

# HLC Assurance Argument

Submitted October 2015

## Core Component 1A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.  
(This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

***Mission Statement: "Minnesota West Community and Technical College is dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible and supportive settings."***

Minnesota West's mission, vision, and goals documents were developed at the time of the merger of Worthington Community College and Southwestern Technical College in 1996. A series of meetings involving faculty, staff, and administrators from all five campuses developed the mission statement, and it was approved in March 1997. The statement has been reviewed regularly and approval was renewed by the MnSCU Board of Directors on November 18, 2008. Although discussions regarding the need to revise the mission arise frequently, the statement has stood the test of time and continues to reflect the college's values and direct its operations.

Minnesota West offers classes at various times to meet the demands of its diverse populations. The course schedule and [college catalog](#) are posted on the college website. The college offers traditional face-to-face courses, interactive television (ITV) courses, hybrid courses, and online courses as well as customized training and continuing education. In addition to the fall and spring semesters, the college offers a winter term, a May term, and a summer term with various starting dates. Minnesota West offers transferable college-level liberal arts courses, business and farm management courses, technical courses, customized training services, continuing education courses, and contract for training programs to enhance job skills. A number of course offerings, including developmental math, reading, and writing courses, are available in eight-week segments to enable students to take two courses in one semester at the same time of day. Face-to-face courses are offered at traditional times and late afternoons.

Minnesota West was a pioneer in ITV courses in the 1980s and in online courses in the 1990s. Now more than half of Minnesota West courses are offered at a distance via ITV or online using the D2L Brightspace platform. Nearly every ITV or on-ground course is enhanced by a D2L Brightspace component. Students in courses that employ Brightspace receive technical assistance from a college Help Desk.

## **Interactive Television Courses**

Worthington Community College conducted its first ITV courses during FY87. Minnesota West continues its commitment to ITV course delivery via its own 38 ITV classrooms on campuses and locations. Minnesota West offered nearly 150 course sections (real time and hybrid) via interactive television in FY15. Most general education courses required for AAS degrees at the technical campuses are taught via ITV from the Worthington campus; however, an increasing number of English, math and speech courses originate from the northern campuses.

## **Online courses**

Minnesota West was one of the first institutions of higher learning in the country to offer online courses and programs that would lead to degrees. The college created its own open source online platform in 1999 and continued to use the program until MnSCU adopted Desire2Learn as its system-wide platform for all courses in 2004. (The Desire2Learn platform was renamed D2L Brightspace in spring 2015.) The college received Higher Learning Commission approval to offer online degree programs in April 2004. By FY14, 34 Minnesota West degree programs were offered fully online. Also by FY14, 2,795 Minnesota West students had taken at least one online course, and more than 30.6 percent had taken online courses exclusively. In FY14, Minnesota West offered 466 online courses.

Most Minnesota West liberal arts and technical courses are available via the Internet. Members of the faculty develop new online courses regularly, and many online faculty are considering or working to obtain Quality Matters (QM) certification for their courses. To encourage QM certification, the college offered a stipend to faculty interested in obtaining it for their classes in spring FY15. A complete current list of online course offerings is on the college website.

The Center for Digital Education, in conjunction with the American Association of Community Colleges, has seven times named Minnesota West one of the top ten small colleges nationally in using digital education. In 2014, Minnesota West placed fourth in the survey.

Minnesota West was thirteenth in the 2015 Best Online Colleges in America ranking by bestcolleges.com.

## **Winter Term**

Each year, Minnesota West offers a winter term during the holiday break in December and January. One course was offered in FY14, for 5.2 FTE. Three students who took the course were enrolled at other colleges. Winter term FY14 enrollment was significantly less than in past winter terms.

## **Hybrid Courses**

Minnesota West also offers hybrid courses in which students may attend class in an ITV studio, attend live online via Adobe Connect, or watch recorded class sessions. Class attendance is measured by the completion of attendance quizzes on the courses' D2L Brightspace sites.

## **Developmental Courses**

Many students who enter Minnesota West require developmental courses to improve basic reading, writing, or math skills. In FY14, Accuplacer scores for full-time degree-seeking students showed that 68 percent needed one or more developmental math courses and 40 percent needed reading and writing courses.

Every semester, Minnesota West offers two-credit developmental courses in math, writing, reading, and study skills. In FY11, the college began offering a second two-credit developmental writing course (Essentials of Writing II, ENGL 0095) and a one-credit college-level Freshman Seminar study skills course (STSK 1110). The courses are designed to help students who test into two or more developmental courses to understand the rigors of college study and the expectations that college instructors have for adult learners. Some 70 students were enrolled in the Freshman Seminar courses in fall 2014.

## **High School Partnerships**

Minnesota West has articulation agreements with high schools in Minnesota through the Southern Minnesota Articulated College Credit Certificate Request Project. The project represents the cooperation of ten Carl Perkins Consortia and 25 post-secondary campuses in southern Minnesota. The project provides students in participating high schools with opportunities to earn college credit for classes they take in high school. Students can earn the credits at no cost to the school district, and the credits earned are accepted at a variety of post-secondary campuses upon admission.

Tech-prep is a program of sequential study that combines at least two years of secondary education with two years of postsecondary technical education. Minnesota West's technical campuses participate in tech-prep arrangements through Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative, an education consortium that serves southwestern Minnesota high schools.

In 1985, Minnesota lawmakers enacted the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option program, or PSEO (M.S. 123.3514), to enable high school students to complete their junior and senior years while attending college and earning college credit at the same time. In 2012, the program was expanded to allow qualified sophomores to enroll in a Career and Technical Education course. Students who qualify under the law and MnSCU policy guidelines may attend college full or part time. Textbooks and materials for the class are provided by the school districts in which the participating students reside and must be returned to the districts at the conclusion of each course. According to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (MOHE), 9,177 high school students participated in PSEO statewide in 2012-13, the last year for which they have numbers posted.

Concurrent enrollment programs, administered as the REACH Program at Minnesota West, allow school districts to contract with Minnesota West to teach college courses in high schools. District instructors must meet minimum qualifications for college teachers and be mentored by college instructors who visit their classrooms at least once each semester. These agreements permit high schools to retain their state aid and negotiate fees with the colleges. Statewide,

23,583 high school students were concurrently enrolled in college courses at their high schools in FY2013, the last year for which the MOHE has posted numbers.

In FY16, Minnesota West has REACH concurrent enrollment agreements with Edgerton Public High School, Fairmont High School, Jackson County Central High School, Luverne High School, Martin County West High School, Montevideo High School, Mountain Lake High School, Pipestone High School, and Worthington High School. The program involves 33 sections of 20 courses, including art, biology, chemistry, composition, history, literature, math, music, psychology, sociology, and speech.

In summer and fall 2014, Minnesota West administrators met with area school superintendents to consider additional partnerships. As a result of those meetings, the Pipestone campus offered carpentry spaces to the Pipestone High School, and other campuses offered training in auto mechanics, nursing assistant, and welding.

### **One Stop Student Services**

In spring semester of FY13, Minnesota West streamlined student services by initiating a “One Stop” program that allows all inquiries regarding general student services at all campuses to be answered with a single phone call. Resource specialists have been 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. Staff involved in One Stop meet regularly to evaluate the program and to resolve issues and make adjustments that will help them serve students more effectively.

Minnesota West's course offerings and services to students are guided by its mission.

### **Sources**

- APC\_POST\_July2014
- APC\_PSEOandREACH2015\_June2015
- APC\_PSEOstats\_Apr2015
- APC\_SouthernMinnesotaArticulatedCollegeCreditCertificateRequestProject\_June2014
- APC\_SW-WC-ServiceCoop\_Aug2014
- APC\_TechPrepCollegeCreditCertificates\_June2015
- MnSCU\_Mission\_BoardApproval\_15April2014
- MnSCU\_Planning\_SCUStrategicPlan2010-14\_15April2014
- MW\_Accuplacer\_July2014
- MW\_CourseSchedule\_30June2014
- MW\_REACH\_Apr2015
- MW\_REACH\_Apr2015
- MW\_StudentServices-Advising\_July2014
- MWA\_OnlineLearning\_eRepublicAward\_Apr2014

## Core Component 1B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of 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 document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Awareness of Minnesota West is so deeply ingrained in the culture of southwestern Minnesota that understanding and support for its mission pervade not only the college but also the corporate offices, main streets, public schools, and residential areas of the region. The college's physical presence in eight local communities bolsters that support.

Minnesota West's constituencies are apprised of the college mission and goals in many ways. The college mission statement is published in program self-studies, the [college catalog](#), the [employee handbook](#), notices and news releases, and on the college website. It is also included in Power Point presentations for all students who participate in college orientation.

In addition to those sources, the mission and goals are published or posted in semester bulletins, online social networks, and most program and marketing publications. Marketers, high school counselors, current and former students, and friends of the college disseminate those publications in English, Spanish, and other languages throughout the region to potential students, employers, families, and partner institutions. Marketers, faculty, students, and staff organize events that bring constituents to the campuses to introduce them to Minnesota West, and they reach out in nearly every way possible to tell the Minnesota West story.

### Future Planning

In November 2013, the MnSCU board approved a strategic plan titled *Charting the Future for a Prosperous Minnesota*. The "Core Commitments" of the plan were actually adopted by the MnSCU Board of Directors in January 2012 as part of MnSCU's Strategic Framework. Those commitments are to:

- Ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans.
- Be a partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs.
- Deliver to students, employers, communities, and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option.

*Charting the Future* met with resistance from MnSCU faculty and student groups in 2014 based on a perceived lack of transparency and forthrightness from MnSCU Chancellor Steven J.

Rosenstone. Those issues were resolved in March 2015, and work on *Charting the Future* continued with participation from all factions of the MnSCU system.

In September 2015, the Leadership Council Executive Committee released a *Charting the Future Work Plan* to outline the next steps for moving forward on the recommendations made by the implementation teams that met through the spring and summer.

Minnesota West's *Master Academic and Student Services Work Plan* was developed by a task force under the direction of the Office of the Provost in 2015, and its goals run parallel with the chancellor's directions. The purpose of the Minnesota West plan is "to succinctly incorporate the vision and goals of the instructional, student services, technology and academic support programs as they are integrated with the mission of Minnesota West Community and Technical College, its Strategic Plan, the Presidents, Workplan, and the Chancellor's Workplan." The plan's goals emerge from the MnSCU and Minnesota West missions, other strategic plans, documents, and related resources. The Minnesota West plan articulates three "Strategic Directions" for academic offerings and student services:

- Provide comprehensive accessibilities and learning opportunities to increase student enrollment, retention and success.
- Provide innovative and accountable programs and services to ensure the growth of our students.
- Deliver programs and services to enhance the economic competitiveness of the state, the region, and its people.

### **Affirmative Action**

Minnesota West's *Affirmative Action Plan for 2014-16* begins with the following "Statement of Commitment": "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 "strive to provide equal employment opportunities and the best possible service to all Minnesotans."

### **Access, Opportunity Reports**

Another document that was recently used to guide Minnesota West's current policies was the Access, Opportunity Proposal for 2012. The document articulated the progress the college had achieved and the challenges it faced to increase services to underrepresented and academically underprepared students. The report articulated two major goals:

Goal 1: Minnesota West Community and Technical College will increase enrollment of underrepresented students of color [with access] to each campus.

Goal 2: Minnesota West Community and Technical College will increase matriculation to graduation of all underserved and underprepared students by high school to college transition and early developmental programs.

Minnesota commitment to expanding opportunities is part of its basic fabric.

### **Sources**

- MnSCU\_Charting the Future Work Plan - Sept2015
- MnSCU\_ChartingtheFuture\_May2014
- MnSCU\_Planning\_SCUStrategicPlan2010-14\_15April2014
- MW\_AccessOpportunityProposal2012\_June2014
- MW\_HR\_AffirmativeActionPlan\_2014-2016
- MW\_MasterAcademicPlan\_2014-2016\_June2015

## **Core Component 1C**

### **Argument**

Minnesota West is acutely aware of the diverse populations of southwestern Minnesota and, as its mission states, is "dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible, and supportive settings." In recent years, that dedication has taken the form of moving and modifying programs, working with regional employers to create new programs that provide the trained workers they need to flourish, and several other forms.

### **Regional Population**

Minnesota's total 2013 population was estimated to be slightly more than 5.4 million, according to the United States Census Bureau. Of that number, 82 percent were identified as "White alone, not Hispanic or Latino," 5.7 percent were Black persons, 5 percent were persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, 4.5 percent were Asian, 2.3 percent were mixed race, and 1.3 percent were Native American and .1 percent were Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

The 2013 population of Nobles County, the county in which Minnesota West's Worthington campus resides, was 21,719, with 63.4 percent "White persons not Hispanic or Latino," 25.3 percent Hispanic or Latino, 6.5 percent Asian, 4 percent Black, 1.4 percent mixed race, 1.4 percent Native American, and .2 percent Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

### **Student Diversity**

In FY15, approximately 83 percent of Minnesota West's students were White, 6 percent were Hispanic or Latino, 6 percent were Black, 2 percent Asian, 2 percent mixed race, and 1 percent Native American. The ethnicity of 2 percent of students was "unknown."

In FY15, more than 14 percent of Minnesota West Community and Technical College students were traditional (18-21 years old); 56 percent were non-traditional (22 and older); and the

remaining 30 percent were either younger than 18 or age unknown. In that year, 1,416 students attended full time and 3,588 attended part-time. Some 5,610 students participated in continuing education, and 379 students enrolled in dual enrollment courses (college in the high school programs). Unduplicated head count for all credit and non-credit offerings was 10,053.

Minnesota West offers a wide range of courses, programs, and training opportunities to meet the various needs of its increasingly diverse constituencies. In addition to offering technical training and traditional higher education for transfer, Minnesota West has made extraordinary efforts to welcome and serve the region's newest residents and prepare them for work and assimilation to their new environment. Most recently, the college has sought out and cultivated partnerships with local industries to increase its capacity to serve diverse communities and to grow the economy.

### **Transfer and Technical Education**

To meet the education and training needs of its large region, Minnesota West offers 50 certificate programs (one advance technology certificate), 43 diploma programs, 37 associate of applied science (AAS) degree programs, 16 associate of science (AS) degree programs, and one associate of arts (AA) degree program. Minnesota West offers technical instruction in 35 technical areas.

At the end of FY14, Minnesota West awarded 137 associate of arts degrees, 145 associate of applied science degrees, 112 associate of science degrees, 241 diplomas, and 393 certificates.

In recent years, Minnesota West relocated its automotive program from Canby to Jackson, moved its massage therapy diploma program from Luverne to Worthington, and expanded its welding offerings at all campuses in response to shifts in populations.

Minnesota West has also taken steps to improve access and opportunities for military veterans. MnSCU offers specialized transfer services for veterans on its "Resources for Veterans and Service Members" page.

### **Customized Training/Continuing Education (CT/CE) and Contracts for Training**

The Minnesota West Marshall Center houses the Customized Training/Continuing Education Division (CT/CE). The CT/CE office is located at the Minnesota Emergency Response and Industrial Training (MERIT) Center in Marshall. The MERIT Center is a regional partnership between Minnesota West and the City of Marshall that was established in 1999 when the training facility was constructed.

Minnesota West's CT/CE staff members are the primary points of contact for the emergency response and industrial safety training programs delivered through the MERIT Center. Currently, three CT/CE staff members, two full time and one part time, maintain offices at the MERIT Center. CTS offices are also located at the Canby campus (two staff members), the Granite Falls campus (one staff member), the Pipestone campus (one staff member), the Jackson campus (one part-time staff member), and the Worthington campus (one staff member).



Minnesota West's CT/CE offers a variety of hour-based and continuing education credit-bearing courses to meet the dynamic needs of business and industry for workforce development and skills training. When employers request new skills courses, CT/CE responds in a flexible and timely manner. CT/CE consistently serves constituents each year in open enrollment and contract for training programs throughout the Minnesota West service region. CT/CE offers more than 82,000 hours of training annually.

Instructors for CT/CE courses are adjunct faculty members, industry professionals, and industry consultants with expertise in their subject areas and current industry experience. In FY14, CT/CE employed 86 different instructors and 39 consultants.

Customized training courses are offered throughout the calendar year. In FY14, 1,037 CT/CE classes were offered to 15,353 students. Examples of successful current CT/CE course offerings include Firefighter I and II (both online and face-to-face); Industrial Maintenance and Manufacturing Machine Automation; Industrial Safety, Confined Space, OSHA Compliance; Computer Technology Training; Management/Supervisory Development; Introductory and Intermediate Welding Training; Boiler Operator; IV Therapy and Trained Medical Administration (online and face-to-face); Lean Manufacturing; Six Sigma Black Belt and Green Belt Certification, CDL written and driving test preparations, and pilot car certification. CTS offers continuing education courses for dental care, health care, and law enforcement professionals. To complement non-credit instruction, CTS now offers credit-based programs in specialized manufacturing areas representing high employment demand throughout the service area. The credit-based programs include a 16 credit Welding Certification, a 16 credit Machine Tool Certification, and an Industrial Technology Diploma and AAS degree.

In February 2015, Minnesota West CTS hosted a National Fire Safety Training Academy at the Merit Center in Marshall. The "Leadership II Fire & EMS: Strategies for Personal Success" workshop was attended by 21 fire department/emergency management officers, chiefs, training officers, and others representing nine departments throughout the region.

### **Agriculture, Wind Energy, and Management Programs**

Southwest Minnesota feeds much of the world, so Minnesota West offers nine degree or certificate programs in agriculture, including AS degrees in Agriculture, Agriculture Business, Agriculture Plant Science, and Agriculture Production Management; associate of applied science degrees in Agriculture Production, Agriculture Business Management, and Agriculture Business Marketing; a diploma in Production Agriculture; and a certificate in Precision Agriculture Application Technician. The college also offers an AS degree in Forestry/Natural Resources. The Farm Management program offers diplomas in Farm Business Management and Lamb and Wool Management and certificates in Advanced Farm Business Management, Applications in Farm Business Management, and Essentials of Farm Business Management.

Lamb and Wool Management Program (LWMP) instructors provide one-on-one instruction at student operation locations, but they also meet groups of students in classrooms and through webinars, provide management updates through a newsletter and weekly e-mail, attend small group meetings, lead field trips, and arrange for tours of other enterprises. In FY15, LWMP

enrollment was 189 students. Students enrolled in LWMP courses increased ewe numbers, implemented more efficient and effective labor management practices, and produced higher quality lambs and wool. Participants increased their net worth by 5 percent.

Three of Minnesota West's Farm Business Management faculty were recognized by the National Association of Agricultural Educators for the Outstanding Adult Ag Ed Program award in the fall of FY15.

