

Yearly Program Assessment Executive Summary: Co-Curricular

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March 2023

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## **Introduction**

This executive summary provides a background of co-curricular assessment, descriptions of co-curricular goals and outcomes at Minot State University (MiSU), a list of co-curricular programs at MiSU, the transition to Strategic Planning Online (SPOL), Yearly Program Assessment (YPA) training for co-curricular programs, an overview of intended outcomes and assessment methods described in co-curricular YPA plans that were submitted for the 2022-2023 academic year, challenges encountered with assessing co-curricular outcomes, and recommendations for next steps.

### **Background of Co-Curricular Assessment**

MiSU is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). HLC (2022) describes five Criteria that represent the standards by which they determine whether an institution meets the requirements for accreditation. Each Criterion subsumes multiple Core Components with examples of evidence to help clarify the requirements of each Criteria. Criterion 4, Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement, pertains to co-curricular program assessment. For example, Core Component 4.B states, “The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students” (p. 35). More specifically, evidence item 1 under 4.B states, “The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings” (p. 35). HLC defines co-curricular as “Learning activities, programs and experiences that reinforce the institution’s mission and values and complement the formal curriculum” (p. 92). MiSU (2018) defines co-curricular learning as “ungraded learning that happens outside the classroom, which complements the learning occurring inside the classroom” (p. 8). According to HLC, examples of co-curricular programming include “study abroad,

student faculty research experiences, service learning, professional clubs or organization, athletics, honor societies, career services, etc.” (p. 92).

### Co-Curricular Goals and Outcomes at MiSU

MiSU (2018) has defined four co-curricular student learning goals (SLGs) representing the categories of leadership, wellness, self-awareness, and career and professional development. The SLGs collectively subsume 12 co-curricular student learning outcomes (SLOs). The co-curricular SLGs are listed with their respective SLOs in Table 1.

**Table 1**

#### *Co-curricular SLGs and SLOs*

Category	SLG	SLO
Leadership	1. Students will enhance their intrapersonal competence through their experiences.	1.1. Students will guide others through processes involving collaboration, shared responsibilities, or teamwork. 1.2. Students will apply problem-solving skills while working towards a common purpose. 1.3. Students will use innovative approaches to solve problems. 1.4. Students will affect positive change within their organizations.
Wellness	2. Students will describe and apply the dimensions of holistic well-being.	2.1. Students will develop emotional wellness-related knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that promote individual and community well-being. 2.2. Student will develop physical wellness-related knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that promote individual and community well-being.
Self-Awareness	3. Students will enhance their intrapersonal competence through their experiences.	3.1. Students will reflect on their goal-directed behavior. 3.2. Students will reflect on their self-efficacy, growth mindset, or confidence. 3.3. Students will reflect on their emotional and situational adaptivity.
Career and Professional Development	4. Students will develop the necessary life and professional skills to promote their future success.	4.1. Students will develop appropriate communication for use in a professional setting. 4.2. Students will use effective time-management skills. 4.3. Students will demonstrate appropriate demeanor in a professional setting.

## Co-Curricular Programs at MiSU

MiSU offers several co-curricular programs for students to engage in ungraded learning outside of the classroom that complements their learning inside of the classroom. Examples of MiSU co-curricular programs by office are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Examples of Co-Curricular Opportunities at MiSU*

Office	Program
Academic Support Center (ASC)	Academic Advising
	Access Services
	ASC Workshops
	Career Services
	Peer Tutoring
	POWER TRiO Student Support Services
	Starfish
	Student of the Month
	Supplemental Instruction
	Director Program
Campus Life	Student Government Association (SGA)
	Minot State University Registration
Enrollment Services	Emerging Leaders Program
Looyenga Leadership Center	Leadership Workshops
	Student Leader Summit
	Military Resource Center
	Military Resource Center
Military Resource Center	Annual Honor Dance & Powwow Celebration
	Annual Native American Cultural Celebration
	Residence Life & Housing Student Staff
Residence Life & Housing	Counseling Services
	Student Health and Counseling
	Student Health Clinic
Wellness Center	Wellness Wheel Education

## Transition to SPOL

Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) institutional effectiveness software is available to North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions at no cost through an existing contract between SPOL and the NDUS. The SPOL Assessment module helps respond to areas for YPA improvement that were identified in the 2022 *Report on the Condition of Academic Assessment*

at *Minot State University* (Anderson, 2022). The areas for improvement included template consistency, efficiency, relevance, comprehensiveness, institutional memory, and assessment guidance.

