

Helena College
Evaluation Committee Report for
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
Conducted April 10-12, 2017

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I. Introduction

Helena College University of Montana, (Helena), is a comprehensive public two-year college located in the state's capitol. The school was established in 1939 as the first vocational-technical institute in the state of Montana. For years it was under the joint control of the Office of Public Instruction and the Helena School District. In 1987, the state legislature authorized the transfer of the institution's governance to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. During a state restructuring of Montana higher education in 1997 Helena retained its program and mission, but its resources and operations were linked with the University of Montana in Missoula and the name was changed to "Helena College of Technology of the University of Montana."

In the last decade, Helena has embraced a community college mission and expanded its offerings to include Associate of Arts and Associate of Science transfer degrees, in addition to a full complement of two year technical degrees. Helena serves a large geographic area including Lewis & Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater counties and currently has an annual unduplicated enrollment of over 1,800 students. As the college expanded into general education degrees it experienced a 57% increase in headcount between 2006 and 2016.

Following a campus-wide discussion forum and planning day in May 2011, a new strategic plan was developed and adopted by the College Council and implemented in the fall of 2012. The plan includes six broad strategic goals aligned with the college's new mission and core themes that will inform and guide college-wide planning, assessment and resource allocation and development for the next decade. Coinciding with the new mission, the Board of Regents adopted a new naming convention for two year institutions so on July 26, 2012 the college became "Helena College University of Montana," which did not delimit the institution's role to the technical designation that it had outgrown.

a. Assessment of Institution's Self-Study and Support Materials

The evaluation community found the self-study to be a helpful introduction to the college and the community, but felt that it did not prepare the committee members for the dynamic and committed college that the committee found during the onsite visit.

b. Brief Summary of Methods Used to Verify the Contents of the Self-Study

Prior to the campus visit, evaluators reviewed materials (Year Seven Report and online supplementary materials). The site visit was conducted on April 10-12, 2017. Evaluators conducted interviews with all major administrators and substantial numbers of faculty, staff and students. Students, staff, administrators and faculty were candid in their responses and feedback to the evaluators.

II. Changes since the 2014 Visit

With the changes in Helena's mission, a number of significant things have occurred since the last visit in 2014. The college has developed a number of new programs and emphases, has established a number of transfer articulation agreements, has received or participated in a number of grants and has been accredited by three national specialized accreditation bodies: National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) for Master Automobile Service Technology certification in the spring of 2014 which is valid through

2019. In the fall of 2015, the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) which accredited the Fires Science programs through 2020 and the Nursing program received continuing accreditation for its Associate of Science Registered Nursing (ASRN) degree by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) through 2024.

In the spring of 2014, a new Helena College Advisory Council was established. The council was formed in response to legislative changes in the Montana University System Board of Regents policy concerning executive boards. The council consists of eleven members who are recognized leaders in the community. In the same year, Helena College Foundation, a separate non-profit corporation, was also established to support the college's mission through fundraising activities for student scholarships and program development.

III. Responses to the Recommendations of Prior Reports

2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Recommendations 1-4

Helena College's last Comprehensive Self-Study Report was submitted in the spring of 2010. Following a visit to campus, the NWCCU Evaluation Committee made four recommendations. Pursuant to the Commission's request, the first recommendation was addressed as an addendum to the Year One Report submitted in spring 2011. The second and third recommendations were satisfied in the Year Three Report submitted in spring 2014. The final outstanding recommendation is addressed in this report as follows:

Recommendation 4. *It is recommended that program assessment data be used to improve teaching and learning, as well as delivery of services. Future program and college strategic goals, as well as resource decisions, need to be tied to emerging assessment results, in an ongoing and continuous fashion. Program learning outcomes should be closely tied to program assessment (Standards 2.C.2, 2.C.5, 4.A.2, 4.A.3)*

As described in greater detail in section 4.A.2 and, 4.A.3, *infra*, the college has made meaningful progress in the assessment of student learning at course, program, and degree outcomes levels, including assessments of particular institutional competencies. There is some evidence that assessment outcomes are used to improve instructional delivery, student learning and budgeting.

As part of the state mandated five year program reviews annual assessment plans are prepared and submitted by each program together with a dedicated budget (including both instructional and non-instructional programs), as well as all institutional committees, and include program goals, as well as learning outcome goals, as appropriate. Those annual assessment plans require the analysis of program expenditures, as well as an explicit prompt to connect goals and outcomes to one or more of the Core Themes and/or Strategic Goals.

