [MUS General Education Transfer](#) policy. All campuses of the MUS will recognize the integrity of general education programs and courses offered by units of the MUS, Montana’s three publicly supported community colleges, the seven tribal colleges, and regionally accredited independent colleges in the State of Montana. All campuses in the MUS recognize the integrity and transferability of the MUS transferable core.

Since April 2017, much intentional work has been done to develop and schedule enough sections of courses in high demand by high school early start students. These courses are selected to facilitate students completing the general education core.

In September 2021, MCC finished the process to join the [Interstate Passport Program](#) coordinated through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). This program facilitates transfer between member institutions. As a process of joining, MCC general education faculty completed a review of the MCC core and its alignment with the Passport Learning Outcomes.

Prior Learning Policies

MCC has policy and procedures to award credit for alternate methods of learning. Some of these areas include College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits, challenge examinations where knowledge gained for certain college courses through education or experience, previous postsecondary education and training for military credits and training, and prior experiential learning.

The MUS created a Credit for Prior Learning Committee to review and revise the current Montana [Prior Learning Policy](#) that was last reviewed in 2017. MCC is represented by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. OCHE has developed a [Prior Learning Assessment](#) web portal with statewide prior learning assessment that will inform the work of this committee

MCC and the MUS are piloting a program, [Montana Virtual Campus](#) (powered by Quottly), to make it easier for students to find and register for online transferable courses between participating institutions (currently: Helena College, Miles Community College, Montana Technological University, University of Montana). This program uses cross-enrollment to easily register for a course offered at one of the other institutions. It is encouraged that students meet with their general education advisor prior to registering for these courses to ensure that the courses will count towards campus requirements. Quottly support staff are available to assist students through the process. When students register for one of these courses, the tuition fee is added to the home institution’s tuition bill and students pay during their normal billing cycle.

1.C.9 The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater: depth of study; demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or relevant professional practice.

Miles Community College does not offer graduate programs.





1.D Student Achievement

1.D.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

As an open-door community college, MCC provides access to quality higher education to anyone over the age of 18 with a high school diploma, state-approved high school equivalency certificate or diploma (GED, HiSET, or TASC), or satisfactory ACCUPLACER scores.

Enrollment Services manages admissions and recruitment functions. Recruitment and outreach to prospective students are frequently conducted through traditional college fairs, high school visits, community events, and career fairs. Our region's rural and sparsely populated area requires a significant amount of travel on behalf of the Admissions Representative. While many students come from places throughout the United States and countries worldwide, students are primarily from eastern Montana, western North Dakota and South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Multiple [Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration \(SOAR\)](#) sessions (required for all new students, including transfer students and those returning after an absence of more than five years) are held prior to each semester. To meet growing student requests for online and virtual access to SOAR, MCC developed an online class to deliver content. Optional in-person informational sessions are available for campus tours, student ID photos, and in-person visits with relevant campus offices such as Financial Aid, Disability Support Services, Student Accounts, and others. Given the economic and travel restraints for some students and families, this mode expands availability and has improved timely access to orientation, advising, and registration for all categories of degree-seeking students.

The virtual SOAR content is maintained in the campus learning management system, Canvas, and includes multiple modules and videos that include a welcome to campus from

administrators, an introduction to course placement procedures, and the student's role in the advising process. Additionally, overviews of various policies related to financial aid, bill payment, Title IX, and other campus practices are included. The [Enrollment and Academic Interest Survey](#) collects information about student interests, goals, and potential barriers to success to be shared with academic advisors and student success staff. The [SOAR Completion Quiz and Reflection](#) provides verification that students completed the material as well as valuable feedback for improving transition programming in the future.

Non-degree seeking and high school early-admit students are also provided with orientation information specific to their student status, which includes information on academic expectations, student support services, bill payment, and more.

As a part of the orientation process, students are assigned and meet with an academic advisor in their general field of study. MCC utilizes a faculty advising model, with full-time faculty having advising responsibilities as a part of their core contract. Each faculty member has a pool of student advisees that they meet with each term. Because of the size of enrollment in our pre-health care majors (Pre-Nursing, Pre-Radiologic Tech, and Pre-Medical Laboratory Tech), the college has created a staff advisor for Allied Health Programs. Advisors meet one-on-one with students prior to registration each term. Once degree-seeking students have completed their advising appointments, they are issued a PIN by their academic advisor, which allows them to access registration in the Banner Self-Service system. Faculty and academic advisors assist students with course selection, schedule planning, and registration each semester, but also provide broad guidance for post-graduation career and transfer planning based on their desired career goals or plan of study.