The Director of Institutional Assessment provided an overview and demonstration of SPOL to co-curricular program directors and other key personnel in May 2022 as a potential alternative to using Microsoft (MS) Word templates and email for submitting YPA plans and reports. Participants in the meeting indicated that they would like to proceed with using SPOL instead of the MS Word templates. The Co-Curricular Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to transition from using the MS Word templates to using SPOL for co-curricular YPA planning and reporting.

### **YPA Training for Co-Curricular Programs**

In response to the desires of co-curricular programs to begin using SPOL for YPA planning and reporting, the Director of Institutional Assessment developed and provided YPA training to co-curricular programs during the summer of 2022. The training included tools and guidance to support the compilation of assessment plan details for Strategic Planning Online (SPOL). The objectives of the training were for the participants to:

- Describe the mission of their program
- Identify which of the co-curricular outcomes are intended to be assessed by their program
- Identify the measure(s) that are utilized to assess each outcome
- Determine the criteria for success on each measure
- Determine the target for each set of criteria
- Organize all program assessment details required for SPOL

### YPA Plans for 2022-2023

Ten co-curricular programs representing six co-curricular offices submitted program assessment plans for the 2022-2023 academic year. The outcomes, measures, and criteria for each of the submitted plans were added to SPOL and are ready for reporting. The co-curricular outcomes intended to be assessed by programs with 2022-2023 YPA plans are outlined in Figure 1. Eight programs plan to assess one outcome. Two programs plan to assess three outcomes. Four programs intend to assess outcomes relevant to category 1, Leadership. Eight programs intend to assess outcomes relevant to category 3, Self-Awareness. No programs intend to assess outcomes relevant to category 2, Wellness, or category 4, Career and Professional Development. Fifty percent (6 out of 12) of the outcomes are intended to be assessed by at least one program:

- One outcome (3.1) is intended to be assessed by five programs.
- One outcome (1.1) is intended to be assessed by three programs.
- Two outcomes (1.4, 3.2) are intended to be assessed by two programs.
- Two outcomes (1.2, 3.3) are intended to be assessed by one program.

The other 50% (6 out of 12) of the outcomes (1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) are not intended to be assessed by any program.

The YPA plans that were submitted for the 2022-2023 year include a variety of measures. For example, the Looyenga Leadership Center intends to use student surveys with Likert-type items for students to report the extent to which they perceived themselves to have achieved the intended outcomes. The Military Resource Center intends to use a worksheet with a checklist to foster student reflection and progress monitoring of key milestones along their educational journey. The Residence Life & Housing Student Staff program intends to use a goal setting sheet and surveys for students to set and reflect on progress toward achievement of their goals.

**Figure 1**

*Co-Curricular Outcomes by Office and Program in 2022-2023 YPA Plans*

<b>Office Program</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Academic Support Center												
Academic Advising							X					
Peer Tutoring		X										
Campus Life												
Student Government Association	X											
Enrollment Services												
Registration							X					
Looyenga Leadership Center												
Emerging Leaders Program								X				
Leadership Workshops	X			X				X				
Student Leader Summit	X			X			X					
Military Resource Center												
Military Resource Center							X					
Native American Center												
Annual Honor Dance & Powwow									X			
Annual Native American Cultural Celebration							X					

### **Challenges with Assessing Co-Curricular Outcomes**

Progress has been made in the assessment of co-curricular programming at MiSU; however, there is room for improvement. Although many co-curricular personnel could generally describe outcomes that their programs were intended to support, there were some challenges in identifying how the intended outcomes of their programs aligned with MiSU's existing co-curricular SLOs in Table 1. Furthermore, even when programs were able to identify one or more of the SLOs in Table 1 that they intended to support, there seemed to be difficulty among some programs in identifying existing measures or developing new measures of the relevant SLOs. These types of challenges may have contributed to the rather low number (10) of co-curricular programs submitting YPA plans for 2022-2023 as well as the finding that only 50% of the co-curricular outcomes were intended to be assessed by at least one program in 2022-2023.



### **Recommendations for Next Steps**

The identified challenges, coupled with the low number of programs submitting YPA plans and the low percentage of existing MiSU co-curricular outcomes being assessed, provide rationale for implementing actions to help make improvements. Recommended actions include conducting additional assessment training for co-curricular programs on program-level assessment and exploring whether it may be worthwhile to update the existing MiSU co-curricular goals and outcomes to help ensure that they align with both the intended outcomes of the co-curricular programs and the outcomes that MiSU students intend to achieve through learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

## References

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