2014 Year Three Peer Evaluation Recommendations 1-3

Helena College's Year Three Report was submitted and evaluated in spring 2014. The NWCCU Evaluation Committee made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: *It is recommended that the College complete the process of establishing baselines and targets for all of its core theme objectives. (Standard 1.B.2)*

In the fall semester of 2015, the Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee developed relevant and practical baselines. As of fall 2016, 92% or 24 out of 26 core theme indicators have baselines determined. Four indicators still need targets determined based on newly established or pending baselines, while five indicators

are awaiting outcome evaluation based on pending data collection. The majority of indicators still requiring final evaluation reside within Core Theme Three: Strengthen the Community. It is anticipated that final data collection and outcome evaluation will occur by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year.

Concern: While baselines have been generally established, there are few, if any targets.

Recommendation 2: *It is recommended that the College complete and implement, as soon as possible, a Credit Hour Policy (Title 34: Education CFR 688.8). (Standard 2.A.12)*

This recommendation was addressed through an ad-hoc report submitted to the NWCCU in May 2015, which was subsequently accepted in July 2015. Helena College Policy 200.5 – the Credit Hour Policy was adopted on January 15, 2015.

http://www.umHelena.edu/campus_facilities/policiesprocedures/docs/CurrentPolicies/200.5%20Policy%20Helena%20College.pdf

Recommendation 3: *It is recommended that a new or amended Master Plan be completed and that a formal process be designed and implemented to ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team and the campus community. (Standard 2.G.3)*

The 2002 final Master Plan was reviewed by Helena College over the 2014 and 2015 fiscal years. An addendum to the plan was created and added to the original master plan. The Helena College Leadership Team is committing to a full revision of the master plan in 2020. This revision will include:

- A review to ensure that the master facility plan aligns with the college's strategic plan.
- Provisions for faculty, staff, and student input on the plan.
- Provisions for the public to comment on the plan.
- A review of potential alternate locations for all or some portion of the college's programs and activities.
- A review of the potential of including more sustainable and environmentally friendly technologies in current and future buildings.

Once the 2020 Master Plan is completed, the leadership team plans to conduct reviews of the plan every four years. When leadership determines that the plan no longer meets the needs of the college, a new master plan will be created.

Chapter 1: Core Themes and Measures

Eligibility Requirements 1, 2 and 3

1. OPERATIONAL STATUS

The institution has completed at least one year of its principal educational programs and is operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs at the time of the Commission accepting an institution's Application for Consideration for Eligibility. The institution has graduated at least one class in its principal educational program(s) before the Commission's evaluation for initial accreditation.

The Evaluation Committee found that Helena College University of Montana is a comprehensive public community college established in 1939 that has graduated several decades of students.

2. AUTHORITY

The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

The evaluation committee found that Helena College University of Montana is an affiliate campus of the University of Montana and is authorized to operate and award degrees as an institution of higher education by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for the Montana University System. The BOR consists of seven members, appointed by the Governor of the State of Montana and confirmed by the State Senate, who serve seven year overlapping terms. The BOR has the power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage, and control the units of the Montana University System and their constituent campuses and affiliated entities under its jurisdiction.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/201-7.pdf> http://www.mus.edu/Universities/university_main.asp

3. MISSION AND CORE THEMES

The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

Helena College's current mission statement was adopted by the College Council on January 25, 2011, and subsequently approved by the Montana BOR on May 20, 2011. The college's three core themes were developed with input from the campus community during the fall semester of 2010 and were later approved by the BOR on September 19, 2013.

The evaluation committee found that the college's mission and core themes are appropriate for a comprehensive two-year institution of higher education that grants Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, Certificates of Applied Science and Professional Certificates. All of the college's fiscal and physical resources are devoted to supporting its mission and core themes.

<http://www.mus.edu/board/meetings/2011/June2011/May19-20,2011BORMinutesFINAL.pdf> (Page 14)
http://www.mus.edu/board/meetings/2013/Sept2013/ARSA/LevelI_Memorandum.pdf
http://www.mus.edu/board/meetings/2013/Nov2013/MINUTES_Sept18-19,2013BOR_FINAL.pdf (Page 17)

Standards

Standard 1.A: Mission

1.A.1 The institution has a widely published mission statement-approved by its governing board-that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.

Helena College Mission Statement:

“Helena College University of Montana, a comprehensive two-year college, provides access to and support of lifelong educational opportunities to our diverse community.”

The college’s current mission statement was developed with input from internal and external constituencies and approved by the College Council in January 2011. The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education reviewed and approved the new statement on May 20, 2011. The mission statement accurately reflects the expanding comprehensive nature of the college and its intent to serve its diverse community of learners who possess a broad range of educational goals and levels of academic preparedness.

