

Assurance Argument

Minnesota West Community and Technical College - MN

Review date: 11/8/2021

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

***Mission:** Minnesota West prepares learners for a lifetime of success.*

***Vision:** Minnesota West is the regional college of choice.*

***Values:** Community engagement, courage, diversity & inclusion, innovation, integrity, and student success.*

Mission

In a "Statement of Missions," Minnesota Statutes Section 135A.052 requires that all public post-secondary institutions "have a distinctive mission within the overall provision of public higher education in the state and a responsibility to cooperate with each other." Minnesota Statutes Section 136F.05 further establishes that "the mission of the [Board of Trustees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities] is to provide programs of study that meet the needs of students for occupational, general, baccalaureate, and graduate education."

Minnesota State Board Policy 1A.1 Part 2. Subparts A- C state:

Subpart A. Vision Statement: The core value of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is to provide an opportunity for all Minnesotans to create a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their communities.

Subpart B. Mission statement: The core commitments of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are to ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans, be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs, and deliver to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option.

Subpart C: College and Universities related missions: Each college and university has a distinct mission that is consistent with, and supportive of, the overall mission of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Board Policy 3.24 and System Procedure 3.24.1 further describe the conditions and processes for the State Board's review and approval of college and university missions.

Minnesota West Community & Technical College's (Minnesota West's) Mission Statement was last reviewed and approved by the Minnesota State Board of Trustees in May 2017. The college's Strategic Planning process involved input from stakeholders gathered in the spring of 2017 through several Minnesota West leadership team meetings, campus engagement sessions, a survey, and various other means including email, listening sessions, and other forms of interactive communication. The process sought to identify Minnesota West's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and desired Results (SOAR). This SOAR analysis then informed revisions of the college's mission, vision, and values.

The results of this mission revision process are summarized in the Minnesota West Strategic Plan 2017-2023, which identifies six strategic directions:

- Implement comprehensive program management
- Improve curriculum delivery options
- Develop college resources beyond state allocations
- Increase partnerships
- Strengthen awareness of Minnesota West identity
- Improve enrollment management.

The strategic plan also identifies concrete outcomes for each strategic direction.

The Strategic Plan was officially released the second week of May 2017. Copies were distributed to all College personnel, the President's Advisory Council (PAC), Minnesota West Foundation Board members, and other stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan is linked to the College web site and printed copies are available at all campus locations.

Core Commitments of Minnesota State

Minnesota State's Extraordinary Impact Strategic Framework introduces the system's core commitments:

- To ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans
- To be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs
- To deliver to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value and most affordable higher education option."

At all Minnesota State colleges and universities, developmental education programs include an integrated series of pre-college level courses and academic support services and interventions designed to develop students' skills and prepare them for college-level coursework. In the fall of 2020, to support student success in developmental education, Minnesota State colleges and universities implemented the Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap to support innovative programming and curricular changes.

Access to Minnesota West

Minnesota West provides multiple educational pathways to "prepare all learners for a lifetime of success."

The College offers transferable general education courses, as well as courses in business and farm management, technical programs, customized training services, continuing education courses, and contract for training programs to enhance job skills. Sixty-seven percent of Minnesota West students attend part-time. Students 25 years of age and older make up 37% of the student body. Twenty-two percent of students are enrolled in a form of distance education, with 27% of those students enrolled **only** in distance education. Approximately 90% of Minnesota West students pursue Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, diplomas, and/or certificates.

Minnesota West offers classes at various times and on various platforms to meet the needs and demands of its diverse populations. The college offers face-to-face courses in campus classrooms at both traditional times and late afternoons. It also offers courses through interactive television (ITV), completely online, and hybrid delivery. In addition to the fall and spring semesters, the College offers winter, May, and summer terms with various starting dates. Zoom videoconferencing was introduced for most classes in the spring of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This medium proved to be another effective method for course delivery. Hybrid and Zoom options significantly reduced the College's reliance on ITV and extended opportunities for students unable to attend classes on campuses.

Minnesota West offers developmental education courses for under-prepared students on all of these platforms and delivery formats. A number of course offerings, including developmental math, reading, and writing courses, are available in eight-week segments that enable students to take two courses in one semester at the same time of day.

The class schedule and course catalog are posted on the College website.

Student Support

In spring 2013, Minnesota West streamlined student services by initiating a “One Stop” student services model that allows all inquiries regarding general student services at all campuses to be answered with a single phone call or one point of contact on campus. Resource specialists are cross trained to answer questions regarding all College services. Callers to the College communication center can receive information on admissions, financial aid, registration, academic programs, housing, and other academic or student services through a single contact. Staff involved in One Stop meet regularly to evaluate the program, resolve issues, and make adjustments that help them serve students more effectively. The entire One Stop program was evaluated in the fall of FY20, and the results are currently being used to improve College-wide student support services.

Students can find links to tutoring and career services, as well as both online and print resources on the Library and Academic Resources Center (LARC) web page. Face-to-face professional and peer tutoring options are available to students on all Minnesota West campuses.

Minnesota West is dedicated to assisting veterans and eligible family members achieve their educational goals. The College has a veteran’s coordinator and regional certifying official that works directly with veterans and their families. Minnesota West is recognized as a “Military Friendly” and “Yellow Ribbon” institution. Instructors and staff make every effort to accommodate scheduled military appointments and duties that conflict with course requirements and deadlines.

Minnesota West Core Values

Minnesota West's core values establish the tone and attitude by which the College meets its mission and vision. Additionally, the core values serve as Minnesota West’s Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

The Institutional Learning Outcomes align with and prioritize the college’s mission and values by stating concrete objectives that support system-wide needs while focusing on Minnesota West’s target constituencies. Minnesota West upholds core values of transformational learning for:

- **Community Engagement and Courage:** Learners develop the confidence, skills, and values to effectively recognize the needs of individuals, communities, and societies and make a commitment to constructively engage in social action.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors to live, work, and communicate with people whose backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are different from their own as well as to consider the global impact of their decisions.
- **Innovation:** Learners develop the ability to use knowledge, behaviors, skills, and experiences flexibly in new and unique situations to innovatively contribute to their field.
- **Integrity:** Learners develop the confidence, skills, behaviors, and values to effectively discern life goals, form relationships, and shape their personal and professional identities to achieve fulfillment.
- **Student Success:** Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to live balanced and fulfilling lives.

Employment Environment

Minnesota West's Affirmative Action Plan begins with the following statement:

"Minnesota West Community and Technical College is committed to Minnesota's statewide affirmative action efforts and providing equal employment opportunity to all employees and applicants in accordance with equal opportunity and affirmative action laws."

The plan further commits Minnesota West to provide an employment environment "free of any form of discriminatory harassment as prohibited by federal, state, and local human rights laws" and strives to provide equal employment opportunities and the best possible service to all Minnesotans.

Intended Constituents

It is a core value of Minnesota State to "provide opportunities for all Minnesotans to create a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their communities." The mission, vision, and values of Minnesota West reflect Minnesota State values and serve as the foundation for all College strategies. Planning efforts grounded in the Minnesota State Strategic Framework, have contributed to the Minnesota West Strategic Plan (2017-2023), as well as a detailed work plan by the College President. A task force consisting of academic and student affairs team members helps to create and execute a biennial plan.

The Master Academic and Student Services Work Plan includes the following strategic directions:

- 1) Provide access and learning opportunities leading to success for the citizens of southwest Minnesota.
- 2) Provide innovative and accountable programs and services to ensure the growth of our students.
- 3) Deliver programs and services to enhance the economic competitiveness of the state, the region, and its people.

Minnesota West's replication of programs such as Dental Assistant and Powerline Technician across multiple campuses is an example of meeting these strategic directions. The College also works collaboratively with other secondary and post-secondary institutions across Minnesota by participating in such programs as Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Health Force, Information Technology, Southern Agriculture, and Transportation. Work Plan results are gathered and published biennially in the Minnesota State Centers of Excellence: Report to Legislature.

In 2018, the Minnesota State Board of Trustees approved a strategic initiative titled Reimagining Minnesota State. The initiative was developed in two phases. First, Minnesota State held forums that led to creating a strategic agenda for Minnesota State. The forums in the Reimagining Minnesota State initiative called for responses to "Three Big Questions":

- 1) What is Minnesota State's unique value proposition to the State of Minnesota?
- 2) How does Minnesota State foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and partnership as we share responsibility for the achievement of our key goals?
- 3) How do we leverage our "systemness" to the benefit of our students and the state?

Phase two of this initiative involves the Strategic Agenda by engaging "leaders from all levels within the system in the practical work of identifying the strategic, organizational, and operational changes that must occur to collectively make progress on key goals by performing more like an interdependent network and by making innovation integral to the operation of the board, system office, and campus."

Articulation of the Mission

Minnesota West's constituencies are apprised of the College mission, values, and goals in many ways. The College mission statement is published in the College course catalog, the faculty handbook, and on the College website. It is also included in student orientation sessions for all incoming students.

In addition to those sources, the mission is printed on all Minnesota West letterhead and on the back of all business cards. The mission, vision, and values are posted and scrolled on television monitors strategically located in campus buildings and are widely shared via social media. Marketing materials also include this information for the benefit of prospective students, their families, and the communities the College serves. ReadSpeaker technology enables Minnesota West website visitors to listen to an audio version of content as they follow along with the highlighted text, enhancing accessibility and making written content available to more people. This online text-to-speech technology also offers a translation feature to reach an international audience.

Sources

- Mn Statute: 135a.052 PostSecondary Missions
- Mn Statute: 136f.05 Missions
- MnState "Extraordinary Impact" Strategic Framework
- MnState Reimagining Minnesota State Envisioning Our Next 20 Years
- MnState Centers of Excellence
- MnState Centers of Excellence Annual Report to Legislature 2021
- MnState Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap
- MnState Policy: 1A.1. Organization and Administration
- MnState Policy: 3.24 Mission System Mission
- MnState Procedure 3.24.1 Mission System Mission
- MW Affirmative Action Plan 2018-2020
- MW Institutional Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map
- MW Master Academic Plan 2018-2020

- MW One Stop Review
- MW OneStop SWOT survey responses
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023
- MW Strategic Planning 2017 Planning Process Implementation
- MW Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

Minnesota West places high priority on meeting its ethical, legal, and academic responsibilities to its internal and external constituencies, communities, region, and state.

Based on the Economic Impact Report 2018-2019, Minnesota West generated an annual economic impact of \$128.6 million on its geographic area of 21,000 square miles, which spans 19 southwestern counties. This includes a direct impact of \$66.1 million and an indirect/induced impact of \$62.4 million. In addition, an estimated \$1.3 million in charitable donations and volunteer services are generated annually by faculty, staff and students. The College generated 1,140 Minnesota jobs both directly and indirectly.

Partnerships

Minnesota West engages with its constituents in several partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

The President's Advisory Council (PAC) is a group of regional industry leaders who meet quarterly with Minnesota West's president. The group offers advice and information on the present and anticipated needs of the region for employee training. For example, workforce needs and recommendations of the PAC resulted in the revision and reintroduction of the College's Plumbing and Heating Technology program.

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), Southwest/West Central (SW/WC) Service Cooperative, and Minnesota Workforce Centers collaborate each year to present Career Expos at the SMSU campus in Marshall and on the Minnesota West Worthington campus. The event typically attracts more than 2,000 high school sophomores. Representatives from more than 100 area business enterprises exhibit and meet with students to help them understand the skills they need to acquire to succeed in various professions.

The annual Diesel Extravaganza on the Canby campus partners with business and industry to bring in and demonstrate power equipment. The event features demonstrations by professionals and is open to the public.

Minnesota West works with area high schools in several ways. Student Services staff assist students by providing general College information and completing applications. Staff also present information on Junior Achievement, financial aid, and the Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO), and meet with individual students as needed. The College partners with area alternative schools and the Private Industry Council (PIC) to offer the Breaking Traditions program on each of the campuses. Current students provide hands-on activities and informal introductions to instructors. These programs encourage students who are less likely to consider advancing to post-secondary schools to consider the economic advantages that continuing their education can provide.

Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) is a rural career and technical education pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding Career and Technical Education (CTE) in southwest and west central Minnesota. "The goal of LYFT Pathways is for every secondary student in the region to gain marketable skills through CTE courses and opportunities which lead to further education and careers that match the region's labor market needs."

The REACH concurrent enrollment program allows high school juniors and seniors to take Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO) courses. Students can enroll in courses delivered on campus, through interactive television (ITV), online, or concurrently at their high schools. Concurrent enrollment courses are taught by credentialed high school teachers who partner with Minnesota West faculty mentors. At present, 46 different concurrent Minnesota West college classes are offered at high schools in southwest Minnesota. Minnesota West received accreditation status for additional locations of Fairmont High School in Fairmont and Marshall Area Schools Technical & Educational Center in Marshall. The REACH concurrent enrollment program is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

Minnesota West participates in the Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Collaborative (MRVCTE), which is a consortium of nine school districts and one area learning center in southwest rural Minnesota. The mission of MRVCTE is to help member districts meet goals they have set for themselves, their students, and their staff. MRVCTE "strives to positively impact student learning and works to be on the cutting edge of school improvement efforts." This partnership provides opportunities for secondary students to participate in career and technical education and, in some cases, offers post-secondary credit.

Minnesota West hosts Future Farmers of America (FFA) State Degree interviews and Regional FFA contests on the Jackson campus each year. Agriculture Instructors travel to Marshall, Minnesota, to cooperate with SMSU to host part of the Ag Bowl at Marshall High School. Along with supporting FFA, the Centers of Excellence in Energy, Transportation, Manufacturing and Agriculture hosts an instructor training seminar for secondary agricultural and industrial technology teachers on the Jackson campus. Training modules are delivered in welding, small engines, machining, energy, renewable fuels, and other subject areas that provide continued education and assist high school instructors in their classrooms.

Management program instructors at Minnesota West work directly with over 700 farmers and small business owners to meet their individual business goals. Students in these programs are

current business owners who choose to be lifelong learners. Instructors work with the students to help them navigate state and federal government programs as well as connect producers with experts in their industry. Faculty work directly with local lenders and other stakeholders in agricultural finance to ensure the students have access to the best information possible to make decisions for their businesses. Minnesota West management program faculty are experts in agriculture and are often asked to present information to local stakeholders or state elected officials.

The Minnesota West agriculture department collaborated to design, construct, and maintain a retention pond on the Worthington campus to collect runoff prior to water entering Lake Okabena. Minnesota West developed this retention pond in cooperation with the Nobles County Highway Department, City of Worthington, Independent School District 518, and the E.O. Olson Trust Fund (a local trust established to support environmental causes). In addition to the retention pond's enhancing water quality in Lake Okabena, fill removed to create the basin was donated to the Nobles County Highway Department to construct a bike/walking path around the perimeter of Worthington.

Minnesota West agriculture classes partnered with the Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District to construct and install floating islands in the retention pond and in Sunset Bay, which is connected to Lake Okabena. These floating islands extract nutrients from the water and provide habitat for aquatic life in the retention basin and lake.

Students in agriculture classes continue to assist the watershed by measuring organic matter levels in silt extracted from Lake Okabena. They have also created and developed pollinator areas on campus grounds that are connected to the community's public areas.

On the Worthington and Pipestone campuses, 1.2 and 3.7 acre plots have been re-established to native vegetation to create wildlife habitat, protect soil and water quality, enhance air quality, and provide natural aesthetics for the communities. Planning is currently underway to establish similar natural areas on the Canby campus. Minnesota West worked in cooperation with public entities including Pheasants Forever, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Pipestone Storm Water Conservation to complete these projects.

The Minnesota Emergency Response and Industrial Training (MERIT) Center (Tier II Regional Training Center) is a 53-acre, state of the art, regional fire and rescue training facility located in Marshall, Minnesota. The facility is owned by the City of Marshall and operated by Minnesota West. The MERIT Center offers a wide variety of training opportunities to both municipal emergency responders and private industrial emergency responders. In addition, the MERIT Center houses Minnesota West's Customized Training offices. Prior to 2018, students in the Law Enforcement program needed to travel 3-4 hours to get the training in the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) because it was not available at or near the Worthington campus. This course is a prerequisite for taking the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board licensing exam. The Law Enforcement faculty developed a one-time EVOC for a summer class in 2018. The two eight-hour per day training sessions were successful and proved to be a significant cost-savings to students as they no longer needed to travel so far and have lodging costs. Through legislative allocations and grants, the driving course was developed, classroom

space was expanded, and updated Driver's Education Simulators were purchased. Minnesota West Law Enforcement students continue to use the MERIT Center for the EVOC training. Collaboration with the MERIT Center creates a new regional connection for Minnesota West by filling a void for public safety instruction in southwest Minnesota.

The Minnesota West Foundation, a private 501c3 charitable organization, promotes and awards scholarships to Minnesota West students. More than 70 College employees contribute to the Foundation every year. Faculty and staff from all College campuses participate on scholarship application review committees in both fall and spring semesters. The foundation also provides emergency funding for students in financial crisis. Campus staff help to organize scholarship award banquets for students during the academic year. The foundation also partners with the College to coordinate raffles for student programs and to provide other financial support for various programs, including accepting equipment donations that are used to enhance and support academic and technical programs. Two members of the foundation's board of directors are former College employees.

The Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) is a community partnership that provides financial and community support to the Minnesota West. SWIF is based in Greater Minnesota and provides grants for emergency funding as well as ongoing student scholarships. SWIF's Grow Our Own initiative provides services and educational pathways to youth in poverty. An Equity and Inclusion task force meets quarterly to discuss regional collaborative approaches to equity, inclusion, and diversity

The Southwest Minnesota Teacher Preparation Partnership (SWMTTP) aims to increase the diverse pool of quality teacher candidates in the region. It is focused on supporting students who want to teach, especially students of color. Members of the SWMTTP include Minnesota West, Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), and Independent School District 518. Courses must meet the standards for professional educators that are established by the Professional Educators Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). Teachers and staff involved in the SWMTTP participate in ongoing cultural competency training to ensure that they meet the needs of all students. Three cohorts of faculty and staff have participated in a three-day workshop co- led by an independent consultant and project leaders. Minnesota West has also led two cohorts of a book group reading *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, a collection of essays written by people of color on their experiences with race in Minnesota.

The College's Allied Health and Nursing program leaders work directly with local health care partners to provide clinical experiences for students. Many health care partners participate on program advisory boards. Feedback from the advisory boards is integral to keeping up with industry demands. Advisory boards meet a minimum of twice annually. Both the practical and registered nursing programs have a shared Nursing Advisory Committee that meets twice a year. This Advisory Committee receives the programs' End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLOs) and the end-of-program nationally required outcomes (licensure passing rate, completion/graduation rates, job placement rates). The same Advisory Committee provides input on how the graduates are employed and contribute to the region's public employment needs. For example, the need for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) continues to be high in all counties served by Minnesota West.

The Carpentry and Plumbing/Heating programs at Minnesota West are located on the Pipestone campus and have formed a unique partnership with the local community. The Pipestone Economic Development Authority (EDA) has partnered with Minnesota West for the past four years to purchase a house in the community that is currently in tax forfeiture. The EDA provides students with funds to purchase materials needed to complete the house's renovation. Students work on the house to gain practical experience. When the city sells the house, local tax revenue is generated. A partnership with Pipestone Area Schools also provides work for students interested in carpentry careers. Students come to the Pipestone campus in the afternoons for the entire academic year. Successful completion of the requirements results in a Certificate of Carpentry from Minnesota West. In 2020, Edgerton High School also sent two students to the program.

Through the Federal Work Study (FWS) program, Minnesota West assists area employers with student employment opportunities. One example is the America Reads program at the Rock County Plum Creek Library in Luverne, ISD 518 in Worthington and West Learning Center in Worthington. Another example is the FWS community service including Puddle Jumpers Child Care in Granite Falls, YMCA in Worthington, Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (SMOC) Head Start in Worthington, Southwest Crisis Center in Worthington, Little Thunderhawk Child Care in Montevideo, Workforce Center (PIC) in Worthington, and Kids R It Child Care in Worthington.

To encourage community partnerships, Minnesota West works with several agencies to lease campus space at rates below market value. Examples include the Puddle Jumpers Day Care and Women's Rural Advocacy Program (WRAP) in Granite Falls, Minnesota Public Radio in Worthington, the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) in Worthington, Southwestern Mental Health and the Southwest Crisis Center in Jackson, SW/WC Service Coop in Pipestone, and the Campus Grill in Canby. The College also has ground lease agreements with the YMCA and The Villas residential housing on the Worthington campus.

Athletic programs at Minnesota West are affiliated with the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Minnesota College Athletic Conference (MCAC). Students can participate in football, men's and women's soccer, volleyball, men's and women's basketball, wrestling, softball, baseball, and women's golf. While all athletics are based on the Worthington campus, students from any campus can participate. In 2019, Minnesota West partnered with Independent School District 518 to develop a new athletic facility on the Worthington Senior High School campus. This consisted of a new artificial turf football/soccer field, all-weather track, bleachers and a field house. This project will serve the high school and college football and soccer, and the high school track and field programs.

AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) volunteers are engaged by both Minnesota West and Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). VISTA projects at the two institutions include exploring food pantry models, building partnerships with community organizations, creating an area resource map for the institutions' websites, and identifying additional student needs. Food pantries that students can access privately are located on each of the five Minnesota West campuses and the Luverne Center.

