



MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Final Report

July 2008

Executive Summary

Policy Center on the First Year of College Vision Statement

The Foundations of Excellence model is a blueprint for building the first year of college as the foundation for undergraduate education. Institutions that strive for excellence in the first year will conduct a candid analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. Based upon that analysis, they will then commit themselves to a course of action designed to improve first-year-student learning and success.

Minot State University has been part of a 2007-08 national cohort of thirteen four-year schools dedicated to improving the first year of college in a project called Foundations of Excellence (FoE). Campus committees were organized around nine program dimensions. Some basic data were collected through a Minot State University Current Practices Inventory and by adding institutional questions to the program surveys that were administered to faculty, staff and students.

The individual dimension committees spent the late fall and winter months meeting and working on their reports. Once each committee had concluded its work and had given its area a grade, the report was submitted, and feedback was received from Betsy Barefoot, our Policy Center liaison. The initial report was then ready to be unveiled to the campus to make sure it was on track. Two campus public forums were held on May 1 to help prioritize all of the action items

The Steering Committee reviewed this list to see if there were other action items to consider, even if they had not received broad campus support. The Steering Committee then synthesized the action items into five main "action themes." They are academic advising; communicating and connecting; faculty/student success; first-year event; and organization.

Subgroups of Steering Committee members then studied these themes and developed them further by assigning costs; rating impact, priority and political sensitivity; and identifying responsible parties and alignment with the strategic plan. Narrative summaries were written, and a matrix for easy viewing and summarization was created. This information was then distilled into a set of immediate actions and longer-term actions. The plans provide an estimated timeline, the parties responsible and an estimate of financial resources for each action item.

All of this activity culminated with the development of this final report that includes a "report card" based on institutional performance on each of the nine program dimensions. While this is the final step in the Foundations of Excellence process, it is only the first step in implementing the ideas to come out of it, as the university looks to improve programs and services for first-year students. The Steering Committee has also made a recommendation for establishing a permanent First-Year Committee to guide this process from this point forward.

Recommended Action Items

A set of action items was created by the individual Dimension Committee teams and prioritized via two public forums on campus. A thematic analysis of campus feedback yielded five action themes: academic advising; organization; faculty and student success; communicating and connecting; and the first-year event. The list of actions below is arranged according to the projected semester of completion:

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2009

- **Connect with departments in a timely way**

- **Assign advisers early in the process**
- **Provide a coordinated effort with the MSU formal advising process**
- **Develop a Minot State University first-year philosophy**
- **Inventory and evaluate FY services: those available and those deficient**
- **Ensure that newly hired faculty understand responsibility to first-year students**
- **Properly prepare newly hired faculty**
- **MSU should once again budget resources to institute a program of opportunities promoting professional development of first-year teaching excellence. Ideally, these would offer faculty a choice of both activities and rewards, including stipends.**
- **Increase percentage of faculty/staff involved in local and national conferences relating to FY experiences.**
- **Create a Student Success Center that will organize activities, pull together resources, and work with new student-orientation events.**
- **Revise all printed material as used**
- **Prepare a comprehensive cost sheet for prospective students**
- **Encourage family participation in MSU events.**
- **Expand reconnect activities through a coordinated effort between Student Affairs, Registrar, Student Life, Chartwells Food Service and Enrollment Services.**
- **Hire a First-year coordinator to begin compiling elements of a first-year seminar/experience. Plan for official launch of initial elements in Fall 2009.**

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2010-11

- **Revise advising system**
- **Provide adviser training**
- **Develop organizational scaffolding for FY success**
 - Collect, store, share and use appropriate data for improvement of first-year experience
 - Assure student physical and psychological safety
 - Support faculty and staff professional development (such as mentoring, active learning processes, etc.) *See Title III, Strategy 1a, p. 20, Strategy 2b, pp 21-22*
- **Hire properly trained faculty**
- **Task each college to:**
 - Set learning goals for its programs
 - Examine course activities for first-year students and develop a set of options
 - Assess impact
- **Review the English placement score for ENGL 110**
- **Review the math placement policy**
- **Provide remedial math support**
- **Provide support services for students admitted by exemption**
- **Develop immediate and long-range plans for remodeling and refurbishing classrooms to promote academic engagement.**

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2012-13

- **Reduce maximum sizes for classes most commonly taken by first-year students**
- **Implement a complete first-year seminar that would inspire a transition into intellectual life at the university level.**
- **Assimilate the following events/activities into the first-year seminar course:**
 - Enhance students' sense of belonging
 - Increase knowledge of, accessibility to, and visibility of student services/clinics
 - Organize a first week of school "come meet your department" event for faculty and students
 - Present information about student services/clinics in classes.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction and Overview of Project	6
Committee Members.....	8
Why the First Year Matters	9
Report Grade	10
Dimension Committee Report Summaries	12
Philosophy Dimension.....	12
Organization Dimension.....	13
Learning Dimension.....	15
Faculty Dimension	17
Transitions Dimension.....	21
All Students Dimension	24
Diversity Dimension	28
Roles and Purposes Dimension	29
Improvement Dimension	31
Action Theme Narratives	34
Academic Advising.....	34
Organization	43
Faculty/Student Success.....	49
Communication and Connection.....	51
First-Year Event	54
Action Theme Matrix	58

Prioritized Recommendations Drawn from Action Themes	69
Conclusion	73
Appendix A – Full Dimension Committee Reports	74
Philosophy Dimension Full Report	74
Organization Dimension Full Report	75
Learning Dimension Full Report	77
Faculty Dimension Full Report	86
Transitions Dimension Full Report	97
All Students Dimension Full Report.....	106
Diversity Dimension Full Report.....	117
Roles and Purposes Dimension Full Report	124
Improvement Dimension Full Report.....	128
Appendix B – Title III Grant Objectives	139

Introduction and Overview of the Project

Minot State University has been part of a 2007-08 national cohort of thirteen four-year schools dedicated to improving the first year of college in a project called Foundations of Excellence (FoE). The comprehensive, year-long self-study was directed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College (hereafter referred to as the Policy Center). One hundred and seventeen other two-year and four-year institutions have already gone through this process. This process is designed to push an institution to think about what it would take to get to a level of having an “excellent” beginning college experience for its students. This is both a measurement and a planning; even dreaming, model that allows universities to improve objective indicators of student success, such as student retention, learning and satisfaction.

In early August 2007, six faculty and staff from Minot State, including President David Fuller attended launch training in Asheville, N.C., the home of the Policy Center. The program was introduced to the campus at the opening fall convocation with a briefing and a video. A press conference for local media and a campus informational session were held on the same day. Volunteers were solicited at the informational session. The campus senates and the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education were also briefed on the program.

Campus committees were organized around nine program dimensions. Each Dimension committee chair served on the overall project Steering Committee. The Steering Committee also served as the Philosophy Dimension Committee. There was a great deal of benefit to the timing of this study, since it occurred at the same time as the ten-year accreditation review cycle with the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The collection and organization of information for HLC paid dividends in doing the same for FoE. Coincidentally, several members of the HLC visiting evaluation team were going through the FoE process on their own campuses.

Some basic data were collected through a Minot State University Current Practices Inventory and by adding institutional questions to the program surveys administered to faculty, staff and students. A great deal of collective faculty/staff experience also benefited the process. The individual dimension committees spent the late fall and winter months working on their reports. Once each committee had concluded its work and given its area a grade and received feedback from Betsy Barefoot, our Policy Center liaison, the initial report was ready to be unveiled to the campus to make sure it was on track.

Two campus public forums were held on May 1. Each committee chair spent a few minutes describing his committee’s work. Then each audience member was given four adhesive dots and asked to use them to identify what they felt were the top four priorities listed on the Dimension Committee report posters. The action items were then collated by the total number of dots received.

The Steering Committee reviewed this list to see if there were other action items to consider, even if they had not received broad campus support. The Steering Committee then synthesized the action items into five main “action themes.” They are academic advising; communication and connection; faculty/student success; first-year event; and organization.

Subgroups of Steering Committee members then studied these themes and developed them further by assigning costs; rating impact, priority and political sensitivity; identifying responsible parties; and assessing alignment with the strategic plan. Narrative summaries were written, and a matrix for easy viewing and summation was created. This information was then distilled into a set of immediate actions and longer-term actions. The plans provide an estimated timeline, the parties responsible and an estimate of projected financial resources for each action item.

Another interesting development during this year of FoE study is a Minot State University application for a Title III Strengthening Institutions grant. The focus of this application is increasing engagement and first-to-second

year retention of students in order to grow our enrollment. Minot State proposes to accomplish this by creating or enhancing services in peer mentoring, tutoring, faculty development, civic engagement and field experiences. Because of the overlapping areas of interest and recommendations in both FoE and Title III, the Steering Committee has approached the writing of this report by assuming Minot State will get Title III funding or will proceed with other university funds. FoE and Title III plans, therefore, mesh and should be viewed as an entire package. The Minot State University 2008 Title III objectives are included in Appendix B of this report. Minot State expects to hear whether or not it has been funded in August.

All of this activity culminated in the development of this final report, which includes a “report card” based on institutional performance in each of the nine program dimensions. While this is the final step in the Foundations of Excellence process, it is only the first step in implementing the ideas to come out of it, as the university looks to improve programs and services for first-year students. The Steering Committee has also made a recommendation for establishing a permanent First-Year Committee to guide this process from this point forward. Many members of the current Steering Committee will continue to serve along with other campus representatives on this yet-to-be-formed First-Year Committee.

Foundations of Excellence Committee Members

Philosophy Dimension (and Steering Committee)

Dick Jenkins*	Bethany Andreasen	Lori Willoughby
Gary Rabe*	John Girard	JoAnn Linrud
Ron Dorn	Laurie Geller	Pat Hubel
Caren Barnett	Wylie Hammond	
Kris Warmoth	Kevin Neuharth	

Organization Dimension

Ron Dorn*	Tania Balas	Dean Frantsvog
Lisa Eriksmoen	Linda Cresap	Lisa Roteliuk
Laurie Weber	John Webster	

Learning Dimension

Caren Barnett*	Cheryl Nilsen	Vicki Michels
Kristi Berg	Margi Coxwell	Leisa Harmon
Kris Warmoth	Conrad Davidson	Michelle Sauer

Faculty Dimension

Bethany Andreasen*	Larry Goodman	Dan Ringrose
Evelyn Klimpel	Deb Jensen	
Dennis Simons	Paul Markel	

Transitions Dimension

John Girard*	Teresa Loftesnes	Debra Chandler
Nancy Mickelson	Dianne Maupin	Rebecca Porter
Margaret Sherve	Sarah Rowe	
Kathy Hintz	Lynda Bertsch	

All Students Dimension

Laurie Geller*	Lisa Borden-King	Sheila Collins
Leon Perzinski	Bob Crackel	
Chirs Keller	Lynne Rumney	

Diversity Dimension

Kevin Neuharth*	Ruth Kihm	Wylie Hammond
Joseph Jastzrembski	Tom Froelich	Ann Rivera
Steve Hayton	Rick Watson	Kenneth Story

Roles and Purposes Dimension

Lori Willoughby*	Ryan Winburn	Neil Nordquist
Lynda Bertsch	Ron Royer	Marv Semrau

Improvement Dimension

JoAnn Linrud*	Rita Curl-Langager	Teresa Seright
Debra Chandler	Erik Anderson	Pat Hubel

*Committee Chair(s)

Why the First Year Matters

For the past 25 years, university and college educators have recognized the importance of the first year of college. The genesis of these programs may be traced to the University of South Carolina's University 101 course in 1972. The pioneer who led the way was the university's president, Thomas Jones. Jones felt compelled to act after the student riots of 1970, when he was held hostage and, as he so eloquently stated, "students gave me an extended opportunity to reflect."¹ University 101 captured the attention of many leaders, and by 1982 the first national conference on the subject was held. Some 27 years later, the Conference on the First-Year Experience attracts more than 1,872 participants; an indication of the growing attention to this subject.

Minot State University's interest in the first year is not solely based on the success of other institutions. In the fall of 2006, MSU's Vision 2013 was formally presented to the campus and the general public. The document presents seven strategies that faculty, administrators and staff will use to achieve the strategic goal of becoming "one of the premier public, regional universities in the 'great' Great Plains."² Strategy Two of Vision 2013 specifically addresses the fostering of engaged learning and place for the benefit of students. Indeed, a key priority to making this strategy a reality is the creation of a "first-rate comprehensive program to support first-year students, their retention and their success."³

At present, Minot State students are not as successful as administrators would like. For example, the 2006 six-year graduation rate was 27 percent, 12 percent below the comparison group mean.⁴ Perhaps of more concern is the high percentage of first-year students on the mid-term deficiency report. In the fall of 2007, 48 percent were on the list, and 75 percent had earned a D, F, or W by the end of the semester.

Some will wonder if Minot State's first-year students are really ready to attend a university. Its main recruiting areas have impressive high school graduation rates, between 80 and 90 percent, compared to the state average of 84.8 percent and the national average of 68.8 percent.⁵ Unfortunately, not all North Dakota graduates are ready for the rigors of a university education. If one uses ACT scores, which are designed to predict a student's potential for success in college, then only 23 percent of North Dakota students are likely to succeed.⁶ This creates a challenge for Minot State University because it is the university's job to do everything it can to make sure that all students are successful. In short, the first year matters.

¹ Keynote address by John Gardner at the 27th Annual First-year Experience Conference, San Francisco, 17 February 2008

² See Vision 2013, http://www.minotstateu.edu/president/pdf/vision_2013_compressed.pdf

³ *ibid*

⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, 2007 IPEDS Data Feedback Report

⁵ The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

⁶ North Dakota State Data Center Population Bulletin, Volume 23, Number 4, April 2007

Dimension Report Card

The Foundations of Excellence® Report Card

This report card represents the final step in the Foundations of Excellence process. It is the culmination of a nine- to twelve-month effort of analysis and planning, focused on the experience of new students. This report card is based on an aspirational model of the first year produced in 2003 by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, its research partners, and 219 four-year colleges and universities. In 2005, the model was adapted for two-year higher education by 82 public and private two-year colleges working with the Policy Center. That model, consisting of nine Foundational Dimensions®, identifies characteristics of excellence in the new student experience. Because the Dimensions focus on institutional structures, policies and processes (the decisions institutions make about organizing and delivering the new-student experience), the model is useful in confirming effective practice and/or providing direction for improvement.

The core work of the project was conducted by the institution's Foundations of Excellence Task Force, with assistance from the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. By using a series of performance indicators and a variety of data sources, the Task Force carefully reviewed the campus efforts that align with each Dimension. These reviews resulted in a collective judgment about the institution's level of achievement on each of the performance indicators.

The final step in the process was to produce single-grade indicators of the institution's achievement of each Dimension. Because these grades are based on judgments made by a campus task force, they are not intended to be used in comparison with any other institution or in a ranking system. The Foundations Report Card can be used most effectively as an indicator of relative grades within an institution. The grades reflect the best collective judgment of the task force and are supported by the evidence collected during the project. Grades will not be made public by the Policy Center in any manner that identifies individual institutions.

Foundational Dimensions	Grade
<p>Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation. (Philosophy)</p>	F
<p>Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements. (Organization)</p>	B-
<p>Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. (Learning)</p>	D

<p>Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty. These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans and department chairs and supported by the institution's reward systems. (Faculty)</p>	D+
<p>Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary-school personnel, families and other sources of support, as appropriate. (Transitions)</p>	C-
<p>Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing and addressing needs is ongoing and subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students. (All Students)</p>	D
<p>Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others. (Diversity)</p>	C-
<p>Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to systematically examine their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e., the major). (Roles & Purposes)</p>	B-
<p>Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement. This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis, a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institution's overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way of achieving ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on the first college year. (Improvement)</p>	D

Summary of Dimension Committee Reports

(Full committee reports can be found in Appendix A)

Philosophy Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies and resource allocation.

Committee Co-chairs:

Dick Jenkins – EdD – Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students

Gary Rabe – PhD – Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA)

Committee Members:

Ron Dorn – MS – Vice President for Administration and Finance

Caren Barnett – MA/RN – Director, Student Health Center

Kris Warmoth – EdD – Dean, Center for Extended Learning

Bethany Andreasen – PhD – Associate Professor of History

John Girard – PhD – Dean of Enrollment Management

Laurie Geller – EdD – Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Wylie Hammond – MA – Director of Multicultural Support Services

Kevin Neuharth – MA – Associate Professor of Communications

Lori Willoughby – PhD – Professor of Business

JoAnn Linrud – PhD – Dean, College of Business

Pat Hubel – PhD – Research Associate

Current Situation

Minot State University currently does not have an overall philosophy for first-year programs. To keep the momentum of this FoE process moving forward, the steering committee is including a first-year philosophy draft (pg. 44) for immediate consideration. It will serve as a starting point for a more inclusive and extensive process of philosophy development that will take place during the 2008-09 academic year.

Organization Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

Committee Leader:

Ron Dorn - MS – Vice President for Administration and Finance

Committee Members:

Lisa Eriksmoen – MA - Director of Student Life

Laurie Weber - MSM - Financial Aid Counselor

Linda Cresap – PhD - Dean, Graduate School

John Webster – PhD – Associate Professor for Geosciences, Chair – Biology

Dean Frantsvog – JD – Associate Professor of Accounting/Finance

Lisa Roteliuk - MS – Instructor of Communications

Current Situation

The Organization Dimension team looked at a variety of data, including the Student Satisfaction Inventory results from April 2007, and the most current NSSE and FSSE reports, but relied most on the information found in the Foundations of Excellence First-Year Student Survey and the Faculty/Staff Survey. Team member perceptions and insights weighed heavily in our conclusions and recommended action steps.

Multiple administrative units provide services to first-year students at Minot State University. The administrative oversight of each of these units is varied, and, in most cases, the unit's primary focus is not on first-year students. The primary units that are charged with initiatives dealing with first-year students are Academic Affairs and Student Services. These two units are working collaboratively to implement the first-year student initiative and have been very successful with the initiatives they have already implemented. They are hampered, however, by a lack of funding to provide additional services to first-year students. The committee feels that the university has implemented some excellent initiatives regarding first-year students, such as the first-year student housing requirement, a mentoring program and the use of data from the CSI survey. The committee believes that Student Services and Academic Affairs, through Enrollment Services, are doing an outstanding job with the initiatives currently in place. The committee feels that a first-year standing committee would improve the collaboration and communication regarding the first-year program. It would provide a place where first-year issues could be discussed and current first-year programs could be reviewed.

Institutional collaborations between units and departments within those units do exist despite a lack of an integrated institutional approach for the first-year student experience. Career Services and Enrollment Services coordinate the first-year student orientation program. The results of the Student Satisfaction Survey Inventory indicate that many units that participate in the first-year student experience in a non-integrated manner receive a high satisfaction rating. Additionally, feedback received from student participants, parent participants and faculty/staff participants regarding the Orientation Program and the Mentoring Program is very positive. The Mentoring Program is a first-year student initiative housed in Career Services.

The team feels that the university needs to provide more resources to support additional first-year initiatives that would help strengthen its efforts in support of first-year students. Training of faculty/staff on an ongoing basis and adequate funding are necessary to support current first-year initiatives and to

strengthen the first-year program. Very limited, if any, funding has been provided by the university for faculty/staff development to increase their understanding of first-year issues and to enhance their ability to effectively participate in the first-year experience. A lack of trained advisers is a concern of students.

Question 034 on the FOE student survey reveals that currently when first-year students have questions about where to go for assistance, our faculty and staff are usually able to connect students with the right office for assistance, with 74.1% of the respondents indicating a high or very high level of satisfaction in this area. To a large degree, our current organization structure is working to support first-year students, with a few exceptions.

Student uncertainty about where to go for assistance with non-academic areas (Q032) and where to inquire about participation in student organizations (Q033) seems to reveal a need to highlight those areas during the CONNECT orientation sessions. The FOE Faculty/Staff Survey also reveals uncertainty among MSU faculty and staff about where to refer students for those same concerns (Q020 and Q021). These deficiencies can be resolved with improved training for new faculty and staff with regard to services available. Faculty and staff concerns about not having a voice in first-year issues (Q028 and Q029) can be addressed through the formation of a Standing Committee on the first-year experience. It would provide organization, collaboration and, most importantly, communication among the various units that provide services to first-year students.

Learning Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Committee Leader:

Caren Barnett– MA, RN – Director, Student Health Center

Committee Members:

Kristi Berg - MSM – Instructor, Business Information Technology
Margi Coxwell - EdD – Associate Professor of Education
Conrad Davidson - PhD – Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Leisa Harmon - MFA – MS/MFA – Assistant Professor of Communications
Vicki Michels - PhD – Assistant Professor of Addiction Studies
Cheryl Nilsen - PhD – Instructor of Mathematics and Computer Science
Michelle Sauer – PhD – Associate Professor of English
Kris Warmoth, EdD – Dean, Center for Extended Learning

Current Situation

Although this review did not find a listing of learning goals for first-year students, it did find evidence that first-year goals are implied. A review of the undergraduate catalog for 2006-08 revealed several pieces of evidence. The first is that there are high school admissions requirements for English, lab sciences, math and social sciences. This requirement would suggest that first-year university students have a certain knowledge base, but there is not an explicit tie.

Entering first-year students (freshmen), transfer students and parents are strongly encouraged to attend New Student Orientation, which is scheduled prior to the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Orientation introduces students to university life through a number of well-designed sessions and social activities. Information about orientation programs is sent to all students who have been admitted to Minot State.

Five high-enrollment courses were identified through the Current Practices Inventory. An evaluation of those courses provided us with information regarding how student engagement is measured. We found that student engagement is measured through a variety of instructional methods, such as peer evaluations, evaluation of outside speakers, small-group assignments, pretests, posttests, class participation and attendance.

Faculty receive feedback from student evaluations each semester. They also receive feedback from the department chair. Changes made as a result of feedback are documented indirectly in faculty self-evaluations and in faculty evaluations done by the chair.

We used the same high-enrollment courses to evaluate the degree to which Minot State documents and evaluates student learning outcomes. We again found that there are a variety of methods used to assess the course outcomes, such as rubrics, peer editing, speaking assignments, writing assignments and final examinations.

Minot State University attempts to address the causes of high D/Failure/Withdrawal/Incomplete (DFWI) rates through the MSU catalog, policies, midterm deficiencies and second-week attendance verification.

End-of-course evaluations are reviewed by the deans and chairs and then given to faculty members. The VPAA gets involved in situations that have been brought to his attention. A performance implementation plan is put into place during a discussion with the faculty member.

The campus intentionally places first-year students in math courses by using the ACT scores. Scores of 21 or higher on the math section allow the student to enroll in Math 103 or above. There are no remedial courses for those students with low ACT math scores. Students who have not taken the ACT are required to take the Compass Math Placement Exam.

Based on information from the Admissions Office and the catalog, high school grades are not reviewed in any case. The College Student Inventory is administered to freshman right out of high school. This information is disseminated through the mentoring program.

According to the Disability Coordinator, students with documented disabilities have equal access. Their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor directs students to the proper program, and students choose their own classes.

According to the Honors Program Director, honors placement for above-average students is done by identifying potential honors students from incoming high school GPA (above 3.50) or by ACT score (above 25, composite). Canadian students are identified by SAT score (above 1,170). Prospective students are sent letters of invitation to the Honors Program, and they are invited to talk to the Honors Program Director at registration.

Out-of-class learning outcomes for first-year students are not specifically linked to academic courses or programs. A large number of activities may include first-year students, but few are designed specifically for them, other than CONNECT and the Mentoring Program. It is assumed that with the wide range of activities available to all students that the first-year students are likely to participate.

Faculty Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty. These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans and department chairs and supported by the institution's reward systems.

Committee Leader:

Bethany Andreasen - PhD - Associate Professor of History

Committee Members:

Larry Goodman – MAT - Lecturer in Mathematics

Debra Jensen – PhD - Associate Professor of Education

Chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Human Performance

Evelyn Klimpel – MS - Disability Student Services Counselor

Paul Markel - PhD - Professor of Psychology

Dan Ringrose – PhD - Associate Professor of History

Current Situation

Campus-level Encouragement:

FoE Faculty survey responses indicate that faculty and staff believe senior academic leaders consider involvement with first-year students to be important (though the lowest mean on item number 54 was that of the College of Arts and Sciences faculty, who are most likely to teach courses to first-year students). However, when asked to what extent institution leaders rewarded engagement with first-year students, results were much less positive. This suggests the lack of a strong connection between what institutional leaders say that they value and what they show they value with their actions.

The General Education (Gen Ed) program is the closest approximation that MSU has to a first-year program of study and outcomes. In spring 2008, the Faculty Senate established an ad hoc committee to suggest revisions to the current Gen Ed program. The VPAA recently sent members of this committee to an institute offered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities to work with consultants on developing a plan for a revised Gen Ed program.

More institutional support of pedagogies of engagement is needed. Ideally, MSU would teach first-year students in small classrooms with flexible furniture and equipment to facilitate discussions, group interaction and diverse teaching methods. Analysis of classrooms assigned to Gen Ed classes in fall 2007 (a reasonable proxy for the physical environment experienced by first-year students in many of their classes) paints a gloomy picture. Gen Ed students flow through classrooms that need upgrades, renovations and flexible furnishings. Room capacity often dictates furnishings in ways that make it difficult or impossible to rearrange the desks (e.g., fixed seating or large sled desks in numbers too great to facilitate rearrangement.) Some of these rooms have gone for years without comprehensive remodeling or new furniture. Usage of these spaces cuts across Gen Ed categories (excluding science, wellness and personal development), so it is possible that a first-year student may spend most or even all of his time scheduled into rooms of this type.

Data on first-year students and students overall, as well as student perceptions, are being collected through many campus-level initiatives. Much of this information has been made available to faculty at Assessment Day meetings and in open forums with the President. However, there is evidence in the

responses from faculty to the FoE survey that they have limited time to engage with the available data due to workload constraints, additional demand for accountability reports (which all require time to generate), and increasing use of the Assessment Days for outside presentations. The lack of full-time staffing has severely limited the extent to which MSU's Institutional Research Office is able to provide analysis of the data collected and to initiate additional collections and analyses of data beyond that already mandated.

During the past few semesters, the Faculty Senate's Academic Assessment Committee has had the financial support of the administration to focus Assessment Day activities on issues that have relevance to student engagement and the first-year experience. Speakers have introduced the campus to the Collegiate Learning Assessment Project, the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) project, and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Unit-level Encouragement:

FoE Faculty Survey results indicate that faculty and staff believe that department/unit leaders value faculty involvement with first-year students, but also see little evidence that these leaders acknowledged, recognized, or rewarded excellence in teaching first-year students. It seems that this is due to unit leaders having little available to them that is systemic or tangible. The FoE faculty and student surveys (open-ended responses) indicate that a broad range of the strategies defined within the Faculty Dimension as "pedagogies of engagement" are being used, although not consistently. The data are bimodal, indicating that some faculty use a great variety of these strategies and others do not. The survey data do not indicate whether those faculty using the strategies are doing so due to department/unit leader encouragement or due to individual faculty initiative.

A high percentage of first-year survey courses are taught by adjunct faculty. It is difficult to differentiate between how the teaching of regular faculty and of adjunct faculty are perceived by students, as the data sources do not appear to break down the data along those lines. Adjuncts are not typically required to perform service and scholarship, so they may have less opportunity for out-of-class engagement.

A large percentage of first-year students is enrolled in Gen Ed courses. Student outcomes, in theory, are driven by the Minot State University philosophy of Gen Ed and the content of the particular course. The Gen Ed assessment process leads to department/unit discussions regarding learning goals for entry-level classes. Some departments provide new faculty with examples of syllabi and course outcomes. Department/unit leaders encourage discipline-based conferences and workshop attendance within the limits of their budgets. Professional resources in the MSU library and literature circulated within units address discipline-specific content and pedagogy, but financial constraints exist, particularly with regard to journal subscriptions.

Many discipline-specific trends are driven by the academies through accreditation processes or standards related to specific majors. It is necessary for faculty to be interactive with their professional academies through participation in professional activities and engagement with current scholarly publications.

Expectations:

There is little evidence that expectations for involvement with first-year students are clearly communicated to either full-time or part-time/adjunct faculty. This is true even using the Gen Ed statement of philosophy and "five strands" model of assessment as an approximation for first-year expectations.

FoE survey results indicate that the hiring process does not dependably address responsibilities to first-year students in position descriptions or campus interviews. Neither the Gen Ed strands nor the philosophy are necessarily identified to candidates during the hiring process. An additional concern during recent years has been the practice of the administration not to authorize searches until well into the academic year. While this practice is driven by understandable financial considerations, it sometimes has an impact on the quality of faculty that MSU is able to hire. Frequently, the institution has to fall back on

temporary hires. Neither outcome is ideal when MSU is seeking to improve its academic engagement with first-year students.

New faculty may inherit a list of assessment outcomes identified for a Gen Ed course. Faculty teaching them become familiar with the strands underlying the program, but there is no process that requires awareness of the Gen Ed statement of philosophy. Recently, the VPAA developed an ongoing orientation for new faculty which addresses issues pertaining to first-year students. Faculty teaching primarily upper-level courses appear to attach more responsibility for student engagement to those courses. There is no consistent process for making information on first-year student characteristics and expectations available to adjuncts.

As MSU increasingly emphasizes the importance of faculty involvement with first-year students, the committee has identified two concerns. First, faculty responses to the FoE survey reveal that a major concern is excessive demand on faculty time. Faculty feel overloaded with administrative requirements, resulting in decreased time for scholarly work and academic discourse. How can MSU faculty focus on improving the first-year experience on top of everything else they have to do? One approach that would aid the faculty is a reduction in class size for courses taken mostly by first-year students. A maximum of twenty-five students in classes that currently enroll forty would allow the faculty to engage more intensively with their students. This, of course, would require that the university reconsider the policy of allocating resources solely on the criterion of FTEs.

The second concern is faculty autonomy. Currently, MSU benefits from the variety of philosophies and teaching strategies among its faculty. This initiative should encourage faculty to use their individual strengths to promote student engagement rather than to limit them to a single model of teaching. Teaching methods should be based on best practice in particular disciplines and positive results in the classroom. The Committee of Twelve, established to provide an additional assessment of teaching by probationary faculty, must fully recognize the validity of a variety of teaching models.

Rewards

Support for good teaching is largely rhetorical, and first-year teaching is not specifically recognized. The same is true for out-of-class interaction and advising of first-year students. MSU does not presently link first-year teaching with monetary compensation, although general teaching is a fundamental component in contracts, evaluation, tenure and promotion. Underscoring the lack of resources, faculty compensation lags behind national and regional norms. What merit resources are available are divided among scholarship, service and teaching in a variety of ways, such that monetary allocations for good teaching are very small. Beyond this, it appears that the system for rewarding good teaching relies on evaluations and other varied formulae across departments and divisions. First-year teaching is not directly defined or distinguished from teaching in general.

Overall, MSU faculty found first-year resources to be moderately adequate, and differences between faculty who had taught first-year courses and those who had not in the past two years were minimal. Those with recent first-year teaching experience were slightly more likely to rate resources very high, but even that pool was only 13.6 percent versus 8.3 percent (cross-tab of questions 57 and 24, filtered by faculty). Probably most telling is that within the College of Arts and Sciences, where the majority of first-year teaching occurs, faculty are least likely to think resources are adequate. Also notable is that no respondent from the two colleges that teach the fewest first-year courses responded that resources were not at all or slightly adequate. Among A&S faculty, 71.4 percent of those hired in the past five years rated adequacy of resources as high or very high, while only 33.3 percent of senior faculty responded this way. Since both junior and senior faculty share roughly equally in the teaching of first-year courses, disparities in first-year teaching loads do not appear to be a factor at MSU. Faculty employed longer than five years were just as likely to have taught a first-year class (62.7 percent) as those hired in the past five years (62.5 percent) (cross-tab of questions 71 and 57). Physical facilities and resources supporting first-year teaching (4.3 percent) seemingly do not account for this difference, since all faculty use the same teaching facilities. Other more likely explanations for the disparity in senior/junior response on adequacy of fiscal and personnel resources are that experienced faculty lag ever further behind national norms in

salaries and the absence of sabbatical or load-release policies. This finding strongly demonstrates the need for multiple mechanisms to reward ongoing teaching of first-year students, including sabbaticals, course reductions, merit pay, resources to redesign courses, and direct input on the facilities used to teach these courses.

Evidence suggests that when MSU has offered faculty a variety of voluntary opportunities to improve pedagogy (Partners In Learning program, known as PIL) and to discuss and refine curriculum (Learning Outcomes Programs) at the unit level, faculty have availed themselves of these opportunities. Upon successful conclusion of these activities, faculty participants received a stipend. Units and programs, as well as individual faculty, should be consulted on the types of tangible rewards that would assist them in providing additional first-year support.

Advising is acknowledged as an important point of contact between faculty and first-year (really all-year) students, but advising loads remain very uneven across campus. SSI reports indicate that students on the whole are relatively satisfied with advising, yet anecdotal evidence and the Self-Study indicate that faculty are less certain that advising is consistent across units. Furthermore, data for the first-year advising experience are lacking. Campus reward systems currently fold advising into the larger collection of duties identified as service, including committee work. The Self-Study and other documentation note that faculty time for advising is quite limited, especially for faculty with heavy advising loads. The FOE faculty survey indicates a wide range of responses as to whether advising works consistently across campus and whether rewards exist for large advising loads or dedication to advising. External accreditation agencies, including NCATE, have raised ongoing concerns about the large number of advisees assigned to some faculty members. Few, if any, units directly reward faculty for heavy advising loads or for high-quality advising.

Comments in the Faculty and Student Surveys reflected three primary areas of need: technical assistance (guidance pertaining to university procedures), academic advising and general career advising. General orientation seminars are best suited for general advising, career exploration, technical assistance, administrative processes and campus activities orientation. Seminars related to academic and intellectual engagement would best be specialized and provided by individual units or programs, or by multidisciplinary groups of faculty. Administrative support for such academic seminars could include load credit for participating units or faculty members. Such seminars could also be accepted for Gen Ed credit.

Both students and faculty expressed concern over the hours that administrative and other services on campus are open, whether staff who perform those functions are available when needed, and whether services can be provided without making several stops for the same function. The need for a paperwork audit to assess effectiveness and duplication of effort also emerged. Considerable change has occurred in paperwork and electronic processes over the past five years, and great effort has been expended to make new processes function effectively. There are, however, still many loose ends, and faculty and students do not always have the necessary knowledge of these processes.