The Canby campus provides a hub for harnessing the enormous potential of wind power on Buffalo Ridge by offering an AAS degree in Wind Energy Technology, a diploma in Wind Energy Mechanic, and a certificate in Windsmith, which focuses on installation and maintenance of wind towers.

Farm Business Management (FBM) programs at Minnesota West provide lifelong education to agribusiness owners and managers. These programs focus on record keeping, goal setting, and informed decision making with the goal of helping owners and managers maintain successful and profitable operations. In FY15, FBM enrolled 349 students, and students enrolled in FBM courses increased their net worth by more than \$51,000, or 4 percent.

Minnesota West's Small Business Management (SBM) and Computerized Small Business Management (CSBM) instructors provide one-on-one instruction in student business places, but they also meet with small groups of students in classrooms, attend meetings, lead field trips, and arrange for tours of other enterprises. In FY15, combined SBM/CSBM enrollment was 127 students.

### **Diversity of Faculty and Staff**

Minnesota West has made great efforts to increase the diversity of its administration, faculty, and staff but has had only limited success. This is a cause for concern that warrants continued attention.

In FY15, 9 of 12 (75%) of college administrators were women, but no administrators were minorities, only one administrator had a disability, and only one was a veteran. Among faculty, 42 of 84 were women (50%), but only two (2.38%) were minorities, three had a disability (3.57%), and four were veterans (4.76%). Among clerical and office employees, all 37 employees were women (100%), one person was a minority, none had a disability, and none was a veteran. Among the 17 service maintenance employees, all were white men without a disability; two of the men were veterans. In August 2015, an Hispanic man was hired as full-time Information Technology (IT) support worker on the Worthington campus.

### **Building Cultural Awareness**

Culture Corner is located in the Academic and Technology Resources Center on the Worthington campus. It is the college wide Office of Cultural Diversity. The office provides a central location where underrepresented students can access services designed to help them succeed. The office was established in FY04 to improve retention of students of color and increase racial, ethnic, and

gender diversity among students. The college provides a variety of programs, services, and referrals that are intended and designed to enrich the campus experience and enhance cultural awareness for all students.

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, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transsexual (GLBT) students, and women's concerns.

All Minnesota West campuses have designated multicultural awareness officers assigned to assist minority students. At the technical campuses, student services advisors are designated diversity officers. The advisors plan activities for minority 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, Women's History Month, Cinco de Mayo, and other occasions.

On the Worthington campus, the Culture Corner and the Office of Diversity and Cultural Affairs sponsor several programs each year that are open to all Minnesota West students, faculty, and staff. Members of the community are also invited to attend the programs at no cost. Examples of recent programs include presentations on Hispanic heritage by natives of Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador, and Honduras. The college screened a locally produced award-winning film, titled *Abrazos*, that documents a trip Worthington's Guatemalan children made to visit grandparents and extended families in Guatemala. The Mixed Blood Theater company visits campus at least once every year; some recent MBT productions include *Minnecanos*, a play about Hispanic history in Minnesota; and *African America*, *Hijab Tube*, *Dr. King's Dream*, *Daughters of Africa*, and *Black Eagle*, plays about contributions African immigrants have made to American culture. 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, winter counts, the NA perspective on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and other topics. The Culture Corner has also promoted student and family workshops on the American Dream Act. The Samaritan Society, which works for more humane immigration practices and policies, has visited campus to offer programs on cultural competence, racism, human trafficking, poverty, and other issues. Each of the last six Decembers, the Culture Corner has cooperated with the Minnesota West Foundation to sponsor a "Celebrations around the World" event on the Worthington campus; at least 30 cultures present food and information about their celebrations at the one-night event. Proceeds benefit students who have limited access to college loans. Recipients have been awarded \$500 to \$1,500 scholarships from these funds.

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, MN, to honor the 38 Native Americans who were hanged there after the Dakota Uprising in December 1862. The group also sponsors a field trip to the nearby Pipestone National Monument to raise awareness of the Pipestone quarries' significance to Native American culture. The Pipestone campus group also participates in the annual Career Day at the Flandreau 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 their gender. 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.

### **Student Organizations to Promote Diversity**

No formal student organizations exist for specific minority groups on Minnesota West campuses. However, each campus diversity officer plans meetings intended to raise student awareness of diversity issues and distinctive cultural traditions. Many Minnesota West students also participate in the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC), a county-wide community organization that works with Culture Corner to promote understanding of diverse cultures through an annual International Festival in downtown Worthington and several other events throughout the year. The NCIC offices moved the Minnesota West campus in January 2015, so it and Culture Corner are now located in the same building.

### **Educational Support for Underprepared Students**

Services available to underprepared, underrepresented, and international students at Minnesota West include information and referral, access to social and cultural activities, cultural awareness programming, diversity training, advising, and help filing financial aid and admissions applications. The college offers developmental and study skills courses to help students raise their academic skills to college levels. The college also employs a half-time retention coordinator to encourage persistence of minority student athletes, who have the historically lowest college success rate. A list of tutoring and study skills services is available on the college website.

In FY11, the college initiated a new course titled Freshman Seminar. The purpose of the course is to ease students' adjustment to college life and increase their likelihood of success. Freshman Seminar provides first-year students with general orientation, a review of study skills, and information regarding college resources. Also since FY11, the college has employed an administrative assistant/athletic retention coordinator to help athletes remain academically engaged through graduation.

## **Veterans Resources**

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 VA 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 veterans' records.

Applications for veteran educational benefits can be obtained from the resource specialist on each campus. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and MnOnline also have websites designed to serve the unique higher education needs of military veterans, students currently serving in the military, and families of veterans.

Minnesota West also offers credit for military experience and training. Course equivalencies can be found at Transferology and on the college website at the college page titled Alternative Methods of Earning Credit.

In 2015, Minnesota West was designated a "Military Friendly School" by Victory Media.

## **A History of Flexibility**

In the past, Minnesota West has offered faculty supervised cable and low-power (UHF) television courses in such areas as art history, the humanities, literature, political science, and composition. The college has also offered weekend classes on campus and both day and night off-campus classes. It has offered concurrent enrollment and complete academic programs at area high schools and industrial sites, including the Toro plant in Windom and the former Bayer Animal Health laboratory in Worthington, now owned by Intervet Corporation, a division of Shering-Plough Animal Health. While some of these attempts at alternative delivery were more successful than others, college administrators and faculty remain eager and open to finding new and convenient delivery methods to meet the desires and needs of all Minnesota West's various constituencies.

- APC\_DeptMnVeteransAffairs\_June2014
- APC\_Transferology\_June2014
- Fed\_MinnesotaQuickFactsCensusBureau\_Apr2015
- MnSCU\_DegreeAwardsFY14\_June2015
- MnSCU\_MnOnline-Military\_July2014
- MW\_AlternativeMethodsofEarningCredit\_July2014
- MW\_CultureCorner\_July2014
- MW\_CustomizedTrainingServices\_Aug2014
- MW\_HR\_DiversityofStaff\_May2014
- MW\_MassageTherapyDiploma\_June2015
- MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014
- MW\_StudySkillsTutoring\_June2014

## **Core Component 1.D**

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
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 identified external constituencies and communities of interest 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. Its goal is to continue that tradition far into the future.

According to a study titled *The Economic Impact of Minnesota West Community and Technical College* completed by Wilder Research, Minnesota West “generates an annual economic impact of \$120 million from its operations in the Upper Minnesota Valley and South West regions. Based on the Upper Minnesota Valley and South West regions’ economy of \$7.6 billion, this means that for every \$100 produced in the region, approximately \$1.6 is directly or indirectly related to Minnesota West Community and Technical College.” While the “direct impact of the college in 2011 was \$91 million ... the indirect impact in other industries was \$29 million.” The college generated 1,571 jobs both directly and indirectly through vendors, contractors, and businesses that cater to the college and its students.

## **Partnerships and Collaborations**

Minnesota West engages with its constituents in a number of partnerships that are mutually beneficial. The President's Advisory Council is a group of regional industry leaders who meet regularly with Minnesota West's president. The group offers advice and information on their present and anticipated needs for employee training.

In the past decade, collaboration with Nova Tech Process Solutions and Minnesota West faculty resulted in the development of the first ever ethanol training simulator. The simulator has become the “training tool of choice” in the ethanol industry. Minnesota West provided training to more than a dozen Midwest ethanol companies including Glacial Lakes Energy; Cardinal Ethanol; POET Biorefining; SIRE Energy; Adkins Energy; Global Ethanol; Lincolnway Energy; Valero Ethanol; Golden Triangle Energy; Minnesota Energy; Granite Falls Energy; DENCO, LLC; and Buffalo Lake Energy.

A recent example of the college working with area employers to provide the skilled workers in demand is the Industrial Technology AAS\_or certificate program. The web site description of the program states that the program will produce graduates with "expertise in mechanical, electrical, and automated systems." Another example is the expansion of the massage therapy diploma program from Luverne to Worthington campus.

Minnesota West nursing programs saved approximately \$2,000 in FY15 due to donated supplies from area health care facilities. Sanford Health also donated an x-ray machine directly to Minnesota West. In fall 2014, Sanford Health Clinics partnered with Minnesota West to add 23 students to the practical nursing program.

In 2014, Minnesota West received \$74,779 in state equipment funds to support the development of a 12 station mobile welding lab. The mobile lab helps meet a pronounced need for welders and metal fabricators in southwestern Minnesota and enables students and incumbent workers to learn three types of welding. The equipment includes a 53' semi van trailer, a fume extraction and heating/air conditioning system, and 12 MIG/TIG welders with accessories. Funds also provided an improved ventilation system that meets proposed federal air quality standards for workers. The state funding was matched by both cash and in-kind contributions totaling \$102,570 from the following southwestern Minnesota private sector businesses:

- AGCO- Jackson Plant (Jackson)
- Doherty Staffing Solutions (Jackson)
- Winnebago Manufacturing Company (Blue Earth)
- Chandler Industries, Inc. (Montevideo)
- Zierke Built Manufacturing Inc. (Winnebago, MN)
- The Schwan Food Company (Marshall)
- Contractor of Choice (Marshall)
- Bisbee Plumbing & Heating (Marshall)
- SMI & Hydraulics (Porter)
- Jim Brewers Electric (Minneota)
- American Welding & Gas, Inc. (Willmar)

In FY15, local companies augmented leveraged equipment funds to help Minnesota West purchase several costly training tools for programs. Worthington Regional Hospital Foundation provided a grant to help the college purchase a new SimMan (\$27,899); Cliff Viessman Trucking sold a used tractor/trailer to the college at half the trade-in value (\$15,000); funds provided by JBS added to vendor discounts enabled Minnesota West to purchase fume and dust collectors for \$6,355; vendor discounts helped the college purchase a motion control simulator and programmable logic controllers for the new industrial technology degree program (\$25,870); the value of an engine donated by Amundson Peterson John Deere Dealership allowed for purchased of equipment used to run engine tests (\$14,326); computer monitors, a forklift and welding simulation software was purchased after receiving \$346,435 in welding equipment from AGCO in Jackson. In 2015, equipment donations, discounts, and cash matched from partners totaled \$483,085.

## **Partnerships in Higher Education**

Minnesota West also collaborates with other higher education institutions to provide benefits to students and employers.

In fall 2014, the Minnesota Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (MNAMP) was selected to receive a \$15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for advanced manufacturing education. MNAMP is a statewide consortium of MnSCU institutions that includes Minnesota West and 11 other colleges. The grant will be administered by MNAMP's Center of Excellence, housed at South Central College in Mankato. The grant project focuses on mechatronics, machining, and welding. Participants in the programs will be able to earn certificates, diplomas, or degrees while working in the industry. The grant targets unemployed, underemployed, dislocated workers, underrepresented groups, and other adult learners, but traditional students are also eligible. As many as 3,000 Minnesota students and hundreds of businesses are expected to benefit from the program.

Southwest Minnesota State University (Marshall) offers a \$2,400 transfer scholarship for Minnesota West graduates who obtain their Associate of Arts degree.

University of Minnesota-Morris and Minnesota West faculty recently developed a three-credit environmental science course. The course focuses on biomass gasification and is taught on the Morris campus by faculty from both colleges during a three-week period each summer.

A Minnesota West faculty member serves on the advisory committee for the University of Minnesota-Crookston's Biofuels and Renewable Energy Technology program, part of its Agricultural Systems Management (ASM) major. The U of M-Crookston accepts several Minnesota West biofuels courses into its ASM major.

North East Community College in Norfolk, NE, adopted the entire ethanol curriculum developed by Minnesota West faculty. Minnesota West provided facilitator guides and conducted train-the-trainer seminars at NECC. NECC also obtained an ethanol training simulator from Nova Tech Process Solutions and continues to use training manuals developed by Minnesota West instructors.

Southern Illinois University houses the National Corn to Ethanol Research Center on the Edwardsville campus. SIUE also uses training manuals developed by Minnesota West and worked with Minnesota West faculty in 2009 to develop a train-the-trainer video to use at the research center.

Minnesota West and St. Cloud Technical and Community College co-lead a MnSCU center of excellence called the Minnesota Energy Center (MnEC), comprising ten MnSCU community and technical colleges that offer an Energy Technical Specialist A.A.S. degree. Students began enrolling in the new program in fall 2009. Minnesota West is solely responsible for courses in wind, ethanol, and biodiesel, and it oversees solar energy courses developed by Century College in White Bear Lake. The MnEC concentrates on continuing and strengthening relationships between industry and community colleges to ensure that MnSCU's two-year college graduates have the proper skills to enter and work in energy production industries. Energy-related programs offered at Minnesota West include biodiesel, ethanol, power line, and solar and wind



power production. All of these programs contribute to the MnEC and benefit from its sustained relationships with industry leaders.

Minnesota West administrators and faculty also belong to the Minnesota Energy Consortium (MEC). The consortium includes representatives of large and small businesses, state agencies, other two-year colleges, and K-12 schools. MEC's initial focus was on power generation, but it has grown to include renewable and alternative forms of energy production. MEC currently serves as an advisor for the MnEC through representatives from industry, government, and education. Minnesota West faculty and administrators serve on task forces within the MnEC whose missions include raising career awareness, improving channels for technical experts to teach energy curricula, and continuing to build a qualified workforce.

Minnesota West and South Central College at Mankato, MN, joined forces in 2012 to create a cooperative agriculture program titled Center for Agriculture.

Minnesota West instructors participated in an "E3 Conference: Energy Education for Educators" at St. Cloud Technical and Community College. Students from ten regional high schools attended the conference. Topics included biofuels, energy crops, electronic circuitry, nuclear energy, power generation, solar energy, and wind energy. Participants toured Great River Energy, Blattner Energy, Anoka-Ramsey (Cambridge) Campus Energy Crops Demonstration plot, and St. John University's (Collegeville) Outdoor University.

Minnesota West is one of 15 two-year colleges that participate in Child Care Aware, an articulation agreement for a single shared online option for obtaining an AAS degree in Child Development.

### **Community Projects**

Minnesota West and Southwest Minnesota State University cooperate each year to present Career Expos at the SMSU campus at Marshall, MN, and on the Worthington campus. The event typically attracts more than 1,700 high school sophomores. Representatives from 70-100 area business enterprises exhibit and meet with students to help them understand the skills that they need for various professions.

Diesel powered equipment is featured at the annual Extravaganza on the Canby campus. The event features demonstrations by professionals and is open to the public.

Minnesota West's Human Services department hosts workshops for Southwest Crisis Center during April, which is National Domestic Abuse Awareness Month. Participants hear from speakers who have survived domestic violence and sexual assault.

In FY15, Minnesota West Math/Science division cooperated with the Worthington YMCA to support a Lego League, a program to help young people build engineering and programming skills. Two retired math teachers worked with the group two afternoons per week during fall semester on the Worthington campus.

Other events include the Melrose Career Fair, Breaking Traditions at Granite Falls, the Willmar Regional Job Fair, and the Trades Fair at Luverne.

Minnesota West is a Tree USA Campus.

### **K-12 schools**

Minnesota West works with area high schools in a number of ways. The college partners with area alternative schools and the Private Industry Council to offer the Breaking Traditions program on each of the campuses. Current students help with the program to provide hands-on activities and informal interaction with instructors. The technical campuses have offered the program for the past ten years. The programs encourage students who are less likely to consider advancing to postsecondary schools to consider the economic advantages that continuing their education can provide. High school juniors and seniors can participate in the Post-Secondary Education Opportunity (PSEO) program on campuses and sites and take concurrent enrollment courses in their home district classrooms. Starting in FY15, high school sophomores could participate in PSEO courses in technical areas.

Kids College is hosted by Minnesota West in July and multi-cultural collaborative groups attend summer events on all college campuses. Elementary, middle school, and high school students are invited to share in events such as lectures, presentations, and theater productions at the college throughout the year. High school students involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) also gather at Minnesota West campuses for contests and interviews.

The Granite Falls BPA chapter sponsors a large high school competition every year.

In addition, the Worthington school district utilizes college facilities for its Alternative Learning Center program. Worthington campus gymnasiums are used for the Wild Turkey Shootout, an invitational basketball tournament for fifth through eighth grade students held every March. In summer 2010, the Worthington public school district's middle school was closed for remodeling, so the Worthington college campus hosted middle school summer classes.

On May 30, 2015, Minnesota West Worthington campus hosted the AT&T Aspire Grant funded Summer Coding Class for ninth through twelfth graders. The tuition for the class was covered by a \$12,000 grant from AT&T. A grant from Blandin Corporation will fund tuition for 20 high school students in an Information Literacy course in spring 2016.

Minnesota West is a good neighbor in each of its communities.

### **Sources**

- APC\_CareerExpo\_Aug2014
- APC\_ChildCareAware\_Aug2014
- APC\_MinnesotaEnergyCenter\_June2015
- APC\_MinnesotaEnergyConsortium\_June2015
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesotaPrivateIndustryCouncil\_Aug2014

- APC\_WelcomeToSARA\_Oct2015
- MnSCU\_LeveragedEquipmentFunding\_June2014
- MW\_BreakingTraditions2014\_Aug2104
- MW\_EconomicImpact\_2013
- MW\_industrialtechnologyaas\_May2015
- MW\_MelroseCareerFair\_Aug2014
- MW\_Trades FairLuverne\_Aug2014
- MW\_Willmar Regional Job Fair\_Aug2014

## **2.A - Core Component 2.A**

---

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

### **Argument**

---

Fairness and integrity are the central aims of all Minnesota West operations. The Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system and Minnesota West have developed and reviewed policies through many years of changes – financial, political, economic, social, technological, and educational. These policies reflect the integrity of the state system and college and the principle goals that have not changed – the desire to do right by students, staff, faculty, administration, and employers, and, most of all, to participate in the development of our region. These goals are reflected in Minnesota West policies.