Minnesota West Student Senates are actively involved in all communities in the College's service areas. Canby Student Senate participates in the local Rotary Club Chapter, holiday parade, and trunk-or-treat activities. They have also assisted in the construction of playground equipment at Central Park in Canby and hosted a community and campus blood drive. The Granite Falls campus has hosted a community and campus blood drive and a community Halloween party as well as a community holiday mixer. The Pipestone campus has partnered with the Pipestone National Monument and a Halloween event. The Jackson campus has written thank you notes to the local veterans, provided meals to families in need, hosted Jackson Chamber of Commerce events and meetings, and hosted a community Halloween party. The Luverne site has been active with local Chamber of Commerce celebrations, and hosted other community organizations at the center. The Worthington campus collects food for a "pop up" food pantry. Student Senates on all campuses participate in their respective communities' Christmas basket set-up and distribution. Athletic teams have also unloaded food delivery trucks for the community food pantries.

Region 8 Business Professionals of America (BPA) is comprised of nine local high schools in collaboration with Minnesota West. The nine high schools include Marshall, Ortonville, Tracy, Worthington, Chokio-Alberta, Comfrey, Springfield, MACCRAY and Fulda. Several opportunities occur throughout the year for Minnesota West to collaborate with high schools. Each January, the Granite Falls campus hosts approximately 200 local high school students along with 25 advisors and guest judges to compete in a variety of judged events that are mandated by the BPA national office.

Minnesota West serves and collaborates with partners in all of its communities in ways that prepare learners for a lifetime of success and provide opportunities for increased cooperation, development, engagement, and growth.

Sources

- APC Minnesota River Valley Collaborative Banner-1
- APC MW Bluffstone Ground Lease
- APC NACEP Explanations Of Evidence
- APC Pipestone EDA Carpentry Project FY21
- APC SMSU Ag Bowl
- APC Southwest Initiative Foundation
- APC Southwest West Central Service Coop Lease Agreement
- APC SWM Private Industry Council
- APC WRAP Lease Agreement
- APC YMCA Ground Lease Agreement
- FEDAmerica Reads
- FEDAmericor VISTA
- MnState FFA State Degree
- MW Business Professionals of America
- MW Economic Impact Report 2018_2019
- MW Merit Center for management programs
- MW Minnesota West Foundation

- MW Nursing Student Learning Outcomes
- MW PELSB Interim report 12.30.20
- MW REACH Guide for Administrators Counselors Teachers
- MW Student Senates
- MW Teacher Preparation Program
- MWM Breaking Traditions 2021 Promo
- MWM Career Expo Fact Sheet 2019
- MWM Diesel Extravaganza
- MWM Launch Your Future Today

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

Minnesota West strives to challenge and encourage students to participate in both curricular and cocurricular activities. Many students become members or pursue leadership positions in a variety of clubs and organizations offered at Minnesota West. A full list of student activities is linked to the College website. A few notable organizations include: Business Professionals of America (BPA), Student Senate, Skills USA, and Alpha Nu Kappa Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa national honor fraternity.

Minnesota West is aware of the diverse populations of southwestern Minnesota and responds to their varied educational needs by providing affordable, accessible, and supportive programs and settings. Minnesota West has adopted an Affirmative Action Plan to ensure services are provided consistently and equitably.

While one diversity officer oversees all College-wide activities, all Minnesota West campuses have student services advisors assigned to assist diverse students. The advisors plan activities for students, including monthly events or meetings with guest speakers, videos, or testimonials from students who have successfully acclimated to the College environment. Other activities provide opportunities for students to reach out to surrounding communities. The advisors also coordinate awareness-raising events on their campuses during Black History Month, national holidays, anniversaries of historic events, and other occasions.

During the 2020-21 academic year, Minnesota West secured a shared AmeriCorps Health VISTA position with Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) in Marshall, Minnesota, to focus on student basic needs and health. Emergency "pop-up" food and hygiene pantries were created on each campus, and a new College-wide Basic Needs Insecurity advisory committee was formed to address students in crisis. This committee was formed to identify basic needs insecurities that Minnesota West students are experiencing. Such basic needs include limited or uncertain availability of food, transportation, housing, and other basic needs that students are unable to satisfy due to constraints created by lifestyles, dependency on parents who are unable to help, work schedules, child care, and other issues. The two colleges engaged a

licensed social worker to provide mental health counseling, transportation, medical assistance, food support, childcare, legal advice, and more. Wellness Wednesdays began in late fall semester 2020. Activities include physical exercise, discussions, and speakers to help both employees and students focus on what remained positive during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Culture Corner is Minnesota West's principal Office of Cultural Diversity and is located on the Worthington campus. The office provides a central location where underrepresented students can access services designed to help them succeed. The office was first funded in 2004 "with the purpose of improving retention of students of color, as well as increasing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among undergraduate students." The College provides a variety of programs, services, and referrals intended to enrich the campus experience and enhance learning for all students.

The Culture Corner's Mission Goals are to:

- Develop and implement programs designed to increase and improve diversity awareness at all levels of the College.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive system of responsibility, accountability, and recognition for increasing campus diversity and improving campus climate.
- Support outreach, community and service-learning opportunities for multi-ethnic students, LGBTQ+, and women's concerns.

Culture Corner activities encourage sensitivity training and programming and contribute to a climate in which all cultures are appreciated as valued members of the campus community. Activities also promote minority enrollment by assisting with College recruitment and retention efforts. The office provides programs and services designed to help students achieve their academic and career goals, encourage and assist students of color with academic and social adjustments to College life, and serve as a liaison among diverse students, the faculty, and administration. The Culture Corner promotes the positive message that all cultures contribute to the College and community.

On the Worthington campus, the Culture Corner sponsors several programs each year that are open to all Minnesota West students, faculty, and staff. Members of the community are also invited to attend programs at no cost. Many events have been offered over the past ten years. Examples of programs include presentations on Hispanic heritage by natives of Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador, and Honduras. The College has screened a locally produced award-winning film, titled *Abrazos*, that documents a trip made by Guatemalan children from Worthington to visit grandparents and extended families in Guatemala. The Mixed Blood Theater (MBT) company visits campus at least once every year. Some MBT productions include *Minnecanos*, *Dr. King's Dream*, *Daughters of Africa*, and *Black Eagle*. In addition, individual students from Egypt, Eritrea, the Karen culture and others have presented programs. Native American speakers have visited campus with presentations about Medicine Wheels, natural healing, the effects of historical trauma on Native American students and families, and other topics. Each December, the Culture Corner has cooperated with the Minnesota West Foundation to sponsor a "Celebrations Around the World" event. Representatives of at least 30 cultures present food and information about their celebrations at the one-night event. Proceeds

from a small admission fee benefit students who have limited access to college loans. Recipients have been awarded \$500 to \$1,500 scholarships from these funds. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no on-site activities were scheduled between March 2020 and spring 2021.

The Worthington campus is also home to the Cultural Diversity Club (CDC). This club engages in many activities that are directly tied to the Institutional Learning Outcome: Diversity and Inclusion. The CDC typically includes 25-30 students who engage in activities throughout the academic year, including the activities listed above. Activities include attending theater productions that highlight cultural practice and interacting with the performers; participating in lectures and classes by artists, authors, historians, and social activists that represent ethnic and culturally diverse communities; and attending Minnesota State sponsored events such as social-justice conferences, the Power in Diversity conference, and Native American conferences. Student Senate funds support CDC activities. In the past few years, the CDC participated in the Hispanic Heritage Celebration of Community, the Celebrations Around the World, the I Am a Man event, and a performance of the ZuZu Acrobats from Kenya and Mozambique. In addition, students in the club helped with the “Getting Connected” day in the fall by participating, interacting with vendors, and preparing presentations for other students. CDC members meet regularly to discuss activities and plan events. Many of the activities of the CDC involve training for leadership and organization, and reflect a desire to create, support, and educate others. Students who participate in the activities broaden and deepen their understanding of people of varying ethnicity, cultures, social levels, and gender. Participants develop leadership skills through guided discussions and respectful yet open conversations. Students use their improved leadership skills within their classrooms, during student activities, at Minnesota State sponsored events, and in the local and regional community. In 2019, students wanted to organize a Worthington campus or College-wide Minnesota West Latino Club. Interested students met with faculty, staff, and administration to organize, find an advisor, and work on the mission. Due to COVID-19, the planning process for the Minnesota West Latino Club was put on hold.

The Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC), a county-wide community organization with offices on the Worthington campus, works with the Culture Corner to promote understanding of diverse cultures through an annual International Festival in downtown Worthington and several other events throughout the year. The festival was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCIC offices moved to the Minnesota West Worthington campus in January 2015, so it and the Culture Corner are now located in the same building.

Students from diverse backgrounds meet monthly on the Pipestone campus to present programs about their cultures and ethnic traditions – and sometimes to share ethnic meals. The meetings often involve hands-on projects, and all students, faculty, and staff are invited to attend. At least once per year, the Pipestone groups screen the documentary film titled *Dakota 38*, about a 2005 horseback ride a group of South Dakota Native Americans made to Mankato, Minnesota, to honor the 38 Native Americans who were hanged there after the Dakota Uprising in December 1862. The group views the film from the nearby Pipestone National Monument titled, *Pipestone - An Unbroken Legacy* and sponsors a field trip to the monument site to raise awareness of the Pipestone quarries’ significance to Native American culture. The Pipestone campus group also participates in an annual Career Day at the Flandreau (SD) Indian School.

The Jackson campus hosts “See It, Learn It, Be It” day for transitional students from area high schools and Adult Basic Education programs. The Jackson campus group also cooperates with Western Community Action to promote “Generation Next,” a program to recruit and retain female students in programs not considered traditional for women. Weekly programs and speakers encourage young women to consider technical careers, primarily in computing, and help them to develop a strong sense of self, understand and create healthy relationships, and plan future careers. The Jackson campus also hosts an annual Halloween party designed to reach out to students and families in their community. In addition to students and their friends and families, people of all backgrounds are invited to attend.

Other activities that are shared college-wide include the Getting Connected and Breaking Traditions events. These activities are available to all potential and current students and provide information and activities that focus on all career paths. Student life activities vary across the campuses. All registered students can participate in these scheduled events

Minnesota West is certified by the Minnesota State Approving Agency for Veteran’s Educational Benefits. The College has a designated certifying officer to help veterans obtain the services they have earned. Faculty members and administrators attend conferences to explore ways to recruit and retain veterans as college students. At a Veteran’s Administration conference in the Twin Cities in June 2015, Minnesota West’s Veterans Service officer was one of three people statewide to be awarded a Certificate of Excellence for outstanding achievement in certifying, monitoring, and managing veteran’s records. Applications for Veteran Educational Benefits can be obtained from the resource specialist on each campus. The Minnesota Department of Veteran’s Affairs and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities also maintain websites designed to serve the unique higher education needs of military veterans, students currently serving in the military, and families of veterans.

Minnesota West offers credit for military experience and training. Course equivalencies can be found at Transferology and on the college website.

Sources

- APC Nobles County Integration Collaborative
- APC Pipestone An Unbroken Legacy
- APC Transferology
- APC Western Community Action
- FEDAmericor VISTA
- MW Affirmative Action Plan 2018-2020
- MW Basic Needs Insecurity Committee Minutes
- MW Business Professionals of America
- MW Culture Corner
- MW Diversity Activities 2017-18
- MW Student Clubs
- MW Student Senates
- MW VA Education and Training Benefits

- MWM Black History Month promo
- MWM Breaking Traditions 2021 Promo
- MWM Celebrations around the World promo
- MWM Culture Corner Activities
- MWM DAKOTA 38 Film promo
- MWM Getting Connected Days
- MWM I Am a Man Event promo
- MWM Student Life Programs
- MWM Wellness Wednesdays promo

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Minnesota West's mission was developed and approved following policies and procedures required by Minnesota statutes and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. The mission reflects the unique nature and purpose of the College and is publicized widely.

Minnesota West strives to fulfill its mission by focusing on student academic achievement as well as encouraging active and responsive participation in service to and planning for the region. The College engages with its constituencies on several levels and in many venues.

College administrators, faculty, and staff study and understand the demographics of the region and make every effort meet the needs of its increasingly diverse student population. The College offers and encourages participation in a variety of curricular and cocurricular activities intended to produce good citizens.

All College initiatives and programs aimed at fulfilling the mission and demonstrating the values are regularly assessed and fine tuned for improvement.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

Board of Trustees/Powers and Duties

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees (Minnesota State) serves as the governing authority for all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities with authority granted by Minnesota statutes and the Minnesota Office of Management and Budget (MMB). Minnesota State system policies and procedures ensure system institutions operate with integrity in financial, academic, human resource, and auxiliary activities.

Minnesota West operates under the same Minnesota statutes, policies and procedures.

Mission

The Minnesota State Board of Trustee's mission is to provide programs of study that meet the needs of students for occupational, general baccalaureate, and graduate education. All state universities, community colleges, and technical colleges have articulated distinct missions, as required by Minnesota State Statute 135A.052, subdivision 1. As discussed in the argument for Criterion 1, Minnesota West has mission, vision, and values statements that guide and support all curricular and cocurricular activities.

Finance

Minnesota West, operating under its own fiscal and administrative policies, as well as Minnesota State Board policies, follows all federal and state laws, rules and regulations that pertain to higher education institutions. Minnesota West's financial records are complete and regularly audited to ensure that financial information is accurate, reliable, and useful for planning. Meticulous financial management supports short- and long-term system and College strategic objectives. Records are subject to internal, legislative and external audits required by Minnesota statutes, state board policies, and the MMB.

Minnesota State's FY2020-21 Biennial and Annual Operating Budget Instructions require Minnesota West to prepare balanced budgets consistent with board policies and system procedures. The College is required to accurately report financial data, which includes, but is not limited to the Composite Financial Index (CFI); primary reserve ratio; return on net assets; viability ratio; and operating margin ratio.

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees maintains authority to set tuition rates for all system institutions and regulates student fees in accordance with Minnesota State Board policy 5.11 and procedure 5.11.1, Minnesota West's Student Financial Aid Office guarantees delivery of federal and state financial assistance to students in a fair and ethical manner following rules and regulations established by the respective state and federal departments of education.

Minnesota West is required to file financial reports and statements annually that are subject to audit. Annual financial statements must comply with a code of conduct and are prepared in cooperation with the Minnesota State Financial Reporting Team. Minnesota West participates in annual system-wide audits that can be viewed at the Minnesota State Office of Internal Auditing website.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General also audits financial aid every year.

The argument for Criterion 5 contains information regarding Minnesota West's strategic investment projects.

Academic Functions

Several processes, policies, agreements, and procedures guide Minnesota West to ensure that it operates with academic integrity. These functions were established collaboratively by faculty and administration. Article 8 of the MSCF Master Agreement details the obligations and responsibilities of each party as they relate to the development of curriculum and the delivery of academic programs. Minnesota West is governed by federal and state legislation, Minnesota State System policies, and College policies. Minnesota West's Policies on Policies (1.A.1) confirms its authority to adopt College policies that are developed and confirmed by a faculty and administration shared governance committee.

Minnesota West is committed to academic quality and integrity in all of its delivery methods of courses and programs. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness works with faculty to ensure the integrity and rigor of online courses using the Quality Matters (QM) assurance system. This system fosters a culture of continuous improvement by integrating QM Standards and processes into organizational plans to improve online education. It includes professional training in the use of rubrics, tools, and best practices. Minnesota West encourages instructors to participate in the QM program by offering stipends for faculty members who request reviews of their online courses and make necessary improvements until the courses can become QM certified.

Minnesota West's Information Technology (IT) department coordinates with the Campus Academic Technology Team (CATT) and the Brightspace/Desire to Learn (D2L) administrator

to offer workshops and support for increased faculty use of online instructional technologies. Minnesota West's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is also committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning. CTL workshops on pedagogy and innovations in educational technology are offered regularly on every campus .

Minnesota West's REACH program provides academically strong high school students the opportunity to earn college credits without leaving their high school. The REACH program is accredited through National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP). Academic integrity related policies and procedures are published on the Minnesota West website, Student Information and Policies, and the Faculty Handbook. Compliance with Minnesota State policies and procedures ensures academic integrity.

To further ensure academic integrity, policies and procedures are in place to address student complaints and grievances both at the College and system level. Responses to student complaints and grievances are documented and maintained in the Office of the President. Procedures for addressing faculty and staff complaints and grievances are included in the respective employee contracts.

Personnel and Human Resources

Minnesota West's policy on Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education, stresses that the College will comply with Minnesota State's policy 1B.1: Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education, and Minnesota State Procedure 1B.1.1.: Report/Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment Investigation and Resolution. Employee search committee members are trained and required to view a video on proper procedures to protect the confidentiality of job applicants.

Student Conduct

Minnesota State Policy 3.6 Student Conduct and Minnesota West Policy 3.6 Student Conduct stipulate that the College has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students. These policies allow College officials to take necessary and appropriate actions to support and protect the safety and well-being of students, faculty, staff, facilities, and programs. Faculty are encouraged to refer to the Minnesota West Student Conduct policy on their syllabi. Major portions of the policy are reviewed with new students at each College orientation. Policies regarding faculty and staff conduct are articulated in the Faculty Handbook and on the College web site.

FERPA

The Minnesota West Office of Human Resources informs faculty and staff of the need to comply with stipulations of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Workshops on compliance have been conducted on administration days, and the document titled "FERPA: What faculty and staff members need to know" is linked to the College website as well as in the Faculty Handbook. Students can refer to the Data Privacy policy in the Student Services area of the College web site.

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, and Internet Use

Minnesota West follows Minnesota State Policy 1.B.03 that prohibits sexual harassment or sexual violence. The College's Student Code of Conduct addresses these issues and specifies disciplinary actions that could result from sexual harassment and violence. The Minnesota legislature has mandated that all new Minnesota college students complete a training module titled "Personal Empowerment Through Self Awareness" (PETA) via D2L/Brightspace.

Ethical use of the internet for College employees and students is outlined in the Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources Policy 5.22. The policy regarding computer use for students is also referenced in the Student Code of Conduct.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Minnesota West Library and Academic Resource Center (LARC) staff is charged with training faculty and staff on copyright and intellectual property laws and protections. New faculty members receive instruction as part of their orientation to the College. A LARC staff person is assigned to monitor activities in which copyrights are involved. College policies are outlined and defined on the Copyright & Intellectual Property page of the Faculty Handbook. Intellectual property rights are also outlined in the MSCF contract, Article 23, Section 4., Subdivision 4.

Employee Contracts and Pay Plans

Minnesota public policy has historically supported organized labor. Minnesota West currently has employee contracts and pay plans with six employee bargaining units representing middle management, faculty, and staff. Data regarding the employee demographics is listed in the Minnesota State report titled: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Biennial Budget Reporting Requirements. More details regarding College employees are included in the argument for Core Component 5.A.

Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) is the official representative of faculty at Minnesota West. This bargaining unit represents both the liberal arts and technical faculty. The 2019-2021 Master Agreement between the Minnesota State Board of Trustees and MSCF was ratified in May 2020.

MSCF maintains two local chapters at Minnesota West. The north chapter represents faculty assigned to campuses at Pipestone, Canby, and Granite Falls and the Luverne site. The south chapter represents faculty assigned to campuses at Jackson and Worthington. Each chapter has its own officers: a president, vice-president, and secretary/treasurer elected by local members and a grievance representative appointed by MSCF.

Most Minnesota West classified staff are members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) bargaining unit. The remaining Minnesota West employees are represented by the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) and Middle Management Association (MMA). All contracts contain "meet and confer" language to help resolve disputes.

Minnesota West administrators are included in the Minnesota State College and Universities Personnel Plan for Administrators.

Reports

The College regularly prepares and publishes reports that provide information about nearly all aspects of College operations for local, state, and federal entities. All current and archived reports (three years or older) are maintained on the Minnesota West website under the heading “Why Minnesota West”?

To comply with the Jeanne Clearly Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crimes Statistics Act of 1998, the Office of the Vice President of Strategy publishes a Campus Security and Fire Safety Annual Report. The report is prepared by the Director of Safety along with faculty and staff and in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies responsible for providing services to the College. This report is distributed to registered students annually in compliance with several federal and state laws including the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act, the Student Right to Know Act, the Campus Security Act, the Drug-Free Workplace Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Audits

The annual College audit includes revenue and expenses related to auxiliary services, such as the bookstore, food services, and athletics. Audit reports are maintained in the office of the Vice President of Finance and Facilities.

Book Fulfillment Center

In FY19, Minnesota West transitioned from campus bookstores to a book fulfillment center. This new process enables all Minnesota West students to order required textbooks and materials online and have them shipped to their homes at no additional cost.

Athletics

Minnesota West’s athletic departments are subject to regulation and review by external governance organizations. Minnesota West is affiliated with the Minnesota College Athletic Conference (MCAC) and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The intercollegiate teams compete in a variety of sports, including baseball, men’s and women’s basketball, football, women's golf, softball, volleyball, wrestling, and men’s and women’s soccer. Minnesota West athletics programs are regulated under all Minnesota State and Minnesota West policies and procedures as well as all policies, procedures, rules and regulations outlined by MCAC and NJCAA, such as those regarding ethics and eligibility.

Community Facility Use

Minnesota West provides space to house groups and organizations on most of our campus locations through low-cost lease agreements. These organizations provide such services as

domestic and sexual violence advocacy, rural women's advocacy, mental health services, food service (open to the public on our Canby Campus,) and day care.