Freshman Seminars are discussed in a number of places in institutional documents. In some contexts, this term is related to orientation activities, such as registration and campus services. In other contexts, the term is related to providing purposeful scaffolding for first-year student engagement in the academic and intellectual expectations at the university level. Considerable effort has been expended to improve the general registration and orientation processes in the Connect sessions relative to initial registration. The university provides a Writing Center and accommodations for students with exceptionalities, but proactive engagement related to academic and intellectual expectations for all first-year students was not evident.

Transitions Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families and other sources of support, as appropriate.

Committee Leader:

John Girard – PhD – Associate Professor of Business

Committee Members:

Lynda Bertsch – BA/BS - Director of Career Services
Debra Chandler - MS – Student Services Adviser
Kathy Hintz - MAT – Instructor of Education
Teresa Loftesnes – BGS - Director of Marketing
Dianne Maupin - MS – Assistant Professor of Communication
Nancy Mickelson - MRC - Counselor
Rebecca Porter - BS - Recruitment Coordinator
Sarah Rowe Clutts - MSU Student
Margaret Sherve, PhD – Assistant Professor of English

Current Situation

The objectives of the Transition Dimension Committee included evaluating Minot State University's effectiveness in:

1. Communicating to potential students the experience of first-year students (through the Web site, enrollment material, marketing and campus visits).
2. Communicating to potential students about the university (mission, academic expectations, out-of-class engagement, entry requirements, costs and financial aid).
3. Communicating to external groups (high schools personnel, families and other support networks) about their role in facilitating student success in the first year of college.
4. Connecting first-year students with faculty (especially out of class), other first-year students, upper-level students and support services personnel.
5. Providing high quality academic advising.

Communication to First-year Students

The admission team works hard to connect with high school students and counselors in the area. All high schools within a 140-mile radius are visited at least once each year. Every high school and all North Dakota juniors and seniors receive printed materials from Minot State University. In addition, all students who include MSU on their ACT form receive a personal invitation to visit the campus. That said, the committee noted:

- The level and timeliness of communication with potential students is weak and requires substantial revision.
- The tone and language of official admission correspondence to potential students is confusing and bureaucratic. **Note:** As a result of this finding, all letters to students have been revised and are now clearer and more student friendly.

- The Minot State University Web site should be reviewed with a potential student's and parents' wants and needs in mind. **Note:** The potential student section of the Web site is being revamped and should be launched in Spring 2008.
- The e-brochure appears useful; however, additional high-quality content and pictures are required for a number of programs.
- The printed recruiting material is high quality; however, it is missing some key messages (e.g., engagement, mission, vision, out-of-class opportunities, connecting students, etc).
- At present, much of the material is not transparent with regard to total costs. Most materials include tuition, fees, and room and board. Most materials do not include costs of books or living expenses. Only 58 percent of students rated the university's accuracy in communicating tuition and living expenses as high or very high.
- The availability of scholarships and awards is promoted; however, the process for applying for awards and scholarships is not entirely clear. Only 50 percent of students rated the university's accuracy in communicating financial aid opportunities as high or very high.
- A high-quality, comprehensive recruiting and marketing booklet (sometimes referred to as a viewbook) is lacking. **Note:** As a result of this finding, a viewbook is being created.

Communication to External Entities

Communicating with external stakeholders is a priority for MSU faculty and staff. For example, many people visit local schools to promote programs. The president frequently visits high schools; the VPAA talks to service clubs in the region; college deans visit regional schools; and the admissions team has a presence at many regional events. Each year Minot State University and Minot High School co host a social to enhance communication between the two entities.

The recent opening of a University Outreach Center at Magic City Campus is a positive initiative; however, more should be done to engage external entities. In particular, regional high school counselors should be aware of significant changes at the university.

At present, North Dakota school counselors do not believe that four-year programs create value for students. A targeted campaign that highlights the benefits of a university education should be implemented. The revitalized high school counselors' newsletter is a good start. An enhanced program for counselor's visits to campus is under development. At present, little evidence exists that MSU is engaging local organizations in helping potential students.

Connecting First-year Students

Faculty, staff and students agree that students are not well connected to academic support services. Almost 50 percent of students reported their level of connection with faculty outside the classroom as nonexistent or slight; only 23 percent reported a high or very high level of connection.

Students do not feel connected to other students or faculty. Only 22 percent of students rated their connection with sophomores, juniors, seniors and faculty as high or very high; 46 percent rated their level as nonexistent or slight. Similarly, students do not believe that their families are connected to the university. At present, the major family activity is the parent component of CONNECT, which has received excellent reviews. In addition, families are invited to visit the campus.

Despite the effort of CONNECT to inform students and families about available support services, only 38 percent rated their level of connection as high or very high; 27 percent rated their level as nonexistent or slight.

Through the Mentoring Program, students can attend workshops on stress management, time management and study skills; however, the attendance at these events is very low. The most popular event was attended by only eight percent of students.

Academic Advising

A significant statistical difference exists between faculty and student thoughts on advising. More than 90 percent of faculty believes that the level of advising on course selection is high or very high; however, only 55 percent of students feel the same. Similarly, 74 percent of faculty rate the level of advising on future enrollment as high or very high, but only 34 percent of students assign the same level of satisfaction. Overall, advisers believe a moderately (3.21/5.0) effective academic advising system is in place for first-year students.

A review of the mid-term deficiency report for Fall 2007 indicates that an alarming rate of students receive D's or F's at midterm (48 percent of first-year students). At present, the only intervention is a letter from the VPAA. Advisers are not made aware of students' situations and, therefore, cannot intervene.

A review of current advising practices discovered a high level of inconsistency. Many department/divisions do not have guidelines, policies, or training. In most cases, individual advisers determine the frequency, quality and timeliness of advising. There is little evidence that advising is available during the summer and winter breaks. At present, very few first-year students are advised by their "real" adviser during CONNECT. Many students do not meet their advisers until well into their first semester.

Group, rather than individual, advising is the order of the day during CONNECT. Students with varying needs are grouped together, resulting in general rather than specific advising. The focus of advising during CONNECT is course selection; there is little time for discussion of careers or special needs. In some units (e.g., humanities, social science, corporate fitness and secondary education), advisers are not well-versed on the nuances of each program.

All Students Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

Committee Leader:

Laurie Geller, EdD – Assistant Professor Mathematics & Computer Science

Committee Members:

Lisa Borden-King - PhD – Assistant Professor of Education

Sheila Collins - Director - Gordon B. Olson Library

Robert Crackel, PhD – Professor of Chemistry

Christopher Keller - PhD – Associate Professor of Biology

Leon Perzinski – BA - Director, Student Union

Lynne Rumney, MM - Director Honors Program and Lecturer of Humanities

Current Situation

The purpose of the All Students Dimension Committee was twofold. First, the committee rated and described the current situation relative to the degree to which MSU:

- Identifies the academic and social/personal needs of individual first-year students.
- Addresses the identified academic and social/personal needs of individual first-year students.
- Assures that all first-year students experience individualized attention from faculty/staff, academic support outside the classroom, opportunities for campus involvement and an inclusive campus environment.
- Assures a campus environment in which first-year students are physically and psychologically safe.

Second, the committee wrote a set of action items based upon the current situation.

To reach its conclusions, the committee examined evidence from multiple sources, including math placement policies, College Student Inventory (CPI), Student Satisfactory Inventory (SSI), English Department's placement policies, Student Mentoring Program, International Student Program, Native American Cultural Center, Honors Program, FOE faculty/staff survey results, Athletic Director, Student Development Center, Higher Learning Commission self-study report, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results, MSU Diversity Climate Survey, MSU Web site and general knowledge. Committee members' perceptions and insights also influenced the committee's conclusions and recommended action items. What follows is a condensed summary of the current situation. The complete All Students Dimension report, including all action items, is located in Appendix A.

Identified Academic Needs

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it identifies the academic needs of individual first-year students. It cited concerns about inconsistent advising, unenforced math placement policies for lower-level courses and ignorance of the specific academic needs of nontraditional students.

Some positive practices included enforced placement in Math 103 and higher math courses, identification of honors students and mandatory reporting of mid-term deficiencies and non-attendance early in the semester. In addition, the Office of Disability Services assesses academic needs/disabilities thoroughly, and athletes' academic progress is monitored.

Identified Social/Personal Needs

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it identifies the social/personal needs of individual first-year students. It indicated that MSU does not identify the social/personal needs of nontraditional students, first-generation students, distance students and students who need child-care services. There was concern that faculty lack the qualifications and resources to effectively address students' social/personal needs. Privacy issues, inaccurate self-reporting, unavailability of data and lack of resources were challenges in identifying student needs.

Some of MSU's positive practices and resources included mentoring, Native American Cultural Center, use of the CSI and campus counseling services. Athletes are monitored and have a built-in mentor (a coach) who has time to spend with each athlete.

Addressed Academic Needs

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it addresses the identified academic needs of individual first-year students. It cited concerns about academic advising and uncompetitive student wages that result in understaffing of the Writing Center and the Math Clinic. Also, there is inconsistency in teaching the essential academic skills that students need in the first year. Finally, there is no efficient system in place to gather and disseminate information regarding students' academic needs in the first year.

MSU does address students' identified academic needs through a number of services, including: Writing Center, Honors Program, on-campus testing center, peer-tutoring program, Math Clinic, Bookstore, SMART Thinking online tutoring, Gordon B. Olson Library, strong technology support, Disability Services, first-year orientation, student mentoring, advisers, transfer specialist in the Registrar's Office, student clubs and organizations, new diversity curriculum requirement, small student-faculty ratio (14:1), and mandatory study table, tutors, grade checks and academic award program for athletes.

Addressed Social/Personal Needs

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it addresses and identifies social/personal needs of individual first-year students. MSU currently does not effectively identify students' personal/social needs, making it hard to address them. In addition, some social support systems are not well developed, making them less effective. Faculty/staff responsibilities, load and overload negatively impact their abilities to address student needs and degrade opportunities for student-faculty interaction. Key support services (e.g., Writing Center, Math Clinic, peer tutoring, mentoring program) are understaffed and/or underfunded.

MSU does address students' identified social/personal needs through a number of services, including: optional student mentoring, Office of International Programs, Native American Cultural Center, Career Services, Student Development Center, Residence Life, Student Association, mandatory orientation, student clubs, organization, and activities, and the university Diversity Committee, which oversees and plans diversity-related events on campus.

Individualized Attention from Faculty/Staff

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it assures that all first-year students experience individualized attention from faculty/staff. The committee was concerned about the lack of time for student-faculty interaction, the ineffectiveness of office hours, and low ratings on the NSSE. For example: a) 51 percent of first-year students and 37 percent of our seniors have never or only sometimes

received prompt written or oral feedback in the classroom on their academic performance, which puts MSU significantly below its peers b) 63 percent of first-year students and 44 percent of seniors have never or only sometimes discussed grades on an assignment with a faculty member. Many services and opportunities are offered, but students do not always take advantage of them. Thus, MSU is unable to assure individualized attention from faculty and staff.

Some of the ways in which MSU assures that all first-year students experience individualized attention from faculty/staff are: a) increased emphasis on undergraduate research and experiential learning; b) administrative offices that are open over lunch hour; c) small class sizes; d) student clubs with faculty/staff advisers; and e) the student mentoring program and workshops. More examples are given in the full report in Appendix A.

Academic Support Outside the Classroom

MSU does not assure that all first-year students receive academic support outside the classroom; thus, the committee gave MSU a very low rating in this area. Students are informed about and have access to various academic support services, but they often do not take advantage of them. According to NSSE results, over half of first-year students and over one-third of seniors have never spoken with faculty about coursework outside of class.

Opportunities for Campus Involvement

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it assures that first-year students experience opportunities for campus involvement. MSU requires all first-year students attend orientation. MSU also offers various opportunities for campus involvement (club fairs, Welcome Week, Heritage Week, Homecoming, movies, dances, etc.), but students often do not take advantage of these opportunities.

Inclusive Campus Environment

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it assures that first-year students experience an inclusive campus environment. According to Q040 of the FOE student survey, 43 percent of first-year students do not strongly feel they belong. According to the NSSE, 57 percent of seniors indicate that they have sometimes or never had a conversation with someone who is different in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. In contrast, 87 percent of first-year students feel strongly that they are treated fairly in regard to gender, race and ethnicity (FOE student survey Q055). MSU provides activities intended to promote an inclusive campus environment, such as Welcome Week and other on-campus events.

Physical Safety

The committee gave MSU a low rating for the degree to which it assures a campus environment in which first-year students are physically safe. According to the FOE student survey, 29 percent of first-year students feel moderately safe or not safe. Concerns related to students' physical safety include: a) landscaping and lighting that is not conducive to safety; b) the lack of blue-light (emergency) phones and external cameras on campus buildings; c) buildings that are not locked until late at night and are not regularly patrolled on foot; d) limited escort services; and e) inadequate responses to reports of assault and harassment.

To assure a safe physical campus environment, MSU locks its buildings on evenings and weekends and has an alert system in place. Improved lighting was installed on campus, and the Student Development Office disseminates regular bulletins related to health and safety. Residence hall and Student Association

programming is provided. MSU contracts with an external security agency that actively patrols campus from 9:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. and is available to escort students between buildings until midnight.

Psychological Safety

The committee gave MSU a very low/none rating for the degree to which it assures a campus environment in which first-year students are psychologically safe. The committee was concerned about the safety of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) students, sexual harassment issues, discrimination based on ethnicity, and faculty/staff assaults on students.

To assure a safe psychological campus environment, MSU has a fully developed sexual harassment policy and is in the process of implementing a new diversity requirement. A full range of counseling services is available to students free of charge. According to the FOE student survey (Q055), 87 percent of students feel they are often or always treated fairly in the classroom, regardless of gender/race/ethnicity.

Diversity Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

Committee Leader:

Kevin R. Neuharth, MA – Associate Professor of Communication Arts

Committee Members:

Thomas Froelich - MS – Assistant Professor of Communication Disorders

Wylie Hammond – MA - Director, Multicultural Support Services

Steve Hayton - MA – Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Joseph Jastrzembki - PhD – Associate Professor of History

Kenneth Story - MSU Student

Ruth Kihm - MSW – Instructor of Social Work

Ann Rivera – BA - Student Activities Coordinator

Rick Watson, MS – BA/BSE – Lecturer in English

Current Situation

Various surveys demonstrate that faculty/staff and students have differing views and expectations of diversity and inclusiveness. In order for MSU to incorporate diversity and inclusiveness into a student's first-year experience, all members of the university community must understand these terms. The Diversity Dimensions Committee anticipates that not only will administration, faculty and staff take a lead role in disseminating diversity/inclusiveness awareness and practice, but also upper-level students and the Student Government Association will play a mentoring role for first-year students. Together, the university community will ensure that first-year students feel comfortable and safe in a diverse environment, preparing them to interact in a diverse global community. Therefore, the Diversity Dimension Committee fully supports the inclusion of diversity-noted course requirements as part of the graduation requirement as well as the implementation of the University Diversity Committee's initiatives. It also advocates a Freshman Seminar course, which would include monthly meetings dealing with diversity issues on campus. It strongly urges that faculty require all students to participate in diversity activities. The goal is to increase awareness and appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism across the campus, region and world.

Roles and Purposes Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e., the major).

Committee Leader:

Lori Willoughby – PhD – Professor of Business

Committee Members:

Lynda Bertsch – BA/BS – Director of Career Services

Neil Nordquist – EdD – Dean, College of Education and Health Sciences

Ron Royer – PhD – Professor of Science

Marv Semrau – BS - Vice President for Advancement

Ryan Winburn – MS - Associate Professor of Chemistry

Current Situation

The Roles and Purposes dimension has three key performance indicators to analyze the university's current situation, opportunities and challenges, and sources of evidence with respect to the dimension. The team reviewed the Foundations of Excellence First-Year Student Survey, Faculty/Staff Survey, and the most current NSSE and FSSE reports.

The first indicator asks how well the campus communicates to first-year students its vision for the following purposes of higher education:

1. Knowledge acquisition for personal growth
2. Learning to prepare for future employment
3. Learning for engaged citizenship — defined as participation in civic, community and political life
4. Learning for the public good — working for the betterment of society for justice, freedom and equality.

Based on the student and faculty survey, the general consensus is that Minot State University does an average job of communicating the need for learning to prepare for future employment and personal knowledge growth. The student survey indicated that 53.6 percent rated MSU as “high” or “very high” for communicating learning to prepare for future employment, and 49.5 percent rated MSU as “high” or “very high” on communicating learning for personal growth. The faculty survey mirrored the student survey, with 56.8 percent rating “high” or “very high” on communicating preparation for future employment. These opinions are validated by actual job placements in fields related to the major. Over the past five years, 70-75 percent of graduates found jobs related to their majors, and only 4-6 percent are still seeking employment.

In contrast, only 29.4 percent of the faculty rated the university “high” or “very high” on effectively communicating knowledge for personal growth. This finding is also borne out by student perceptions. For example, the HLC *2008 Institutional Self-Study Report* noted that in a “2006 public, Cambridge-style student debate over the value of general education, some students suggested that general education courses were boring, lacking in pertinence to their career fields, and sometimes poorly taught. An audience vote concluded that general education does have significant value, but that some of the courses should be more rigorous.”

Over the past year and a half, the Faculty Senate and its General Education Committee, as well as a special ad hoc Committee for Review of General Education, have been continuously discussing revisions to the program in response to these concerns.

The student and faculty responded that the campus does an average job of communicating its vision for learning for engaged citizenship and for the public good. Student and faculty surveys indicated a response of 42.2 percent and 26.6 percent (“high” and “very high,” respectively) for communicating a vision for engaged citizenship. Likewise, the surveys indicated 49.5 percent and 26.6 percent ratings (“high” and “very high,” respectively) for communicating learning for the public good. These findings are not surprising in light of the fact that many of the MSU’s oldest and most important programs are service-related (e.g., nursing, special education, teacher education, speech-language pathology, etc.).

The second performance indicator asks what the institution does to provide opportunities for first-year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education.

The students responded that 60.4 percent believe that the institution does a “moderate to very high” job of providing first-year students with opportunities to examine their motivations for higher education. The faculty responded with 74.3 percent believing that the institution does a “moderate to high” job of providing such opportunities. Furthermore, students responded that 73.3 percent believe that the institution does a “moderate to very high” job of helping them to examine personal reasons for completing a college degree. Although there is no corresponding question for faculty, the discussion among the committee members indicated a “very high” belief that faculty are having an influence on student motivation for pursuing higher education. However, this pursuit too often is completed at another institution, as exhibited by a 60 percent second-year return rate and a 29.2 percent six-year MSU graduation rate.

The third performance indicator asks to what degree the campus effectively communicates its rationale for the following:

1. Course requirements — core curricula and general education
2. Required competencies — library skills, computing and writing
3. Requirements for entry into majors

Based on a thorough review in the mid-1990s, a good understanding about the role of general education was achieved by the university. As a consequence, there are several places in the undergraduate catalog, online and in various general education syllabi where the mission and purpose of general education are presented. However, a disconnection has evolved since that time between program purposes and student understanding of those purposes and the fundamental importance of general education. Many students believe that general education courses lack rigor, often repeat their high school experiences, or waste time.

Writing competencies are outlined within the general education sequence, in that all graduates are required to take two courses in composition. However, the rationale for students taking these courses is generally glossed over. Library skills are covered sporadically throughout the curriculum, with little mention of why they are important. There are no courses in computer literacy required of all students.

Requirements for entry into a major may be discussed with students when they meet with advisers prior to registration during their first year. However, if students do not meet with their advisers, the only way they have access to major requirements and related rationale is through the catalog.

Improvement Dimension Summary

Best Practice

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement. This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis — a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institutions' overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way to achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on the first college year.

Committee Leader:

Dr. JoAnn Linrud – PhD - Dean, College of Business

Committee Members:

Erik Anderson – DMA – Assistant Professor of Music

Debra Chandler - MS – Student Services Advisor

Rita Curl-Langager – PhD – Professor of Psychology

Teresa Seright – MS – Instructor of Nursing

Current Situation

The Performance Indicators (PIs) for the Improvement Dimension target four areas that required close examination:

- 1) The degree to which first-year initiatives included systematic assessment with a majority of students. The MSU FoE coordinators selected three first-year initiatives:
 - a. the Mentoring Program
 - b. the Noel Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI)
 - c. the Orientation Program.
- 2) The degree to which MSU faculty and staff members used assessment results to improve existing practices across the initiatives identified in PI 1.
- 3) The degree to which assessment activities improved faculty, staff and student responses to time allocation, use of campus services and class attendance by students; and faculty, staff, student, and administration responses to student/faculty concerns.
- 4) The degree to which MSU faculty and staff used specific strategies to improve the first-year experience for incoming freshmen.

The committee evaluated the sources in the evidence library for information that might be helpful in informing the MSU community about first-year students to promote ongoing improvement in the freshman experience. These data supported the analysis of the four, targeted PIs and the conclusions that make up the remainder of this report.

In response to the question to what degree each initiative includes systematic assessment, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very low/none" and 5 being "very high," the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings:

- Mentoring Program low (2)
- Noel Levitz College Student Inventory high (4)
- Orientation medium (3)

Mentoring Program. Currently, MSU does not have a systematic assessment process for the Mentoring Program. Typical consumer queries — including the value of the program to students, student

satisfaction with the program, and its effectiveness in achieving improved retention — remain unasked. At this time, it is difficult to determine the value of the mentoring sessions to individual students.

Pat Hubel, former MSU Academic Programs and Research Coordinator, completed dissertation research with two groups of MSU students. She compared students in the Mentoring Program with students receiving typical support. Results showed that expectations and satisfaction were higher for students in the Mentoring Program, but that many outcome measures showed no significant difference between groups. Hubel recommended continued refinement of the Mentoring Program and implementation of a formal assessment process.

Debra Chandler, Mentoring Coordinator, reported many levels of student participation in the program: some students visit their mentors often and record their activities; some students seldom visit but check off the activities to gain early registration; while others visit but do not complete the check-off process, etc.

Currently, we are determining the value of the Mentoring Program through anecdotal information, and there are no plans to conduct formal assessments.

Noel Levitz College Student Inventory. The Noel Levitz CSI survey is a standardized assessment tool administered to freshmen. It provides data for a number of demographic items and some student perceptions. (See Items 6 and 22 in the Evidence Library.) It is a North Dakota University System required assessment tool. The MSU administration currently is determining how best to use the data. Previously, MSU shared the data with academic advisers and mentors in the Mentoring Program. Advisers and mentors then shared the inventory information with students during private meetings. In the fall of 2007, MSU did not distribute available data to faculty advisers.

Orientation. John Girard, former Director of Enrollment Services, reported that Enrollment Services staff collected survey data for orientation sessions prior to 2007. Beginning in the summer of 2007, Enrollment Services staff sent a condensed overview of the sessions to the MSU staff prior to each orientation session. After each segment of an orientation session, students, parents, faculty and speakers completed a written assessment of the segment. After each orientation session, a team of involved individuals conducted an after-action review of those assessments. Further, Enrollment Services staff members invite a group of interested stakeholders, including all faculty and staff at MSU, to discuss the results.

That survey data led to the idea of CONNECT, which was implemented in summer 2007. Following the summer 2007 orientation sessions, students are now required to complete a survey before they can check out. For the spring 2007 orientation, only online orientations were held. An online evaluation approach was formalized into a five-question survey required for check-out.

In response to the question to what degree assessment results have been used to improve existing practices across the following initiatives (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very low/none," and 5 being "very high"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings:

- Mentoring Program: very low/none (1)
- Noel Levitz College Student Inventory: very low/none (1)
- Orientation: medium (3)

Since no measurements are collected on the mentoring program, no changes have been made based on formal assessment practices. In addition, the Improvement Committee could discern no formal changes to first-year practices based on Noel Levitz CSI data. Based on feedback from sources related to Orientation, Enrollment Services has changed some practices, such as those relating to the comfort of the participants (providing lunch for faculty advisers, etc.). With respect to changing major components of the orientation process (dates, amount of time on campus, etc.), Enrollment Services is cautious in noting long-term trends. For example, when parents at several sessions raised the issue of campus safety; Enrollment Services added that topic to its presentation. The larger issue is the overall effectiveness of the orientation program in helping students maneuver through campus life in the first year, ultimately resulting in their decision to return a second year. Enrollment Services has added more faculty advising,

on the assumption that requiring students to have faculty advising before registering would lead to better class-selection choices. Enrollment Services has sought qualitative data to support its program changes. Enrollment Services believes it is difficult, however, to draw a straight line between first-year orientation and retention due to a number of extraneous variables affecting students' decisions to return.

In response to the question to what degree recent assessment activities have improved campus understanding of the following elements of student success?" (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very low/none," and 5 being "very high"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings:

- Student allocation of their time: medium (3)
- Student/faculty connections: medium (3)
- Student use of campus services: low (2)
- Student class attendance patterns: very low/none (1)

Most information is getting down to the university and college committee levels and possibly to the department-chair level. There is a growing understanding of problems with respect to first-year student behaviors and performance. However, it is not clear to what extent this information is understood or makes an impact at the faculty level. (An example is CLA. After broad distribution of information and discussion in convocations, CLA has now been endorsed by the Faculty Senate. With Faculty Senate endorsement, the initiative is being more widely discussed in department meetings. Dr. George Kuh visited campus in January for convocation; Dr. Jillian Kinzie will visit in April as a follow-up and expansion of the discussion. Faculty members are becoming more aware of NSSE and FSSE data, which address the items identified in PI 9.3 (student allocation of time, student/faculty connections, student use of campus services, and student class attendance patterns).

In response to the question to what degree the following strategies have been used by your campus to improve the first year (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very low/none," and 5 being "very high"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings:

- Attendance at higher education meetings (e.g., conferences, institutes, workshops): very low/none (1)
- Participation in multicampus initiatives focused on the first year: very low/none (1)
- Broad campus exposure to external experts: very low/none (1)
- Broad exposure to campus-based knowledge and expertise about the first year: very low/none (1)

Reporting across disciplines and colleges on university initiatives has been lacking. Based on data sources and committee members' knowledge of existing practices, there has been little or no attention paid to issues directly related to the first year, by discipline or across campus. Faculty attendance at conferences and meetings, faculty reading about first-year issues and presentations by faculty received very low ratings for their level of engagement (see Faculty Survey questions Q050-Q053). Ratings for any single item were no higher than 2.79 on the five-point scale.

Further, faculty report that they are not meaningfully influenced by any of the information sources queried in Questions 84-91. Even when considering MSU's assessment capabilities relevant to the first year, no rating was higher than 3.04 for assessing what is relevant, disseminating results and using results for improvement. In short, faculty members are not engaged, do not use information, and rate MSU's assessment capability as only "moderate" with respect to the first year. Thus, faculty members have little coordinated focus on the first year. Anecdotal evidence indicates that individual faculty members are concerned about first-year students and have a demonstrated level of engagement. But individual efforts do not amount to a campus-wide effort.

Action Theme Narratives

Academic Advising

The need for a revamped advising system was a prevalent theme in Minot State University's Foundation of Excellence in the First Year review. Five of the nine dimension committees explicitly highlighted advising as an issue requiring attention. The result was that 31 of 119 action items were advising-related, the highest single category. Equally significant, during campus open forums, a modified Delphi technique recognized advising as the most prominent issue.

The Roles and Purpose dimension committee prepared a very clear overview of the need:

"Reconsider and reframe advising as mentorship. Make advising mandatory for all students and adviser training mandatory for all advisers. Develop a user-friendly, intuitive system for advising that every student will want to take advantage of, one that will help to successfully guide them through their four years at MSU and examine their future goals."

Leichliter and McCleaf (2008) suggest "that the first year of post-secondary education is the most precarious period in students' progress toward graduation." Given Minot State University's very low graduation rates (29 percent — the lowest of any four-year university in North Dakota) and our low first-year student retention rate, the time is right to aid students' progression with a comprehensive advising system.

The literature to support a move toward a holistic advising system, especially during transformation, is rich. For example, Hunter et al remind us that "academic advisers are in a unique position to deal with both the changing student population and the evolving institution." Perhaps no time in its history has Minot State University witnessed a more profound change in both student expectations and institutional goals. Clearly, to achieve the objectives of Vision 2013, MSU must ensure that students are well served by the advising system.

The real question for Minot State University is not what to do, i.e., develop and implement an effective academic advising system, but rather how to do it. There are a variety of models from which to choose; however, *MSU must develop a user-friendly, intuitive system for advising that every student will want to take advantage of, one that will help to successfully guide them through their four years at MSU and examine their future goals* as recommended by Roles and Purpose dimension committee. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) provides outstanding resources to its members, many of which would help Minot State University in its quest for a robust, yet affordable, academic advising system.

To ensure success, a phased approach is recommended. In the short-term, i.e., by Fall 2008, the university should:

- Endorse a *Concept of Advising* — a recommendation, based on the work of NACADA, is attached
- Endorse a *Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising* — a recommendation, based on the work of NACADA, is attached
- Dedicate a *First-year Student Day* — First-year students should meet the day before classes begin with their department faculty and chairs for an orientation to the major.

- Assign Advisers Early — First-year students should know their advisers' names and contact details within the first two weeks of their first semester.

Collectively, these recommendations will establish a foundation from which MSU may develop and implement a system by Fall 2009. The Vice President for Student Affairs should lead an effort to ensure that a comprehensive advising system is in place by Fall 2009.

References

Christine G. S. Leichter and Kathy J. McCleaf (2008), Preparing to Advise First-Year Advisors, *Academic Advising Today*, Volume 31, Number 2, June 2008.

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National Academic Advising Association. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved 29 May 2008 from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Concept-Advising.htm>

NACADA. (2004). NACADA statement of core values of academic advising. Retrieved 29 May 2008 from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Core-Values.htm>

Minot State University Concept of Advising⁷

Preamble

Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education. Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated citizens of a democratic society and a global community. Academic advising engages students beyond their own world views, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values and motivations as they enter, move through and exit the institution. Regardless of the diversity of institutions, students, advisers and organizational structures, academic advising has three components: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising).

The Curriculum of Academic Advising

Academic advising draws primarily from theories in the social sciences, humanities and education. The curriculum of academic advising ranges from the ideals of higher education to the pragmatics of enrollment. This curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the institution's mission, culture and expectations; the meaning, value and interrelationship of the institution's curriculum and co-curriculum; modes of thinking, learning and decision-making; the selection of academic programs and courses; the development of life and career goals; campus/community resources, policies, and procedures; and the transferability of skills and knowledge.

The Pedagogy of Academic Advising

Academic advising, as a teaching and learning process, requires a pedagogy that incorporates the preparation, facilitation, documentation and assessment of advising interactions. Although the specific methods, strategies and techniques may vary, the relationship between advisers and students is fundamental and is characterized by mutual respect, trust and ethical behavior.

Student Learning Outcomes of Academic Advising

The student learning outcomes of academic advising are guided by Minot State University's mission, goals, curriculum and co-curriculum. These outcomes, defined in an advising curriculum, articulate what students will demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of participating in academic advising. At Minot State University, students will:

- craft a coherent educational plan based on assessment of abilities, aspirations, interests and values
- use complex information from various sources to set goals, reach decisions and achieve those goals
- assume responsibility for meeting academic program requirements
- articulate the meaning of higher education and the intent of the Minot State University's curriculum
- cultivate the intellectual habits that lead to a lifetime of learning
- behave as citizens who engage in the wider world around them

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Summary

Academic advising, based in the teaching and learning mission of higher education, is a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and time frames.

Minot State University
Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising⁸

Declaration

1) Advisers are responsible to the individuals they advise.

Academic advisers work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual within the academic setting. Advisers' work is guided by their beliefs that students:

- have diverse backgrounds that can include different ethnic, racial, domestic and international communities; sexual orientations; ages; gender and gender identities; physical, emotional and psychological abilities; political, religious and educational beliefs
- hold their own beliefs and opinions
- are responsible for their own behaviors and the outcomes of those behaviors
- can be successful, based upon their individual goals and efforts
- have a desire to learn
- have learning needs that vary, based upon individual skills, goals, responsibilities and experiences
- use a variety of techniques and technologies to navigate their world.

In support of these beliefs, the cooperative efforts of all who advise include, but are not limited to, providing accurate and timely information, communicating in useful and efficient ways, maintaining regular office hours and offering varied contact modes.

Advising, as part of the educational process, involves helping students develop a realistic self-perception and successfully transition to the postsecondary institution. Advisers encourage, respect and assist students in establishing their goals and objectives.

Advisors seek to gain the trust of their students and strive to honor students' expectations of academic advising and its importance in their lives.

2) Advisers are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

Effective advising requires a holistic approach. At Minot State University, a network of people and resources is available to students. Advisers serve as mediators and facilitators who effectively use their specialized knowledge and experience for student benefit. Advisers recognize their limitations and make referrals to qualified persons when appropriate. To connect academic advising to students' lives, advisers actively seek resources and inform students of specialists who can further assess student needs and provide access to appropriate programs and services. Advisers help students integrate information so they can make well-informed academic decisions.

3) Advisers are responsible to their institutions.

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Advisers nurture collegial relationships. They uphold the specific policies, procedures and values of their departments and Minot State University. Advisers maintain clear lines of communication with those not directly involved in the advising process, but who have responsibility and authority for decisions regarding academic advising at Minot State University. Advisers recognize their individual roles in the success of the university.

4) Advisers are responsible to higher education.

Academic advisers honor academic freedom. They realize that academic advising is not limited to any one theoretical perspective and that practice is informed by a variety of theories from the fields of social sciences, the humanities and education. They are free to base their work with students on the most relevant theories and on optimal models for the delivery of academic advising programs. Advisers advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standard, support student goals and uphold the educational mission of the institution.

5) Advisers are responsible to their educational community.

Academic advisers interpret their Minot State University's mission as well as its goals and values. They convey institutional information and characteristics of student success to the local, state, regional, national and global communities that support the student body. Advisers are sensitive to the values and mores of the surrounding community. They are familiar with community programs and services that may provide students with additional educational opportunities and resources. Advisers may become models for students by participating in community activities.

6) Advisers are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.

Advisers participate in professional development opportunities, establish appropriate relationships and boundaries with advisees and create environments that promote physical, emotional and spiritual health. Advisers maintain a healthy balance in their lives and articulate personal and professional needs when appropriate. They consider continued professional growth and development to be the responsibility of both themselves and their institutions.

**Minot State University
Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising⁹**

Exposition

Core Value 1: Advisers are responsible to the individuals they advise.