The college describes the mission statement as “provid[ing] guiding direction for decision-making at all levels from the current ten- year strategic plan to annual planning, assessment, and budgeting at the departmental and program levels. The statement is widely available to the community via the college website, as well as a number of published documents including the 2012-22 Strategic Plan, annual reports, the academic catalog, faculty, staff, and student handbooks, as well as documentation used for program planning and assessment.”

<http://www.umHelena.edu/abouthc/default.aspx>
http://umHelena.edu/catalog/docs/HCCatalog_2016_17.pdf

(Page 3)

1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Determination of an Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment

Helena College stated that they determined acceptable thresholds or extent of mission fulfillment by systematically evaluating the outcomes or performance for each of the indicators of achievement identified under the institution’s three core themes. They have identified twenty-six indicators of achievement, many of which include multiple metrics. Where multiple metrics occur for an indicator, they use a weighting system to determine the relative importance of each metric and the overall performance for the indicator. They explained that, where possible, data collected to evaluate the metric for each indicator will reflect a running three-year average. They rate performance on each of the indicators according to the following rubric:

Rating Scale Rubric

Rating	Description	Score
Exceeds Expectations	Outcome exceeds target	2 points
Meets Expectations	Outcome meets target	1 point
Fails to Meet Expectations	Outcome fails to meet target	0 points
No Measurement Available	Outcome cannot be measured	N/A

An acceptable level or threshold of overall mission fulfillment for Helena College is defined as 60% of the indicators of achievement under each core theme objective rated as meeting or exceeding expectations. The scoring for acceptable threshold under each core theme is as follows:

Core Theme One - Access and Support

Objective 1: 3 Indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.8 points or better

Objective 2: 4 Indicators x 1 point x .60 = 2.4 points or better

Total acceptable threshold for core theme = 4.2 points or better

Concern: The evaluation committee was concerned that the college’s use of “threshold” and “mission fulfillment” may be confounded with institutional “targets.”

Core Theme Two - Demonstrate Academic Excellence

Objective 1: 2 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.2 points or better

Objective 2: 3 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.8 points or better

Objective 3: 3 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.8 points or better

Total acceptable threshold for core theme = 4.8 points or better

Core Theme Three – Strengthen the Community

Objective 1: 2 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.2 points or better

Objective 2: 2 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.2 points or better

Objective 3: 4 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 2.4 points or better

Objective 4: 3 indicators x 1 point x .60 = 1.8 points or better

Total acceptable threshold for core theme = 6.6 points or better

The college plans to monitor the majority of the indicators of achievement on a regular basis to facilitate continuous improvement. The final evaluation of outcomes will follow the new seven-year accreditation cycle. Where indicators of achievement fail to demonstrate an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment established for a core theme objective, the college will develop recommendations for improvement that will be implemented to achieve the minimum expectations for performance within a specified time frame. At the end of the seven-year accreditation cycle following the final evaluation of outcomes, the college plans to engage in a comprehensive review of its core themes, objectives, and indicators of achievement.

The college explained that it has tried to fully integrate institutional planning and assessment, by aligning the college’s strategic plan goals and objectives to the core themes and corresponding objectives. Their plan requires all departments and programs to regularly demonstrate alignment of their outcomes to the college’s strategic goals and/or core themes in their annual assessment plans, budget requests, and internal program reviews.

Standard 1.B: Core Themes

1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

The college stated that their three core themes were identified through inclusive campus and community discussions of the college’s purpose and goals. The college has tried to identify themes that manifest key aspects of Helena College’s mission:

1. Provide access and support.
2. Demonstrate academic excellence.
3. Strengthen the community.

The college asserted that, “Taken together these themes encompass the college’s mission as a comprehensive two-year college and its commitment to serve the community.” They define their mission as:

1. High quality educational activities and programs important to achieving student success.
2. A high degree of integrity, quality, and reliability in all academic and non-academic programming.
3. Meeting regional workforce needs, strengthening employee knowledge and skills, providing a

bridge to further educational attainment through advanced degrees, and serving as a facilitator for cultural enrichment.

1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

In fall 2015, the college completed a “full review of core them indicators, as part of its response to the first recommendation from the college’s Year Three Peer Evaluation. In that process, the college updated existing baselines and targets for metrics. In areas where the metrics lacked baselines or targets, the college consolidated some metrics. . Where the metrics lacked relevance or the data was difficult to collect, the college tried to redefine the metrics. The college provided the following tables to reflect those revisions and provide the final objectives, indicators, and metrics for assessing achievement of the college’s core themes and the extent of mission fulfillment for the current seven-year accreditation cycle.