Sources

- APC NACEP Explanations Of Evidence
- APC Quality Matters Rubric
- FED FERPA
- Mn Statute: 135a.052 PostSecondary Missions
- MnState Biennial Budget Reporting Requirements
- MnState MSCF Contract
- MnState Policy 1B.1
- MnState Policy: 1B.03 Sexual Violence
- MnState Policy: 3.06 Student Conduct
- MnState Policy: 5.11 Tuition and Fees
- MnState Policy: 5.22 Acceptable Use of Computers and IT Resources
- MnState Procedure: 1.B.1.1 Report Complaint Discrimination Harrassment
- MnState Procedure: 5.11.1 Tuition and Fees
- MnState Student Complaints
- MW Campus Security Report 2020
- MW Center for Teaching and Learning Report 2019 - 2020
- MW Policy 1A.1 Policy on Policies
- MW Policy 3.6 Student Code of Conduct
- MW REACH Guide for Administrators Counselors Teachers
- MW Student Data Privacy

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

Minnesota West strives to be clear, complete, and transparent with its students and the public whenever it shares key information. Minnesota West communicates with students through its course catalog, website (Current Students page), a free student email service, the D2L Brightspace online platform, social media, on-campus television monitors, and print materials. It also employs GradesFirst, an automated alert system that can send text messages to all registered students, faculty, and staff. The College communicates with outside constituents through multi-media advertising, marketing publications, social media, sponsorships, participation in public activities, its physical presence in communities, employee and student volunteer services, news releases, and the College website.

Admission

Minnesota West is an open enrollment institution requiring a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) certificate, or qualifying scores on the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) exam or Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) exam. Admission to Minnesota West does not guarantee admission to college-level courses nor to specific programs. New students are required to take an assessment exam that measures reading, writing, and math skills.

All requirements for admissions are outlined on the Minnesota West website under Prospective Students as well as in Minnesota West Policy 3.4. Additional topics addressed in policy 3.4 include the application fee, transfer students, international students, new immigrants, suspended students, and readmission to the College.

College Catalog

Each Minnesota West program is briefly described online in the College course catalog, which is updated every two years. Printed copies are available upon request. Program descriptions include one to two paragraphs that explain course content, prerequisites, or licensing requirements. The descriptions list required courses and general education classes in a logical sequence. Program

descriptions are intended to help students plan and successfully navigate their chosen educational pathways.

In addition to the College course catalog, individuals can access information about the College's programs on the Minnesota West website and by accessing academic advising resources. Individual program pages provide information on requirements for admission, course content, program handbooks, program accreditation (if applicable), and salary and job outlook potential.

Class Schedule

The class schedule, located on the website, allows prospective students to search for courses by term, campus, and/or specific faculty. The class schedule also provides links to course descriptions, course outlines, required books, a list of academic programs for reference, and additional costs or information that students need to know prior to registration.

Tuition and Fees

Information on the cost of attending Minnesota West is available online on the Tuition and Fees page of the College website. Available to students is a net price calculator, which provides a realistic estimate of the cost of their education. Students are apprised of their financial responsibility when they register for classes. Invoices, financial aid information, and reminders of deadlines are available in each student's e-services account. General financial aid information is available on the Finance Your Education section of the College website.

Student Governance

Minnesota West Business Office personnel provide student consultations annually. The College marketing department advertises these consultations to the general public, so all prospective and current students are invited to attend. These consultations include details of College financial health, budgets, and proposed tuition and fee structures. After the consultation, each campus's Student Senate submits a letter reviewing the consultation and stating its position on issues raised in the presentation. The College president must submit the Student Senate letters to the Minnesota State system office prior to the board's initial consideration of any proposals included in the consultation. Examples of issues requiring a Student Senate letter to the Minnesota State Board of Trustees include changes in student fees, tuition hikes, and major land purchases.

Accreditation Status

Minnesota West's accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission and 16 other agencies is listed in the College course catalog and on the website. A complete list of accrediting agencies and their addresses is included in the argument for Criterion 3 of this report.

Fiscal and Operational Oversight

The Minnesota West website contains a link at the bottom of every page to the Minnesota State home page. As stated in the argument for Core Component 2.A., while Minnesota State is the

entity responsible for the fiscal and operational oversight of the system, Minnesota West maintains responsibility for its own fiscal and operational oversight.

Advertising and Marketing

The Director of Marketing, Enrollment, and Communication is responsible for the oversight of all College marketing activities. Support staff include a Web and Social Media Specialist, Graphic Arts Specialist, and Recruiting Specialists. Minnesota West's marketing has traditionally been focused on several target audiences – high school students, four-year college students, "non-completers" interested in completing work for a degree, minority students, underrepresented students, distance learning students, non-traditional students, and the unemployed or underemployed.

Throughout the academic year, marketers meet with potential students at alternative learning centers (ALCs), private business gatherings, career fairs, community orientations, high schools, workforce centers, and on campuses. The marketing staff work closely with workforce centers and employers to discover needs and train displaced workers for new occupations and careers. Recruiting specialists plan and assess their efforts to meet the needs of individual campuses and communities.

Contributions to the Educational Experience

All Minnesota West student clubs and organizations, community engagement activities, experiential learning experiences, and research is directly related to either a College curricular or cocurricular activity, and all curricular and cocurricular activities have observable, measurable learning outcomes, Minnesota West ensures that evidence supports all contributions made to the educational experience.

Sources

- MW Policy: 3.4 Admissions

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

Governing Board

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees (The Board) appointed by the governor, including three members who are students who have attended an for at least one year and are enrolled at the time of appointment at least half time in a degree, diploma, or certificate program in an institution governed by the board. The Board has responsibility for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations.

The Board's "Extraordinary Impact Strategic Framework" document states that its core commitments are "to ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans, be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs, and deliver to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option."

Minnesota Statute 136F.06, Powers and Duties gives the Board general authority over state colleges and universities and all related property. This includes prescribing conditions of admission, establishing tuition and fees, approving courses of study, awarding degrees and certificates, contracting, and adopting policies for the institutions comprising Minnesota State.

The Charter of the Board of Trustees gives the Board responsibility to exercise independent judgment and to act in what they believe to be the best interests of Minnesota State in pursuit of its educational mission. The Board operates under a code of conduct as stated in Minnesota State

Board Policies and Procedure 1C.: System management, which ensures an individual institution's preservation and enhancement.

The Board gives full authority and responsibility for leadership, management, and operation of the system to the Minnesota State chancellor. The chancellor is responsible for providing academic leadership to the system's colleges and universities, ensuring effective and efficient management and operation of the system's carrying out board policies, recommending operating and capital budgets to the board, and planning for the current and long-term educational needs of Minnesota.

Members of the Board "strive to make informed decisions based on sufficient information, thoughtful deliberation and comprehensive understanding of issues." To achieve that goal, Board members gather information by listening, asking questions, analyzing materials, and exploring issues thoroughly with other trustees, faculty, staff, students and constituency groups. The Board's Code of Conduct ensures that the governing board listens to and considers interests of internal and external constituencies. To assure that student perspectives are considered, Minnesota State Policy 2.03 promotes student involvement in system, college, and university decision making. Minnesota State Policy 3.1 outlines student rights and responsibilities.

The Board's Code of Conduct Part 5, outlines conflicts of interest and provisions for dealing with them. Prohibited activities listed in the Code of Conduct include "use of a Board position to secure benefits, unauthorized communication of information subject to confidentiality, and undo use of influence."

Institutional Administrative Organization

The College President is the Chief Executive Officer of Minnesota West and is guided by Minnesota State Policy 4.2. The President reports to the Chancellor and is responsible for leading the College faculty, staff, and students in developing and implementing the College mission. The institution's mission must be consistent with the Minnesota State Board of Trustees mission and goals. The President is the primary spokesperson for College interests and consults regularly with other senior administrators, students, faculty, staff, and members of the greater community. Presidential duties and responsibilities include providing academic leadership, allocating College resources, employing personnel, complying with Minnesota State policies and procedures, and implementing strategic plans for both Minnesota West and Minnesota State. The president advises the chancellor, system office staff, and the Board of Trustees on matters of system policy as appropriate, and otherwise administers and supports all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities policies and programs.

The President's Cabinet consists of senior administrators that work together to discuss current issues and to plan for the future. The current President's Cabinet consists of the President, the Provost, the Vice President of Finance and Facilities, Vice President of Strategy, and the Chief Human Resources Officer. The Presidential cabinet considers minutes and messages from advisory boards, program reviews, accreditation reports, enrollment data and projections, reports from external audits of systems or departments, and, in the past year, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. An administrative assistant records the team's actions and decisions and posts them

on a shared website. At least four times per year, the cabinet holds institution-wide meetings to share information.

The President's cabinet meets regularly with the Faculty Shared Governance Council to comply with Article 8 of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) Master Agreement. Minutes of these meetings are posted on a shared website.

The Minnesota West Provost serves on the leadership team and provides professional advice on executive leadership and academic planning and processes. The Provost is responsible for initiating, planning, implementing, managing, and evaluating all projects and tasks assigned by the President. The Provost oversees all credit-bearing course work in approved program areas. The Provost also monitors progress towards achieving Strategic Plan goals, and several College budgets, including those for equipment, technology, and academic affairs. The Provost coordinates HLC accreditation and individual program accreditation efforts, conducts academic program reviews, recommends policy changes or program improvements, and directs the posting and publication of all relevant college documents and reports. The Provost maintains a working knowledge of College finances and personnel. In the absence of the President, the Provost serves as the College's chief executive.

The Vice President of Finance and Facilities coordinates and directs all College administration services. The Vice President of Finance and Facilities oversees human resources, business offices, facilities, and auxiliary enterprises for the entire College. This officer reports to the President and supervises the College business manager.

The Vice President of Strategy coordinates and directs all student affairs, the Energy Center, and Customized Training/Continuing Education (CT/CE). This officer recruits, hires, and supervises project coordinators, faculty, and support staff for CT/CE, cooperates with business, industry, and government agencies and leaders to develop innovative programs that provide relevant training and retraining for workers in the region. The Vice President of Strategy reports to the College Provost.

The Senior Human Resource Officer is responsible for campus safety, payroll, insurance, contract interpretations, position descriptions, retirement plans, recruitment and vacancy filling, requests for reasonable accommodations, sabbatical processing, track classification evaluations, and unclassified staff development. The Senior Human Resource Officers is also the college Affirmative Action Officer. This office is based on the Canby campus.

The Dean of Students Services oversees enrollment, admissions, registration, orientation, counseling, student success activities, student records, placement, housing and financial aid services at the campus level.

The Dean of Liberal Arts, Dean of Nursing and Science, Dean of Allied Health, Dean of Trades and Services, and Dean of Management Programs develop, evaluate, execute, and monitor department and technical programs within their respective areas. In addition, the academic deans supervise faculty and staff, work with faculty on curricular projects, and conduct program reviews.

Faculty and staff participate in all major policy and curriculum decisions through meet and confer structures established through employee labor agreements. Those structures are described in later chapters of this report.

The governing structure of Minnesota State and Minnesota West allows the institution the autonomy to make decisions good for students and its own operations. Governance is always guided by the College mission.

Sources

- Mn Statute 136f.06 Powers and Duties
- MnState "Extraordinary Impact" Strategic Framework
- MnState MSCF Contract
- MnState Policy 1C
- MnState Policy 3.1 Student Rights
- MnState Policy: 2.03 Student Involvement
- MnState Policy: 4.2 Appointment of Presidents
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

Minnesota State and Minnesota West Community & Technical College encourage scholarship, free expression and exchange of ideas, and the rights of individuals to claim and control their own intellectual property.

Syllabi

Minnesota State Policy 3.22.1 specifies that syllabi are created by and reflect the creative work of faculty members. Each syllabus must "contain the elements of the corresponding course outline" and "standards for evaluation of student learning." Syllabi may include additional information that "reflects the creative work of the faculty member."

The Minnesota State College Faculty Contract (MSCF) specifies that faculty members have the right to select all teaching materials. Each faculty member also has the right to teach "in an atmosphere of free intellectual inquiry." Instructors may not be subjected to any restraints or harassment that would impair teaching.

The Faculty Handbook and the Curriculum Development Manual and related documents also articulate the faculty's academic freedom.

Freedoms

Minnesota West Policy 3.1 outlines student rights and responsibilities, including freedom to learn, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. Students have the right to assemble, to select speakers, and to discuss issues of their choice (MnWest Policy 3.1.4). Student-funded publications must be free of censorship and advance approval, and their editors and managers must be free to develop their own editorial and news coverage policies (MnWest Policy 3.1.5).

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Minnesota State Policy 3.26 and 3.27 address copyright and intellectual property rights for students and staff. Specifically, Policy 3.26 states that "rights in scholarly works belong to the faculty member or student who created the work." Minnesota State Policy 5.22 discusses copyright and academic freedom pertaining to the use of computers. The Faculty Handbook addresses copyright law for faculty and staff.

Sources

- FED FERPA
- MnState MSCF Contract
- MnState Policy: 3.26 Intellectual Property
- MnState Policy: 3.27 Copyrights
- MnState Policy: 3-22 Course Syllabi and Outlines
- MnState Policy: 5.22 Acceptable Use of Computers and IT Resources
- MW Curriculum Development Manual
- MW Faculty Handbook
- MW Policy: 3.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

Minnesota West's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

Academic Integrity

Minnesota West's policy 5.22.1 on the Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources outlines what is acceptable use while not expanding, diminishing or altering academic freedom. The complete Minnesota West Student Code of Conduct defines and clarifies what constitutes a violation and specifies disciplinary actions that the College can take to respond to violations. Most course syllabi include links to the policy, which is posted on the College website.

The primary responsibility for guiding students in the ethical use of information resources belongs to the faculty who require research projects for their courses. Classroom instructors are informed and supported by Library and Academic Resources Center (LARC) staff who monitor research activities and stay apprised of changes in laws and public policies involving copyright and intellectual property. LARC staff present copyright information to new students at orientations, in classrooms, and at workshops for faculty duty days. They prepare and regularly update online presentations on fair use of intellectual property to keep faculty, staff, and students informed.

When instructors detect cases of academic misconduct, they complete an Academic Integrity Infraction form and submit it to the appropriate administrator. If the administrator's investigation confirms the violation, the violator must accept the consequences specified by the faculty member, and a misconduct report is added to the student's permanent record. Violations are infrequent..

Institutional Research

As is outlined in the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) contract (Article 23, Section 4, subdivision 1 and 2):

Faculty are entitled to complete ownership and control of a patentable discoveries or inventions, or of intellectual property and copyrighted material, except where the faculty member's normal workload was reduced for purposes of the development project, where the college has provided substantial support for or involvement in the project., or where the inventions or discoveries are produced as a result of agreements of contracts between the college and external sponsors. Intellectual property produced during a sabbatical leave is considered scholarly work.

When faculty conduct research that includes human subjects, they must submit a proposal for research to the Ethics and Standards in Research committee.

Sources

- MnState MSCF Contract
- MW Academic Infraction Form
- MW Policy 3.6 Student Code of Conduct
- MW Policy: 5.22.1 Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Minnesota West has historically been committed to behaving and serving its constituents in ethical, responsible, and transparent ways.

College policies and procedures have evolved and are regularly assessed and consistently enforced to ensure that students, faculty, employees, and administrators understand and carry on the honorable traditions that have shaped this venerable institution.

College governing boards, both at the state level (Minnesota State) and locally (the President's Cabinet and meet and confer committees) are guided by tradition and the College's mission, core commitments and values. Students, faculty, staff, and advisory boards participate in decision making. College budget development involves all who are affected, and regular financial audits show responsible allocations and use of funds.

Students, faculty, and staff are apprised of laws and ethical practices dealing with private information and intellectual property, and policies and procedures are in place to ensure that those practices are followed.

Voices that express challenging or divergent ideas are welcomed on campuses. Diverse ideas are expressed in a variety of ways, including through fine art, performance art, lectures, and written materials.

Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills, and time and money are available for them to continue their education and training. Individual accomplishments are acknowledged publicly and rewarded financially in compliance with current contracts.

College reports and policies are comprehensive and posted on the College website and available in print.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

Minnesota West's courses and programs are current and require levels of performance appropriate to the credentials awarded, as evidenced by the College's membership in the Minnesota State College and University System (Minnesota State); its adherence to the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum; Minnesota State Transfer Pathways; local oversight by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC); the College's Curriculum Development Manual; frequent program review; program-level admission requirements; federal credit hour requirements; accreditation by regional and national regulatory bodies; academic program guides; and the Institutional Learning Outcomes curriculum map.

Membership in the Minnesota State College and University System

Minnesota West is a two-year college that was founded in 1936 as Worthington Junior College. It became part of the state-wide system of two-year colleges in 1964, and part of Minnesota West Community and Technical College in 1995. As one of 37 Minnesota State colleges, its courses, programs, and student outcomes are regularly and objectively evaluated by faculty, administration, and both campus and college-wide committees. Courses and programs are also reviewed by Minnesota State compliance and transfer specialists, faculty and program directors from other Minnesota State institutions, and the University of Minnesota. Higher education institutions from neighboring states also work with Minnesota West faculty to develop two-plus-two transfer and other articulation agreements.

Minnesota Transfer Curriculum

The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) is the result of collaboration among all two-year and four-year public colleges and universities in Minnesota to help students transfer successfully completed general education coursework seamlessly among state institutions. Students who complete the MnTC can transfer to any other Minnesota public baccalaureate degree-granting university having fulfilled all lower division general education requirements.

The MnTC requires students to complete 40 credits selected from ten goal areas. A single course may apply in up to two goal areas; however, credits are only counted once in the total. The MnTC grade point average is calculated using grades of A-D (passing grades) earned in all MnTC courses, including both Minnesota West and transfer grades. Students must earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00.

See the example ENGL 1101 Composition 1 course outline in which MnTC goals are aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes.

Minnesota State Transfer Pathway Articulation

Minnesota State Transfer Pathways are frameworks established by Minnesota State to allow students to complete an associate degree in a particular discipline at a two-year college and then transfer to one of the seven state universities to complete a bachelor's degree. To develop the pathways, several statewide, discipline-specific groups, comprised of both two-year and four-year faculty, met and standardized learning goals and specific core competencies for majors in several transfer-level degrees, including communications, education, law enforcement, and others. The Transfer Pathway framework allows Minnesota West students to transfer seamlessly to any state four-year university without having to take extra classes. The Communication Studies Associate of Arts degree and Law Enforcement Associate of Science Degree are two examples.

Academic Affairs and Standards Committee (AASC)

Program quality assurance and consistency is monitored by Minnesota West's Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) that meets monthly during the academic year. The primary responsibilities of the AASC are:

- To process curricular changes approved by divisions and/or the Transfer Pathways/Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Oversight Committee that must be submitted to Minnesota State;
- To provide support and assistance to divisions and/or Transfer Pathways /Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Oversight Committee;
- To establish and monitor systems for maintaining curriculum records, course outlines, and course descriptions;
- To ensure the academic integrity of all proposals presented to AASC;
- To update and revise curricular processes (Curriculum Development Manual p. 12 – 14).

The AASC consists of two-thirds faculty and one-third administrators and/or other staff. To ensure equal representation among the five College campuses, academic division chairs and the

presidents of both the north and south chapters of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) organization participate on the AASC. Administrators include the College Provost, academic Deans, and directors and coordinators of areas in the institution that impact academics, such as the library, marketing, customized training, and management programs. Up to two additional faculty members may be appointed to the AASC to ensure each College campus is fairly represented (Curriculum Development Manual p. 12 – 14).

Curriculum Development Manual

The Curriculum Development Manual ensures consistent formats for articulating learning outcomes. Templates for course outlines and course syllabi reduce redundancies. Along with providing necessary common forms, the Curriculum Development Manual provides guidance for writing learning outcomes and required approval pathways for all curricular activities.

Program Review

The program review process plays a large role in monitoring the currency and effectiveness of Minnesota West's curriculum. Program reviews serve several purposes:

- To evaluate programs by comparing them to other similar programs in the system;
- To ensure broad involvement of all department faculty in the analysis, evaluation, and decision-making for that program;
- To use the results of the review to make informed decisions regarding strategic planning, curriculum development, and budgeting, all with a focus on continuous improvement.

Program reviews include an efficiency analysis that provides data regarding equipment and supply expenditures, personnel expenditures, tuition and fees, and other revenue. In addition, the reviews calculate and compare the College's cost per each full year equivalent (FYE) student to Minnesota State's costs for each FYE student, the College's cost per FYE faculty compared to Minnesota State's cost, and student FYE to faculty FYE ratios. Reviews also consider average class size, graduation rates, job placement rates, and assessment of student learning to determine program effectiveness and viability.

Regular analysis of the data allows Minnesota West decision-makers to recognize trends that indicate general success or areas that need attention and can inform decisions to change, relocate, replicate, or discontinue College programs. The primary purpose of program review is continuous improvement.

Program-Level Admission Requirements

Minnesota State Board Policy 3.36 on Academic Programs details the framework and basic structure for all Minnesota West programs. Additional program-level admissions requirements are set by each College program with support and guidance from program advisory committees and state accrediting standards.

Federal credit hour requirements are determined by the Minnesota State System Board Policy 3.36.1 & Minnesota West Policy 3.29 .

Accreditation by Regional and National Bodies

Minnesota West submits to regular external reviews (outside of Minnesota State)) by regional and national accrediting bodies. At present, Minnesota West boasts active membership and accreditation from the following entities:

- - Minnesota Board of Nursing Accreditation
 - American Dental Association Accreditation
 - Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) Accreditation
 - Commission of Dental Accreditation
 - Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) Accreditation:
 - Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs Accreditation (www.caahep.org). Medical Assistant Program upon recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAAERB); Surgical Technology Program upon recommendation of the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA)
 - Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)
 - Minnesota Board of Barber and Cosmetologist Examiners Accreditation
 - Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training Accreditation
 - Minnesota Department of Agriculture Accreditation
 - Minnesota Department of Rehabilitation Services Accreditation
 - Minnesota State Approving Agency for Veterans Education Accreditation
 - National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences Accreditation
 - National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) Accreditation
 - Professional Certificate Approval Program (PCAP)
 - Professional Educator's Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)
 - United States Department of Education Accreditation

Academic Program Guides

Academic Program Guides are linked to the Minnesota West website and in the college course catalog. Program guides list course numbers and course credit values and recommended paths to help students progress through each semester to graduation. Program curriculum maps chart specific learning outcomes and when those outcomes will be introduced, reinforced, mastered and assessed. In addition, each program is directly tied to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Programs are designed to lead to Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees as well as diplomas or certificates.

