Chapter 3

Chapter

3

Criterion 3

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

The MSUM campus community agrees: Teaching and learning are at the heart of our campus culture. Our work to assess student learning is moving us toward a more centralized process with direction and oversight. In addition, our assessment efforts have become more closely tied to university planning and budgeting in a manner that allows us to remain true to our educational mission.

We take pride that MSUM faculty and administration have an especially strong commitment to the education of our students. The 2004-2005 Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey (HERI) data indicate that a higher percentage of MSUM faculty report that their interests lie more heavily in teaching than in research when compared to other public, four-year institutions (43.7 percent versus 31.2 percent). Further, a recent visit in March 2006, by a team from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AASCU), noted "Student learning is priority number one at MSUM."

The emphasis on student academic success and learning environments can be observed in many of the activities and planning on our campus. Although we face challenges tied to shrinking financial resources, we continue to find ways to move forward with multiple, creative strategies that continue to support effective teaching and learning.

Core Component 3A:
The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible

MSUM actively continues to develop and strengthen a culture of assessment on campus. We have made changes in our committees, planning and reporting, and have recently created a new administrative position to oversee assessment efforts on campus.

These changes have been implemented to ensure that assessment of programmatic student learning outcomes, and our responses to assessment, become regular activities infused throughout all levels of institutional planning. Although we believe that one of our main challenges lies in maintaining this effort into the future, we believe that we have established a strong foundation from which to move forward. We have a strong vision of our goals with respect to assessment of student learning outcomes.

The following sets of evidence illustrate Core Component 3A:

- Evidence Statement 3A-1: Student learning outcomes for academic programs are clearly stated and available to the campus community.
- Evidence Statement 3A-2: MSUM is attentive and responsive to the importance of developing and maintaining a culture of assessment on campus.
- Evidence Statement 3A-3: SLOAC greatly strengthens MSUM's efforts to value assessment as a dynamic, ongoing process that provides us with an understanding of how well we are meeting our educational mission.
- Evidence Statement 3A-4: Information regarding all aspects of assessment of student learning at MSUM is well organized and easily accessible to the campus and to the public.
- Evidence Statement 3A-5: New assessment planning and reporting forms have been developed to facilitate departmental engagement in assessment of student learning and to better tie these efforts to our mission.
- Evidence Statement 3A-6: An annual departmental work plan requirement more closely aligns programmatic planning with assessment and university planning.
- Evidence Statement 3A-7: The Academic Affairs division provides funds for departments to address needs related to student learning outcomes.
- Evidence Statement 3A-8: There is increasing recognition of the validity of the different types of evidence of student learning already available on our campus.

Evidence Statement 3A-1:
Student learning outcomes for academic programs are clearly stated and available to the campus community.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree are clearly stated in the MSUM Bulletin. The definition of an academic program is defined by Minnesota State system policy.[1] The Bulletin is updated every two years and is available in both hard copy and online[2] making the SLOs current and readily available to the campus community at all times. The 2006-2007 Graduate Bulletin also has SLOs available for each program leading to a graduate degree.[3] Many academic programs state their programmatic SLOs on their departmental websites and in departmental literature used during recruitment and during advising.

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1 http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/302.html

2 See http://www.mnstate.edu/home/bulletin/index.htm

3 See http://www.mnstate.edu/graduate/graduate_bulletin.htm

MSUM is in the process of developing SLOs for other educational programs on campus. The division of Student Affairs has proposed in its 2007 Work Plan[4] to develop assessable student learning outcomes to ensure that MSUM student services are effective. Although Student Affairs currently has stated goals and objectives,[5] the development of student learning outcomes and the establishment of a regular assessment program specific to the services and types of learning opportunities this division provides, will ensure student learning in environments beyond the classroom.

Evidence Statement 3A-2:
MSUM is attentive and responsive to the importance of developing and maintaining a culture of assessment on campus.

Assessment of student learning at MSUM is divided into two major components. The first focuses on assessment of SLOs as stipulated in the expectations of degree-granting programs. This process is guided by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC). The second component focuses on assessment of student learning in the Dragon Core. This process is facilitated by the Dragon Core Assessment Committee and addresses the learning competencies specified in the Dragon Core Competency Areas and the outcomes from the foundation four courses.

From 1993-2005 the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) and the Liberal Studies Committee oversaw campus assessment efforts of student learning. The additional charge of assessing institutional effectiveness was added to the IAC part way through this period, changing that committee to the Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness Committee (IAEC). The Liberal Studies Committee (LSC) oversaw the assessment of student learning in the liberal studies program and provided this data to the IAEC. An NCA focus visit in 2000 noted that MSUM had made significant progress in the area of assessment of student academic achievement.

While the actions of the IAEC were quite helpful in developing a culture of assessment on campus, by 2004 it had become increasingly obvious that the charge of overseeing both programmatic and institutional assessment was unmanageable. The IAEC group was too large, too general in its charge, and communication between the committee and academic departments across campus was lacking. In 2005, the associate dean for the College of Arts and Humanities and the College of Social and Natural Sciences was given the charge of overseeing and facilitating campus efforts to more effectively assess programmatic SLOs. As a result of the issues stated above, it was determined that a new committee should replace the IAEC. This new committee, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC), was established in the fall of 2005.[6]

With the implementation of the new Dragon Core and the initiation of the phase-out period of the existing liberal studies program in the fall of 2006, the LSC was replaced with the Dragon Core Assessment Committee (DCAC).[7] Details and information about the DCAC, including the justification for the establishment of this committee, its charge and its role in the overall campus assessment effort can be found in 4B-2 as part of the discussion on the revision of the Liberal Studies program.

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4 See http://www.mnstate.edu/president/StrategicPlanning/FY2007SP/StudentAffairsindex.htm

5 See http://www.mnstate.edu/stdntaff/mission.htm

6 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/Committee.htm

7 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/dragoncore/DCAC.htm

Members of SLOAC, the DCAC and the Office of Academic Affairs recognized that the university needed a dedicated administrative position to oversee the efforts of the new assessment committees. Without that leadership, there was a possibility that we could lose the new momentum toward developing a strong culture of assessment on campus. As a result in the summer of 2006, a new administrative position, the assistant vice president for assessment, was established and filled (on a part-time basis). The person in this position is currently overseeing assessment of our new general education curriculum, the Dragon Core. Eventually, her duties will also include oversight of programmatic assessment.

The effort to develop a stronger emphasis on student learning outcomes is not limited to the programmatic level. Since 2004, MSUM policy[8] has required all syllabi to include a statement of individual course objectives and student learning outcomes. All instructional faculty and staff are reminded of this policy by the Office of Academic Affairs at the beginning of each semester.

Evidence Statement 3A-3:
SLOAC greatly strengthens MSUM's efforts to value assessment as a dynamic, ongoing process that provides us with an understanding of how well we are meeting our educational mission.

Assessment at MSUM is guided by the standards set forth by the Higher Learning Commission. The charge of SLOAC is to assist departments in revising and maintaining programmatic assessment plans for majors and graduate programs, to review all assessment of student learning outcomes, departmental plans and reports, and to make recommendations to the dean/director for approval and action. In addition, this committee is responsible for preparing and making available to the campus community an annual report of the university's progress with regard to assessing student learning outcomes and continuous improvement in curriculum and student learning. The committee is composed of the associate dean of arts and sciences, NCATE coordinator; five faculty members, one from each college and one from the library, two students (one in arts and sciences and one from the professional programs). When appropriate, SLOAC also reviews assessment of SLOs associated with non-degree programs such as the Honors Program and the Corrick Center.

Since the formation of SLOAC, a more centralized and a more clearly communicated process for assessment of SLOs has emerged. The committee has made a number of efforts to strengthen the communication between SLOAC and departments. The chair of SLOAC is available to and does attend academic department meetings to clarify the SLO assessment planning and reporting process. To support departmental efforts in developing appropriate SLOs and in using programmatic assessment as a measure of how well they are meeting our educational mission, departments are also encouraged, in consultation with their dean, to appoint a faculty member as an assessment coordinator. This faculty member is either a member of SLOAC, a departmental assessment committee, or has experience and interest in assessment, or is the departmental chairperson. The intent of this interaction is to facilitate communication between the SLOAC and each department with respect to programmatic SLOs and assessment and, to ensure that departmental approval of all programmatic assessment plans and reports occurs. The overall goal of SLOAC is to establish an ongoing, collaborative, peer-review process with each department, to ensure that assessment is central to our educational work.

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8 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/Departments/policies/coursesyllabusPolicy.htm

Evidence Statement 3A-4:
Information regarding all aspects of assessment of student learning at MSUM is well
organized and easily accessible to the campus and to the public.