- Academic advising is an integral part of the educational process and affects students in numerous ways. As advisers enhance student learning and development, advisees have the opportunity to become participants in and contributors to their own education. In one of the most important potential outcomes of this process, academic advising fosters individual potential.
- Regular student contact through in-person appointments, mail, telephone, e-mail, or other computer-mediated systems helps advisers gain meaningful insights into students' diverse academic, social and personal experiences and needs. Advisers use these insights to assist students as they transition to new academic and social communities, develop sound academic and career goals, and, ultimately, become successful learners.

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- Advisers recognize and respect that students' diverse backgrounds are comprised of their ethnic and racial heritage, age, gender, sexual orientation and religion, as well as their physical, learning and psychological abilities. Advisers help students develop and reinforce realistic self-perceptions and help them use this information in mapping out their futures.
 - Advisers introduce and assist students with their transitions to the academic world by helping them see value in the learning process, gain perspective on the college experience, become more responsible and accountable, set priorities and evaluate their progress, and uphold honesty with themselves and others about their successes and limitations.
 - Advisers encourage self-reliance and support students as they strive to make informed and responsible decisions, set realistic goals, and develop lifelong learning and self-management skills.
 - Advisers respect students' rights to their individual beliefs and opinions.
 - Advisers guide and teach students to understand and apply classroom concepts to everyday life.
 - Advisers help students establish realistic goals and objectives and encourage them to be responsible for their own progress and success.
 - Advisers seek to understand and modify barriers to student progress, identify ineffective and inefficient policies and procedures, and work to effect change. When the needs of students and the institution are in conflict, advisers seek a resolution that is in the best interest of both parties. In cases where the student finds the resolution unsatisfactory, they inform students regarding appropriate grievance procedures.
 - Advisers recognize the changing nature of the college and university environment and diversity within the student body. They acknowledge the changing communication technologies used by students and the resulting new learning environments. They are sensitive to the responsibilities and pressures placed on students to balance course loads, financial and family issues, and interpersonal demands.
 - Advisers are knowledgeable and sensitive regarding national, regional, local and institutional policies and procedures, particularly those governing matters that address harassment, use of technology, personal relationships with students, privacy of student information and equal opportunity.
 - Advisers are encouraged to investigate all available avenues to help students explore academic opportunities.
 - Advisers respect student confidentiality rights regarding personal information. Advisers practice with an understanding of the institution's interpretation of applicable laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
 - Advisers seek access to and use student information only when the information is relevant to the advising process. Advisers enter or change information on students' records only with appropriate institutional authorization to do so.
 - Advisers document advising contacts adequately to meet institutional disclosure guidelines and aid in subsequent advising interactions.

Core Value 2: Advisers are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

- Academic advisers must develop relationships with personnel critical to student success, including those in such diverse areas as admissions, orientation, instruction, financial aid, housing, health services, athletics, academic departments and the Registrar's Office. They also must establish relationships with those who can attend to specific physical and educational needs of students, such as personnel in disability services, tutoring, psychological counseling, international study and career development. Advisers must also direct students, as needed, to experts who specialize in credit transfers, co-curricular programs and graduation clearance.
- Because of the nature of academic advising, advisers often develop a broad understanding of an institution and a detailed understanding of student needs and the resources available to help students meet those needs. Based upon this understanding:
 - advisers can have an interpretative role with students regarding their interactions with faculty, staff, administrators and fellow students, and
 - advisers can help the institution's administrators gain a greater understanding of students' needs.
- Students involved in the advising process (such as peer advisers or graduate assistants) must be adequately trained and supervised for adherence to the same policies and practices required of the professional and faculty advisers and other specially trained staff advising in the unit/institution.

Core Value 3: Advisers are responsible to their institutions.

- Advisers abide by the specific policies, procedures and values of the department and institution in which they work. When circumstances interfere with students' learning and development, advisers advocate for change on the advisees' behalf with the institution's administration, faculty and staff.
- Advisers keep those not directly involved in the advising process informed and aware of the importance of academic advising in students' lives. They articulate the need for administrative support of advising and related activities.
- Advisers increase their collective professional strength by constructively and respectfully sharing their advising philosophies and techniques with colleagues.
- Advisers respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students make comments or express opinions about other faculty or staff; are nonjudgmental about academic programs; and do not impose their personal agendas on students.
- Advisers encourage the use of models for the optimal delivery of academic advising programs within their institutions.
- Advisers recognize their individual roles in the success of Minot State University and accept and participate in institutional commitments that can include, but are not limited to, administrative and committee service, teaching, research and writing.

Core Value 4: Advisers are responsible to higher education in general.

- Advisers accept that one goal of education is to introduce students to the world of ideas in an environment of academic freedom. Advisers demonstrate appreciation for academic freedom.
- Advisers base their work with students on the most relevant theoretical perspectives and practices drawn from the fields of social sciences, the humanities and education.

- One goal of advising is to establish, between students and advisers, a partnership that will guide students through their academic programs. Advisers help students understand that learning can be used in day-to-day application through exploration, trial and error, challenge and decision-making.
- Advisers advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standards and support student goals as they uphold the educational mission of the institution.
- Advisers advocate for the creation, enhancement and strengthening of programs and services that recognize and meet student academic needs.

Core Value 5: Advisers are responsible to their educational community.

- Minot State University recognizes the importance of integrating classroom learning with community experience, study abroad and programs that bridge the gap between the academic and off-campus environments. Where such programs exist, advisers help students understand the relationship between the institution and local, regional, national and international communities.
- Advisers advocate for students who desire to include study abroad or community-service learning into their co-curricular college experience, and they make appropriate referrals to enable students to achieve these goals.
- Advisers understand the intricacies of transfer between institutions and make appropriate referrals to enable students to achieve their goals.

Core Value 6: Advisers are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.

- Advisers use the Statement of Core Values to guide their professional actions.
- Advisers seek opportunities to grow professionally. They identify appropriate workshops, classes, literature, research publications and groups, both inside and outside Minot State University, that can keep their interest high, hone professional skills and advance expertise within specific areas of interest.
- Advisers seek cross-cultural opportunities to interact with and learn more about ethnic communities, racial groups, religions, sexual preferences, genders and age levels, as well as physical, learning, and psychological abilities and disabilities found among the general student population.
- Advisers recognize that research topics are embedded in academic advising practice and theory. Advisers engage in research and publication related to advising as well as in areas allied with their training and disciplinary backgrounds. Advisers' research agendas safeguard privacy and provide for the humane treatment of subjects.
- Advisers are alert to the demands surrounding their work with students and the necessity of taking care of themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually to best respond to high-level demands. They learn how to maintain a "listening ear" and provide sensitive, timely responses that teach students to accept their responsibilities. Advisers establish and maintain appropriate boundaries, nurture others when necessary, and seek support for themselves, both within and outside the institution.

Organization

The “Organization” theme encompasses a number of structural topics designed to provide organic and perhaps holistic support, the “backbone,” for the MSU Foundations of Excellence effort. First and foremost, it makes provision for a statement of philosophy regarding first-year students. Secondly, it provides a mechanism for conducting an inventory of first-year practices and procedures already under way and those lacking. Finally, it addresses a collection of actions that provide additional scaffolding to support Foundations of Excellence, including data management, faculty and staff professional development, and learning environment security.

Develop Philosophy

Action Item 1: Develop MSU First-year Philosophy

As the primary tenet of Foundations of Excellence efforts, “Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices.” MSU currently has no overarching philosophy statement with respect to first-year programs or activities. The FoE Steering Committee and faculty and staff who attended the discussion forums expressed the need for such a statement.

Nature of the Philosophy Statement

FoE literature (www.fyfoundations.org) notes that “the philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies and resource allocation.” Finally, the statement should be “a written, campus-wide statement of philosophy ... that 1) has been formally approved by the appropriate campus-wide governance body(ies) and 2) is specific and clear about the institution’s established purpose for the first year.”

FoE performance Indicators identify additional criteria for the statement: Intentional alignment and support of the campus mission statement, focus on what the institution controls, articulation of why the institution values the purposes made explicit in the statement. In addition, the statement should be disseminated to students, new and continuing faculty, new and continuing student affairs and other staff whose responsibilities include significant interaction with, and/or responsibility for, first-year students. In developing a philosophy statement, the institution is guided to review existing documents to determine the presence of key elements that might be used to construct the philosophy statement. Examples of such documents include college, division and departmental mission statements, the institution’s strategic plan, accreditation reports and statements related to general education.

Responsibility

To ensure that an appropriate philosophy statement is constructed, responsibility for its construction should lie with the FoE Steering Committee, with the addition of others who have an important stake in first-year programs and outcomes. Approval should be sought by MSU’s governing bodies, including, but not limited to, the Board of Regents, University Cabinet, Academic Affairs Council, and the Faculty, Staff and Student Senates.

Cost

The predominant cost of this effort will be in the faculty and staff time spent in deliberating about the components and construction of the statement. In addition, there may be some cost involved in communications to share the statement, including printing, Web site (Intranet) development and, perhaps, a forum or other sharing event. Costs are not anticipated to exceed \$500.

Political Sensitivity

Given the nature of this foundational activity and the support it received at the open forum, it is likely that political sensitivity would be medium to low. While there may be individuals with particular interest in directing the tone of the statement, it is hard to envision opposition to the activity of developing the statement.

Time Frame

Work on developing a philosophy statement should begin immediately. The draft statement should be presented to MSU's governing bodies early in fall semester 2008, with approval by the end of the fall semester. It should be disseminated to the academic colleges and non-academic departments early in the spring semester 2009, so that each unit has ample time to revise its own mission statement in alignment with the philosophy.

Impact

The impact of a guiding philosophy statement is very high, as it should set the tone for all other campus activity related to first-year students. It should guide all future policy development and coordination of campuswide activities. It should have significant future budget impact as well.

Alignment

The construction of a first-year philosophy is consistent with the nature and tone of *Vision 2013* in every way, involving all seven strategies contained in that document:

- One: Creating a distinctive mission focused on engagement and place
- Two: Fostering engaged learning and place for the benefit of students
- Three: Valuing faculty and staff within an engaged community
- Four: Building a diverse and multicultural university climate
- Five: Focusing on student success and future achievements
- Six: Creating a commitment to civic engagement, service and the common good
- Seven: Ensuring future institutional viability, vitality and growth.

Proposed Philosophy for the First-Year Experience

Minot State University is built upon a core commitment to students, learning, service and cooperation, and a respect for people and place that helps them appreciate life and contribute meaningfully to the lives of others. As outlined in its strategic plan, *Vision 2013*, the university is proud of its values and long-term commitment to:

- Teaching and learning with excellence, integrity and engagement.
- Serving students and others respectfully and responsibly.
- Following high ethical and moral principles.
- Supporting the values of community and place, where all community members are valued and respected for their work, contributions and freedom of expression.

To assist freshmen and transfer students in their critical time of transition to the university, individual faculty/staff, organizational units and community partners are committed to building a quality first-year experience. These first-year transitions include moving from:

- High school to college classrooms.
- "Home" to a new community.
- General education to a specific discipline.
- Limited freedom to greater independence and individual responsibility.

Minot State University is committed to creating, assessing and constantly improving the first-year experience. In addition to providing a healthy start toward acquiring the fundamental values the university espouses, the first-year program is designed to provide each student with the intellectual skills, confidence and moral character to successfully attain his or her educational goal and become an active contributor to society

Inventory Services

Action Item 2: Inventory and Evaluate First-year Services

FoE has defined the importance of completing a First-Year Services audit by collaborating with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to develop the Data Audit and Analysis Toolkit to Support Assessment of the First College Year (<http://www.nchems.org/pubs/detail.php?id=16>). Use of the Toolkit would facilitate the identification and implications of all first-year experiences as well as the impact of all first-year students, faculty and staff.

Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing an effective First-Year Services audit should begin with the Institutional Research Office. The creation of the inventory and evaluation of First-year Services should be a collaborative effort, including the FoE Steering Committee, Institutional Research Office and others who have an important stake in the first-year program and outcomes to identify services.

Cost

The primary cost in developing the audit system and completion of the audit would be the time of the Institutional Research staff. Additional costs would include the purchase of the Toolkit and publishing the results to the campus at large. Costs are not expected to exceed \$500.

Political Sensitivity

The political sensitivity is expected to be medium to low. The completion of the audit should be a starting point in sharing what is already being accomplished with all faculty and staff across campus.

Time Frame

Completion of the First-Year Services audit should begin immediately and continue concurrently with the development of the philosophy statement. The audit should then be conducted yearly.

Impact

The impact of this First-Year Services audit is very high. The audit will set the stage in knowing what is already being implemented and what needs to be developed.

Alignment

The completion of the First-Year Services audit is in alignment with all seven strategies in Vision 2013.

Build Additional Organizational Scaffolding

Action Item 3: Develop Organizational Scaffolding for First-year Success

In order to provide an infrastructure that supports ongoing success of first-year initiatives, it will be necessary to devote some attention to additional factors, referred to here as “scaffolding.” One such factor is data accessibility, involving the collection, storage, communication and use of data for development and improvement of first-year programs. Another such factor is the support of faculty and

staff through professional development related to their participation in first-year programs. Finally, MSU must ensure that the environment is physically and psychologically secure and safe for learning. These three factors are addressed separately in the action items below.

3.1 Collect, store, share and use appropriate data for improvement of first-year experience

As well as having an understanding of the current first-year experiences, it will be important to collect data through various national and local surveys. The analysis of the data should then be disseminated to all others on campus to “close the loop.” The analysis will also assist in effecting change for the future success of the first-year program.

Responsibility

Primary responsibility for gathering data for improvement of first-year experiences should be with the Institutional Research office.

Cost

The primary cost will be the purchase of the surveys (NSSE, FSSE, CSI, SSI, etc.), expecting not to exceed \$20,000.

Political Sensitivity

The political sensitivity is expected to be medium to low. Faculty and staff are already familiar with the processes used to implement the surveys and the value of the information gathered.

Time Frame

The majority of these surveys are already being completed and should continue in the regular rotation. New surveys designed specifically for new first-year experiences could be developed as part of the first-year experience and implemented at the completion of the experience.

Impact

The impact of conducting and analyzing the data as well as disseminating the information is very high and is expected to have an immediate impact on the retention and graduation rates.

Alignment

The use of appropriate surveys aligns with all strategies in Vision 2013 and provides the base for justifying change.

Support faculty and staff professional development

A critical component recommended for the *Vision 2013* Action Plan for Strategy Three, “Valuing Faculty and Staff within an Engaged Community,” was establishing a Center for Faculty and Staff Development. This center was envisioned as one which would support the recruitment and retention of excellent faculty and staff by providing access to training opportunities for skills development, assisting with peer- and self-evaluations, providing support materials, such as literature and software, bringing to campus resource experts, mentoring, and advocating on the part of faculty and staff for development of their skills toward meeting the goals of Vision 2013.

Since many universities have such centers; resources abound for information on creating and maintaining a center. The existing centers range in focus from very broad to very narrow. One example of a broad-based resource is the Compendium of Faculty Professional Development Centers, combining resources from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Hofstra University on Long Island, New York, and the University of Kansas and hundreds of other universities that provide open access to online resources and

materials related to faculty development and the enhancement of teaching and learning (<http://www.mccfl.edu/>)

Another is the Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center at Northern Illinois University, which actually maintains support for faculty and staff, graduate teaching assistants and academic administrators (<http://facdevblog.niu.edu/>). A good example of a center focusing explicitly on first-year students may be found in the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina (www.sc.edu/fye/index.html).

Responsibility

Responsibility for researching the needs of MSU with respect to establishing a Center for Faculty and Staff Development should begin with the expanded Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee, then continue with a separate task force or task forces designated for the purpose. Alternatively, a special task force, as a part of the implementation process for the *Vision 2013* Action Plan could be assigned the task of establishing the parameters and guidelines for operation of the center.

Cost

The Center for Faculty and Staff Development is anticipated to cost approximately \$100,000 annually, including the following estimated costs: Director (half-time reassigned from teaching, for example) at \$30,000; faculty and staff development monies, \$30,000; materials and resources, \$40,000.

Political Sensitivity

It is anticipated that the faculty and staff should have low resistance to the creation and existence of a development center. There could be, however, some friction with respect to selection of a center director and selection of projects and activities supported through center funds. In general, however, the political sensitivity to establishing a center should be moderate.

Time Frame

Establishment of a center has short- and long-term components. Planning should begin immediately for creating the center: identifying a task force for the purpose of setting parameters for its scope and guidelines for its performance. An implementation plan should be written by the end of fall semester 2008, with deployment by the end of spring semester 2009. Further, ongoing support and maintenance of the center should be identified in the implementation plan.

Impact

The Center for Faculty and Staff Development has potential for a profound impact on faculty and staff morale and practices at MSU and upon the ways in which faculty and staff perform their functions. It may directly and/or indirectly affect every student on campus and online through its advocacy for improvement in course and service delivery.

Alignment

A Center for Faculty and Staff Development aligns directly with *Vision 2013*'s Strategy Three, "Valuing Faculty and Staff within an Engaged Community."

Ensure safe and secure learning environment

Along with other security initiatives at MSU, including planning for emergencies, should be the provision of an environment that is physically and psychologically safe, secure and conducive to learning and working. In order to do that, we must clearly understand what constitutes a "safe and secure learning environment." Examples of projects undertaken at universities include one at Northern Arizona University which resulted in the development of a "Safe Working and Learning Environment Policy" (<http://home.nau.edu/diversity/swale.asp>) and one at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, "Creating a

Safe Learning Environment,” involving a handbook for graduate teaching assistants (http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/gsapd/resources/gta_handbook/gettingstarted/safety.shtml).

While utilizing resources such as these, the following actions should be undertaken: conduct an inventory of existing practices at MSU; survey students to determine their perceptions of the learning environment and faculty and staff for their perceptions of the working environment; construct a policy related to a safe environment; make changes as appropriate; create a Web site and otherwise communicate safe and secure campus features and changes; and measure the effectiveness of the changes for future improvement.

Responsibility

Initially, the responsibility for examining the physical safety and security of the campus should lie with the Director of Facilities Management. Likewise, initially; responsibility for examining the psychological safety and security could lie with the expanded Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee and/or the Vice President of Student Affairs, in combination with others, such as the Presidents of the Student Government Association and Faculty and Staff Senates. In the past, creation of a specific task force for undertaking certain safety initiatives has been a practice.

Cost

Approximately \$500 would be expended, beyond faculty and staff time, in conducting an inventory, conducting online surveys, communicating results and changes, and measuring the effectiveness of the changes. Estimating costs involved in making changes to the campus environment to improve safety and security is difficult and likely to vary widely. Already under way is an emergency notification system.

Political Sensitivity

This topic, and/or portions of this topic, could have medium to high political sensitivity. An issue may be the convergence of personal space and personal rights versus campus safety and security. A discussion surrounding the nature of these topics for the purpose of finding common ground might be undertaken.

Time Frame

Certain steps with respect to safety are under way, such as the emergency notification system. Other steps will be ongoing. However, it is recommended that an inventory of campus safety features and surveys of perceptions of safety be undertaken during fall semester 2008.

Impact

The impact of a changed campus environment to ensure safety and security will be moderate to high, depending on the nature of the environmental change. Changes perceived as improving personal safety in the work and study space are likely to have a moderate to positive impact. Changes perceived as impinging upon personal freedoms for the purpose of ensuring security are likely to have moderate to high negative impact.

Alignment

This action item aligns well with *Vision 2013 Strategy Two*, “Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of Students,” in that it addresses a campus physical and psychological atmosphere supportive of learning; *Strategy Four*, “Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate;” and *Strategy Seven*, “Ensuring Future Institutional Viability, Vitality, and Growth.”

Faculty/Student Success Overview

In Vision 2013, Minot State University constructed a plan for its future. This plan included as one of its strategies to “raise academic standards and expectations exceptionally high for quality teaching and engaged learning; create and sustain a dynamic place and engaged campus atmosphere and design conducive to high-quality learning and student support. Given this emphasis, it is understandable that quite a number of the action items recommended by the nine Foundations of Excellence dimension committees fell within areas related to faculty, to student success, or to both. The importance of first-year students feeling connected with faculty and the university as a whole has been documented (Thompson, D.E. et.al, *College Student Journal*, Sep 2007, Vol 41; ASHE Higher Education Report, 2007 Vol. 32.)

Some of the proposed action items require little time and effort to put into effect, while others would require significant time and money, and a fundamental change in MSU’s approach to class size and faculty load. In working with this list, four categories of action became evident.

Professional development

Any institution which desires to continue and strengthen the quality of its teaching must provide support for the professional development of its faculty. Ideally, this would involve both internal and external development activities. When MSU has provided internal professional development options, the level of faculty participation has been high. The best example of this is probably the Partners in Learning (PIL) program that was instituted under the auspices of a 1999 Bush Foundation Grant. Pairs of faculty members conferred with each other on a regular basis, observed each other’s teaching and interviewed students about the effectiveness of the teaching in each other’s classes. Participation in this stipend-supported program typically involved 24 to 30 faculty members each year. The program ended with the grant funding, however. MSU needs to develop a strategy that makes possible ongoing funding, not only of internal professional development activities, but of travel to and participation in external professional development activities, which offer the benefit of a more explicitly discipline-centered focus.

Processes for hiring new faculty and supporting new hires

If MSU is going to make engagement with first-year students a priority, that priority needs to be evidenced and supported for potential and newly hired faculty, to ensure that they are prepared for this responsibility from the start. Materials such as position descriptions need to stress this priority, as do interviews. Potential faculty who are brought to campus should be required to demonstrate their abilities to promote engaged learning through the teaching of an actual class wherever possible. Chairs should assist newly hired faculty in developing their courses by providing them with sample syllabi and course outcomes and by providing them with a faculty member from the unit to serve as a mentor.

Improvement of the classroom environment

Certain elements of the classroom environment lie beyond the control of the individual faculty member yet are extremely important in promoting an atmosphere supportive of engaged learning. Smaller class size facilitates engaged learning by making possible increased faculty interaction with each student, both within the classroom and in response to work turned in by the students. Additionally, physical surroundings can either promote engagement or work against it. At the most basic level, students who are physically uncomfortable are not able to focus on learning. Also, engaged learning works best in a setting with furniture that may be moved to promote diverse teaching strategies, including small-group or full-class discussion. Many of the classrooms that serve the largest numbers of MSU’s first-year students are currently furnished with outmoded sled desks or fixed seating, an arrangement best suited for lecture. Movable tables would be more ideal, particularly if the number of tables in each room is low enough to permit easy rearrangement of furniture to fit the teaching method in use. MSU needs to establish an

ongoing procedure for assessing renovation and refurbishing needs and to set up a revolving schedule for undertaking these projects.

Procedures and services to promote student success

MSU's retention rate for first-year students is currently rather low. There are a number of steps that the university needs to take to facilitate a greater level of success for these students. It would be useful to review existing placement test requirements to determine whether or not any revision is in order. There are quite a number of student support services that could be established or extended beyond what is currently offered, including advising, mentoring and tutoring. McMurray and Sorrells (2007) point to the need for faculty and support services staff to collaborate and communicate in an effort to avoid a potential disconnect between the classroom, student services programs and various student services providers on campus (*College Student Journal*, Dec 07 Part B, Vol. 41.) Ideally, these services would be coordinated through a Student Success Center, where first-year students would find easy access to the services that meet their needs. Even in the absence of such a center, the services still are needed.

Communication and Connection

The Communication and Connection theme encompasses Minot State University efforts to provide all students (particularly first-year students) with accurate, positive and easily understandable institutional information in a “welcoming” educational environment.

Revise all printed materials

Lack of communication and miscommunications can lead to dissatisfaction among first-year students. The need to improve communication with first-year students and their families was clearly expressed by the FoE Dimension Committees.

One area of concern is student frustration with the current lack of communication with regard to tuition and fee costs for the various methods of delivery. A need exists to educate students and faculty advisers about the costs associated with the various course delivery methods.

Another factor to consider is Minot State University’s relationship with families of first-year students. It is important to strengthen the connection to family members in order for the University and the family to be partners in fostering the success of students as they transition to the institution.

Action Item 1: Publish Cost/Institutional Information

By the beginning of the fall 2008 semester, the Vice President for Finance, in conjunction with the Dean of Enrollment Services and Director of Student Life, should develop and publish a comprehensive cost sheet for distribution to all first-year students. The cost sheet should also be distributed to academic advisers and administrative staff.

The cost sheet should include:

- Tuition and fees for all methods of course delivery for all residencies, including the 12-credit cap for on-campus tuition and fees
- Specific program fees for programs such as nursing and clinical lab science
- Residence hall fees
- Board plan fees
- On-campus apartment costs
- The Web site for the MSU Business Office so students can plan to access future years’ fees online.

The cost sheet should be updated and distributed to first-year students at orientation annually and should be published on the MSU Business Office Web site.

Responsibility: To ensure timeliness and accuracy of information, the MSU Business Office should be responsible for dissemination of this information. Information should be distributed to all offices, departments, Student Support Services personnel, all orientation and reconnect sessions and appear on the MSU Web site.

Cost: The cost of this effort would be absorbed by the present Business Office budget (personnel and material costs).

Political Sensitivity: There is not any political sensitivity associated with this effort.

Time Frame: Ideally, this activity should be completed prior to Fall semester 2008.

Impact: (high) Making the tuition and fee information more widely available will greatly reduce misunderstandings and the frustration of students. Students who understand the differences in costs for different methods of delivery may not alter their class selections, but they will choose knowingly. Making cost information available sooner also helps families plan for the payment of each semester's expenses rather than being caught by unexpected surprise.

Alignment: The revision and accuracy of MSU institutional materials supports our "student-centered" philosophy in strategy Five of Vision 2013.

Develop events/activities into a first-year seminar

A first-year seminar course will enhance a student's sense of "belonging," increase student awareness of support services, familiarize students with faculty and staff, and improve student retention.

Action Item 2: Offer first-year events and activities within a first-year seminar course to clearly articulate the services available to students at Minot State University

In an effort to increase students' knowledge of and accessibility to campus resources, such as tutoring, student health, counseling, etc., information and materials should be disseminated through special clinics/presentations in academic departments. Additionally, information promoting these services should be presented from each of these support areas in a first-year seminar course.

Responsibility: Enrollment Services Office, all Students Support Services personnel, Academic Departments and Administrators/Offices.

Cost: Includes food, materials and faculty pay, totaling \$7,000.

Political Sensitivity: Although there is bound to be vigorous debate with regard to how many things can be part of a first-year experience class, the importance of ensuring student access to support services on campus is critical and would be unlikely to cause issues of political sensitivity.

Time Frame: This plan should be included as a component in the first-year seminar class, beginning fall semester 2009.

Impact: (high) Inclusion of these critical support services will help struggling students feel more confident about seeking assistance and support our retention effort.

Alignment: A first-year seminar course aligns with all Vision 2013 strategies.

Encourage family participation in MSU events

Family participation in Minot State University activities/events serves to support student encouragement and success.

Action Item 3: Encourage family awareness of and participation in MSU events

In the interest of connecting with families of first-year students, it is recommended that the Public Information Office offer an option at the Connect orientation sessions for family members to sign up for e-mail notification of on-campus events. The use of postcards and letters is also suggested.

Responsibility: The Public Information Office would work with the IT Central Staff to develop a listserv for family members, and the Enrollment Services Office and individual academic departments would disseminate information for special activities/events.

Cost: Cost would be limited to the time of the IT Staff to develop a listserv and the Public Information Office Staff to send communications to the listserv (departmental budget).

Time Frame: Begin offering the listserv option as soon as possible or by December 1, 2008 to allow family members to register at the Connect sessions for spring 2009.

Impact: (medium) Family support is critical to the success of first-year students. Informing parents and other family members about campus events will help them encourage their first-year students to engage in campus activities and will also encourage family members themselves to be engaged with Minot State University.

Alignment: Family involvement and support of MSU activities/events is supported through Strategies Two, Four, Six and Seven of Vision 2013.

FoE First-Year Experience

Three FoE Dimension Committees articulated the need for MSU to establish a first-year seminar/experience. A recommended action item from the All Students Dimension Committee described the need for a first-year seminar. The Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee advocated the development of a “series of freshman seminar topics to keep students engaged in learning, campus life and community life within a widely understood context of the vision and purpose of general education and higher learning.” They saw this taking place through a cohort model that could be developed around “majors, residence halls, service learning initiatives, etc.” Finally, the Diversity Dimension Committee articulated the need to develop a freshman seminar. These recommendations are discussed in more detail below.

There are several good models that are described in the literature which capture the views expressed by the FoE Dimension Committees. Minot State University would benefit from a review of these institutions to develop the best model for implementation at MSU. For example, the edited volume by Wendy Troxel and Marc Cutright, *Exploring the Evidence: Initiatives in the First Year of College*, outlines programs for first-year students around topics, including civic engagement and service learning, first-year advising, how to link learning communities, organizational assessment and how to design first-year seminars. Minot State University might look at Millersville University, which is a public four-year school with about 7,000 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate students. After discovering problems with first-year students adjusting to university life, it developed an integrated living and learning community with three courses, an English composition course, a communications course and another general education course. The experience was coordinated through a first-year seminar (University 101), which linked in-class experience with out-of-class civic engagement and service-learning experiences. Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, a public comprehensive university in western Pennsylvania which services a rural populations, has recently experienced an 8 percent increase in its retention rate by integrating first-year experiences and academic programs. A similar approach was adopted at California State University – Hayward, with a resulting increase in the retention rate of its students.

Adding a component of service learning or other form of experiential or engaged learning may add a significant benefit to the learning communities/first -year seminar model. Research conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and the Policy Center on the First Year of College has affirmed that students who participated in service learning activity reported higher levels of satisfaction with campus than students who did not. Additionally, students reported higher levels of feeling successful at college. They also reported more meaningful connections to faculty or staff, more effective study skills and more success in developing a network of friends

Recommendations from Dimension Committees

The All Students Dimension Committee advocated a mandatory first-year seminar course that would inspire a transition into intellectual life at the university level. A first-year seminar coordinator should be hired to facilitate and coordinate activities related to the first-year seminar. All course sections should operate under a general umbrella syllabus with common objectives, including critical reading, critical writing and critical problem-solving. The first-year seminar coordinator would collaborate with faculty to design the syllabus, ensuring that course subject matter has perceived relevance and that practical skills are integrated into course assignments.

The All Students Dimension Committee also recommended the seminar be a two-credit graded course team-taught by a faculty member and student services representative. Instructors can help identify student needs, but they should also be provided with each student’s CSI results, placement scores, GPA, ACT scores, and all other relevant information. After completion of the first-year seminar course, an updated folder should be sent to each student’s academic adviser(s). First-year seminar instructors and

subsequently academic advisers should review the folder of student information and proactively help connect students to needed resources. For example, the umbrella syllabus might include one-on-one sessions between students and their seminar instructors, designed to identify individual needs and connect the students with the necessary resources.

The Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee suggested development of a series of first-year seminar topics to keep students engaged in learning, campus life and community life within a widely understood context of the vision and purposes of general education and higher learning. The All Students Dimension Committee recommended first-year seminar faculty give students credit for attending and reflecting on such campus and community events. They also recommended students be trained to track their academic progress and to be professional and proactive. The Transitions Dimension Committee recommended a first-year symposium be organized for faculty teaching the first-year seminar.

The Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee recommended using a cohort model to provide a paradigm for understanding the purposes of higher education, establish a model for examining one's own purposes for higher learning and provide opportunity for understanding the purposes of others. Such cohorts might be developed around majors, residence halls, service-learning initiatives, etc.

The Diversity Dimension Committee recommended that all departments offer a required, one-credit course titled "Freshman Seminar," taught at the same time on the same day by all departments. All sections would meet in Nelson Auditorium once a month for a general session on a topic of diversity, presented by either faculty members or students. These required presentations would be recorded and placed on reserve in the Olson Library for students unable to attend. The rest of the course should cover areas important to student success in the major. This experience would increase student cohesion and complement diversity coursework by providing increased opportunities for discussion, special diversity speakers, and practicum experiences. This activity would also sustain and build on the initial diversity activity presented prior to the beginning of the semester.

Finally, according to the All Students Dimension Committee, the seminar should establish the clear expectation that academic success requires effort, time on task, commitment, and perseverance; the seminar needs to send the message: "We will help you succeed, but you have to do the work." Section size should be restricted to 20 students, and course and advising time should be part of faculty/staff load (suggested two-and-a-half semester hours for a two-hour seminar course, similar to a lab or graduate class).

Cost

This initiative would require hiring an additional staff member to coordinate the first-year seminar. This person would have the responsibility of organizing the Welcome Week activities for these students; coordinating the service-learning or civic-engagement events/opportunities; organizing and possibly aligning class sections for cohorts of students in linked classes; maintaining necessary paperwork related to the course; working with departments, Residence Life, the student activities director, mentor program coordinator, Registrar's Office, Enrollment Service, other relevant staff and faculty, and community members to meet the student-learning outcomes of this experience. This person would also conduct professional development training for faculty on the first-year experience and best teaching practices for linked courses. A small budget should be available to offer stipends for faculty/staff to become involved in the initiative.

Other costs include faculty/staff time for professional development. Time is also needed to develop, teach and assess the first-year seminar. Student tuition will help offset some financial costs, but faculty/staff load issues will also need to be addressed. Depending on section size, credit hours, and first-year seminar model, some departments may be impacted more than others. For example, if the first-year seminar is offered by each department, those departments with more majors will need to offer more course sections.

Initial annual budget: \$150,000 for coordinator's salary and benefits, stipends, and other materials and costs.

Political Sensitivity

There would be little opposition to this concept. Elements of a first-year experience have been advocated by faculty, students and staff in the Vision 2013 Action Plans. The FoE project saw three dimension committees advocate a first-year experience. The FoE open forums affirmed broad support.

The model chosen for the first-year seminar will also determine the level of political sensitivity. If all departments must offer a first-year seminar, then credit-hour production will be related to the number of majors in each department. If a different model, not connected to any department, is chosen, credit-hour production will be credited elsewhere, but faculty load will still be impacted.

Time Frame

Hire a first-year seminar coordinator during the 2008-09 academic year, to develop the concept of a first-year seminar, and prepare for launch of initial elements of the program in the fall of 2009.