Associate of Arts (AA) degrees require successful completion of 60 credits, including 40 credits from within the 10 areas of the MnTC and 20 addition credits of general education electives.

Associate of Science (AS) degrees require successful completion of 30 credits of general education courses from 6 of the 10 areas of the MnTC. The remaining 30 credits are comprised of technical or program major courses. The AS degree allows for transfer to a baccalaureate degree at a four-year institution.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees can range from 60-72 credits, depending on the specific program. An AAS degree requires at least 15 credits of general education courses with the remaining credits comprised of technical or program major courses. The AAS degree provides students the training and skills required to enter the workforce.

Diploma programs require successful completion of 30-72 credits and are designed to offer field-specific courses that train graduates to advance directly into a specific work force. If diplomas are awarded for less than 45 credits, general education courses may be required as part of the program and are established through consultation with the program advisory committee. If diplomas are awarded for 45 credits or more, 15 percent of the credits must be in general education, unless recipients receive advisory committee approval for requiring a minimum of six general education credits. Several diploma programs are available at Minnesota West including Automotive Technician and Lamb and Wool Management.

Minnesota West certificate programs require successful completion of 9-30 credits and are designed to provide recipients with essential skills required for specific jobs.

The Common Course Learning Outcome Template

Minnesota West requires faculty to complete a Common Course Outline for all new and existing courses. Each Minnesota West course requires a course outline approved by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) that includes the course description and applicable Minnesota Transfer Curriculum areas (see the argument for Core Component 3B). In addition, the course outline specifies prerequisites for the course (if any); the credit value; lab and lecture hours; topics to be covered; and specific Student Learning Outcomes. A course outline for CMST 1101, Public Speaking is an example.

Minnesota West articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate and certificate programs as evidenced by the connection of the Course Student Learning Outcomes, Technical Program Outcomes, and Institutional Learning outcomes.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

In 2019, Minnesota West reviewed all Liberal Arts courses to determine compliance with the MnTC and improve Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to ensure each outcome was observable and measurable. The review also included Program Learning Outcomes.

The comprehensive review of course outlines provided opportunity to transition to a simpler assessment model. The current Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) clearly state what students are expected to learn and demonstrate the rigor of courses. Faculty were encouraged to review the current course outline for each course. SLOs were edited or recreated to reflect the current

rigor of courses and were included on the revised Course Outline. For example, general education courses began with a review of each course outline by the respective faculty member(s). The revised COs were then submitted to faculty in each respective division (i.e. Humanities, Social & Behavioral Science/History, Math/Science) for further discussion or editing. Following final review by the division faculty, the CO was submitted to the Liberal Arts Transfer Pathway (LATP) committee and, finally, to the Dean of Liberal Arts prior to being submitted for final approval by the AASC. For a more extensive review of this process please see the argument for Core Component 4B.

Technical Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Technical Program Learning Outcomes (TPLOs) are reviewed each year to ensure required content and skills are addressed in each respective course. The TPLOs represent the knowledge and skills students will possess after graduating from each respective program. The TPLOs are evaluated by the faculty and program coordinator or lead faculty member to confirm that the required program TPLOs are addressed in ways that are observable and measurable.

An extensive process to review all TPLOs began in the 2019-2020 academic year. The interim Dean of Academic Affairs worked with the technical program faculty to review and edit all learning outcomes for each respective technical program. TPLOs were plotted on a curriculum map to indicate in which course the specific TPLO was introduced, reinforced, mastered and assessed. After the curriculum map was completed, it was submitted to the AASC for discussion and approval. Once approved, the TPLO curriculum maps were uploaded onto the Minnesota West website. The Electrician and Welding TPLO maps are examples.

In addition to the TPLOs, most Minnesota West technical programs, such as those involving health care, include state and national tests that students must pass to earn certifications or licenses required for employment. Other programs, such as Power Sports, involve optional licenses or certifications from outside organizations (i.e., Power Sports faculty encourage students to test for the Arctic Cat CatMaster certification). When no other national tests or standards are required, most technical programs use the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) exams to measure student outcomes.

Students in agricultural and Farm Business Management programs must pass state exams to become certified for commercial pesticide applications, chemical spraying, and animal waste disposal. Students who own and operate large vehicles may need to pass exams to receive special driver's licenses.

An electrical journey worker's license requires 8,000 hours (about 11 months) of work experience. A student who successfully completes the two-year Electrical program at Minnesota West is credited with 2,000 hours of experience. Students must work in additional 6,000 hours in the field to be eligible to take the journey worker's exam. After another 2,000 hours, 10,000 total hours, graduates working in the profession may take the master's electricians exam.

In Dental Assisting, the Minnesota Dental Board requires a state jurisprudence exam, state registration exam, and a Dental Assisting National Board exam.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) requires EMT basic and refresher exams, an online National Certification Exam, first responder basic and refresher exams, and a CPR/AED/FA exam. Successful graduates receive two-year American Heart Association certification.

Surgical Technology, Medical Lab Technology, and Phlebotomy programs include certification exams that students complete after finishing their coursework. Medical Assistant graduates are eligible to take the American Association of Medical Assistants CMS exam. For Minnesota West to maintain its AAMA accreditation, at least 70 percent of graduates must take and pass this exam during a five-year period, a goal that the college has always met.

Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) students must pass the NCLEX-PN exam to be licensed to practice after graduation. Associate degree nursing program graduates must pass the NCLEX-RN exam to be licensed Registered Nurses. Both LPN and RN nursing graduates pass the state licensure exams at rates near or exceeding the state average each year. In FY19, the Minnesota West pass rate for practical nursing graduates was 97.96%, and for associate degree nursing, the pass rate was 77.94%.

Law Enforcement graduates must pass the Peace Officer Standard Testing (POST) exam to be licensed.

Cosmetology students must complete 1,550 hours of class work and pass a state certification exam before they can obtain a Minnesota license. Nail technician and Esthetician students must also pass Minnesota exams before they can obtain license to practice. Testing is conducted by an independent testing service.

Pass rates for Minnesota West students are outstanding in all technical fields. These successes strongly indicate that the College prepares student well for their future professions.

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

While each general education course adheres to the standards and competencies of the MnTC, Minnesota West also recognized a need to develop Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that address learning in all areas of the college, including cocurricular areas.

Minnesota West's Mission, Vision, and Values (as addressed in the argument for Criterion 1) were developed in 2017 and included in the Strategic Plan. The values were redefined in 2019 and became the ILOs. They are as follows:

Community Engagement & Courage – Learners develop the confidence, skills, and values to effectively recognize the needs of individuals, communities, and societies and make a commitment to constructively engage in social action.

Diversity & Inclusion – Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behavior to live, work, and communicate with people whose backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are different from their own as well as to consider the global impact of their decisions.

Innovation – Learners develop the ability to use knowledge, behaviors, skills, and experiences flexibly in new and unique situations to innovatively contribute to their field.

Integrity – Learners develop the confidence, skills, behaviors, and values to effectively discern life goals, form relationships, and shape their personal and professional identities to achieve fulfillment.

Student Success – Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to live balanced and fulfilling lives.

A campaign to link the ILOs to course Student Learning Outcomes and Technical Program Learning Outcomes began in 2019. Minnesota West expects that students will meet at least three of five ILOs in each course and technical program. Because some of the TPLOs were so specific to a respective program, Overview PLOs were created to connect them to the ILOs. The Overview PLOs focus not only on skill and content but also attitude, ethics, and standards of the respective profession. Many of the TPLOs are directly tied to program accrediting agencies.

Minnesota West strives to provide students with quality programs that are guided by the college's mission, vision, and values.

Program Advisory Committees

Minnesota West's Program Advisory committees are comprised of industry and community members and exist to offer advice and help facilitate curricular changes and program improvement. Technical faculty are required to meet with an advisory committee at least once per year. The advisory committee's role is to ensure the quality of program graduates by offering suggestions for improvements that will help the program grow and stay current. Advisory committees provide specifications, validation of course content, assessment of program quality, credibility, and assistance in adapting skill standards for local needs. Advisory committees must approve all curricular changes. The Minnesota State Advisory Committee Handbook (Curriculum Development Manual p. 11). offers more information.

Advisory committee meeting minutes are posted and archived on the College website.

REACH Concurrent Enrollment/NACEP

The REACH program is a collaboration between Minnesota West and area high schools. REACH concurrent enrollment offers qualified high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit in their high school during regular school hours. All REACH program courses are taught by pre-approved, fully credentialed high school instructors who partner with Minnesota West faculty mentors. All concurrent enrollment instructors at the high schools must meet the same minimum credential qualifications as Minnesota West faculty who

teach the assigned courses. Each REACH instructor is assigned to a Minnesota West mentor instructor who works with the instructor to share ideas, offer advice, ensure course rigor, complete assessment activities, and monitor compliance with the College's common course outline. High school faculty and students have access to the same College resources, such as the College Learning Management System, tutoring, library (databases and reference materials), and all Minnesota West facilities and events.

When high school instructors are assigned to teach REACH courses, they can request that a course shell be created in the College's Learning Management System (LMS), which is the Desire to Learn (D2L) Brightspace platform. The D2L platform contains a library of training resources for high school and College faculty as well as a collection site for such REACH data as syllabi, paired assessments, and communication logs. D2L Brightspace drop boxes are used to collect data and reports on mentoring activities and professional development achievements.

The Library and Academic Resource Center (LARC) and Tutor.com

A Library and Academic Resource Center (LARC) operates on five Minnesota West campuses. It serves to assist all students in any instructional mode with course access, tutoring, testing, computers, and general support.

College Learning Management System

As mentioned previously, Minnesota West uses Desire to Learn (D2L) Brightspace as its course management system. All online courses are offered via D2L. Faculty teaching face-to-face, via ITV and/or in a hybrid delivery model also use D2L for assessment of course requirements, communicating with students, and reporting grades. Some 87% of all College faculty use the D2L Brightspace learning management system for instruction, allowing most students to access their course materials, grades, and content whenever necessary. All faculty and staff complete and upload course, technical program, and cocurricular program assessments to the D2L Assessment Site.

Sources

- Mn State Transfer Pathways
- MnState Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)
- MW Academic Programs
- MW Auto Tech diploma
- MW CMST 1101 Course Outline
- MW Communication Studies AA
- MW Course Outline Form
- MW Curriculum Development Manual
- MW ELEC AAS Individual Learning Outcomes PLO Map
- MW ENGL 1101 Course Outline

- MW Institutional Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map
- MW Lamb and Wool Diploma
- MW Law Enforcement AS
- MW Policy: 3.29 Definition of College Credit
- MW Policy: 3.36.1 Academic Programs Part 3
- MW REACH Guide for Administrators Counselors Teachers
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023
- MW Welding Learning Outcomes

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)

In the early 1990s, the Minnesota Legislature mandated Minnesota's higher education systems to develop and implement the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC), a standard core curriculum for general education that could be completed by first- and second-year liberal areas students and provide seamless transfer among public institutions of higher learning.

The MnTC specifies learning objectives in ten major general education areas: Communication, Critical Thinking, Natural Sciences, Mathematical/Logical reasoning, History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Humanities and Fine Arts, Human Diversity, Global Perspective, Ethical and Civic Responsibility, and People and the Environment. Minnesota West's general education courses are designed to satisfy the MnTC requirements by addressing the objectives in each of the ten general education areas. Course Outlines are reviewed regularly by faculty, curriculum committees, the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC), and Minnesota State transfer specialists to ensure rigor and compliance.

While the MnTC provides the framework for general education, students have flexibility to choose courses within each of the ten areas. All courses have a Course Outline that includes observable and measurable student learning outcomes. Course Outlines dictate the content of the course regardless of the instructor, number of sections offered, or delivery method.

Course Syllabi

Faculty are required to provide a detailed syllabus to students within the first week of class. The syllabus lists important class information including the course description, assignments, the textbook, faculty office hours, class policies, and the assessments used to evaluate performance. Unlike the Course Outline, the syllabus is the intellectual property of the instructor. While several revisions have been made to the syllabus template, the most current form was approved in 2020. The syllabus template is available to faculty on the College website.

Minnesota Transfer Curriculum and Minnesota West ILOs

To earn an AA degree, a student must complete at least 60 credits, 40 of which must be general education courses selected from the MnTC's ten areas. Individual courses cannot be counted in more than two areas of emphasis, and no course can count more than once in areas 1-6. One-credit courses apply to the MnTC only if the student completes two or more one-credit courses in the same discipline (i.e., two semesters of Chorale or two semesters of Theater Production).

While the MnTC is primarily designed for students who seek AA degrees, it also is the basis for general education courses applicable to AS and AAS degrees and diplomas. Students who pursue AS degrees must successfully complete 30 semester credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the MnTC. At least 15 of the total credits required to complete AAS degree programs must be in general education and selected from at least three of the ten areas of the MnTC. Minnesota West degree and award requirements are listed on the College website.

In 2016, the Provost and the Liberal Arts curriculum committee conducted a comprehensive review of all courses in the MnTC to determine if they continued to align with the goals and competencies outlined by Minnesota State. While most of the courses were in alignment, some MnTC areas were determined to have insufficient course options for students. As a result, faculty reviewed their respective courses to determine if they met more than just one area. This allowed students more course options to satisfy respective transfer areas.

The MnTC was reviewed again during the 2019-2020 academic year during a campaign to review Student Learning Outcomes. Several general education courses added transfer curriculum areas to course outlines because the goals and competencies in that respective area were being taught in the course. Courses that were not on the transfer curriculum were evaluated and redesigned to qualify for inclusion in the transfer curriculum and afford students more course options and enhance transferability.

Culture Corner

As noted in the argument for Criterion One, Minnesota West created the Culture Corner in 2004. The Culture Corner provides services that improve the retention of students of color, as well as increase racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among undergraduate students. Activities offered through the Culture Corner include social and cultural events, cultural awareness programs, diversity training, assistance with financial aid and admissions applications, advising and related services for International students. It is the College's principal Office of Cultural Diversity. The Culture Corner strives to:

- encourage through sensitivity training and programming the development of a climate in which all cultures, especially persons of color, are appreciated as valued members of the campus community.
- increase minority enrollment at Minnesota West Community and Technical College by assisting the college's student recruitment efforts.
- increase the retention of minorities at the college by providing programs and services designed to help students achieve their academic and career aspirations.
- encourage and assist students of color with their academic and social adjustments to college life.
- serve as a liaison between students of color, the faculty, and administration.
- promote the positive image that all cultures contribute to the college and make the college experience a productive successful endeavor for all students at Minnesota West Community & Technical College.

The Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) of Diversity and Inclusion is mapped to most courses, Technical Programs and cocurricular areas. See Criterion 4.

The Nobles County Integration Collaborative

The Nobles County Integration Collaborative is housed on the Worthington Campus. This agency is a consortium of Worthington School District 518 and adjacent school districts that promote student success and community acceptance of differences by providing opportunities for students, families, and staff from diverse backgrounds to learn from and with one another. The goals of the collaborative are to promote cultural awareness, close achievement gaps, foster success in student achievement, increase and improve parent involvement and provide professional development opportunities to community members.

Strategic Inclusion Plan 2016-2021

Minnesota West developed a strategic inclusion plan that recognizes the increasing diversity of the communities the College serves. The Inclusion Plan is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of how best to meet the needs of students and communities. The Inclusion Plan reflects the importance placed on respecting the diversity of the College's students and communities.

The goals of the Inclusion Plan are to promote an inclusive, respectful and dynamic learning environment that provides opportunities to expand and advance diversity awareness and cultural competence for students. The Inclusion Plan reflects Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' (Minnesota State) Strategic Directions and Charting the Future Recommendations and is aligned with the diversity goals presented by the Minnesota State System Diversity Office.

Notable Faculty and Student Achievements

Minnesota State's two-year college instructors are not required to conduct research, but many Minnesota West instructors and administrators have contributed to greater bodies of knowledge in their fields. To cite a few examples, faculty members in Law Enforcement and History

authored open-access educational resources, and two History program faculty published books in their areas of expertise. Faculty in the Chemistry and Nursing programs co-authored articles in academic journals.

Other faculty members and administrators present their scholarship at academic or professional conferences or to the public. Instructors in the Dental Assistant, History, Information Technology, and Physics programs presented at regional research conferences, Psychology and History faculty presented their research findings in public forums, and instructors in the Farm Business Management Program regularly host public informational meetings on current agricultural topics, programs, and policies.

Instructors at Minnesota West also engage in creative work. Among the most notable contributions include English Department faculty authoring several children's books and editing and publishing Minnesota West's creative writing student journal *Unwound*. Music/Theater department faculty perform in or direct numerous area theatrical and choral performances annually.

Additionally, the faculty at Minnesota West are invested in and engaged in their communities. Faculty in the Computer Science/Mathematics Department facilitate coding clubs (Coder Dojo) for community youth and organize events to promote STEM education within the community, the Physics instructor hosts annual Star Parties (public telescope viewings), and a Plumbing Instructor volunteers on the local fire department. Many other faculty and administrators serve on advisory committees for local school districts and/or serve on the boards of local and regional religious and civic organizations.

Students at Minnesota West contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge as well. They participate in community events and engage in community outreach. Students volunteer as mentors and teachers in the Coder Dojo club, contribute creative writing pieces for Minnesota West's creative writing journal, serve on local boards, school committees and associations, and volunteer with local groups and community organizations.

Gender studies are Social/Behavioral Sciences/History courses. Some literature courses are specific to gender studies.

While Minnesota West embraces the LGBTQ+ community, no specific club or organization has been developed as of this writing. While there has been indicated interest, finalization of a formal student club/organization is not complete.

Sources

- APC Nobles County Integration Collaborative
- MnState Reimagining Minnesota State Envisioning Our Next 20 Years
- MnState Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)
- MW Course Outline Form
- MW Course Syllabus Template

- MW Institutional Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Minnesota West has adequate numbers of faculty and staff to oversee curriculum, assist students, and promote student learning in all its programs throughout the institution. Faculty and staff are evaluated regularly, engaged in professional development, and are accessible to students.

Based on the agreed language of Article 20, section 7 of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) Master Agreement, at least 70 percent of all Minnesota State faculty must be full time unlimited (Article 20, Section 7). At least 60 percent of total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) faculty must be unlimited full-time plus unlimited part-time minimum guarantee, a standard that Minnesota West consistently exceeds.

Faculty Diversity and Credentialing

Minnesota West is committed to Minnesota's statewide affirmative action efforts and providing equal employment opportunity to all employees and applicants in accordance with equal opportunity and affirmative action laws. No individual is discriminated against in terms and conditions of employment based on race, sex (including pregnancy), color, creed, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, marital status, familial status, status regarding public assistance, or membership in a local human rights

commission. Employment practices include but are not limited to the following: hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff, disciplinary action, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship.

The diversity of the faculty and staff for the years of 2015 through 2019 are summarized below.

Race/Ethnicity	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
AMER_IND_AK	0.98%	0.95%	0.93%	0.98%	0.97%
ASIAN	3.78%	4.05%	4.22%	4.53%	4.70%
BLACK	3.03%	3.15%	3.21%	3.56%	3.64%
HISP	1.92%	2.02%	2.17%	2.15%	2.40%
NAT_HAW-PI	0.11%	0.13%	0.12%	0.11%	0.10%
TWO_PLUS	1.09%	1.11%	1.14%	1.32%	1.26%
UNKNOWN	0.77%	1.00%	0.99%	0.98%	1.12%
WHITE	88.32%	87.60%	87.21%	86.36%	85.80%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Faculty Role in Curriculum Review

Minnesota West’s curriculum review process involves individual instructors, academic divisions, campus and college-wide committees, administrators and the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC). Curriculum changes follow a procedure outlined in the Curriculum Development Manual.

The curriculum change process is typically initiated by a member of the faculty and the respective Dean. The initiating faculty member proposes the curriculum change to his or her division chair, who then facilitates a discussion of the impact on individual courses and programs within the division. The proposal is then brought to all the division faculty for discussions, editing, and approval. This is typically done via the Brightspace Desire2Learn platform, as the divisions cross campuses.

The Liberal Arts Transfer Pathways (LATP) committee reviews all general education courses and program proposals and moves the proposed changes to the AASC. Technical Program changes are reviewed with the program faculty and division, the respective Dean, and then presented to the AASC.

If the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) approves the change, it becomes part of the curriculum and is added to the online college catalog and the next biennium’s printed catalog.

If the AASC rejects the change, the process begins again or is dropped. A sample AASC agenda is provided.

Minnesota State must approve any new program delivered online, onsite, or off-site. Minnesota State must also approve changes in locations or delivery methods for existing programs that the College wants to duplicate. All virtual degree or diploma-granting programs must also have Minnesota State approval.

To deliver degrees or diplomas online, a college must have accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). On May 13, 2004, Minnesota West received independent HLC accreditation to offer all its existing degree diploma programs online.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a set of survey components collected by the National Center for Education Statistics from 6,400 postsecondary institutions in the United States. In the 2019 report, Minnesota West was compared to 36 other institutions of equivalent size and other characteristics. Minnesota West had 93 FTE faculty compared to a median of 73 from the comparison group, and 16 instructional support staff compared to the median of 13.