To encourage the development of an institutionalized assessment effort, a centralized and current source of information about assessment is available on the MSUM website. The information is well organized and provides easy access to policies and procedures, forms, assessment schedules, completed plans and reports, funding opportunities and external links to other information.[9] Although information about approved departmental assessment plans and results have previously been available online, this information was maintained as part of the overall departmental planning and review process and was not as easily accessible. Further, in the past there have been many misconceptions on our campus regarding the development of student learning outcomes and the methods of assessing them. The current website also provides links to help faculty better understand assessment and to guide them in developing clear, assessable SLOs. Rubrics[10] used by SLOAC when reviewing plans and reports are also available on this site to help remove any "mystery" from the review process and to help departments when developing appropriate SLOs and assessment strategies.

In addition, this site also provides easy access to the assessment planning and reporting status of all academic departments on campus. The plans and reports are categorized by college[11] and allow quick reference to both the status of a department and to their actual plans and reports. As we look toward the future with respect to assessment, one of the goals of SLOAC is to ensure that all departments are current with their plans and reports.

Evidence Statement 3A-5:
New assessment planning and reporting forms have been developed to facilitate
departmental engagement in assessment of student learning and to better tie these
efforts to our mission.

Although assessment of student learning and departmental planning and reporting of assessment have been occurring on campus for the past twelve years, some departments have fallen behind in the submission process. As a result, a set of standardized forms[12] for assessment planning and reporting have been developed. The goal of this activity is to provide a clear and simple method for each department to initiate and submit their plans and reports to SLOAC. In addition, the forms require that departments align their assessment efforts with key aspects of MSUM's mission goals. Instructions for each type of form are clear and can be filled out online. All programs that have not submitted a plan or report in the previous year were required to submit these by Oct. 31, 2006.

Evidence Statement 3A-6:
An annual Departmental Work Plan requirement more closely aligns programmatic
planning with assessment and university planning.

MSUM's department and programmatic review process is a critical link between the assessment of student learning and department planning and goal-setting. Until recently, departments at the graduate or undergraduate level have been required to provide a report about overall departmental planning, of which assessment was a component, every two years (Biennial Department Reports) to the dean of their college as part of a cyclical six-year

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9 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/

10 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/Resources.htm

11 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/Plans_Reports.htm

12 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/Forms.htm

Table 3-1: Instructional Improvement Grants		
Department	**Amount**	**Project**
Physics	$6,850.00	Optics Education Kit
Mass Communications	3,806.00	Extended Duty Days (EDDs) and books
Social Work	3,157.00	EDDs and Supplies
Early Childhood Education	2,037.00	Assessment videotapes
Psychology	6,795.00	5 computers

review process. At the end of each six-year period, and as part of a final self-study of the six-year period, departments were required to have an evaluation by an external consultant. The dean provided comments to the department based on their reports and forwarded those comments to the vice president for academic affairs for review and action. This six-year review was designed to be an ongoing process in which each department worked with their dean to continually evaluate, assess and modify (improve) departmental goals, curricula and SLOs with respect to the educational mission of the university.

As the planning and budgeting procedures at MSUM have been revised over the past three years (refer to Chapter 2/Criterion 2, Core Component 2B), it was determined that the process outlined above was not working well in aligning departmental planning and reporting with the Academic Affairs division and the university. In response to this, the vice president for academic affairs initiated in August 2006, a new process known as the Department Work Plan.[13] The Department Work Plan is an annual process, and starting in the 2007-2008 academic year, it will replace the biennial process outlined above for all departments. As part of the transition to this new process, in the 2006-2007 academic year, departments who would normally have a report due have the option of using either the old or the new reporting system. In addition, all departments who did not submit an assessment plan or report during 2005-2006 were given a deadline of Oct. 31, 2006 to submit an assessment plan and report to SLOAC. These deadlines were developed in an effort to have all departments review their SLOs in preparation for the 2007-2008 academic year, when every department will be required to link their assessment efforts to departmental planning and resource requests. Finally, an external evaluation of each department has been maintained as part of this process on a six-year schedule.

Six-year program reviews are not mandatory for those programs that are accredited by national program accrediting bodies (e.g., NCATE, AACSB, CSWE, ABET) if such accreditation includes on-campus program review by an external reviewer. It is mandatory for such programs to submit a copy of their report to the university, through the appropriate dean to the vice president for academic affairs, together with a report covering any unaddressed aspects of the consultant's questionnaire normally utilized in six-year program reviews. A final determination of the need for the full six-year program review rests with the vice president for academic affairs.

This new planning process will continue to strengthen the culture of assessment on campus. Department Work Plans and reports will be submitted to deans at the end of each academic year. A given department's work plan should identify a number of goals, some of which will be identified from that department's assessment plan, and are required to align with the Academic Affairs Master Plan. The assessment of student learning is therefore tightly linked to the Department Work Plans and departmental requests for resources such as equipment,

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13 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/Departments/reports/2006-2007/Planning-ReportingMemo.htm

student help, staffing and course scheduling. The Department Work Plans, in turn, are to be related to the Academic Affairs Master Work Plan and campus Work Plan Initiatives, for which funding is announced every May.

Evidence Statement 3A-7:
The Academic Affairs division provides funds for departments to address needs related to student learning outcomes.

As part of the departmental review process, Academic Affairs has provided funds for Instructional Improvement Grants for the past six years. A pool of $50,000 is available for departments to address a financial or resource need that is identified in their assessment reports and is related to a specific SLO or set of SLOs. Proposals are submitted in conjunction with a departmental assessment report and the funds are used by departments to make programmatic improvements where need has been identified through the results of assessment. SLOAC reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the Academic Affairs Council for a decision at the end of each fiscal year.

Thirty-two grants have been awarded to various departments since 2003.[14] Table 3-1 identifies the grants awarded last year.

Evidence Statement 3A-8:
There is increasing recognition of the validity of the different types of evidence of student learning already available on our campus.

Our assessment of what and how well our students are learning requires multiple approaches that go beyond the standardized tests and surveys used in the past. Therefore a "one-size-fits-all" approach to assessment is not going to be an effective and valuable measure of what our students are learning and whether or not we are meeting their educational requirements.

MSUM faculty are interested in student feedback. According to an internal faculty survey conducted fall 2005 by members of the NCA Self-Study Criterion 3 Team, 87 percent of MSUM faculty reported always reading student evaluations of their teaching. While these results do not indicate the amount or type of assessment of student learning outcomes that is occurring, they do support the notion that faculty at MSUM are interested in the experience that their students have in the classroom and are interested in what they are learning.

The campus community and its constituents have also begun to recognize the vast demonstration of student learning and achievement that is already evident in the activities that our students participate in. For example, the annual Student Academic Conference[15] is a day-long display of achievement of student learning that has been recognized not only by faculty and administrators on campus but also by local employers and by the chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and University system.

Finally, at the 2005 Professional Development Day, faculty were asked during structured tabletop discussions "In what ways have you reshaped pedagogy in response to your assessment procedures? The majority of answers indicated that faculty use and value assessment of student learning outcomes in their own pedagogy. Answers included:

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14 http://www.mnstate.edu/assess/LrningImprovs.htm

15 See http://www.mnstate.edu/acadconf/2006/history.cfm

- "End-of-semester surveys are used to re-work material and presentation of material;"
- "Capstone courses;"
- "Senior portfolios of writing assignments, which are reviewed by faculty;"
- "Feedback from the community;"
- "Letters and emails received from former students;"
- "Anecdotal comments;" and
- "The number of majors who went to graduate school."

In conclusion, MSUM clearly states student learning outcomes for each academic program. Changes have occurred on campus to better ensure that these learning outcomes are ones that are assessable and therefore useful for us to determine if we are meeting our educational mission. In order to fully institutionalize the assessment process, assessment of student learning outcomes has become more centralized and associated with both departmental and university planning. In addition, the Academic Affairs division provides annual support in the form of Instructional Improvement Grants to help and encourage departments to follow through with the feedback loop aspect of assessment. Information and educational materials for faculty and administration about current principles of assessment and about the process at MSUM is easily found on a single MSUM website and faculty are becoming more aware of the variety of measures of student learning that already exist on campus.

Core Component 3B:
The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Overwhelmingly, MSUM faculty report that their first priority is teaching and that their major activity is teaching. In a recent 2004 survey of MSUM faculty by the Higher Education Research Institute, 92.4 percent of responding faculty on our campus listed their primary activity as teaching.