Impact

This initiative will have a significant, positive effect on the MSU retention rate, and NSSE scores will increase in dimensions measuring academic engagement and providing an environment that supports student success and development. Faculty and staff who participate can expect increased student-faculty engagement. If taught as an interdisciplinary class, the first-year seminar also will promote increased communication among faculty and staff across disciplines. Student peer relationships will be enhanced, and students will become assimilated into MSU and university life, increasing their sense of belonging, their success and their retention. Civic- engagement and service-learning initiatives will develop and enhance MSU's relationships with community members and local organizations.

Alignment

A first-year experience aligns with Vision 2013 Strategy Two, fostering engaged learning for the benefit of students, Strategy Four, building a diverse and multicultural campus climate and Strategy Six, creating a commitment to civic engagement, service and the common good.

Implementation Tasks

A number of tasks must be completed to implement and support the first-year seminar.

First-Year Seminar Advisory Committee: A first-year seminar advisory committee should be formed to guide planning, implementation and future developments. Decisions should not be made in isolation without consultation and feedback from faculty, staff and students. For example: If the first-year seminar course is offered by each department, then each department will need to be involved in planning the content under the umbrella syllabus. If groups of students take common course sections, some departments will be impacted more than others, depending on which courses are chosen and linked. The advisory committee should also create an enrollment policy for the course (e.g., optional or mandatory, transfer student requirements).

First-Year Seminar Coordinator: As mentioned above, a first-year seminar coordinator must be hired to begin developing the concept for launch in the fall of 2009. This person will have many responsibilities (see suggestions above and below) and should be a member of the First-year Seminar Advisory Committee.

If student cohorts are to take common course sections, the first-year seminar coordinator will need to work closely with the Registrar's Office, Enrollment Services, and departments to schedule student cohorts in two or three common course sections. If these cohorts are to live in close proximity to further promote their assimilation into university life and foster positive peer relationships and a sense of belonging, the first-year seminar coordinator will need to work closely with Residence Life to make these living arrangements possible.

The first-year seminar coordinator will work with faculty, staff and community members to coordinate the service-learning or civic-engagement opportunities that are part of the first-year seminar course. Making and maintaining such contacts will require an organized and energetic professional with exceptional interpersonal skills and an understanding of service learning and academics.

The first-year seminar coordinator will work with the student activities director to link relevant campus activities to residence life and the first-year seminar course. The coordinator will also work with the student mentor program coordinator to connect faculty, staff and peer mentors to first-year students.

Assessment Plan: An assessment plan must be developed for the first-year seminar. This plan should be developed in consultation with all necessary stakeholders (e.g., first-year seminar coordinator, VPAA, IR, departments, First-year Seminar Advisory Committee, Faculty Senate assessment committee, etc.). Results of each year's assessment must be reviewed and changes must be made for future improvements.

Curriculum Process: Once the format/model of the first-year seminar course has been determined, the course must proceed through the curriculum process. Courses listed as INT 101 University 101 (one semester hour), INT 175 Transition to University Life (two semester hours), and INT 190 Study Skills (two semester hours) currently exist but may need to be revised to better fit the model and its objectives and outcomes.

Further discussions and decisions must be made to determine whether the course will be a part of general education. If so, the course must also be approved by the General Education Committee.

If adding the course requires that some majors take more than 128 hours to graduate, students will be required to pay for additional credit hours, imposing higher student costs.

Faculty and Resource Issues: Faculty/staff will need to be chosen and/or volunteer to teach the first-year seminar course. Some faculty will be better at this than others, and this issue will need to be carefully considered when selecting instructors. In all cases, faculty/staff will need to receive professional development training on aspects of the first-year experience and lessons on best-teaching practices for coordinating lesson plans for linked courses. The Title III grant, if funded, could support professional development activities. A stipend should be provided to all participants. These activities will be conducted by the first-year seminar coordinator and must occur prior to launch in fall 2009.

Adding many sections of a first-year seminar will create faculty/staff load and subsequent resource issues that will need to be resolved.

ACTION THEME MATRIX

Advising

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>Revise Advising System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU should develop a user-friendly, intuitive system for advising that all students will want to take advantage of, one that will help to successfully guide them through their four years at MSU and examine their future goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA • Create a first-year advising center (Student Success Center) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ** Title III Grant funds would shift mentoring program and internship responsibilities from Career Services to the Newly Created CETL (Center for Engagement in Teaching and Learning). This would free up Linda & Debra in Career Services to retool to serve as first-year student advisers. One additional staff person will be required to meet the anticipated load. It is anticipated that students will transition from these first-year advisers to their department advisers during their second semester of the first year. ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA 	Salary and fringe benefits to hire an additional adviser \$45,000	Low	High	Fall 09	High	Vision 2013, Strategies 2, 5 and 7
<p>Connect with Departments in a Timely Way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-year students should meet the day before classes begin with their department faculty and chairs for an orientation to the major. Outcome based. Budget: \$5/first-year student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA 	\$3,000	Low	High	Fall 08	Medium	Vision 2013, Strategies 2, 5 and 7

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
Assigning Advisers Early in the Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-year students should know their adviser's name and contact details within the first two weeks of their first semester. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: Dept. Chairs, Registrar 	0	Medium	High	Fall 08	High	Vision 2013, Strategies 2, 5 and 7
Provide Adviser Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU must develop and implement a training program for faculty, staff, or students who are assigned as advisers. The training should be outcome-based and assessed frequently. Ideally, a series of checklists and tools should be developed to assist advisers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA 	\$500	Medium	High	Fall 09	High	Vision 2013, Strategies 2, 5 and 7
Coordinate efforts on first-year advising with the MSU formal advising process for other students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA and VPAA 	Included in present budget	High	High	12 months	High	Vision 2013, Strategy 5

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Foundations of Excellence – Themed Action Items

Organization

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>Develop MSU first-year philosophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise college/division/department mission statements accordingly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> FoE Steering Committee, plus others who have important stake in first-year program and outcomes 	<p>Faculty and staff time; sharing: e-mail, Web site (intranet); event; printed materials: \$500</p>	<p>Medium to Low</p>		<p>Begin immediately; to Senates by end of fall semester; to colleges by end of academic year</p>	<p>Very high; of utmost importance</p>	<p>All seven strategies in Vision 2013</p>
<p>Inventory and evaluate first-year services: those available and those deficient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct, capture, store and disseminate inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> FoE Steering Committee, plus others who have important stake in first-year program and outcomes to identify services; IR to implement inventory procedures 	<p>Dedicated IR staff time; develop database, Web site, SharePoint; publish materials: \$500</p>	<p>Medium to Low</p>		<p>Begin immediately; concurrent with philosophy statement</p>	<p>Very high; cannot plan new programs without this ground-work</p>	<p>As base for new programs, aligns with all seven strategies in Vision 2013</p>
<p>Develop organizational scaffolding for first-year success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, store, share and use appropriate data for improvement of first-year experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> IR collects, stores, disseminates data; all others on campus share and use data for 	<p>Acquire surveys and databases; develop Web site; could be \$20,000</p>	<p>Medium To Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Short and long-term; ongoing</p>	<p>Very high</p>	<p>Vision 2013, all strategies; provides base for</p>

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>“Closing the loop” to effect change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support faculty and staff professional development (such as mentoring, active learning processes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Expanded FoE Steering Committee (see No. 1 above) initially; then separate task forces, such as mentoring committee, and/or one charged with implementing Vision 2013 Strategy 3, Center for Faculty and Staff Development • Assure student physical and psychological safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Director of Plant, President of Student Government Association, First-year Committee 	<p>See Title III, Strategy 1a, p. 20</p> <p>Strategy 2b, pp 21-22</p> <p>Unknown – there is a possibility of one-time funds from the Legislature</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Short and long-term/ongoing</p> <p>Short and long-term</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>justifying change</p> <p>Vision 2013, Strategy 3</p> <p>Vision 2013, Strategies 1-3 and 5</p>

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Foundations of Excellence – Themed Action Items

Faculty/Student Success

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>Ensure that newly hired faculty understand responsibility to first-year students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans and chairs should make certain that faculty position descriptions and interviews specifically discuss responsibilities to first-year students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Deans, Chairs, new Search Process Task Force, First-year Committee 	<p>Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>F09</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategies 2 and 3</p>
<p>Hire properly trained faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates for faculty positions should be asked to submit a portfolio of teaching materials and to teach a class during the campus interview. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Deans and Chairs 	<p>Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Put into practice Spring 09</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategies 2 and 3</p>
<p>Properly prepare newly hired faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department/unit leaders should facilitate the teaching of newly hired faculty by ensuring that they are provided with sample syllabi, course outcomes and a departmental mentor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Deans and Chairs 	<p>Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Put into practice Fall09</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategies 2, 3 and 5</p>
<p>MSU should once again budget resources to institute a program of opportunities promoting professional development of first-year teaching excellence. Ideally, these would offer faculty a choice of both activities and rewards, including stipends.</p> <p>Activities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention training for faculty to assist with students falling into the DFWI categories 	<p>See Title III, Strategy 1b, p. 20</p>	<p>Low to medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Plan and budget during 08-09, put into operation Fall09</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategies 2, 3 and 5</p>

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for identifying and incorporating techniques and strategies that maximize student engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility: VPAA, VPAF, CETL Director 						
<p>Task each college to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set learning goals for its programs Examine department and course in-class activities for first-year students and to develop a set of options Assess impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility: Deans 	Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify.	Medium	High	2-3 years	High	Vision 2013 Strategies 2 and 5
<p>Increase percentage of faculty/staff involved in local and national conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department/unit leaders should work with senior academic leaders to encourage and enable their faculty to participate in professional development opportunities. Recommend that the university contribute additional funds to academic units to support faculty who participate in conferences for professional development purposes. This money must not be taken from current travel budgets, which are essential to support faculty research and scholarship. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility: VPAA, Deans, Title III Director 	See Title III, Strategy 2b, p. 22	Low to medium	Medium	Plan and budget during 08-09, put into operation Fall09	Medium to High	Vision 2013 Strategies 2, 3 and 5
<p>English Placement Score for ENGL 110</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend that the English department establish minimum scores on the ACT writing component and the COMPASS writing test. These minimum scores would be used to place students in ENGL 110 or to refer students to remedial options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility: Humanities Chair, CAS Dean 	Costs involve faculty load and tuition and are difficult to quantify.	Political sensitivity is difficult to calculate. A review of current NDUS policies would help estimate if students were being asked to	Medium	Fall09	High	Vision 2013 Strategy 5

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
		meet requirement not found at other colleges and universities				
<p>Provide Remedial Math Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU should provide remedial support (Math 099 Beginning Algebra) for those students who do not meet placement requirements for Math 102 or higher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> CAS Dean, Math Chair, CEL 	Two or three sections of Math 099 will need to be offered each academic year, resulting in additional salary costs.	Political sensitivity is difficult to calculate. Math 099 was previously offered at MSU but is now being offered through MSU-B as ACS 092 using IVN.	Medium	Review and make decision in 08-09, put into practice for 2009 admissions	High	Vision 2013 Strategy 5
<p>Math Placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU should enforce math ACT and COMPASS placement scores for Math 099 and Math 102, similar to current practice for Math 103; students must enroll in the class in which their scores place them. Students can challenge placement by taking the COMPASS placement exam. • Students who do not pass Math 102 with at least a C should not be allowed to take future higher math classes (e.g., Math 103, Math 104, etc.). Students who do not meet this requirement and still enroll in higher math classes will be asked to drop the course or take the COMPASS placement exam during the first week of the semester. Students who fail to meet 	Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify.	Political sensitivity is difficult to calculate. A review of current NDUS policies would help estimate if students were being asked to meet requirement not	Medium	Review and make decision in 08-09, put into practice for 2009 admissions	High	Vision 2013 Strategy 5

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>required COMPASS scores will be administratively dropped from the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <u>Responsibility</u>: Registrar, Enrollment Services, Dept Chairs and Advisers, Math Dept, CEL (COMPASS) 		found at other colleges and universities.				
<p>Support services for students admitted by exemption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students admitted to MSU by exemption should be automatically placed in the mentoring program. 	Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify. There may be an increased cost for training additional mentors.	Political sensitivity is difficult to calculate. A review of current NDUS policies would help estimate if students were being asked to meet requirements not found at other colleges and universities	Medium	Train additional mentors Spring09, put into operation Fall09	Medium	Vision 2013 Strategy 5
<p>Create a Student Success Center that will organize activities, pull together resources, and work with new student-orientation events.</p> <p>Activities could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a Native American, International student orientation activity which would alert students to resources. • Include a diversity activity as part of center workshops. This activity could focus on a respect for the diversity of ideas, cultures, lifestyles. 	<p>\$25,000 each year Operating Budget</p> <p>See Title III, Strategy 2c, p. 23</p>	Low to Medium	High	Planning would begin in Fall08 with some activities implemented by Fall09	High	Vision 2013, Strategies 4 and 5

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate a system of end-of-semester surveying of D/F students. The intent would be to gather knowledge about circumstances that could lead to assistance and/or intervention strategies. • Develop a capability to capture reasons for student withdrawals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPSA 						
<p>Develop immediate and long-range plans for remodeling and refurbishing classrooms to promote academic engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remodeling/refurbishing must continue on a revolving basis. • Faculty who teach in these classrooms must be involved in the planning process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: VPAF, VPAA, Director of Facilities 	\$20,000 for first year; \$10,000 per year thereafter	Low	High	Plan and budget during 2008-09, put into operation Summer 09	High	Vision 2013 Strategies 2 and 5
<p>Reduce maximum sizes for classes most commonly taken by first-year students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility</u>: Academic Affairs Council 	Costs involve faculty load and tuition and are difficult to quantify.	Medium	High	Plan and budget during 2008-09, put into operation Fall09	High	Vision 2013 Strategies 2, 3 and 5

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Foundations of Excellence – Themed Action Items

Communication and Connection

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>Revise all printed material as used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure inclusion of 2013 tenets • present a positive MSU picture • promote MSU student centered philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enrollment Services, Marketing Director, VPAA, VPAF, Registrar 	<p>No additional expenses expected.</p> <p>New materials will replace previously budgeted materials</p>	<p>No sensitivity issues.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>6-12 months</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategy 5</p>
<p>Prepare a comprehensive cost sheet for prospective students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> VPAF 	<p>No additional expenses expected</p>	<p>No sensitivity issues.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>8/22/08</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>All 2013 Strategies</p>
<p>Encourage family participation in MSU events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify parents of campus activities through the Enrollment Services Office by e-mail, post ards and letters ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> Student Activities Director 	<p>\$7,000</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategy 6</p>
<p>Reconnect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand “Reconnect” activities through a coordinated effort between the Student Affairs Office activities coordinator, Registrars Office, Student Life Office (housing), Chartwells Food Service and the Enrollment Services Office ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> VPSA, Others 	<p>\$7,000</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Vision 2013 Strategies 1, 2, 4 , 5 and 6.</p>

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Foundations of Excellence – Themed Action Items

First-Year Event

Action	Cost	Political Sensitivity	Priority	Timeframe	Impact	Alignment
<p>Implement a first-year seminar that would inspire a transition into intellectual life at the university level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire first-year seminar coordinator (2009) • Form a Seminar Advisory Committee to guide planning, implementation and future developments • Develop assessment plan • Cover common objectives, including critical reading, critical writing, critical problem-solving • Develop a series of seminar topics to keep students engaged in learning, campus life, and community life within a widely understood context of the vision and purposes of general education and higher learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> VPSA, Others VPAA, First-year Committee, Faculty Senate, Title III staff 	<p>Salary for additional staff member, stipends for faculty and staff to become involved and participate in the initiative, materials and other costs \$150,000</p> <p>Costs involve department and faculty time and are difficult to quantify. There may be an increased cost for training additional mentors.</p>	Low	High	<p>Pilot program in 2 years</p> <p>Full program in 3-5 years</p>	High	Vision 2013, Strategies 2, 4 and 6
<p>Assimilate the following first-year events/activities into the first-year seminar course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance students’ sense of belonging • Increase knowledge of, accessibility to, and visibility of student services/clinics • Organize a first week of school “come meet your department” event for faculty and students • Present about student services/clinics in classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Responsibility:</u> VPSA, Others VPAA, First-year Committee, Faculty Senate, Title III staff 	Food, materials and salaries - \$7,000	Low	High	12 months	Medium	Vision 2013, Strategy 7

Prioritized Recommendations Drawn From Action Themes

Recommended Action Items

As mentioned in the *Introduction and Overview of the Project* section of this report, a set of action items was created by the individual Dimension teams and prioritized via two public forums on campus. A thematic analysis of campus feedback yielded five action themes: Academic Advising, Organization, Faculty and Student Success, Communication and Connection and the First-Year Event. The list below is arranged according to the projected semester of completion and sub-grouped according to theme.

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2009

Academic Advising

- **Connect with Departments in a Timely Way**
 - First-year students should meet the day before classes begin with their department faculty and chairs for an orientation to the major.
- **Assign Advisers Early in the Process**
 - First-year students should know their advisers' names and contact details within the first two weeks of their first semester.
- **Provide a coordinated effort with the MSU formal advising process**

Organizational

- **Develop an MSU first-year philosophy**
 - Revise college/division/department mission statements accordingly.
- **Inventory and evaluate first-year services: those available and those deficient**
 - Conduct, capture, store and disseminate inventory.

Faculty/Student Success

- **Ensure that newly hired faculty understand responsibility to first-year students**
 - Deans and chairs should make certain that faculty position descriptions and interviews specifically discuss responsibilities to first-year students.
- **Properly prepare newly hired faculty**
 - Department/unit leaders should facilitate the teaching of newly hired faculty by ensuring that they are provided with sample syllabi, course outcomes and a departmental mentor.
- **MSU should once again budget resources to institute a program of opportunities promoting professional development of first-year teaching excellence. Ideally, these would offer faculty a choice of both activities and rewards, including stipends. See Title III, Strategy 1b, p. 20**
 - Activities could include:
 - Intervention training for faculty to assist with students falling into the DFWI categories
 - Training for identifying and incorporating techniques and strategies that maximize student engagement
- **Increase percentage of faculty/staff involved in local and national conferences. See Title III, Strategy 2b, p. 22**
 - Department/unit leaders should work with senior academic leaders to encourage and enable their faculty to participate in professional development opportunities.

- Recommend that the university contribute additional funds to academic units to support faculty who participate in conferences for professional development purposes. This money must not be taken from current travel budgets, which are essential to support faculty research and scholarship.
- **Create a Student Success Center that will organize activities, pull together resources, and work with new-student orientation events.** *See Title III, Strategy 2c, p. 23*
 - Activities could include:
 - Include a Native American, International student orientation activity which would alert students to resources.
 - Include a diversity activity as part of center workshops. This activity could focus on a respect for the diversity of ideas, cultures and lifestyles.
 - Incorporate a system of end-of-semester surveying of D/F students. The intent would be to gather knowledge about circumstances that could lead to assistance and/or intervention strategies.
 - Develop a capability to capture reasons for student withdrawals.

Communication and Connection

- **Revise all printed material as used to:**
 - ensure inclusion of 2013 tenets
 - present a positive MSU picture
 - promote MSU student-centered philosophy
- **Prepare a comprehensive cost sheet for prospective students**
- **Encourage family participation in MSU events.**
 - Notify parents of campus activities through the Enrollment Services Office by e-mail, postcards and letters.
- **Reconnect**
 - Expand “Reconnect” activities through a coordinated effort between the Student Affairs Office, activities coordinator, Registrars Office, Student Life Office (housing), Chartwells Food Service and the Enrollment Services Office.

First-Year Event

- **Hire a First-year coordinator to begin compiling elements of a first-year seminar/experience. Plan for official launch of initial elements in Fall 2009.**

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2010-11

Academic Advising

- **Revise Advising System**
 - MSU should develop a user-friendly, intuitive system for advising that every student will want to take advantage of, one that will help to successfully guide them through their four years at MSU and examine their future goals
 - Create a first-year advising center (Student Success Center.) It is anticipated that students will transition from these first-year advisers to their department advisers during their second semester of the first year.
- **Provide Adviser Training**
 - MSU must develop and implement a training program for faculty, staff, or students who are assigned as advisers. The training should be outcome-based and assessed frequently. Ideally, a series of checklists and tools should be developed to assist advisers.

Organization

- **Develop organizational scaffolding for first-year success**
 - Collect, store, share and use appropriate data for improvement of first-year experience
 - Assure student physical and psychological safety
 - Support faculty and staff professional development (such as mentoring, active learning processes, etc.) *See Title III, Strategy 1a, p. 20, Strategy 2b, pp 21-22*

Faculty/Student Success

- **Hire properly trained faculty**
 - Candidates for faculty positions should be asked to submit a portfolio of teaching materials and to teach a class during the campus interview.
- **Task each college to:**
 - Set learning goals for its programs
 - Examine department and in-class activities for first-year students and to develop a set of options
 - Assess impact
- **Review the English Placement Score for ENGL 110**
 - Recommend that the English Department establish minimum scores on the ACT writing component and the COMPASS writing test. These minimum scores would be used to place students in ENGL 110 or to refer students to remedial options.
- **Review the Math Placement Policy**
 - MSU should enforce math ACT and COMPASS placement scores for Math 099 and Math 102, similar to current practice for Math 103; students must enroll in the class in which their scores place them. Students can challenge placement by taking the COMPASS placement exam.
 - Students who do not pass Math 102 with at least a C should not be allowed to take future higher math classes (e.g., Math 103, Math 104, etc.). Students who do not meet this requirement and still enroll in higher math classes will be asked to drop the course or take the COMPASS placement exam during the first week of the semester. Students who fail to meet required COMPASS scores will be administratively dropped from the course.
- **Provide Remedial Math Support**
 - MSU should provide remedial support (Math 099 Beginning Algebra) for those students who do not meet placement requirements for Math 102 or higher.
- **Support services for students admitted by exemption**
 - Students admitted to MSU by exemption should be automatically placed in the mentoring program.
- **Develop immediate and long-range plans for remodeling and refurbishing classrooms to promote academic engagement.**
 - Remodeling/refurbishing must continue on a revolving basis.
 - Faculty who teach in these classrooms must be involved in the planning process

Recommendations to be completed by Fall 2012-13

Faculty/Student Success

- **Reduce maximum sizes for classes most commonly taken by first-year students**

First-Year Event

- **Implement a complete first-year seminar that would inspire a transition into intellectual life at the university level.**
 - Form a Seminar Advisory Committee to guide planning, implementation and future developments
 - Develop assessment plan

- Cover common objectives, including critical reading, critical writing and critical problem-solving
- Develop a series of seminar topics to keep students engaged in learning, campus life, and community life within a widely understood context of the vision and purposes of general education and higher learning.
- **Assimilate the following first-year events/activities into the first-year seminar course:**
 - Enhance students' sense of belonging
 - Increase knowledge of, accessibility to and visibility of student services/clinics
 - Organize a first week of school "come meet your department" event for faculty and students
 - Present information about student services/clinics in classes.

Conclusion

Drawing inspiration from the goal articulated in Vision 2013 of transforming MSU into a premier institution within the “great” Great Plains, MSU has just completed a year-long study to help develop an understanding of how to best serve and support first-year students. We were fortunate to have been selected as one of fourteen four-year schools by the Policy Center on the First Year of College to be part of their Foundations of Excellence in the First Year of College 2007-2008 cohort. We have spent the last year guided by the Policy Center evaluating how well we perform in meeting nine “Foundational Dimensions” that are essential components of how campuses need to meet the needs of first-year students. We have collected data from students, faculty and staff, reflected on existing policies and procedures, and reviewed budget, infrastructure, and organizational structures. Some of the best leaders across campus have reviewed, critiqued, debated, and written our findings in this report. We owe a lot to them for their dedication and service.

We have learned a lot through this process. Some of the suggested changes were easy to accomplish and have already been implemented. For example, the Enrollment Services office completed an audit of student communications and discovered that the correspondence we were sending prospective and ultimately admitted students were distant, rigid and bureaucratic. As a result, the communication plan and documents have been revised to incorporate a more encouraging and welcoming voice. We also discovered we did not have a clear campus philosophy statement regarding first-year students. Consequently the Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee has drafted and shared a philosophy statement for campus review and adoption.

More difficult changes are yet to come. In the past, MSU has attempted various models of learning communities or first-year experiences. As a result of the Foundations of Excellence self study, we have a very clear understanding about the best way to organize, support and sustain this initiative. We also must provide more professional development opportunities for our faculty so they understand and support the first-year students. Faculty need more interaction with first-year students outside the classroom, and need to provide engaging instruction in the classroom and timely feedback on student performance. Administration needs to reinforce this behavior by implementing a rewards system for faculty who exemplify these ideals.

We also need to develop an assessment plan to provide constant review and feedback on how the campus is meeting the needs of first-year students. We need to encourage a sense of “positive restlessness” where we are constantly reviewing our actions and seeking continual improvement.

Participation in The Foundations of Excellence for the First College Year has given MSU a clear understanding on where we are and what we need to do in order to best support the needs of first-year students. By completing this process, we have moved a giant step forward in becoming the premier higher education institution in the “great” Great Plains.

Appendix A

Full Dimension Committee Reports

Philosophy Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation.

Committee Co-chairs:

Dick Jenkins – EdD – Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students
Gary Rabe – PhD – Vice President for Academic Affairs

Committee Members:

Ron Dorn – MS – Vice President for Administration and Finance
Caren Barnett – MA/RN – Director, Student Health Center
Kris Warmoth – EdD – Dean, Center for Extended Learning
Bethany Andreasen – PhD – Associate Professor of History
John Girard – PhD – Dean of Enrollment Management
Laurie Geller – EdD – Assistant Professor of Mathematics
Wylie Hammond – MA – Director of Multicultural Support Services
Kevin Neuharth – MA – Associate Professor of Communications
Lori Willoughby – PhD – Professor of Business
JoAnn Linrud – PhD – Dean, College of Business
Pat Hubel – PhD – Research Associate

Recommended Grade: F

Recommended Action Items: Philosophy: Develop MSU FY Philosophy (High priority)

Philosophy: Disseminate campus-wide first-year philosophy statement (High priority)

- include future students
- inform community (marketing)
- Regents, SBHE, area legislators
- article in Connections, Red and Green, Minot Daily News
- new faculty orientation, convocation

Transitions: Consider FY Program of Study (Medium priority)

Philosophy: Consider Revision of College/Division/Department Mission Statements (Low priority)

Organization Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

Committee Leader:

Ron Dorn - MS – Vice President for Administration and Finance

Committee Members:

Lisa Eriksmoen – MA - Director of Student Life

Laurie Weber – MSM - Financial Aid Counselor

Tania Balas – MS - Registrar

Linda Cresap – PhD - Dean, Graduate School

John Webster – PhD – Associate Professor for Geosciences, Chair - Biology

Dean Frantsvog – JD – Associate Professor of Accounting/Finance

Lisa Roteliuk – MS – Instructor of Communications

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

The Organization Dimension team looked at a variety of data including the Student Satisfaction Inventory results from April 2007, and the most current NSSE and FSSE reports, but relied most predominately on the information found in the Foundations of Excellence First-Year Student Survey and the Faculty/Staff Survey. Team member perceptions and insights weighed heavily in our conclusions and recommended action steps.

Multiple administrative units provide services to first-year students at Minot State University. The administrative oversight of each of these units is varied, and in most cases, the unit's primary focus is not on first-year students. The primary units that are charged with initiatives dealing with first-year students are Academic Affairs and Student Services. These two units are working collaboratively to implement the first-year student initiative and have been very successful with the initiatives they have already implemented but are hampered by a lack of funding in their ability to provide additional services to first-year students. The committee feels that the university has implemented some excellent initiatives regarding first-year students such as the first-year student housing requirement, a mentoring program, and the use of data from the CSI survey. The committee believes that Student Services and Academic Affairs, through its Enrollment Services area are doing an outstanding job with the initiatives currently in place. The committee feels that a first-year standing committee would improve the collaboration and communication regarding the first-year program by allowing a vehicle where first-year issues could be discussed, while also allowing for a review of the results of the effectiveness of current first-year programs.

Institutional collaborations between units and departments within those units does exist in spite of our lack of an integrated institutional approach for the first-year student experience. Career Services and Enrollment Services coordinate the first-year student orientation program. The results of the Student Satisfaction Survey Inventory indicate many units that participate in the first-year student experience in a non-integrated manner receive a high satisfaction rating. Additionally, feedback received from student

participants, parent participants, and faculty/staff participants regarding the Orientation Program and the Mentoring Program is very positive. The Mentoring Program is a first-year student initiative housed in Career Services.

The team feels that the university needs to provide additional resources to support additional first-year initiatives that would help strengthen its efforts in support of first-year students. Training of faculty/staff on an ongoing basis and adequate funding are necessary to support current first-year initiatives and to strengthen the first-year program. There appears to be very limited, if any, funding provided by the university for faculty/staff development to increase their understanding of first-year issues and to enhance their ability to effectively participate in the first-year experience. A lack of trained advisors appears to be a concern of students.

Question 034 on the FOE student survey reveals that currently, when first-year students have questions about where to go for assistance, our faculty and staff are usually able to connect students with the right office for assistance, with 74.1% of the respondents indicating a high or very high level of satisfaction in this area. To a large degree, our current organization structure is working to support first-year students, with a few exceptions. Student uncertainty about where to go for assistance for help with non-academic areas (Q032) and where to inquire about participation in student organizations (Q033) seem to reveal a need to continue to highlight those areas during the CONNECT orientation sessions. The FOE Faculty/Staff Survey also reveals uncertainty among MSU faculty and staff about where to refer students for those same concerns (Q020 and Q021). These deficiencies can be resolved with improved training for new faculty and staff in regard to the services available. Faculty and Staff concerns about not having a voice in first-year issues (Q028 and Q029) can be addressed through the formation of a Standing Committee on the first-year experience to provide organization, collaboration and most importantly, communication among the various discrete units that provide services to first-year students.

- Evaluate the services available for deficiencies and services currently not available. (*Medium priority*)

Inventory services that should be available to first-year students but are not available or are so deficient that they cannot be used.

- Services to include faculty/staff orientation, faculty advising, consolidate information (catalogs, handbooks, etc) into one book with an continually updated electronic version available to minimize duplication of information,
 - Have a standing committee to evaluate and recommend initiatives to continually enhance the first-year experience.
 - Survey first-year students during first and second semester.
- Structure program based on inventories (*Medium priority*)

Structure complete first-year student program based on inventories. Include responsible parties, costs, and funding sources.

Learning Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institutions philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Committee Leader:

Caren Barnett– MA/RN – Director, Student Health Center

Committee Members:

Kristi Berg - MSM – Instructor, Business Information Technology
Margi Coxwell - EdD – Associate Professor of Education
Conrad Davidson - PhD – Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Leisa Harmon - MFA – MS/MFA – Assistant Professor of Communications
Vicki Michels - PhD – Assistant Professor of Addiction Studies
Cheryl Nilsen - PhD – Instructor of Mathematics and Computer Science
Michelle Sauer - PhD – Associate Professor of English
Kris Warmoth, PhD – Dean, Center for Extended Learning

PI 3.1: Learning Goals

Current Situation

Although this review did not find a listing of learning goals for first-year students, it did find evidence that first-year goals are implied. A review of the Undergraduate catalog for 06 - 08 revealed several pieces of evidence. The first is that there are High School Admissions Requirements for English, Lab Sciences, Math and Social Sciences. This requirement would suggest that first-year university students have a certain knowledge base, but there is not an explicit tie.

The next two pieces of evidence are the first-year Orientation and the General Education Requirements statement of philosophy. Both are described below:

Orientation

Entering first-year students (freshman), transfer students, and parents are strongly encouraged to attend New Student Orientation, which is scheduled prior to the beginning of fall and spring semester. Orientation introduces students to University life through a number of well-designed sessions and social activities. Information about orientation programs is sent to all students who have been admitted to the University.

General Education Requirements

These courses are typically completed in the first two years of attendance. They are clearly defined and their purpose is outlined in the statement of philosophy:

Statement of Philosophy

At Minot State University, the principal role of general education is to foster the broad repertoire of intellectual, social, and cultural skills needed to function in the world. General education equips students to understand and influence their own milieu. General education develops the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information and to use it in solving problems. The general education curriculum therefore emphasizes 1) mastery of linguistic skills, 2) a broad historical and cultural perspective, 3) literacy in the

social, natural, and mathematical sciences, 4) understanding and appreciation of the arts such as music, literature, painting, and sculpture, and 5) commitment to contributing one's talents to advancement of the common good. It develops ability to think and live creatively, critically, intuitively, and rationally, using the full range of abilities inherent in the mind and body. It offers the potential to create in every student a sense of personal, historical, and cultural identity, leading to a breadth of understanding that offers possibilities in all phases of life.

Although the philosophy statement is clear, the requirement states that all baccalaureate degree students must complete the general education requirements. There is no direct tie to learning goals for first-year students.

A review of department degrees revealed that core courses are clearly outlined and that program outcomes are identified and in some cases a first-year schedule is suggested, but the learning outcomes for the first-year student in that major are not identified.

A review of the MSU website revealed an online link to information for first-year and transfer students (<http://www.minotstateu.edu/enroll/>). This site has links to applications, FAFSA, scholarships, mentoring program, academic departments etc. No specific learning goals for first-year students.

A review of department web sites found that within a major there are certain courses encouraged for first-year students. For example, mathematics, learning outcomes are established within the calculus courses, which for math majors are typically taken as freshmen. Computer science majors typically take their first two programming courses in their freshman year. Again, there are learning outcomes identified in those courses. In both programs of study, these outcomes are not looked on as specific learning goals for freshmen in the programs.

The Communication department has an informal set of goals for first-year students, but nothing written down. Goals are covered in their Freshman Seminar. The English department is in the process of creating a first-year seminar and the Psychology department has an outline of courses that they suggest that freshman psychology students take.

Vision 2013, Strategy Two, states that planning a comprehensive program to support first-year students is a priority. Once learning goals for first-year students are determined, a comprehensive program to carry out these goals can be developed.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Learning goals for specific disciplines can engage first-year students immediately and tie them to their major early in their academic career.

Challenges

Challenge 1: Developing a set of learning goals for the institution that is "written, endorsed but the institution, and widely shared" could be a big challenge. The endorsement part is potentially difficult because colleges may have varying opinions of what should be learned in the first year.

Challenge 2: Departments and disciplines should be able to agree on first-year learning goals. As a university with a liberal arts focus, when the process is expanded to a university focus the challenge might be to keep the product from becoming diluted and vague and it tries to include all department and colleges.