Credentialing

College faculty teaching credit-based courses, counselors, and librarians meet all the College Faculty Credentialing requirements established by Minnesota State Board Policy 3.32 and Procedure 3.32.1. At Minnesota West, the Human Resource Office, in consultation with the Office of the Provost, manages the credentialing process for unlimited full-time (UFT), temporary-full time (TFT) faculty, temporary part-time (TPT) faculty, and adjunct faculty. The office of the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Liberal Arts manages external instructors, including high school instructors teaching PSEO and concurrent enrollment courses. High school instructors teaching concurrent enrollment courses and customized training instructors teaching for-credit courses are managed through the K-12 system of credentialing as is required by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Minimum Qualifications – Technical Instruction

In addition to satisfying established Minnesota State policies of credentialing, technical faculty experience must include two full-time years (or equivalent) of verified, paid work-related experience in the credentialed field. At least one year of this experience must be within the five years immediately preceding the date of application for credentialing. This requirement can be waived if the candidate has two years of successful full-time post-secondary teaching experience in the credentialed field within the past five years. State or national industry licensure or certifications considered essential for practice in the assigned field are also required. For example, practical nursing instructors must be registered nurses and law enforcement faculty must have POST Board certificates.

Online Credentialing Process

Unlimited full-time (UFT), unlimited part-time (UPT), temporary full-time (TFT), and temporary part-time (TPT) faculty complete an online credentialing application that is reviewed by a Minnesota West Human Resources Officer. Newly hired instructors must submit official college transcripts, employment verifications of related occupational experience, relevant industry licensures or certifications, and any other documentation Minnesota State requires. Exceptions to the process may include:

- Pending credentials: Individuals who are close to meeting minimum qualifications may be hired for no more than two consecutive semesters.
- Special expertise: Individuals with special expertise in specialized areas may be hired to teach courses in those areas. Examples are coaches. The College prefers to hire master's-prepared coaches but also looks for specific athletic skills and experiences.
- Renowned qualifications: Individuals who have achieved exceptional status or recognition in particular areas may be hired to teach courses in those areas. This is a rarely used options and usually considered only for seminar classes. The College has employed guest faculty in bioscience who held doctorate degrees but did not meet the credential for bioscience.
- Emerging fields: Individuals involved in emerging areas of study for which preparation requirements and experiences are not yet clearly defined (i.e., alternative energies) may be hired until minimum qualifications are established.

Hiring Process

When vacancies occur, the Human Resource Office, in consultation with the respective Dean, works directly with leaders to solicit interested employees and students to join a search committee. Strict rules of confidentiality regarding applicants and their personal information are explained to the committee members in a mandatory online orientation video and enforced during the hiring process. Interested candidates submit applications to the Human Resources office during a specified time through an online application system. Once the application deadline passes, the search committee reviews applications and chooses candidates to invite for an interview. Reference-checking is initiated on all candidates invited for an interview. After interviews with candidates and further deliberation, the search committee recommends a minimum of two candidates to be considered finalists. The committee chair summarizes the qualifications of final candidates and submits names in unranked order to the Provost and College President for consideration. The President is the final hiring authority.

REACH concurrent enrollment faculty are hired through consultation with the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Liberal Arts and appropriate other deans. Instructors at partner high schools submit their credentials, along with a list of any courses they would like to teach. Their credentials are reviewed to ensure they meet the minimum faculty qualifications for the subject area. When REACH instructors are approved, they are notified and assigned Minnesota West faculty mentors.

Teaching and Learning Competency Requirement

Minnesota State Board Policy 3.32 and Procedure 3.32.1 also require that all new full-time unlimited instructors hired after July 2006 complete a non-credit course titled Philosophy of Community and Technical College Education. The course focuses on the evolution, mission, purpose, and operating features of community and technical colleges. It is a self-directed course managed by Minnesota State and offered online via Brightspace Desire2Learn.

New instructors must also complete three additional credit-bearing courses within three years of their employment at Minnesota West. These courses cover course construction, teaching and instructional methods, and student outcomes assessment and evaluation. Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) developed the undergraduate courses, which are available online, on ITV, or in two-week face-to-face course blocks offered during the summer. New faculty who can document evidence of completing equivalent coursework or who have three years of successful full-time secondary, postsecondary, industry, or trade apprenticeship teaching experience may be exempt from taking the credit-bearing courses. The Teacher Education Series (TES) course at Bemidji State University (BSU) or the University of Minnesota also satisfy the teaching and learning competencies.

These courses are intended to provide the faculty with insight into the culture and climate of teaching at a community or technical college in Minnesota, lay the groundwork for excellence in teaching and learning, and ensure that faculty possess the minimum instructional knowledge, skill, and practice components foundational for the community and technical college teaching environment.

Faculty Evaluations

All instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with Minnesota West Policy 4.9.1, Faculty Performance Management. Probationary instructors are evaluated in several classes during each year of their three-year probationary period. An announced classroom evaluation occurs during fall semester and an unannounced visit occurs in the spring of each probationary year. When courses are delivered online, the instructor must permit the respective dean to enter and review the course. Unlimited full-time or non-probationary faculty members are evaluated on a three-year rotating schedule. Adjunct instructors are evaluated during their first four terms and on a three-academic year rotation after that. Evaluations may be performed more frequently if problems occur or are suspected.

The objective of faculty evaluation is to encourage excellence in instruction and identify areas of instruction that need improvement. Each faculty evaluation includes a written self-evaluation, a student evaluation, a classroom observation, an evaluation conference, and an optional peer review. The self-evaluation requires instructors to identify and describe their perceived accomplishments and areas for growth. Online instructors also complete separate reviews of their online courses.

The student evaluation tool for faculty is created on SurveyMonkey and is composed of questions developed by instructors and related to student learning outcomes for each course. Students evaluate their own growth relative to assessments in the course and methods of instruction. During classroom observations, Deans complete observation reports that they share

with instructors at evaluation conferences. Deans evaluate online courses by logging in to courses taught by the instructors being evaluated. Evaluation conferences occur after the semester ends and bring together all elements of the evaluation process. The administrator and instructor then sign a summary report of the evaluation for the instructor's file. This file is maintained in the Human Resources Office.

Instructors who are being evaluated are encouraged but not required to schedule a peer evaluation in their classrooms during the process. Instructors select their own peer evaluators to complete Peer Classroom Observation Reports and then discuss the report with the peer evaluators as soon as possible after the observation. Instructors then decide whether to share the report with administration.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, faculty may employ their own methods of obtaining student feedback. These methods include informal conversations with students, solicitation of feedback via email, evaluation tools provided to the students via D2L Brightspace, and/or mid-term or end-of-term surveys. GradesFirst is also used to enhance communication with students and is an additional source to gain feedback.

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Minnesota West supports and empowers faculty to enhance instructional effectiveness and promote student academic achievement. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is designed to help the College meet those goals. Each campus has two CTL campus coordinators to facilitate campus activities. CTL goals and an annual CTL report is submitted to the College Provost. Minnesota West employs one faculty CTL coordinator who is responsible for ensuring training activities are being offered and preparing the annual report.

College-wide CTL goals focus on three principal areas: teaching and pedagogy, technology and technical training, and cross-campus information sharing. Training requests are derived from the annual Assessment Summary Report and faculty evaluations. The CTL leaders arrange to provide training in these areas. Workshops and training sessions are hosted by individual campuses throughout the year but are open to all faculty face-to-face, through Interactive Television (ITV), or Zoom. A spring semester duty day for all College instructors is dedicated to CTL activities and hosted by one of the five campuses on a rotating schedule. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all CTL activities were offered via Zoom during the spring of 2020 and all the 2020-2021 academic year. Faculty members consider CTL an effective vehicle to help them improve teaching and learning both on their own campus and College wide.

Academic Divisions

Minnesota West's current academic divisions include Allied Health, Computer Science and Business, Humanities and Fine Arts, Science and Math, Social & Behavioral Sciences/History, Trades and Services, and Transportation.

Each academic division has a faculty-elected division chair who serves for at least one two-year term. Assignment to both campus and College-wide committees is based on recommendations

from division chairs. Currently, the division chairs are required to serve on the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) and participate in monthly Deans, Directors, and Division meetings.

Impact of Corona Virus (COVID-19) on Course Delivery

In March 2020, the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities extending the spring break to allow for administrative planning on course and program delivery state-wide. All colleges and universities were directed by Chancellor Devinder Malhotra of Minnesota State, who, with guidance from Governor Tim Waltz, created a fluid plan to continue to offer all courses and programs online using D2L Brightspace, if possible, for the remainder of the semester. Courses and technical programs that required face-to-face delivery were adapted using extended dates of delivery, social distancing, proper hygiene, and disinfectant practices to ensure the safety of faculty, staff, and students.

Minnesota West has several general education courses that have laboratory requirements. Faculty were able to bring equipment to their homes and work with students using the Zoom platform. Technical Program delivery adjustments varied depending upon the program requirements. Most allied health programs (i.e., Surgical Technology, Radiology Technician, Medical Laboratory Technician) restarted April 22, 2020, and extended the program into the summer to minimize the number of students gathering at one time. The Law Enforcement program adopted a similar practice and is used as an example:

This plan was in place for a 16-student cohort. However, one of the cohorts contracted Covid-19 prior to classes resuming. That student could come back later to finish their spring semester classes. The cohort was split into two groups and each group spent the next 3 weeks together completing the following lab classes: 1. Patrol Operations, 2. Crime Scene Processing, 3. Traffic Stops, 4. Accident Investigation/DUI Enforcement – Investigation/Radar Operation/Radio Operation

One group spent the morning with either Mr. Schwint or Mr. Cumiskey and then switched to the opposite instructor in the afternoon.

Classes resumed on the April 24 and students completed their classes the week of May 11. Below are the instructions we sent to our students prior to resuming. We maintained this process for the duration of the training. The students were met at the main entrance and completed a health screening before being able to enter. The students were also told if they felt, or became, ill they should stay home. They were told if they contracted Covid-19, they would be able to finish training later at no extra cost to them.

1) All students will be required to always wear facemasks while in attendance in any college instruction.

2) Safety glasses will also be required depending on the training, which is standard practice in law enforcement.

3) We will have face shields available for student and faculty use.

4) We will spread laptops around in the lab to increase social distance.

5) Where students are assigned to patrol cars, we will maintain those assigned vehicles through the duration of the session.

6) Student workers will be engaged in patrol car sanitation after each use. Facilities staff will provide instruction and necessary oversight to assure compliance with MDH/CDC guidance.

Our plan is to begin on Wednesday, April 24 at 8:00 a.m. We will have all students enter through the main door for screening. Once through screening, they will go to the LAWE labs for further instruction. Plans for facility use will be limited to the LAWE spaces upstairs, outside activities when possible, and instruction at the fairgrounds. Ron Schwint and Mike Cumiskey will keep regular communications with facilities staff to assure sanitation processes are maintained.

Students, technical programs, cocurricular programs, and Institutional Learning Outcomes were a priority when considering course delivery, as the need to meet these outcomes and assess the effectiveness is critical to the College's success. See the argument for Criterion 4B.

Beginning the last week of March 2020, weekly Cabinet Convening meetings were held via Zoom to bring the College faculty and staff up to date on the latest guidance from the Governor and Chancellor and the impacts specific to Minnesota West. In the Spring of 2020, Cabinet members included the Minnesota West President, the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Finance and Facilities, and the Director of Human Resources. Faculty and staff were not only advised about state mandates, course delivery options, human resource changes and benefits, but were also provided support.

These meetings were attended by more than 100 faculty and staff. Meetings continued weekly through the end of the semester and continued with one meeting per month through the summer.

The Cabinet Convenings continued into the 2020-21 academic year. The membership of the Cabinet changed and included the Minnesota West President, Provost, Vice President of Finance and Facilities, Interim Vice President of Strategy, and Director of Human Resources.

Professional Development Opportunities

Minnesota West understands that excellence is not static but must seek continuous improvement. Professional development and training are important. To that end, faculty and staff seek out and invest in activities that lead to professional development and continuous self-improvement.

Minnesota West provides instructors, administrators, and staff with professional development opportunities and funds to improve their teaching and instructional methods. Each year faculty are encouraged to apply for grants from the Faculty Professional Development Fund to assist in the cost of attending conferences, workshops, and seminars. This fund is administered by a committee of Minnesota West faculty and annually disburses \$50,000 to qualified applicants.

Many Minnesota West administrators, faculty and staff attend professional conferences each year to improve their teaching, widen their knowledge base, or enhance their skills. Conferences also help employees establish and maintain support networks in their respective disciplines or positions. More technical instructors than liberal arts instructors attend professional conferences each year. A few members of the College staff also participate in professional conferences.

Diversity and inclusion have been a staple of Minnesota West's professional development offerings over the past several years. As an example, in May 2019 the College-wide professional development day featured Dr. Tony Byers. Dr. Byers led a day-long workshop focused on the strategies presented in his recent book *The Multiplier Effect of Inclusion* (2018). In August 2020, Keith Edwards spoke at the campus CTL Day on the topic "Becoming an Anti-Racist Ally." As a follow-up to his presentation, Edwards conducted a series of discussions for interested faculty over the course of the following month.

In addition to campus-wide CTL Days, Minnesota West frequently offers additional opportunities for faculty and course development. In 2019 and 2020, faculty from the Law Enforcement and Communications programs conducted Open Educational Resource (OER) learning circles for those faculty interested in creating or modifying their courses to be OER-compliant (all-digital resources). OER Mini-Grants were made available to faculty in 2019 to encourage faculty to create OER courses. The Minnesota West K-12 Collaboration Manager also conducted a book discussion group. Faculty from a variety of disciplines gathered over the course of the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters to discuss *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, edited by Sun Yung Shin (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2016). A second cohort of the book club began over the summer of 2020 and extended into fall semester.

Sabbaticals

Sabbaticals offer faculty opportunities to obtain additional education, training, or experience to make them better instructors. Minnesota West administrators encourage qualified faculty to make use of sabbatical opportunities. Full-time faculty members who have served continuously for the equivalent of six or more full-time academic years at a Minnesota State two-year college with an aggregate of 12 semesters of actual service are eligible. Each eligible instructor submits a sabbatical plan for approval by the College President during fall semester the year before the planned sabbatical leave. After the sabbatical experience, the instructor submits a written report to the President explaining how he or she met the objectives.

Twenty Minnesota West instructors have taken sabbatical leave from 2011 to 2020. At least two but no more than six instructors have participated each year. Historically, more liberal arts instructors than technical faculty have participated in the program, but in recent years four technical instructors have also taken sabbatical leave.

Faculty Achievements

The professional development opportunities provided by Minnesota West contribute to an exceptionally well-qualified and successful faculty who are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. Minnesota West takes great pride in the accomplishments of its faculty. In

FY15, as mentioned in the argument for Core Component 1C, three Minnesota West Farm Business Management faculty were named by the National Association of Agriculture Educators to receive an award for the Outstanding Adult Ag Ed Program. In addition, a computer instructor from the Jackson campus was named Post-Secondary Teacher of the Year by the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education; a Medical Laboratory Technician instructor was elected junior director of the southwestern Minnesota chapter of the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science and became a senior director after one year; a computer instructor on the Granite Falls campus was recognized for her participation in the Advance IT Best Practices Hunt; a physics instructor from the Worthington campus secured grant funding from NASA to increase STEM education at Minnesota West; a history instructor earned a Fullbright Scholarship to teach in Russia for a semester; and the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting awarded a certificate of merit to Minnesota West's Surgical Tech program after 100 percent of graduates passed the National Certification Examination to become Certified Surgical Technologists.

Additional verification of the success of Minnesota West faculty in their teaching roles is the number of teaching awards received by various faculty members within the past ten years. In 2013 and 2020, faculty members in the English and Medical Laboratory Technician programs received the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Board of Trustees Award for Outstanding Educator. In 2016, a math Instructor received the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Board of Trustees Award for Faculty Excellence.

In addition to these achievements, several faculty have participated in scholarship, conference and public presentations, creative work and community engagement.

Additional indicators of the teaching prowess of Minnesota West faculty is the institution's 2019 receipt of Innovative Partnering and Collaboration Awards from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. This award recognizes institutions that have created partnerships that specifically provide opportunities to acknowledge curricular and program or service efforts that reflect the changing nature of education. In 2019, Minnesota West was recognized for partnerships created in K-12, higher education, and private businesses through the innovative collaboration creating Career & Technical Education (CTE) Career Pathways and LYFT programs in Southwest/Central Minnesota.

Faculty Accessibility

Article 11, Section 3, Subdivision 7 of the MSCF Master Agreement (page 32) stipulates that each instructor shall post and maintain one (1) office hour or one (1) hour of student availability in some other campus location per week for each three credits taught to a maximum of fifteen (15) credits. Additional office hours or student availability may be scheduled at the instructor's option. If a faculty member's entire assignment is online, the office hours can be held entirely online. If the entire assignment is onsite, the office hours are held entirely onsite. If the assignment is mixed, the office hour locations are mixed in reasonable proportions to allow for faculty availability to student. Most instructors are available in their offices far more than the minimum number of hours required.

Minnesota West has faculty and staff to provide academic access and opportunity to its students. Both faculty and staff are expected to participate in professional development activities and are provided with funds and supports to do so. In many cases, faculty and staff make themselves more accessible to students than the students demand.

Sources

- MnState Faculty Sabbatical Leave Application
- MnState MSCF Contract
- MnState Policy: 3.32 Faculty Credentialing
- MnState Procedure: 3.32.1 Faculty Qualifications
- MW Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) 20 Feb 7 Minutes
- MW Center for Teaching and Learning Report 2019 - 2020
- MW Curriculum Development Manual
- MW Faculty Development Request Form
- MW IPEDS data feedback 2020
- MW Policy: 4.9.1 Faculty Performance Management
- MW Scholarship, Creative Work, Community Engagement, Conferences

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

Academic Placement

Many students entering Minnesota West require developmental courses to improve basic reading, writing or math skills. In-coming freshman are required to complete the Accuplacer Assessment of Basic Skills before they can register for courses.

The Accuplacer exam is the Minnesota State system-endorsed entrance exam for all Minnesota State Colleges (Minnesota State Procedure 3.3.1 Assessment for Course Placement. However, students with adequate minimum scores in relevant subject areas of the ACT exam may also be able to register for college-level courses. In FY19, Accuplacer scores showed that 22 percent of full-time, first-time students needed one or more developmental math or reading courses, and 15 percent took developmental writing courses. (The same Accuplacer cut score is used to place students in developmental reading and writing).

Minnesota West implemented NextGen Accuplacer in conjunction with Multiple Measures in January 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on in-person testing, staff fully engaged with multiple measures for course placement. Multiple Measures allows for a variety of methods to assess aptitude for course placement. Students who have previous college coursework or who have taken an ACT, SAT, MCA or Accuplacer exams and have qualifying high school GPA scores do not need to take the Accuplacer Assessment.

Orientation

Minnesota West administrators, faculty, and staff provide vital information for new students at orientation meetings both on campus and online. The College also invites students to campuses for "Getting Connected Days" and College open house events. Some campuses combine general

orientation sessions to tailor them for specific programs. Agenda items include campus tours and detailed instructions for completing class registration; a review of financial aid; a summary of the Student Code of Conduct; and training for accessing student records, student email, D2L Brightspace, Smarthinking®, and Tutor.com. Students also obtain identification cards at the on-campus orientation events.

Minnesota West moved from a few large scheduled mass orientation days to weekly Advising and Registration Days every Wednesday after registration opens for the next term. Individualized appointments allow students to choose options that work best for their schedules and provide longer, more in-depth sessions with advisors to cover academic and career goals, and overviews of what to expect in college. Advisors have incorporated the Bookings app to schedule for other options. Moving from a few big orientation days to individualized advising sessions has minimized long lines and provides for more quality time with incoming students.

Advising Framework

All students are assigned to an academic advisor upon enrolling at Minnesota West. Academic advisors conduct a variety of online and on campus services, whether students are in technical programs or seeking transfer degrees. Advisors assist with registration, financial aid, course selection, transfer, testing, PSEO, accommodations and disability services, diversity, orientation, retention, and more. Academic Advisors also serve as campus resources for students. Academic Advising can be done face-to-face, over the phone, or via Zoom.

Technical Program faculty engage in advising activities specific to each program.

The Culture Corner

The Culture Corner is the office of cultural diversity and is located on the Worthington Campus. Its purpose is to improve retention of students of color and increase racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among students. Culture Corner fosters a campus environment of inclusion, knowledge, and understanding among all groups. It helps faculty, staff and students value diversity and respect individual differences that enrich the College community. Each Minnesota West campus has a diversity coordinator who engages in multiple activities designed for diverse populations. More complete information on Culture Corner is in the argument for Core Component 1C.

GradesFirst

As discussed in other parts of this report, GradesFirst is a tool that advisors use to contact and counsel students in danger of failing their courses. Faculty can also use the system to communicate with students directly via text messaging or email. GradesFirst provides students access to progress reports, midterms, class schedules, and tutoring requests. Students at risk for failing a course will receive messages from instructors and advisors. Instructors make these contacts as soon as they notice issues to help their students succeed.

Disability Services

Minnesota West has a coordinator of Disability Services who works to help students succeed who have documented disabilities. The coordinator arranges accommodations and support services and, when necessary, advocates on behalf of students in matters of appropriate physical accommodation for accessibility. Students with certain types of disabilities are also informed that some courses or programs require specific physical abilities. The coordinator also conducts training for faculty and staff on topics of disabilities, accommodations, and modifications.

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, an individual with a disability has a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activity.” Minnesota West’s policy is to provide access to and encourage participation in its programs, services, and activities to all persons with disabilities whenever possible.