The following sets of evidence illustrate Core Component 3B:

- Evidence Statement 3B-1: Curricular content is determined by qualified faculty.
- Evidence Statement 3B-2: MSUM supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching in varied learning environments.
- Evidence Statement 3B-3: MSUM evaluates faculty teaching in a consistent and regular manner.
- Evidence Statement 3B-4: MSUM values and promotes effective teaching.
- Evidence Statement 3B-5: MSUM provides a variety of services and activities to support the continual improvement of pedagogies.
- Evidence Statement 3B-6: MSUM demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance learning.
- Evidence Statement 3B-7: Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach.

Evidence Statement 3B-1:
Curricular content is determined by qualified faculty.

At all levels, MSUM faculty have the primary responsibility for determining curricular development. This responsibility is a reflection of the central role that our educational mission plays at MSUM. The administration also plays a role in curricular development, but in almost every instance, curricular committees at levels beyond the departmental levels are predominantly made up of faculty who are actively engaged in their disciplines and on

Cross-Cutting Theme: The Distinctive Organization

Developing Faculty through an Intentional Process

MSUM faculty have many opportunities to develop themselves as teachers and scholars. New probationary faculty are reviewed each year by their department colleagues, department chair, dean, and vice president for academic affairs. In addition to a written report by the dean, each faculty member meets twice individually with the dean—once to discuss his or her plans for the year and later on his or her progress towards achieving those plans. At each level of the review process, probationary faculty are advised on strengths, weaknesses, and means of improvement.

Financial resources exist to help faculty improve their teaching and scholarship. Departments distribute faculty development funds mandated by the contract. For the current year, departments are allocated $1,115 per faculty member. Most departments, in turn, allocate this money to the individual faculty in the department. Additionally, the contract mandates that money is available for faculty development grants. A peer review committee at the college level reviews grant applications and recommends funding.

Through this process, faculty receive steady evaluation and the means to further develop as teachers and scholars.

campus. For example, faculty are elected through a process run by the Inter Faculty Organization to MSUM's Academic Policy Advisory Council (APAC).

Programmatic curricular decisions are determined by faculty teaching within the departments offering the programs. As of November 2005, 67.3 percent of full-time instructional faculty at MSUM hold Ph.D.s and 9.9 percent hold Specialists, M.F.A., J.D., and M.L.S. degrees, considered to be terminal degrees in their disciplines.

Some departments have curriculum committees through which new course proposals are made. The review of new courses begins with those committees, moves to the department as whole, then on to the appropriate university committee. Thus, faculty are very much involved in the overall development of new courses and programs.

The Academic Policy Advisory Council[16] at MSUM was established in 1978 and has as its purpose "to improve communication between faculty and administration in academic matters." The vice president for academic affairs is responsible for chairing the bimonthly meetings. Other members of the committee consist of college deans, the director of instructional resources, one elected faculty member per each 0.25 FTE per college, two students and, the MSUAASF president or designee. APAC is responsible for reviewing and approving curricular changes such as change in course number or level, number of credits, new course proposals, workshops and other topics courses (APAC Policy Manual 2005/2006[17]). Copies of APAC agendas and minutes are available online and the actions of the committee are also routinely published in MSUM's newsletter, Continews.[18]

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16 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/APAC/index.htm#policies

17 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/APAC/Policies/courselevelpolicy.htm

18 http://www.mnstate.edu/publications/continews/

Table 3-2: Faculty Evaluation Schedule		
Appointment Type	**Evaluation**	**P r o g r e s s Reports**
Fixed Term Faculty appointed to less than .75 FTE	None	None
Fixed Term Faculty appointed to .75 FTE or more	Annually	Annually
Community Faculty	None	None
Adjunct Faculty	None	None
Head Coaches	Annually	Annually
Assistant Coaches, appointments totaling .75 FTE or more	Annually	Annually
Assistant Coaches, appointments totaling less than .75 FTE	None	None
Probationary Faculty appointed to .50 FTE or more	Annually	Annually
Tenured and Non Tenure Track Faculty (below rank of Full Professor)	Every four (4) years	Annually
Tenured and Non Tenure Track Full Professors	Every four (4) years	S u m m a r y report in year two (2) Full Report in year four (4)
Data source: IFO/Minnesota State system Master Agreement, page 69.		

Two recent task forces, made up predominantly of faculty, the 3-4 Credit Task Force (2003-2004) and the Liberal Studies Task Force (2005 – Nov. 29, 2006) were charged with evaluating important elements of the curriculum. In March of 2005 the 3-4 Credit Task force submitted a memo of recommendations[19] to the administration. The Liberal Studies Task Force was, in part, established in response to some of the recommendations made by the 3-4 Credit Task Force. The recommendations made by the Liberal Studies Task Force (refer to Chapter 4/Criterion 4) have been approved and changes to MSUM's liberal studies program are currently underway. These two task forces have been responsible for significant curricular changes that will positively impact every student enrolled at MSUM.

Evidence Statement 3B-2:
MSUM supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching in varied learning environments.

MSUM recognizes that effective teaching can occur in many formats beyond the traditional lecturer-at-a-podium-style. Faculty are encouraged to further their professional development in a manner that facilitates teaching in a variety of environments. These environments at MSUM include web-enhanced, online and hybrid courses, self-paced courses, use of web and video streaming, use of technology in the classroom, research mentoring and, use of a variety of technological tools to accommodate students with disabilities.

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19 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/

The examples that follow provide some recent examples of how the professional development of faculty in these areas is supported by MSUM.

In 2003, the Technology Task Force recommended the implementation of a laptop initiative. With this initiative, which began in 2004, all faculty are to receive a laptop computer in place of a desktop as part of the MSUM Technology Work Plan. The laptops are meant to facilitate the use of technology in the classrooms and the initiative is designed to provide all faculty with a new laptop every three or four years on a rotating cycle. Faculty are required to apply for the laptops with the award priority being classroom use.

The Instructional Technology Services[20] group on campus is composed of faculty and staff who provide expertise and training in the use of technology in the classroom and beyond. This group offers regular workshops that support professional development related to use of a variety of technologies for teaching.

Faculty can also apply for competitive funds designated for Professional Development (19A money)[21] made available from Academic Affairs through the collective bargaining agreement. These funds are available for research, creative activity, degree completion and professional development. These awards are available for research related to teaching effectiveness, development of a new course, study of a refresher or retraining nature, projects designed to meet the changing needs of the department or institution, and other activities devoted to the development of professional skills as they relate to teaching.

Support for travel to meetings regarding professional development with respect to teaching in different environments that involve curricular changes, novel teaching methods, research etc., is also provided through collective bargaining and through the college dean's discretionary funds

Evidence Statement 3B-3:
MSUM evaluates faculty teaching in a consistent and regular manner.

The Minnesota State system/IFO Agreement delineates faculty expectations. It does so by laying out five criteria. Among these five criteria, the first focuses on effective teaching. For teaching faculty, the agreement states "effective teaching shall be the principal proportion of the five criteria considered in evaluation."[22]

Evaluation of faculty teaching occurs at regular intervals for all faculty positions on campus. See Table 3-2 for details.

Faculty submit Professional Development Plans (PDP) to be covered by the period under evaluation on a schedule determined by the Minnesota State system/IFO Agreement. As part of the evaluation process, each faculty member submits a Professional Development Report to their dean and a copy of the report to their department. The dean evaluates the faculty member's performance and this evaluation goes into the faculty member's official personnel file. Then, vice president for academic affairs engages in the same evaluation process and the vice president's evaluation is also part of the official personnel file.

Since the Agreement recognizes teaching as consisting of activities and responsibilities beyond classroom instruction, faculty evaluation may address activities in course

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20 http://www.mnstate.edu/instrtech/

21 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/msumgrants/index.htm

22 http://www.hr.mnscu.edu/LR/Contracts/IFO/05-07/contract.pdf

development, curriculum design, instructional innovation, ability to organize, analyze and present knowledge, instructional advisement and other such related activities. As evidence of the contractual area that addresses the ability to teach effectively, faculty with teaching assignments at MSUM are required to include a process for student evaluations in their PDP and evidence of these student evaluations in their PDPs. One method available to faculty to provide these student evaluations of teaching is the MSUM Optional Student Evaluation of Teaching procedure.[23]

This process is the result of negotiations between the MSUM Administration and the Faculty Association.

The evaluation form was developed by an ad hoc committee of MSUM student, faculty association and administrative representatives to address issues that arose over the years during review of individual faculty teaching effectiveness by college deans. If a faculty member chooses not to administer this evaluation, then the dean of the division may interview random students about that faculty's teaching. Regardless of which method used (MSUM Optional Student Evaluation of Teaching or dean interview of students), faculty members are also free to incorporate other evaluative measures.