With the need for advising improvement and its importance to students brought to light by the CCSSE, the College developed an Advising Taskforce committee to address advising processes, advisor training and development, and planning and implementation of the initial Advising Days. Co-chaired by the Director of Student Success and Retention and a faculty member, the committee provides cross-campus collaboration focused on the improvement of the overall advising program, including addressing both student and advisor needs as well as creating supplemental materials to support the advising process. Successes realized by the Advising Taskforce since its inception include the development of an [Advising Syllabus](#), improvements to the Graduation Application process, and the refinement of readily accessible student advising sheets for each program (e.g., [Education Pathway](#)). The Taskforce also solicited faculty and advisor feedback on training needs, resulting in a targeted training session related to advising students for transfer being offered as advisor professional development.

During SOAR, and throughout the advising lifecycle, the Director of Student Success and Retention and other staff in the Learning Center are available to assist undecided students in navigating major and course selection. Additionally, the Learning Center uses the [Montana Career Information System](#) to provide career and transfer planning. The Director of Student Success and Retention also serves as the primary point of contact for four-year institutions visiting MCC to recruit and advise prospective transfer students and MCC graduates.

The Learning Center also houses the [Adult Education \(AE\) Program](#) for the Montana Association of Counties (MACO) District 3, which includes the southeastern Montana counties of Custer, Rosebud, Treasure, Powder River, Fallon, and Carter. The AE program is funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); the grant is awarded and administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Serving all out-of-school adults and youth aged 16 or older with [HiSET](#) preparation and workplace and basic literacy skills, the service is critical to the open-access mission of the College, and AE Program staff work closely with WIOA partners at Job Service Miles City and Vocational Rehabilitation. Adult Education students wishing to enroll at the College after completion of the HiSET can participate in the Bridge to College program, which provides career exploration, college readiness activities, and transition advisement and support.

1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of, and in comparison, with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

Miles Community College uses a broad set of indicators that provide data for enrollment, retention, and postgraduation success. These indicators are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, Pell Grant status, and first-generation college student status. This institutional data is shared through multiple stakeholder groups including the Board of Trustees, Executive Team, President's Cabinet, various committees, and advisory boards, and when creating initiatives on campus. Links to some of the institutional datasets collected and maintained through Tableau are listed below:

- [Full Time Equivalent Enrollment \(includes data by student type\)](#)
- [Enrollment by Residency Type](#)
- [Graduation and Retention Rates by Montana 2 Year Comparison](#)
- [Graduation and Retention Rates by IPED Comparable Institutions](#)
- [Retention Fall to Fall](#)
- [Retention Fall to Spring](#)
- Enrollment by demographic data:

Miles Community College Demographics: Fall 2021	
Average Age	23.48
Female	373
Male	171
Total Headcount	544
Degree-seeking Headcount	372
Non-degree-seeking Headcount	172
Degree-seeking Freshmen	343
Degree-seeking Sophomores	136
Full-time Degree-seeking Students	258
Part-Time Degree-seeking Students	114
Enrollment FTE	370.5

Average Student Credit Load	10.2 (overall) 13.1 (degree-seeking)
Total Custer County Students	118
Total Montana Students	461
Total Out-of-State Students	83
Caucasian	451
Native American	26
Hispanic, Asian, African American	12
Students in Transfer Programs	243
Students in Career-Technical Programs	129
Degrees Awarded AY 2021	111

Beginning in 2014, the MCC Board of Trustees adopted a set of Student Success Measures, which established the student indicators most important to the Board and allow the institution to track annual goal achievement in various areas related to enrollment, retention, graduation, affordability, athletics, and more. As the institution progressed through setting Vision 2020 goals and modified the indicators of success used in our Core Themes, the Student Success Measures have adjusted slightly from their original form, so that all data points used to measure success across campus are the same. The Board is updated on the Student Success Measures twice per year at their mini retreats.

The Montana University System (MUS) also maintains a series of [dashboards](#) that include student achievement data throughout the state. This data is reviewed in individualized stakeholder meetings with campus leaders from each institution in Montana including Presidents/Chief Executive Officers/Deans, Senior Academic Affairs Officers, Senior Student Affairs Officers, and Enrollment Management Officers. Data is presented in various formats, and MCC's institutional data that is included in state dashboards is verified, at the request of the MUS IT Director, by the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research. Links to some of the statewide dashboards are listed below:

- [First-time Freshmen Dashboard](#) (Includes enrollment data, retention, and capture rates)
- [Full Time Equivalent Enrollment](#) (Includes institutional, system, and summary data)
- [Headcount Information](#) (Includes demographics, by institution, system, and by map)
- [Degrees Awarded](#) (Includes degrees and disciplines through system and individual institutions)
- [Dual Enrollment](#) (Includes early college enrollment, total students, and numbers of credits)
- [Workforce Development](#) (Includes employment percentages by discipline, award, major, and job availabilities classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS))