The current process for accessing disability services must be initiated by the student. All qualified individuals with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations to help them succeed and achieve their personal and academic goals. The College must provide access to its programs and services, and reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with documented disabilities to allow them to effectively participate in those programs and services. To receive accessibility and disability services, students must be registered at Minnesota West and have a recognized and documented disability. Steps to request accessibility and disability services require the student to complete the Request of Accessibility and Disability Services form, which is linked to the College website. Students may complete the form electronically or request a paper copy of the form from a campus student services advisor.

Minnesota West Learning Environments

Because of its large geographic area, Minnesota West is challenged to provide effective learning environments for its students. The College meets that challenge in several ways, including offering face-to-face classes and interactive television (ITV) classrooms on all its campuses and locations, off-site courses, and via the internet, using the OneStop services to help with registration and the D2L Brightspace platform and Zoom to deliver courses. Courses taught online or on ITV follow the same course outlines and have the same academic rigor as face-to-face courses. Class size limits and rigor of content are the same for face-to-face, ITV, and online classes.

D2LBrightspace is an online course management system that provides instructors the technological tools they need to interact effectively with students. Minnesota West has used Desire2Learn since spring semester 2004, when Minnesota State adopted D2L as its official course management system. The name of the platform changed to D2L Brightspace in spring 2015. Internships, management programs, and customized training courses also use the D2L Brightspace platform to enhance learning opportunities.

Instructors in face-to-face courses also use the D2L Brightspace system for grading, posting assignments, encouraging discussions, and making announcements. Students now expect a D2L Brightspace site for every course, so they can check their grades and assignments, participate in discussions, and communicate easily with instructors and classmates outside of the classroom.

Faculty development and training on D2L Brightspace takes place at summer workshops, on faculty duty days, and at monthly meetings that are accessible in real time or through recordings. In 2019, Minnesota State changed to Zoom for video and audio conferencing, which enables interactive online meetings that provide a better method for discussions and use of audio and visual materials. Brown-bag noon sessions have also been offered throughout the academic year. Due to Covid-19, these sessions have been and continue to be offered via Zoom. Practice communities at each campus help new instructors become acquainted with the system or inform experienced users of recent or pending changes in the D2L Brightspace system.

Minnesota West offers an Introduction to Online Learning on Brightspace course to help orient students to the system. The free course is always available on the D2L Brightspace website. All students registered for online classes are automatically added to the course and most online instructors require or strongly encourage their students to complete it. The course was first offered in fall 2005. Participants agree or strongly agree that they “are more confident about taking an online course after reviewing the material” in the free class.

Open Educational Resources (OERs)

Minnesota West is actively engaged in seeking Open Educational Resources (OERs) for student and faculty use. Faculty had the opportunity to join Learning Circles that focused on the use of OERs in their courses. An example of the work created in the learning circles is a poster guidebook created by a faculty member in the Law Enforcement program. This guidebook was created and displayed at a Shark Tank activity.

LARC Mission and Services

Mission: *Minnesota West libraries strive to be a place where individuals and groups have access to information for exploring, learning, and teaching. Each library will establish a viable collection of resources, provide access to networks and online information, instruct in the use, interpretation, and evaluation of information, and be staffed by professional librarians and qualified technical support.*

Minnesota West uses a system of one-stop academic support services known as campus Library and Academic Resource Centers (LARCs). Each campus has recently expanded its library space to include computer labs, study rooms, tutoring centers, test proctors, and career center services. The computer Help Desk for online services was also established at the Worthington campus LARC. The Help Desk provides support for student emails accounts, distance learning, and the Minnesota State e-services portal. Consistent with the nationwide trend in higher education libraries, collections have shifted significantly from the traditional print model to one that primarily emphasizes digital resources. Since 2012, four of the five LARC locations have removed print resources leaving one main library collection on the Worthington campus, housing approximately 40,000 print books. The shift in resources was completed in time for the start of the 2006 academic year. In 2012 and 2013, two of the technical campuses repurposed LARC spaces by deselecting a substantial proportion of physical books and bookshelves and replacing them with additional student computers and study modules. The Worthington LARC underwent

a renovation in summer 2019 to update furniture and create more spaces for collaborative learning.

Minnesota West uses an integrated library system software called ALMA (an Ex Libris product) to provide an array of library services, including the online catalog and circulation, interlibrary loan, and acquisitions services. Support of ALMA is provided by contract with MnPALS, a library consortium serving libraries throughout the Midwest. The College libraries converted to this system in January 2019. The transition was a major training challenge for library staff and faculty due to the complex nature of the system and the radically different framework of the software to reflect changes in how people create and access information.

Minnesota West utilizes free resources wherever possible. In addition to print resources at each LARC, increased emphasis has been placed on acquiring online resources. The State of Minnesota provides free access to several databases, but they are subject to change through RFP processes. During the most recent process, MINITEX secured access to 37 databases for all public libraries, school libraries, and public institutions of higher learning. The Minnesota West library web page provides links to 31 of those databases. The libraries also subscribe to six subject-specific data bases targeted to programs and courses. Annual monitoring of statistics and faculty input helps determine which services are retained or replaced each year.

The Librarian responsible for distance learning achieved training and received Creative Commons Certificate for Librarians in December 2018. This includes open access resources on the subject-specific research guides (LibGuides) available on the LARC home page. Students and faculty can access electronic library resources from off campus via a proxy server at any time during the day or night. Students access the server with their Star ID credentials.

Librarians conduct LARC instruction sessions for individual courses at the request of instructors. Instruction sessions are conducted face-to-face, over ITV, online, and through prerecorded reference tutorials. Librarians work with instructors to determine student needs and modify their presentations accordingly.

Each campus determines LARC hours of operation based on the needs of its students and the limitations of its available staff. Typically, open hours at the technical campuses are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fridays. The Worthington campus LARC has open hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday. LARC hours have fluctuated over the years as campus needs and course offering have changed. For example, when ITV classes were scheduled in the evenings, the LARCs stayed open to provide technical assistance and accommodate students and faculty involved in those classes.

The administration of the LARC is the responsibility of the College Interim Vice President of Strategy, with daily operations under the direction of the Dean of Student Services. The two College librarians offer to provide reference and bibliographic instruction to students and faculty and work together to maintain and develop library collections. Increasing demands for materials in electronic formats combined with flat budgets have necessitated increase collaboration in all areas of LARC operations.

LARC staff positions were designed to reflect the variety of services available. Library technicians assist in daily operations but also help with tutoring, test proctoring, and career services. Support workers are all part-time employees who have honed their skills on the job rather than through formal library training.

Early in LARC development, monthly team meetings occurred to identify and resolve issues in the LARCs. Now, less frequent face-to-face meetings occur, and email, telephone, and Zoom are the primary vehicles for staff communication. Librarians and support staff are encouraged to participate in staff development activities and on-campus and College-wide committees.

Each campus LARC also establishes hours for test proctoring based on staffing and student needs. Students can make appointments and arrange with instructors to make up tests during those hours. Students with documented disabilities can also schedule tests at alternative times. If necessary, LARC staff will also provide special accommodations, such as reading tests to students with documented disabilities.

Individual and small group tutoring is also available in Minnesota West LARCs. Tutoring is provided by both LARC staff and student peer tutors who are paid by the hour.

Tutor.com is a 24-hour online tutoring service available to all Minnesota West students from any computer with internet access. It provides real-time or timely help with accounting, chemistry, economics, math, physics, Spanish, statistics, and writing. Access is gained through the learning platform D2L. Students utilize this resource often. For example, from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, student use totaled 2,619 sessions and accounted for 1,705 hours of tutoring services.

Information Technology Services

The goal of Minnesota West's Information Technology (IT) services is to provide a technical infrastructure that supports the development and delivery of courses across the institution's large geographic area. Minnesota West instructors have access to several technologies that enhance distance learning, including the D2L Brightspace course management system. Faculty and staff request services or submit question to ITS online through AskIT, a college-wide service that was developed to keep track of requests, problems, and solutions involving technology issues.

Because some disciplines require a more "hands on" approach to course materials, Minnesota West and its consortium partners provide web-based conferencing systems such as Zoom to create synchronous learning environments. These technologies allow instructors to communicate with students in real time, which can be more effective for presenting some course materials than asynchronous presentations can be.

Interactive television (ITV) instruction was first offered by Worthington Community College in 1988 and continues to play a vital role in linking Minnesota West students at various campuses and locations. Minnesota West supports 38 ITV rooms, from small meeting spaces to technology-enhanced classrooms with high-definition video equipment.

Nursing and Science Labs

Nursing labs are located at the Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone, and Worthington campuses. The labs are used by instructors and students in nursing assistant, practical nursing, and associate degree nursing programs. Nursing labs are designed to simulate clinical nursing environments. The purpose of the labs is to help students develop psychomotor, cognitive, and critical thinking skills in environments like those in medical facilities.

Skill labs are equipped with patient care stations that include beds, life-size mannequins, Nursing Kelly models, and a variety of skills-modeling and medication administration equipment. Pipestone, Granite Falls, and Worthington labs have wall suction and oxygen administration simulators available. Both high- and low-fidelity simulations enhance students' clinical and critical thinking skills in realistic patient-care situations. Minnesota West owns two SimMan patient simulators and one new SimMan model in the state-of-the-art Simulation Center in Pipestone. Updates were done to the Granite Falls and Worthington labs, which allowed separate spaces for the nursing assistant lab and the PN/AS lab at Worthington and one ten-year-old model with more limited functionality at Pipestone.

Both the Practical Nursing and Associate Degree Nursing programs invested in virtual simulations during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide clinical experiences for those students who were unable to have clinical experience in hospitals, nursing homes, and other client care environments. These virtual simulations, along with the pre-briefing and debriefing sessions that were held during the Zoom sessions, allowed students to grow in their clinical reasoning skills and become better critical thinkers. Zoom sessions allowed for continuous student/instructor interaction.

Minnesota West maintains science labs in Canby, Granite Falls, Pipestone, and Worthington campuses and at the Luverne location. The College has made substantial investments in science labs in the past decade. Investments at Canby total \$277,000; at Granite Falls, \$462,876; at Pipestone, \$515,000; and at Worthington \$375,000. At Worthington, three science labs – biology, chemistry, and physics – were remodeled, and a greenhouse was constructed outside of the main academic building. Science and nursing faculty helped to redesign the labs to make them modern, effective, and safe teaching and learning environments.

The investment at Canby was used primarily to renovate the 1,462 square foot Dental Health Career Lab while making the space more flexible for biology and soil and water course lab work. Included were the improvements in dust collectors, ventilation, cabinets and counters, flooring, and wiring for both electricity and data distribution.

The investment at Granite Falls added a 1,200 square foot science lab designed to accommodate biology and chemistry courses for the nursing program and the newly developed renewable energy curriculum. The Granite Falls lab contains lab benches, analytical instruments, and appropriate environmental and safety equipment. Courses taught in the lab include Microbial Energy, Biodiesel Fundamentals, Process Plant Chemistry, and Distillation and Evaporation.

The investment at Worthington was used to re-align the laboratories for more efficient use. Chemistry and biology labs were co-located to allow sharing of prep/storage space and reduce

supply inventories. The remodeling also made it easier for other sciences, such as soil science and agronomy, to use the facilities.

A medical science lab was established as part of the remodeling project at the Luverne additional location. The Luverne lab supports medical assistance, medical laboratory technology, and radiology technology. Funding for the lab was provided by Sanford Health Systems (formerly Sioux Valley Hospital), the City of Luverne, and Minnesota West.

In addition to laboratories, science instructors have also developed home science kits for students taking online science courses, including anatomy and conceptual physics. The kits contain most of the materials need to perform inquiry-based lab experiences at home. Students order the kits through the College's book distribution center.

Art and Theater Facilities

Minnesota West's Worthington campus includes facilities for visual and musical arts. In addition to a theater, the Fine Arts Building on campus includes an art gallery, a music room, private music rehearsal rooms equipped with pianos, a ceramics rooms with an adjacent storage and kiln room, and a large classroom for painting instruction. When studio art classes are offered on other campuses, shop spaces are used. A portable kiln and throwing wheels are moved to the campuses for ceramics classes and easels are moved for painting and drawing courses.

Visiting artists from a variety of cultures throughout the region, some of which are former Minnesota West students, exhibit their work at several separate exhibitions on the Worthington campus. Each spring, the art department conducts a student art show and competition in the Fine Arts gallery.

Second grade elementary students come to the Worthington campus each spring to learn pottery and printmaking at a workshop taught by Minnesota West art students.

The Fine Arts Theater is used throughout the year for student and community performances, presentations, lectures, and events. Recent theater productions include *The Fantasticks*, *Snoopy! The Musical*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Defying Gravity*, *Dracula*, and *Godspell*. Community organizations also cooperate with the College to use the theater for seminars and meetings.

Athletic Facilities

The Health and Wellness Center on the Worthington campus was remodeling in 2011-13 to provide more modern spaces for physical education and College athletics. The \$4.5 million project resulted in an expanded gymnasium, new and improved exercise room, additional locker rooms and restrooms, two additional classrooms, and several other aesthetic improvements. The facility was outfitted with additional equipment, including a state-of-the-art scoreboard, with additional funds raised from alumni and the local community.

Extensive renovations to the Baseball Field occurred during the 2018-2019 year. Slightly more than \$100,000 were invested in tiling the field, rebuilding the infield and baselines, underground irrigation, clay repair, landscaping, and aggregate costs. The field needed repair due to flooding during heavy rain, spring thaw, and new construction changed water flow in the area. In the spring of 2021, a partnership between Minnesota West, the City of Worthington, and the local Independent School District 518 created a new city maintenance position that dedicates one individual to maintain all baseball and softball fields in the city.

Minnesota West partnered with the local Independent School District 518 through a contribution of \$250,000 to football/soccer field improvements. While the football field complex is located on ISD 518's property, this partnership secures the Minnesota West football and soccer teams a state-of-the-art complex for competition.

Center for Career Education

In 2013, the Worthington campus purchased and remodeled the City of Worthington's vacated fire hall at an approximate cost of \$200,000. The building was initially outfitted with automotive equipment for classes offered in cooperation with the local school district. Classes began in fall 2013. Currently, the Mechatronics program operates out of the CCE. In addition, Customized Training welding courses are delivered here. Planning continues for additional uses of the facility to meeting regional training needs.

Facilities Planning

To comply with Minnesota State policies and to ensure that Minnesota West meets its mission, vision and values, an updated *Comprehensive Facilities Update Plan* is completed every five years. The facilities plan includes periodic updates and long-range (25-50 year) facilities planning for each campus that considers the College mission, physical plant maintenance, current conditions and usage, plans for capital improvements, and other considerations over a two to six-year capital budget cycle and future budgets. Minnesota West's most recent *Facilities Master Plan* was completed in 2019 and extends through 2024.

Minnesota West has the facilities and technology to provide effective and efficient learning environments for all its students.

Sources

- MnState Open Educational Resources Learning Circles
- MnState Open Educational Resources Poster Template guidebook
- MnState Procedure: 3.3.1 Assessment for Course Placement
- MW Comprehensive Facility Plan Update
- MW Course Outline Form
- MW Culture Corner
- MW Disability Services
- MW GradesFirst Student Homepage

- MW LARC Help Desk
- MW LARC Tutor Services
- MW Multiple Measures for course placement
- MW Nextgen Accuplacer
- MW Policy 3.6 Student Code of Conduct
- MW Request for Accessibility form

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

As its mission promises, Minnesota West "provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered."

Through nearly 85 years of delivering post-secondary liberal arts and more than 60 years of technical education and customized training to a vast geographical area of southwestern Minnesota, southeastern South Dakota, and northwest Iowa, Minnesota West has developed, refined, and proven its ability to provide high-quality education in classrooms, at work sites, in farm fields, and online. Students are well served by the education they receive because of Minnesota West's commitment to assess and review all of the services it provides. General education courses comply with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, technical programs are directed by advisory boards and assessed based on industry standards and national testing, and customized training programs respond to meet the needs and desires of employers throughout the region.

Minnesota West employs appropriate numbers of full and part-time faculty and staff. Although faculty focus is on teaching rather than research, many instructors also contribute to the discovery of knowledge through independent scholarship, outside projects, work in the private sector, voluntary contributions of time and talent to their communities, and other creative and utilitarian endeavors. All faculty must meet minimum standards for academic credentials regardless of where or how they teach. Faculty are evaluated regularly and participate in professional development with encouragement and financial support from the institution. Instructors make themselves accessible to students and serve on college committees and boards.

Faculty initiate and oversee the curriculum at Minnesota West through departments and divisions, campus committees, and the Academic Affairs and Standards Committee. Individual instructors assess and monitor student learning and cooperate with advisors to provide early warnings to students who struggle academically. Staff who provide advising, financial aid, library assistance, tutoring, and other support services are qualified, trained, and supported with professional development opportunities. Accommodations and services are available to students with disabilities, veterans, and non-traditional adult learners.

Computer hardware, software, and support is provided to all faculty, staff, and administrators. Students can access wireless internet connections and computers on all campuses and at all locations. Online tutoring, email, and library services are available to all students.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

Minnesota West has systems in place to review and evaluate programs, transcripts, transfer credits, experiential learning, prerequisites and rigor of courses, student learning outcomes, and the success of graduates. These systems have evolved over many decades and are evaluated and adjusted frequently to ensure viability.

Program Review

The College's primary mission is to provide a quality learning environment for its students. One means to accomplish this is to offer an effective and efficient method to evaluate the viability of existing programs and proposed programs.

Program reviews are completed annually by program faculty and administrators. Each program is reviewed on a three-year rotation. The purpose of program review is to ensure continuous

improvement in efficiency, effectiveness, and delivery of instruction. Each review evaluates a program against similar programs in the Minnesota State system, includes broad involvement of all department faculty in analysis and evaluation, and uses results to guide informed decisions regarding strategic planning, curriculum development, and budgeting.

Each program and department associated with instruction is evaluated based on the College's Strategic Plan and Master Academic and Student Services Plan. Evaluations consider faculty-to-student ratios, enrollment trends, employment patterns, and outlook. Administrators analyze the data and categorize each program or department into one of four categories: high cost/low enrollment, low cost/low enrollment, high cost/high enrollment, and low cost/high enrollment. Based on this analysis, faculty and administrators work together to create action plans for improvement, if necessary.

The program review policy is articulated in Minnesota West Policy 3.10 Academic Program Review. The system complements regular assessments of courses and student learning outcomes. These two parallel programs provide the College with tools to meet its mission and realize its Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Transcription of Credits

Minnesota West registrar's office evaluates all the credits that the College transcripts, including credits awarded "for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning." Minnesota West Policy 3.21 Transfer Credit describes how students can transfer courses to Minnesota West. The College policy follows policies established by Minnesota State.

The College registrar is responsible for ensuring that the credits that transfer to Minnesota West meet college standards. Following the established policies, the registrar's office uses a Transfer Evaluation System (TES) to compare a transferring institution's course description to Minnesota West's course description. If questions arise, appropriate faculty review the transferring institution's course description to determine if the course meets requirements to transfer in.

Minnesota West offers comprehensive transfer services and is staffed with transfer specialists to assist with transcript evaluation and provide information on receiving credits for prior learning and military training. To make this process transparent to students, Minnesota West Policy 3.21 Transfer Credit states that "all students be provided with a clear statement of Minnesota West's transfer policy, a fair credit review and an explanation of why credits were or were not accepted, a copy of the formal appeals process, and a review, on request, of eligibility for financial aid or scholarships." Transfer Information can be found in the most current Minnesota West College Catalog (p. 11, 2020-2022 College Catalog).

Transcription of credits occurs in the following areas:

- Advance Placement (AP) examinations (Minnesota West Policy 3.21 Transfer Credit and Minnesota West Policy 3.15 Advance Placement).
- International Baccalaureate (IB) programs (Minnesota West Policy 3.21 Transfer Credit and Minnesota West Policy 3.16 International Baccalaureate Credit).

- Course test-out (Minnesota West Policy 3.18 Course Test-Out).
- Nationally recognized examination programs (i.e., Dantes Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP), Excelsior Examinations, New York Foreign Language Proficiency, and National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)), and Minnesota West Policy 3.19 Other Nationally Recognized Examination Programs.
- The Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services (ACD) (Minnesota West Policy 3.21 Transfer Credit and Minnesota West Policy 3.23 Military Training).
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) scores are evaluated using an equivalency chart on Transferology (Minnesota West Policy 3.33 Student Assessment).

From 2016-2020, Minnesota West transcribed 103 AP credits, 0 IB credits, 81 test-out credits, 3 DSST credits and 677 CLEP credits.

Minnesota West offers internships in several programs. An internship is a faculty supervised training and mentoring period for qualified students in service or employment. Student interns must complete program content before starting an internship. Requirements for internships are specific to an academic program but all programs follow Minnesota West Policy 2.22.

Authority over Curriculum

Minnesota West has developed effective and efficient policies and procedures that ensure the quality of each course and program. The Curriculum Manual, approved by the Minnesota West Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC), outlines those policies and procedures. Minnesota West's system of developing and modifying curriculum, including the descriptions and uses of Course Outlines and Syllabi, is further detailed in the argument for Core Component 3. Minnesota West completed a campaign to improve student learning outcomes during the 2019-20 academic year.

The Provost, together with the faculty, the departments and divisions, Deans, local curriculum committees, advisory boards, and the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC), monitors the prerequisites, rigor, and student learning outcomes of Minnesota West courses. Proposals for new courses or changes in courses must include submission of either a New Course Form or a Course Modification Form and a completed Course Outline that contains a course description and information on credit hours, prerequisites, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) applications, course content, student learning outcomes, and inclusion in any Transfer Pathways. The division chair, the respective Dean, liberal arts transfer pathway curriculum committee (if applicable), and the AASC must approve any changes in prerequisites, MnTC or Transfer Pathway applications, and major changes in course content or student learning outcomes.