As part of the evaluation of teaching, faculty members are required to submit evidence or documentation of claims made in their Progress Reports. This documentation may "also include, but is not limited to: peer reviews, quality of syllabi, nature and quality of assignments, practices and quality for assessing student progress, time lines of evaluation of student performance, pedagogical approaches, attention to student advisement, nature and frequency of course development and timeliness of revision, and timeliness of work assignments." As noted above in the excerpt from the collective bargaining agreement, "effective teaching shall be the principal proportion of the five criteria considered in evaluation." Therefore, for renewal, tenure, and promotion, teaching remains the highest priority.

Evidence Statement 3B-4:
MSUM values and promotes effective teaching.

Excellence in teaching and learning is at the heart of our educational mission. MSUM faculty themselves highly value effective teaching as evidenced by the use of student evaluations to incorporate in their courses and approaches. At the 2005 Professional Development Day "Focusing on the Future," faculty were asked how they determine if their teaching is effective. Many faculty (both non-tenured and tenured) use student surveys on a regular basis to evaluate not only the effectiveness of their teaching style but also to evaluate other items pertinent to learning such as the textbook used, the online learning system used, the classroom environment itself and the types of assignments and content assessment examinations utilized. Faculty were also asked to fill out an online survey when registering for the 2005 Professional Development Day. One of the questions asked "If you always or usually read student evaluations, what do you do with them?" Of the 211 responses received, all but five indicated that they used their evaluations to make some type of change in their courses. These comments are provided in the Resource Room and provide strong evidence for the value faculty place on effective teaching.

The university recognizes and honors outstanding examples of teaching in a number of public ways:

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23 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/Departments/TeachingEval/procedure.htm

- Academic Affairs honors individuals on campus who make exceptional contributions to the university through the annual Excellence Awards in five different categories; one of which is Excellence in Teaching. Faculty members are nominated for these awards by other faculty and staff and the awardees are selected by Academic Affairs Council. Since 1995, 24 faculty members have been recognized for their teaching efforts. These awards are presented at the annual Faculty Dinner held at the beginning of each academic year.
- In keeping with the collective bargaining agreement, faculty cannot receive tenure or be promoted without demonstrating effectiveness in teaching. In fact, faculty have at times been promoted or tenured for exceptional teaching, even if other areas have been less exceptional. In that way, MSUM expresses its value on teaching. Each year, the tenures and promotions are publicized, both internally and externally, and since 2002, the Livingston Lord Library has honored faculty who receive tenure and/or promotion with a book plate program, through which newly tenured and promoted faculty select a book to be donated in their name to the library's collection.[24]
- MSUM faculty are also recognized and valued for their teaching by off-campus organizations. Over the last 10 years, three MSUM faculty members have been honored with the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Teacher of the Year Award for the state of Minnesota.[25] No other institution in the state has received more than one of these nationally recognized awards during the same time period. In each instance MSUM has held a public recognition ceremony for the individual and has ensured that the faculty member's award is highly publicized on- and off-campus (local newspaper, MSUM home page, and Continews).

Evidence Statement 3B-5:
MSUM provides a variety of services and activities to support the continual improvement of pedagogies.

The campus Faculty Development Committee[26] is the main source of activities and resources promoting improved pedagogies for faculty. The Faculty Development Committee is composed of MSUM faculty and provides a variety of resources to support and develop their pedagogies. These resources vary from "Brown Bag" workshops on various teaching topics to an extensive website that provides faculty with links to a number of valuable teaching resources. The committee is also active during the orientation day for new faculty, providing them with information about the resources available to them and, in the past has provided new faculty with a book about effective teaching. This committee also offers individual faculty development opportunities such as a mentoring program for new faculty, and the "Talking about Teaching" program. The Talking about Teaching program provides pairs of faculty with on-campus meal coupons for one monthly lunch meeting to meet and discuss issues related to teaching. At the end of the academic year, the committee sponsors a group breakfast for all participants in the program. More than 60 faculty have participated in this program since it began in 2000.

Although the main interest of the majority of our faculty is in teaching and we do provide support for faculty development opportunities on campus, we still face a challenge in determining how to best provide these opportunities in a manner that better encourages and supports faculty participation. Recent efforts to address this challenge have focused on utilizing scheduled, non-instructional days for faculty development related to pedagogical

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24 http://www.mnstate.edu/cmc/HonoringFaculty.htm

25 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/News/CASE.htm

26 http://www.mnstate.edu/faculty/

improvement. For example, at the beginning of the fall 2006 semester, the majority of the MSUM faculty attended a seminar entitled "Generation NeXt Comes to College" by Dr. Mark Taylor of Arkansas State University during a non-instructional duty day prior to the start of classes. A follow-up to his seminar was then held in the afternoon of a non-instructional duty day eight weeks later.

The Faculty Development Committee at MSUM works cooperatively with the Minnesota State system Center for Teaching and Learning and Minnesota State system's Office of Instructional Technology. This office also provides funding for the Faculty Development Committee to provide a site license for faculty to access the National Teaching and Learning Forum. As an index of its commitment to strong pedagogy and effective teaching, the university supports the innovative Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) initiative. In the past year (2005-2006), the university has sponsored some 14 CTL faculty development seminars designed specifically to enhance effective pedagogy and to disseminate best practices to enhance teaching among its faculty and learning among its students. During this same time period, 120 MSUM faculty members have attended these seminars while 25 faculty members have been involved in leading the various discussions of each seminar. A list of the seminar titles can be found in the Resource Room.

Other pedagogical-focused activities and initiatives occur throughout the year on the MSUM campus such as those that incorporate panel discussions to support other faculty in the development of writing intensive courses. In preparation for the incoming curricular changes, especially the movement towards writing intensive courses across the curriculum, academic affairs has created the new position of campus writing director.[27] This director will help to facilitate the creation of new writing intensive classes while also offering support for faculty attempting to develop and implement these courses. The formal creation of this position follows two successful summer workshops (summer 2005 and 2006). These workshops, limited to 20 faculty members each year, focused on effective ways to integrate writing into courses in a variety of disciplines.

The number and types of these activities demonstrate our commitment to our educational mission; we are active in improving and remaining current in our pedagogical efforts.

Another important area of pedagogy, supported by the Academic Affairs Work Plan, has been the TOCAR's Anti-Racism Pedagogy Across the Curriculum.[28] The first workshop was held in May 2006. Institutional funds provided for this four-day workshop. Faculty participants represented disciplines ranging from political science to the biosciences. Each participant received $1,000 and a number of books and other resources to help them adopt a current syllabus or design a new syllabus to integrate antiracism in their courses, and they each participated in a day-long follow-up workshop just prior to the start of the next academic year. The workshop is scheduled again in spring of 2007.

Evidence Statement 3B-6:
MSUM demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance learning.

The university has a history of supporting innovative practices that enhance learning for students at all levels. Innovation occurs in many different venues and with very different goals across the campus.

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27 http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/writingmatters/

28 http://www.mnstate.edu/tocar/

In the 2005-2006 academic year, the Academic Service Learning Advisory Board[29] instituted a grant program for faculty members wishing to create new service learning opportunities. Four faculty received funds to develop courses and a mentor from the ASL Advisory Board. The new courses were taught in the fall 2006 semester, and grantees will report on their projects at an open forum in the spring of 2007. In previous years, faculty participation in Academic Service Learning has also been encouraged and supported by the Faculty Development Committee.

Student involvement in creative and other scholarly activities such as research occurs in a variety of disciplines at MSUM and is strongly encouraged and supported. One way that MSUM encourages undergraduate involvement in these activities is through the Student Academic Conference. Since its inception in 1998, this event has allowed campus undergraduates to showcase their research in a day-long conference format. The MSUM Student Academic Conference is unique in the Minnesota State system, based on the numbers of students that participate and that are aware of this annual event. Students become involved in research as part of specific classes they take and they also become involved in research projects through one-on-one mentoring relationships with faculty.

Undergraduates also present their research in other venues specific to their disciplines. For example faculty in the natural sciences, psychology, social work and economics, take students to present their work at both regional and national meetings.

MSUM provides some funding for these types of student activities through the Honors Apprentice Program and scholarships (for both entering freshman and upper-class students) where students are required to work with faculty for a minimum of five hours per week. The College of Social and Natural Sciences (CSNS) has recently begun awarding small research grants to students once a semester. Students write proposals and are expected to present their research at the MSUM Student Academic Conference. The proposals are reviewed by the CSNS Student Advisory Board, which makes recommendations to the dean about funding.