The Enrollment Action Team committee has implemented Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are used to assess the progress of the [Strategic Enrollment Plan \(SEP\)](#). These KPIs and related Performance Indicators (PIs), primarily include enrollment indicators related to recruitment and retention. While there is significant overlap between the various indicators of

achievement used campus-wide, for the purposes of the Strategic Enrollment Plan, the enrollment indicators are disaggregated by student type and residency, rather than by race, ethnicity, or gender. Based on our institution's service region, this becomes more critical. Institutional data confirms that our underrepresented students are achieving at rates similar to, or above, their peers. The information that affects the data is that most of our underrepresented students are student-athletes who must show satisfactory achievement to participate in collegiate sports. For the purposes of enrollment and retention planning, initiatives focused on having a positive impact on SEP KPIs may include retention or student success efforts focused around first-generation students, low-income students, or adult learners, rather than other underrepresented populations, as that is reflective of the needs in our immediate service region and is an area where such populations are not retained at a proportionate rate.

MCC SEP Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Performance Indicators (PIs)	
KPIs	Associated PIs
FTE Enrollment	New (non HS, including new first time and new transfer), continuing students, non-degree students, concurrent and high school early start, part-time, full-time, Montana residents, end of term fall, end of term spring, and end of term summer
Headcount enrollment	New (non HS, including new first time and new transfer), continuing students, non-degree students, concurrent and high school early start, part-time, full-time, Montana residents, end of term fall, end of term spring, and end of term summer
Credit hour production	Montana residents, end of term fall, end of term spring, and end of term summer
Retention rate (MCC Dashboard NOT IPEDs)	First time full time, full time, part time, adult learners (25+), traditional (under 25), minority, low income, first generation, residency, on-campus residents, by academic program, fall-to-spring, and fall-to-fall
Completion/Degrees Awarded	Total, by degree type and major, low-income, first generation, minority, student athletes, also average credits to completion and average time to completion
Admissions Funnel Yield Rates	Overall yield by term, yield by student type, yield by residency, rate of SOAR attendance, yield of SOAR attendees, FAFSA completions/packaging rate
Market penetration rates	High school senior capture rates (fall numbers) from service area high schools, matriculation rates of Dual Enrollment, Jump Start, and Pioneer Express

Examples of enrollment action plans by program include:

- [Dual Enrollment and Pioneer Express Programs](#)
- [Nursing Program](#)
- [Softball Program](#)

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

Enrollment and retention reports are regularly shared with MCC administration, faculty, and staff, and updates are provided to the MCC Board of Trustees multiple times each semester. These reports are located on the [Consumer Information](#) page of the website.

The Student Success Measures, which were established by the Board of Trustees in 2014 as their primary focus in measuring student success, are updated each term, with a more in-depth analysis of the Student Success Measures provided to the Trustees at their biannual retreats.

Analysis of MCC's disaggregated retention and completion data, combined with qualitative data and feedback from students, faculty, and staff, have been used to create more effective student support services for all degree-seeking students, including academic advising and course placement, mental health services, and academic and behavioral interventions with students of concern.

Through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process, funding was allocated beginning in fiscal year 2022 for the institution to join the National Student Clearinghouse Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP), with the intent that being part of the PDP would provide access to expanded student data, reporting, and benchmarking not currently happening within our small institutional research office. MCC was accepted into the NWCCU PDP Accelerator Project in June 2021, and the team identified to take part in the Project was looking forward to the collaborative support provided. However, MCC was notified in August of 2021 that the Montana University System was able to secure funding to join the PDP as a system through at least the fiscal year 2024. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) will submit data from the MUS data warehouse and has indicated that they will be using the opportunity of joining the PDP to develop shared definitions and tracking mechanisms for the few data elements not currently consistently and commonly collected from the individual institutions in the system. Each institution will have access to a campus-specific PDP dashboard, as well as the system-level dashboard. OCHE has identified that, in addition to collecting more robust system-level data, one goal of joining the project as system was to relieve the burden of data submission from individual campus IR offices while maintaining the benefit of joining the PDP for individual institutions.

As previously noted, the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) collects data from all public institutions of higher education in the state to help with system-wide reporting. Data dashboards representing system and institutional data are published on the [MUS website](#).

Miles Community College measures student engagement data every two years using the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The Institutional Findings Reports

allow MCC to measure various student data against peer institutions and top performing colleges.