An example of AASC meeting minutes held on February 7, 2020, shows how AASC functions. Topics covered in the AASC meeting include approving course outlines with changes to course descriptions, changes to learning outcomes, changes to prerequisites, and changes to MnTC applications.

Authority over Faculty Qualifications

As stated in Minnesota West Policy 3.32 Faculty Qualifications, “all College Faculty teaching credit-based courses and counselors and librarians will meet the College Faculty Credentialing requirements as established by Minnesota State Board Policy 3.32 Faculty Credentialing and Procedure 3.32.1 College Faculty Qualifications.” This includes all “temporary-full time (TFT) faculty, temporary part-time (TPT) faculty, adjunct faculty, and external instructors including high school teachers teaching PSEO concurrent enrollment courses and Customized Training faculty teaching credit courses.” The credentialing process is detailed in the argument for Core Component 3C.

When faculty positions are vacant, the appropriate administrator consults with faculty leaders to appoint a search committee consisting of faculty, staff and students. Details of this process are described in the argument for Core Component 3C.

Authority over Dual Credit

Minnesota Statute 124D.09 Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act provides guidelines to “promote rigorous academic pursuits and to provide a wider variety of options to high school pupils by encouraging and enabling secondary pupils to enroll full time or part time in nonsectarian courses or programs in eligible postsecondary institutions.” Minnesota West follows the “Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act” to provide high school students with postsecondary options.

Minnesota West’s Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program includes high school students taking Minnesota West courses on campus or online, through the REACH program, and Career and Technical education (CTE). Students must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Minnesota Department of Education PSEO Reference Guide, and listed on the Minnesota West PSEO webpage.

Dual credit REACH instructors (PSEO Concurrent Enrollment) must meet the same qualifications as college faculty, as stated in Minnesota West Policy 3.32 Faculty Credentialing and in the REACH Program Guide. REACH instructors apply using the REACH Teacher Application.

The REACH Program Guide provides guidance for REACH instructors to develop syllabi using the course outlines provided by Minnesota West. The guide also explains the role of the REACH instructor’s Minnesota West faculty mentor, which is to “ensure that the REACH program course demonstrates the same rigor, content, learning environment, assessment, and pedagogy as other college courses.” REACH mentors upload paired syllabi, paired assessments, classroom observations, and professional development summary reports to the REACH Professional Development and Resource D2L site to provide evidence of Minnesota West’s monitoring of REACH instructors. REACH program directors have clear expectations that teachers will adhere to the approved course outline, content, academic rigor, and assessment procedures. A non-compliance policy requires professional development or sanctions for teachers who do not meet expectations.

Minnesota West's REACH program is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). REACH was initially accredited by NACEP in 2016; accreditation goes through academic year 2022-23.

Accreditations

Minnesota West is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary School (NCA).

In addition to HLC accreditation, some technical programs are also accredited by the following agencies:

- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
- American Dental Association- Commission of Dental Accreditation
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs – Surgical Technician
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs – Medical Assistant
- Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)
- Minnesota Board of Nursing
- Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM)
- Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota Board of Barber and Cosmetologist Examiners
- Minnesota Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Minnesota State Approving Agency for Veterans Education MDVA-MN SAA
- National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)
- Professional Certificate Approval Program (PCAP)

Accreditation is key to the vitality of Minnesota West programs. Faculty, staff, and administrators strive to achieve and maintain the high academic and performance standards that accrediting agencies demand.

Success of Graduates

Minnesota West publishes a Student Right-to-Know report that details graduation rates and transfer-out rates for full time students. This report contains information “in compliance with the Title VI of the Educational Amendments of 1976 to the Higher Education Act and subsequent Federal Legislation” (Minnesota West Policy 3.20.1 Consumer Information/Student Right to Know). In addition, graduation rates and transfer-out rates are available in the current IPEDS report.

Minnesota West publishes the Accountability Dashboard Strategic Framework Performance Measures 2018 from the Minnesota State system office's Research, Academic and Student

Affairs Division, which includes licensure exam pass rates to demonstrate the quality of graduates and related employment of graduates in the workforce.

Minnesota West publishes the Minnesota State Student Success Performance Measures 2019 which includes a breakdown of system colleges' licensure exam pass rates (p. 4) to demonstrate the quality of graduates and related employment of graduates in the workforce (p. 5)

Sources

- APC NACEP Explanations Of Evidence
- Mn Statute: 124D.09 PostSecondary Enrollment Options Act
- MnState MDE PSEO Reference Guide
- MnState Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)
- MnState Policy: 3.32 Faculty Credentialing
- MnState Strategic Framework Performance Measures 2018
- MnState Student Success Performance Measures 2019
- MW Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) 20 Feb 7 Minutes
- MW Course Modification Form
- MW Course Outline Form
- MW Course Syllabus Template
- MW Curriculum Development Manual
- MW Institutional Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map
- MW Internship Administrative Guidelines
- MW IPEDS data feedback 2020
- MW Master Academic Plan 2018-2020
- MW New Course Form
- MW Policy: 2.22 Internships
- MW Policy: 3.10 Academic Program Review
- MW Policy: 3.15 Advanced Placement
- MW Policy: 3.16 International Baccalaureate Credit
- MW Policy: 3.18 Course Test-Out
- MW Policy: 3.19 Other Nationally Recognized Examination Programs
- MW Policy: 3.20.1 Consumer Information/Student Right to Know
- MW Policy: 3.21 Transfer Credit
- MW Policy: 3.23 Military Training
- MW Policy: 3.32 Faculty Qualifications
- MW Policy: 3.33 Student Assessment
- MW Program Review Process
- MW REACH Guide for Administrators Counselors Teachers
- MW REACH teacher application
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023
- MW Student Right to Know

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Minnesota West demonstrates a culture of assessment through continuous and robust assessment of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in individual courses, and technical and cocurricular Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Minnesota West's institutional, course, and program assessment processes are documented in the Assessment Handbook. The handbook is updated yearly and published with the faculty handbook. Changes in The Assessment Handbook require approval from the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).

On May 17, 2016, the Institutional Action Committee (IAC) of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) required that Minnesota West submit an interim report on assessment of student learning. The Open Pathways Assurance Argument review team wrote:

"It is recommended that Minnesota West provide an interim report to demonstrate specific goals, common measures, outcomes, and actions to improve for college-wide student learning outcomes to assure achievement of learning goals for all students in curricular and co-curricular programs."

Two previous HLC review committees approved Minnesota West's program of student assessment, but the questions this review panel raised were fair, and the college adjusted to enhance and strengthen the process. Minnesota West responded to the concerns in the Interim Report on Budgeting, Planning, and Assessment of Student Learning.

Making these adjustments to the assessment tool appealed to the HLC review committee. As a result of these changes, assessment data was more robust and reinforced the need to continuously monitor the assessment process. The Assessment Summary Report from 2019-2020 summarizes the data collected as a result of these changes.

The concerns outlined by HLC in 2016 prompted a more intense review of the assessment process at Minnesota West. To make assessment more robust, the college expanded the assessment reporting document to include a Likert rating scale that enabled the faculty to ascribe

a level of effectiveness of each method used in meeting the student or program learning outcomes. Because the assessment methods listed were not all inclusive, an open-ended question was added to allow faculty to provide analogue data regarding assessment methods. An open-ended question was included for faculty to describe what changes they made to the assessment methods since the last time they taught the course to determine the effectiveness of the methods over time. An additional open-ended question gave space for faculty to provide sample evidence of effectiveness of the assessment methods used.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are directly connected not only to the Core Values of the college – essentially becoming the Values defined – but also to the college’s Mission and Vision.

Five ILOs are mapped into all courses and programs at Minnesota West. The ILOs are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to develop as a result of their overall experience at Minnesota West.

The Minnesota West Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are:

1. **Community Engagement and Courage:** Learners develop the confidence, skills, and values to effectively recognize the needs of individuals, communities, and societies and make a commitment to constructively engage in social action.
2. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors to live, work, and communicate with people whose backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are different from their own as well as to consider the global impact of their decisions.
3. **Innovation:** Learners develop the ability to use knowledge, behaviors, skills, and experiences flexibly in new and unique situations to innovatively contribute to their field.
4. **Integrity:** Learners develop the confidence, skills, behaviors, and values to effectively discern life goals, form relationship, and shape their personal and professional identities to achieve fulfillment.
5. **Student Success:** Learners develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to live balanced and fulfilling lives.

ILOs are part of every assessment tool and are measured in courses each semester, and in technical and cocurricular programs annually. The ILOs were written in August 2019 and first assessed during the 2019-2020 academic year. ILO assessment data from the 2019-2020 academic year can be found in the Assessment Summary Report 2019-2020 for curricular programs and cocurricular programs. Additional information can be found in the Assessment Summary Report: Data Sets, 2019-2020. The ILOs were assessed during the 2020-21 academic year. That data can be reviewed in the Assessment Summary Report 2020-21 and Assessment Summary Report Data Sets 2020-21.

Course and Technical Program Assessment

As stated in the argument for Core Component 3, Minnesota West’s Course Outline stipulates observable and measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each course offered at the college. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) establishes general education goals for all students attending the state's public colleges.

For several years, at the conclusion of each semester, teaching faculty have completed and submitted Course Assessment forms to their division chairs via Desire to Learn (D2L) Brightspace for each course taught during the semester. A mandatory assessment day is scheduled and led by the Assessment Coordinator and conducted via face-to-face, ITV, and, more recently, via Zoom, at the end of each semester.

The assessment tools provide space for instructors to specify not only the methods of assessment used to measure student learning but also the effectiveness of those methods. Changes in the assessment methods, relation to and effectiveness of meeting the Program and Institutional Learning Outcomes, and faculty requests for additional training are also addressed in the assessment tools. All assessment activities, processes and results are summarized in a yearly Assessment Summary Report. This report is submitted to the office of the Provost for approval, emailed to all faculty and staff, and published on the website.

Training needs identified on the assessment tools are summarized and forwarded to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) coordinators on each campus to help plan both local and college-wide CTL sessions for the next year.

Faculty participation in course assessment is consistent and substantial. The graph below shows the percentage of faculty by employment type, that completed the assessment tools from 2017 to 2020. One hundred percent of full-time faculty complete the assessment tools each semester. Part-time and adjunct faculty have an average of 80% completion rate each semester. When faculty fail to complete assessment activities, the respective Dean addresses this concern during faculty evaluations and in program reviews. The REACH/Concurrent Enrollment faculty completed course assessment in prior years but were considered in the part-time/adjunct data collection sub-group. It wasn't until 2020 that the completion rate was measured specifically for this sub-group.

Employment Type	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	2018-2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Full-time	83%	82%	80%	79%	80%	
Part-time	12%	12%	12%	8%	7%	
Adjunct	5%	6%	8%	13%	6%	
REACH (PSEO)	Not Measured as a sub-group	Not Measured as a sub-group	Not Measured as a sub-group	Not Measured as a sub-group	7%	

Cocurricular Assessment

In spring 2019, formal assessment of cocurricular programs was included in yearly assessment activities. While data is collected in each respective cocurricular area of the college, creating a separate assessment tool that aligns with how course and technical programs conduct assessment was deemed important. This began with the creation of an assessment tool specific to student clubs and organizations. The Assessment Coordinator met with the advisors of all clubs and organizations to discuss and create club/organization program learning outcomes (PLOs). An assessment form was created and completed by the club/organization advisors in spring of 2019. As with the course and technical program tool, methods and effectiveness of assessment, evidence samples, and training needs were included. The data is summarized in the Assessment Summary Report, 2018-2019.

Significant changes also occurred with cocurricular assessment during the 2019-2020 academic year. Several areas of the college are now included on the D2L/Brightspace assessment site, including Academic Advising, Library and Academic Resources Center (LARC), Liberal Arts, Student Services, Peer Tutoring, and Professional Tutoring. These “departments” are now considered “programs.” For example, the advising department is now referred to as the advising program. While all of these programs have consistently assessed their effectiveness over the past several years, the format of gathering data was changed to make it consistent with the course, technical program, and cocurricular areas of clubs/organizations. This allows for a central location to get assessment data that is specific to student learning outcomes.

The process of creating the various cocurricular program assessment forms included communications with each program area via email, face-to-face, and Zoom meetings. During these meetings, the Assessment Coordinator posed a question to staff of each respective program: “After having interacted with the _____ program, Minnesota West students will have learned _____ upon graduation from our institution.” This question stimulated conversations among the members of each respective program and from those discussions, specific program learning outcomes were created.

The Program Learning Outcomes were then included in the assessment tool created specifically for each cocurricular program. Similar in format to the course and technical programs tool, the cocurricular forms included assessment methods, evidence of effectiveness, changes needed, and training needs. All cocurricular programs completed the assessment tool at the end of academic year 2019-2020.

Improvements to Assessment

The College made several additional changes to the assessment process during the 2019-2020 academic year. The course outline form was modified to make it more usable and less confusing for students. The argument for Core Component 3 summarizes those changes. While transferring from the old to the new course outline form, faculty reviewed the course descriptions and student learning outcomes for each respective course. The process of how these changes were approved by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) is also highlighted in the argument for Core Component 3. In addition to courses being reviewed, the assessment process itself was also reviewed, which led to several changes and additions. Two new “short-forms” were created: the

course Student Learning Outcome (Course SLO) and Technical Program Learning Outcome (Program PLO) forms.

The process of creating these new documents was faculty-driven and provided instructors with an optional short-form to use when evaluating a course each time it is taught. This comparative data helps faculty to determine if various methods are, in fact, effective in meeting the learning outcomes. Upon AASC approval of the changes proposed to a course outline, the specific student or technical program learning outcomes were put on an editable Word document. A Likert scale was created to demonstrate the effectiveness of the assessment methods in meeting the specific learning outcomes. The rating scale is:

1. No students demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes
2. Most students demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes (more than 50%)
3. All students demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes.

The course SLO and technical program PLO form was uploaded onto the assessment site on D2L Brightspace. Faculty complete one form for each course and/or program, and upload into the drop box where they can access these documents at any time. Introduction to Special Education is an example of a course SLO short form and Automotive Technology is an example of a technical PLOs short form.

Training on the new forms was provided face-to-face, on ITV, and via Zoom meetings. Email with pictorial instructions were provided to the faculty during spring semester 2020. College-wide, faculty created 146 individual course Student Learning Outcomes forms. Thirty technical Program Learning Outcomes forms were completed representing various degree awards. While these numbers are not representative of most of the courses and degree programs at Minnesota West, this new process will continue to be highlighted in future trainings, so it becomes a consistent part of the assessment process.

The process of changing the course outline reinforced and enhanced the culture of assessment at Minnesota West during the 2019-2020 academic year. Shared language of learning outcomes is no longer considered just curricular language but is now language shared by all aspects of the college.

The Assessment Summary Report 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 demonstrates the effectiveness of these changes and continues to be the stimulus for the following academic year's training activities.

The data gathered through the assessment process is posted to the Minnesota West website, shared with program advisory committees, and annually distributed College-wide to faculty and staff.

REACH/Concurrent Enrollment Assessment

REACH program faculty complete the Minnesota West course assessments at the end of the fall and spring semesters. In addition, to monitor the quality of learning in concurrent enrollment

courses, Minnesota West follows the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) standards for follow-up assessments.

NACEP Program Evaluation Standard (E1) requires the college to conduct end-of-term student course evaluations to provide instructors with student feedback for each concurrent enrollment course. This evaluation includes submitting surveys to those students that participate in any REACH concurrent enrollment course. The results of the surveys are provided to the REACH instructors and their mentors for discussion. Time is given to review and discuss results during the annual Minnesota West REACH Professional Development Day at the beginning of each academic year. A report is also compiled for all courses offered in each term and sent to high school administrators/staff who support the REACH program. This report is made publicly available on the Minnesota West website.

Students are asked to provide feedback in the following areas:

- Understanding of the subject matter has improved as a result of this class;
- The reading, discussion, writing, projects, papers, assignments, and other course activities helped the student learn more about the subject matter;
- The course materials were helpful to understanding of the subject matter;
- The assessments (quizzes, tests, projects, papers) were effective and provided feedback on progress in mastering the subject; and what changes should be made to the course and why?

Evidence demonstrating substantial participation in evaluations of standard E1 in the REACH courses is provided below:

Semester	Percent of Surveys Returned	Number of Students Providing Feedback
Fall 2017	72%	479 students
Spring 2018	88%	583 students
Fall 2018	76%	478 students
Spring 2019	86%	546 Students
Fall 2019	76%	403 students
Spring 2020	88%	450 Students

Previous versions of NACEP Evaluation standard E2 called for an annual survey of REACH alumni who are one year out of high school. Minnesota West sent surveys in June 2018 to 425 alumni; 12 percent responded, and all but 1 reported that the REACH program credits transferred. The current E2 standard calls for regular and ongoing evaluations of the concurrent enrollment program effectiveness and demonstration of continuous improvement. Minnesota West consults with a REACH Advisory Committee at least annually. This committee comprises volunteer stakeholders from both the college and high school partners, and is tasked with reviewing and updating policies and procedures. Minnesota West's K-12 Collaboration Coordinator also works with high school faculty and staff to respond to evolving needs as

REACH program enrollment increases. Recent examples of improvements include updated forms and ongoing revisions to the enrollment process.

Results of Assessment Practices

Assessment activities at Minnesota West have evolved over the last decade. With each academic year, the culture of assessment has been reinforced with all employees. This has been done with continuous training, review of data to determine effectiveness of assessment, and ensuring that students learn what instructors claim they will learn.

Changes to programs, budgets, and administrative structure have been impacted based in part, upon the results of assessment activities. For example, purchasing of equipment is directly tied to assessment tools to ensure purchases will improve student learning. Additionally, restructuring the administrative Dean positions from campus Deans to academic program Deans helps to ensure assessment activities are monitored and reviewed, and the data is used to make necessary changes.

Assessment Handbook

All procedures regarding assessment at Minnesota West is highlighted in the Assessment Handbook.

Sources

- APC NACEP Explanations Of Evidence
- MnState Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)
- MW Assessment Handbook 2021-2022
- MW Assessment Summary Data 2020 2021
- MW Assessment Summary Data 2019 2020
- MW Assessment Summary Report 2019 2020
- MW Assessment Summary Report 2020 2021
- MW AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY AAS SLO Short-Form
- MW Center for Teaching and Learning Report 2019 - 2020
- MW Clubs and Organizations assessment questions
- MW Course Outline Form
- MW EDUC 2900 Cours Student Learning Outcomes Short Form
- MW HLC Interim Report 2017

- MW Institutional Learning Outcomes Curriculum Map
- MW Master Academic Plan 2018-2020
- MW REACH Advisory Committee Power Point update
- MW Student Clubs
- MW Tech Programs Assessment Tool Questions

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Institutional Goals and Data

Minnesota West has ambitious and attainable goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. Goals are articulated in the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan. Specifically, Minnesota West has goals to increase retention of current students by 1% and graduation/completion rates by 4% by FY21.

Minnesota West uses the Institute of Education Sciences Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) definition for retention - measures of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage - and completion counts of postsecondary awards granted where each award is reported once, but multiple awards may be reported for one recipient. Minnesota West collects, analyzes, and uses the IPEDS data, which report graduation rates by race/ethnicity.

Retention Goal: Increase retention of current students by 1% by FY21.

IPEDS Year	Full-time Retention	Part-Time Retention
2012	62	42
2013	54	39
2014	65	48
2015	66	58

2016	67	41
2017	63	45
2018	62	46
2019	63	40

Strategic Plan 2017-2023: Outcome 6c Graduation Goal: Increase Graduation/Completion rates by 4% by FY21.

IPEDS Year	Graduation Rate, Overall	Graduation, Normal Time	Graduation, 150% of Normal Time	Graduation, 200% of Normal Time
2012	46	35	42	42
2013	45	40	46	47
2014	47	38	45	46
2015	50	36	47	47
2016	44	41	50	51
2017	44	30	44	46
2018	44	36	44	44
2019	46	35	44	47

Minnesota West publishes the Accountability Dashboard Strategic Framework Performance Measures, which includes student persistence and completion rates compared to the institution's goal.

Institution Use of Information

The overall graduation rate and transfer-out rates are published on the Student Right-to-Know report.

The CCSSE report indicates that Minnesota West engages in many activities to promote enrollment and to measure student satisfaction from registration to degree completion. The data collected through the CCSSE report was used during Phase II of the college's Quality Initiative (QI) to measure the effectiveness of the QI's analysis and actions, and to streamline the process from prospect to graduation. Phase II area 3 of the QI focuses on enhancements to student forms to streamline the process from prospect to graduation.

Other methods of data analysis are used by specific programs or departments. Two examples follow.

The English Department used the Minnesota State Developmental Education Analysis Roadmap to review persistence and completion rates within the English developmental course sequence. The data revealed that a significant percentage of students of color fail to persist in the lower-level English classes: between 40-60 percent, depending on the year. The

English Department met with the Dean of Liberal Arts to review course sequencing, course outcome expectations, and culturally inclusive pedagogy. The data then informed the department's approach to designing and launching an accelerated English co-requisite course designed to provide additional support structures around college-level English. The English Department also aligned the developmental course sequence (Essentials of Writing 1, Essentials of Writing 2) to the student learning outcomes of Composition 1 to better prepare developmental students for college-level writing. The data also revealed that white students exhibited limited struggle in the English course sequence. This led the department to wonder what cultural or language barriers might be inhibiting student success. Two of the three English faculty then participated in cultural competency training, course improvement, and/or diversity faculty groups.

