Montana University System
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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2024 Accreditation Report
September 2024

The Northwest Commission on College and Universities (NWCCU) conducting the following evaluations of Montana University System campuses during the 2023-24 academic year.

Year Seven/Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
Helena College (Spring 2024)
Montana State University Northern (AY 2024)
Montana Tech (2023)
University of Montana (Summer 2024)

Mid-Cycle Evaluation
Flathead Valley CC (Spring 2023)

Year Six Evaluation:
University of Montana Western (Spring 2024)
Montana State University (August 2023)

In the 2024-25 academic year, the following Montana University System campuses will be evaluated as follows:

Year Six Review:
Montana State University Billings (Fall 2024)

Mid- Cycle Review:
Great Falls College (Spring 2025)

Currently, all MUS and CC campuses are accredited by the NWCCU.

MUS Campus	Year of Initial Accreditation	Degrees Permitted
Dawson Community College	1969	A
Flathead Valley Community College	1970	A
Great Falls College Montana State University	1979	A
Helena College University of Montana	1977	A
Miles Community College	1971	A
Montana State University – Billings	1932	A,B,M
Montana State University – Bozeman	1932	A, B, M, D
Montana State University – Northern	1932	A, B, M
Montana Technological University	1932	A, B, M, D
University of Montana – Missoula	1932	A, B, M, D
University of Montana – Western	1932	A, B

Commission Recommendations & Findings - AY 23-24 Evaluations

Flathead Valley Community College - Mid- Cycle Review

In response to the spring 2023 Mid-Cycle NWCCU visit, the Strategic Planning and Accreditation Council, in coordination with the data team and feedback from the campus community, developed and thoroughly vetted a revised set of mission fulfillment indicators that directly align and support each of FVCC's strategic goals.

Looking ahead, FVCC will review its policies and procedures throughout the upcoming academic year in preparation for the NWCCU spring 2026 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR).

Montana State University - Year Six Review (August 2023)

Montana State submitted the university's Year-Six NWCCU accreditation report on Policies, Regulations and Financial Review in August 2023. From review of the report, MSU received 3 findings that are being addressed in the addendum of the subsequent Year-Seven NWCCU accreditation report. Work on the Year-Seven NWCCU accreditation report on Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness will be completed and submitted in August 2024. The institution will receive an NWCCU accreditation review team visit on Oct 9-11, 2024, with an NWCCU Board of Commissioners report to the MSU President and Accreditation Liaison Officer during their January 28-31, 2025 meeting.

Helena College - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Spring 2024)

Our Year Seven site visit with the peer evaluators for NWCCU has resulted in two preliminary recommendations focused on strategic planning, specifically our key performance indicators. In response, the Dean's Cabinet will review and develop a shared understanding of all existing KPIs to establish priorities for the college. The KPIs will be disaggregated by special populations, where available, to identify equity gaps and begin discussions about how they might be closed. The performance of KPIs will also be benchmarked against peer institutions when available, to support strategic decision-making and planning. The entire campus will also be educated on our KPIs – not only what they are, but also why they were chosen, how we are doing, and what we plan to do with the information we learn from monitoring the metrics. The Institutional Development, Effectiveness, and Accreditation Committee will be re-focused to prioritize strategic planning activities and move assessment under a new Faculty Senate or Academic Standards and Curriculum Review sub-committee.

Montana State University Northern - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (2024)

During MSU-Northern's most recent accreditation review conducted by NWCCU, the University received commendations as follows:
"The Commission commends Montana State University - Northern for:

1. An immense amount of pride and care across every level of the institution. Each person the peer
evaluation team met at Northern expressed their deep affection for their students.

2. Community engagement as demonstrated by significant participation in campus events and impressive fundraising support.

3. The deep devotion to their institution and appreciation for all the faculty and staff do to support their academic, professional, and personal success.

4. Their outstanding commitment to first generation college students, lower income students, and, in
particular, Native American students."

The Commission recommends that Montana State University - Northern:

• Recommendation 1: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Employ faculty and staff sufficient in role and number to achieve its organizational responsibilities, educational objectives, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs. (2020 Standard(s) 2.F.3)

• Recommendation 2: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Ensure its financial planning includes meaningful opportunities and transparency for broad participation by relevant stakeholders. (2020 Standard(s) 2.E.2)

• Recommendation 3: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Compare itself to regional and national peer institutions and establish and share widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.2;1.D.3)

• Recommendation 4: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Publish all expected program and degree learning outcomes and ensure information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.3)"

Montana Technological University - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (2023)

The Commission commends Montana Technological University for:
1.
Their deliberately distinctive special focus in science, engineering and technology while honoring the broad purpose of benefiting humanity and meeting workforce needs.
2.
Its student services dedication to a collaborative spirit of serving students by listening and responding to student needs.
3.
Its collaborative culture and dedication to finding creative ways to offer strong programs and support systems at Highlands Campus.
4.
Their commitment to experiential learning which leads to highly employable graduates and engaged alumni.

Recommendations Substantially in Compliance but in Need of Improvement
The Commission recommends that Montana Technological University:

- Recommendation 1: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Set and articulate meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.2)

- Recommendation 2: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Implement a systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness and assign resources. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1;1.B.3)

- Recommendation 3: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Implement an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in all programs. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.5)

- Recommendation 4: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Demonstrate the use of assessment results to inform academic planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes in all programs. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.7)

- Recommendation 5: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Make available disaggregated student achievement data and document how the institution uses these data to inform, implement, and develop strategies and allocate resources. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.4)

- Recommendation 6: Spring 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Complete and adopt policies and procedures for reviewing published materials to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services. (2020 Standard(s) 2.D.1)

University of Montana - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Summer 2024

"The Commission commends The University of Montana - Missoula for:

- UM faculty, staff and administrators for their deep commitment to the mission of the institution, their resiliency through prior challenges, and their commitment to moving forward together to continuously improve in service to their students and communities.
- Supporting their uniquely diverse student body through the delivery of programming tailored to support student success and well-being.
- Its progress on student success and achievement as evidenced in their metrics, specifically improvements in retention and four-year graduation rates. Further, the institution is commended for their use of disaggregated as well as peer-comparison analytics to identify and address equity gaps.
- Its strong commitment to faculty, staff, and student shared governance and to productive collaboration toward common goals.

Recommendations Substantially in Compliance but in Need of Improvement

The Commission recommends that The University of Montana - Missoula:

- Recommendation 1: Fully integrate Academic Affairs into the Strategic Operating Rhythm planning and evaluation process to inform and refine the institution's effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1)
- Recommendation 2: Develop an inclusive and integrated University-wide framework to assess student learning outcomes at the program and degree level that is distinct from the use of student achievement data and metrics. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.7)
- Recommendation 3: Implement an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed and that the institution ensure that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy. (2020 Standard(s) 2.G.7)"