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

The Director of Institutional Research uses data from the state data warehouse and reports produced from the Banner Student Information System (SIS) to develop various data dashboards in Tableau. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services, Dean of Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services, Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning, and Director of Financial Aid and Admissions all have institutional Tableau user licenses, providing ready access to various dashboards that are used by their respective divisions to inform planning and daily work. In the case of enrollment and retention dashboards, information is shared monthly with all employees at all employee meetings, at Cabinet meetings, and with the Board of Trustees at their monthly meetings. Executive leadership is briefed on enrollment and retention more frequently, particularly leading up to semester census.

Reporting on recruitment and enrollment metrics draws directly from the Fireworks Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and from the SIS. The CRM is new to campus and was prioritized through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process in 2020. In addition to allowing recruitment and admissions personnel to create customized communication plans based on many prospective student and applicant traits, the CRM allowed the campus to link online enrollment forms, like those for admission, information requests, and campus visit and orientation registrations, directly into existing prospective student or applicant data.

In some cases, minimum standards for achievement are mandated by the federal government, and failure to meet such standards prompts a fresh look at strategies that can be used to bring the institution into compliance. In the case of the College's student loan default rates, a cohort default rate of 18% in fiscal-year 2016 led MCC to contract with [Inceptia](#) to provide cohort default prevention outreach and counseling to former MCC students. In the 3 years since the College began working with Inceptia, cohort default rates have dropped back to their previous levels, and MCC was able to affordably provide loan counseling and loan resolution services without overburdening existing staff or having to hire new staff. The approximately \$4,000 annual cost for Inceptia's services was allocated through the PBA process.



Conclusion

Miles Community College is committed to the success of our students and community. As this self-study should reflect, MCC assists our students in preparing them for their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals. The College achieves this through quality program offerings and through involvement with both community and workforce partners.

MCC is also committed to the ongoing improvement of campus programs and services. The College values stakeholder involvement. Our students, employees, community, workforce partners, and state and federal leadership are engaged in campus planning and assessment. As part of these processes, the campus is currently undergoing the next evolution of Miles Community College. Through the development of a new strategic plan, the College is defining the outcomes we expect to achieve over the coming years and is developing the commitments and goals the campus will make in the areas of student success, workforce development and lifelong learning, community outreach and partnerships, institutional excellence and faculty/staff support.

Additionally, the campus is poised to be the educational center for Eastern Montana. MCC intentionally develops programs that meet workforce needs, encourage student learning and achievement with well-defined learning outcomes, and promotes the advancement of our students into continued education or meaningful career opportunities. Miles Community College monitors local, regional, and statewide trends and expectations in meeting our stakeholders' needs and must continue to expand the work in this area to stay relevant and timely. The College employs quality faculty and staff to address the expectations placed on the institution and prioritizes resources to continue the quality work we do.

Miles also provides pathways to achieve our commitments. Whether it is the recruitment and enrollment of students into our academic offerings or engaging individuals in lifelong learning, MCC has well defined processes and student support that assists with the transitions through the college experience. The College uses institutional data and indicators of achievement of statewide peer institutions. Over the upcoming years, the College will also need to monitor the work we do with regional and national peers more to better identify best practices to advance our mission.

The College celebrates diversity and promotes equity in a region that may not be as culturally diverse as other parts of the country. MCC continually works on providing open access to higher education and monitors impacts on the socio-economic challenges of our region. Through our recruitment, we have been able to expand our reach to bring out-of-state students and international students to Miles City. Our students report great satisfaction with this exposure and become better prepared for the diverse world we live in. Miles Community College will continue promoting this and includes diversity in the commitments, goals, and strategies in the newly developed strategic plan.

Miles Community College looks forward to continuing to serve our region with the quality educational services we provide. As a campus, we are committed to the continual improvement and the ongoing development of the quality education MCC has become known for.



Appendices

[Appendix A: Institutional Report Certification Form](#)

[Appendix B: Year Six, Standard Two, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review \(PRFR\)](#)

[Appendix C: PRFR Peer Evaluation](#)

[Appendix D: Response to PRFR Peer Evaluation](#)

[Appendix E: Report Hyperlinks and Core Documents Hyperlinks](#)

Appendix A: Institutional Report Certification Form

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT CERTIFICATION FORM

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



Institutional Report Certification Form

On behalf of the Institution, I certify that:

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

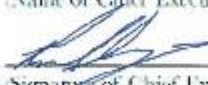
I understand that information provided in this report may affect the continued Candidacy or Accreditation of my institution. I certify that the information and data provided in the report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Miles Community College

(Name of Institution)

Mr. Ron Slinger, President

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)


(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

February 23, 2022

(Date)

Appendix B: Year Six, Standard Two, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR)

[Report](#)

Appendix C: PRFR Peer Evaluation [Report](#)

Appendix D: Response to PRFR Peer Evaluation

Following notification on July 6, 2021, by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) of improvements needed as identified through the Spring 2021 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR), Miles Community College began the process of identifying a campus response to these areas. In some instances, the recommendations resulted in the approval of new policies. In others, it became clear that there were omissions in the original PRFR report. The following is intended to address those areas identified.