The math Department also employed the Minnesota State Developmental Education Analysis Roadmap to plan curriculum changes for developmental education mathematics courses. The department's data analysis also included Minnesota State's Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap initiative (January 2018 - p. 4) as well as recent national studies for best practices in math education such as Jagers, S. & Stacey, G. (2014) Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY, NY. ERIC Number ED565668. Based on this analysis, the math department implemented changes from a pre-requisite to co-requisite model of developmental math courses to remove barriers and improve student persistence and degree completion.

In addition, Minnesota West's tutoring effectiveness is evaluated on an ongoing basis as well as at semester and year-end intervals. Tutoring activity is recorded using the GradesFirst software, and data entered includes dates and times of tutoring services as well as session objectives and activities. A spot check of student comprehension is conducted during each session and follow up sessions are scheduled as needed. Tutoring statistics are reported to administration in year end reports. Recent tutoring data reflects a decrease in face to face tutoring sessions (during the COVID pandemic) but is leading to discussions about further steps to increase engagement.

Sources

- MnState Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap
- MnState Strategic Framework Performance Measures 2018
- MW Community College Survey of Student Engagement Results 2019
- MW HLC Quality Initiative Final Report
- MW IPEDS data feedback 2020
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023
- MW Student Right to Know

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Every student, employee, program, course, activity, and organization at Minnesota West is held to high standards of effectiveness and efficiency that are clearly articulated and regularly assessed and reviewed. Those who teach, coach, coordinate, participate in, provide funding for, or advise College activities conduct those assessments. The College also engages outside evaluators to complement internal assessment efforts. Assessment results lead to continuous improvement of courses, programs, and activities. Occasionally, the results indicate needs to create new curricula or make other major and minor adjustments to help Minnesota West meet its mission.

In an era rife with unforeseen challenges, such as a world-wide pandemic, Minnesota West has shown its determination to meet the changing needs of its constituents, the environment, regional employers, and the institutions to which students transfer. The College perpetually and systematically explores new curricula and approaches to instruction, marketing, and partnerships that are necessary for its many constituencies in a geographical area larger than many states.

Minnesota West will continue to pursue new resources to nurture and enhance relationships with area employers and advisory boards, and to increase cooperation with other institutions of higher learning that receive transfer students. College goals are to improve pedagogical relevance of existing programs, enhance student success, respond to articulated and perceived needs for new programs, and improve student persistence to completion.

These pursuits carry on a long Minnesota West tradition.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

Minnesota West Community & Technical College is one of 37 colleges in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System governed by a Board of Trustees (BOT) and managed by a full-time Chancellor. The President of Minnesota West reports directly to the Chancellor and has local authority that aligns with state policies.

Minnesota West's systems of shared governance involve College-wide standing committees made up of administration, faculty, staff and students. Faculty Shared Governance Council (FSGC) and Academic Affairs and Standards (AASC), in compliance with the MSCF Master contract, are chaired by faculty members and comprised of two-thirds faculty and one-third administration/staff, with a maximum three administrators. Both committees meet twice each academic semester or more often if needed. The FSGC's purpose is to address faculty concerns and review program changes that may result in faculty layoffs as well as fiscal matters, safety, policy review and other issues. The AASC committee provides direction for all academic affairs including course outlines, graduation requirements, academic standards, course and program components, and the inventory of course and program offerings.

Each academic program is reviewed annually by comparing instructional costs with respect to enrollment, cost effectiveness and use of resources. Minnesota State provides an annual cost study formula that calculates the cost per student for programs and courses at the institution. This data is used to inform decisions about each program's viability and future.

Data is collected annually to create a Student Success Performance Metrics Report (previously Strategic Framework Performance Metrics) that measures the performance of students in various categories by cohort. It also includes data on success of students of color within the cohorts. This data informs the College of the outcomes of initiatives and generates ideas for future projects designed to improve student success and advance equity and inclusion.

Minnesota West uses VFA (a facility software supported by Minnesota State) to record data that creates a Facility Condition Index (FCI) that helps assess the current and projected condition of College buildings. The Comprehensive Facility Plan is also used to prioritize College facility projects. Facility improvements are funded with local funds and/or state allocations. The College prepares an annual Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR) report to the Minnesota State system office with funding requests for facility projects. Every two years, the College proposes a list of capital projects to the system office that are intended to address changing academic conditions, opportunities, and strategic directions.

Other reports that College leaders consider when making decisions include the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, Economic Impact report, IPEDS Data Feedback Report, and the Master Academic and Student Services Work Plan.

In addition to Faculty Shared Governance Council and Academic Affairs and Standards Council, other College-wide committees also involve administration, faculty, staff and students. Examples include the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), various funding committees, Strategic Enrollment Monitoring Committee, College Safety Committees, Financial Advisory Committee, Policy Review Committee, Technical Program Advisory Committees, the President's Advisory Council, and *ad hoc* employee search committees.

Minnesota West's President's Cabinet members meet with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) and Middle Management Association (MMA) employees at least quarterly to discuss any labor/management concerns as well as share current relevant information related to budget, enrollment, and safety. These meetings help foster a mutually constructive, cooperative relationship between administration and staff.

Additionally, when the President and other administrators consider plans or strategies that could result in layoffs, union representatives are involved in the discussions and decisions. The President or designee and local union representatives can negotiate Memoranda of Understanding to modify agreements upon the request of either party.

Safety committees meet at least quarterly on each campus. Safety committees are intended to proactively encourage and promote safety awareness. The safety committees establish methods for evaluating, resolving, and communicating safety and health issues raised by campus employees and students. The committees include representatives from all College bargaining groups, including staff, faculty, and administration.

Each Minnesota West campus has a Student Senate that communicates regularly with administrators on policy and fiscal matters. A staff or faculty advisor attends all Senate meetings

and sometimes serves as liaison between students and administrators. Minnesota West recognizes the campus Student Senates as the official body for student representation on each campus. Student Senates also provide input on issues such as changes in fees or policies that impact students, and they serve as a vehicle to develop new leaders. Decisions regarding changes to campus-level student associations are made by students on each campus in consultation with the statewide student association.

Student consultations occur twice during each academic year. An administrator meets with each Student Senate to share fiscal information as well as “state of the college” updates. Input and feedback from Student Senate leaders helps to inform administrators of students' needs and concerns. Students also participate on technical program advisory boards that provide input for curricula and policies.

"Pizza with the President" meetings provide opportunities for all interested students to meet with the College president to discuss various topics that concern them. These meetings take place at least once per term. The President also meets with faculty and staff at each location at least once per term in a forum the current President has titled “Talks with Terry.” This gives the President opportunities for open discussion of issues that impact the entire College community.

Sources

- MnState MSCF Contract
- MnState Student Success Performance Measures 2019
- MnState: 2020 HEAPR List - System Office
- MW Community College Survey of Student Engagement Results 2019
- MW Comprehensive Facility Plan Update
- MW Economic Impact Report 2018_2019
- MW Financial Advisory Committee Charter November 2019
- MW IPEDS data feedback 2020
- MW Master Academic Plan 2018-2020

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

Minnesota West ensures its employees are selected from the best-qualified candidates through a search and interview process. Search committee members rely on Human Resource staff to review qualifications and screen applications to verify candidates meet minimum requirements that align with position job descriptions. Search committees are involved throughout the search process and follow College hiring policies and plans for both faculty and classified positions.

Once hired, new faculty undergo an orientation and on-boarding process involving the Deans, department faculty, and mentors. Probationary and tenured faculty submit Professional Development Plans and Reports that are reviewed with their Deans according to the contractual schedules. All other College employees' performances are evaluated annually. During the performance evaluation process, professional development goals are determined and discussed.

Faculty attend professional development sessions for one full day in both the fall and spring. Typically, one general session is focused on a topic such as assessment, online instruction, or diversity and inclusion. Other professional development opportunities are available for faculty and staff through the College Center for Teaching and Learning. An Assessment Day in the spring is scheduled for academic and student service departments but is open to all employees and departments. Professional development funds are available to both faculty and staff individually through their contractual agreements. The agreements outline approved uses for funds, which may include travel expenses and fees for professional workshops and conferences as well as other uses. The College budgets for and funds a staff development day generally held each spring.

The College maintains memberships in various state and national organizations that provide training, conferences and networking opportunities for both faculty and staff. Faculty are also eligible for sabbatical leave to enhance their professional development as outlined in the MSCF contract.

The six strategic directions and outcomes that are included in the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan were shaped by identifying the College's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR). Input was gathered from the administrative team, the President's Advisory Council and through campus engagement sessions with staff, faculty and students. Results identified in the SOAR analysis help to inform College leadership of the strategic directions needed to fulfill Minnesota West's mission.

Minnesota West uses its strengths to focus on opportunities identified in the SOAR process. The College partners with many area high schools to provide liberal arts and career and technical educational options for high school students. A collaboration with Minnesota West, Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), and Independent School District 518, provides a Teacher Pathway program aimed at students of color to provide a path to an education degree. Relationships with other educational and industry partners (Southwest/West Central Service Co-op, Private Industry Council) provide educational opportunities for under-served populations. See the argument for Core Component 1C for more information.

The President's Advisory Council consists of community and regional business leaders who provide counsel on economic and community needs that Minnesota West can support. The Foundation Board also includes community and business leaders that provide perspective and counsel to College leadership. Each technical program has an advisory committee that ensures the curriculum and program resources are current and relevant to meet industry needs. Minnesota West's President also belongs to all Chambers of Commerce in the communities where the College has locations.

These collaborations are the foundation of the mission to prepare learners for a lifetime of success. Minnesota West often reaches out to its partners to fulfill educational needs. The Luverne Center location resulted from a partnership between Minnesota West and the City of Luverne to provide allied health programming in a vacant hospital/clinic. The Blue Jay Villas housing unit on the Worthington campus provided much needed housing for the students through partnerships with the City of Worthington and Bluffstone, a private developer who owns and operates the facility on the property. Minnesota West collaborates with the City of Pipestone for a construction program that refurbishes blighted properties in the city.

Minnesota West has also focused on building College-wide collaboratives instead of campus-specific initiatives. In addition to the One Stop Student Service model, other College-wide committees include the faculty-led funding committee that oversees the purchasing of equipment and technology and Perkins funding for the College. This shift in culture has allowed for increased awareness and cooperation among campuses. Pooling resources has enabled the College to initiate larger projects that collectively benefit more students. This has also encouraged more collaboration of programs sharing ideas and resources. Other examples of College-wide collaboratives include the Academic Appeals Committee, Strategic Enrollment Monitoring Committee, Policy Review Committee, Faculty Development Committee and the College-wide IT support team.

Because Minnesota West's reserve balance has grown and the Composite Financial Index (CFI) is strong, the College has been able to explore initiatives to strengthen the commitment to the

College mission. In 2019, Minnesota West approved \$1 million in one-time investments and another \$1.8 million in academic programs over the next four years. The opportunity to submit proposals was open College-wide. Thirty-two proposals were submitted from staff, faculty, and administration. Each proposal was scored based on its relevance to the strategic plan. Fourteen proposals were approved for funding. The scope of the projects ranged from facility upgrades, safety initiatives, and increased services for students to large equipment purchases, existing program expansion, and proposals for new academic programs.

The budgeting process at Minnesota West begins in consultation with the Minnesota State System Office. Minnesota State receives a biennial appropriation from the State of Minnesota. Minnesota West's share of the state appropriation is approximately two percent of the total. More than 50 percent of Minnesota West's annual operating revenue comes from the state appropriation. The remaining sources of revenue are tuition, fees, grants, and other minor sources such as lease income and resale profits. Estimated tuition revenue is based on projected FYE and proposed or approved tuition rates.

The second step in the budgeting process is gathering information on proposed operating expenditures by department. The Business Office prepares budget documents and distributes them to department leaders (budget approvers). The documents include historical data on budgets and expenditures as well as current year budget details. Each budget approver is asked to consult with the budget users to make recommendations for budget needs. Users provide rationale and correlate expenses with the strategic plan as they forecast their budgetary needs. Other expenses, including personnel, repair and replacement, equipment, and debt service, are recalculated and compiled to create the fiscal year operating budget.

The administrative team reviews overall budgetary needs, considers enrollment projections and adjusts as appropriate. Factors that contribute to budget decisions include enrollment, programming, strategic marketing efforts, and facility planning. The President's Cabinet is the final approving authority.

The budget forecast is shared with the College community (faculty, staff and students) through various methods. The Financial Advisory Committee reviews and recommends best practices for the budgeting process to ensure fair and equitable budget preparation and monitoring. The Financial Advisory Committee includes faculty, staff, students and administration.

The final step in the budgeting process is approval from the Minnesota State Board of Trustees (BOT). This typically occurs in May prior to the start of the fiscal year on July 1. The College submits budget and enrollment updates for Minnesota State to review throughout the year.

Upon request, any Minnesota West employee can review non-salary budget balances for any department. The VP of Finance and Facilities also monitors budgets and sends monthly budget reports to the budget approvers. These reports provide details on the expenditures and available budget balances. Contingency funds are available for Deans to use at their discretion when non-budgeted expenses arise. Large requests must go to College leadership for consideration.

The State's allocations help to ensure that Minnesota West's educational purposes are achieved.

Minnesota West allocates its resources to teaching, learning, and support services, which includes academic affairs, student services, institutional support, administration, athletics, and physical plant and facilities support. Shared services are provided to the 37 institutions of the Minnesota State System that have funding requirements covered by the institutions. These include such services as information technology, the Integrated Student Reporting System (ISRS), a facilities scheduling system, a facilities condition reporting system, a centralized Human Resources Transactional Service Model, a web platform for online courses, and others.

Minnesota West maintains a reserve balance that can support non-budgeted needs. Financial stability is also reflected in the Composite Financial Index (CFI) for the college. The CFI for FY20 is 5.43 and the last five-year average is 5.33. This index is a combination of the ratios of primary reserve, return on net position, viability and operating margin.

Sources

- APC MW Bluffstone Ground Lease
- MW Faculty Professional Development Plan
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

Allocation of Resources

Each Minnesota West department submits an annual budget request that links expenditures directly to the strategic directions and outcomes outlined in the Strategic Plan. To justify expenses, budget planners request that correlation to Minnesota State System priorities (closing the educational equity gap, enhancing access to higher education and delivering high value, affordable education) be included with the proposals. This process is intended to align resources with the College mission, vision and values. The President's Cabinet and Leadership Team review the department budgets as well as the macro budget prior to submitting the overall budget to Minnesota State for approval.

Minnesota West's strategic investments totaling \$2.8 million over four years represent an example of planning and allocating resources to improve operations and to promote student growth and success. Other examples include the transportation initiative (transportation for students who otherwise would not have the means to travel to another campus for programming), YMCA land lease, Blue Jay Villas land lease, and increased resources to support program expansions for regional high school students to access higher education.

Minnesota West also supports the Centers of Excellence across Minnesota and serves as the fiscal agent for the Energy Center of Excellence. These initiatives promote awareness and strengthen industrial-educational relationships across the state to provide a qualified workforce for industries.

Budgetary Alignment

As described in previous chapters, faculty and staff at Minnesota West engage in assessment activities throughout the academic year. Assessment activities demonstrate and support the College's mission to prepare learners for a lifetime of success, the College's vision to be the regional college of choice, and the College's values that promote community engagement, courage, diversity and inclusion, innovation, integrity, and student success. Many methods are used to determine if resources align with student success. For example, administrators review IPEDS, CCSSE data, faculty evaluations, student surveys, and program reviews to determine if student outcomes in academic and cocurricular programs can be improved. Identifying trends in different student categories also helps guide where resources are most needed. Enrollment trends as well as economic issues contribute to the overall planning and assessment of College's operations and resource allocations. Exit interviews of departing employees and the Affirmative Action Plan offer other perspectives in evaluating College operations and areas that can be improved.

Student voices are also important in the planning and operations across the College. Students participate on College-wide committees (safety, financial advisory, employee search, policy, strategic enrollment, technical advisory, facility planning, etc.). Students are consulted for budgeting decisions, student service operations, and other academic issues. The six campus Student Senate groups often meet with the President, business office personnel, and the Dean of Student Services to share their concerns.

Current and future budgeting needs are assessed throughout the year and acted upon during budget preparation.

Planning Process

In recent years, Minnesota West has made conscious efforts to create College-wide structures to replace campus-specific committees and responsibilities. These efforts have increased collaboration across the College as well as combined resources (funds and talent) across the institution. The College administration moved from a Campus Dean structure to a structure in which Deans support curricular or co-curricular teams. Student involvement in College-wide committees has enabled students to gain exposure to institutional initiatives and allowed them to be more involved with their peers across the College. The Comprehensive Facility Planning process included input from faculty, staff, students, community members, and the Foundation Board. Through this process, facility projects were prioritized and a capital-bonding project for 2022 was developed. Planning for this project relied heavily on staff, faculty, and student input in working with the architectural firm and College leadership.

Minnesota West's President reaches out to the College community in many different forums. The President conducts regularly scheduled sessions with staff and students to share College updates as well as hear concerns and gather ideas. The President and other College leaders are involved in many external constituency groups (i.e. Private Industry Council, SW Superintendents Council, DEED, Workforce Centers, technical advisory boards, President's Advisory Council, MN Centers of Excellence, MN West Foundation Board). These groups provide insights from business and industry that help guide operational planning.

Institutional Plans

The College constantly monitors factors that influence its revenue sources, including enrollment, state allocations, and the economy. Minnesota West has been affected by enrollment challenges that have resulted from a decline in typical, historical college enrollment patterns but have been offset somewhat by a greater presence in area high schools. Minnesota West's REACH program is a collaboration between Minnesota West and area high schools. This partnership offers qualified high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit without leaving their own high schools.

Allocations from the State of Minnesota also impact the College budget. State funding is appropriated in response to legislative budget requests from the Minnesota State Board of Trustees. This funding is then allocated to the system institutions using the Allocation Framework. A legislative liaison for Minnesota State provides a link between the Board of Trustees and the Legislature. This relationship fosters understanding between both groups and helps guide budgeting forecasts. Revenue and expense projections are presented to College faculty and staff during College-wide meetings and to students during budget consultations.

Grant opportunities often arise across the College. Prior to grant application, the Provost or VP of Finance & Facilities must review and approve each grant proposal to ensure the grant correlates with the College's mission and that the concept is sustainable. Several grants have enabled Minnesota West to enhance regional workforce needs. Examples include grants from the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC), Carl D. Perkins Fund, and the Teacher Pathways.

With multiple locations across a 17-county region, the need for technology resources continues to grow. Minnesota West was a statewide leader in interactive television (ITV) technology and has now expanded to Zoom technology. Resources to improve technology access for students, staff, and faculty both on and off campus have become a priority in recent years. These resources include the installation of a Virtual Private Network and hot spots across all locations. The College's Information Technology Plan guides the planning and allocation of resources in this area. At the state system level, a Next Generation student support system will be deployed over the next seven years. This system will enhance support in all departments as well as improve the student experience. Legislative support and resources from each Minnesota State college and university contribute to this effort.

In spite of revenue fluctuations, Minnesota West has successfully maintained a stable composite financial index that measures the sustainability of the college's resources.

Implementation of Plans

The mission and vision of Minnesota State and Minnesota West serve as the foundation for College strategies. Planning efforts grounded in the Minnesota State Strategic Plan have resulted in the Master Academic and Student Services Work Plan. The purpose this plan is to incorporate the vision and goals of the instructional, student services, technology, and academic support programs with the Minnesota West mission. The plan provides specific performance indicators,

strategies, and actions for implementation. Multiple constituent groups contributed to the planning and evaluation of this plan. The changing needs of students in higher education have created the need to also modify the ways in which departments function. Changes include the inception of the One Stop Student Service model, strategic enrollment monitoring activities, the restructuring of the Financial Aid, Registration, and Business Services departments as well as the restructuring of the administrative team. Professional development opportunities such as assessment training and the Center for Teaching and Learning for faculty as well as staff development seminars for staff are available. Employees can participate in online professional trainings as well through the Minnesota State System.

Sources

- APC MW Bluffstone Ground Lease
- APC WRAP Lease Agreement
- APC YMCA Ground Lease Agreement
- MW Affirmative Action Plan 2018-2020
- MW Community College Survey of Student Engagement Results 2019
- MW Comprehensive Facility Plan Update
- MW Grant Sign Off Form
- MW Information Technology Master Plan 2020
- MW IPEDS data feedback 2020
- MW Master Academic Plan 2018-2020
- MW Strategic Plan 2017 2023

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

Minnesota West Community & Technical College historically and currently has the resources, institutional structures, and processes necessary to fulfill its mission and continuously improve academic offerings. It has the will and flexibility to confront any future challenges, embrace opportunities, and respond to trends. The College has the fiscal means, the community support, and the professional faculty, staff, and administration to continue its long-standing role as the professional and technical educator of choice for the diverse population in southwestern Minnesota, southeastern South Dakota, and northwest Iowa.

The College has the financial backing of a healthy state government and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, a mature state higher education system managed by a full-time, experientially qualified chancellor and directed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the state's governor and approved by the state legislature. The College has tried and tested systems in place for assessing curriculum and programs, budgeting, developing and improving curriculum, encouraging and funding professional development for both faculty and staff, and planning for the future.

Minnesota West is aware that it has persistent challenges. The region's population is aging, shrinking, and diversifying, so the College will continue its efforts to diversify faculty, staff, and administration to more closely resemble the region's demographics. Although a chronic paucity of affordable student housing in Worthington has been partially ameliorated by the College's partnership with Bluffstone, a regional affordable housing shortage continues to create problems for attracting students to all Minnesota West campuses and for keeping graduates in the region after they are equipped to become productive members of the region's workforce.

Knowing challenges is the first step toward meeting them, and Minnesota West continues to prove, especially in the past year, that it has the experience and resources to meet these challenges and any others that develop.

The College embraces and fulfills its mission and is well positioned to do so far into the future.

Sources

There are no sources.