Minnesota West complies with the policies and procedures established by the MnSCU Board of Trustees. The 15-member board is appointed by the governor and is responsible for oversight, planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admission requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations for 31 public colleges and universities. The board usually meets in St. Paul although it occasionally meets at one of the member institutions in greater Minnesota.

The MnSCU board grants authority for implementing policies to the MnSCU Chancellor. The Chancellor appoints Vice Chancellors to assist in specific areas of operations. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellors also rely heavily on assistance and cooperation from the system's Campus Presidents, who serve as non-voting members of MnSCU committees and provide input to board members individually and at monthly meetings.

### **Financial Audits**

The MnSCU Board of Trustees hires external auditors to conduct a financial statement audit of the System. This audit provides consolidated financial statements, as well as supplemental

financial information for individual institutions. The most recently completed audit was for years ending in 2013 and 2014. The State of Minnesota's Financial and Compliance Report on Federally Assisted Programs includes federal financial aid programs.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs also audits financial aid every year.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

Minnesota West Policy 1B.1.1 has two major parts. Part A stresses that the college will comply with MnSCU's policy of "equal opportunity and non-discrimination." Part B states that "no person shall be discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices or access to and participation in, programs, services, and activities with regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law." Employee search committee members are trained and required to view a video on proper procedures to protect the confidentiality of job applicants.

### **Code of Conduct**

Minnesota West Policy 3.6 is a "Code of Conduct" that stipulates that the college "has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students. The College...reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to support and protect the safety and well-being of the College community: its students, faculty, staff, facilities, and its programs. Students are expected to abide by local, state, and federal laws, and the College's rules." Faculty are encouraged to refer to this policy on their syllabi. Major portions of the policy are reviewed at each college orientation. [Definitions and procedures](#) for Policy 3.6 are listed on a separate document linked to the policy page.

Policies that apply to faculty and staff are articulated in section C of the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Staff Handbook](#). Both are linked to the college website.

### **FERPA**

Minnesota West administrators inform faculty and staff of the stipulations of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act so that full compliance is achieved. Workshops on compliance have been conducted on administration days, and a document titled "FERPA: What faculty and staff members need to know" is available on the college website.

### **Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, and Internet Use**

Minnesota West accepts and follows the MnSCU Policy 1.B.3 that prohibits sexual harassment or sexual violence. Ethical use of the internet is outlined in the college's Internet Use Policy. Policies regarding ethical use of state equipment, receiving gifts, carrying weapons, maintaining confidentiality, using controlled substances, and committing fraudulent or dishonest acts are included in the first seven pages of the Employee Handbook.

## **Copyright and Intellectual Property**

Minnesota West library 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, and the college library has a staff person assigned to monitor activities in which copyrights are involved. College policies are outlined and defined on the Copyright & Intellectual Property page of the website.

## **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 groups is listed in the MnSCU report titled MnSCU Payroll 2015. More details regarding college employees are included in Section 5.A.

Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) is the official representative of faculty at Minnesota West. MSCF was formed after the merger from the two bargaining units that formerly represented technical college faculty (United Technical College Educators – UTCE) and liberal arts faculty (Minnesota Community College Faculty Association – MCCFA). The merger of the two units was a process that began in 2001. The *Master Agreement 2001-2003* included transition language for the merged association with two salary schedules. The *Master Agreement 2003-2005* was the first to contain common language and a unified salary schedule for both groups. The efforts to achieve common language and schedules have continued in subsequent bargaining agreements. The most recent *Master Agreement between the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees and the Minnesota State College Faculty 2013-15* is in effect until a new contract is negotiated.

MSCF maintains two local chapters at Minnesota West. The north chapter represents faculty assigned to campuses at Pipestone, Canby, and Granite Falls and locations at Luverne, Marshall and Redwood Falls. The south chapter represents faculty assigned to campuses at Jackson and Worthington. Each chapter has its own officers, a president, vice-president, and secretary, all of which are elected by local members, and a grievance representative who is appointed by MSCF.

Most Minnesota West classified staff are members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The remaining Minnesota West employees are represented by the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) and Middle Management Association (MMA). Their contracts contain language for meet and confer, which is conducted whenever issues arise.

Minnesota West administrators are included in the MnSCU Excluded Administrators pay plan or the Commissioner's Pay Plan.

Minnesota West documents timely responses to complaints and grievances, especially those of students. The college regularly prepares and publishes reports that provide information about

nearly all aspects of college operations for local, state, and federal entities. The reports are published on or linked to the college website.

Minnesota West operates with integrity in all aspects of its operations and auxiliary functions.

## Sources

---

- APC\_AFSCME2013-2015\_state\_master\_agreement\_June2014
- APC\_MAPEcontract\_June2015
- APC\_MMALContract\_2015
- APC\_MSCFMasterAgreement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_1b-03-SexualViolencePolicy\_July2014
- MnSCU\_BoardofTrusteesRoster\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Finance-Year-endFinancialStatements\_Aug2014
- MnSCU\_Financial and Compliance Report on Federally Assisted Programs 2013\_Feb2015
- MnSCU\_Payroll2015\_March2015
- MW\_CodeOfConduct\_July2014
- MW\_CodeOfConduct-3.6Definitions\_June2014
- MW\_CopyrightAndIntellectualProperty\_July2014
- MW\_FERPA-Handout\_June2014
- MW\_HR\_EmployeeSalarySummary13\_June2014
- MW\_Pol\_EqualOpportunity Policy1B.1.1\_July2014
- MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014
- MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014
- MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014
- MW-Pol\_InternetUse\_July2014

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

---

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

## Argument

---

Minnesota West communicates with students through its [catalog](#), website (Current Students page), 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 sends 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.

## Catalog, Program Descriptions, and Course Outlines

Each Minnesota West education program is briefly described online and in the printed [Course Catalog](#), which is updated every two years. Most individual program directors maintain separate printed program descriptions that can be distributed on 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 travel their chosen educational paths.

Complete college course schedules are posted on the college website at least one full semester in advance. Course outlines for every college course are listed on the college website. MnSCU regularly reviews the outlines to monitor currency and compliance. In 2014, MnSCU reviewers used college outlines to determine that some developmental courses no longer qualified for federal financial aid because they did not cover material deemed to be at least at the high school level.

### **Advertising and Marketing**

Until fall 2015, Minnesota West's marketing efforts were directed by one college-wide coordinator of marketing who was located on the Worthington campus and who reported directly to the Provost. Each of the five campuses also employed one campus marketer. Responsibilities for marketing are also part of the job descriptions for site managers at Luverne, and Redwood Falls, and the college Communication Center staff.

Minnesota West's marketing has traditionally been focused on several target audiences – high school students, four-year college students and non-completers, minority students, underrepresented students, distance learning students (both online and ITV), non-traditional students, and the unemployed or underemployed. The most accessible group has been high school students, most of whom plan to attend college after graduation. Many local graduates consider Minnesota West first because of its easy access and affordability. Some students enroll elsewhere and then discover that they are not prepared emotionally or academically for moving away from their families or communities. Those students are welcomed when they transfer to Minnesota West.

Throughout the school year, marketers meet with potential students at alternative learning centers, private business gatherings, career fairs, community orientations, high schools, workforce centers, and on campuses. During FY14, marketers attended 189 high schools, 31 college fairs, and 28 job, trade, or career fairs or expos. They presented college information at 43 meetings of community organizations and hosted more than 100 events on Minnesota West campuses. They mailed nearly 24,000 marketing documents. They spoke to more than 4,800 prospective students.

Recruiting specialists plan and assess their efforts based on needs of individual campuses and communities. Marketers work closely with workforce centers and employers to discover needs and train displaced workers for new occupations and careers.

Marketers gather and use data regarding constituents to plan events and visits that optimize contact with those most in need. Specific events include community orientations that focus on meeting the new arrivals to the region. Marketers and faculty volunteers conduct classroom presentations at area alternative learning centers to impress on at-risk and underrepresented students the need to continue their education beyond high school. Marketers also work closely with the business community and non-profit organizations to inform leaders of the opportunities for advanced training that the college provides. To help with these meetings, marketers have produced several Spanish language materials to distribute to Hispanic workers and their families.

New marketing materials that focus on online learning and diversity recruitment are developed each year. Marketing campaigns have also expanded into the technical environments where modern students live, including online advertising, such as Google advertising, and online social networks, including Facebook, Pandora, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube.

Marketing staff review data that help direct marketing strategies at monthly marketing meetings. Student data and prospect information are kept for five years in the ISRS system. The college does not share or sell the information it gathers.

The college advertises online, on billboards, on local theater screens, on television, on radio, and in e-zines and print magazines. The theme phrase for all advertising is “Learn with Purpose.” The goal of the advertising is to present a professional image of the college, and campaigns place special emphasis on photographs that show a diverse student body, including ethnic diversity, students with disabilities, non-traditional students, and students in non-traditional careers. Social media is used to share day-to-day college activities and events to increase awareness and visibility of Minnesota West.

In FY15, the *ad hoc* marketing committee was formed to consider revisions to current marketing strategies. The committee proposed a new marketing plan titled *Enrollment Management and Outreach 2015-2020*. The plan calls for the hiring of a Director of Marketing, Communications, and Enrollment; two Enrollment Specialists; a Web and Social Media Specialist; and a Marketing and Production Specialist. In addition, the college will employ a full-time director of the Minnesota West Foundation to manage operations and provide outreach to alumni. Those positions were filled in late summer FY15. The foundation director's salary will be divided between the college and the foundation.

### **Accreditation Status**

Minnesota West's accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission and 13 other agencies is listed in the college catalog and on the website. A complete list of accrediting agencies and their addresses is included in Criterion 4A of this report.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Current rates for tuition and fees are listed on the college website's Business Office page. The page lists costs per credit and total cost per semester for a 16-credit course load. Tuition for an online class is \$12.50 per credit higher than for a face-to-face class. In compliance with MnSCU



policy, the business manager conducts a Student Consultation meeting on all five campuses and at the Luverne Center each spring to explain college budgets and discuss changes in tuition rates and fees to interested students.

## **Crime Reports**

Minnesota West encourages all students and members of the college community to be aware of safety issues on all campuses and locations and on the private property adjacent to the campuses and locations. All are encouraged to prevent or report any illegal or inappropriate activities that they experience or witness.

To comply with the Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crimes Statistics Act of 1998, the Minnesota West Provost's office publishes an annual *Campus Security and Fire Safety Annual Report*. The report is prepared in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies responsible for providing services to the college along with faculty and staff. Campus crime, arrest, and referral statistics include those reported to campus deans, designated campus security authorities, and local law enforcement agencies.

The report is published by October 1 of each year. It includes reported crimes alleged to have occurred on campus, at facilities owned or leased by the college, and on the immediately adjacent surrounding public area. A print version of the report is available on request to any current student or employee.

Everyone associated with the college is encouraged to report any real or potential criminal activity to the campus dean and the local police. Reportable crimes include arson, assault, burglary, drug violations, hate crimes, liquor law offenses, manslaughter or murder, possession of illegal weapons, robbery, and sex offenses; motor vehicle theft; domestic violence; dating violence; and stalking. The report also notes which crimes were bias-motivated. Minnesota West does not have campus law enforcement. The college normally requires a written complaint before beginning an investigation, but it will make exceptions when cases present clear danger to victims or to college property.

Campus Deans serve as liaisons for campus security with all law enforcement agencies. Minnesota West offers to assist anyone who desires to file a complaint with local law enforcement. Whenever possible, Minnesota West will protect the identities of crime victims.

Information about Minnesota West is available on nearly every platform currently known to be available. The college is proud of its history, happy to build on it, and eager to share it with its constituents.

## **Sources**

---

- MnSCU\_Tuition-Fees\_June2014
- MW\_AcademicPrograms\_30June2014
- MW\_Accreditations\_July2014

- MW\_CampusSecurity&FireSafetyAnnualReport2013\_July2014
- MW\_CourseOutline-Generic\_June2014
- MW\_CourseSchedule\_30June2014
- MW\_CurrentStudents\_July2014
- MW\_Student Consultation fy13\_March2015
- MW\_Tuition-Fees\_July2014
- MWM\_MarketingOverview\_April2014
- MWM\_MarketingPlan\_May2015

## **2.C - Core Component 2.C**

---

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

## **Argument**

---

Minnesota community colleges and four-year universities make up the statewide Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. MnSCU policies and activities are guided by a chancellor and the MnSCU Board of Trustees. MnSCU's Policy 3.36 Academic Programs outlines the MnSCU board's role in directing academic offerings for member institutions.

Each MnSCU college is headed by a President who serves as the chief executive officer. Presidential appointments are recommended by the MnSCU Chancellor and approved by the MnSCU Board of Trustees. Presidents report to the MnSCU Chancellor and are ultimately responsible for developing and implementing college missions, policies, and procedures. A new president took office at Minnesota West on July 1, 2015.

The President is the primary spokesperson for Minnesota West and periodically consults 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 MnSCU policies and procedures, and implementing strategic plans for both Minnesota West and MnSCU.

Minnesota West's President's leadership team meets monthly to discuss current issues and to plan for the future. In FY15, the leadership team consisted of the Interim President, the Provost,

the Vice President of Administration, campus deans, the Dean of Technology and Distance Learning, the Dean of Customized Training/Continuing Education, the Dean of Nursing, the Director of Human Resources, and the Dean of Management Programs. The team considers minutes and messages from advisory boards, program review reports, accreditation reports, enrollment data and projections, and reports from external audits of systems or departments. An administrative assistant records the team's actions and decisions and posts them on a shared website.

The college President, Provost, and two other college-wide members of the leadership team also meet regularly with the Faculty Shared Governance Council, to comply with Article 8 of the MSCF Master Agreement. Minutes from these meetings are also 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 planning, initiating, 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 Student Services operations, progress toward achieving Strategic Plan goals, and several college budgets, including those for equipment, financial aid, technology, and academic and student 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 publications 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 Administration plans, coordinates, and directs all college administration services. The Vice President of Administration oversees human services, business offices, facilities, and auxiliary enterprises for the entire college. The Vice President reports to the President and supervises the college business manager and Chief Human Resources Director. The Vice President of Administration is also a permanent member of the President's leadership team.

Minnesota West's Campus Deans oversee enrollment, admissions, registration, orientation, counseling, student success activities, student records, placement, housing, and financial aid services at the campus level. The Campus Deans are also responsible for facilities, grounds, personnel supervision, community relations, campus promotions, planning for growth, and carrying out college and MnSCU policies and procedures. The Campus Deans report to the Provost.

The Chief Human Resources Director oversees all human resource functions at the college. The director participates in planning, administering labor contracts, resolving personnel issues, managing recruitment of new employees, and organizing staff development. The director also serves as coordinator for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for employees and as Affirmative Action Officer. The director reports to the Vice President of Administration and supervises a personnel assistant and payroll technician.

The Dean of Management Programs plans, develops, evaluates, executes, and monitors farm and business management education programs offered throughout the region. The director supervises nine Farm Business Management instructors, one Small Business Management instructor, two Lamb and Wool Management instructors, and one office support staff person. The director reports to Minnesota West's Provost.

The Dean of Customized Training/Continuing Education recruits, hires, and supervises project coordinators, faculty, and support staff for CT/CE and manages the Minnesota West Marshall office. The Director of CT/CE also cooperates with business, industry, and government agencies and leaders to develop new programs that provide relevant training and retraining for workers in the region. The director reports to the college Provost.

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

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

## Sources

---

- APC\_MSCFMasterAgreement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_BoardofTrusteesRoster\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Policy3.36\_AcademicPrograms\_Apr2015

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

---

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

## Argument

---

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

MnSCU Policy 3.26 specifies, among many other things, that faculty members choose their own textbooks and that their syllabi belong to them. MnSCU policy, the MSCF Master Agreement, the [Faculty Handbook](#), the Minnesota West online Curriculum Development Manual and related documents articulate the academic freedom of faculty.

Minnesota West Policy 3.1 outlines student rights and responsibilities, including “Freedom to Learn,” “Freedom of Expression,” and “Freedom of Association.”

The college has an established Internet Use Policy and a Student Code of Conduct.

Minnesota West Policy 3.26 addresses copyright and intellectual issues for students and staff.

To encourage "freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth," outside speakers and stage productions are brought to campus regularly. These speakers and performances often express or portray views that challenge the entire college community to examine core values and beliefs. Recent examples include the Rev. Billy Kyles, Mississippi civil rights activists Hollis Watkins, Dr. Leslie McLemore, Dr. Rickey Hill, and several productions from Mixed Blood Theater.

A student art and literary magazine titled *UnCover* is produced on the Worthington campus every spring. The magazine is funded by student activity funds and features creative writing and visual art works submitted by students college-wide. The magazine's editorial staff selects the works that are included in the publication. The staff is made up of students and one faculty advisor.

Continuing education for faculty and staff is encouraged through the provision of professional development funds, tuition waivers, and salary incentives based on educational achievement. Since 2012, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has conducted all-college duty days that have been opened to all employees. Faculty and staff who earn new advanced degrees are recognized and celebrated publicly at spring graduation ceremonies.

## Sources

---

- APC\_MSCFMasterAgreement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_Policy3.26-IntellectualProperty\_June2014
- MnSCU\_Procedures-3.32.1-FacultyCredentialling\_June2014
- MW-Pol\_CodeOfConduct-3.6Definitions\_June2014
- MW-Pol\_Copyright-IntellectualProperty-3.26\_July2014
- MW-Pol\_InternetUse\_July2014
- MW-Pol\_StudentRightsResponsibilities-3.1\_July2014

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

---

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

## Argument

---

Minnesota West's student Information Technology policy and policy on internet use expressly forbid plagiarism or violations of copyright, patent, or trademark laws. Most course outlines contain statements that remind students that plagiarism and other violations will not be tolerated.

The complete Student Code of Conduct defines and clarifies what constitutes a violation and specifies disciplinary steps that the college will take to respond to violators.

The primary responsibility for guiding students in the ethical use of information resources belongs to faculty who require research projects for their courses. Classroom instructors are informed and supported by college librarians (who are also faculty) and library staff who monitor research activities and stay apprised of changes in laws and public policies involving copyright and intellectual property. Librarians present information to new students at orientation and occasionally lead workshops for faculty duty days or brown bag lunch sessions. They are invited to visit classes and prepare online presentations on fair use of intellectual property to keep faculty, staff, and students up to date. A new course titled Information Literacy will be offered as a special topics course in spring FY16.

All faculty are encouraged to include language regarding cheating and plagiarism on their syllabi. When cases of academic misconduct are reported to the campus dean, the dean investigates. If a violation is found to have occurred, the violator must accept the consequences specified by the faculty member, and a misconduct report is added to the student's permanent record. Such violations are rare. Campus deans reported that only three incidents rose to that level in FY15.