Challenge 3: Convincing students that the learning goals for the first-year experience are important. Convincing first-year students of the value of the general education coursework could be difficult.

Sources of Evidence

- Email correspondence with department chairs of high enrollment courses
- A review of the Undergraduate Catalog for 06-08
- Review of MSU website and an examination of the link for 1st year and transfer students (<http://www.minotstateu.edu/future.html>)

PI 3.2: Engaging Students

Current Situation

Comm 110: Student engagement is measured using peer evaluations of speaking assignments both verbal and written, evaluation of outside speaker, discussions of daily local/regional/world events, small group assignments and discussion. About 50% of the sections are evaluated on a yearly basis. Faculty received feedback from chairs, documented through formal and informal faculty discussions. Also document results of course changes in the assessment document.

Engl 110 and 120: Assess changes in students' writing skills on assignments throughout the semester. Discussion topics and peer reviews are also used to assess engagement. Evaluate every section, every semester. Document results through a department assessment report. Changes to classes are documented as a result of the feedback through assessment meetings and meeting minutes.

Psych 111: Student evaluation and the peer review for those professors not tenured are the methods used to assess teacher effectiveness and student engagement. The pre and post test assesses whether learning has taken place, and could also be an indirect measure of student engagement. Changes in courses are documented in professor's self evaluation and course syllabi.

Math 102: Faculty in all sections of Math 102 informally evaluate levels of student engagement by noting frequency of student questions, responses, and participation in discussion during class sessions. They also take note of those attending optional help sessions held on the off day (the course meets four days a week.) The degree to which students' regularly complete homework is also an indicator of their levels of engagement. All faculty who teach Math 102 meet informally to discuss teaching strategies and to compare teaching practices and course pace. The incorporation of group work has been one topic discussed, as it is used by some faculty in Math 102. One faculty member who teaches Math 102 uses Quizdom, an electronic student response system, which engages students in the learning process. Student evaluations are done every semester in all sections of Math 102. Faculty receive feedback about student evaluations each semester. They also get feedback from the chair and from informally given peer perspectives. Changes made as a result of feedback from evaluations are documented indirectly in faculty self-evaluations and in faculty evaluations done by the chair. Changes that occur across all sections are discussed at department meetings and are documented in meeting minutes.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

A Senate General Education Ad Hoc committee has been formed to review the General Education structure and purpose.

Challenges

Time, disagreements about how to measure student engagement; student evaluations tend to be lower when students are required to meet higher standards, so the evaluations may not always be an accurate assessment.

Sources of Evidence

A survey of the department Chairs was completed.

PI 3.3: Course Outcomes

Current Situation

Comm 110: Evaluate courses through speaking assignments, written outlines for speaking assignments, evaluation of sources, and written assignments. 50% of the sections are assessed on a yearly basis. Faculty receive feedback from the chair, discussed via formal and informal discussions. Changes documented in the assessment document.

Engl 110 and 120: Assessment for both makes use of a rubric to determine student performance on outcomes using writing process, usage, mechanics and voice, rhetorical context, citing and referencing and support evidence. Students take part in the peer editing process.

Psych 111: Course outcomes are assessed by a pre and post test created within the department to assess overall learning and the five strands for general education. During Spring Semester one class is given the pretest early in the semester and then again at the end of the semester. Pre and post overall scores are compared as are each of the strand scores. The results are discussed in departmental meetings and those discussions are documented in departmental meeting notes.

Math 102: Learning outcomes for Math 102 are assessed directly through the final examination. Learning outcomes are identified on the course syllabi for all sections. The learning outcomes are assessed indirectly through student success in the general education course Math 103 which has Math 102 as a prerequisite. Students who are successful in meeting the learning outcomes for Math 102 will have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in meeting the learning outcomes for Math 103.

A note about Math 102: Assessment of learning outcomes for Math 102 is not gathered aggregated to the same extent as occurs for Math 103, since Math 103 is the course that meets the general education mathematics requirement. The department has a well-developed system of assessing the critical and factual learning of students across sections of Math 103 in alignment with the general education model.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Challenges

Challenge 1: The Psych 111 pre and post test requires two entire class periods to give and there is some concern that it cannot be completed in the classes that meet three days a week for 50 minutes. The class that is evaluated is the one that meets twice a week for 75 minutes. The problem is only one section of the course is evaluated as a result which gives limited information.

Challenge 2: Time for the Psych 111 pre and post test and the time it takes to score and aggregate the data.

Sources of Evidence

A survey of the department chairs was completed.

PI 3.4: Courses with High D/Failure/Withdrawal/Incompletes (DFWI) Rates

Current Situation

Focus Classes: Engl 110, Comm 110, Psych 111, Math 102, Engl 120.

Currently information regarding DFWI is addressed in the MSU catalogs; Policies/Procedures exist; Midterm deficiencies; 2nd week attendance verification.

End of course evaluations are reviewed by the Deans and Chairs, and then given to faculty members. VPAA gets involved in situations that have been brought to his attention. He said a performance implementation plan does exist and is put into place during a discussion with the faculty member.

The Disability Coordinator assists students if she feels the course load is overwhelming. It is a case by case basis. It was found on a sampling of syllabi it is being encouraged to use tutors, smart thinking, writing center, math clinic.

MSU has not had reference to this information previously. This is information that will be watched.

Demonstrate correlation between students and faculty, students and faculty are both reporting a high % of communication. However, still the high DFWI rates still exist.

Incompletes: Currently addressed at MSU with a clear policy already in place.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Include a mandatory drop down box for students to select why they are dropping when they withdraw.

Informing students, it is better to withdraw than to receive an F.

An exit interview for students.

Intervention training for faculty.

Challenges

Do students know how to withdraw?

Sources of Evidence

MSU-DFWI for fall 2006 through summer 2007

New Student Orientation Handbook

Student Survey Data

PI 3.5: Placement

Current Situation

For placement in Math courses, ACT scores are used for all students who have taken it; scores of 21 or higher on the math section allow the student to enroll in Math 103 or higher. Those students who have not taken the ACT are required to take the Compass Math Placement Exam. Scores of 0-45= Math 099, scores of 46-65= Math 102, and scores of 66 = Math 103 or 104.

Based on information from Admissions Office and the catalog, high school grades are not reviewed in any case.

The College Student Inventory is administered to freshman right out of high school. Student Affairs staff decided the mentor program might be a good vehicle to disseminate this information.

According to the Disability Coordinator, students with documented disabilities have equal access. Students are counseled by their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to the type of program they should enter and the student makes the choice of classes.

According to the Honors Program Director, Honors placement for above-average students is done by identifying potential Honors students by incoming high school GPA (above 3.50) OR by ACT score (above 25, composite). For Canadian students, we try to ID by SAT score (above 1170). Prospective students are sent letters of invitation for the Honors Program and they are invited to talk to the Honors Program Director at registration. She is sure that a good number of students are missed, either because their GPA's are not in the enrollment office system, or their ACT scores haven't yet arrived, or because their letters aren't timed just right, etc. etc., however a good effort is made to try and identify and invite. Qualified students are invited to CHOOSE to place themselves in more challenging classroom environments (honors classes are generally smaller, more discussion-based, and more accelerated). Many, however, choose not to respond to that invitation. Students are not "intentionally placed" so much as "intentionally invite self-placement."

The student survey showed that approximately 75% of students felt they were appropriately placed in their courses.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Students who are admitted to MSU by "exemption" should be required to be in the Mentee Program.

Advisors names should be mailed to students as early as possible in their first semester.

Challenges

Challenge 1: Because of the rural location, students have been in schools where they were provided lots of guidance, maturity level is lacking, intimidating for them to ask for help, have not had lots of experience on being responsible for themselves.

Challenge 2: It was difficult to locate the specific policy for admission exemptions (not found in the Undergraduate Catalog, Student Handbook or SBHE policies).

Challenge 3: Are the students admitted by exemption in the high DFWI category?

Challenge 4: Advisors are not assigned to incoming students until the second or third week of school. Many students go months without knowing who their advisors are if they don't take the time to go into Campus Connection to do so.

Sources of Evidence

Connect sessions

E-mail memo correspondence from Carissa Klabunde regarding exemption policy

PI 3.6: Out-of-Class Learning

Current Situation

There seems to be lots of activities that may include 1st year students, but few other than CONNECT and the mentoring program that are designed specifically for first-year students. It is assumed that with the wide range of activities available to all students that the first-year students are likely to take part.

Lisa Eriksmoen, Director of Student Life reported via email that they do have a data base of by hall of hall activities and the number in attendance. However, they do not have learning outcomes in residence life. She is unaware of anything in student affairs that is strictly 1st year except the freshman housing policy.

According to the MSU Institution Specific Question (ISQ #8), students were asked "What special programs does MSU offer to assist first-year students in the transition to college?"

The responses included:

- Mentoring, tutoring and advising was the most frequent response
- The second greatest number of responses was: "I don't know" or "I'm not sure"
- Other responses included: intramurals, guides, gatherings to meet new people, counseling, financial aid, writing center, study groups
- One student said that there were "Lotz [activities]. I did not attend any."

For question 3, (out-of-class activities linked to academic courses or programs) it seems that departments have out-of-class activities for all students in their classes but none designed specifically for the first-year student.

For example, in the BSE program for mathematics, students are required to do a shadowing day in a K-12 school in ED 250 - Introduction to Education, 60 hours of practicum in MATH 391 - Teaching Mathematics, and a minimum of 12 weeks student teaching. Additionally these students attend a mathematics conference as part of the MATH 391 course. The only one of these experiences that may be done by freshmen is the ED 250 course. The other experiences are typically done in the junior and senior years. BSE and BA mathematics majors who take MATH 446 - the second probability and statistics course, are required to design and run a survey, an activity that requires them to conduct their work outside of the classroom. Computer Science majors attend the MICS conference on robotics, do a robotics camp, and do internships on and off campus. The on campus internships are often done outside of the department and are always out-of-class.

The Communication department has a wide range of activities for all students: theatre activities off and on campus, speech contests for high school students, 24-hour play festival, Freshman 10 Theatre productions, and the KMSU Auction. However, none of these activities are targeted for the first-year student - although they are linked back to academic courses and programs.

English department activities include: service learning, activist projects, internships, practicums, student teaching, conferences, senior seminar presentations and the English Club/Sigma Tau Delta.

The Psychology department has no specific activities for freshman psych, addiction, or Social Work. Some classes have activities but these are not established by the department. They do have particular out-of-class activities in upper division classes. Both Addiction Studies and Social Work have practicum requirements. Psychology students may do a senior research project. Psychology Education majors must student teach. Social Work has requirements for out-of-class activities for many of their classes. All students are encouraged to attend professional conferences, and the department frequently takes students to regional conferences where some present their own research.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

We have the opportunity to increase student awareness immediately entering their studies at MSU of the wide range of cultural opportunities that are free and/or affordable.

Challenges

Challenge 1: It will be a challenge to figure out what we are doing now and develop a cohesive plan for the first-year student. Departments seem to have activities for general education or lower level courses within a major that may include and could be likely to include first-year students, but there is no documented plan.

Challenge 2: The challenge is to assess the impact of first-year activities. With so many influencing factors, how can a single course of action be identified as making the difference?

Sources of Evidence

- Email communications from Math, Communication and English department chairs.
- Review of undergraduate catalog to find specific reference to first student activities. The Mentoring Program (<http://www.minotstateu.edu/mentoring/>) was the only reference to a first-year specific program.
- Email communication from Student Services and Residence Life coordinators
- Review of the MSU Institution Specific Question (ISQ #8)

Recommended Grade: D

Recommended Action Items:

- Intervention Training for Faculty (High priority)
 - Train the faculty to deal with students who fall in the DFWI categories. Including: how to verbally address such issues and creating a statement to include on the syllabi.
- Exempted students and Mentoring Program (High priority)
 - Students admitted to MSU by exemption should be automatically placed in the mentoring program.
- Tie Gen Ed to First-Year Learning Goals (High priority)
 - Tie general education requirements to first-year learning goals (once they have been established.)
- University Committee (High priority)
 - Create a university committee to drive a focused organized effort to create learning goals for first-year students.
- University Committee (High priority)
 - Create a university committee to drive a focused look at student affairs and residence life activities as they relate to the first-year student.
- Department/College Examination of Activities (High priority)
 - Task each college to examine department and course in-class activities for first-year students and to develop a set of options. Example: Require all first-year students to attend a cultural event and give credit in class
- Email advisor names (High priority)
 - Advisors' names should be emailed to first-year students during the first week of the semester.
- First-year student Meeting with Department Faculty and Chair (High priority)
 - Have first-year students meet the day before classes begin with their department faculty and chairs for an orientation to the major.
- Discipline Specific Courses in the First Year (High priority)

- Require first-year students to take discipline specific courses in their major to create an early involvement with department faculty.
- Set Learning Goals, Define Activities, Assess Impact (High priority)
 - We need to look at the many outstanding things we are doing for all students and put together a program or a schedule that will actively involve students in MSU life. First we need to set learning goals (3.1) and then define activities that support these goals. Once this is set, there needs to be a way to assess the impact of the activities both immediately and longitudinally. Is student retention increased? Student success in the classroom? Anecdotally?
- Student Withdraw Process: Additional Requirement (High priority)
 - When a student withdraws from a class they must respond to a drop down menu in PeopleSoft that indicates their reason for dropping the class. addresses the W)
- Identify techniques that maximize student engagement. (High priority)
 - Explore how techniques can be incorporated into all sections of the same course.
- Document how data drives change. (High priority)
 - Currently data is used informally without documents in place to track such changes and effects.
- Addressing D's and F's: Exit Interview/Survey (Medium priority)
 - An opportunity exists to interview students with D and F. Following the grade reporting period students could be interviewed or sent a survey inquiring on the following: Class D or F received? Course taught by? Why the grade was earned? What could have been done to help you be successful in this class?

Faculty Dimension Committee Report

Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty. These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans, and department chairs and supported by the institutions' reward systems.

Committee Leader:

Bethany Andreasen - PhD - Associate Professor of History

Committee Members:

Larry Goodman – MAT - Lecturer in Mathematics

Debra Jensen – PhD - Associate Professor of Education

Chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Human Performance

Evelyn Klimpel – MS - Disability Student Services Counselor

Paul Markel - PhD - Professor of Psychology

Dan Ringrose – PhD - Associate Professor of History

Performance Indicator 4.1. Campus-level Encouragement:

To what degree do senior academic leaders encourage faculty to do the following?

Summary of findings for Performance Indicator 4.1

Faculty Survey item number 54, which asked “to what degree is faculty involvement with first-year students considered important by senior academic leaders?”, produced a mean of 4.04 for all responses. This mean was higher than the means for similar questions about department/unit leaders and colleagues, and is a clear indication that faculty believe that campus leaders value engagement with first-year students. When broken down by college, the lowest mean was found in the College of Arts and Sciences (3.69, while the College of Business mean was 4.25 and the College of Education and Health Sciences mean was 4.20), which is an interesting result, given that Arts and Sciences faculty are the most likely of the three to teach courses to first-year students. It should be noted at this point that recently there has been a great deal of turnover in the position of the Dean of Arts and Sciences (two deans and three interim deans during the last six years), which might have had some impact on this result.

However, the responses to survey question number 60, which asked to what extent institution leaders rewarded engagement with first-year students produce a much lower mean of 2.54 among all responses. This suggests the lack of a strong connection between what institution leaders say that they value, and what they show that they value with their actions.

4.1.1 - Use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses (rating of 2)

Currently, the General Education program is the closest approximate that Minot State has to a first-year program of study. Under the auspices of the Faculty Senate, an ad hoc committee was established this semester to consider and suggest revisions to the current General Education program. The office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs is financially supporting this effort by providing the funding to send most of the members of this ad hoc committee to an institute offered by Association of American Colleges and Universities during the summer of 2008, where they can work with consultants on the process of developing a proposal for a revised General Education program.

One measure of institutional support and encouragement of faculty in the use of pedagogies of engagement is the quality of the physical facilities in which classroom interactions take place. Ideally MSU would teach its first-year students in small classrooms with flexible furniture and equipment to facilitate discussions, group interaction and diverse teaching methods. Preliminary analysis of classrooms assigned to General Education classes in Fall 2007 gives a reasonable proxy for the physical

environment experienced by first-year students in many of their classes. (Caveat: this study used enrollment and class assignments supplied by the registrar, and further study could develop this analysis more completely. This analysis does not include science classes and laboratories, due to the way room size is allocated for those classes.) In general, the picture painted is one in which every semester large numbers of General Education students flow through classrooms that need upgrades, renovations and flexible furnishings.

Top five general purpose classrooms used by Gen. Ed. Students, F 2007, excluding Science
 Ranked by largest numbers of General Education students to “flow through” the room
(Preliminary Findings)

Room	Capacity	Format	Condition	Furniture
#1 Admin 360	48	Lecture/Tight Rows	needs renovation	Sled Desks
#2 Memorial 114	99	Lecture/Fixed Rows	good	Fixed Desks
#3 Hartnett 330	42	Lecture/Tight Rows	needs renovation	Sled Desks
#4 Admin 359	51	Lecture/Tight Rows	needs renovation	Sled Desks
#6 Main 106	100	Lecture/Fixed Rows	good	Fixed Desks

*#5: specialized computer lab used to teach writing, Hartnett 316E - capacity approximately 25

Analysis of this data has led to the following conclusions:

1. The capacity of the room appears to have dictated the furnishings, such that even if smaller size classes are located in these facilities it is difficult (or impossible) to rearrange the desks. The two most modern rooms (Memorial 114 and Main 106) are equipped with fixed amphitheater-style seating; group projects or circulation among students is not really feasible. If class size is lowered, the physical arrangement of the assigned classrooms also needs to be addressed, for it does little good to teach a small class in a room rigidly arranged for lecture.
2. The other three high-use first-year rooms on this list beg for a comprehensive remodeling. There does not appear to have been comprehensive remodeling of classroom space on third floor Administration or most of Hartnett Hall for at least ten years. Admin 360, Hartnett 330 and Admin 359 are so full of desks that it is not possible to rearrange them or to circulate to pass back work, help groups, or answer questions. Desks in these three rooms are cracking or even broken. Most Hartnett classrooms are not equipped with whiteboards. In general, good technology is present in these rooms (projector and computer cart) but it is installed to favor lecture presentations.
3. Usage of these spaces cuts across the major General Education categories, so it is entirely possible that a first-year student may spend most or even all his or her courses scheduled into rooms of this type.

4.1.2 Understand campus-wide learning goals for the first year (rating of 2)

Open-ended comments from the surveys indicate that individual faculty who teach first-year courses set outcomes expected in their courses, but do not necessarily have a clear sense of overall outcomes for first-year students. Faculty teaching primarily upper-level courses appear to attach more responsibility for student engagement to those courses. There has been effort to include some focus on faculty teaching in new faculty orientation days at the beginning of fall semester, but those sessions still appear to be focused primarily on human resources paperwork and orientation to the campus.

Overarching goals for first-year students are currently best approximated through the General Education sequence, but little evidence was found that administration or faculty have a clear understanding of any consistently expected first-year outcomes. It was also unclear as to whether faculty categorized these goals in relation to orientation, academics, connection to support services, or socialization and community-building.

4.1.3 Understand the characteristics of first-year students at this campus (rating of 3)

Substantial evidence was found that data on the characteristics of our first-year students and students overall is being collected through campus-level initiatives (Student Satisfaction Inventories-SSI, Self-reported Demographics, Faculty Surveys of Student Engagement-FSSE, National Surveys of Student

Engagement-NSSE) . This information has been overviewed and made available to faculty at Assessment Day meetings and in open forums with the President.

Data regarding actual student perceptions of MSU support (differentiated by grade-level rank) is available in the Student Satisfaction Inventories collected from 2002-2006. Categories of information include: Student Centeredness, Campus Life, Instructional Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid, Campus Support Services, Academic, Advising, Registration Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Concern for the Individual, Service Excellence, Responsiveness to Diverse Populations, and Campus Climate.

Administration and faculty have data on the general demographics (i.e. 2007 Noel Levitz College Student Inventory) of our first-year students. FSSE and NSSE data provide a range of information on more detailed questions related to faculty engagement with students. These data are differentiated by lower-division and upper-division, and allow side-by-side comparison of student and faculty perceptions of these items.

It was unclear whether MSU-specific questions in these data instruments had been generated by our MSU students or by our potential markets of students (e.g. open-ended, first-source specifics on reasons they choose a campus, students' expectations of their education, type of engagement they desire of the campus, faculty, etc.) Instruments may have been designed around predetermined administration, faculty, or researcher questions rather than generative student comments (i.e. talking with students rather than about students). There was not evidence of consideration of surveys from local high school students or those from other states or countries, all of which are targeted recruiting markets.

There is evidence in the open-ended responses from faculty to the FoE survey that they have limited time to engage with the available data sources due to workload constraints, additional demand for accountability reports (which all require time to generate), and increasing use of the Assessment Days for outside presentations. The lack of full-time staffing has severely limited the extent to which MSU's Institutional Research office is able to provide analysis of the data collected, or to initiate any additional collections and analyses of data beyond that which is already mandated.

4.1.4 Understand broad trends and issues in the first year (rating of 3)

During the past few semesters, the Faculty Senate's Academic Assessment Committee has had the financial support of the administration as it has sought to focus Assessment Day activities on issues that have relevance to student engagement and the first-year experience. A central topic of discussion at MSU's Spring 2007 Assessment Day sessions was the General Education program. Administration funding has made it possible to bring to campus such presenters as Richard Hersh, who introduced the campus to the Collegiate Learning Assessment Project, for which he serves as co-director, and George Kuh, Director of the Center for Postsecondary Research, who described the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) project and explained the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and MSU's results.

Recommendations concerning 4.1

MSU should expand the personnel of the Institutional Research Office. (Medium priority)

MSU needs at least one fulltime staff member in the Institutional Research Office in order to analyze data currently being collected, and to gather and analyze additional data useful to the institution. If the administration cannot make this staffing commitment to break down data into targeted reports more immediately useful to individual service areas and academic units, it will need to make more paid time available to units and programs to review data.

MSU should develop immediate and long-range plans for remodeling and refurbishing classrooms to promote academic engagement. (High priority)

MSU needs to develop plans for comprehensive remodeling of classrooms across campus. The highest priority should be those classrooms that serve the highest numbers of General Education (and thus first-year) students.

Performance Indicator 4.2 Unit-level Encouragement:

To what degree do unit-level academic administrators encourage faculty to do the following?

Summary of findings for Performance indicator 4.2

One Faculty Survey item, number 55, was quite positive. The item asked “to what degree is faculty involvement with first-year students considered important by: Your Department/unit leader?” The data produced a mean of 3.73 from 150 respondents (Std Dev 1.12) on a 1-5 scale. A total of 63.3% of the respondents rated the degree as “high” or “very high”. Only 15% responded “Not at all” or “slight”.

Faculty Survey item 59 produced a mean of 2.82 from 68 respondents (Std Dev 1.22). The item asked “to what degree is excellence in teaching first-year students acknowledged, recognized, and/or rewarded by: Your Department/unit leader?” A total of 42.6% responded “Not at all” or “slight”. Only 30.9% responded “high” or “very high”.

These findings were prototypical across documents; that is, there was definitely encouragement for faculty to engage students in these ways. However, unit leaders had little available to them that could be applied as systemic or tangible rewards for doing so, and a number of constraints were identified.

4.2.1 Encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses (rating of 2)

Unit administrators (chairs and program directors) understand the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses, since processes related to their job duties involve them directly in faculty assignments for teaching, pre-requisite course requirements, curriculum change initiatives and program assessments.

The FoE faculty and student surveys (open-ended responses) indicate a broad range of the strategies defined within the Faculty Dimension as “pedagogies of engagement” are being used, although perhaps not consistently. The data are bimodal, indicating some faculty use a great variety of these strategies, and others do not. The survey data does not indicate whether those faculty using the strategies are doing so due to department/unit leader encouragement or due to individual faculty initiative.

A high percentage of first-year survey courses are taught by adjunct faculty. It is difficult to differentiate between how the teaching of regular faculty and of adjunct faculty are perceived by students, as the data sources do not appear to break down the data along those lines. Adjuncts are not typically required to perform service and scholarship, so they may have less opportunity for out-of-class engagement.

Faculty development for consistent high quality instruction should be supported in policy and systemically in faculty induction processes. Faculty come to MSU as experts in their content area, but may have had no course work in the processes of learning, varied models for teaching particular types of objectives, or motivational theory and group dynamics necessary for classroom engagement. In addition, teaching new course preparations at a new university requires time to work with existing faculty on the types of engagement expected, university learning goals, and specific trends in that new area.

4.2.2 Encourage faculty to understand unit-level learning goals for entry-level courses (rating of 3)

There are no unit-level learning goals for first-year students in particular, but a large percentage of first-year students are enrolled in General Education courses. Department/unit leaders utilize faculty committees when writing outcomes for General Education courses. The student outcomes, in theory, are driven by the Minot State University philosophy of General Education and the content of the particular course. Some outcomes are also dependent on commonality agreements on General Education within the North Dakota University system. The General Education assessment process leads to department/unit discussions regarding learning goals for entry level classes. Some departments provide new faculty with examples of syllabi which include course outcomes.

4.2.3 Encourage faculty to understand the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses (rating of 2)

Efforts of department/unit leaders to facilitate faculty understanding of discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses can be found in the General Education discussions and assessment process. Analysis of assessment data leads to discussions about trends and issues in the department.

Discussions of course changes, teaching assignments, course content, pedagogy, and student retention also lead to more understanding. Department/unit leaders encourage discipline-based conferences and workshop attendance, within the limits of their budgets. Several departments also circulate literature to faculty containing discipline-specific content and pedagogy. Faculty in many disciplines are actively adding to professional resources in the MSU library, but some financial constraints exist for obtaining access to new journals, as part of the physical collection or electronic full text. Some additions were made in this area this year, such as the Science Direct access.

It should also be noted that many discipline-specific trends are driven by the academies through accreditation processes or standards related to specific majors. It is critical to be aware that standards and standardization are not the same thing, and that higher education exists to seek new knowledge and innovations, not merely to replicate existing knowledge. It is necessary for faculty to be interactive with their professional academies through participation in professional activities and engagement with current scholarly publications to drive this ongoing knowledge process.

Recommendations concerning 4.2

Department/unit leaders should work with senior academic leaders to encourage and enable their faculty to participate in professional development opportunities. (High priority)

MSU and specific units within should make available a slate of professional development options focused on active engagement with new learning and teaching content and strategies, as well as incentives for participating in them. These activities might include, but not be limited to, MSU-sponsored workshops open to all faculty (perhaps instead of the plethora of meetings on convocation days), advanced academic coursework in learning sciences (offered to faculty at no cost), or interactive work with experienced educators who have been recognized for high quality student engagement. These options should include both opportunities on the MSU campus and beyond, and should also be open to adjunct faculty.

Department/unit leaders should facilitate the teaching of newly-hired faculty by ensuring that they are provided with sample syllabi, course outcomes, and a departmental mentor. (Medium priority)

All new faculty should be provided with copies of course outcomes and existing syllabi for the courses that they will be teaching. They should also be assigned a mentor within the department/division who is teaching similar courses.

Department/unit leaders should work to provide sufficient funding for the travel necessary to participate in professional development opportunities. (Medium priority)

Each department/unit should allow all faculty teaching first-year students to attend discipline-based conferences and/or workshops on a rotational basis. This should not decrease the funding for other types of travel in the department/unit. They should provide sufficient time for in-depth academic discussion and planning.

Performance Indicator 4.3 Expectations:

To what degree are expectations for involvement with first-year students clearly communicated to the following groups?

Summary of findings for Performance Indicator 4.3

In the view of the committee, there is little evidence that expectations for involvement with first-year students are clearly communicated to either full-time or part-time/adjunct faculty. This is not surprising, as the university has no specific statement of philosophy with regard to the first-year experience. The closest approximate that exists is the General Education statement of philosophy, supplemented by the "five strands" model of assessment for General Education courses. Requirements for continued certification of General Education courses ensure that faculty teaching these courses must become familiar with the strands underlying the General Education program, but the same is not necessarily true of the philosophy.

Neither the strands nor the philosophy are necessarily identified to candidates during the hiring process, either through position descriptions or the interview. Once a faculty member is hired, he or she may inherit a list of assessment outcomes identified for a pre-existing General Education course, but there is no process that seeks to ensure that each faculty member who teaches first-year students is made aware of the General Education statement of philosophy. The faculty handbook and new handbook developed specifically for adjunct faculty as of the 2006-2007 academic year provide information related to logistical issues, but do not address matters concerned with academic interaction with students.

A positive recent development is an on-going orientation for new faculty that is handled by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. He meets monthly with all of the new full-time faculty hires for the academic year, and the group holds discussions based upon their classroom experiences and their readings in two books: Rebekah Nathan's *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*, and Patrick Allitt's *I'm the Teacher, You're the Student*. Issues pertaining to first-year students have been part of these discussions, but not the focus. Interestingly, however, none of the open-ended survey responses made reference to these discussion meetings.

During recent years, it has been the norm for the administration not to authorize searches until well into the academic year. While this practice is driven by understandable desires to be financially prudent, the later that MSU begins the process, the smaller the pool of potential applicants becomes. This sometimes has an impact on the quality of faculty that MSU is able to hire, and frequently results in the institution having to fall back on temporary hires. Neither outcome is ideal when MSU is seeking to improve its academic engagement with first-year students.

4.3.1 Newly hired full-time faculty (rating of 1)

AND 4.3.2 Newly hired part-time/adjunct instructors (rating of 1)

Survey question 69 addresses Position Descriptions. The mean for all responses is 2.16; 66.3% said positions descriptions do not address responsibilities to first-year students, or address them only slightly. Interestingly, when this is broken down by college, the College of Business faculty responses have a slightly higher mean (2.62) than either the College of Arts and Sciences (2.14) or the College of Education and Health Sciences (2.04), even though Business faculty have the least amount of interaction with first-year students, and thus are least likely to find this in their position descriptions. Survey question 70 addresses Candidate Interviews. The means for all responses is 2.32; 56.5% said interviews do not address responsibilities to first-year students, or address them only slightly. Again, Business faculty responses have a slightly higher mean (2.71) than A&S (2.39) or EHS (2.08). Survey question 72 addresses orientation for recent hires. The mean for all responses is 2.32; 50% said orientation does not address responsibilities to first-year students, or addresses them only slightly.

Open-ended comments from the surveys indicate that individual faculty who teach first-year courses establish student outcomes for their courses, but do not necessarily have a clear sense of overall outcomes for first-year students. Faculty teaching primarily upper-level courses appear to address more responsibility for student engagement toward those courses. There has been effort to include some focus on teaching in new faculty orientation days at the beginning of fall semester, but those sessions still appear to be focused primarily on human resources paperwork and orientation to the campus. There does not appear to be a consistent process for making information on first-year student characteristics and outcome expectations available to adjuncts.

4.3.3 Continuing faculty (rating of 2)

As discussed previously, the lack of a philosophy statement for the first-year experience necessarily means that such a statement has not been communicated. The first necessary step will be for the university to define a philosophy statement for the first-year experience; the second step will be to communicate it to all faculty. As this is the purview of the Philosophy Dimension, this committee will not elaborate further on that matter. However, as MSU's expectations increasingly emphasize the importance of faculty involvement with first-year students, there are two concerns that the committee believes it is important to address.

Faculty responses to the open-ended questions on the FoE survey reveal that a major concern is too many demands on faculty time. There was evidence in narrative comments across documents that faculty feel overly busy with non-academic work, and that they have decreasing time for scholarly work or academic discourse. This is unsurprising, given the plethora of initiatives that the university has become involved with in recent years, as spelled out in some detail in MSU's 2007-2008 Higher Learning Commission Self-Study (hereafter referred to as Self-Study). Additionally, there have been many changes in administrative and support staff systems which have caused considerable 'trickle-down' of detail work being redistributed across campus. Cumulatively, this has added considerable committee and 'busy-work' time to the faculty workload. Unfortunately, that time is of necessity taken away from direct contact with students and the curriculum. Redistributing excess work does not solve the problem; it simply hands the problem to someone else.

The question then becomes, how can MSU faculty focus on improving the first-year experience on top of everything else they have to do? One approach that would aid the faculty in this focus would be a reduction in class size for courses taken mostly by first-year students. In some General Education categories, the average enrolled class size is about 40 students. In areas such as composition and communications, classes are capped at 22 and 25; mathematics limits start at 35 students but are often raised to accommodate fall-semester enrollments. A maximum of twenty-five students, rather than forty, would allow the faculty to engage more intensively with their students. This, of course, would require that the university reconsider the policy of allocating resources focused almost solely on the criterion of FTEs.

The second concern is faculty autonomy. Currently, MSU's quality benefits from the existing variety of approaches among its faculty, who have individualized philosophies and strategies for teaching the students. It is important that the execution of this initiative encourage faculty to use their individual strengths to promote student engagement, rather than to limit them to a single model of teaching to which all faculty are required to adhere. It should also be noted that different learning goals require different teaching models and strategies, even within the same class. Faculty should be provided with many examples and ideas on how to engage students, but must be left with autonomy to make professionally-grounded decisions about those philosophies and strategies they choose, based on what is best practice in their discipline areas and what will yield positive results for students engaging in those areas.

In the last few years, the Committee of Twelve has been established to provide an additional assessment of faculty teaching. Probationary faculty members are observed by members of this committee two times during their first five years at Minot State, and the records of these observations are considered by the Promotion Committee for those individuals seeking promotion to Associate Professor. In operation, it appears that not all committee members recognize the validity of a variety of teaching models.

Recommendations concerning Performance Indicator 4.3

MSU should reduce maximum sizes for those classes most commonly taken by first-year students. (High priority)

To encourage engagement, additional writing, and student interaction, MSU needs to set a lower maximum limit for first-year classes than currently exists in most of the General Education categories other than Communications.

MSU should launch faculty position searches earlier in the academic year. (Medium priority)

In order to maximize the quality of the faculty it hires, MSU would be best served by beginning its searches as early as possible, so as to have access to the largest pool of potential applicants.

Deans and chairs should make certain that faculty position descriptions and interviews specifically discuss responsibilities to first-year students. (Medium priority)

Position descriptions should include language that explains that academic engagement with first-year students is something that the institution both expects and values on the part of its faculty. Once a philosophy statement for the first-year experience is developed, it will be important to include it as part of

these materials. The interview process should specifically address the responsibilities of the person hired for any faculty position involving academic engagement with first-year students.