CORE THEME 1: PROVIDE ACCESS AND SUPPORT	
Objective 1: To provide appropriate access to lifelong learning opportunities.	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Participation in credit-bearing programs and instruction
	2. K-12 participation and partnerships in credit-bearing programs and instruction
	3. Participation in non-credit/credit continuing and community education programs
Objective 2: To provide high quality support through institutional processes, student services, and academic experiences	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Availability and utilization of financial support for students with an emphasis on grants and scholarships
	2. Persistence towards achievement of educational goals
	3. Completion of certificate and degree programs
	4. Student engagement and satisfaction with academic experience and support services

CORE THEME 2: DEMONSTRATE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	
Objective 1: To enhance learners’ college level skill development	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Successful completion of developmental coursework
	2. Successful completion of gateway math and writing courses subsequent to developmental coursework
Objective 2: To facilitate transfer	
Indicators of Achievement	1. AA/AS transfer degree production
	2. Transfer to four-year institutions
	3. Transfer success
Objective 3: To prepare the 21st century employee	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Professional license and certification pass rate
	2. Career and technical education degree production
	3. In field placement rates

CORE THEME 3: STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY	
Objective 1: To be responsive to regional workforce needs	

Indicators of Achievement	1. Employer satisfaction with graduates and customized trainings for employees
	2. Implementation of advisory council recommendations into career and technical education program curriculum
Objective 2: To serve as a facility and cultural resource for the community	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Community use of campus facilities
	2. College entity sponsorship of social, intellectual and/or cultural events or activities open to community participation
Objective 3: To meet community needs through learning, volunteer and service collaborations	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Collaborations with community stakeholders
	2. Service to community by faculty, students and staff
	3. Foundation and alumni activities
	4. Use of credit and non-credit programs to support community needs
Objective 4: To develop and strengthen employee knowledge, skills, and engagement	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Faculty and staff participation in professional development activities
	2. Retention of college employees
	3. Employee engagement and satisfaction with campus community and working environment

Chapter 2: Resources and Capacity

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements: 4-21

The evaluation committee verified each of the representations made by the college in their responses to Eligibility Requirements 4-21, except where noted.

4. Operational Focus and Independence

Helena College is an institution of higher education affiliated with the University of Montana and authorized by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education to offer and award degrees and certificates. The College!NOW Initiative of the Montana University System recently reaffirmed the college's comprehensive mission of providing transfer education, workforce development, developmental, and adult basic education, lifelong learning, and community development. Helena College dedicates all of its resources to the execution of its institutional mission, goals, and objectives and therefore has the necessary organizational capacity and independence to meet and be held accountable to NWCCU's standards and requirements.

Concern: While it appears that Helena College enjoys considerable institutional autonomy with respect to the development of its academic programs and its day-to-day financial affairs, it appears that it is not sufficiently fiscally separate from the University of Montana that an audit can be done at the college level.

5. Non-Discrimination

Helena College is committed to providing all persons an equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in activities as provided by law. Additionally, college facilities may not be used in the furtherance of any discriminatory practice, nor become a party to an agreement, arrangement, or plan which has the effect of sanctioning discriminatory practices. The college's policies and procedures are in compliance with the requirements of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Montana Human Rights Act, and the Montana Governmental Code of Fair Practices. Helena College ensures that its non-discrimination policy, as it affects applicants and students, is published and disseminated by means of the college website, academic catalog, and student handbook. Equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies are administered by the Office of Human Resources and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

6. Institutional Integrity

Helena College promotes and maintains high ethical standards in its operations and relationships through adherence to policies administered by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, as well as its own policies, which are published on the college website and in employee and student informational materials. The process for policy development provides opportunities for campus-wide participation and input. All faculty and staff receive regular and systematic training on institutional policies. Training on institutional policies and ethical standards is provided in a number of formats and venues to maximize access and is administered by the Office of Human Resources.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>

http://www.umHelena.edu/campus_facilities/policiesprocedures/default.aspx

<http://www.umHelena.edu/hr/prodev.aspx>

7. Governing Board

Helena College is governed by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. The board consists of seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate for overlapping seven-year terms. No members of the board have any contractual, employment, or personal financial relationship or interest in the college.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/201-7.pdf>

8. Chief Executive Officer

The college employs a full-time chief executive officer who is hired by the President of the University of Montana subject to approval of the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. Dr. Daniel Bingham, the present Dean/CEO, has held this position since 2005 and is responsible for the oversight of all operations in accordance with the college's mission. Neither Dr. Bingham nor any other senior administrative officer at the college serves on or chairs the BOR.