Recommendation 1: Spring 2021 PRFR -The following standards are areas substantially in compliance but where improvement is needed. (2020 Standard(s): 2.C.4; 2.D.1; 2.E.2; 2.G.4; 2.G.7)

2.C.4 The institution's policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release, and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records.

Follow-up action identified:

The year 6 narrative describes secure processes for paper records on campus and electronic records hosted by the University of Montana. The College provided a FERPA document in support of this standard but no separate evidence of the secure handling of records. Additional documentation supporting the process described in the narrative should be provided to the year seven team.

Student records are maintained, archived, and destroyed using procedures consistent with the requirements of applicable state and federal laws and guidelines. The College has multiple policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records. Specifically, [Policy 500.1: Student Records](#) identifies that the Dean of Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services shall be responsible for student record maintenance. This policy addresses the formal process of granting appropriate access to student records. Authority is granted to the Dean of Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services or designee, the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee, Information Technology, Human Resources, and relevant department managers. Physical student records containing personally identifiable information and non-directory student information are stored securely in a locked cabinet or office, or in one of the College secure storage vaults, with vault access granted by the Dean of Enrollment Management, College Registrar, or designee. This policy was last revised in September 2021.

The Campus does provide students with an [Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA](#). This notice, available on the website and in the [College Catalog and Student Handbook](#), includes information on the following:

- The right to inspect and review student educational records
- The right to request amendments of personal educational records that are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of individual rights
- Campus designations of directory or public information

- Rights regarding filing complaints with the Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with FERPA
- Procedure for withholding disclosure of any or all items of public information being released to a third party

In September 2021, the Miles Community College Board of Trustees approved Policy [1900.4: General Record Retention Schedule](#). This policy identifies a uniform set of schedules for the retention and disposition of records that are created or maintained in the College operations. This policy is in line with the [Montana University System's General Record Retention Schedule](#).

Additionally, MCC has also established policies regarding confidentiality of victims/complainants by not including personally identifying information about the victim/complainant as defined in section 40002(a)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)(20)). This includes maintaining the confidentiality of any accommodations or protective measures provided by the victim/complainant, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the institution to provide accommodation or protective measures. The institution will, upon written request, disclose to the alleged victim of a crime of violence, the report on the results of any disciplinary proceeding conducted by the institution against a student who is the alleged perpetrator of such crime or offense. If the alleged victim is deceased as a result of such crime or offense, the next of kin of such victim shall be treated as the alleged victim for purposes of this paragraph. Additional information regarding the release of information pertaining to reports of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and stalking are in Board Policy 600.16 Grievance Procedures. In those cases where a formal complaint is made involving Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and/or stalking, as defined in the final Title IX Rules of the Education Amendments of 1972, the College will share information with any respondent and advisor of choice.

MCC currently uses Single Sign-On (SSO) functionality that enables users to securely authenticate with multiple applications and websites such as Ellucian Banner, Maxient, Office365, Quottly, etc. by using one set of credentials. Based on a recent Information Technology review with a consultant in late 2021, MCC will be making improvements to information security through a multi-factor authentication process across all enterprise applications.

2.D.1 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Follow-up action identified:

The College cites several methods it uses to communicate academic information to students and the public. Academic program information in the catalog includes the length and number of credits; the panel did not see information on average time to completion. The policies and

procedures for review of published materials are unaddressed; the evidence cited is about ethical standards for the Board of Trustees.

Miles Community College represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. The Division of Academic Affairs oversees production of the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook, while the Dean of Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services and the Marketing and Campus Communications Coordinator are primarily responsible for the College's representation in major recruitment and other publications. The College [Viewbook](#) and other major publications are reviewed by the President's Cabinet and Executive Team prior to publication to help ensure integrity in all representations. The Marketing and Campus Communications Coordinator also prepares and distributes campus [news releases](#) to various media outlets, which are also published on the website. College Departments, individuals, program or group advisors, and so on, may submit media release requests through a [web form](#) available on the faculty and staff webpage. Form submissions are routed to the Marketing and Campus Communications Coordinator for review and publication. A [Marketing Request Form](#) is also available on the website. Employees, student groups, and others can use this portal to make requests for assistance in developing various marketing or communication materials, or the portal can be used to submit materials already created for approval. Once submitted, requests are sent to the Marketing and Campus Communications Coordinator, who reviews prepared materials for adherence to [college branding guidelines](#). The public website is maintained by the Web Committee, made up of representatives from Enrollment/Marketing, Information Technology, and Academic Affairs/Catalog Production. While individual departments are responsible for generating and updating content for the website, it is additionally reviewed for accuracy by the Web Committee and the IT Specialist that maintains and designs the website.