From HERI data, 55.1 percent of faculty reported working with undergraduates on a research project compared to 66 percent of faculty at other four-year institutions.

Many faculty on campus are incorporating technology into their instruction to support student learning. For example, faculty are utilizing personal response systems to allow frequent polling of their students to ensure understanding of concepts, while others have developed extensive course websites with supportive learning objects and web-based simulations that support students' understanding of the concepts in the course. Many faculty are also using the Desire2Learn instructional management system to support collaboration among students in their courses via group discussion areas and group chat areas.

Evidence Statement 3B-7:
Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach.

The 2004-2005 HERI survey of MSUM faculty indicates that, our faculty participate in professional organizations and activities relative to their teaching at a level that is similar to other four-year universities. The 2005-2007 Minnesota State system/IFO Agreement[30], provides each department with $1,115 per full-time equivalent faculty member to use toward

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29 http://www.mnstate.edu/asl/

30 http://ifo.org/contract/ifomnscu0507.htm

professional development. In accordance with the agreement, each department will determine "through a democratic process" a procedure for distributing those funds. Among other permissible uses, these funds are available for faculty to use to maintain memberships in professional organizations, travel to conferences, and to buy professional journals and books.

In conclusion, there is a large amount of evidence to indicate that MSUM both values and supports effective teaching. Our highly qualified faculty are active in their disciplines, report having a high level of interest in teaching, and are interacting with our students in the classroom. We have an established and standardized system of faculty evaluation of teaching effectiveness that places teaching as a high priority (both at MSUM and within the Minnesota State system) in the overall evaluation of faculty by their immediate superiors. Finally, MSUM has a number of strong campus activities and resources supporting the continual improvement of pedagogies and innovative teaching practices.

Core Component 3C:
The organization creates effective learning environments.

MSUM recognizes that in an educational situation, the encompassing environment for students on campus is just as important as effective teaching in ensuring that learning can occur. While we believe that we have a number of excellent programs and systems in place that create a good learning environment on campus, we have recently taken a closer look at how our students perceive their learning environment. The 2006 Student Success Institute studied the myriad influences our various institutional structures and programs have on creating a learning environment that promotes student success. The results of this Institute, along with a new Moorhead Together initiative to help address responsible decision making for students, have us looking proactively towards the future and towards creating a more supportive and effective learning environment for our students.

The following sets of evidence illustrate Core Component 3C:

- Evidence Statement 3C-1: MSUM provides an environment that supports all learners and the diversity they bring.
- Evidence Statement 3C-2 : Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.
- Evidence Statement 3C-3: MSUM is being proactive in understanding how we can best respond to student needs in order to enhance and support their learning success.
- Evidence Statement 3C-4: MSUM has an effective alternative admissions program that supports the academic success of a select group of students.
- Evidence Statement 3C-5: Student development programs support learning throughout the student's experience on campus.

Evidence Statement 3C-1:
MSUM provides an environment that supports all learners and the diversity they bring.

The MSUM mission statement specifically addresses our commitment to providing an educational environment that supports all students. While the vast majority of students come from the region surrounding MSUM (54.8 percent from Minnesota and 33.9 percent from North Dakota) and 93.1 percent of students are white (or unreported), MSUM works through Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to foster a climate that welcomes the many forms of diversity its students do bring to campus.

Cross-Cutting Theme: The Learning-Focused Organization

The Mathematics Learning Center

The Mathematics Learning Center (MLC) was developed during the summer of 2000 in response to growing concerns that too many students were not successfully completing entry-level mathematics courses. Entering MSUM students who score below a certain level on the MnSCU Mathematics Placement Exam and/or the mathematics portion of the ACT are placed into beginning algebra and intermediate algebra classes. The curricula for these courses uses both new materials first presented in a lecture setting, then, in the MLC. Students are encouraged to help each other with assigned problems with the guidance of the lab director, the lecture instructor and a student tutor.

Before the MLC was developed, only 47 percent of the students enrolled in college algebra received a D or higher in the course. After the MLC was developed, nearly 70 percent of students enrolled in college algebra here successfully completed the course. During spring semester 2002, 91 percent of Mathematics Learning Center alumni completed college algebra successfully and 78 percent of those students who completed work in the Learning Center in 2001- 2002 returned to MSUM for fall semester 2002. Many of the MLC student tutors are mathematics education majors. These future teachers, as a result of the center, gain valuable teaching experiences at MSUM by teaching their fellow students.

The MLC won the 2005 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' Academic and Student Affairs Award for Excellence in Curriculum Programming. Of the 40 programs and administrators nominated in the state system, only 10 received awards based on a review by a panel of college and university academic and student affairs administrators. The MLC exemplifies MSUM's commitment to supporting student learning and ensuring student success.

Ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity are supported throughout Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. Through programming offered by the multicultural affairs office, the office of international programs, and the office of student activities, students are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities emphasizing the diversity of our campus, region, nation, and the world. During the 2005-2006 academic year, MSUM offered opportunities intended to create a positive and inclusive environment such as: the 17th Woodlands and High Plains Traditional PowWow; a series of speakers and events celebrating American Indian Awareness Month; Celebrations of Nations; international student exchange programs; the Black Student Alliance; the Muslim Students Association; and the Ten Percent Society.

Academically, the support for creating a climate welcoming of diversity is evident in the graduation and programmatic requirements. The new Dragon Core curriculum demonstrates this importance by including in its foundation courses, required of all students in their first year, a critical and multicultural thinking course. This course should establish from the students' first year on campus the university's commitment to fostering diversity. Additionally, in the Inner, Middle and Outer Clusters, students will take courses in human diversity and global perspectives. (The previous liberal studies curriculum also required that students take courses in both American multicultural studies and global studies.)

The university is committed to supporting Aim 8 of the mission: "To ensure a campus climate that embraces diversity and bases relationships on civility and tolerance and that acknowledges the perspectives of women, minorities and non-western cultures." We want our students to understand the importance of that element of the mission from their first year on campus.

MSUM recognizes and provides a supportive environment for other forms of diversity within its population, including age, sex, and sexual orientation. MSUM offers many programs that attempt to make all students feel accepted and to raise awareness among the university community as a whole. For instance:

- Hendrix Health Center offers Safe Zone training for the campus community. Through this training, Safe Zone contacts are established who provide "information, sensitivity, and understanding towards Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (GLBTQ) issues or concerns."
- The Women's Center provides a place for students to gather, offers educational programming, and "envisions a university environment that works collaboratively to eliminate barriers, prejudice and bigotry, and engender a supportive and empowering climate to all women."
- The Non-Traditional Student Association offers students 23 and over a group of supportive peers. They hold meetings, publish a newsletter, and have Desire2Learn (D2L) meeting options. offering flexible ways for students to participate.

MSUM also provides access and support for students with wide-ranging levels of academic ability. Learners of diverse ability are provided with services ranging from peer tutoring and supplemental instruction, to arranging accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Writing tutoring is available for all students through the Write Site, the campus writing center, and students enrolled in specific mathematics classes work with the Mathematics Learning Center, which is a priority for Academic Affairs.[31]

Corrick Center for General Education

MSUM also provides entry to the university for those students who may, because of previous academic performance or because of life situations limiting academic experiences, not normally have access to a university education. Since 1972, our Corrick Center for General Education has offered an alternative entry program for students who demonstrate the potential to succeed in the university even though traditional measures like ACT scores or class rank show them as under prepared or at-risk. The Corrick Center offers a less competitive environment in which students work closely with their professors, who are also their academic advisors, to create an appropriate course of study. The Corrick Center emphasizes student success through its variable credit, modified mastery learning system that allows students to gain mastery of material and confidence in their academic work. Each year the Corrick Center enrolls approximately 230 students, and since 2001, enrollment has ranged from 434 to 510. These are students who would normally be denied admission from the university.

The Honors Program

The Honors Program provides a place for students demonstrating exceptional performance. The program currently offers a variety of courses aimed at challenging excellent students. The program offers a colloquium and 10 other courses. Students admitted to the Honors

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31 Priority 3, Goal 8 of the Academic Affairs Work Plan for 2005-2010 states that it will support the Math Learning Center.

Cross-Cutting Theme: The Distinctive Organization
The Student Success Institute

Inspired by a national study and committed to student success, a group of 36 MSUM administrators, faculty, staff, and students met over the course of two weeks during June 2006 to discuss ways of improving student success at MSUM. The group evaluated current strategies to enhance student success and worked in groups on specific areas of focus. In the end, the group advanced 18 specific proposals aimed at improving student success.