Candidates for faculty positions should be asked to submit a portfolio of teaching materials, and to teach a class during the campus interview. (Medium priority)

Candidates for faculty positions should submit a portfolio of materials that illustrates their strategy and experience in the arena of student engagement. They should also teach a class (an existing class, or a group of students brought together for this purpose), and the search committee should solicit the students' opinions on the engagement of the candidates' teaching.

Individual faculty should consider ways in which they might choose to incorporate evidence of strategies of engagement with first-year students into their tenure and promotion application materials. (Low priority)

Over a period of time, some faculty will choose to produce portfolios of materials that demonstrate the strategies that they employ to engage their first-year students. They would then have the option of submitting these portfolios as additional material demonstrating the quality of their teaching when they are being considered for tenure or promotion.

The Faculty Senate, in conjunction with the financial support of the office of the VPAA, should provide orientation for members of the Committee of Twelve. (Medium priority)

If the institution is going to promote teaching strategies that engage first-year students, the Faculty Senate should review the efforts of the committee, and work with the support of the office of the VPAA to ensure that committee members participate in professional development activities that prepare them to observe and assess this engagement in an open-minded manner.

Performance Indicator 4.4: Rewards

To what degree does the institution reward a high level of faculty performance in the following?

Summary of findings for Performance Indicator 4.4

A variety of data reveal that encouragement for good teaching is at present largely rhetorical and that first-year teaching is not specifically recognized. The same holds true for out-of-class interaction with and advising of first-year students. Overall, existing recognition and reward systems identify teaching in a broader sense. The most prestigious award is the Board of Regents' Faculty Achievement Award. Three faculty are selected annually, one for service, one for scholarship, and one for teaching excellence. Awardees may only receive the award once in their MSU career and receive \$1,000. Some years, and in some colleges, deans distribute letters recognizing particularly high teaching evaluations. Newsletters identify faculty as sponsors of high-profile student engagement activities, including undergraduate research, conference presentations, partnerships and community service. Finally, the MSU President sends personal letters to faculty recognizing notable events in the community, including those related to the student-engagement aspects of Vision 2013.

4.4.1 Instruction in first-year classes (rating of 1)

MSU does not presently identify first-year teaching specifically for monetary compensation, although general teaching is a fundamental component in contracts, evaluation, tenure and promotion. Underscoring the lack of resources for salaries overall, MSU's Self-Study found that compensation of faculty lags behind national and regional norms. Current efforts to address salaries have led the MSU Compensation Task Force to emphasize a combination of cost-of-living increases and equity adjustments to raise existing salaries closer to national CUPA-based norms. After these priorities are met, deans receive discretionary funds "for merit or internal equity." (Self-Study, pp. 45-47) It appears that what merit resources are available are then divided among the areas of scholarship, service, and teaching in a variety of ways such that actual monetary allocations for good teaching appear to be very small. While the Faculty Dimension committee could not verify this, the Self-Study concluded in general that merit pay is inadequate (p. 61). Beyond this, it appears that the system for rewarding good teaching relies on evaluations and other quite varied formulae in use across departments and divisions. First-year teaching is not directly defined or separated out from teaching in general.

The FoE survey looks at many aspects of the university experience, but very few questions directly assess faculty perceptions of existing reward mechanisms for teaching first-year students. Even so, respondents likely saw one aspect of Question 24 (adequacy of “fiscal” and “personnel” resources for first-year teaching) in part as indicative of their own compensation. In general, there was a significant disparity between responses from administrators on Question 24 (adequacy of resources) and those from all responding faculty. The mode for administrators is high (6/18 respondents) whereas the mode for faculty members (33/107) is only moderate. One-fifth of faculty respondents described adequacy of resources for first-year courses (personnel and fiscal) as slight to not at all (cross-tab of questions 1 and 24).

Overall, MSU faculty found first-year resources to be moderately adequate, and differences between faculty who had taught first-year courses and those who had not in the past two years were minimal. Responses mostly ranged from moderate to high. Those with the recent first-year teaching experience were slightly more likely to rate resources very high, but even that pool was only 13.6% versus 8.3% (cross-tab of questions 57 and 24, filtered by faculty). Forty respondents did not teach in past two years, whereas 67 did.

Probably most telling is that within the College of Arts and Sciences, where the majority of first-year teaching occurs, faculty are least likely to think resources are adequate. Also notable is that no respondent from the two colleges that teach the fewest first-year courses responded that resources were not at all or slightly adequate.

Cross-Tabbed Responses to Questions 57 and 24, Filtered by College

	Taught Past 2 Years	Didn't Teach
A&S	45	8
EHS	14	24
Business	0	7

Among A&S faculty, 71.4% of those hired in the past five years rated adequacy of resources as high or very high, while only 33.3% of senior faculty responded this way. Since both junior and senior faculty share roughly equally in the teaching of first-year courses, disparities in first-year teaching loads do not appear to be a factor at MSU. Faculty employed longer than five years were just as likely to have taught a first-year class (62.7%) as those hired in the past five years (62.5%) (cross-tab of questions 71 and 57). Physical facilities and resources supporting first-year teaching (4.3) seemingly do not account for this difference, since all faculty use the same teaching facilities.

Other more likely explanations for the disparity in Senior/Junior response on adequacy of fiscal and personnel resources include: experienced faculty whose salaries lag further and further behind national norms (discussed in the Self-Study) and absence of any break for renewal and revision of courses (lack of sabbatical or load-release policy). This finding strongly demonstrates the need for multiple mechanisms to reward ongoing teaching of first-year students, including sabbaticals and course reductions, merit pay, resources to redesign courses, and direct input on the facilities used to teach these courses.

Evidence suggests that when MSU has offered faculty a variety of voluntary opportunities to improve pedagogy (Partners In Learning program, also known as PIL) and to discuss and refine curriculum (Learning Outcomes Programs) at the unit level, faculty have availed themselves of these opportunities. In addition to dozens of faculty who participated in PIL, fifteen academic programs undertook some sort of revision sponsored by the Learning Outcomes Program part of the Bush grant. Upon successful conclusion of these activities, faculty participants received a stipend.

Units and programs, as well as individual faculty, should be consulted on what type of tangible rewards would assist them in providing additional first-year supports. It is likely time or monetary rewards will be noted, but faculty may also value better support for travel for faculty development or consideration of these activities toward sabbatical leave as well as service.

4.4.2 Out-of-class interaction with first-year students (rating of 1)

The committee found little recognition or reward for out-of-class interaction with first-year students, beyond what was discussed above.

4.4.3 Advising of first-year students (rating of 1)

Advising is acknowledged as an important point of contact between faculty and first-year (really all year) students, but across campus advising loads remain very uneven. SSI reports indicate students on the whole are relatively satisfied with advising, yet anecdotal evidence and the Self-Study indicate that faculty are less certain that advising is consistent across units. Furthermore, data for the first-year advising experience are lacking. Campus reward systems currently fold advising into the larger collection of duties identified as service, including committee work. The Self-Study and other documentation notes that faculty time for advising is quite limited, especially for faculty with heavy advising loads. Open-ended responses to the FOE faculty survey indicate a wide range of responses as to whether advising works consistently across campus as well as a perception that there are few rewards for large advising loads or dedication of significant time to advising. External accreditation agencies, including NCATE, have raised ongoing concerns about the large number of advisees assigned to some faculty members. Few, if any, units directly reward faculty for heavy advising loads or for high-quality advising.

Advising comments in the open-ended Faculty and Student Surveys stemmed from three primary areas of need.

- 1) Technical Assistance: IDs, registration, technology, access library services, financial aid, business office, records office procedures, campus safety, student appeals
- 2) Academic Advising: program requirements, scheduling sequences, course content, pre-requisites, specific-area materials, tutoring, testing, academic honesty, and expectations for university-level academic and intellectual engagement
- 3) General Career Advising: career exploration, job skills, resume writing, etc.

General orientation seminars are best suited to deal with general advising, career exploration, technical assistance, administrative processes, and campus activities orientation. Seminars related to academic and intellectual engagement would best be more specialized, and provided by individual units or program areas, or by multi-disciplinary groups of faculty. Administrative support for such academic seminars could include load credit for participating units or faculty members. Such seminars could also be accepted for General Education credit.

Both students and faculty expressed some concern over the hours that administrative and other services on campus are open, whether the particular staff who perform those functions are available when needed, and whether services can be provided more seamlessly without several stops for the same function. This is of particular concern for new students and new faculty, but persists in comments of individuals more experienced with MSU's structures.

Substantial need for a paperwork audit to assess effectiveness and duplication of effort also emerged. Considerable change has occurred in paperwork and electronic processes over the past five years, and considerable effort has been expended to make new processes function effectively. There are, however still many loose ends, and change still seems constant and random rather than systematic. This change, and reconfiguration of many administrative and staff positions, has resulted in many processes being distributed across faculty and students, who may not always have necessary information or knowledge of the fundamental reasons for these processes. Distance education students, including new undergraduate and graduate students, often have difficulty with paperwork processes which were originally designed to function primarily on-campus. For instance, they often expect to receive a mailed billing for tuition. It was not clear whether all notices and reminders posted for students on campus are also sent to students in distance and blended courses.

Freshmen Seminars are discussed in a number of places in institutional documents. In some contexts this term is related to orientation activities such as registration and campus services. In other contexts the term is related to providing purposeful scaffolding of first-year student engagement in the academic and intellectual expectations at the university level. Considerable effort has been expended to improve our

general registration and orientation processes in the Connect sessions relative to initial registration. The University provides a Writing Center and accommodations for students with exceptionalities, but proactive engagement related to academic and intellectual expectations for all first-year students was not evident.

Recommendations concerning Performance Indicator 4.4

MSU should once again institute a program of opportunities promoting development of first-year teaching excellence, which offer faculty a choice of both activities and rewards. (High priority)

Faculty who elect to participate might expand their pedagogical repertoire through a revived PIL program, audit of a graduate course in Education, structured observation of other faculty, or a Learning Opportunity Program directed at revamping first-year courses. After completing one of these experiences, teaching a predetermined number of first-year sections, and submitting a narrative describing related changes and improvements, the faculty member would be formally rewarded. Rewards should be substantial and tailored to individual needs. A possible incentive list should include unrestricted course release time, financial and benefit support for sabbatical opportunities, merit pay, specialized equipment, and summer research funding.

MSU should provide additional resources in order to create a dedicated reward system for good first-year teaching. (High priority)

Recognition of first-year teaching will require substantial new resources rather than dividing the existing pie into smaller slices. Institutionalization of the necessary resources and logistical support for such a program will require a substantial and ongoing commitment by MSU. It is essential that this program complement rather than replace other institutional recognition efforts. Nevertheless, the recognition system proposed would spread the cost over several years and allow resources to be allocated for sabbaticals, course release, merit pay, and other incentives in a systematic, predictable, and planned manner. Over the long term this affordable investment will support both the quality of the first-year academic experience, faculty morale, and faculty retention.

MSU should establish a tiered system of advising. (Medium priority)

Considering the diversity of student needs, as well as the fact that advising needs to continue past the first year, several strands of advising need to occur, ideally through a “tiered” system across the four-year experience, providing information as needed by the students. Parties responsible for these strands would fall out logically across already existing structures.

MSU should formally recognize academic advising as part of load. (Medium priority)

If the university truly values this additional engagement time with students, advising loads should either be factored into faculty load or paid an equivalent overload. This should include both advising of freshmen undergraduate students, and the advising necessary for graduate student induction and capstone projects/theses/demonstrations.

MSU needs to undertake a paperwork audit. (Low priority)

A paperwork audit would help trace and streamline necessary administrative functions and tie responsibility for these to the appropriate job descriptions. This would make it possible to lessen existing confusion over frequently-changing administrative processes, and reduce the amount of time that faculty and students must devote to completing the required processes.

Overall grade for Faculty Dimension: D+

Transition Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support, as appropriate.

Committee Leader:

John Girard – PhD - Dean of Enrollment Management

Committee Members:

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Rebecca Porter - BS - Enrollment Services
Sarah Rowe Clutts - MSU Student
Margaret Sherve, PhD – Assistant Professor of English

Background

Committee Objectives

The objectives of Transition Dimension Committee included evaluate Minot State University's effectiveness in:

1. Communicating to potential students about the lived experience of first-year students (through our website, enrollment material, marketing, and campus visits).
2. Communicating to potential students about our university (mission, academic expectations, out-of-class engagement, entry requirements, actual costs, and financial aid).
3. Communicating to external groups (high schools personnel, families and other support networks) about their role in facilitating student success in the first year of college.
4. Connecting first-year students with faculty (especially out of class), other first-year students, upper-level students and support services personnel.
5. Providing high quality academic advising.

Sources of Evidence

To achieve the objectives, the Committee considered the following:

1. Minot State University website (www.minotstateu.edu), with special emphasis on the potential student section (www.askmsu.com).
2. Printed material used to recruit students.
3. E-Brochure used to recruit students.
4. Official correspondence of the Admission's Office.
5. Events hosted for high school counselors.
6. CONNECT (new student orientation and registration).
7. Current department/division advising policies and procedures.

8. Faculty/Staff and Student Foundation of Excellence (FoE) surveys.
9. FoE Current Practice Inventory (CPI).
10. Mid-term deficiency report.
11. Student mentoring program.
12. Campus visit practices.

Analysis

Dimension Grade: C-

Communication to First-year Students

Summary Dimension Committee Analysis:

The admission team works incredibly hard to connect with high school students and counselors in our area. All high schools within a 140 mile radius are visited at least once each year. Every high school and all ND juniors and seniors receive printed material from Minot State University. In addition all students who include MSU on their ACT form receive a personal invitation to visit the campus. That said, the committee noted:

- The level and timeliness of communication with potential students is weak and requires substantial revision.
- The tone and language of official admission correspondence to potential students is confusing and bureaucratic. **Note:** As a result of this finding, all letters to students have been revised and are now clearer and much more student friendly.
- The Minot State University website should be reviewed with a potential student's and parents' wants and needs in mind. **Note:** The potential student section of the website is being revamped and should be launched (or "should launch") in Spring 2008.
- The e-brochure appears useful; however, additional high quality content and pictures are required for a number of programs.
- The printed recruiting material is high quality; however, it is missing some key messages (engagement, mission, vision, out-of-class opportunities, connecting students etc).
- At present, much of the material is not transparent with regard to "total costs." Most material includes tuition, fees, and room & board. Most material does not include costs of books or living expenses. Only 58% of students rated the University's accuracy in communicating tuition and living expenses as high or very high.
- The availability of scholarships and awards is promoted; however, the process to apply for awards and scholarships is not entirely clear. Only 50% of students rated the University's accuracy in communicating financial aid opportunities as high or very high.
- A high-quality comprehensive recruiting and marketing booklet (sometimes referred to as a viewbook) is lacking.

Survey Analysis:

The following questions from the faculty/staff and student surveys were considered (based on 1 to 5 Likert scale):

Question	Faculty/Staff Mean	Student Mean
Prior to attending this college/university, to what degree did this institution accurately communicate the following: Academic expectations for students	NA	3.51
Prior to attending this college/university, to what degree did this institution accurately communicate the following: Available academic majors	NA	3.77
Prior to attending this college/university, to what degree did this institution accurately communicate the following: Tuition and living expenses	NA	3.63
Prior to attending this college/university, to what degree did this institution accurately communicate the following: Financial aid Opportunities	NA	3.48
To what degree has this institution: Communicated the importance of out-of-class activities	NA	2.90
Standards of Behavior - To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Standards of behavior in an academic community	NA	3.45
To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Acknowledging the source of ideas not your own	3.30	3.45
To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Academic honesty	3.49	3.88
To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Ethical conduct	3.19	3.62

Communication to External Entities

Summary Dimension Committee Analysis:

Communicating with external stakeholders is a priority for a variety of MSU faculty and staff. For example, many people visit local schools to promote our programs. The president frequently visits high schools; in 2007/8, the VP for Advancement talked to most service club in the region; college deans have visited regional schools; and the admission team has a presence at many regional events. Each year Minot State University and Minot High School co-host a social to enhance communication between the two entities.

The recent opening, by Minot State University, of a University Outreach Center at Magic City Campus is a positive initiative; however, more should be done to engage external entities. In particular, we should ensure regional high school counselors are aware of the significant changes at the University.

At present, ND school counselors believe four-year programs do not create value for students. We advise a targeted campaign that highlights the benefits of four-year university education. The revitalized high school Counselor’s Newsletter is a good start. An enhanced program for counselor’s visits to campus is under development.

At present, little evidence exists demonstrating that we are engaging local organizations to help FY students.

Survey Analysis:

There are no survey questions related to this section.

Connecting First-year Students

Summary Dimension Committee Analysis:

Faculty, staff, and students agree that students are not well connected to academic support services outside of the classroom. Almost 50% of students reported their level of connection with faculty outside the classroom as not at all or slight; only 23% reported a high or very high level of connection.

FY students do not feel particularly connected to other students or faculty. Only 22% of students rated their connection with sophomores, juniors, seniors and as high or very high; 46% rated their level as not at all or slight.

Similarly students do not believe their families are connected to the University. At present the major family “activity” is the parent component of CONNECT, which has received excellent reviews. In addition families are invited to Campus Visits.

Despite a valiant effort at CONNECT to inform students and families of available support services, only 38% rated their level of connection to academic support services outside the classroom as a high or very high level; 27% reported rated their level as not at all or slight.

Through the Mentoring Program, FY students have the option to attend workshops concerning issues related to stress management, time management, study skills; however, the attendance at these events is very low (the most popular event was attended by 8% of FY students).

Survey Analysis:

Question	Faculty/Staff Mean	Student Mean
As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution: Connected you with other new students	NA	3.14
As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution: Connected you with sophomores, juniors, and seniors	NA	2.65
As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution: Connected you with faculty members outside of class	NA	2.68
As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution: Connected you with academic support outside the classroom (e.g., tutoring, advising)	3.21	3.13
As a first-year student, to what degree has this institution:	NA	2.53

Helped your family feel a part of your college experience		
To what degree has this institution: Provided opportunities for involvement in out-of-class activities that interested you	NA	3.18

Academic Advising

Summary Dimension Committee Analysis:

A significant statistical difference exists between advisors' and students' thoughts about advising. More than 90% of faculty advisors believe that the level of advising first-year students regarding the selection of courses is high or very high; however, only 55% of students feel the same.

Similarly, 74% of faculty advisors rate the level of advising about future enrollment plans as high to very high but only 34% of students assign the same level of satisfaction. Overall, advisors believe a moderately (3.21/5.0) effective academic advising system is in place for first-year students.

A review of the mid-term deficiency report for Fall 2007 indicates an alarming rate of students receive D's or F's at midterm (48% of FY students). At present, the only intervention is a letter from the VPAA. Advisors are not made aware students' situations and therefore cannot intervene.

A review of current advising practices and processes discovered a high level of inconsistency.

Many department/divisions do not have guidelines, policies, or training. In most cases individual advisors decide the frequency, quality, and timeliness of advising. There is little evidence that advising is available during the summer and winter breaks.

At present, very few FY students are advised by their "real" advisor during CONNECT. Many FY students do not meet their advisors until well into their first semester.

Group, rather than individual, advising is the order of the day during CONNECT. Often students with varying needs and different programs are grouped together resulting in general rather than specific advising. The focus of advising during CONNECT is course selection; there is little time for discussion about careers or special needs. In many cases - for example humanities, social science, corporate fitness, secondary education - most advisors are not particularly well versed on the nuances of each particular program.

Survey Analysis:

Question	Advisor Mean	Student Mean
To what degree have faculty/staff advisors: Explained the requirements for specific academic majors	NA	3.45
To what degree have faculty/staff advisors: Helped you select courses	4.43	3.56
To what degree have faculty/staff advisors: Discussed what it takes for you to be academically successful	3.89	3.31
To what degree have faculty/staff advisors: Discussed your	4.05	3.00

future enrollment plans (e.g., stay, drop-out, transfer)		
In advising first-year students, to what degree do you: Have adequate training to effectively address their needs	3.49	NA
The overall effectiveness of academic advising for first-year students at this institution	3.21	NA

Action Items

Based on the Transition Dimension Committee's evaluation, the following action items are recommended (grouped by category and priority):

- Admissions: Print Material should be more positive and congratulatory. Where applicable it should build on the tenets of Vision 2013. Information about CONNECT (orientation and registration) should be included (*High priority*).
- Admissions: Invite University President and Student Government Association to include letters of welcome (*High priority*).
- Advising: Join a national association (perhaps National Academic Advising Association www.nacada.ksu.edu) to implement best practices (*High priority*)
- Advising: Engage Faculty Senate to clarify faculty role in advising (*High priority*)
- Advising: Assign advisors during CONNECT (*High priority*)
- Advising: Ensure advising services are available during summer and winter breaks (*High priority*)
- Advising: Develop and disseminate unique advising strategies for select populations (for example Honors, Native American, International, Athletes, etc) (*High priority*)
- Advising: Expand policy, responsibility, and accountability of mid-term deficiency reports (*High priority*)
- Advising: Define clear interventions, both academic and student affairs (*High priority*)
- Advising: Develop outcomes and assessment plan for advising (*High priority*)
- Advising: Re-evaluate the process for assigning advisors (*High Priority*)
- Advising: During CONNECT offer one-on-one advising (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: Establish a "one-stop" FY shop/clearinghouse for all student questions (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: Develop and implement a training program for faculty and staff (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: Develop advising checklists (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: During CONNECT, move beyond course selection to academic planning (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: Develop advising guidelines for academic programs and general education (*Medium priority*)
- Advising: Consider a mentoring system for advisors (*Low priority*)
- Advising: Consider sending a team to the NACADA Academic Advising Institutes (June 22-27, 2008 or July 27 - August 1 www.nacada.ksu.edu) (*Low priority*)

- Advising: Establish a plan to provide advice in three areas: academic, student success, and career (*Low priority*)
- Advising: Acknowledge and train informal advisers (for example library, registrar, enrollment, recruiting, financial aid, international staff) (*Low priority*)
- Advising: Determine if FY students "really" comprehend messages from CONNECT (*Low priority*)
- Advising: Develop web-based advising tools (how, what, where, when, why) (*Low priority*)
- Advising: Develop students responsibility sheet/contract (*Low priority*)
- Communication: Expand and refine Counselor Day (perhaps focus on department or division) (*High priority*)
- Communication: Expand Counselor Newsletter (*Medium priority*)
- Connections: Develop and sustain FY experience (*High priority*)
- Connections: Expand student mentoring with a view to have a higher percentage of FY students participate in events. (*High priority*)
- Connections: Develop a "Bring a FY student" event (*High priority*)
- Connections: Expand ReCONNECT (first week activities) (*High priority*)
- Connections: Increase knowledge of, accessibility to, and visibility of student services/clinics (*High priority*)
- Connections: Develop programs to encourage/reward student participation in club/organization (*High priority*)
- Connections: Organize a first week of school "come meet your department" event for faculty and students (*High priority*)
- Connections: Expand life skill workshop options for students and encourage participation therein (*High priority*)
- Connections: Organize regular "Thursday off-hour" events to facilitate faculty and students out-of-class engagement (*Medium priority*)
- Connections: Develop sample schedules for each department to ensure balanced course loads and interaction with other FY students (*Low priority*)
- Connections: Present about student services/clinics in classes (*Low priority*)
- Faculty: Invite and encourage faculty participation in campus visit, Ideally faculty will showcase student engagement and activities (classroom visit, labs, studios, etc) (*High priority*)
- Faculty: Organize a FY symposium for FY faculty to share ideas (*High priority*)
- Faculty: Meet with faculty to discuss FY needs/wants (*High priority*)
- Organization: Commit budget resources to FY faculty professional development (*High priority*)

- Organization: Create Student Success Office to provide coordinated planning/organizing/leadership/budget function (*High priority*)
- Recruiting: Include themes from Vision 2013 and Action Plans in messages (print, web, visits, etc) (*High priority*)
- Recruiting: Emphasize out-of-class engagement in messages (print, web, visits, etc) (*High priority*)
- Recruiting: Ensure transparency in costs. At present our material discusses tuition & fees and room & board (~\$10,000 per year). Full disclosure of costs would benefit students. Actual costs per year are ~\$14,000. (*Medium priority*)

All Students Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.

Committee Leader:

Laurie Geller, EdD – Assistant Professor Mathematics & Computer Science

Committee Members:

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Sheila Collins – MLS/JD – Director, Gordon B. Olson Library

Robert Crackel, PhD – Professor of Chemistry

Christopher Keller - PhD – Associate Professor of Biology

Leon Perzinski – BA - Director, Student Union

Lynne Rumney, MM - Director Honors Program and Lecturer of Humanities

CURRENT SITUATION

PI 6.1 Identified Needs

To what degree does your campus identify the academic needs of individual first-year students?

MSU does the following to identify the academic needs of individual first-year students:

- The Department of Mathematics & Computer Science uses the ACT Math Score and the COMPASS exam to place students in Math 103 College Algebra. If students do not place in Math 103, they enroll in Math 102 or ASC 092 (MSU-B) depending on their ability and advising.
- The English Department is working on a placement exam for ENGL 110 Composition I and ENGL 120 Composition II. Students with an ACT below a certain score will be asked to take the COMPASS for English. No plan is in place to address students who will score too low for ENGL 110 and require remediation.
- International students are required to take the TOEFL.
- Freshmen take the CSI (College Student Inventory).
- The Office of Disability Services assesses academic needs/disabilities thoroughly, but students without financial means have difficulty obtaining official diagnoses.
- Potential honors students are identified by ACT and GPA.
- Non-attendance early in the semester (2nd week) must be reported.
- Mid-term reporting of D and F students is mandatory.
- Athletes' academic progress is monitored. Mandatory grade checks are performed twice each semester for all student athletes. At-risk student athletes are identified by a GPA set by the coach.

MSU does not do the following to identify the academic needs of individual first-year students:

- MSU does not identify who should take Math 099. There is no cutoff/placement score to enroll in Math 102.
- MSU does not monitor appropriate enrollment in Math 102 and ASC 092 (MSU-B) following placement recommendations.
- The specific academic needs of non-traditional students are not identified
- Advising inconsistently identifies academic needs due to different levels of advising "skill"; some do it better than others.

To what degree does your campus identify the social/personal needs of individual first-year students?

MSU identifies the social/personal needs of individual first-year students in the following ways:

- Athletes are monitored and have a “built-in” mentor (coach) who has time to spend with each athlete. Coaching staff, high school coaches and counselors identify student athletes’ social/personal needs.
- The CSI identifies general coping areas of need, financial security, sociability, family/emotional support, receptivity to support services.
- The mentor program often informally identifies students’ social needs.
- The SSI results do include some relevant results but not for individual students.
- Students with disabilities are self-identified, further assessed, and referred by the coordinator of Disability Support Services to local agencies that can assist student needs.
- International students are identified and referred to orientation and the Office of International Students where they receive advisement.
- The Native American Cultural Center is available and staffed
- The CSI identifies potentially important information regarding geographical background, race/ethnicity of the student, and financial concerns.
- Students with mental health issues are self-identified.

MSU does not do the following to identify the social/personal needs of individual first-year students:

- social and personal needs of non-traditional/older-than-average are not specifically identified.
- the social and personal needs of first generation college students are not specifically identified.
- the social and personal needs of exclusively distance education students.
- MSU does not identify students who need childcare services. Campus taskforces, however, have identified that this is clearly a need.

The committee was concerned about other issues related to academic and social/personal needs identification. There was concern that academic faculty lack the qualification and resources to effectively address students’ social/personal needs. In addition, students’ needs are assessed with various instruments, but no coherent plan exists to use the results. At this time, the location and availability of these results is not known to most faculty. Privacy issues, inaccurate self-reporting, identifying the needs of particular groups of students, high DWFI rates, time, faculty load, and lack of resources were all challenges to identifying student needs.

PI 6.2: Addressed Needs

To what degree does your campus address the identified academic needs of individual first-year students?

MSU students’ identified academic needs are addressed through a number of services, including:

- Writing Center
- Honors Program
- On campus testing center
- Academic advisors are assigned to all incoming students although this process needs to be improved
- Tutoring program
- Math Clinic
- Bookstore services
- SMART Thinking online tutoring
- Gordon B. Olson Library
- Strong technology support

- Disability Services evaluation for learning disabilities
- Mandatory study table, tutors, grade checks, academic award program for athletes
- Center for Extended Learning (CEL) resources for online students (orientation, SMART Thinking)
- First-year orientation
- Transfer specialist in the Registrar's Office
- Student clubs and organizations (somewhat academic)
- Full-time online advisor
- Student mentoring program
- New diversity curriculum requirement
- 14:1 student-faculty ratio

MSU does not do the following to address the identified academic needs of individual first-year students:

- Academic advisement suffers from lack of uniformity, inefficiency, and communication issues resulting in confusion for students and inconsistent academic advising results
- There is no campus wide training for academic advising nor are there consistent expectations regarding academic advisement, particularly when academic advisement is seen more as a scheduling process than a mentoring relationship
- Student pay for tutoring and staffing the Writing Center and the Math Clinic is low, resulting in difficulties in serving students' academic needs
- There is no consistent approach to teaching students the essential academic skills students need in the first year
- There is no efficient system in place to gather and disseminate information regarding students' academic needs in the first year

To what degree does your campus address the identified social/personal needs of individual first-year students?

MSU students' identified social/personal needs are addressed through a number of services, including:

- Optional Student mentoring program
- Office of International Programs
- Native American Cultural Center
- Career Services
- Student Development Center—counseling, disability services
- Residence Life
- Student Association
- Mandatory Orientation offered on campus or online
- Student clubs and organizations
- Student activities sponsored by Student Association and Residence Life
- University Diversity Committee (oversees and plans diversity related events on campus)

MSU does not do the following to address the identified social/personal needs of individual first-year students.

- There is no provision of on campus child care
- It is difficult to figure out what to do to address needs for specific students and/or student subgroups when we do not identify what those needs are well
- Social support systems for specific student subgroups (GLBT students for example) are not well developed
- We do not currently address the social/personal needs of 100% online/distance students

The committee was concerned about other issues related to addressing the academic and social/personal needs of students. Multiple job responsibilities for staff members and overload situations

for faculty, both of which result from MSU's smaller size and need to "do more with less," negatively impact our abilities to communicate, plan, and implement activities designed to address students' social/personal needs. Faculty and staff at MSU are cognizant of difficulties in this area.

Results of Q096 of the FOE faculty/staff survey (to what degree does this institution's delivery of the first year enhance students' personal development?), indicate that 24% of faculty/staff responded slight to not at all and 42% responded moderate. Thus, only 36% of faculty/staff rated MSU's ability to enhance first-year students' personal development as high or very high. In addition to difficulties resulting from the factors discussed above, student engagement on campus is also related to changing social trends and increased student work schedules. The committee believes the following concerns or challenges are central to addressing student needs:

- Faculty load and overload degrade opportunities for student-faculty interaction.
- Multiple bureaucratic responsibilities diminish the ability of staff and faculty members to prioritize student contact as key
- The Writing Center is understaffed.
- The Mentoring Program is under funded and understaffed.
- Math Clinic is understaffed due to inadequate student pay.
- Peer tutoring is problematic due to low pay of tutors (lacks sufficient financial incentive).

The following FOE faculty/staff survey results, except Q040, support the concerns discussed above. Responses to Q040 are supported by the additional monitoring of and services provided to athletes.

Q036. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of honors students?
10.3% rated this slight to not at all; 28.1% rated this moderate
Q037. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of students with academic deficiencies?
19.3% rated this slight to not at all; 37.3% rated this moderate
Q038. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of students with learning disabilities?
12.2% rated this slight to not at all; 30.6% rated this moderate
Q039. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of students with physical disabilities?
12.6% rated this slight to not at all; 36.4% rated this moderate
Q040. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of student athletes?
2.1% rated this slight to not at all; 22.1% rated this moderate
Q041. During the first year, to what degree does this institution address the unique needs of racial/ethnic minorities?
17.7% rated this slight to not at all; 39% rated this moderate
Q097. To what degree does this institution's delivery of the first year enhance student learning?
17.7% rated this slight to not at all; 44.2% rated this moderate

PI 6.3: Student Experiences

To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience individualized attention from faculty/staff?

The following activities assure that all first-year students experience individualized attention from faculty/staff:

- Increased emphasis on undergraduate research and experiential learning.
- Class size limits for some freshmen classes. MSU's student-faculty ratio is 14:1.
- Almost all classes are taught by faculty (not TAs).
- Administrative offices are open over lunch hour.
- Academic advisors are assigned to all students.
- Mentoring program and workshops help connect faculty, staff, and students.
- Career Services offers one-on-one career and academic advising.
- Student clubs with faculty advisors have student-faculty interaction.
- Athletic coaches serve as mentors for their team members.
- Residence Life offers programs that help connect students, faculty, and staff.

The committee cited the following concerns about individualized attention from faculty/staff:

- Classes are too close together to facilitate after-class student-faculty interaction, which is a preferred method of interaction.
- Office hours are an ineffective way of encouraging faculty-student interaction.
- According to NSSE results:
- MSU rates low on students asking questions in class.
- One-third of first-year students and one-fifth of seniors have never spoken with their advisor about career plans.
- 51% of first-year students have never or sometimes received prompt written or oral feedback in the classroom on their academic performance, which puts us significantly below our peers, as compared to 37% of our seniors.
- 63% of first-year students and 44% of seniors have never or sometimes discussed grades or an assignment with a faculty member.
- A key consideration in relation to first-year student experiences must be the fact that many services and opportunities are offered but students do not always take advantage of them; thus, we are unable to assure individualized attention from faculty and staff.

To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience academic support outside the classroom?

MSU does not assure that all first-year students receive academic support outside the classroom. Students have access to, and are informed about, various academic support services, but they often do not take advantage of the available services or opportunities. According to NSSE results, over 1/2 of first-year students and over 1/3 of seniors have never spoken with faculty about coursework outside of class.

To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience opportunities for campus involvement?

MSU requires all first-year students attend orientation. MSU also offers various opportunities for campus involvement (club fairs, welcome week, heritage week, homecoming, movies, dances, etc.), but students often do not take advantage of these opportunities.

To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience an inclusive campus environment?

Results of the evidence raised concerns about first-year students' perception of MSU having an inclusive campus environment. According to Q040 of the FOE student survey, 43% of first-year students do not

strongly feel they belong. According to the NSSE, 57% of seniors indicate that they have sometimes or never had a conversation with someone who is very different in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. In contrast, 87% of first-year students feel strongly that they are treated fairly in regard to gender, race, and ethnicity (FOE student survey Q055). We provide activities intended to promote an inclusive campus environment among students, such as Welcome Week and other on campus events.