The MCC Academic Catalog and Student Handbook is published annually and is available on the College website. Semester class schedules are available on the [website](#), with limited printed copies available at the Student Services desk or in the Learning Center. The semester schedule of classes, prior to being entered into Banner and published for viewing, is vetted and reviewed by the Division Chairs and Associate Deans, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic Affairs Technician, Dean of Enrollment Management, and Registrar. The schedule is reviewed to ensure that all required courses for each scope and sequence are offered in the appropriate term in a way that minimizes student course conflicts, and academic program enrollment projections are discussed to ensure sufficient seats and sections are available. Academic Affairs is currently in the process of revising semester schedule preparation procedures to plan and publish an entire academic year schedule at once. The current practice has been to publish the fall schedule in the previous March and publish the spring schedule in the previous November. Under the new plan, on the Advising Day held in March of each year, students will be able to register for Fall 2022 as well as see Spring 2023 (registration for Spring will not be open until November). Having an entire academic year schedule built and viewable will help students and advisors with planning. Seeing multiple semesters of schedule offerings at once will improve planning and therefore assist with timely degree completion.

In the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook and student program advising sheets, degree programs include a recommended semester-by-semester course sequence (what MCC calls a program “scope and sequence”) to assist students in academic planning for timely completion. The semester-by-semester outline serves to both indicate to students that the program can be completed in the period indicated (such as four semesters of full-time study for an Associate degree), but also provides a clear visual representation of which terms classes are offered and the order in which students should take classes to ensure appropriate pre-requisite progression. Course descriptions in the College Catalog indicate online availability of coursework, and, if applicable, designate the general education core area of study. Under development is the inclusion in course descriptions of which term(s) courses are offered, which will provide additional guidance on course-sequencing for students other than full-time students. Catalog entries for each degree program also include the following disclaimer for students attending part-time: “Program course requirements are presented in sequence. Part-time students and others who cannot follow this sequence should check Course Descriptions to determine pre-requisites and should consult their advisor regarding the order in which to take courses.”

Any interruptions to the academic schedule and campus offerings are sent via campus email and through the [RAVE Emergency Alert Program](#). Students, faculty, staff, and parents are encouraged to sign up for the emergency alert system on the campus safety page.

2.E.2 Financial planning includes meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholders and ensures appropriate available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and comprehensive risk management to ensure short term financial health and long-term financial stability and sustainability.

Follow-up action identified:

The College has documented guidelines through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) document; however, the Evaluation Team did not find evidence of policies and procedures that ensure meaningful opportunities for stakeholder’s participation.

MCC’s PBA process facilitates the alignment and prioritization of initiatives throughout the college in support of MCC’s Vision 2020: Pioneering Our Future document, mission, NWCCU core themes, and annual strategic plans and their relationship with annual budget allocations. The College, as well as its divisions, follow a planning model in which annual objectives, strategies, and action plans are defined, and progress is assessed through self-evaluations and environmental scans of the operating environment. Based on assessment, strategic initiatives are developed and prioritized in support of long-term goals and annually identified college-wide areas of focus. The PBA conversations provide a forum to promote collaboration, alignment, integration, and transparency in discussing initiatives, priorities, and the annual allocation of resources. To facilitate the process, a PBA Committee was developed to review, assess, and approve the various department, unit, and program plans.

In 2017, the College adopted the [Miles Community College Planning, Budget, and Assessment \(PBA\) Guidelines](#) based on practices found at Utah Valley University. These guidelines address MCC’s principles for resource allocation that include campus stakeholders throughout the process. While the process is facilitated through the PBA Committee, a group made up of the

President's Cabinet, all units, departments, and programs are included. Specifically, individual units prepare PBA Packages that include:

- [PBA Review and Request Form](#)—this document is located behind a secure staff log-in on the faculty and staff webpage entitled MCC Planning, Budget, and Assessment Process Online Forms.
- [PBA Budget Template](#)—this document allows departments and units to identify the current budget and expenditures at the time of submission and a proposed budget that aligns with information provided in the PBA Review and Request Form. This form closely aligns with how accounts look in the Ellucian Banner Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP)

Prior to submitting these documents, divisions are encouraged to collaborate on projects that meet joint needs or leverage services and activities. Requests for new resources and/or new salaried positions are submitted through the PBA process regardless of funding sources. Requests for resources from non-general funds require the identification of non-general fund revenue to support the request.