## Sources

---

- MW\_Pol\_InformationTechnologyPolicy\_June2014
- MW-Pol\_CodeOfConduct-3.6Definitions\_June2014
- MW-Pol\_InternetUse\_July2014

## 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 and transparent ways. Policies and procedures have evolved and are currently enforced to ensure that students, faculty, employees, and administrators understand and carry on the traditions that have shaped this venerable institution.

The college governing boards, both at the state level (MnSCU) and locally (the President's Leadership Team and meet and confer committees) are guided by traditions and mission statements that are regularly reviewed to ensure and maintain relevance. 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 kept apprised of laws and ethical practices dealing with private information and intellectual property, 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 publically and rewarded financially in compliance with current contracts.

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

While the college is dedicated to pursuing excellence and integrity in all of its operations, leaders acknowledge that areas for improvement remain.

## **Sources**

---

- MW\_Pol\_PoliciesWebpage\_July2014
- MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014

## **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

---

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for 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 is a two-year college growing and thriving from roots that were set in southwestern Minnesota nearly 80 years ago (Worthington Junior College was founded in 1936). As one of 31 currently operating MnSCU colleges, its courses, programs, and student outcomes are constantly evaluated by faculty, administration, and both campus and college-wide curriculum committees. Courses and programs are also frequently reviewed by MnSCU compliance and transfer specialists, faculty and program directors from other MnSCU institutions, and the University of Minnesota. Higher education institutions from neighboring states also work with Minnesota West faculty to develop agreements for two-plus-two transfer and other articulation agreements.

Each Minnesota West course requires an approved Course Outline that includes a catalog description and information regarding areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (see Core Component 3B) that the course satisfies. Among other features, the course outline includes the course description; specifies any required prerequisites; describes the course's duration, credit value, and academic content; and lists both course goals and expected student outcomes. Course outlines for all courses are posted on the website. A completed Course Outline for Composition I is an example.

Academic Program Guides can be accessed via the Minnesota West website. Program guides list course numbers and course credit values and recommend paths to help students through each semester to graduation. Programs are sorted as AA, AS, AAS, diploma, or certificates. An example program guide is Accountant, Diploma.

As described for Core Component 1, Minnesota West provides college transfer courses in face-to-face classrooms, through interactive television, online through the D2L Brightspace platform, and through the REACH concurrent enrollment on high school campuses. Instructors for all sections of a course must adopt and meet the requirements specified on the Course Outline on file.

To ensure quality is maintained in the concurrent enrollment courses at high schools, the college has developed the REACH program, which is "a collaborative effort between Minnesota West Community & Technical College and area high schools [that] offers qualified high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit in their high school setting during regular school hours. All REACH program courses are taught by pre-approved, fully credentialed high school teachers who partner with a faculty member from the college." All concurrent enrollment instructors at the high schools must meet the same minimum qualification standards as Minnesota West faculty who teach the assigned courses. Each REACH instructor is assigned to a Minnesota West instructor who works with and mentors the instructor to share ideas, offer advice, and monitor compliance with the Course Outline. The college has applied for accreditation for the REACH program from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). Minnesota West's Dean of Technology and Distance Learning has also created a web site on D2L Brightspace to enhance communication among REACH instructors, mentors, and REACH coordinators, and to provide training and guidance for instructors. D2L Brightspace drop boxes are also used to collect college data and documents that report on mentoring activities and professional development achievements.



In spring semester FY15, 18 high school instructors from seven high schools were teaching REACH courses, offering 33 sections of 20 different courses to 757 students (duplicated headcount). Fourteen college instructors mentored the REACH instructors.

To ensure the quality of its distance education program, Minnesota West recently became part of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) group. The group has been formed to "increase administrative efficiency and lower the costs of obtaining authorization to provide postsecondary distance education" in member states.

### **Technical Program Outcomes**

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 National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) exams to measure student outcomes in their programs.

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. If they own and operate large vehicles, they may need special drivers' licenses.

An electrical journey worker's license requires 8,000 hours 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 an 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 exam.

In human services, a certified child development associate must have 480 hours of experience, a portfolio, and a CDA assessment to become certified. Students in the program graduate with 200 hours of experience toward that goal. A Minnesota Department of Human Services "lead teacher" must have an associate's degree and 1,040 hours of experience. To be an assistant teacher requires a degree plus 520 hours of experience.

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) examinations include the EMT basic and refresher exams, an online National Certificate Exam, first responder basic and refresher exams, and a CPR/AED/FA exam. Successful graduates receive two-year AHA certification.

Surgical technology, medical lab technology, and phlebotomy programs include certification exams students complete after finishing their coursework. Medical assistant graduates are eligible to take the American Association of Medical Assistants CMA 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 exceeded.

Practical nursing students must pass the NCLEX 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 RN and LPN nursing graduates pass the state licensure exams at rates near or exceeding the state average each year. In FY14, the pass rate for practical nursing graduates was 84.09 percent, and for associates degree nursing, the pass rate was 82.35 percent.

Law enforcement graduates must pass the Peace Officer Standard Testing (POST) exam to be licensed. The pass rate for Minnesota West law enforcement students in FY13 was 100 percent, and in FY14 it was nearly 93 percent.

Cosmetology students must complete 1,550 hours of class work and pass a state certification exam before they can obtain a Minnesota license. Nail tech and esthetician students must also pass Minnesota exams before they can obtain licenses to practice. Testing is completed 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 students well for their future professions.

## Sources

---

- APC\_ArticulationAgreements\_July2014
- APC\_NATEF\_July2014
- APC\_NCLEX\_July2014
- APC\_NOCTI-exam\_July2014
- APC\_POST\_July2014
- APC\_WelcomeToSARA\_Oct2015
- MW\_AcademicPrograms\_30June2014
- MW\_CourseOutlinecollection\_July2014
- MW\_CourseOutline-Comp1\_July2014
- MW\_CourseOutline-Generic\_June2014
- MW\_MinnesotaTransferCurriculum\_July2014
- MW\_ProgramGuide-AccountantDiploma\_July2014
- MW\_PSEOandREACH2015\_June2015
- MW\_REACH\_Apr2015

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

---

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. 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. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

---

In the early 1990s, the Minnesota Legislature ordered Minnesota's higher education systems to develop and implement a standard core curriculum for general education that could be completed by first and second year liberal arts students and provide "seamless transfer" among public institutions of higher learning. Faculty representatives from the Minnesota Community College System, the Minnesota State University System, and the University of Minnesota developed that curriculum over a three-year period. The finished product was titled the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) and it was to be implemented by the beginning of FY1996. For a variety of reasons, Minnesota West (then Worthington Community College) faculty and administration decided to implement the transfer curriculum for students seeking an associate of arts (AA) degree one year earlier, in fall 1994 (FY1995).

The MTC specifies learning objectives in ten major general education areas - communications, 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 or modified to satisfy MTC requirements by addressing the objectives in each of the ten general education areas. Course Outlines are reviewed regularly by faculty, campus curriculum committees, the AASC, and MnSCU transfer specialists to ensure rigor and compliance.

Minnesota West also requires faculty to provide a detailed syllabus to students within the first week of class. The syllabus lists important information regarding the class 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. The syllabus for Chemistry 1150 is an example.

To earn an AA degree, a student must complete at least 60 credits, 40 of which must be general education courses selected from the MTC'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 MTC 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 MTC is primarily designed for students who seek AA degrees, it also is the well from which general education courses applicable to AS and AAS degrees and diplomas are drawn. Students who pursue AS degrees must successfully complete 30 semester credits selected from at least six of the 10 goal areas of the MTC. 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 MTC. Minnesota West degree and award requirements are listed on the college website.

Minnesota State College and University's two-year college instructors are not required to conduct research, but many Minnesota West instructors have contributed to greater bodies of knowledge in their fields. For example, English department faculty have published poems and fiction, history instructors have published and edited works in their areas of special interest, math and law enforcement instructors have provided training for other instructors around the United States and the world, and music/theater instructors have directed or produced plays and performed on stages in a wide region. Minnesota West's energy faculty engage in research for personal scholarly projects, work in local biotech companies, and review textbooks for publishers.

Minnesota West's general education courses are clearly appropriate for the college's mission, program offerings, and degree levels.

## Sources

---

- APC\_D2L\_Aug2014
- APC\_MinnesotaEnergyCenter\_June2015
- APC\_MinnesotaEnergyConsortium\_June2015
- APC\_NATEF\_July2014
- APC\_NovaTech-News\_July2014
- MW\_CourseSyllabus-CHEM\_Mar2015
- MW\_CourseSyllabus-Template\_June2014
- MW\_Degrees-Awards-Requirements\_July2014
- MW\_MinnesotaTransferCurriculum\_July2014

## 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 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; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. 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.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

---

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

In 2014, Minnesota West employed 68 unlimited full time equivalent (FTE) instructors, 16 full time probationary instructors, 7 unlimited part-time instructors, and 117 adjunct instructors. All instructors, no matter where they teach, must meet minimum education qualifications, which are established by MnSCU Procedure 3.32.1 and as part of the faculty contract between MnSCU and the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF). The 2014 faculty to student ratio was 14:59:1. At least 70 percent of all MnSCU faculty must be full time unlimited (Article 20, Section 7, *MSCF Master Agreement*, Article 20, Section 7). At each college, at least 60 percent of total FTE must be unlimited full time plus unlimited part-time minimum guarantee, a standard that Minnesota West consistently exceeds.

College counselors, librarians, and instructors who teach credit-based courses must meet college faculty credentialing requirements established by MnSCU and articulated in the MSCF Master Agreement. At Minnesota West, the Provost works with the Human Resources office to manage the credentialing process for temporary full-time (TFT) faculty, temporary part-time (TPT) faculty, adjunct faculty, and external instructors, such as high school teachers teaching concurrent enrollment courses and customized training instructors teaching for-credit courses.

At the time they are hired, unlimited full-time (UFT), unlimited part-time (UPT), temporary full-time (TFT), and temporary part-time (TPT) faculty complete an on-line 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 MnSCU requires.

Adjunct and external instructors assigned to teach credit-based courses as well as counselors and librarians submit credentialing documentation to the appropriate deans, who forward the documents to the Human Resources office.

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 experience.
- 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 option 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 experience are not yet clearly defined (i.e. alternative energies) may be hired until minimum qualifications are established.

### **Minimum Qualifications – Technical Instruction**

In addition to satisfying established MnSCU policies, technical faculty experience must include two full-time years (or the 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 credential field within the past five years.

State or national industry licensure or certifications considered essential for practice in the assigned field are also required (i.e. practical nursing instructors must be registered nurses and law enforcement faculty must have POST Board certificates).

### **Hiring Process**

When faculty vacancies occur, the appropriate administrator, in consultation with faculty leaders, appoints a search committee. Candidates submit applications to the Human Resources office during a specified time period through an online application system. Once the application deadline passes, the search committee reviews the candidates' applications, selects and interviews candidates. Once the search committee settles on two candidates to recommend, the committee chair forwards the unranked names to the Provost, who then forwards the recommendations to the college President or designee for final approval. Strict rules of confidentiality regarding applicants and their personal information are explained to committee members in a mandatory online orientation video and strictly enforced during the hiring process.

### **Teaching and Learning Competency Requirement**

MnSCU 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 MnSCU 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. The courses cover course construction, teaching/instructional methods, and student outcomes assessment/evaluation. Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) developed the undergraduate/graduate 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. Teacher Education Series (TES) courses at Bemidji State University (BSU) or the University of Minnesota also satisfy the teaching and learning competencies.

According to the MnSCU website, these courses are “...intended to provide the faculty with an 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 at Minnesota West are evaluated regularly (MW Policy 4.9.1. Faculty Performance Management). Probationary instructors are evaluated in several classes during each year of the three-year probationary period. An announced classroom evaluation occurs during fall semester and an unannounced visit occurs in the spring of each year of probation. 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 the IDEA Survey (see next section), which is partially composed of questions developed by instructors and directly related to learning outcomes for each course. Students assess their own growth relative to assignments and methods of instruction. During classroom observations, administrators complete observation reports that they share with instructors at the evaluation conference. Evaluation conferences occur after the

semester ends and bring together all elements of the evaluation process. The administrator and instructor then sign a summary of the evaluation for the instructor's file.

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 evaluator to complete a Peer Classroom Observation Report and then discuss the report with the peer evaluator as soon as possible after the observation. Instructors then decide whether to share the report with administration.

## **IDEA Surveys**

Each semester, students are invited and encouraged to provide feedback on teaching and learning in their courses. Minnesota West uses the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) survey to accomplish this task. Face-to-face and interactive television (ITV) students take the survey in person and during class time. Online students complete the survey electronically. Faculty chose IDEA after reviewing several other survey options because it allows students to assess their own progress on learning goals that faculty establish. Students also provide feedback on the frequency of various teaching methods used in the course.

Minnesota West has been using IDEA since fall 2005. Students complete the surveys for all online classes with more than 15 students enrolled and in face-to-face classes whose instructors are being evaluated. The assigned administrator shares the results of the survey with the instructor of the course at the evaluation conference. The administrator also provides feedback based on the survey results to the college assessment coordinator who works with the Center for Teaching and Learning campus coordinators to arrange training to remediate teaching problems identified on the surveys. Survey results have brought about pedagogical improvements in both online and onsite classroom teaching methods.

In a survey conducted in August 2010, administrators, faculty, and staff were asked: "In addition to IDEA surveys, how do you obtain feedback from students regarding assignments, courses, or services?" Nearly half said that they engage in informal conversations with students, some said they seek comments by sending emails to students, and about one-fourth reported using mid-term or end-of-semester surveys to seek student comments. Many faculty also employ the survey function of D2L Brightspace, social media, and GradesFirst to enhance communication with students.

## **Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**

A key component of Minnesota West's mission is to support and empower 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 formerly had one college-wide faculty CTL coordinator, but those duties are now performed by the Provost's administrative assistant.



CTL leaders determine yearly goals aimed at improving all faculty teaching and student learning. College-wide CTL goals focus on three main areas: teaching and pedagogy, technology and technical training, and cross-campus information sharing. When division chairs gather information from individual faculty assessment forms, they compile lists of training requests and pass them on to CTL leaders. The leaders then arrange to provide training in these areas. Workshops and training sessions are held on individual campuses throughout the year. 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. Faculty members consider CTL to be an effective vehicle to help them improve teaching and learning both on their own campuses and college wide.

## **Academic Divisions**

Minnesota West's academic divisions include Trades and Services, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Computer Science and Business, Science/Math, Humanities and Fine Arts, Manufacturing and Energy, Transportation, Allied Health, Management, Developmental Studies, and Distance Learning. Each academic division has an 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.

## **Faculty role in Curriculum Review**

Minnesota West's curriculum review process involves individual instructors, divisions, campus curriculum committees, administrators, and the Academic Affairs and Standards Committee (AASC). Curriculum changes follow a procedure outlined in the Curriculum Development Manual. The process is typically initiated by a member of the faculty and an appropriate administrator. When the change is ready to move through the approval process, the initiating faculty member proposes it to his or her division and other affected divisions. If the primary division approves, the recommendation advances to the campus curriculum committee, which either approves or denies the change. If the change is approved, the proposal continues to AASC for final review. If 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. An AASC agenda for April 2015 is attached.

MnSCU must approve any new programs delivered online, onsite, or off-site. MnSCU 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 MnSCU approval.

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

## **Professional Development**

Minnesota West understands that excellence is not static but must be tended and nurtured in an environment of continuous improvement. Professional development and training are the focus of

Goal 8 of the college mission: “To provide continuous improvement processes via assessment, evaluation, and upgrading of programs and services, and to support the professional development of college personnel.” Administrators, supervisors, and employees work together to set professional development goals and plan training or education strategies to achieve them.

Professional and staff development funds are available for most full time Minnesota West employees.

For instructors, Article 17, Section 1 of the *MSCF Master Agreement for 2013-2015* states that "Each college will allocate faculty development funds at the rate of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) per each full-time equivalent faculty position at the college during the preceding academic year. The total MSCF chapter shall determine an equitable procedure for the distribution of faculty development funds."

At Minnesota West, both MSCF chapters have policies in place for distributing faculty development funds. In FY14, \$26,514 was budget for faculty to fund faculty development, of which \$23,502 was used. A portion of unused faculty development funds can be carried over from one fiscal year to the next, from campus to campus, or from northern chapter to southern chapter if the allocated funds are unused.

Development funds for classified staff are budgeted for each campus and managed by a committee of peers who receive, review, and approve applications for funds. An example of a campus process is to limit funding to \$200 initially with additional funds made available after May 15 of each year if the fund has an unused balance. In FY14, \$6,300 was budgeted for classified staff development, and \$1,613 was spent for individual classified staff development. Additionally, the college planned and hosted a college wide staff development day at a cost of \$8,832. The day included a keynote address followed by breakout sessions on a wide range of topics. Seventy employees attended and participated in the event.

The Chief Human Resources Director manages funds for unclassified staff development. The director reviews requests for funds and makes final decisions regarding disbursements. The individual funding limit is \$500 per year initially, but employees may apply for remaining funds after May 15. In FY14, \$7,400 was budgeted and \$4,721 was spent for unclassified workers professional development activities.

Tuition waiver benefits are also available for college employees attending Minnesota West or other MnSCU colleges. The number of credits available is established by negotiated labor agreements. If space is available, full-time faculty may use tuition waivers for up to 24 credits per year at any of the 32 MnSCU colleges or universities. If instructors choose not to use this benefit, their spouses or dependents are eligible to apply the tuition waiver for up to 16 credits per year at any MnSCU two-year college. Union contracts for both classified and unclassified employees offer tuition waiver funding for up to 20 credits annually for the employee or 16 credits for employee dependents. Unlike the waiver for full-time faculty, the tuition waiver for classified and unclassified workers can only be used at other two-year institutions in the MnSCU system. Tuition waivers are processed at the college business office. In FY14, 28 staff members

took advantage of the waiver to obtain a total 251 credits for themselves or for family members, and 22 faculty used the waiver for themselves or family members to earn 218 credits.

Each Minnesota West instructor must complete and submit a professional development plan to the appropriate academic administrator and review it with the administrator at least once every three years. New instructors must submit and review their plans every year for their first three years. After that, instructors must update their plans at least once every three years. Instructors submit their plans on forms approved by the Minnesota West Shared Governance Committee.

Minnesota West administrators are enrolled in MnSCU supervisory courses. Science of Supervision and Art of Supervision courses are taught partially online and partially at face-to-face meetings held regionally during the year.

### **Sabbaticals**

Sabbatical leaves 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 leave opportunities. Full-time faculty who have served continuously for the equivalent of six or more full-time academic years at a MnSCU 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.

Since the last HLC comprehensive visit in 2011, eight Minnesota West instructors have taken sabbatical leave. At least two but no more than six instructors have participated each year. Historically, far more liberal arts instructors than technical faculty have participated in the program, but in recent years three technical instructors have taken sabbatical leave.