PI 6.4 Physical and Psychological Safety

To what degree does your institution assure a campus environment in which first-year students are physically safe?

MSU does the following to assure students are physically safe:

- Buildings are locked on evenings and weekends.
- An alert system is in place.
- Improved lighting was installed on campus.
- Student Development Office disseminates regular bulletins related to health and safety.
- Residence hall programming is provided.
- Student Association programming is provided.
- Relevant mentoring program workshops are offered.
- Beaver Bus taxi service offers discounted services for students.
- We are an alcohol free campus, but enforcement is difficult.
- MSU contracts with an external security agency that actively patrols campus from 9:00 P.M. until 6:00 A.M. and is available to escort students between buildings until midnight. The agency's focus is on residence hall areas.

The committee cited the following concerns related to students' physical safety:

- Landscaping is not conducive to safety (i.e., assaults can occur under low lying trees and bushes).
- Buildings are locked on evenings and weekends, preventing student access to labs, practice rooms, and other relevant resources.
- No bluelight (emergency) phones are on campus.
- Many campus locations are not well lit and are unpopulated after hours.
- Buildings are not locked until late and are not regularly patrolled on foot.
- Many outdoor lights are turned off at midnight.
- According to the FOE student survey, 29% of first-year students feel moderately safe or not safe.
- MSU is not responding proactively enough to reports of assault and harassment.
- Escort services are limited to 9 P.M.-midnight. Services are not prominently advertised.
- There are no external cameras on campus buildings.

To what degree does your institution assure a campus environment in which first-year students are psychologically safe?

MSU does the following to assure students are psychologically safe:

- MSU has a fully developed sexual harassment policy
- The campus's new diversity requirement is in the process of being implemented.
- There is a full range of counseling services available to students free of charge on campus.
- The campus tried to organize a GLBT student organization and provided an advisor (see below for concerns).

- According to the FOE student survey (Q055), 87% of students feel they are often or always treated fairly in the classroom regardless of gender/race/ethnicity.

The committee cited the following concerns related to students' psychological safety:

- Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered (GLBT) do not feel safe, according to Diversity Climate Survey (p. 48).
- The GLBT student organization is not active because students do not feel safe to meet.
- Sexual harassment issues (p. 25 of Diversity Climate Survey).
- Discrimination based on ethnicity exists according to Diversity Climate Survey (p. 24).
- According to the FOE student survey, 34% of first-year students feel moderately respected or not respected by others.
- Faculty/staff assault on students is a concern. MSU frequency of reported assaults was high within the NDUS (see Appendix of Diversity Climate Survey).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Please see actions below.

DIMENSION GRADE: D

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

To complete the committee's objectives, it considered the following sources of evidence:

- Math placement policies
- College Student Inventory (CPI)
- Student Satisfactory Inventory (SSI)
- English Department's placement policies
- Student Mentoring Program
- International Student Program
- Native American Cultural Center
- Honors Program
- FOE faculty/staff survey results
- Conversations with MSU's Athletic Director
- Student Development Center
- Higher Learning Commission self-study report
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results
- MSU Diversity Climate Survey
- MSU Web site
- General knowledge

RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

Based on the All Students Dimension Committee's evaluation, the following action items are recommended.

PI 6.1 Identified Needs

Required First-Year Seminar Course (*High priority*)

MSU needs to institute a first-year seminar course. The first-year seminar course should be a two-credit graded course team-taught by a faculty member and student services representative. Instructors can help identify student needs, but they should also be provided with each student's CSI, placement scores, GPA, ACT scores, and all other relevant information. After completion of the first-year seminar course an updated folder should be sent to each student's academic advisor(s). MSU needs to hire a first-year

seminar coordinator who will facilitate such activities. Section size should be restricted to 20 students. Course and advising time should be part of faculty/staff load (suggested 2.5 SH, similar to a lab or graduate class).

Effective Distribution of Academic and Social/Personal Needs Assessment Results (*High priority*)

Faculty advisors and student support staff should have access to relevant assessment results and training to advise/counsel/direct students to appropriate services. For example, CSI results have been inconsistently sent to faculty advisors, and there has been no faculty training regarding how to help students receive appropriate assistance.

Math Placement Score for Math 103 (*High priority*)

The Math Department should evaluate the effectiveness of using a math ACT score of 21 as the placement score for Math 103.

Math Placement Score for Math 102/Math 099 (*High priority*)

The Math Department should determine an appropriate ACT math placement score for Math 102 and enforce it. Students judged unprepared for Math 102 should be required to take ASC 092 at Bottineau or other remedial interventions.

English Placement Score for ENGL 110 (*High priority*)

MSU should consider requiring the writing component of the ACT test. If students do not have the requisite score, they should take the COMPASS writing test. The English Department should determine an appropriate COMPASS writing placement score for ENGL 110 and enforce it. Students judged unprepared for ENGL 110 should be required to remediate their skills. This process would parallel the approach to Math 103 placement.

Needs Identification of Non-Traditional Students (*High priority*)

MSU needs to identify the academic and social needs of:

- students who are single parents
- students who are parents
- students with full-time jobs
- financially independent students
- delayed enrollment students
- married students
- military students
- part-time students
- 25 years or older students
- students who are caregivers
- During registration/orientation MSU students' need to be surveyed regarding the above needs.
- This information needs to be disseminated to appropriate offices and instructors and coordinator of the first-year seminar. First-year seminar instructors can continue to gather information about the needs of these individuals.

The individual student profile is more important than the categorization of the student. The gathering of generic demographic information does not facilitate student support. The ultimate goal is to assist individual students with their unique needs.

PI 6.2 Addressed Needs

First-Year Seminar (*High priority*)

The first-year seminar course should inspire a transition into intellectual life at the university level. The course will operate under a general umbrella syllabus with common objectives, including critical reading, critical writing, and critical problem-solving. The first-year seminar coordinator will collaborate with faculty to design the syllabus, ensuring that course subject matter will have perceived relevance and that

practical skills will be integrated into course assignments. For example, library staff can determine appropriate exercises and pedagogies to accomplish particular course objectives. First-year seminar instructors and subsequently academic advisors should review the folder of gathered student information (see PI 6.1 Action Plan, "Required First-Year Seminar Course" description above) and proactively help connect students to needed resources. For example, the umbrella syllabus might include one-on-one sessions between individual students and their seminar instructors, designed to identify individual needs and connect the students with the necessary resources. The seminar should establish a clear expectation that academic success invariably requires effort, time on task, commitment, and perseverance; the seminar needs to send the message: "We will help you succeed, but you have to do the work." Again, section size should be restricted to 20 students, and course and advising time should be part of faculty/staff load (suggested 2.5 SH similar to a lab or graduate class).

Competitive Wages for Campus Jobs (*High priority*)

MSU should raise wages to encourage more student workers on campus. \$9.00/hour is a suggested minimum. Thus, more hard cash funds are needed for campus jobs. In first-year seminar, instructors should stress the importance of working on campus and educate students about these opportunities.

Student Success Center (*High priority*)

MSU should start a Student Success Center, as described in Vision 2013 Strategy Five action plan. The Student Success Center should include: student mentoring office, career services, first-year seminar coordinator, advising coordinator, service learning and internships office and coordinator, student activities office, student services advisement, residence life, and parking office. Tutoring services, Math Clinic, and Writing Center should be moved to the third floor of the Student Center and the Advancement Office should be located somewhere else.

Streamline Academic Advisement (*High priority*)

Advising needs to be more efficient and timely. Assignment of academic advisors should happen earlier so that students are not initially given one advisor (usually a designated person such as the dept/division chair) only to have their advisor changed early in the semester as departments divide the advising load amongst faculty. Thus, departments need to identify advisors and parameters for the admissions office so that official assignments can be made sooner.

Advisor's contact information should be made easily accessible to the student. Students who double major need to know who both advisors are.

Security access needs to be available for all relevant academic advisors.

Enable group communication between advisors and advisees.

Require advisee/advisor contact early in the first year. This could be done during the first-year seminar course.

Social Support (*High priority*)

MSU should:

- Provide on-campus childcare.
- Develop support networks/groups, such as a group for single parents.
- Develop student activities that engage part-time students, parents, and other students who attend social events less frequently.
- Online students should have access to the counseling center.
- Provide a first-year seminar in order to develop strong cohorts of students.
- Offer the first-year seminar to online students.
- Assign a CEL staff member and a Student Life representative the specific responsibility of finding concrete ways to integrate distance students into student life (clubs and organizations, student government, discussion forums, etc.).

PI 6.3 Student Experiences

Enhance First-Year Students' Exposure to Diversity (*High priority*)

- Campus events should often be diversity-related.
- Diversity training/cultural sensitivity training should be a part of orientation.
- Include in orientation some fun, team-building, collaborative activities that deliberately mix and match students from diverse backgrounds.
- Help general education faculty develop strategies for encouraging lively debate between students.
- Provide informal, regular sponsored events that feed students and encourage debate about current issues of perceived relevance. Have sessions led by popular charismatic faculty.

Enhance Students' Sense of Belonging (*High priority*)

- The first-year seminar syllabus should include first-year seminar activities devoted to cohort building.
- Update classroom furnishings for more flexible interaction.
- Create spaces that encourage informal faculty/staff/student interaction, such as departmental lunch/study spaces.
- See above action plans for additional strategies for enhancing students' sense of belonging.

Professional Development to Encourage Active Learning (*High priority*)

MSU needs to provide further professional development opportunities to help faculty know how to incorporate new pedagogical methods and technologies to encourage more student involvement. New faculty should be given specific opportunities to develop active learning pedagogies.

Train Students to be Professional and Proactive (*High priority*)

The first-year seminar syllabus should require students to visit their current instructors in an effort to facilitate interaction and reduce students' fears about these interactions. Seminar faculty should offer students strategies for being proactive about seeking help before problems get out of hand (e.g., failing a course) as well as when problems occur (e.g., poor grade on an exam, confusion).

New Requirements for D/F Students at Mid-Term (*High priority*)

First-year students with more than one D or F should be required to visit the Student Success Center and develop an action plan to address the problem(s). Registration holds will be placed on students until the meeting has been completed.

Revisit Class Scheduling (*Medium priority*)

Faculty Senate should consider a new approach to class scheduling to facilitate after class student-faculty interaction. For example, we might increase the amount of time between classes.

Student Training for Tracking Their Academic Progress (*Medium priority*)

The first-year seminar coordinator and faculty should incorporate student training in the first-year seminar that will help students track their own academic progress in classes routinely.

Be Proactive about Inviting First-Year Students to Committees (*Medium priority*)

Faculty and staff should reach beyond the population of students who tend to get involved in campus government. Involve part-time and OTA/non-traditional students by showing them how they can really make a difference beyond socializing.

Invite Family Members to Events and Support Groups (*Medium priority*)

The MSU Student Activities office should plan events designed to serve and involve MSU students with children.

Link First-Year Seminar to Campus Events (*Medium priority*)

First-year seminar faculty should give students credit for attending and reflecting on campus events.

PI 6.4 Physical and Psychological Safety

Improvements to Assure Physical & Psychological Safety (*High priority*)

MSU should:

- Install an emergency blue-light phone system on campus.
- Install and monitor external cameras on campus buildings.
- Install an emergency broadcasting system on campus.
- Trim trees and bushes to make them more conducive to safety (i.e., increase height of lowest branches to prevent assaults under trees/in bushes).
- Hire full-time campus security unit responsible for full-time surveillance and extended escort service.
- Help students feel safe to report assaults and harassment. Educate them on what to do and how to help themselves and friends when assault or harassment occurs. Continue student affairs programming related to this issue.
- Update the Student Handbook to include more specific information about who to contact if harassment or assault occurs. Students specifically need to know what to do if assaulted by a faculty or staff member.
- Add a piece to orientation that discusses harassment and assault and related reporting processes.
- Ensure that campus officials investigate reported incidences of harassment and assault and follow through with appropriate disciplinary actions. It is the responsibility of the administration to remove employees who are a threat to students and/or campus personnel.
- Require chairs who receive complaints to report them to dean and VPAA/VPASA.

Diversity Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

Committee Leader:

Kevin R. Neuharth, MA – Associate Professor of Communication Arts

Committee Members:

Thomas Froelich - MS – Assistant Professor of Communication Disorders

Wylie Hammond – MA - Director, Multicultural Support Services

Steve Hayton - MA – Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Joseph Jastrzembki - PhD – Associate Professor of History

Kenneth Story - MSU Student

Ruth Kihm - MSW – Instructor of Social Work

Ann Rivera – BA - Student Activities Coordinator

Rick Watson - MS/BA/BSE – Lecturer in English

Introduction:

Minot State University remains dedicated to the concept of diversity and inclusiveness. These concepts are embedded in the university's most recent HLC Self Study and are explicitly included in the university's mission and its strategic planning document, Vision 2013. In addition, diversity and inclusiveness are included in the student and faculty handbooks and highlighted on the university website. Nevertheless, the Diversity Dimension Committee believes that more can be done to fully integrate these concepts into university practice.

Current Situation, Opportunities, and Challenges:

Various surveys demonstrate that faculty/staff and students have differing views and expectations of diversity and inclusiveness. In order for MSU to incorporate diversity and inclusiveness into a student's first-year experience, all members of the university community must understand these terms. The Diversity Dimensions Committee anticipates that not only will administration, faculty, and staff take a lead role in disseminating diversity/inclusiveness awareness and practice, but also upper level students and the Student Government Association will play a mentoring role for first-year students. Together, the university community will ensure that first year MSU students feel comfortable and safe in a diverse environment, preparing them to interact in diverse global community.

What follows is the Diversity Dimensions Committee response to an evaluation of the Diversity Dimension questions. These will be followed with specific recommendations from the committee.

PI 7.1 Diverse ideas:

To what degree does the institution assure that first-year students experience diverse ideas and world views through the following?

Evaluate Each	<u>Very Low/None</u> 1	<u>Low</u> 2	<u>Medium</u> 3	<u>High</u> 4	<u>Very High</u> 5	<u>N/A</u>
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Initiatives based in the curriculum			X			
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Initiatives based in the co-curriculum (campus sponsored out-of-the class activities)		X				
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Initiatives integrated across the curriculum and co-curriculum		X				
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The above ratings were based on First-Year Student Survey results, Faculty/Staff Survey results and analysis by the Diversity Dimension Committee. Results show that students were generally more prone to answer the questions as "Not at all" or "Slight." When asked to what degree this institution was exposing them to different world cultures (Q017), world religions (Q018), political perspectives (Q019), or issues relating to social class/economic status (poverty vs. privilege) (Q020) the student response ranged from 36.2% to 50.9% in the "Not at all" to "Slight" range.

Survey results strongly indicate that increased attention is required in introducing and supporting diverse ideas and perspectives in the Minot State University curriculum and environment. Student responses suggest that experiences with or about diverse cultures have not been made readily accessible and that there appears to exist a paucity of opportunity for exposure to perspectives and ideas outside of the status quo.

It is relevant that first-year students were surveyed within the first three months of their residence on campus; we are compelled to address the initial negative impressions on the lack of diversity as soon as is practically possible upon arrival on campus. The proposed Orientation Activity and the Native American Task Force Orientation Committee are both designed to address the issues of immediacy and student perspective.

Minot State University faculty and staff were also surveyed using similar questions. Responses for the questions, "To what degree does this institution's curriculum, as experienced by most first-year students, include appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world views" (Q030), and "To what degree does this institution's out-of-class activities for first-year students include appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world-views" (Q031), were enough to move the "initiatives based on curriculum" to an overall medium response of 45.2%, an obvious difference of view from the first-year students.

The Minot State University's recently created Diversity Class Requirement is recommended as a partial answer to this issue. Though multiple opportunities for diversity experiences currently exist on the MSU campus, there has often been a lack of definition and overall coordination for integrating activities into the curriculum of distinct programs and departments. The Diversity Class Requirement, through the development of criteria for defining and integrating diverse ideas and content, provides a vehicle for this coordination.

Beyond the Diversity Class designation, faculty across campus currently include student attendance at outside the classroom diversity activities and programming in meeting specific class objectives. Students may be required to attend out-of-the-classroom activities and synthesize their experience with in-class content. The Diversity Dimension Committee strongly agrees that faculty be further supported and encouraged to include similar opportunities for students within their class design, with an emphasis on classes for first-year students. Increased publicity and promotion for the already existing diversity activities is also warranted.

A small sampling of recent and on-going campus activities addressing this diversity component include

- The Northwest Art Center (NAC) Humanities Lecture and Art series. The mission statement for the Northwest Art Center, located on the MSU campus, is to "encourage and promote artistic and multi-cultural expression with education and outreach through an interdisciplinary regional arts center"
- the Annual Women's Heritage Month activities, including women's contributions in art, literature, religion, business, politics as well as lectures and discussions on topics as diverse as women in art to women in combat;
- The Annual MSU Powwow;
- The Black History Month activities and Martin Luther King, Jr., Day observance;
- International Program office presentations highlighting various cultures;
- Campus Ministries' Featured Faith series on various religions;
- Minot State University's participation in the Tournees Festival sponsored by the French American Cultural Exchange;
- MSU Theatre Department's presentations of "The Laramie Project" and "The Vagina Monologues" as well as productions from classical and contemporary playwrights.

PI 7.2 Interactions:

To what degree does the institution structure opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from backgrounds and cultures different from their own within the following categories?

Evaluate Each	<u>Very Low/None</u> 1	<u>Low</u> 2	<u>Medium</u> 3	<u>High</u> 4	<u>Very High</u> 5	<u>N/A</u>
Faculty/staff at the institution				X		
Other students at the institution				X		
Individuals outside the institution		X				

As with the previous question, the above ratings were based on First-Year Student Survey results, Faculty/Staff Survey results and analysis by the Diversity Dimension Committee. Information from the NDUS Campus Climate Assessment Report, completed in December, 2006, was also considered.

Students and faculty agree the institution provides opportunities for interaction with other students from differing backgrounds and cultures. Both the student survey and faculty/staff survey responses show agreement primarily in the moderate to high range.

These findings do not appear to coincide with other findings from the earlier NDUS report. Members of the Committee express a concern with aspects of the Campus Climate Assessment Report regarding negative (personal) interactions for individuals on the MSU campus. The report states that offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct was often believed to be based on the respondent's position on campus, age, gender, sexual orientation, education and political views (pp. iii-iv). A summary of the NDUS Campus Climate Assessment findings are presented below:

16% of respondents had personally experienced offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus.

Compared with 16 % of white people, 21 % of people of color had personally experienced such conduct.

Of respondents of color who reported experiencing this conduct, 55% stated it was because of their ethnicity.

Compared with 16% of heterosexual people, 38% of LGB and "uncertain" respondents had personally experienced such conduct.

Of sexual minority respondents who reported experiencing this conduct, 38% stated it was because of their sexual orientation.

A higher percentage of women (18%) than men (11%) experienced harassment; 28% of women and 6% of men said it was based on their gender.

23% of respondents who experienced this harassment made a complaint to a MSU employee or official; 16% did not know who to go to, and 23% did not report the incident out of fear of retaliation.

It is clear that providing opportunities for students to interact with others from differing backgrounds and cultures is not enough; a safe environment within which this interaction can occur is also necessary. Among the goals of the recommended action items are to further understanding, tolerance and familiarity, creating a sense of place that encompasses all individuals, both those native and new to the campus and regional community.

Student and faculty/staff surveys had similar findings in regard to positive interactions between students and faculty/staff from differing backgrounds and cultures. Students responded positively (Q022) with a 67.1% rating in the moderate and high sections while faculty and staff had a 64.9 % positive response (Q033). This may be interpreted as faculty and staff becoming more accessible to students, especially first-year students. A recently created mentoring program for new students has proven popular with mentors coming from faculty, staff and upper-class students and has provided new (first-year) students with a personal connection to someone familiar with the campus environment.

Another of the proposed action items is a one semester-hour Freshman Seminar course to provide students support through the creation of a first-year cohort and to provide on-going information and interaction through monthly meetings in a relaxed and inviting atmosphere.

Similar opportunities for positive interaction with people outside of the institution from differing backgrounds and cultures can also be developed. The student response to the specific question (Q023) shows they rate the institution at 44.4% in the "Not at all" and "Slight" sections. The Faculty and staff responded more negatively with a 50.7% in the "Not at all" and "Slight" sections.

Opportunities to interact with individuals outside of the campus community is recommended through use of a Diverse Activity Tour of regional communities as well as providing to students options of attending local multicultural events within the Minot area. First-year students could familiarize themselves with the region through organized visits to regional tribal college partner campuses, attendance at tribal events (such as a Powwow), or through attendance at local ethnic and cultural events such as the annual Norsk Hostfest, (billed as North America's largest Scandinavian Festival) or the local Greek Festival. Each of these events celebrate unique heritage and include artisans, food, entertainment and cultural traditions specific to groups of people who live in the greater Minot and North Dakota region.

PI 7.3 Behaviors:

To what degree does the institution convey to first-year students the standards of behavior it expects for participants in an open and civil campus community?

<u>Very Low/None</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Very High</u>	<u>N/A</u>
1	2	3	4	5	

Evaluation of above statement X

As with the previous questions, the above ratings were based on First-Year Student Survey results, Faculty/Staff Survey results and analysis by the Diversity Dimension Committee. Additionally, Committee members surveyed campus departments offering courses with high first-year student populations.

Students responded very positively when asked if the institution communicated the importance of respecting others with differing opinions (Q024) at the rate of 47.9% in the "High" and "Very High" sections. Similarly the faculty responded to the same question (Q035) with a 41.1% rating in the same sections.

However, the faculty responded to a second question regarding the institution's communication of the importance of standards of behavior in an academic community (Q073) with a 41.2% in the "Moderate" range compared to 37.5% in the "High" and "Very High" ranges.

It appears that faculty members believe a more inclusive Academic Honesty Policy, institutionally driven, may be warranted.

Though the formal surveys found that both students and faculty felt that standards of behavior were satisfactorily presented and understood, the informal survey done by Committee members revealed that little time was spent discussing expected standards of behavior in an academic community. One respondent stated that "2-3% of the class time was spent communicating" this issue. In contrast, responses to the Committee survey indicated that most faculty members were clear in how diversity was addressed in their coursework.

A recommended action to address this issue is a Faculty Orientation. It is during that orientation that the Diversity Dimension Committee proposes to more fully support and recommend implementation of the University Diversity Committee's initiatives:

- Across the campus, increase the awareness and appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism.
- Develop faculty and staff recruitment strategies to attract and hire people from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
- Develop deliberate student recruitment strategies to attract students from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
- Provide a friendly and open campus atmosphere full of opportunities for all people.
- Create on campus a global awareness, appreciation, and understanding with programs, activities, displays, and places for honoring and respecting international cultures.
- Expand support for multicultural student clubs as well as on campus activities sponsored by faculty, staff, and /or students.

Until recently, most first-year students at MSU did not have a specific diversity requirement in their course of study. BA and BS students, for the most part, received aspects of diversity through their general education sequence of courses, most specifically in the Humanities and Social Sciences. However, specific diversity courses per se did not exist in General Education.

The major exceptions are the teacher education and pre-professional programs that incorporate diversity into the first-year experience of their students. Teacher Education, for example, requires students to take SPED 110 Introduction to Special Education as well as SS 283 Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in America. Social Work, Communication Disorders, and Nursing also require SS 283 of their students. Teacher Education also begins the process of instilling the ten INTASC standards into their students' course of study. Standard III Adapting Instruction to Individual Need encapsulates most aspects of diversity and inclusion.

To address this unevenness of diversity in the curriculum, MSU has created a diversity requirement for all students. Six semester hours of diversity-identified courses are to be taken by all students. Three of these hours will come from the general education sequence and three from the university curriculum. Courses to be designated as meeting the diversity requirement first need the approval of the Curricular Diversity Committee.

Sources of Evidence

To achieve the objectives, the Diversity Dimension Committee considered the following:

- Minot State University website (www.minotstateu.edu), undergraduate catalog, student and faculty handbooks, etc.
- MSU Faculty/Staff and Student Foundation of Excellence (FoE) surveys.
- Minot State University Vision 2013 Statement.
- MSU Faculty Senate Minutes, February 2006.
- North Dakota University System Campus Climate Assessment Project, Minot State University, Final Report.
- University Diversity Committee's Prioritized Action Plan 2008-2009.
- Diversity Dimension Committee's informal survey of Departments
- FoE Current Practice Inventory (CPI).
- Northwest Art Center (NAC) Lecture Series Programming.
- MSU Women's Heritage Month Activities Programming.
- MSU Theatre Department Programming.

Recommended Grade: C-

Recommended Action Items:

1. Orientation Activity #1 (High priority):

The Committee recommends a focused diversity orientation activity that all first-year students must attend during the regularly scheduled MSU orientation session prior to the beginning of the semester. Timed immediately after initial "move-in" day and before classes begin, students could center their attention on the activity without distraction.

The proposed activity consists of a series of short sketches to inform and educate incoming students about diverse issues, ideas, and situations. One such activity is titled "Risqué Business." This takes the student through a series of sketches ranging from the risks of smoking to date rape to what it is like for a gay student living on campus. The presentations will be made by Student Ambassadors and members of the Theatre department. High Priority

2. Freshman Seminar (High priority):

We recommend all departments offer a required, one semester hour course titled "Freshman Seminar". The course should be taught at the same time on the same day by all departments. All sections will meet in Nelson Auditorium once a month for a general session on a topic of diversity. Each presentation will be made by either faculty members or students. These presentations will be recorded and placed on reserve in the Olson Library for students unable to attend, for whatever reason. It is our belief the presentations should be required. The rest of the course should cover those areas important to the student finding success as a major in that department. We feel this experience increases student cohesion and is a form of cohort without actually calling it that. Given the six-hour requirement above, the committee believes that a one-credit seminar will complement their coursework by providing increased opportunities for discussion, special diversity speakers, and practicum experiences. This activity would also sustain and build on the initial orientation activity presented prior to the beginning of the semester. As an interdisciplinary class, this course also would promote increased communication and discussion between faculty across campus and disciplines. High Priority

3. Native American Task Force Orientation Activity (High priority):

For many Native American students, the adjustment from tribal colleges and high schools to non-tribal institutions, like Minot State University, is very difficult. We recommend there be a specific activity during

orientation for all first-year/first time Native American students to help them become more aware of the available opportunities and services as well as the expectations leading to a successful transition as a new Minot State University student. A similar activity might be helpful with all first-year/first-time international students. High Priority

4. Diversity Course Requirements (priority):

We recommend continued support for the activities of the Curricular Diversity and Campus Climate Committee in seeking out those courses of a diverse nature to include on the recently approved course diversity requirement list. To address this unevenness of diversity in the curriculum, MSU has created a diversity requirement for all students. Six semester hours of diversity-identified courses are to be taken by all students. Three of these hours will come from the general education sequence and three from the university curriculum. Courses to be designated as meeting the diversity requirement first need the approval of the Curricular Diversity Committee. We would like to encourage that group to include more first-year/first time student type courses on the list, over and above the present general education offerings. Medium Priority

5. Diversity Activity Tours (Medium priority)

We recommend Minot State University offer off-campus opportunities of a diverse nature to first-year/first-time students. Multiple opportunities for providing this activity are available in the immediate Minot area as well as in the larger region. Organized tours to area cultural events and unique geographic locations may be linked to specific courses but may also be a requirement in all first-year or Freshman Seminar courses. Students could attend a Native American Powwow held in conjunction with one of MSU's tribal college partners, or participate in a locally held ethnic event, such as Minot's annual Scandinavian festival, Norsk Hostfest. Students new to the area as well as those familiar with it could benefit through experiencing these places and events through a new perspective. Medium Priority

6. Faculty Orientation (Medium priority)

Though not necessarily directly related to the action recommendations for students, the Committee strongly recommends that faculty lead in the creation of a diverse and inclusive campus community. Faculty members need to be active participants in the whole of the diversity activities provided for students as teachers, mentors, guides and role models as engaged members of our community and place. Students should come to expect faculty members with interest, concern, passion and compassion for their work, for their students, for themselves, their community and their world.

As noted earlier in this report, the Committee proposes full support and implementation of the University Diversity Committee's initiatives, to most importantly, increase the awareness and appreciation of our students and all individuals on campus, for diversity and multiculturalism across our campus, region, and world. Medium Priority

Roles and Purposes Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e., the major).

Committee Leader:

Lori Willoughby – PhD – Professor of Business

Committee Members:

Lynda Bertsch – BA/BS – Director of Career Services

Neil Nordquist – EdD – Dean, College of Education and Health Sciences

Ron Royer – PhD – Professor of Science

Marv Semrau – BS - Vice President for Advancement

Ryan Winburn – MS - Associate Professor of Chemistry

The Roles and Purposes dimension has three key performance indicators that have been evaluated to analyze the university's current situation, opportunities and challenges, and sources of evidence with respect to the dimension. The team reviewed the Foundations of Excellence First-Year Student Survey, Faculty/Staff Survey, and the most current NSSE and FSSE reports.

Performance Indicator 8.1: Purposes

Current Situation

The first indicator asks how well the campus communicates to first-year students its vision for the following purposes of higher education:

- Knowledge acquisition for personal growth
- Learning to prepare for future employment
- Learning for engaged citizenship – defined as participation in civic, community and political life
- Learning for the public good – working for the betterment of society for justice, freedom, and equality.

Based on the student and faculty survey, the general consensus is that Minot State University does an average job of communicating the need for learning to prepare for future employment and personal knowledge growth. The student survey indicated that 53.6% rated MSU as “high” or “very high” for communicating learning to prepare for future employment, and 49.5% rated MSU as “high” or “very high” on communicating learning for personal growth. The faculty survey mirrored the student survey, with 56.8% rating “high” or “very high” on communicating preparation for future employment. These opinions are validated by the actual graduate job placements in fields related to the major, in which over the past five years 70-75% of graduates report finding jobs related to their majors and only 4-6% are still seeking employment.

In contrast, only 29.4% of the faculty rated the university “high” or “very high” on effectively communicating knowledge for personal growth. This finding is also borne out by student perceptions. For example, the HLC *2008 Institutional Self-Study Report*, noted that in a “2006 public, Cambridge-style student debate over the value of general education, some students suggested that general education courses were “boring,” lacking in pertinence to their career fields, and sometimes poorly taught. An audience vote concluded that general education does have significant value, but that some of the courses should be more rigorous.”

Over the past year and a half the Faculty Senate and its General Education Committee, as well as a special ad hoc Committee for Review of General Education have been continuously discussing general education and potential revisions to the program as a response to these concerns.

The student and faculty responded that the campus does an average job of communicating its vision for learning for engaged citizenship and for the public good. Student and faculty surveys indicated a response of 42.2% and 26.6% (“high” and “very high” respectively) for communicating a vision for engaged citizenship. Likewise the surveys indicated 49.5% and 26.6% ratings (“high” and “very high” respectively) for communicating learning for the public good. These findings are not surprising in light of the fact that many of the MSU’s oldest and most important programs are service-related (e.g., nursing, special education, teacher education, speech-language pathology, etc.).

Opportunities and Challenges:

Challenges:

- Advising – There are very few classes exclusively for first-year majors, and it is sometimes difficult to find classes for first-year students that fit within their degree plans, given their late registration times.
- Reputation—MSU is seen as a good place to complete generals before moving on to another university to actually complete a degree.

Opportunities:

- Freshman Seminar: Designed for specific departments or the university as a whole (potentially interdisciplinary seminars with varying topics)
- Orientation: Group meetings for each major
- Mentoring Program: Freshmen can learn through the "Connect" sessions of availability of a mentoring program, also to encourage community & civic participation
- Cohort System: Encourage freshmen to complete courses together and possibly live in the same dorms, either as a major cohort or as a more general cohort
- Faculty & Staff Orientation: Review MSU’s mission and vision

Performance Indicator 8.2: Motivation

Current Situation

The second performance indicator asks “What does the institution do to intentionally provide opportunities for first-year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education?”

The students responded that 60.4% believe that the institution does a “moderate to very high” job of providing first-year students with opportunities to examine their motivations for higher education. The faculty responded with 74.3% believing that the institution does a “moderate to high” job of providing such opportunities. Furthermore, students responded that 73.3% believe that the institution does a “moderate to very high” job of helping them to examine personal reasons for completing a college degree. Although there is no corresponding question for faculty, the discussion among the committee members indicated a “very high” belief that faculty are having an influence on student motivation for pursuing higher education. However, this pursuit too often is completed at another institution, as exhibited by a 60% second-year return rate and a 29.2% six-year MSU graduation rate.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenge:

Many students do not take advantage of their advising sessions, limiting interaction of faculty advisors with those students. Advising sessions should be made mandatory for every student prior to registering each semester.

Faculty members need to understand why we think we do a good job of retention when in reality retention rates are poor and declining.

Opportunity:

- Major cohort – including the general studies students
- The Writing Center could motivate students on their college attendance and choice of career by providing stimulating topics requiring the student to reflect upon these concerns.
- "Connect" sessions, the Web, and student personnel office can provide more and better information on such services and programs available such as tutoring and student health.
- Recover retention rates based on understanding of the truth.

Performance Indicator 8.3: Rationale

The third performance indicator asks: "To what degree does the campus effectively communicate its rationale for the following?"

- Course requirements – core curricula and general education
- Required competencies – library skills, computing and writing
- Requirements for entry into majors

Based on a thorough review in the mid-90s, a good understanding about the role and purpose of general education was achieved and published by the university. As a consequence, there are several places in the undergraduate catalog, online, and in various general education syllabi in which the mission and purpose of general education are presented. However, a disconnection has evolved since that time between program purposes and student understanding of those purposes and the fundamental importance of general education. Many students claim to believe that general education courses lack rigor and are often a repeat of their high school experiences (and thus another way for the university to "make money"), or even that they are "a waste of time."

Writing competencies are outlined within the general education sequence, in that all graduates are required to take two courses in composition. However, the rationale for students taking these courses is generally glossed over. Library skills are covered sporadically throughout the curriculum, with little mention of why they are important. There are no courses required of all students that cover computer literacy.

Requirements for entry into a major may be discussed with students when they meet with advisors prior to registration for classes during their first year. However, if students do not meet with their advisors, typically the only way they have access to major requirements and related rationale is through the catalog.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges:

- Students need to understand the value of the general education curriculum and its overall importance to earning a degree.
- Faculty across the campus need to be more uniformly vested in the mission and rationale of general education.
- Faculty need to examine the role of general education and determine if the mechanism by which it is being offered is the best way for this campus.