The timeline of the PBA process includes the following steps:

1. Individual unit, department, and program leads evaluate previous year's PBA strategy outcomes for alignment with developed and introduced annual strategic and action plans. This is the time to review previous PBA Requests and Budgets.
2. Prepare new draft PBA Review and Request Form and Budget Form. Submit PBA Package to Division Leads
3. Division Leads review and prioritize PBA Packages with input from individuals who made the requests.
4. Division Leads submit PBA Packages to PBA Committee
5. Individual Committee Members review, evaluate and prioritize PBA Packages.
6. PBA Committee reviews prioritized PBA Packages, establishes annual budget projections and investment abilities, and conducts hearings to review forms. PBA Committee reviews annual strategies of each unit, department, and program confirming alignment with college plans.
7. PBA Committee prepares, formulates, and finalizes annual budget and process for Board of Trustee approval.

Prior to going to the Board, information is presented to various governance groups for response or support. For example, the Associated Students of Miles Community College (ASMCC) has written letters of support for previous tuition setting, room and board setting, and fee setting decisions based on information presented through the PBA process.

The preliminary budgets are then presented to the Board of Trustees for review. Questions and feedback are provided at a public hearing conducted by the Board. Needed changes are made between the first and second readings by the Trustees and a final budget is presented in July for final approval. The budget is then submitted to the Board of Regents for their review per Board Policy in accordance with [Montana Code Annotated 20-15-312](#)

In September 2021, the College also adopted [Policy 800.1.1 Planning Budget and Assessment](#). This policy codified the processes being used since 2017.

2.G.4 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

Follow-up action identified:

The panel found sufficient evidence of published financial aid policies and information provided to students regarding repayment obligations. The panel did not see evidence of how student loan programs are monitored. The College refers to the loans section of the policies and procedures handbook, but the handbook did not appear to contain that information. This could be a miscommunication as a result of this pilot PRFR effort, or it could be a real lack of evidence.

The [Miles Community College Financial Aid website](#) provides obligations of student loans to all current and prospective students on the [Financial Aid Loans](#) link. Specific material is provided in electronic format or paper when the aid offer is accepted, specifically addressing loan requirements and the need that they be repaid. Miles Community College requires active loan acceptance from students via web acceptance or signed aid offer letter.

All students that have accepted a student loan must have completed online loan entrance counseling through the US Department of Education prior to disbursement. When a student withdraws from the institution or drops below at least half-time status, [loan exit counseling information](#) is sent to their current mailing address via US mail. [Loan exit counseling information](#) is also provided to graduating students.

Miles Community College has a contractual agreement with [Inceptia](#) to provide outreach to former students during grace period and delinquency. The intent is to educate students on how to get back to successful repayment and provide personalized solutions, specific to the needs of each borrower. While the original contract with Inceptia was implemented as a result of a cohort default rate of 18% in fiscal-year 2016, the partnership has proved extremely beneficial to students and financial aid office staff. In the 3 years since the College began working with Inceptia, cohort default rates have dropped back to their previous levels, and MCC was able to affordably provide loan counseling and loan resolution services without overburdening existing staff or having to hire new staff. The approximately \$4,000 annual cost for Inceptia's services was allocated through the College's PBA process.

The MCC Financial Aid Office maintains policies and procedures in a secured financial aid folder in the faculty/staff drive. Loan programs are identified in [Chapter 16-Loan Programs](#). This chapter addresses Federal Loan Programs such as Direct Loan (Subsidized and Unsubsidized) and PLUS Loans, Entrance and Exit Counseling requirements, Review of Federal Aid Eligibility and Alternative Loans, and Direct Loan reconciliation processes. Financial Aid staff also utilize the U.S. Department of Education's Common Origination and Disbursement web site to

perform a variety of functions related to student/award/disbursement data for Pell, Direct Loan, and Teach Grant programs.

2.G.7 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

Follow-up action identified:

The panel did not see documented policies or procedures regarding identity verification, except for a process described in the year six narrative. That process includes the issuance of credentials with default passwords for the LMS and directions to students to change them immediately, a student which may or may not be effective. The panel finds that the college's effort on this standard needs improvement.

Miles Community College has created a procedures and practices document, worked with faculty on identity verification in online courses, created text for a student facing webpage, and developed content for the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) program.

Student Identity Verification Procedures and Practices

The [Student Identity Verification Procedures and Practices at MCC](#) is maintained through the Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning and has been distributed to staff and faculty. The document is stored in the CANVAS learning management software in the Faculty Resources Course. It is also stored in the centrally accessible H://drive under H://Policies and Procedures.