The Student Success Institute is part of a strategic effort to engage in self-reflection about student learning on campus. The effort began when Dean Ron Jeppson co-authored an Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) study of 12 institutions that have higher than average student success rates. Following the study, AASCU invited member institutions to have teams of reviewers assess their institutions based on the study. MSUM was the first campus to accept the offer and six university administrators visited MSUM in March 2006. Their recommendations guided the Student Success Institute last summer. An FY2006 Work Plan Initiative partially funded the AASCU visit and summer retreat, with additional money from the offices of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

The campus community is now engaged in reflection and discussion about how to best implement some of the proposals from the SSI. One proposal would relocate the bookstore to the student union and use the space vacated by the bookstore to house all student services offices in a one-stop help center. Another proposal would align the activities of Dragon Days, Orientation, and the First Year Experience course. Additional information about the institute can be found at www.mnstate.edu/success.

By inviting our peers to campus to review our institution and then engaging in serious discussion about our programs, MSUM demonstrates that it is committed to the self-evaluation process.

Program must complete four courses, including the colloquium.[32] The courses offered are "devoted to the essential purpose of the Liberal Arts and, indeed, of the university itself: to examine, assess, and celebrate the artistic, intellectual, literary and other expressions of our shared humanity."[33] Currently, the Honors Program is being revised and becoming more programmatic. Also, those revisions will allow new entering freshmen to come into the university as part of that programming.

Evidence Statement 3C-2:
Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.

Student advising at MSUM occurs both in formalized classroom experiences and with individualized faculty interactions. Advising is an important part of the assignment of faculty members at MSUM. According to Article 10 of the Minnesota State system/IFO Agreement, academic advising is a contractual component of faculty workload. The

[32] http://www.mnstate.edu/honors/

[33] Undergraduate Bulletin 2005-2006

2004-2005 HERI survey results indicate that the majority of faculty spend one to eight hours each week on advising (89.5 percent of males and 76.5 percent of females) and 22 percent of female faculty report spending nine to 20 hours per week on advising. An MSUM faculty member recently received a National Academic Advising Association as one of the nation's top 17 advisors and one of two in the Upper Midwest.[34] This was the first time that this award has been received by an MSUM faculty member.

Advising Support Center

The Advising Support Center is committed to helping fulfill the educational mission of the university.[35] Because of this commitment, every effort is made to assign students to appropriate advisors. In assigning advisors, MSUM attempts from the beginning of students' academic careers to integrate them smoothly into a major and thus into the culture of that major. If, based on his/her class schedule, an incoming student does not demonstrate a trend towards a major, the Advising Support Center attempts to assign one of the student's instructors as advisor. The director of the Advising Support Center also advises many undeclared students.

In 2003 MSUM's Advising Committee instituted a student-driven award for outstanding advisors across campus. According to the most recent HERI data, 66.2 percent of faculty and 50 percent of administrators report that they "disagree" or "disagree strongly" that faculty are rewarded for being good advisors. Advising frequently entails a negative reward in that the best advisors often end up with the most advisees, so awards like the one the listed above should help to make good advisors feel more appreciated.

First Year Experience

The First Year Experience Course (FYE) is an elective course that offers topics from advising and course registration to stress management to diversity. Students work on study skills like note taking, listening, memory, and test taking, and critical thinking and problem solving. Such study skills instruction compliments discussions of personal responsibility, self-awareness, and other personal growth issues. Together, this class should equip students for academic success. Instructors for FYE come from across the campus, from various areas of Academic and Student Affairs.[36]

Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental Instruction[37] (SI) at MSUM is modeled on a program initially developed by the University of Missouri, Kansas City. It consists of student-led sessions that are held once or twice a week for select courses in science, math and accounting that students find particularly challenging. Student SI-leaders are trained in collaborative-learning techniques and hold informal sessions to help their peers better understand the material presented in class. The influence of SI on student understanding and course grades is regularly evaluated by the Counseling and Personal Growth Center on campus.

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34 http://www.mnstate.edu/biology

35 http://www.mnstate.edu/advising/first_year_advising.htm

36 http://www.mnstate.edu/advising/FYE.htm

37 https://www.mnstate.edu/counsel/SI/index.htm

Cross-Cutting Theme: The Future-Oriented Organization

Enhancing our Teaching and Learning Spaces

Based on a vision mapped by the Master Plan for Technology Task Force, MSUM has made significant progress in equipping our faculty and their classrooms to use new technology in teaching our students.

The university is in the third year of providing laptop computers for faculty. Approximately 225 of 300 faculty now have laptop computers that are less than two years old. Faculty are able to take their laptops from their desk to classrooms equipped with permanently installed projection equipment. University classrooms are equipped with one of four standard configurations, ranging from a basic transparency projector to complete remote control of all sound, video, and computing equipment in the room. Most rooms—110 of 150—are equipped at the second, third or fourth level, which includes, at minimum, a data projector, laptop docking station with Internet connection, and an audio/video player and speakers.

Faculty and staff not only have access to the technology in classrooms, but they also have access to a wide array of training sessions. Staff from the Information Technology and Instructional Technology departments conduct regular training on topics such as innovative software, operating system tools, and website design. An annual technology conference on campus showcases the latest technology and promotes discussion about using technology to enhance student learning.

MSUM is committed to integrating new technology in our learning spaces and training faculty to use it to teach more effectively.

Evidence Statement 3C-3:
MSUM is being proactive in understanding how we can best respond to student needs in order to enhance and support their learning success.

After the March 2006 visit by members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) review team, MSUM initiated the Student Success Institute.[38] Thirty-six faculty, staff and students met over the course of two weeks to discuss ways to improve student success on campus.

The group produced 18 specific proposals for the campus and the administration to enhance student success at MSUM. Since that time, the president has appointed a task force with the charge of developing a strategic plan for student success at MSUM and a new director of transitions has recently been appointed to oversee key student success initiatives on campus such as orientation, first year experience, and Dragon Days.

Evidence Statement 3C-4:
MSUM has an effective alternative admissions program that supports the academic success of a select group of students.

The Corrick Center for General Education[39] is a program that provides a supportive learning community for a selected number of first and second-year students admitted to Minnesota

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38 www.mnstate.edu/success/about.cfm

39 http://www.mnstate.edu/center/

State University Moorhead. This unique program prepares students for success in their chosen field of study by offering a college-level curriculum emphasizing writing, critical reading, and mathematical skills. The faculty provide personal advising and are committed to helping students build a foundation of success to achieve their academic goals.

Students admitted through the Corrick Center are required to take a separate first-year experience course. The Center's commitment to mastery learning extends to this course, which emphasizes the processes of advising, schedule planning, and planning toward graduation. Central to this course is that the instructor of each section is the advisor to the students in that section. That relationship is in place until the student transfers to his/her major department. Traditionally, the course has been a one-credit Introduction to Higher Education, but in fall 2006, a three-credit Freshmen Experience in Higher Education is being piloted. The three-credit model will integrate the traditional introduction to the university and advising with more intensive study-skills instruction and an academic service learning component, through which students will both explore fields of study and enhance their connection to the community beyond the university.

Evidence Statement 3C-5:
Student development programs support learning throughout the student's experience on campus.

MSUM understands that student learning does not stop when students leave the classroom and that students cannot succeed in their education without the appropriate physical, psychological and social support. Aim 10 of MSUM's mission documents demonstrates the university's commitment to the whole person and broader experience of the student when it states the commitment to: "provide support personnel, facilities, and resources that enhance and complement the academic experience." In order to reach this aim, the university offers a wide range of programs across the campus to create a positive learning environment for students.

In response to campus and community concern, MSUM has strengthened its commitment to student wellness by meeting head-on the challenge of alcohol misuse. Beginning in fall 2006, all freshmen are required to complete HLTH 122: Alcohol and College Life, a one-credit course addressing alcohol and the college environment. The course is part of a multifaceted approach to helping students make good decisions about alcohol. As we strive to help students "live usefully, act responsibly, and be learners all their lives," MSUM is committed to making the campus environment one that is as supportive and safe as possible. This course and a new alcohol and other drug policy were the result of the work by the President's Task Force on Student Alcohol Misuse.

The Student Affairs division offers a wide variety of co-curricular resources and services that help to make the students whole experience at MSUM a learning experience. Students are offered a number of learning activities and opportunities across the university. Some of these experiences include:

- Dragon Ambassadors Program (competitive program where students help at public events such as graduation and alumni activities);
- STARS Program (Student Tele-Counseling Admissions Representatives);
- Peer Educators;
- Counseling and Support Center;
- Electronic Portfolios;
- Interviewing Skills; and
- Annual Health Fair.