### **Professional Conferences**

Many Minnesota West instructors, administrators, and staff attend professional conferences each year to improve their teaching, widen their knowledge base, or enhance their skills. Conferences also help workers establish and maintain support networks in their respective disciplines or positions. Generally, more technical instructors than liberal arts instructors attend professional conferences each year. A few members of the college staff participate in professional conferences. Examples of regularly attended conferences are:

- Bioscience Conference – four to five instructors and administrators annually
- Desire2Learn conference – five instructors annually
- Health Educators Conference - all nursing faculty annually
- Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting – two to six instructors and administrators annually
- Library Technology Conference – one or two librarians annually
- Math Educators Conference – four or five instructors annually

- Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators – one or two staff and administrators annually
- Minnesota Dental Educators Conference – two instructors annually
- Minnesota Electrical Instructors Conference – four instructors annually
- Minnesota Library Association Conference – one or two faculty annually
- Minnesota Nursing and Allied Health Educator Annual Conference – six instructors and administrators annually
- National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships - one administrator every other year.
- National Basketball Coaching Association Annual Conference – one instructor annually
- National Conference of American Wind – four instructors, administrators, and staff
- National Cosmetology Association Instructor Training – one or two instructors annually
- National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks Workshops for Community College Faculty – ten instructors in recent years including two in 2012, the last year the NEH conferences were offered.
- National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission Annual Conference – four instructors and administrators
- Northern Great Plains History Conference
- Realizing Student Potential/iTeach conference – eight to ten instructors annually
- Regional Conference of Marketing and Public Relations – one administrator annually
- State Conference of Marketing, Recruitment, and Retention – two staff and administrators annually
- The Teaching Professor – eight faculty in recent years
- Tri-State Bookstore Conference – one or two staff annually
- Western History Association Conference
- Tutoring Summit – one to three faculty annually

In addition to the regularly attended conferences, faculty also attended several other conferences and workshops in FY15.

### **NEH summer workshops**

Until they ended in 2013, several Minnesota West instructors participated in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer Landmarks of American History and Culture summer programs for community college instructors. At least eight Minnesota West faculty members attended NEH workshops, and some attended more than one.

As a result of one of the Landmark workshops, titled “From Freedom Summer to the Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike,” the college has been able to entice veterans of the Civil Rights movement in Mississippi to share their stories on the Worthington campus during each February (Black History Month). Some notable speakers have included Dr. Leslie McLemore, who was the youngest participant in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964; Chuck McDew, an original member of Mississippi’s Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); Hollis Watkins, a member of the Mississippi SNCC while he was just a high school student and who is now executive director of Southern ECHO; the late L.C. Dorsey, a retired sociology professor from Mississippi Valley State University who was a sharecropper’s daughter and an

activist in Mississippi's Head Start program; Dr. Rickey Hill, who grew up in Bogalusa, Louisiana, was a member of the Black Stone Society at Southern University in the early 1970s, and is currently a professor of political science at Jackson State University; and the Rev. Samuel "Billy" Kyles, the Mississippi-born Memphis minister who was standing with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis when Dr. King was assassinated in April 1968. Whenever they visit, these venerable guests speak at a public forum at noon and then visit the college's "The Turbulent Sixties" class in the afternoon of the same day.

Beginning in 2014, NEH has sponsored summer workshops for college faculty that extend over three or more weeks, which is far less practical for faculty who also teach summer courses. One instructor at Minnesota West applied to attend a seminar at the Library of Congress scheduled for the summer of 2015 but was denied. However, the same instructor applied for and received a Fulbright Scholarship and will be teaching and studying in Russia in spring 2016.

### **Leadership Development**

Luoma Leadership Academy is an 18-month leadership development program designed to nurture MnSCU leaders. Participants may include deans, directors, faculty, financial aid officers, and staff who aspire to leadership positions. The course is sponsored by the MnSCU Office of the Chancellor and facilitated by The Academy of Mesa, Arizona. Minnesota West has sent ten employees to the Luoma Leadership Academy since it began in 2004. Participants have included three faculty, one administrator, one middle manager, and five MAPE employees.

Faculty and staff at Minnesota West are focused on student success. To that end, they seek out and invest in activities that lead to professional development and continuous self-improvement.

### **Faculty Achievements**

Minnesota West takes great pride in the accomplishments of its faculty. In FY15, as mentioned in section 1C, three Minnesota West Farm Business Management faculty were named by the National Association of Agricultural 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 instructor was elected junior director of the southwestern Minnesota chapter of the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science and will become 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 Fulbright Scholarship to teach in Russia in spring FY16; 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.

### **Faculty Accessibility**

Section 2, Subdivision 5 of the MSCF Master Agreement (page 25) 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 students." Most instructors are available in their offices far more than the minimum number of hours required.

Minnesota West has more than sufficient numbers of 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 support to do so. In many cases, faculty and staff make themselves more accessible to students than the students demand.

## Sources

---

- APC\_IDEA-Survey\_Aug2014
- APC\_MSCFMasterAgreement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_FAQ-TeacherEducationSeries\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Luoma\_July2014
- MnSCU\_NewTeacherCourses\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Policy3.32-FacultyCredentialing\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Procedures-3.32.1-FacultyCredentialling\_June2014
- MnSCU\_Salary-Credentialing\_Aug2014
- MSCF\_facultysabbaticleaveapplication\_Apr2015
- MW\_AASCAgenda\_May15
- MW\_CenterForTeaching-Learning\_July2014
- MW\_CTLReport\_2013\_2014\_Apr2015
- MW\_CurriculumDevelopmentManual\_2013-14\_June2015
- MW\_DaveMillsFulbright\_May2015
- MW\_HR\_FacultyProfessionalDevelopmentPlanForm\_June2014
- MW\_Wgtn Faculty Develop 2014-15\_May15
- MW-Pol\_ClassifiedStaffDevelopment-4.16\_Oct2015
- MW-Pol\_FacultyEvaluation-4.9.1\_July2014

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

---

The institution provides support for student learning and 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 programs 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

## **Argument**

---

Student success is Minnesota West's primary goal. "How will this help students?" is the most pressing question committee members and leaders consider before making any decision. The college has structures in place to help students safely navigate through the often unfamiliar waters of academic life.

## **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 come to campus for "Getting Connected Days" and college open house events. Some campuses combine 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, and Smarthinking®. Students may also obtain identification cards at the on-campus orientation events.

## **Academic Placement**

Many students entering Minnesota West require developmental courses to improve basic reading, writing or math skills. New Minnesota West students are required to complete the Accuplacer assessment of basic skills before they can register for courses.

The Accuplacer exam is the system endorsed entrance exam for all MnSCU colleges (see MnSCU\_Assessment for Course Placement\_June2014). 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 FY14, Accuplacer scores showed that 68 percent of full-time, first-time students needed one or more developmental math courses; 40 percent needed one or more developmental reading and developmental writing courses. (The same Accuplacer cut score is used to place students in developmental reading and writing.)

## **Advising**

All students are assigned to an academic advisor upon enrolling at Minnesota West. Student Services advisors conduct a variety of online and on campus services for all students, whether they are in technical programs or seeking transfer degrees. They assist with registration, financial aid, course selection, transfer, testing, PSEO, accommodations and disability services, diversity, orientation, retention, and more. In FY14, Minnesota West designated one lead online advisor, but all advisors' loads included students taking programs on campus, online, or a combination of the two platforms. Three advisors had offices at Worthington, and the Jackson, Pipestone, Canby, and Granite Falls campuses each housed one advisor. At the Redwood Falls and Luverne locations, the site director also advises students. The technical program faculty advise students in course selection and registration, job placement, and retention. In FY14, the college had 45 technical faculty advisors.

Minnesota West does not discriminate against any person or persons with regard to “race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law.”

Minnesota West embraces the notion that diversity enhances campus environments, and it regards affirmative action in a broader context than merely employment opportunities.

Each Minnesota West campus has a diversity coordinator who engages in multiple activities designed for diverse populations.

In 2004, Minnesota West opened an Office of Cultural Diversity on the Worthington campus. The office was later re-named “Culture Corner.” 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. More complete information on Culture Corner is in the argument for Criterion 1.

As discussed in other parts of this report, GradesFirst is a tool advisors use to contact and counsel students in danger of failing their courses. Faculty can also use the system to communicate with students via text messaging or email.

## **Disability Services**

Minnesota West has a Coordinator of Disability Services, and each campus designates one advisor to work with students who have documented disabilities to help them succeed in college. Advisors arrange accommodations and support services and, when necessary, advocate on behalf of the 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.

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.

## **Minnesota West Learning Environments**

Because of its enormous 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 on all its campuses, providing interactive television (ITV) classrooms at all campuses and locations, offering off-site courses, and via the internet, using MnOnline to help with registration and the Desire2Learn Brightspace platform to deliver classes.

Distance education at Minnesota West includes both ITV and online classes. Courses taught online or on ITV follow the same course outlines as face-to-face courses. Class size limits 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 MnSCU 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.

Minnesota West offers approximately 170 courses online each semester. In the spring of 2015, 94 Minnesota West online courses included 839 PSEO students (duplicated headcount) from 51 area high schools. 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 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. Approximately 300 face-to-face or ITV courses use the system each semester.

Faculty development and training on D2L Brightspace takes place at summer workshops, on faculty duty days, at monthly meetings that are both accessible through and recorded on Adobe Connect, and during brown-bag noon sessions throughout the academic year. 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, which undergoes a major update nearly every May.

Because so many instructors incorporate D2L Brightspace in their courses, the college offers an Introduction to Online Learning on Brightspace course to help orient students to the system. The free course is always available on the 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, and spring semester 2015 was the 32nd term that the course was offered. By then, 5,800 unique students had viewed the course. To help assess the effectiveness of the course, the college surveys online

students each semester, and nearly 85 percent of participants agree or strongly agree that they "are more confident about taking an online course after reviewing the material" in the free class.

## **LARC**

In spring 2005, Minnesota West transitioned to a system of one-stop academic support services known as campus Library and Academic Resource Centers (LARCs). Each campus expanded its library space to include computer labs, 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 email accounts, distance learning, and the MnSCU e-services student portal. The shift in resources was completed in time for the start of the 2006 academic year. In 2012 and 2013, two of the predominantly technical campuses repurposed LARC spaces by deselecting a large proportion of physical books and bookshelves and replacing them with additional student computers and study modules.

## **Minnesota West Library 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.*

The Worthington campus library was created in 1936 when Worthington Junior College opened its doors. The libraries at Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, and Pipestone were established in 1993, some 30 years after the colleges were started. Before 1993, specialized resource materials were maintained for each technical program on the campuses. Between 1993 and 2013, collections of resources for technical programs expanded while resources for liberal arts programs were added at each campus library. Since 2013, Minnesota West has followed a collection development approach emphasizing "access" rather than "ownership" and as a result has significantly slowed the rate of print book purchases while significantly expanding eBook and digital collections. Even with the shift in collection development strategy brought on by the internet and digital collections, sharing non-digital resources among the LARCs is common and encouraged. The college employs Interlibrary Loan and requests for materials are submitted through an online catalog and sent via U.S. mail.

The LARC coordinator purchases materials for libraries. To better facilitate college-wide collection development, the librarians wrote a *Collection Development Policy* in 2006 and update it periodically, most recently in January 2014. Collaborative collection development has become increasingly important for the college as more money is allocated each year to online resources to support both on-ground and online student populations.

Minnesota West uses an integrated library system software called Aleph (an Ex Libris product) to provide an array of library services, including the online catalog and circulation, interlibrary loan, and acquisitions services. Support for Aleph is provided on a contract basis by MnPALS, a library consortium serving libraries throughout the Midwest. The college libraries converted to

this system in 2004-05. The transition was a major training challenge for library staff and faculty due to the complex nature of the system and the need to maintain five campus libraries within the system. Much has changed in academic publishing and library collections since then, and the availability of digital content and necessary means of disseminating that information has changed the playing field dramatically. Aleph was developed at a time when libraries defined themselves by their physical collections, and library software functioned largely to accommodate the acquisition, organization, and dissemination of print materials, yet offered some functionality in incorporating electronic resources. Now, all major library software vendors are developing systems that seek to blend all types of content seamlessly with the primary emphasis on content created and distributed digitally.

During FY14, Ex Libris indicated that it will stop providing service and updates for Aleph when its new product, Alma, is fully operational, although no official date has been released. A number of colleges are part of Phase 1 for implementation and testing of Alma, including the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Ultimately, the Minnesota West Libraries will undergo another significant change in the next two to three years as it determines which library software is most appropriate for the entire college. A member of the Minnesota West library faculty is an active member of the MnPals Task Force that researches and recommends new library management software for the consortium.

Minnesota West utilizes free resources wherever possible. In addition to print resources at each LARC, increased emphasis has been placed on acquisitions of online resources. The State of Minnesota provides free access to a number of databases, but they are subject to change through RFP processes. During the most recent process, MINITEX secured access to 45 databases for all public libraries, school libraries, and public institutions of higher learning. Of those 45 databases, the Minnesota West library web page provides links to 20 of them. The libraries also subscribe to eight subject-specific databases targeted to programs and courses. Annual monitoring of statistics and faculty input helps determine which services are retained or replaced each year.

Minnesota West also takes advantage of Open Source software developed at the University of Minnesota. Subject resource pages, known as “Research QuickStart” pages, support student learning via a server maintained at St. Cloud State University. By 2015, the list of “Research QuickStart” pages had reached 45, with topics ranging from Agriculture to Wind Energy.

Students and faculty can access electronic library resources from off campus via a proxy server at any time during the day or night. Access to the server requires the barcode that is printed on college identification cards or student Star IDs. Students who take only online courses are informed in a print letter, in the Introduction to Online Learning course, and on the library website to contact a librarian to obtain a barcode number.

Librarians conduct LARC instruction sessions for individual courses at the request of instructors. The Research QuickStart pages are usually the starting point for library presentations. Instruction sessions are conducted face-to-face, over ITV, and online. 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, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays during fall and spring semesters. LARC hours are reduced for May term, winter term, and summer sessions. LARC hours have fluctuated over the years as campus needs and course offerings 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 LARCs is the responsibility of the college Provost, with daily operations under the direction of the Campus Deans. When the transition from campus libraries to LARCs occurred, a LARC director position was created to oversee LARC operations, but this position was eliminated in 2009 due to budget cuts. The two college librarians are now assigned to campuses and work together to provide LARC resources and services. One librarian is always at Worthington.

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 increased collaboration in all areas of LARC operations.

When LARCs were created, library staff positions were redefined to reflect the variety of services available. Library technicians assist in daily library 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 and the telephone 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.

Since the LARC director's position was eliminated, librarians work together to submit a library budget to the Provost each spring. Budgets have remained flat through the past several years, except for a five percent decrease in funding during FY09 and a ten percent decrease for FY15. Once the budgets are approved, the LARC coordinator is responsible for resource purchases.

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.

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.

Smarthinking® 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.

Students access “e-structors” by linking to Smarthinking® at Minnesota West’s LARC web page or through D2L. Services also include an online writing lab that allows students to submit drafts of writing assignments for revision assistance and receive feedback within 24 hours. Hours of access to the service have ranged from 345 hours in the first year (FY06) to a peak of 858 hours in FY10. In FY15, 1,114 tutoring sessions totaled 774 hours.

Smarthinking® is supported by Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act funds and purchased hours can be carried over from year to year. The college has purchased “buy-two-get-one-free” hours through MnOnline, although the maximum number of hours that are available at that price varies from year to year. MnSCU and MnOnline also provide some hours to the college each year, and until FY10, additional hours were available from statewide reserves.

Minnesota West writing students submitted 729 essays to Smarthinking® from July 2009 to early March 2010, using 545 Smarthinking hours. In FY14, (7/1/13 to 6/30/14) -- the Essay Center reviewed 769 essays, totaling 538 service/contract hours.

### **Information Technology Services**

The goal of Minnesota West’s information technology services (ITS) is to provide technical infrastructure that supports the development and delivery of courses across the institution’s large geographic area. Minnesota West instructors have access to a number of technologies that enhance distance learning, including the D2LBrightspace course management system. Faculty and staff request services or submit questions to ITS online through AskIT, a college-wide service that was developed to keep track of requests, problems, and solutions involving technology issues.

Minnesota West employs a Dean of Technology and Distance Learning (DTDLE) to assist faculty in developing course work. The DTDLE provides coaching and basic technical support to individual faculty members and helps to research, select, and develop appropriate learning resources for each course. Other IT staff members work closely with the DTDLE to identify technologies that will enhance course offerings and provide students with quality learning experiences.

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 Adobe Connect 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 material 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.

Minnesota West's IT department conducted an IT Satisfaction survey in spring 2015 that showed that 96 percent of respondents were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with IT services at the college.

### **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 similar to 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, one new model at Worthington and one ten-year-old model with more limited functionality at Pipestone.

Minnesota West maintains science labs at 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 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.

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.

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 radiologic 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 needed to perform inquiry-based lab experiences at home. Students order the kits through the college bookstores.

### **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 room 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.

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

Minnesota West arts students participate in Fine Arts Festivals attended by art students from two-year colleges around the state. Minnesota West hosted the festival in 2007.

Visiting artists from a variety of cultures throughout the region, some of which are former Minnesota West students, exhibit their work at seven to nine 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. Kids College, a one-week summer program for fifth through eighth grade students, nearly always involves an art class.

### **Athletic Facilities**

The Health and Wellness Center on the Worthington campus was remodeled 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.

## 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. The facility has since been refitted to house customized training courses and college courses that will lead to diplomas or AAS degrees. Planning continues for additional uses of the facility to meet regional training needs.

## Facilities Planning

To comply with MnSCU policies and to ensure that Minnesota West meets mission goals five and nine, an updated *Campus Facilities Master Plan* is completed every five years. The facilities plan includes periodic updates and long-range (25-50 year) facilities planning for each campus that takes into account 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 June 2012.