The process used to develop the procedures and practices included the following:

- **Identity Verification in Online Courses:** During the Fall 2021 semester, the College collected responses from all full-time faculty who teach online to assess current practices. From the self-reported data, a list of acceptable practices was created to guide future faculty and to create clear and consistent expectations.
- **Internal Procedures and Practices for Resetting Student Passwords or Student Identification Numbers:** The College held meeting with all personnel listed as able to reset account information to gather current practices, discussed the feasibility of new practices, and gathered additional feedback and questions. Using this data, in combination with other relevant regulations, MCC created new procedures that are identified in the Student Identity Verification Procedures and Practices at MCC document.
- **External Communication to Students Regarding Password Reset Processes:** Feedback was gathered on information to include on student facing pages. Three categories were included in the recommendation for communication. They included: 1) MCC Student Account Descriptions, 2) Login Instructions for Student Accounts, and 3) How to Reset a Password and Who to Contact. The webpage is under construction with a publication goal of March 31, 2022.

As the College prepares for the next round of SOAR sessions, the Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning will review the Student Identification Procedures and Practices at MCC document and student facing webpages to confirm accuracy and relevancy. As the campus considers the ability for single sign-on capabilities, it will be important to update the processes and procedures.

Future Technology Implications

Not only has the College addressed processes regarding verification of student credentials for distance education, MCC also wanted to assess overall Information Technology (IT) functions and how technology will assist develop future policies regarding information security. In October 2021, the College secured a consultant to review current IT operations, the perception of IT across the College, and the alignment of IT with the College's strategic Priorities. In this review, multiple stakeholders were included as part of the consultant's work. A report, titled [Miles Community College IT Assessment](#), was produced for the campus and the College is currently analyzing the findings to consider future development of processes and protocols. Some of the information in the report includes the need to develop new IT governance and to improve information security such as multi-factor authentication. By addressing some of these technology concerns in the report, the processes used to secure authentication of our online identity verification processes. As these are explored, we will continue utilizing the newly developed Student Identify Verification Procedures and Practices.

IT Acceptable Use Policy

The campus does remind students of their responsibility with the use of information technology on campus. Students are provided with the IT Acceptable Use Policy in multiple ways including the [MCC Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](#), via the [IT Use Policy](#) on the Miles Community College website, and in the Residence Hall Handbook. Students are reminded to protect the access and integrity of computing and information technology resources and violations including unauthorized use of resources, accessing files, data, or processes without authorization, using someone else's account and password, or sharing passwords with others, and purposely exploiting security flows to gain system or data access.

Appendix E: Report Hyperlinks and Core Documents Hyperlinks

MCC Core Documents

[Mission Statement & Core Themes](#)

[Board Policy Handbook](#)

[Academic Catalog & Student Handbook](#)

[MCC Committees 2021-2022](#)

[Employee Directory](#)

Document Links

1.B.1

- [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#)
- [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#)
- [Assessment & Impact Award](#)
- [mapping core area outcomes](#)
- [NCLEX Program Reports](#)
- [Systemic Plan of Evaluation](#)
- [2020 Executive Summary](#)
- [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#)

1.B.2

- [Major Initiatives and Expectations](#)
- [Message of Inclusion](#)
- [2020-2021](#)
- [Pioneering Our Future: A Five-Year Vision.](#)
- [exercises](#)
- [draft strategic plan](#)

1.B.3

- [Board Policy Handbook](#)
- [Planning, Budget, and Assessment Committee §800.1.1](#)
- [annual plans](#)
- [Master Agreement](#)
- [Constitution of the Associated Students of Miles Community College](#)

1.B.4

- [Campus Technology and Furniture Needs/Classroom Hardware](#)
- [Classroom Hardware, Software, and Furniture Needs Survey](#)
- [Miles Community College IT Assessment](#)

- [Benchworks New Student Assessment](#)
- [A Mind at Work: Maximizing the Relationship Between Mindset and Student Success](#)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [YouMatter MUS](#)
- [Interstate Passport](#)
- [webpage](#)
- [Interstate Passport Timeline and Implementation Worksheet](#)
- [Athletic Strategic Plan](#)
- [Student Athlete Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [2021 ACEN Accreditation Self-Study Report](#)
- [Temporary "T"](#)
- [Miles Community College Flower Library](#)
- [eLearning Modality Guide](#)
- [MCC Distance Education Fee History](#)
- [eLearning Fee Proposal Data Overview](#)
- [eLearning Fee Structure Proposal](#)
- [MUS eLearning Advisory Committee \(EAC\) §303.7](#)
- [core principles of quality online course design](#)
- [Montana Virtual Campus](#)
- [early college programs](#)
- [Perkins V](#)
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- [Associate of Arts degree \(A.A.\)](#)
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1.C.2

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- [mus.edu/transfer/transfer](#)
- [Complete College America Alliance](#)
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- [Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration \(SOAR\)](#)
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- [Full Time Equivalent Enrollment \(includes data by student type\)](#)
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