In conclusion, the evidence demonstrates that MSUM creates learning environments that are not only effective but also inclusive and supportive. Students of wide-ranging backgrounds, abilities, and interests can find opportunities to grow both in and out of the classroom. The university also offers a variety of services directed at making the students life outside of class productive and healthy.

Core Component 3D:
The organization's resources support learning and effective teaching.

MSUM has a wide variety of resources that support learning and effective teaching, from physical space and financial resources, to people themselves. As we work to improve the teaching and learning environment, we have engaged in a significant amount of renovation and new construction on campus over the past six years, with plans for much more in the future. Our commitment to the Dragon Core to provide a meaningful, linked and coherent general education experience for our students along with our commitment to a variety of professional and pre-professional programs requires that we provide a wide variety of resources. While we may struggle with decreasing financial support from the state of Minnesota, we are proud of our continued efforts to develop our physical, technological and human resources.

The following sets of evidence illustrate Core Component 3D:

- Evidence Statement 3D-1: There is a demonstrated commitment and focus on campus to ensuring that our students have access to buildings, classrooms and other physical space that supports learning and effective teaching.
- Evidence Statement 3D-2: MSUM is actively looking and planning towards the future with respect to our physical resources.
- Evidence Statement 3D-3: MSUM has multiple technology-based resources that enhance both student learning and effective teaching on campus.
- Evidence Statement 3D-4: MSUM values "people" as an important resource in supporting teaching and effective learning.
- Evidence Statement 3D-5: MSUM's multiple partnerships and innovations are a strong resource to us that enhance student learning opportunities and strengthen teaching effectiveness.

Evidence Statement 3D-1:
There is a demonstrated commitment and focus on campus to ensuring that our students have access to buildings, classrooms and other physical space that supports learning and effective teaching.

Effective teaching and learning are best supported in an environment that is comfortable and accessible to every person. In addition, the technology used in the classroom by both student and teacher needs to align with the skills and learning styles of our students and the requirements our students will encounter when they enter an information-based workforce upon graduation. One strong indication that MSUM is addressing these needs is the amount of construction that has been occurring on our campus since 1998. By 2010 there will have been more than $130,000,000 spent on construction and renovation projects on our campus. During the 2006-2007 academic year there are four major projects occurring simultaneously.

The construction of the new Science Laboratory Building that started in July 2002, has now reached its final stage with the renovation of Hagen Hall. The newest building, Science Laboratory, is located between Hagen Hall and Weld Hall and has replaced laboratories in King Hall (Biosciences Department) and Hagen Hall (Chemistry and Physics Departments). This, and the renovated Hagen Hall facilities, provide improved ventilation, code-compliant

chemical storage, a sprinkler system, fire alarm system, fire-rated egress pathways for labs, and an appropriate ratio of fume hoods to students. These buildings house state-of-the-art research and teaching laboratories with current scientific equipment, lecture rooms and office space.

Our students now have access to the type of laboratory and scientific learning resources that are found at larger, research-intensive institutions. In addition, this resource enables our science faculty to most effectively teach and mentor all of our students. These students include those who are non-science majors, as Dragon Core courses in the natural sciences that have a lab component are also taught in this facility. More than 600 students each year enroll in courses that utilize the equipment in this facility.

Evidence of the impact of this resource is illustrated by the success of our students in obtaining national-level scholarships and in presenting the results of their scientific research at national meetings and, in student placement in post-graduate professional programs and studies. In the past four years the Biosciences Department at MSUM has had five Barry M. Goldwater Scholars. The Goldwater Scholarship is the top national scholarship in science, engineering, and mathematics. Each year approximately 300 scholarships are awarded nationally.

Currently, classrooms and teaching space were renovated in Murray Commons and are ongoing in MacLean Hall. Classrooms will be designed to best support student learning (desks with power outlets for student laptops, comfortable and moveable seating etc.) and outfitted with modern technology (projectors, interactive white boards, multiple screens) for teaching. In both of these cases and in the building of the Science Lab and renovation of Hagen Hall, efforts were made during the planning stages of these projects to develop facilities that would better encourage cooperation and communication between departments (see campus Master Plan Task Force minutes).[40] This was done with an effort to plan our building resources from a perspective of providing our students with an integrated learning experience and, from a perspective of supporting effective teaching by planning classroom resources in a manner that allowed these resources to be utilized most efficiently. In addition, all classrooms and meeting rooms on campus are scheduled through a central scheduling system which allows not only for classes to be taught in a room with the appropriate technology but also, allows for the review of the efficiency of classroom use and scheduling.

The science facilities on campus are just one example of the physical resources that are available on campus. For example, the psychology department also has a number of well-equipped lab facilities for student-faculty research including, a new child development lab, auditory lab and animal facilities. Numerous other physical resources that support student learning are mentioned throughout the self-study document. These include, the Regional Science Center, performing arts facilities, speech language and hearing facilities, and Livingston Lord Library which provides a variety of resources for both learning and teaching. In particular the library houses the Curriculum Materials Center,[41] which has a dedicated librarian and provides resources especially for teacher preparation.

40 http://www.mnstate.edu/adminaff/files.html

41 http://www.mnstate.edu/cmc/

Evidence Statement 3D-2:
MSUM is actively looking and planning towards the future with respect to our
physical resources.

Although our campus has undergone and is in the process of undergoing numerous construction and renovation projects, our Facilities Master Plan[42] is evidence that we continue to look towards and plan for the future with respect to our physical resources. This plan provides a critical evaluation of opportunities and challenges on our campus with respect to physical spaces and also provides a framework for potential development.

The Academic Affairs Master Workplan for 2005-2006[43] lists facilities as part of Goal One (Minnesota State system Priority Three) "To prepare undergraduate and graduate students for fulfilling and productive careers in the 21st century." The objectives of this goal are to strategically use the equipment allocation of this the division of Academic Affairs to upgrade classrooms in a manner that allows faculty to effectively teach. Further, this allows us to provide equipment, laptops and software appropriate to programmatic needs. In this manner, we are remaining responsive not only to student learning needs but also to programmatic needs as demonstrated through assessment of SLOs.

Evidence Statement 3D-3:
MSUM has multiple technology resources that enhance both student learning and
effective teaching on campus.

The mission of the Technology Task Force[44] is, "to develop a comprehensive plan that facilitates the effective, efficient, and meaningful use of technology by MSUM faculty, staff and students." This task force developed both academic and administrative action plans[45] to assess technological needs on campus and to implement the Technology Master Plan. Examples of some of these actions include: upgrades of equipment and classrooms, installation of wireless service across campus, implementing a rotation plan for faculty and staff computer upgrades and replacement and the enhancement of student computer labs and software. Other actions of the Technology Task Force are documented in Chapter 2/ Criterion 2B-7.

Classroom upgrades include the following types of technologies: overhead computer projection, symposium systems, electronic whiteboards, personal response systems, and Internet connections in all classrooms. Most recently MSUM became designated as an iPOD University.

The implementation of wireless access points across campus is helping to expand the learning environments on campus and also increases students' access to learning tools.

One of the goals identified by the Technology Task Force was to increase the number of blended and electronic course offerings. As part of this effort, MSUM faculty have access to an instructional management system called Desire2Learn (D2L). This system provides an online gradebook, various communication tools (chat, online discussion, paging tool), online assessment (quizzes and surveys) providing immediate feedback and expedited gradebook entry, restricted access to course materials, etc.

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42 http://www.mnstate.edu/plans/facilities/index.htm

43 http://www.mnstate.edu/president/StrategicPlanning/FY2006SP/FY2006.htm

44 http://www.mnstate.edu/plans/technology/mission.htm

45 http://www.mnstate.edu/plans/technology/index.htm

Multiple examples of technology use on campus including our streaming media server, Tegrity Learning System and Horizon Wimba Video Conferencing Services are listed in Appendix J.

Our campus's student computer labs also support student learning. MSUM recognizes the need for students to have access to computing software specific to their specialty and maintains over 200 computers in 30 labs across campus for student use. These labs are open 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week during the academic session. In addition, MSUM uses the City of Moorhead's GoMoorhead! wireless service to provide full wireless access to students across campus and in the dormitories.

MSUM also utilizes the resources of the Minnesota State system Office of Instructional Technology[46] and MNOnline[47] to support our educational mission. This support provides: a pilot project that offers online tutoring services for online students through SmartThinking[48]; licensing for Desire2Learn and a 24/7 helpdesk for students using D2L and, the RightNow helpdesk support that is available for the Minnesota State system's faculty and staff.

Evidence Statement 3D-4:
MSUM values people as an important resource in supporting teaching and effective learning.