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

## Sources

---

- APC\_AdobeConnect\_Aug2014
- APC\_D2L\_Aug2014
- APC\_GradesFirst-Login\_Aug2014
- APC\_PALS\_interface\_Aug2014
- APC\_Smarthinking\_Aug2014
- Fed\_ADA1990\_July2014
- MnSCU\_AssessmentforCoursePlacement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_MnOnline-Military\_July2014
- MW\_Accuplacer\_July2014
- MW\_Advisors\_Aug2014
- MW\_Ask IT\_Aug2014
- MW\_CultureCorner\_July2014
- MW\_Databases\_A-Z\_Aug2014
- MW\_DisabilityServices\_Aug2014
- MW\_DisabilityServicesStaff\_Aug2014
- MW\_HR\_CareerServices\_July2014
- MW\_InformationTechnology\_Aug2014
- MW\_ITsurvey\_results\_summary\_Mar2015
- MW\_Online\_Aug2014
- MW\_Pol\_EqualOpportunity Policy1B.1.1\_July2014
- MW\_Pol\_LARC\_CollectionDevelopmentPolicy\_Aug.2014



- MW\_ResearchQuickStart-Agriculture\_Aug2014
- MW\_StudentServices-Advising\_July2014
- MW\_Systems and Software Summary\_June2015
- MW\_TestProctoring\_Aug2014
- MW\_Tutoring-LARC\_Aug2014

### **3.E - Core Component 3.E**

---

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## **Argument**

---

### **Co-Curricular Programs**

Although open-door institutions such as Minnesota West continually deal with underprepared students, the college also strives to challenge and encourage academically gifted students. At Minnesota West, all registered student organizations must allow interested students to participate, become members, or pursue leadership positions, regardless of their status or beliefs. A list of student organizations is included on the college website.

Alpha Nu Kappa, a chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the national community college honors society, began on the Worthington campus many years ago, but the opportunity to participate in PTK was expanded to students on all campuses in 2008.

Business Professionals of America (BPA), Skills USA, and Post-Secondary Agriculture Students (PAS), are also co-curricular organizations available to Minnesota West students. More detailed descriptions of those organizations and their successes is included in the argument for Criterion 4.

Future Wind Techs of America is based at the Canby Campus.

Minnesota West's intercollegiate "Bluejays" and "Lady Jays" athletic teams are based at the Worthington campus, but students from other campuses are invited and encouraged to participate. The college fields men's teams in football, basketball, wrestling, and baseball. Women's teams include volleyball, basketball, and softball. Minnesota West maintains membership in the Minnesota Community College Athletic Conference and the National Junior College Athletics Association. In 2015, the Lady Jays were one of only eight teams to earn a spot in the National NJCAA Basketball Tournament held at Bethlehem, PA.

Minnesota West's Granite Falls campus houses a Midwest Child Care Resource & Referral approved child care center. Other campuses and locations do not offer child care services. The college website provides information regarding child care services and the Post-Secondary Child Care Grant Program on the Campus Child Care Centers page.

Minnesota West Student Senates are affiliated with the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) and a delegation of four to eight Minnesota West Student Senators attends a statewide MSCSA conference each semester. The state assemblies are usually held either in Brainerd or in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Assemblies include leadership training workshops for student attendees. Minnesota West Student Senate members have also served on MSCSA statewide committees.

### **Economic development**

Minnesota West sends three representatives to Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council's Youth Council (PICYC), a committee that develops and seeks out appropriate education and employment opportunities for area young people. The PICYC meets quarterly and includes members from PIC, Workforce Center, Upward Bound, area employers, alternative school representatives, area service coops, and others.

Minnesota West's Customized Training Services provide continuing education, training, and retraining to individuals and employers throughout the region. CTS programs concentrate on five major areas: Computer Technology, Emergency Response and Industrial Safety, Health and Human Services, Manufacturing and Automation Technology, and Management and Professional Development. CTS consistently serves approximately 6,600 employees in 22 counties of southwestern Minnesota with an average of nearly 77,000 hours of training annually.

Minnesota West provided space in its LARCs for a Private Industry Council (PIC) career services representative for several years. Services included financial assistance for education, career exploration, and assessment, resume and cover letter development, interviewing skills, and job placement. That agreement ended in June 2009.

In the fall of 2014, the LARC joined with the College Central Network, a resume and job posting service. On College Central, students and alumni can create an account to help them search for jobs or internships, create and upload resumes or portfolios to show to potential employers, or find announcements, career advice, and other helpful resources to help them with employment issues. Employers can create accounts and post jobs targeted to Minnesota West students and alumni. More than 150 employers had created accounts by mid-spring semester 2015. By then, 57 jobs were listed.

Minnesota West is a long-standing member of Southwest Minnesota Work Force Council. The council serves 14 counties. Its members include local leaders in business, education, human services, job services, economic development, and community organizations. Minnesota West's President is a member of Southwest Minnesota Work Force Council.

A related group, known as the SMART Alliance, is a regional collaborative designed to support and sustain economic development. The alliance was started with funds from a FIRST grant and is led by the Southwest Leadership Team. Minnesota West's President and Director of Customized Training participate in the SMART Alliance.

FastTRAC programs are funded through a grant that ties Adult Basic Education, Workforce Centers, the PIC, and Minnesota West together to provide training for manufacturing, maintenance, healthcare, and customer service industries. Local partners meet to identify needs and develop training services specific to their industries. Courses are delivered by appropriate Minnesota West faculty working with instructors from ABE. More than 240 participants have completed programs offered by FastTRAC. In the spring of 2015, FastTRAC funds helped create classes in computer programming and welding on the Worthington campus.

Minnesota West works with area high schools in a number of ways. They are described in section 1.D.

Minnesota West also partners with Adult Basic Education (ABE) on some campuses. At Jackson, for example, ABE is housed in Minnesota West classrooms. College staff makes presentations to ABE students several times each year.

Mindquest Academy is a tool Minnesota West offers to help high school students prepare for college level reading, writing, and math skills. Mindquest Academy is designed to help under-prepared students who are completing GEDs, testing into developmental courses, or experiencing language barriers.

Technical Skills Challenge is a collaborative project involving the Southwest-West Central Minnesota Service Cooperative, Minnesota West, and area K-12 school districts. Each year, a campus is chosen for the challenge and students converge on that campus to participate in a variety of activities. Students compete in challenges involving individual welding, group trailer welding, solar sprint cars, and photography.

The Minnesota West Pipestone campus partners with Flandreau (SD) Indian School (FIS) to conduct an annual Career Day at the FIS campus. FIS students also visit the Pipestone college campus to explore the programs that Minnesota West offers.

In addition, the Worthington school district utilizes college facilities for its Alternative Learning Center program. Worthington campus gymnasiums are used for the Wild Turkey Shootout, an invitational basketball tournament for fifth through eighth grade students held every March. In the spring of 2015, Minnesota West Worthington leased the top floor of its Academic and Technical Resources Building to Worthington Independent School District 518 to house Nobles County Integration Collaborative programs.

Minnesota West and Southwest Minnesota State University cooperate each year to present Career Expo at the SMSU campus at Marshall, MN. The event attracts more than 1,700 high school sophomores. Representatives from 70-100 area business enterprises exhibit and meet with students to help them understand the skills that they need for various professions.

Each summer, Minnesota West's Worthington campus invites middle school students to a one-week Kids College. The program is the result of a partnership between Minnesota West and Nobles County Integration Collaborative. Courses include Building Rockets, Connecting across Cultures, Dairy, Global Positioning Systems, Green Technologies, Graphic Design, Improvisation, Mythology, Photography, Pneumatics, Web Development, Wireless Technology, and many others. Since the program was initiated in 2003, more than 900 students have enrolled in 256 different classes. 2006, Kids College was one of five finalists for a Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration. A similar program was started at the Canby campus in summer 2010.

Minnesota West also works with local school districts to bring students of all age groups to the campuses for special events. Each event is at least partially designed to interest young people in attending college and to help them begin to consider their long-term academic goals.

### **Community service by students, faculty, staff, administration**

Minnesota West faculty and staff contribute to their communities in scores of capacities and venues. Many college employees are active in community churches, political parties, and service clubs, including Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Rotary Club. Many employees work with and provide leadership for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, chambers of commerce, charitable organizations, city and county governments, community celebration committees, conservation groups, food shelf committees, health care organizations, political parties, and school boards. Technical instructors work closely with the community industries most closely related to their areas of expertise and interest.

### **Institutional Volunteerism**

All Minnesota West campuses cooperate with the American Red Cross to provide space and the volunteers needed to conduct blood drives each semester.

Medical assisting students offer voluntary blood pressure checks at the Luverne Home Show.

Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) students help with area health fairs by conducting cholesterol checks. Students in the program have also volunteered to draw blood at a veterinary clinic, where they checked employees for rabies titers, and at a packing company, where they checked employee cholesterol levels. Students in the program have also donated time to area charitable meal sites.

Members of Alpha Nu Kappa, the local chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, participate in a number of volunteer activities. In recent years, they have conducted food drives, collected children's books to be redistributed at local food shelves, and organized campaigns to raise awareness against domestic violence. The local chapter also participates annually in the local Relay for Life, a fundraiser for cancer research, and the donations ANK raises for that cause range from \$400-700 each year. The chapter collects new and used books for Better World Books (designated for Africa) at the end of each semester.

## Sources

---

- APC\_HOSA\_Aug2014
- APC\_AdultBasicEducation-Mn\_Aug2014
- APC\_BPA\_Aug2014
- APC\_CareerExpo\_Aug2014
- APC\_ChildCareAware\_Aug2014
- APC\_CollegeCentral Network\_June2015
- APC\_FastTRAC\_Aug2014
- APC\_PAS\_Aug2014
- APC\_PhiThetaKappa\_Aug2014
- APC\_SkillsUSA\_Aug2014
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesotaPrivateIndustryCouncil\_Aug2014
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesota-WorkforceCouncil\_Aug2014
- APC\_SW-WC-ServiceCoop\_Aug2014
- APC\_Technical SkillsChallenge\_Aug2014
- APC\_WorkForceCenters-MN\_Aug2014
- MnSCU\_MSCSA\_Aug2014
- MW\_Athletics\_Aug2014
- MW\_ChildCare\_Aug2014
- MW\_CustomizedTrainingServices\_Aug2014
- MW\_MindquestAcademy\_July2014
- MW\_StudentClubs-Organizations\_Aug2014

## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

---

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

### • Summary

---

- Without question, Minnesota West "provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered," as its mission promises.
- Through nearly 80 years of delivering post-secondary liberal arts and technical education and customized training to a vast geographical area of southwestern Minnesota, 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 and meet the needs and desires of employers throughout the region.

- Minnesota West employs appropriate numbers of full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Faculty focus is on teaching rather than research, but many instructors contribute to the discovery of knowledge through independent scholarship, outside projects, work in the private sector, voluntary contributions to their communities, and other creative and utilitarian endeavors. All faculty must meet minimum standards for academic credentials regardless of where they teach. Faculty are evaluated regularly and participate in professional development activities. They make themselves accessible to students and serve the college on committees and boards.
- Faculty initiate and oversee the curriculum at Minnesota West through their departments and divisions, campus committees, and the college wide Academic Affairs and Standards Committee. Individual instructors assess and monitor student learning and cooperate with advisors to provide early warnings to students who are struggling academically.
- Staff who provide advising, financial aid, library assistance, tutoring, and other support services are qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Services are available for students with disabilities, veterans, non-traditional adult learners, as well as traditional students.
- Computer hardware, software, and support is provided to all faculty, staff, and administrators. Students can access computers in several places on all campuses and at all locations. Online tutoring, email, and wireless internet are available to all students at all Minnesota West facilities.

## • Sources

---

- *There are no sources.*
- 

## 4.A - Core Component 4.A

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
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 assure 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 assures 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 assures that the degree or certificate programs 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, such as employment rates, admission rates

to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).

## **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**

Minnesota West's Program Analysis System (PAS) was developed to be an effective and efficient method to evaluate college programs. The program review policy is articulated in Minnesota West Policy 3.10. The system complements assessments of student academic achievement. These two parallel programs provide the college with tools to meet its mission goals to provide relevant and cost-effective instruction and training.

The goal of PAS is to evaluate the status of each instructional cost center with respect to enrollment, cost effectiveness, and optimal use of classroom capacity. Each cost center is placed in one of five categories based on how effectively the program associated with it satisfies mission goal one: "To provide pre-professional and liberal arts courses which lead to associate in arts (AA) or associate in science (AS) degrees. The courses are designed to transfer to a four-year college or university and will apply toward a baccalaureate degree."

During the annual program review, each cost center associated with actual instruction is evaluated based on nine variables. The variables include enrollment trends, cost trends, ratio of faculty to full-time students, and other factors measured over a five-year period. Each of the nine variables has a value of 5, 10, or 15 points. The sum of the scores on the nine variables determines the status of the cost center. Categories are rated to be in "serious decline," "decline," "stable," "growth," or "serious growth" modes.

Program faculty and the appropriate administrator develop "action plans" for programs found to be in "decline" or "serious decline" or "cost center goals" for programs deemed to be stable. Administrators make plans to monitor and correct cost centers that are identified as "declining." They also develop recommendations for cost centers considered to be "growing." The President's Leadership Team reviews action plans and makes recommendations prior to December of each fiscal year. If a program must be closed or downsized, appropriate union contract provisions are followed.

The PAS policy itself is reviewed at the end of each year and modified if necessary.

For all new programs, changes to existing programs, and replications of existing programs, an "Instructional Program Proposal" must be submitted for both college and MnSCU approval. Non-transfer program cost centers (career and technical programs) are evaluated annually based

on the percent of incoming students that graduate on time, number of graduates, results of graduate follow-up surveys, and starting salaries of recent graduates.

### **Transcription of Credits**

The 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." The registrar's office is also responsible to see that the credits that transfer to Minnesota West meet college standards. Minnesota West Transfer Credit Policy 3.21 describes how students can transfer courses into Minnesota West: "Credit achieved through experiential learning processes shall be evaluated according to published national standard guidelines established by the American Council on Education, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, or other similar national organizations." The college policy follows policies established by MnSCU.

### **Internships**

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

### **Authority over Curriculum**

Minnesota West's system of developing and modifying curriculum, including the descriptions and uses of Course Outlines and Syllabi, is described in Criterion 3. Over the past two decades, the college has developed effective and efficient policies and procedures that ensure the quality of each course and program.

The rigor of Minnesota West courses is monitored by the Provost in concert with local curriculum committees, advisory boards, and the Academic Affairs and Standards Committee (AASC). Proposals for new courses or for changes in courses must include submission of both a Curriculum Change Form and a completed Course Outline that contains information on textbooks, prerequisites, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum applications, course content, and expected student learning outcomes. Any changes in prerequisites or MTC applications, and major changes in course content or student learning outcomes must also be approved by the local curriculum committee and the AASC.

### **Hiring Process**

When faculty openings occur, the appropriate administrator, in consultation with faculty leaders, appoints a search committee, usually with representatives of faculty, staff and students. Details of the process are described in section 3.C.

### **Accreditations**



Minnesota West is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NCA). In addition to HLC accreditation, specialized Minnesota West programs are accredited by the following agencies:

**American Dental Association** Commission of Dental Accreditation 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60601-2678

**Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs** 1361 Park Street Clearwater, FL 33756

**Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)** 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2850, Chicago, IL 60606-3182

**Minnesota Board of Nursing** 8229 University Ave SE, #500, Minneapolis MN 55414-3253

**Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training** 1600 University Avenue, Suite 200, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104-3825

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture** 90 West Plato Boulevard, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55107

**Minnesota Department of Commerce Board of Cosmetology** 2829 University Ave. SE, Suite 710, Minneapolis, MN 55414

**Minnesota Department of Rehabilitation Services** 390 North Robert Street, 1st Floor, St. Paul, MN 55101

**Minnesota State Approving Agency for Veterans Education** MDVA-MN SAA 206 Veteran's Service Bldg., 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155-2079

**National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences** 8410 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 670, Chicago, Illinois 60631

**Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), Inc.** 3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 500, Atlanta, GA 30326

**United States Department of Education** 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202

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

## Sources

---

- MnSCU\_Policy3.32-FacultyCredentialing\_July2014
- MnSCU\_Procedures-3.32.1-FacultyCredentialing\_June2014

- MW\_CourseOutline-Generic\_June2014
- MW-Pol\_ProgramReview-3.10\_July2014
- MW-Pol\_StudentInternships-2.22\_January2015
- MW-Pol\_TransferCredit-3.21\_July2014

## **4.B - Core Component 4.B**

---

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

## **Argument**

---

As stated in the argument for Criterion 3, Minnesota West's Course Outline stipulates both course outcomes and student learning outcomes for each course offered at the college. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC) establishes general education goals for all Minnesota students attending public colleges.

Minnesota West's course and program assessment processes are documented in an *Assessment Handbook*. The handbook is updated regularly and published with the faculty handbook. Ultimate responsibility for the handbook lies with the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).

At the conclusion of each semester, teaching faculty complete and submit Course Assessment forms to their division chairs via Desire to Learn (D2L) Brightspace for each course taught during the semester. A mandatory assessment meeting is scheduled and led by the assessment coordinator and conducted on ITV on each semester's final faculty duty day. The assessment forms provide space for instructors to specify the number of sections taught for each course, methods of assessment used to measure student learning, and notes regarding any adjustments the instructor may want to make in the course based on that semester's experience. For fall 2014, nearly 100 percent of faculty submitted the forms. At the end of the year, the assessment coordinator provides an Assessment Report Summary to the Provost that is then posted on the web page.

The Course Assessment forms also provide space for instructors to request additional training in specific areas, and that information is forwarded to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

coordinators on each campus to help them plan both local and college-wide CTL sessions for the next year.

### REACH Assessment

To monitor the quality of learning in concurrent enrollment courses, Minnesota West follows NACEP's standards for follow-up assessments. Evaluation Standard E1 is end-of-term evaluation for each course section offered. In FY15, 78 percent of course surveys (27 of 35 sections) were returned, with 472 students offering comments. Evaluation Standard E2 calls for an annual survey of REACH alumni who are one year out of high school. Minnesota West sent surveys in June 2015 to 205 alumni; 20 percent responded and all reported that REACH program credits transferred. Evaluation Standard E3 calls for conducting a survey at least once every three years of alumni who are four years out of high school. Evaluation Standard E4 surveys instructors, principals, and guidance counselors at least once every three years. The Evaluation Standard E4 survey was conducted in March 2013.

### Co-curricular Program assessments

Minnesota West provides co-curricular opportunities for students in several academic areas (see CC 3). Student in those programs do well in regional and national competitions.

Alpha Nu Kappa, a chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the national community college honors society, began on the Worthington campus some years ago, and the opportunity to participate in PTK was expanded to students on all campuses in 2008. In most years, 40-50 students participate in PTK, but in 2014, 61 students participated. Students in the program are eligible to earn awards that are presented every spring at a banquet in the Twin Cities. In the past several years, three to five PTK students each year have received recognition from the All-Minnesota Academic Team. Minnesota West PTK members have also won the prestigious Coca-Cola Scholarship Award and Hite's Scholars Award. Projects the local chapter regularly sponsors include an annual Red Cross Blood drive, Founder's Day recognition, Commit to Complete (a PTK International focus project), Better World Book Drive: Books for Africa (at the end of each semester), financial literacy student workshops, and various other campus projects.

Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) is a national organization that promotes leadership, career skills, and interaction with individuals in various health occupations. Minnesota West Students in the Medical Laboratory Technician, Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy, and other health-related programs meet locally, attend conferences, and participate in state and national competitions.

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is a professional organization for students in business and office programs. Its purposes are to promote student leadership, develop vocational competencies, promote understanding of business principles, and improve student poise, sociability, attitude, and tact. Members also participate in state and national competitions, conferences, and elections. Every year, Minnesota West students from the technical campuses place well in regional and national competitions. At the spring 2015 state meeting, for example, seven Jackson campus students brought home trophies, including two first place, three second

place, two third place, four fourth place, and three fifth place trophies. Students in the top five places qualify for the National Leadership Conference, which is held in May.

Skills USA is a professional organization for students in trade, industrial, technical, or health programs. Members exchange ideas, discuss problems, and work together to reach common goals. Skills USA offers students opportunities to gain recognition for themselves, their programs, and the college through competitions in occupational skill areas and leadership development. In June 2015, a Minnesota West electrician student from the Canby campus placed third in the Industrial Motor Controls competition at the SkillsUSA National Competition in Louisville, Kentucky, after placing first in the division in the Minnesota Skills USA event in April.

Post-Secondary Agricultural Students (PAS) organized on campus in the late 1990s. Some 30 to 35 agriculture students participate in PAS each year. Locally, the group sponsors trap shoots, archery contests, and annual pork lunches. During the winter, members compete at state level contests involving livestock, crops, soil science, dairy, equine, and horticulture as well as a College Bowl competition. PAS members attend career planning workshops and tour local businesses and industries. Each year, a group of members qualify for the National PAS Conference where they continue their competitions, attend workshops and take tours. Recent national conferences have been in Idaho, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. In 2015, 11 students qualified to compete in the national competition at Boise, Idaho, in March. A Minnesota West student was elected national PAS vice president for 2015.

Future Wind Techs of America is a relatively new student organization at the Canby Campus. The FWTA mission statement proclaims:

*The Wind Energy student club is committed to promote and enhance student education through exposure to wind energy related activities. To stimulate students to be more effective communicators so that they can be the sought after employees the industry is looking for. To provide a broader view of what the wind energy industry has to offer, and to create long lasting relationships among like-minded individuals.*

## **CCSSE**

In 2009, the Office of the Chancellor of MnSCU mandated use of the Community College Student Engagement (CCSSE) instrument to measure student engagement and satisfaction. The CCSSE survey asks students to assess their college experiences by answering questions regarding how they spend their time; what they believe they have gained from their classes; how they rate their relationships and interactions with faculty, counselors, and peers; the kinds of work they are challenged to complete; and how the college supports their learning. In the initial survey, Minnesota West scored a few points higher than the benchmark scores in the areas of “Active and Collaborative Learning,” “Student-Faculty Interaction,” and “Support for Learners.” The college scored lower than the benchmarks in the areas of “Student Effort” and “Academic Challenge.” Some differences were also noted between responses from part-time students and full-time students, with part-time students’ scores lower than full-time students in all areas except “Support for Learners.”

Subsequent CCSSE surveys were conducted in spring semester 2011, spring 2013, and spring 2015. In the 2013 survey, Minnesota West scored higher than the 2011 cohort in “Active and Collaborative Learning” and “Student Faculty Interaction.” Minnesota West scored slightly lower than the 2011 Cohort in “Student Effort,” “Academic Challenge,” and “Support for Learners.” In the 2013 survey, scores from full-time students exceeded those from part-time students in all five areas.

Another CCSSE survey was conducted in spring semester 2015.

### **Program Assessment**

At the end of each calendar year, program directors complete Program Assessment Forms. The forms enable program directors to identify and evaluate assessment tools used as well as recommend changes, document results of previous changes, and consider the budget implications of changes. Feedback from these forms promotes reflection and discussion of teaching methods and pedagogy as well as program outcomes and objectives.

Faculty participation in the processes described above is mandatory. Faculty who are delinquent in submitting assessment forms are reminded first by the assessment coordinator. If delinquency persists, the Provost becomes involved in obtaining the forms.

### **Sources**

---

- APC\_HOSA\_Aug2014
- APC\_BPA\_Aug2014
- APC\_PAS\_Aug2014
- APC\_PhiThetaKappa\_Aug2014
- APC\_SkillsUSA\_Aug2014
- MW\_Ask IT\_Aug2014
- MW\_AssessmentHandbook\_May2015
- MW\_AssessmentSummary\_2013-2014\_Feb2015
- MW\_MinnesotaTransferCurriculum\_July2014
- MW\_NACEPE1-coversheet\_Sept2015
- MW\_NACEPE2-coversheet\_Sept2015
- MW\_NACEPE3-coversheet\_Sept2015
- MW\_NACEPE4-coversheet\_Sept2015
- MW\_ProgramAssessmentForm\_June2015
- MW\_StudentClubs-Organizations\_Aug2014

### **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 regularly measured. Those who participate in college activities, those who teach or coordinate activities, those who provide funding for activities, and, in many cases, outside evaluators conduct those assessments. Assessment results lead to continuous improvement of courses, programs, and activities. Occasionally, they indicate needs for the college to shape new curricula and make other major and minor adjustments that help it meet its mission.
- In an era rife with new challenges, Minnesota West has shown its willingness to adjust to meet the changing needs of its environment, populations, regional employers, and the institutions to which students transfer. The college is constantly seeking new partnerships, new curricula, and new approaches to instruction that are suitable for its many constituencies in a geographical area larger than many states.
- Minnesota West plans to continue to pursue new resources such as the Otto Bremer Foundation grant, 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, improve student persistence and completion, and to develop and enact new marketing strategies that will increase enrollment and the health of the local economy.
- Those pursuits are part of a long Minnesota West tradition.

## • **Sources**

---

- *There are no sources.*
- 

## **5.A - Core Component 5.A**

---

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

## Argument

---

Though its roots go back nearly 80 years, Minnesota West Community and Technical College in its present form is nearly twenty years old, and the formerly independent institutions that formed it have operated successfully in southwestern Minnesota for decades. Those institutions have survived many changes, and they individually and collectively continue to offer meaningful and appropriate higher education experiences to students of all ages, consistent with Minnesota West's mission, vision, and goals. Minnesota West has the financial backing of a healthy state government; a qualified and stable faculty, staff, and administration; the support of its various internal and external constituencies; and the fiscal and physical resources it needs to continue far into the future.

## Funding Resources

Funding for Minnesota West comes from two major sources, state allocations and tuition. Less significant sources of income include grants, gifts, and special allocations from the federal government, private industry, individual donors, and other entities.

## State Allocations

State allocations are based on a MnSCU funding formula adopted for each fiscal year. Minnesota West's base allocation for FY14 was \$9,525,194. Information regarding the history, formulas, principles, and underlying assumptions of the framework can be found online. The FY16 MnSCU allocation was approved after a special session of the Minnesota Legislature in June 2015.

## Budget Structure

Minnesota West's financial structure rests on four fund types.

The **general fund** is the main operating fund for the college. Revenues are mostly unrestricted and used to cover basic operating costs, including salaries, benefits, utilities, and supplies. Minnesota West has four major funds within the general fund. The **general fund** is used to cover basic operating costs of credit-based instruction. The **customized training/continuing education fund** is used to cover costs of non-credit and closed enrollment credit-based instruction. The **equipment fund** is used for new equipment purchases, and the **repair and replacement** fund covers costs of repairs to facilities or replacement of items not routinely replaced.

In FY14, the general fund had revenues of approximately \$25.22 million and expenditures of \$24.5 million. Excess funds were placed in reserve accounts, which are used for unplanned expenditures; to establish reserves for uncompensated absences, long term debt obligations and maintenance of IT infrastructures; and, currently, to meet MnSCU Board required reserve levels needed for the years immediately ahead that will likely be marked by reduced state allocations.

The **enterprise fund** is dedicated to self-supporting enterprises such as the bookstore and parking. In FY14, the fund had revenue of approximately \$1.83 million and expenditures of \$1.9 million. Unused and undesignated funds are set aside for large, costly projects such as parking lot expansion or repair.

The **restricted fund** account includes student financial aid and federal and state grant allocations. In FY14, approximately \$16.2 million flowed through this fund.

The **capital building fund** is for building projects designated for Minnesota West in the state's capital bonding bills. Funds for such projects are kept in a separate account, with the exception of funds designated for roofs, which are managed by MnSCU. The college recently completed a capital bonding project on the Worthington campus. The \$5.4 million project, while mostly used to remodel and update the athletic building, included an addition that enlarged the building and completed the link to the Worthington Area YMCA. The 2015 Minnesota Legislature approved two capital projects that the college will begin soon. One project will replace the heating and cooling system at the Canby campus with a geothermal system. The second project will cover the costs of demolishing a two-story addition at the Jackson campus and replacing it with a one-story, high-bay indoor power line training facility. The project will provide the space needed to move existing power line training from an off-campus location.

In addition to the four college funds, Student Life committees on each campus submit budgets for funds collected on their behalf through student fees. Student Life funds support activities at college campuses and locations. They also provide financial support for the various student organizations recognized by the committees. The committees also monitor Student Life policies and expenditures. Decisions on the budget are approved by Student Senates and the college President or designee. The Student Life budget for FY14 was \$236,599. Student Life budgets carry large balances from year to year on most campuses, but student leaders recently used banked funds to purchase fitness and entertainment equipment and provide matching funds for campus beautification projects.

## **Minnesota West Current Funds Expenditure Summary, FY03-FY15**

### **Budget Development**

Minnesota West begins its budget development process by projecting revenues to be received from the state allocation framework, tuition, grants, and other sources. Estimates of state allocations are available from the MnSCU board at various times during the legislative cycle. Tuition estimates are based on projected FYE and proposed or approved tuition rates. Minor sources of revenue include gate receipts, gifts, rent payments, and resale profits.

The second step in the budgeting process is gathering information on proposed expenditures. The Business Office prepares budget worksheets and distributes them to appropriate members of the President's Leadership Team. Leaders then forward the worksheets to department leaders for recommendations. The worksheets include information on cost centers, two-year histories of budgets and expenditures, the current year's budget numbers, empty columns for the next year's



budget proposals, and space for relevant comments that may inform and guide final decisions in the budgeting process.

Department leaders complete the worksheets and resubmit them to appropriate administrators. The leadership team reviews and approves requests before sending them on to the Business Office. After all the worksheets are compiled, members of the leadership team build a budget based on the requests, considering such factors as carryover funds, estimated revenues, anticipated growth of the college, and documented areas of concentration, such as marketing.

## **Tuition**

Individual colleges in the MnSCU system set tuition rates each year based on guidelines established by both Minnesota statutes and MnSCU policies and limits. In addition to tuition, colleges also set and collect fees for parking, student associations and activities, and technology.

Before tuition and fee rates can be established, MnSCU requires consultation with students on each campus. The current MnSCU policy for student consultation is 5.11 Tuition and Fees. Minnesota West's process for consulting with students is described in an earlier section.

In FY14, tuition at Minnesota West was set at \$171.55 per credit for an on-ground course and \$184.05 for an online course. Fees included a Technology Fee of \$10 per credit, a Student Life Fee of \$5 per credit, a MCCSA Fee of \$.31 per credit, and an Access/Parking Fee of \$1.82 per credit. The estimated total cost per semester was \$3,018.88 for 16 credits.

Due to costs, tuition is higher for a few selected programs. For example, an online fee of \$12.50 is charged for all internet classes; \$4.50 goes to MnSCU to help pay for Desire2Learn Brightspace, and \$8 remains to cover costs at Minnesota West. Nursing, surgical, and radiologic courses with an 8 or 16 student maximum class size and clinical courses are also assessed different tuition rates. Other special fees are listed on the tuition and fees page.

MnSCU colleges including Minnesota West have negotiated tuition reciprocity agreements with neighboring states of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Students from all other states pay the resident Minnesota rate to attend Minnesota West.

## **Grants**

Minnesota West receives numerous grants from a variety of public and private sources.

Grants from Minnesota Job Skills Partnership provide funds for training and retraining local workers. In FY14, Minnesota West applied for and received two Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) grants worth a total of \$492,887. These grant funds were dispersed to help several regional manufacturing businesses including Avicenna Technology and Polar Tank and Trailer.

In FY15, the college received grants from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Blanden Corporation for an Information Literacy Course, and from AT&T for a computer programming course.

Workers trained with these grant funds tend to stay and work in southwestern Minnesota.

## **Perkins IV Grants**

In FY14, the combined Perkins IV Consortium budget was \$510,013, of which Minnesota West's share was \$254,854. Minnesota West uses more than \$200,000 to support recruitment, retention, tutoring, and advising of students who are first generation, underprepared, and non-Caucasian. These services are available both online and on ground at each campus and location.

The Minnesota West consortium is directed by five goals:

### **1. Design and Implement Programs of Study: Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Minnesota West plans to meet this goal by expanding pathways in health science technology, an area where Minnesota West already has strong programs. The college accesses a statewide Programs of Study website and conducts workshops for school personnel to enter data and be apprised of changes.

### **2. Effectively Utilize Employer, Community, and Education Partnerships.**

Minnesota West has nurtured relationships with many southwestern Minnesota partners to meet the needs of traditional and non-traditional students in a variety of ways. The college conducts conferences, offers staff-development opportunities, and promotes student competitions and other events for which it relies on the expertise of partners in industry, non-profit organizations, work force centers, and educators at all levels to provide the best and most relevant information.

### **3. Improve Service to Special Populations**

Minnesota West provides resources and support to special needs students with the help of other secondary and post-secondary partners. The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) holds annual Breaking Traditions events on the Minnesota West campuses. The events expose students from area learning centers to a variety of non-traditional careers through hands-on activities. An annual Career Expo introduces high school sophomores and juniors to non-traditional careers through a Career Game Show. The college intends to seek out more non-traditional exhibitors for the interactive displays. A regional career assessment and exploration program, Project Discovery, is expanding its independent living skills component to meet the needs of more students and their families. The college's financial aid staff hosts workshops on each campus to assist students/families with completing their FAFSA and answer financial aid questions.

### **4. Provide a Continuum of Service Provision for Enabling Student Transitions**

The *Southern Minnesota Articulated College Credit* website enables instructors to request college credit certificates for high school students who meet certain competencies. Approximately 3,000 certificates are requested each year. The website allows instructors to search for certificates in particular career fields. Users can view the certificates they are eligible

to request by school district. The consortium website apprises members of upcoming events, facilitates registration for staff development workshops, and provides access to Perkins forms.

## 5. Sustain the Consortium of Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions

The partners in the Minnesota West consortium have a long history of successful relationships and successful projects. The partnership regularly adds new businesses, colleges, and organizations. Annual evaluations by consortium instructors and administrators help to improve services. Cooperative programs in the consortium include the Technical Skills Challenge, Breaking Traditions, Programs of Study in six areas of business, college faculty providing in-service for high school faculty, Accuplacer assessment in high schools, and a joint coordinator.

Of the students who received hours of service in FY15, 19 graduated with one or more degrees and 28 were registered for fall FY16 classes. Ten of the students were suspended during FY15, but two appealed their suspensions and were allowed to register for fall classes.

### **Minnesota West Foundation**

The Minnesota West Foundation is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization that exists to provide financial support to Minnesota West students. The foundation is administered by a board of community volunteers who set policies and distribute funds.

The Minnesota West Foundation's combined assets at the end of FY14 totaled \$1,167,488. Private donations to the foundation in that year totaled \$145,281. Nearly 25 percent of Minnesota West faculty, staff, and administrators contribute to the foundation through payroll deduction or annual gifts. The foundation received gifts from employees totaling \$9,228 in FY14. Scholarships awarded to students that year totaled \$65,000.

A new marketing plan announced in May 2015 suggested modifications to the scholarship application process as well as the focus of scholarship recipients.

At the February meeting the foundation board approved a plan to hire a full-time executive director. The director is expected to develop and implement programs to increase grants and gifts to the foundation, to meet the foundations goals, and to enhance relationships with college alumni. The foundation director took office in June 2015.

### **Donations from Constituents**

As described in earlier sections of this assurance argument, several of Minnesota West's external constituents also help the college control its costs by donating equipment and services. For example, the fluid power program recently benefited from a donation of equipment valued at nearly \$14,000. Other donations enhanced the cosmetology, nursing, radiologic technology, and auto mechanics programs.

### **Human Resources**

As described in the argument for Criterion 2, Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) is the official representative of faculty at Minnesota West. According to MnSCU's Reporting and Data Services, in FY15, MSCF represented 151 faculty in the bargaining unit. The average salary was \$63,580. Among instructors, 78 were female with an average 12 years of service and an average salary of \$63,379, and 73 were male with an average 15 years of service and an average salary of \$63,791. A total of 170 members of college faculty were non-unit faculty. This group includes adjunct faculty and customized training faculty. Of those, 72 were female with an average six years of service and average salary of \$27,288, and 98 were male with an average nine years of service and an average salary of \$37,850.

Minnesota West employed 73 unclassified and classified staff in FY15. The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represents the classified staff. In 2015, AFSCME represented 26 Minnesota West clerical employees, all of whom were female, at an average salary of \$43,710. Additionally, AFSCME represented 16 males in maintenance at an average salary of \$49,073, and twenty technical staff, eighteen female and two males, at an average salary of \$45,809.

Also in FY15, the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) represented 25 Minnesota West professional employees; nine were male with an average salary of \$70,839 and twelve were female with an average salary of \$57,975.

One bargaining unit and one pay plan represent managers and administrators at Minnesota West. In FY15, the Middle Management Association (MMA) represented four managers, two female with average salaries of \$79,169 and two male with average salaries of \$71,209. Excluded Administrators included eight females and four males in FY15. Average salary for the females was \$96,381 and average salary for males was \$111,056. Two employees were also part of the Commissioner's Plan.

Minnesota West staff members are initially trained by HR and the staff members with whom they will work. They are encouraged to continue their training at weekly One Stop meetings and college wide, regional, state, and national conferences and workshops held throughout the year. Professional development funds for staff training are provided by contract and described earlier in this assurance argument.

## **Bookstores**

Minnesota West provides three bookstores where students can purchase textbooks, school supplies, clothing, souvenirs, snacks, and sundries. Allocated space for bookstores ranges from 800 to 2,500 square feet, plus an option for online ordering. The college employs bookstore managers at Canby, Jackson, and Worthington. The Canby manager also provides resources for Granite Falls, Redwood Falls, and Pipestone students. The Worthington manager also provides materials for Luverne. At Canby and Jackson, the bookstore managers have additional campus duties.

Total bookstore sales for Canby and Granite Falls in FY4 were \$433,000. At Jackson, bookstore sales were \$260,000 in FY14. Sales at Pipestone were \$303,000 in FY14, but starting in FY15,

the college reported those sales as part of Canby and Worthington based on the student location. Worthington bookstore sales were \$822,000 in FY14. Net profit from bookstore operations in FY14 was \$62,000.