Opportunities:

- Develop a standardized component in all syllabi for general education courses. This would assist in developing continuity from one course to another in the general education curriculum as well as tying the general education curriculum to the entire B.S. or B.A. degree.
- If freshman seminars are developed, the purpose and value of the general education sequence could be a topic that is covered.
- Incorporate ideas gathered by the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee attending the AAC&U workshop on general education.
- Work on a “writing across the curriculum” campaign and within each designated course will ensure that the rationale behind needing to be a functional writer is covered.

Recommended Grade: B-**Recommended Action Items:****Cohort Model (High priority)**

The cohort model will provide a paradigm for understanding the purposes of higher education, establish a model for examining one’s own purposes for higher learning, and provide opportunity for understanding the purposes of others. Such cohorts might be developed around majors, residence halls, service learning initiatives, etc.

Freshman Seminar (High priority)

Develop a series of freshman seminar topics to keep students engaged in learning, campus life, and community life within a widely understood context of the vision and purposes of general education and higher learning.

Mandatory Advising (High priority)

Reconsider and reframe advising as mentorship. Make advising mandatory for all students and advisor training mandatory for all advisors.

Develop a user-friendly, intuitive system for advising that every student will want to take advantage of, one that will help to successfully guide them through their four years at MSU and examine their future goals.

Improvement Dimension Report

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement. This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis - "a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institutions' overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way to achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on the first college year.

Committee Leader:

Dr. JoAnn Linrud – PhD - Dean, College of Business

Committee Members:

Dr. Erik Anderson – DMA – Assistant Professor of Music

Ms. Debra Chandler - MS – Student Services Advisor

Dr. Rita Curl-Langager – PhD – Professor of Psychology

Ms. Teresa Seright – MS – Instructor of Nursing

The Performance Indicators (PIs) for the Improvement Dimension target four areas that required close examination:

- 1) The degree to which first-year initiatives included systematic assessment with a majority of students. The MSU FoE Coordinators selected three first-year initiatives:
 - a. the Mentoring Program
 - b. the Noel Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI)
 - c. the Orientation Program.
- 2) The degree to which MSU faculty and staff members used assessment results to improve existing practices across the initiatives identified in PI 1.
- 3) The degree to which assessment activities improved faculty, staff, and student responses to time allocation, use of campus serves, and class attendance by students; and faculty, staff, students, and administration responses to student/faculty concerns.
- 4) The degree to which MSU faculty and staff used specific strategies to improve the first-year experience for incoming freshman.

The Committee evaluated all of the sources in the Evidence Library for information that might be helpful in informing the MSU community about first-year students to promote ongoing improvement in the freshman experience. These data supported the analysis of the four, targeted PIs and the conclusions that make up the remainder of this report. (See data below)

Foundations of Excellence Data Sources 2007-2008

Improvement Dimension Performance Indicator 9.1. Assessment

To what degree does each initiative include systematic assessment? (Systematic assessments are appropriately timed, focused, and based on data collection and analysis methods that provide high quality information for decision making.)

No.	Data Source	What is the nature of the data? How useful for understanding first-year students?	How is the data distributed? What follow-up occurs?
1.	Student Satisfaction Inventory, 2002, 04, 06; Freshman and Sophomore data	Results of SSI from 2002, 2004, 2006 administrations of the survey. Data sorted into categories.	To Enrollment Services
2.	SSI Compiled Results from 2202-2006 Administrations	Results of Student Satisfaction Inventory for the 2002, 2004, 2006 administrations. Surveys were administered in courses.	To Enrollment Services; VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
3.	SI of First-time, Full time students spring 2007	SSI data on surveys of first-year freshmen in second term of enrollment at MSU. (dissertation project)	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
4.	2007 CSI Demographic Data	Self-reported demographic data of 430 first-time students enrolling for Fall 2007 at MSU.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
5.	MSU – DFWI for Fall 2006 through Summer 2007 Terms	D, F, W, and I grades given in each semester for Freshman courses.	FoE use.
6.	2006 FSSE Results	Faculty results of survey on same issues as NSSE data; contains data for faculty-student comparison on like questions.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown; FSSE to Faculty Senate, convocation.
7.	College Student Inventory – Compiled	Same data as 4.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use

	Demographic Data		unknown.
8.	NSSE 2007 Mean and Frequency Reports	Not useful as is.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
9.	NSSE Benchmark Comparison 2007 Report	Same data as 8.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
10.	NSSE 2007 Student Comments	Not useful as is.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
11.	NSSE MSU Benchmark Report 2005	Not useful as is.	VPAA, President, to Deans, eventual use unknown.
12.	General Education Overview	Course identification; not useful as is.	MSU Catalog.
13.	Vision 2013	Useful for setting direction.	All MSU and external constituents.
14.	MSU Mentoring Program Web Page	Useful for policy; number of hits may be useful.	MSU website.
15.	Freshman Housing Policy	Useful for policy; number of hits may be useful.	MSU website.
16.	New Student Orientation Link	Useful for policy; number of hits may be useful.	MSU website.
17.	Student Center Link	Useful for policy; number of hits may be useful.	MSU website.
18.	MSU Enrollment Services Link	Useful for policy; number of hits may be useful.	MSU website.
19.	MSU Honors Program website	Data-collection and assessment in Honors virtually nonexistent; could collect data from Honors 1-credit Freshman seminar.	Currently N/A.
20.	TEHP and FY Students; Dr. Deb Jensen	Elementary Education program has advising process to ensure first-year students take proper courses in the proper sequence. Useful for informing students.	Currently N/A.
21.	ND ACT High School Profile Report	Performance of 2006 [high school] graduating seniors who took the ACT as sophomores, juniors, or seniors; provides measures of performance, access, course selection, course	Overall ACT for MSU printed in MSU Fact Book, one year later. Data may be requested from Records for students

		rigor, college readiness, awareness, and articulation. Could be used to determine other factors for student success.	within particular disciplines. Math ACT provided to advisors for placement.
22.	2007 Noel Levitz CSI Results	Provides data on gender, hours working, high school average grades, general academic knowledge, racial origin, education of mother and father, highest degree planned to pursue, perception of academic ability, and when decision to apply to college was made.	Currently shared with administrators.
23.	Question 6 (Institution Specific Question) on FoEx Student Survey	"Other than lecture, what methods do faculty use to engage you in lower level courses (100 level)?" Open-ended responses.	Developed for FoE.
24.	Question 7 (Institution Specific Question) on FoEx Student Survey	"What factors influence your decision to take first-year (introductory) courses?" Open-ended.	Developed for FoE.
25.	Question 8 (Institution Specific Question) on FoEx Student Survey	"What special programs does MSU offer to assist first-year students in the transition to college?" Open-ended.	Developed for FoE.
26.	Question 9 (Institution Specific Question) on FoEx Student Survey	"What could Minot State University do to make first-year students a priority?" Open-ended.	Developed for FoE.
27.	Question 10 (Institution Specific Question) on FoEx Student Survey	"To what degree is there a need for more discussion among students concerning the purpose of a university education?" Open-ended.	Developed for FoE.
28.	ND CORE Data	North Dakota Drug and Alcohol Survey. Although data not specifically about first year, majority of respondents are Freshman. Other state-wide data (available from RCJC/NDSH) indicates alcohol abuse is wide-spread in ND and that we have higher than national average of underage drinking. Respondents indicate alcohol use impacts feelings of safety, enjoyment of activities and studying.	Data not published; Health Center may use the data to develop programs. Data shared at student affairs; also available by contacting Health Center.
29.	ACHA Fall 2006 Survey; Inst. Data Report	National College Health Assessment Institutional Data Report - Fall 2006. Data has been used to develop	Results not published; shared at "appropriate committees" for example,

		education/programs on campus (though this isn't specified by health center rep). See comments under NDCORE survey. Data not specific to first year. With respect to the drug/alcohol responses, data confirms much of what the NDCORE survey results indicate.	student affairs.
30.	ACHA-ES Data Report; Fall 2006	National College Health Assessment Survey Executive Summary.	See ND CORE Data, item 28.
31.	Orientation Book for 2007-08	Contains information relevant to orientation of new and transferring students.	To all new students at campus CONNECT orientation/registration events.
32.	MSU Student Handbook	Useful for policy and procedures.	To all new students.
33.	Withdrawing Student Survey	This ACT survey summarizes students' reported reasons for leaving MSU; semester by semester comparisons.	Unknown.

PI 1. Assessment

Current Practice

In response to the question, "To what degree does each initiative include systematic assessment," on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Very Low/None," and 5 being "Very High," the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings.

- Mentoring Program Low (2)
- Noel Levitz College Student Inventory High (4)
- Orientation Medium (3)

Mentoring Program. Currently, MSU does not have a structured systematic assessment process for the Mentoring Program. Typical consumer queries including the value of the program to students, student satisfaction with the program, and its effectiveness in achieving improved retention remain unasked. At this time, it is difficult to determine the value of the mentoring sessions to individual students.

Pat Hubel, formerly MSU's Academic Programs and Research Coordinator, completed dissertation research with two groups of MSU students, comparing the Mentoring Program with student controls receiving typical support. Her results showed that expectations and satisfaction were higher for students included in the Mentoring Program, but that many outcome measures showed no significant difference between groups. Ms. Hubel recommended continued refinement of the Mentoring Program and implementation of a formal assessment process.

Debra Chandler, Mentoring Coordinator, reported that there are many levels of student participation in the program: some students visit their mentors often and record their activities; some students seldom visit, but check off the activities to gain early registration; while others visit but do not complete the check off process, etc.

Currently, we can determine the value of the Mentoring Program only through anecdotal information, and there are no plans to conduct formal assessments.

Noel Levitz College Student Inventory. The Noel Levitz CSI survey is a standardized assessment tool administered to freshmen, which provides data for a number of demographic items, and some student perceptions. (See Items 6 and 22 in the Evidence Library.) It is a North Dakota University System required assessment tool. The MSU administration currently is determining how best to use the data. Previously, MSU shared the data with academic advisors and with mentors of students participating in the Mentoring Program. Advisors and mentors then shared the Inventory information with students during private meetings. In the fall of 2007, MSU did not distribute available data to faculty advisors.

Orientation. John Girard, Director of Enrollment Services, reported that Enrollment Services staff collected some survey data for orientations sessions prior to 2007. Beginning in the summer of 2007, Enrollment Services staff sent a condensed overview of the sessions to the MSU staff prior to each orientation session. After each segment of an orientation session, students, parents, faculty, and speakers completed a written assessment of the segment. After each orientation session, a team of involved individuals conducts an "after-action review" of those assessments. Further, Enrollment Services staff members invite a group of "very interested stakeholders," and all faculty and staff at MSU, to discuss the results.

That survey data led to the idea of CONNECT, which was implemented in summer 2007. Following the summer 2007 orientation sessions, students are now required to complete a survey before they can "check out." For the spring 2007 orientation, only on-line orientations were held; an on-line evaluation approach was formalized into a five-question survey required for check-out.

Opportunities and Challenges

Students with a low desire to complete a university education or otherwise low likelihood of success are not likely to visit their academic advisors or mentors, so finding a means of assisting them is a challenge. There is a closer "watch" on athletes. The Noel Levitz CSI could be useful, but use is limited.

MSU could find ways to connect with students in low-likelihood categories and have meaningful counseling sessions with them. Some majors and departments (music, for example) have frequent and close contact with their students; other departments do not have first-year courses and, therefore, find it harder to interact with students who are interested in their majors. In conclusion, we have data, we have advisors, but we do not connect the two on a formalized basis. We do not systematically train advisors to address specific student-assistance needs. The Mentor Program matches students with faculty and staff prior to receiving results from the CSI assessment; students self-select for participation in the Mentor Program. The timing of orientation, Mentor Program assignment, and distribution of CSI results are not coordinated and present a conundrum: when is the best time to intervene? Career services recently adopted the on-line option for the CSI.

Sources of Evidence

The Improvement Committee examined all of the data sources in our FoE Evidence Library for usefulness in improving MSU's situation with respect to connecting with first-year students. That analysis ("Foundations of Excellence Data Sources 2007-2008), attached to this report, contains indications regarding uses of the data sources.

PI 9.2: Use of Assessment

Current Situation

In response to the question, "To what degree have assessment results been used to improve existing practices across the following initiatives?" (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Very Low/None," and 5 being "Very High"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings.

- Mentoring Program: Very Low/None (1)
- Noel Levitz College Student Inventory: Very Low/None (1)
- Orientation: Medium (3)

As no measurements are collected on the mentoring program, no changes have been made based on formal assessment practices. As well, the Improvement Committee could discern no formal changes to first-year practices based on Noel Levitz CSI data. Based on feedback from sources related to Orientation, Enrollment Services has changed some practices, such as those relating to the comfort of the participants (providing lunch for faculty advisors, etc.). With respect to changing major components of the orientation process (dates, amount of time on campus, etc.), Enrollment Services is cautious in seeking longer trends. For example, parents at several sessions raised the issue of campus safety; Enrollment Services added that topic to its presentation. The larger issue is the overall effectiveness of the orientation program in helping students maneuver their way through campus life in the first year, ultimately resulting in their decision to return a second year. Enrollment Services has added more faculty advising, on the assumption that requiring students to have faculty advising before registering would lead to better class-selection choices. Enrollment Services has sought qualitative data to support its program changes. Enrollment Services believes it is difficult, however, to draw a straight line between first-year orientation and retention due to a number of extraneous variables affecting students' decisions to return.

Opportunities and Challenges

Activities initiated and planned by Enrollment Services are very positive, particularly with respect to advisement prior to registration. However, students are managing to avoid meeting the requirements; there needs to be more communication between Enrollment Services, faculty, and students, and perhaps more checks and balances to close the loopholes. Information doesn't always find its way to the persons who can implement or make changes. Institutionalized attitudes sometimes prevent independent

problem-solving and innovative thinking. In new initiatives, good ideas are presented, faculty and staff are asked to do specific tasks, but there doesn't seem to be implementation and follow-up. In George Kuh's words, "If we wish it to happen, we must require it." We could encourage faculty to attend conferences and seminars to learn what others are doing at their universities. We can share ideas and practices across the university to understand student behaviors and performance in general, without regard to discipline. We need to elevate the discussion across disciplines. Bringing in speakers or external experts or attending conferences elsewhere will tend to minimize discipline-specific attitudes about our campus and/or "turf protecting" and/or "baggage" and thereby broaden our perspectives.

Sources of Evidence

Interviews with the Mentoring Director, Debra Chandler, and Dr. John Girard, Dean of Enrollment Management, yielded information used to support the committee's analysis in this category.

PI 9.3: Understanding

Current Situation

In response to the question, "To what degree have recent assessment activities improved campus understanding of the following elements of student success?" (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Very Low/None," and 5 being "Very High"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings.

- Student allocation of their time: Medium (3)
- Student/faculty connections: Medium (3)
- Student use of campus services: Low (2)
- Student class attendance patterns: Very low/None (1)

Most information seems to be getting down to the university and college committee level, and possibly the department chair level. There seems to be a growing understanding of problems with respect to first-year student behaviors and performance. However, it is not clear to what extent this information is understood or makes an impact at the individual faculty level. (An example is CLA. After broad distribution of information and discussion in convocations, CLA has now finally been endorsed by the Faculty Senate. With Faculty Senate endorsement, the initiative is being more widely discussed in department meetings.) Dr. George Kuh visited campus in January for convocation; Dr. Jillian Kinzie will visit in April as a follow-up and expansion of the discussion. Faculty members are becoming more aware of NSSE and FSSE data, which address the items identified in PI 9.3 (student allocation of time, student/faculty connections, student use of campus services, and student class attendance patterns).

Opportunities and Challenges

Dr. Jillian Kinzie is interested in addressing with us FoE items when she visits MSU on April 15. The advantage of this connection is that she will be able to focus on NSSE from the standpoints of first-year experience, general education and engagement, and FoE goals. Available data do not address these four issues (in 9.3) in great detail; creation of data collection procedures might be encouraged. MSU does have a policy mandating freshman residence on campus, for example; however, approximately only 38 percent of our freshmen live on campus. This low percentage is due, in part, to a policy exemption for freshmen having permanent addresses within 25 miles of Minot and a petition process for those from farther away. A majority of our freshmen students live within this range or have successfully petitioned to live off campus, and thus have found alternative living arrangements. What's remarkable about the statistic (38 percent) is that it is lower than the previous year, when the mandatory housing policy did not exist. The committee discussed this phenomenon from the broader perspective of local and regional behaviors and cultural influences. From the committee's perspective, there exists in this region and broader community a cultural mindset that views fierce independence as an asset. Committee members identified other effects: resistance to authority, inability to get behind a leader, a "clan family" mentality, family-first, for example, and an indication that, to some, higher education is viewed with suspicion. The

committee was concerned that this mindset encourages self-serving behavior that may have immediate rewards but has longer-standing detrimental effects. The challenge for us at MSU would be in encouraging our students to be academically engaged and establish patterns for life-long learning.

Sources of Evidence

All data sources in MSU's FoE Evidence Library, as well as the FoE Faculty Survey and the FoE Student Survey, provided information for analysis in this area.

PI 9.4: Strategies

Current Situation

In response to the question, "To what degree have the following strategies been used by your campus to improve the first year?" (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Very Low/None," and 5 being "Very High"), the Improvement Committee assigned the following ratings.

- Attendance at higher education meetings (e.g., conferences, institutes, workshops): Very Low/None (1)
- Participation in multi-campus initiatives focused on the first year: Very Low/None (1)
- Broad campus exposure to external experts: Very Low/None (1)
- Broad exposure to campus-based knowledge and expertise about the first year: Very Low/None (1)

Reporting across disciplines and colleges on university initiatives has been lacking. Based on our data sources and committee members' knowledge of existing practices, there has been little or no attention to issues directly related to the first year, by discipline or across campus. Faculty attendance at conferences and meetings, faculty reading about first-year issues, and presentations by faculty received very low ratings for their level of engagement (see Faculty Survey questions Q050-Q053). Ratings for any single item were no higher than 2.79 on the five-point scale.

As well, faculty report that they are not meaningfully influenced by any of the information sources queried in Questions 84-91. Even when considering MSU's assessment capabilities relevant to the first year, no rating was higher than 3.04 for assessing what is relevant, disseminating results, and using results for improvement. In short, faculty members are not engaged, do not use information, and rate MSU's assessment capability as only "moderate" with respect to the first year. Thus, faculty members have little coordinated focus on the first year. Anecdotal evidence indicates that individual faculty members are concerned about first-year students and have a demonstrated level of engagement. Individual efforts do not amount to a campus-wide effort.

Opportunities and Challenges

A suggestion was made for monthly college meetings as a means of coordinating continuing efforts (such as FoE and CLA) toward improvement. These meetings could also be used to share university information such as the NSSE or FSSE or CLA, for example. Numerous disciplines have conferences and workshops specifically addressing curriculum issues affecting freshmen and/or first-year students. We could be sending faculty or bringing experts to campus to broaden the faculty's understanding and engagement. Resources are available; it's a matter of priorities. Reevaluation of General Education could provide an opportunity to focus on the first-year experience.

Sources of Evidence

All data sources in MSU's FoE Evidence Library, as well as the FoE Faculty Survey, provided information for analysis in this area.

Based on the foregoing analysis, the committee has concluded that MSU's performance on the Improvement Dimension has been very weak. Assessment with respect to first-year students is ill-defined, rarely formalized, and not used in a systematic manner to improve campus practices and perspectives. As well, there is little evidence to indicate that the campus has encouraged individual faculty members to attend workshops and conferences or to utilize existing literature to improve campus consciousness of the first-year student experience. For these reasons, the committee has assigned the following grade to MSU's performance on the Improvement Dimension.

Recommended Grade: D

Recommended Action Items:

- **Improvement 1a: Formalize advising process (High priority)**
 - The advising process could be improved by formalizing the process for both students and faculty, to include advisor training, establishing a time-frame for advising, coordinating data and practices, and utilizing all available information. A successful model has been implemented in the College of Business for advising students about academic issues (such as course sequencing) vs. career issues (such as determining the right major fit). Academic issues are advised by a staff person; career and major issues are advised by faculty. The entire advising process across campus could be examined for definition, purpose, and format, and coordinated to achieve relative synchronization. This would ensure consistent and higher quality of advising campus-wide. (umbrella approach) There will be a need to identify information needs at each stage of the advising process and to assign advising tasks accordingly to administrative advising (such as Enrollment Management) and academic program advising (college, division, department, or program advising). Cross-training can then occur between the two functions. The point is that Enrollment Management is well equipped to advise on certain topics, program advisors are well equipped to advise on other topics. To address the problem of students avoiding seeing their advisors and to improve the quality of decisions that students are making about their course selection, we could implement a process whereby students must demonstrate that they have visited with an advisor. This process could be implemented in conjunction with a data sharing system (including data sets such as CSI) to improve advisors' knowledge about the students. Electronic note-sharing could be explored. A concerted effort should be made to address FY students' perceptions about appropriate and desirable behavior and performance at the university.
- **Improvement 1b: Increase data accessibility (High priority)**
 - Access to sources investigated in this dimension (see PI 9.1 Sources of Evidence list, separate attachment) as well as to pertinent student information through People Soft could be broadened for those who are in a position to help students succeed (faculty, advisors, mentors). In particular, a specific policy for how certain instruments (such as the CSI) are used must be developed, to warrant continued purchase. For those instruments, VP-level oversight must be implemented to ensure effective application. As well, to advise properly, faculty advisors need to have easier access to students' transcripts, CSI, and other relevant data.
- **Improvement 2a: Increase percentage of faculty/staff involved in local and national conferences (High priority)**
 - With more people involved, MSU will have greater likelihood that more sharing across campus will occur and increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable implementation.
- **Improvement 3: Assess Mentoring Program (High priority)**

- Typical consumer measures including the value of the program to students, student satisfaction with the program, and its effectiveness in achieving improved retention must be developed and implemented. Changes to the Mentoring Program should be based on these measures.
- **Improvement 1c: Utilize small groups for continuous engagement (Medium priority)**
 - Beyond the initial orientation and large-group training, MSU could have small-group and individualized training for students and faculty to maintain procedures for intervention and for continuous engagement and improvement.
- **Improvement 2b: Encourage family participation in MSU events (Medium priority)**
 - To address the cultural issue identified in PI 9.3: Understanding, we recommend, based on Betsy Barefoot's review of this draft, that our students' families "be invited to visit campus at every opportunity to reduce whatever fear or suspicion may exist in the broader culture."
- **Improvement 2c: Hold monthly college meetings (Medium priority)**
 - To increase information sharing, monthly college meetings would provide a forum for presenting results from NSSE, FSSE, CLA, assessment, etc. This could provide a venue for sharing information about events, problems, suggestions for change, university initiatives, etc., and thus increase communication across disciplines within a college with respect to the first year and other topics.
- **Improvement 3: Hold monthly college meetings**

Appendix B – Title III Grant Objectives

Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
<p><i>Objective 1. To increase levels of engagement among our students to the level of our peer institutions nationwide, as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement, by 9/30/13. Strategy 1a. Establish Center for Engagement in Teaching and Learning to coordinate engagement and retention activities for students and faculty.</i></p>			
<p>Appoint CETL Advisory Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overall project direction. • Read/score applications for mini-grants; make awards. • Represent the project to the campus and community; liaise with shared governance groups: Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, University Cabinet, Graduate Council. • Evaluate the project, both formatively and summatively. 	<p>President David Fuller, VPAA and Project Coordinator (PC) Gary Rabe, VP Student Affairs Dick Jenkins, deans, Faculty Senate,</p>	<p>Committee will consist of PC Rabe (chair), President Fuller, two faculty from each college (one senior, one junior), representatives from Student Services and Registrar, two students (one freshman or sophomore, one junior or senior), one community member, CEL staff member, and one dean.</p>	<p>By 9/1/08, Advisory Committee is formed and operational; meets twice per month through year 1, monthly thereafter.</p>
<p>Appoint staff of the CETL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director: 12 month, full-time appointment. • Two Associate Directors selected from faculty/staff: 50%, 9 month, two-year appointments. • Tutoring/Mentoring Coordinator: 12 month, full-time appointment • Administrative Assistant: 12 month, full-time appointment 	<p>President Fuller, PC Rabe, deans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recruit CETL Director, advertise nationally as soon as Title III grant is awarded; appoint by 1/1/09. • Associate Directors: announce and recruit among faculty in September, 2008; appoint by 1/1/09. • Tutoring/Mentoring Coordinator: advertise regionally; appoint by 1/1/09 • Administrative Assistant: recruit locally; appoint by 1/1/09 	<p>By 1/1/09, CETL is fully staffed with Director, Associate Director 1 & 2, Tutoring/Mentoring Coordinator, and Admin Assistant.</p>
<p>Establish office suite for CETL in Administration/Student Center, third floor</p>	<p>President Fuller, PC Rabe, CETL staff, VP Admin & Finance Ron Dorn, and Facilities Director Roger Kluck.</p>	<p>Renovate space, purchase furniture, install computers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">139</p>	<p>By 6/30/09, CETL offices are established in Administration/Student Center and offering services to faculty and students.</p>

Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
Strategy 1b. Require three engagement experiences of all students prior to graduation; one to be completed during students' first year, one a field experience.			
Find and manage engagement opportunities (e.g. service-learning, civic engagement, community based learning projects on- and off-campus) appropriate for first-year students; build into new 1 credit FYE/Orientation to College course (detailed in strategy 2a, below)	CETL Director, Associate Director 2, interested faculty/staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalog current engagement opportunities available to MSU students. • Identify and secure new engagement sites in and around Minot appropriate for first-year students. • Offer engagement opportunities to all entering freshmen in fall 2009 and 2010, and strongly encourage them to participate. Require students entering fall 2011, and thereafter to complete one experience during their first year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 6/1/10, 30% of MSU first-year students will have completed a voluntary engagement experience. • By 6/1/11, 60% of first-year students complete engagement experience. • Thereafter, 100% of MSU first-year students will have completed at least one experience.
Arrange second engagement opportunity for sophomores, juniors, or seniors.	Faculty, CETL Director, Associate Director 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and secure engagement sites appropriate for advanced students. Most off-campus sites will be within driving distance; a few may be very distant. • Meet with departments and faculty to explain the requirement, assist in incorporating engagement experiences into existing or new courses, and assist with logistics and details. • CETL serves as clearing house for engagement opportunities, matching sites with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 9/30/13, all academic programs provide at least one engagement experience tied to a course for students in that program. • By 9/30/10, 30% of MSU students will have completed a second experience; By 9/30/11, 50%; By 9/30/12, 75%; By 9/30/13, 100%.
Provide each MSU student with a significant field experience (e.g. internship, practicum, student teaching, campus job) related to major and/or projected career; require completion before graduation.	CETL Director, Associate Director 1, deans, academic advisors, faculty, Career Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalog existing field experience opportunities at MSU: internships, student teaching, practica, and campus jobs related to major or career; count number of participants. • Devise criteria for acceptable field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 9/30/09, catalog of existing field experiences completed, criteria for acceptable experiences developed. • By 9/30/11, 75% of

Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
		<p>experiences, especially for campus jobs. Primary considerations: field experience must provide practical experience in students' field; must include both academic and field supervisors; must include thoughtful reflection on the relationship between coursework and work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help faculty integrate field experiences into academic programs through workshops, dept/program meetings, consultations. • Help faculty and field supervisors develop appropriate supervisory and evaluation procedures. • CETL serves as clearing house for field experience opportunities. 	<p>academic programs will include field experience opportunities and requirements by 9/30/13, 100%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 9/30/09, 40% of MSU graduates will have completed a qualifying field experience; by 9/30/10, 60%; by 9/30/11, 75%; by 9/30/12, 90%; by 9/30/13, 100%.
<p>Award mini-grants for specific faculty-led projects or programs designed to increase students' levels of engagement in courses and academic programs (e.g. through collaborative and active learning, writing across the curriculum, undergraduate research).</p>	<p>CETL Director, Associate Director 1, faculty, deans, department chairs, CETL Advisory Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for ideas to better engage students in coursework. • Meet with faculty in each college to explain goals, objectives, and procedures. • CETL Advisory Committee reads and scores proposals and makes awards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 RFPs issued by 1/15/09, awards made by 3/1/09, projects completed by 12/30/09. • Thereafter, RFPs issued 9/1, 5 awards made by 10/15; projects completed by the following 9/30.
<p>Award mini-grants for specific faculty- or staff-led projects designed to increase students' civic engagement (e.g. through increased volunteerism, service learning, American Democracy Project, student government).</p>	<p>CETL Director, Associate Director 2, student affairs staff, faculty, deans, community members, CETL Advisory Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for ideas to better engage on- and off-campus students in community. • Meet with students, student organizations, student affairs staff, off-campus constituencies to explain goals, objectives, and procedures. • CETL Advisory Committee reads/scores proposals and makes awards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 RFPs issued by 1/15/09, awards made by 3/1/09, projects completed by 10/1/09. • Thereafter, RFPs issued 9/1, 5 awards made by 10/15, projects completed by the following 9/30.

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Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
<p>Objective 2. To increase our first-to-second-year retention to 75% by 9/30/13; 6 year graduation rate to 40% by 9/30/13, 43% by 9/30/15. Strategy 2a. Create learning communities centered on an FYE course for all first-year students.</p>			
<p>Create 1 credit FYE/Orientation to College course including survival skills, service learning/civic engagement.</p>	<p>CETL Director, Associate Directors 1 & 2, faculty, student affairs staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create FYE/Orientation course and gain Faculty Senate approval during grant year 1; implement as pilot during years 2 and 3; require of all first year students year 4. • FYE instructor uses the linked content course syllabi and assignments to teach study and survival skills. • Student mentor assists FYE and other LC instructors, conducts threaded discussions (electronic and face-to-face) with students throughout year. 	<p>20% of first-year students complete FYE course by 12/31/10; 60% by 12/31/12; 100% by 12/31/13.</p>
<p>Create learning communities (LCs) for first-year students linking at least two content courses and FYE course.</p>	<p>CETL Director; Associate Director 1, academic advisors, faculty, PC Rabe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue RFPs for LC ideas and models; award mini-grants to proposals for LC's most likely to engage first-year students. • CETL Director participates in annual training sessions for academic advisers; introduces concept and rationale for LC's, summarizes opportunities. • During years 1-3, academic advisers strongly encourage first-year students to enroll in LC that best fits their intended program and career; years 4-5, require enrollment in LC including FYE course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP for LCs issued 9/1/09, mini-grants awarded by 12/1/09. Second round completed during year 3. • By 9/1/10, 25% of first-year students enroll in LC; by 9/1/11, 40%; by 9/1/12, 85%; by 9/1/13, 100%.
<p>Strategy 2b. Implement faculty development program to enhance first-year experience for students.</p>			

Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
<p>Provide convocation for faculty/staff at beginning of each semester addressing methodologies to increase engagement and retention (e.g. incorporating service learning into courses, FYE techniques, creating learning communities). Provide workshops during academic year on more specific topics (e.g. LCs including online courses, supervising field experiences, engagement activities at distant locations).</p>	<p>CETL Director, Associate Directors 1 & 2, faculty, Student Affairs staff, academic advisors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Foundations of Excellence data to target areas of weakness in services provided to 1st yr students. • Invite appropriate national leaders to give convocations, e.g. John Gardner and/or FYE colleagues from U of South Carolina/Foundations of Excellence on first-year courses, George Kuh and colleagues on increasing engagement. • Recruit faculty/staff from MSU and local and regional institutions to give focused workshops on engagement-related topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First convocation offered 1/09; each semester thereafter. • First workshop offered spring, 09; at least one per semester thereafter.
<p>Provide travel funds for faculty/staff to attend conferences and workshops devoted to engagement & retention activities (e.g. FYE conferences, Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching & Learning, National Tutoring Association).</p>	<p>CETL Director, Associate Directors 1 & 2, faculty, staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue RFP to faculty/staff soliciting proposals for travel to conferences or workshops related to engagement or retention. • Award 10 travel grants per year. • Recipients disseminate skills and information gained across campus through workshops, websites, white papers, and/or other methodologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP issued 11/1/08, deadline 1/15/09; thereafter at beginning of fall semester. • 10 awards made each year; recipients disseminate results of travel within two months of return.
<p>Assign experienced faculty mentors to all new faculty.</p>	<p>Deans; veteran faculty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify experienced faculty who work well with first-year students and have success in introductory courses; match them with newly hired faculty, when possible from other departments. • Faculty mentors observe mentees' classes at least once per month and meets with mentees at least monthly to discuss teaching strategies and ways to maximize success of first-year students. • Mentee observes mentor or other 	<p>New hires for fall 2009 are assigned mentors by 8/1/09 and meet with mentors at least once per month throughout the year. Repeat annually thereafter.</p>

Specific Tasks	Primary Participants	Methods Involved	Tangible Results & Timeframe
		experienced faculty member at least two times per semester.	
Strategy 2c. Develop and expand peer tutoring and mentoring programs for all students.			
Reduce failure rate of first-year students in crucial, gateway courses through expanded and improved tutoring.	CETL Director, Tutoring/Mentoring Coordinator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify failure points in high-failure gateway courses (e.g. first exam, term paper, weekly quizzes) and work with course instructors to identify tutoring strategies to ameliorate those failure points. • Design tutoring programs to implement those strategies, e.g. Supplemental Instruction, in-class assistance, small group tutoring, individual tutoring, online tutoring. • Recruit and train peer tutors for expanded tutoring program. • Publicize availability of tutoring for gateway and other courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure points analyzed by 6/30/09. • Tutoring programs designed for each high-failure gateway course by 6/30/10. • Tutoring programs for all high-failure gateway courses implemented by 9/30/13.
Provide peer mentors for all MSU first-year students tied to FYE course and learning communities.	CETL Director; Tutoring/Mentoring Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit peer mentors: successful students in at least their second year. • Train mentors to be active participants of online discussions, help LC members draw connections between courses and common and ultimate major program/career, respond to individual members' needs; refer neediest students to other offices on campus. • Assign each first-year LC 1 trained mentor. Mentors lead ongoing discussions, meet with the group at beginning/end of semester, meet individually with mentees as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 9/1/10, each FYE/LC scheduled for first-year students includes 1 peer mentor. • By September 30, 2013, each first-year student receives peer mentoring though FYE/LC.