One of our most valuable resources is people. Criterion 2B-6 discusses MSUM Work Plan Initiatives and provides evidence for how our campus identifies what positions (faculty, staff and administration) are best for our students and where we are lacking in these resources. A recent example is the creation of the administrative position regarding assessment, outlined in Chapter 3/Criterion 3A.

The technology initiatives mentioned above would not be possible without the support of MSUM's Instructional Technology,[49] Instructional Media[50] and Information Technology.

- Instructional Technology and the Student Technology Team facilitate both students and faculty in using all of the technology available on campus. Instructional Technology provides regular workshops throughout the year for faculty to learn how to effectively use a variety of software and other technology applications in their classrooms.
- Instructional Media Services has professional staff to advise and assist in the technical and production aspects of teaching, learning and research projects with respect to educational materials and hardware.
- Information Technology provides the backbone of MSUM's installation and maintenance services for web page support, computer hardware and software support, email and other network issues.

Faculty-mentored research experiences are designed to teach students not only about how to do research in their chosen area of study, but also to develop their critical thinking skills, to work both independently and in groups and to hone their writing and presentation skills. In

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46 http://www.oit.mnscu.edu/pages/resources.html

47 http://www.mnonline.org/

48 http://www.smarthinking.com/

49 http://www.mnstate.edu/instrtech/

50 http://www.mnstate.edu/media/

short, students have ownership of their work. The faculty involved in these efforts are a valuable resource for student learning. We believe our efforts in this area to be unique when compared to larger, more research-intensive institutions where undergraduates involved in research more typically work as lab assistants and or office assistants.

The MSUM administration supports student efforts in this area by providing Honors Apprentice Scholarship opportunities. In addition, MSUM budgeting and planning efforts (see Chapter 2/Criterion 2) reflect dedicated support for research. Further, the College of Social and Natural Sciences recently initiated a student research grant process.

MSUM values the contributions our staff makes to the campus and to the educational experience of our students. Staff development workshops[51] are held and annual awards are given to exceptional staff members in a variety of categories. The Council on Staff Affairs is a committee of 12 classified staff members and the vice president for administrative affairs who organize social events on campus to promote a sense of community among campus employees and who also raise scholarship money for staff and dependents of staff.[52]

Evidence Statement 3D-5:
MSUM's multiple partnerships and innovations are a strong resource to us that enhance student learning opportunities and strengthen teaching effectiveness.

MSUM has a variety of established partnerships with other institutions and business organizations that enable us to provide a wide variety of opportunities for our students. One of our most visible partnerships (described in the Introduction of this self-study) is the Tri-College University (TCU),[53] an official partnership between three higher education institutions in the Fargo-Moorhead area. This partnership provides a variety of resources to our students such as course exchange, specific programmatic needs, scholarships, lecture series and a number of other relationships[54] that benefit our students. One especially valuable resource that supports student learning and effective teaching is the TCU Film Library.[55] This resource provides faculty at all three institutions access to a wider selection of educational DVDs and videos that would not otherwise be available to us.

The MnPALS and Interlibrary Loan (ILL) resources at MSUM's Livingston Lord Library also greatly increase the variety and selection of resource material that students and faculty on our campus have access to.

MSUM has also enjoyed a strong partnership with the City of Moorhead. The Moorhead Police Department has a substation[56] located on the MSUM campus. This is believed to be the first joint facility of its kind in the state of Minnesota for police and security. This facility has offices for MSUM Campus Security, as well as offices for the Moorhead Police Department.

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51 http://www.mnstate.edu/instrtech/Handouts/staff_development_workshop__may.htm

52 http:www.mnstate.edu/csa/index.cfm

53 http://www.tri-college.org/about.htm

54 http://www.tri-college.org/academic.htm#art

55 http://www.mnstate.edu/tcufilm/

56 http://www.mnstate.edu/security/history.cfm

Recently, another partnership, called Moorhead Together[57] has been initiated. This collaboration between MSUM, Concordia College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College-Moorhead, and the City of Moorhead was developed to reduce high risk drinking among Moorhead college students.

In conclusion, MSUM is proud of the large number of resources available to students that support learning and effective teaching. The allocation and appropriation of funding towards campus infrastructure that prioritizes student learning needs, demonstrates our commitment to the physical resources that support learning and effective teaching. The various equipment and access to the equipment that students need to be successful is evidenced in the computer labs, science facilities, performing arts facilities, library resources and importantly technological resources that are so critical for student success in today's world. MSUM has also a number of established and recently initiated partnerships and collaborations that provide resources for our students that go beyond our campus itself. Finally, MSUM prides itself on the type of staff, faculty and administrators we have on campus, who themselves are invaluable resources of the enthusiasm, motivation and effort that are required for us to remain focused on our educational mission.

Chapter 3/Criterion 3: Chapter Evaluation and Summary

Our Strengths

- A centralized structure is in place for programmatic assessment and we are actively developing a culture of assessment on campus. This is reflected in a new administrative position charged with assessment;
- New departmental reporting structures where assessment is more closely tied into university planning and resource allocation;
- Faculty and institutional commitment to quality education;
- We critically evaluate and respond to the learning environment needs of our students in order to address retention and success of our students; and
- We have a wide variety of resources (buildings through people) that support student learning and effective teaching.

Our Challenges:

- Maintaining the momentum of our assessment efforts in order to keep assessment of SLOs at the forefront of what we do and central to our educational mission;
- Ensuring that the results of assessment are readily available and utilized in our efforts to move forward is something that we must remain vigilant about;
- Decreasing state appropriations and lack of strong fundraising/endowment efforts strain resources at all levels on our campus. Not only does this impact our ability to appropriately address building repair and renewal, it also impacts budgets and resources allocated to faculty reassigned time for activities that focus on continual improvement of pedagogies and enhance innovative methods for student learning; and
- We have a number of one-person efforts on campus (e.g. Institutional Research, oversight of undeclared students) that leave the institution in a difficult situation if these key individuals are ill, are involved in emergency situations, or retire.

MSUM is dynamic. We understand the importance of having clear, assessable student learning outcomes and in performing regular assessment of these SLOs to critically examine ourselves and determine if we are meeting our educational mission. We are actively

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57 http://www.mhdtogether.org

establishing a culture of assessment on campus and becoming more focused and intentional in our assessment efforts. New departmental reporting structures that tie assessment more closely into university planning and resource allocation, is simply one example. Our greatest challenge will be in keeping assessment of SLOs at the forefront of what we do and central to our educational mission, and to not become complacent after a few years.

It is also evident that MSUM values and supports effective teaching. We have faculty with a strong commitment to quality education and a strong alignment between faculty and administrators with respect to campus values and expectations for student learning. In addition, data (NSSE) indicate that students want to come back to MSUM after graduation. This culture of education and learning remains strong despite financial challenges that we face. Our state tuition match is less than 50 percent and we also have a difficult time with fundraising/endowments. Both of these issues mean that we sometimes struggle with the ability to support effective teaching by providing more reassigned time or hiring more faculty and support staff.

We are very interested in providing learning environments that work for a wide-range of students and are committed to providing access and support to students with a variety of backgrounds. Our alternative admissions program and Mathematics Learning Center are unique in the state. In addition, our recent Student Success Institute provides clear evidence that we are committed to evaluating and determining which aspects of our learning environment most heavily influence student success. This institute has already resulted in a number of changes. We still face a challenge in dealing with the changing demographics of our region and in providing support for non-native speakers.

Finally, we have many valuable resources on campus such as buildings, technology, people and partnerships that support learning and effective teaching. Our campus landscape has been evolving and buildings are added and renovated. Although much of our construction efforts are the result of many years of deferred maintenance, new construction such as the Science Lab and Hagen Hall facilities and the planned Wellness Center are indicative of the growth and renewal that is an ongoing process on campus. We are still mindful of the struggles we have with maintenance issues and a challenge remains for our campus to continue to accommodate the added costs of maintenance of new buildings.

Our technological resources are very wide-ranging and current and our technology support teams are an enthusiastic and excellent resource for students and faculty alike but we could effectively make use of additional personnel in these areas.

Our partnerships and collaborations also provide many opportunities for student learning and for faculty to teach effectively.

MSUM could improve in publicizing the many resources that are available on campus and have the campus community become better involved and gain more ownership of the variety of activities and resources that we do offer.

Our dynamic nature is both a strength and a challenge. Our desire to remain responsive, dynamic and student-centered has resulted in a lot of change on campus. This change has had an associated cost of increasing faculty and administrative time spent on committee work straining the amount of time available for pedagogical activities outside of the classroom.