In FY15, bookstore sales fell 11 percent, while enrollment dropped only 7 percent. Net profit from the bookstores went from approximately \$62,000 in FY14 to \$32,000 in FY15.

Minnesota West offers a textbook rental program for some programs and provides options for e-books. During FY16, college bookstore operations will take on a bookstore partner, MBS. The change will include a move to a POS system that is expected to benefit students and provide greater efficiencies for staffing.

## Sources

---

- APC\_BremerGrant-2014-15\_June2015
- APC\_CareerExpo\_Aug2014
- APC\_JobSkillsPartnershipGrant\_June2015
- APC\_MnProgramsOfStudy\_June2015
- APC\_PerkinsConsortium\_June2015
- APC\_SouthernMinnesotaArticulatedCollegeCreditCertificateRequestProject\_June2014
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesotaPrivateIndustryCouncil\_Aug2014
- MnSCU\_AllocationFramework.July2015
- MnSCU\_BoardofTrusteesRoster\_July2014
- MnSCU\_FY2016\_operating\_budget\_with\_attachments\_Final\_July2015
- MnSCU\_Payroll2015\_March2015
- MnSCU\_Tuition-Fees\_June2014
- MW.Current Funds Expenditure Summary\_Sept15
- MW\_Bookstore\_June2015
- MW\_BreakingTraditions2014\_Aug2104
- MW\_Foundation\_June2015
- MW\_Student Consultation fy13\_March2015
- MW\_Tuition-Fees\_July2014
- MWM\_MarketingPlan\_May2015
- MW-Pol\_ClassifiedStaffDevelopment-4.16\_Oct2015

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

---

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

## Argument

---

The MnSCU Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the academic and financial practices of member institutions, but local leaders are free to make most decisions regarding institutional operations. Most decisions that affect the institution are made collaboratively and without interference from MnSCU.

“Meet and confer” refers to the expectation that faculty and administration will fairly exchange views and concerns regarding major college decisions. Campus and college committees are established to promote communication and participatory management of college operations.

The Faculty Shared Governance Council (FSGC) and Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) are established by the *MSCF Master Agreement* and serve the entire college. Other committees are campus specific and meet monthly or as issues arise. They include Campus Curriculum, Distance Learning, Fiscal Affairs, Equipment and Technology, Safety, and Scholarship. Committees that meet only as needed are Student Code of Conduct and Academic Appeals and Suspensions. Recent *ad hoc* committees have included a Marketing and Retention Committee, a REACH committee, an Alcohol/Drug Policy Review Committee, an HLC Steering Committee, and distance learning subcommittees.

According to the *MSCF Master Agreement*, the AASC and FSGC must comprise two-thirds faculty and one-third administration. The presidents of both the north and south chapters of the Minnesota West Community and Technical College Faculty (MWCTCF) or their designees serve on both the AASC and the FSGC. Other faculty members on the committees are division chairs or their designees. A member of the MWCTCF south chapter chairs the AASC and a member of the north chapter chairs FSGC. The college President appoints administrators to serve on both committees and usually attends the FSGC meeting in person.

The purpose of FSGC is to communicate faculty positions regarding “personnel, student affairs, facilities, fiscal matters, and general matters” (*Master Agreement between the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees and the Minnesota State College Faculty 2013-15* 9). FSGC meetings must involve administrators and a delegation of MSCF members from “a cross section of disciplines” (*Master Agreement 2013-15* 9). FSGC meetings are required by contract to occur at least twice each academic semester, but they usually occur monthly. Most meetings are face-to-face at a central location, but an occasional meeting with a short agenda may be conducted via ITV or desktop conferencing.

Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) is the only other contractual MnSCU/MSCF meet and confer committee. The purpose of AASC is “to provide direction for the College President in all matters included in academic affairs, including course outlines, award requirements, academic standards, course and program components, and the inventory of course and program offerings” (*Master Agreement 2013-15* 10). The AASC comprises two-thirds faculty and one-third administration or other staff, including the college Provost. The AASC usually meets via ITV at the end of each month from September through April after campus curriculum committees have met. In a non-catalog year, meetings may be less frequent.

### **Consultation with Staff**

Minnesota West AFSCME employees meet regularly on each campus. Contractual language specifies that meet-and-confer and labor-management meetings must occur every three months. The Labor-Management Cooperation section of the current AFSCME contract states:

*When an appointing authority initiates a planning process or management study which is anticipated to result in layoff, the appointing authority will meet and confer with the local union during the decision planning phase and again during the implementation phase. The appointing authority and the local union shall enter into negotiations regarding a Memorandum of Understanding upon request of either party to modify this agreement regarding the implementation plans which shall include, but are not limited to, the following: length of layoff notice; job and retraining opportunities; alternative placement methods, early retirement options...; bumping/vacancy options for part-time employees to preserve their insurance eligibility or contribution; and other methods for mitigating layoffs or their effect on employees.*

Other provisions in the contract call for labor/management committees to be formed “to promote and foster” a “mutually constructive, cooperative relationship between the parties” (Article 31). Included in this area is a Safety Committee, whose purpose is to “propose policies, programs and guidelines” to ensure that the college deals with such safety issues as OSHA compliance, right-to-know training, workers’ injury reports, workers’ compensation claims, bomb threats, and communicable diseases.

Remaining Minnesota West employees are represented by MAPE and MMA. Their contracts also contain language for meet and confer, which is conducted whenever issues arise.

### **Consultations with Students**

Each Minnesota West campus has a Student Senate that communicates regularly with administrators on policy and financial matters. Usually, the communication is conducted through local Senate officers who request meetings with administrators in writing when Senate members raise questions or articulate concerns or requests regarding policies that affect them. A staff or faculty advisor attends all Senate meetings and sometimes serves as liaison between students and administrators. A more complete description of the Student Senates is included in section 3.E.

### **Advisory Boards**

Advisory boards provide expert guidance for the design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and revision of technical and liberal arts curricula. Advisory boards also help with recruitment, placement, and financial support of college programs. Minnesota West posts advisory board meeting minutes on its website.

Minnesota West Policy 3.35 describes the purpose, characteristics and roles of advisory boards. The policy includes guidelines for committee membership, selection of officers, activities, terms of service, and recruiting.

## Sources

---

- APC\_AFSCME2013-2015\_state\_master\_agreement\_June2014
- APC\_MSCFMasterAgreement\_June2014
- MnSCU\_BoardofTrusteesRoster\_July2014
- MnSCU\_BoardPolicyonStudentInvolvement\_June2014
- MW\_ProgramAdvisoryCommitteeMinutes\_Aug2015
- MW\_Student Consultation fy13\_March2015
- MW-Pol\_AdvisoryCommittees-3.35\_July2014

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

---

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
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. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

## Argument

---

Minnesota West serves an enormous region, but current trends indicate that the region's population and workforce are aging, shrinking, and becoming increasingly multicultural. The role of manufacturing in the region's economy is minimal. New efficiencies in agriculture production have reduced the need for farm workers. On the other hand, bioscience and renewable energy industries such as wind power and biofuels offer new opportunities for economic growth. Minnesota West constantly seeks new and creative ways to reach out to traditional and



nontraditional students to make them better informed citizens and help them become the skilled workers that innovative employers need to succeed in highly competitive environments.

## **Planning Documents and Resources**

In September and October 2009, campus deans and the Director of Customized Training met with community and regional leaders to evaluate the college's effectiveness. Community meetings held at each of the five campuses were attended by community political and business leaders, interested citizens, and college personnel. Nearly every group identified Minnesota West's strengths as affordability, variety and diversity of programs, community support, online offerings, student success, quality faculty and staff, and health care programs. The groups also confirmed Minnesota West's challenges: housing, threatened funding sources, marketing issues, limitations for student life activities, and a shrinking population.

Minnesota West's planning grows out of a number of state and local resources including the *Minnesota State College and Universities Strategic Plan 2010-2014*; the college's own *Strategic Plan* and related reports; region-wide strategic plan advisory boards, which include students; analysis of the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)*; and IDEA Surveys.

The most recent *Minnesota West Strategic Plan* was developed for fiscal years 2010-15. Trends and challenges identified in the plan include agriculture-related industry development, demographic changes due to the growing diversity of the population, continued "out-migration" from the region, an increasingly difficult economic climate, and the need to enhance distance learning technologies. Opportunities identified include delivering more courses to high school students, increasing health occupations training, and planning for the aging, increasingly diverse population.

The *2010-2015 Strategic Plan* identifies three "Strategic Directions" that will guide Minnesota West policy decisions. They are:

- Strategic Direction One: Minnesota West Community and Technical College will increase access, learning opportunities and success for the citizens of southwestern Minnesota.
  - Goal 1.1 – The College will increase the level of achievement of underrepresented students.
  - Goal 1.2 – The College will refine its services to underserved/underprepared populations.
  - Goal 1.3 – The College will develop new credit and non-credit programs that serve the needs of the region.
- Strategic Direction Two: Minnesota West Community and Technical College will provide innovative and accountable programs and services to ensure the growth of our students.
  - Goal 2.1 – The College will improve instruction and student support through assessment of student engagement and learning outcomes.
  - Goal 2.2 – The College will access and refine multiple delivery options for education programs and student services.

- Goal 2.3 – The College will increase the participation of faculty and staff in professional development opportunities focused on strategic decisions.
- Strategic Direction Three: Minnesota West Community and Technical College will deliver programs and services to enhance the economic competitiveness of the state, the region, and its people.
  - Goal 3.1 – The College will be the region’s leader in workforce education and training.
  - Goal 3.2 – The College will support regional vitality by contributing artistic, cultural and civic assets that attract employees and other residents seeking a higher quality of life.

Running parallel with Minnesota West’s mission goals, the three major goals and directions of the MnSCU *Charting the Future* plan are to

- Ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans.
- Be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota’s workforce and community needs
- Deliver to students, employers, communities and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option increase access and opportunity.

Minnesota West’s numerous locations, its commitment to distance education, and its increasing number of program offerings reflect these goals.

### **Trends and Highlights Meetings**

Annually, college and universities meet in groups of three or four institutions to participate in Trends and Highlights meetings. Attendees include academic, student services, human resources and finance administrators along with the president from each institution. MnSCU system office staff from these same departments or divisions also attend the conversations. In preparation for the discussions, the MnSCU System Office Institutional Research Department provides a data book. The meetings incorporate academic and student affairs topics in combination with human resources issues. With the historical data as a background or starting point for the discussions, the focus is on the current year, the upcoming year, and the future beyond next year.

### ***Master Academic and Student Services Plan***

Minnesota West’s *Master Academic and Student Services Work Plan* was developed by a task force under the direction of the Office of the Provost in 2015, and its goals run parallel with the chancellor’s directions. The purpose of the Minnesota West plan is “to succinctly incorporate the vision and goals of the instructional, student services, technology and academic support programs as they are integrated with the mission of Minnesota West Community and Technical College, its Strategic Plan, the President’s Workplan, and the Chancellors’ Workplan.” The plan’s goals emerge from the MnSCU and Minnesota West missions, other strategic plans, documents, and related resources. More details are included in section 1.B.

Paulien Space Needs Study

Changes in demographics as well as population migration prompted Minnesota West to commission a study to determine how much assignable square feet (ASF) should be maintained for future instructional needs. Solid planning practices begin with understanding what is happening both outside of the college, through environmental scanning, and internally, through strategic and academic planning processes. Existing demographic, economic, and labor force data was collected and analyzed prior to conducting the space study. Layered over this information were important trends that will likely affect how the college will deliver future programs and services. College enrollment projections also informed the study. Results of the study provided practical information regarding the space required for each of the five campuses and three centers based on accepted guidelines.

## **Sightlines**

All MnSCU System institutions use a Sightlines product to record data in a Facilities Reinvestment and Renewal Module (FRRM). The module includes data on buildings by system, sub-system and sub-sub-system. The data includes current replacement value, gsf, year built, facilities condition index, backlog amount and estimated renewal year. The master facilities plan, space study analysis and FRRM data all inform planning for capital projects. Annually, Minnesota West reviews, updates and submits a prioritized [HEAPR](#) project list to the System Office facilities division through a SharePoint site.

## ***Affirmative Action Plan***

Minnesota West's *Affirmative Action Plan* for 2014-16 begins with the following "Statement of Commitment": "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 "to provide an employment environment free of any form of discriminatory harassment as prohibited by federal, state, and local human rights laws."

## **Economic Development**

Minnesota West assists in economic development planning throughout southwestern Minnesota. Customized Training/Continuing Education is an active partner with county and city economic development authorities and is an active member of the Northern Economic Development Professionals and Southern Economic Development Professionals associations that serve the region, although it is more active with the southern group. The southern group is based in Slayton and meets quarterly. Topics included at the April 2015 meeting included USDA Programs, Property Assisted Clean Energy (PACE) programs, and the Minnesota Talent Network (MTN).

Additional economic development planning is facilitated through Workforce Development Centers in Marshall, Montevideo, and Worthington and through the Southwestern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SWIF). Customized Training/Continuing Education has established solid

relationships with the Business Service Specialists and the Private Industry Council representatives from each area and with economic development specialists. These relationships allow the college to participate in planning initiatives that benefit the entire region.

Small Business Management (SBM) and Computerized Small Business Management (CSBM) programs are applied management programs that combine education and direct assistance to business owners and managers. Details of those programs are described earlier, but these programs help to increase the viability of businesses within their community. The SBM and CSBM Programs assist existing businesses as well as help in the areas of business startup, expansion, transitioning, and planning for the future. The management programs work with financial institutions, community EDA organizations, and SWIF to encourage good business practices among client members.

## Sources

---

- APC\_IDEA-Survey\_Aug2014
- APC\_SouthwestInitiativeFoundation\_June2015
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesotaPrivateIndustryCouncil\_Aug2014
- APC\_SouthwestMinnesota-WorkforceCouncil\_Aug2014
- MnSCU\_2016 HEAPR Master List\_Aug2015
- MnSCU\_Backlog and 5 Year Renewal s\_Aug2015
- MnSCU\_Master Trends Schedule Updated 010515\_Aug2015
- MnSCU\_Mission\_BoardApproval\_15April2014
- MnSCU\_Trends and Highlights FY2015\_Aug2015
- MnSCU\_TrendsandHighlightsMeetings\_Aug2015
- MW\_AffirmativActionPlan\_2014-2016\_June2015
- MW\_MasterAcademicPlan\_2014-2016\_June2015
- MW\_PaulienSpace Needs Study MAR 2015\_Aug2015

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

---

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

## Argument

---

Minnesota West has developed a culture of assessment that informs all of its decisions. All college courses, programs, events, and activities include some form of documented evaluation

and assessment. Data produced by these instruments are integral to college planning and decision-making.

Formal institutional and program evaluations involve external instruments including Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), IDEA Surveys, and statewide or national licensing exams, including the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI), for tradespeople and professionals. Evaluation and review of programs involves the college's own Program Review System, MnSCU audits and reports, IT surveys, on-going standards updates and visits from accrediting agencies, regular faculty evaluations, communications within divisions, and regular scrutiny from campus curriculum committees and the college-wide Academic Affairs and Standards Committee.

Even though Minnesota West is an “open door” institution, students who take classes must meet minimum academic standards and make satisfactory progress toward graduation. As stipulated in [Minnesota West Policy 2.9](#), “Satisfactory Academic Progress is defined as progressing in a positive manner toward fulfilling requirements for the degree or certificate in a given program of study. Satisfactory progress is the measurement of a student’s performance (credits completed and cumulative grade point average) in meeting the institutional degree requirements.” Students who fail to meet the standards specified in the policy are placed on academic probation or suspended. Students may appeal their status in front of a Suspension and Appeals Committee made up of faculty and staff and chaired by a campus dean.

As explained in previous chapters, every Minnesota West course is assessed by its instructor at the conclusion of each semester. The assessment reports are uploaded to a D2L Brightspace drop box and collated by the assessment coordinator, a faculty member. The coordinator prepares an annual assessment summary report at the end of each year and submits it to the provost, who uses it to adjust curriculum and plan faculty workshops. The reports are also uploaded to the Reports page on the website.

Results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement are shared with faculty and staff at college administration days. Suggestions for improvements in low-scoring areas are solicited then. Those suggestions are considered when the leadership team reviews the results in more detail. Changes that have occurred in response to CCSSE surveys include One Stop student services, an additional developmental writing course, freshman seminar, new library policies, and adjustments in how registration and orientation occur.

## Sources

---

- APC\_IDEA-Survey\_Aug2014
- MnSCU\_2014SystemwideFinancialReport\_Feb2015
- MnSCU\_Procedures-3.32.1-FacultyCredentialling\_June2014
- MW\_AssessmentHandbook\_May2015
- MW\_AssessmentSummary\_2013-2014\_Feb2015
- MW\_CenterForTeaching-Learning\_July2014
- MW\_CTLReport\_2013\_2014\_Apr2015

- MW\_ITsurvey\_results\_summary\_Mar2015
  - MW\_Reportswebpage\_July2014
  - MW-Pol\_FacultyEvaluation-4.9.1\_July2014
  - MW-Pol\_ProgramReview-3.10\_July2014
  - MW-Pol\_SatisfactoryProgressStandards-Policy 2.9\_June2015
- 

## **5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary**

---

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

### **• Summary**

---

- Minnesota West Community and Technical College historically and currently has the resources, institutional structures, and processes necessary to fulfill its mission and continuously improve its educational offerings. It has the will and flexibility to accommodate future challenges, opportunities, and trends. The college has the fiscal means, the community support, and the professional faculty, staff, and leadership to continue its role as the professional and technical educator of choice for a diverse population in southwestern Minnesota, southeast South Dakota, and northwest Iowa.
- The college has the backing of a healthy state government and the Minnesota State College and University System (MnSCU), a maturing state higher education system managed by a chancellor and directed by a Board of Trustees. The college has tried and tested systems in place for assessing curriculum and programs, budgeting, developing and improving curriculum, encouraging and supporting professional development of faculty and staff, and planning for the future.
- Minnesota West is aware that it has chronic challenges. The region's population is aging, shrinking and becoming more diverse, so the college has made efforts to diversify its faculty and staff to more closely resemble the region's demographics. A paucity of affordable housing has created problems not only for attracting students to Minnesota West campuses but also for keeping them in the region after they are educated and prepared to become productive members of the region's workforce. Finding the right balance between online and on-ground courses is another area of concern.
- Knowing challenges is the first step toward meeting them, and Minnesota West has the experience and resources to meet these and other challenges. The college embraces and fulfills its mission and is well equipped and positioned to do so far into the future.

### **• Sources**

---

- *There are no sources.*