9. Administration

Helena College's Leadership Team consists of senior administrators and their support staff who are qualified to provide effective direction for and management of the college's four primary organizational divisions including Administration, Academic Affairs, Fiscal/Plant, and Student Affairs. The senior administrators of each division, including the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and the Assistant Dean of Fiscal/Plant report directly to the Dean/CEO who also oversees the administrative division consisting of human resources and institutional research. Mid-level administrators including academic Division Chairs and Directors of Continuing Education, Information Technology, Facilities, Library Services, as well as several areas within student affairs, report directly to the appropriate senior administrator. Cross-divisional participation and representation in the Leadership Team, the College Council, the Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee, and various formal and ad hoc institutional committees helps to foster and ensure collaboration across the organizational structure to achieve the college's mission and core themes.

http://www.umHelena.edu/campus_facilities/committees/default.aspx

10. Faculty

Helena College employs 34 full-time faculty members and approximately 95 adjunct instructors who are appropriately qualified to teach in their designated areas of instruction. All full-time faculty and adjunct instructors meet the minimum teaching qualifications subject to Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 730 which specifies appropriate educational and vocational credentials and experience for two-year college programs. The faculty has the primary responsibility for curriculum development and review, accomplished through the Academic Standards and Review Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Faculty members are evaluated at regular intervals by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for the purpose of achieving excellence in instruction and job performance.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor700/730.pdf>

<http://www.umHelena.edu/hr/default.aspx>

11. Educational Program

Helena College offers 34 credentials in 12 different program areas. Consistent with its mission and core themes as a comprehensive two-year college, the institution offers instruction and programs that culminate in credentials in general education/transfer (AA, AS), workforce education (AAS, CAS, CTS), as well as an Associate of Science in Registered in Nursing and Professional Certificates in the areas of accounting, business, e-learning, geoscience, and interior design and space planning. The General Education department also offers pre-college developmental instruction in mathematics and writing. The college offers a

comprehensive continuing education providing non-credit and credit courses for personal enrichment and professional development and partners with the Helena Public School district to deliver adult basic education and Access to Success, a high school diploma completion program. Dual credit courses are provided to high school students through partnerships with public school districts throughout the college's service area. Institutional and program level student learning outcomes are identified and demonstrate content and rigor consistent with the mission of the college. <http://www.umHelena.edu/academics/default.aspx>

12. General Education and Related Instruction

Helena College's Associate of Art and Associate of Science degrees require a minimum of 31 credits of general education core requirements in the areas of natural science and mathematics, written and oral communication, social and psychological sciences, humanities and fine arts, and diversity. Associate of Applied Science degrees and Certificates of Applied Science require related instruction in the areas of communication, computation, technology literacy, and human relations. Each of the general education core area requirements has identified outcomes which are aligned with the Helena College Institutional Competencies. Related instruction for applied associate degrees and certificates are also aligned to the Institutional Competencies and support identified program outcomes.

<http://www.umHelena.edu/catalog/default.aspx>

http://www.umHelena.edu/abouthc/institutional_research/default.aspx

13. Library and Information Resources

Helena College provides library and information resources that are consistent with its mission and core themes by maintaining on-campus facilities and off-campus access to both print and digital resources and services. This is enabled by a library website that links to a Montana University System library catalog with electronic books, books, DVDs, and other print materials made available through patron initiated on-shelf holds, databases of journals and reference materials shared with MUS libraries, OCLC interlibrary loan, and library literacy instruction onsite and online.

The library's print and digital collections reflect the scope and composition of the academic programs offered, as well as support for cultural enrichment and lifelong learning in the community. Materials and services are acquired, developed, and shared in accordance with a collection management plan that includes and encourages faculty involvement and ensures the currency, depth, and breadth necessary to support the college's mission.

The library further expands its resources through cooperative circulation agreements with other Helena libraries: Montana State Library, Corette Library at Carroll College, and the Lewis & Clark County Library. Students and faculty have access to professional librarians in the library and by telephone, email, and live chat. Services at the Airport Campus were enhanced in the fall of 2013 by providing a library kiosk highlighting online library guides developed for the trades programs housed there and direct access to the library's website and catalog along with materials delivery for patron initiated on-shelf holds. Services at the Airport Campus were further enhanced in the summer of 2015 with the allocation of space for the development and opening of an Airport Branch Library to house the book and journal collections pertaining to the programs of study on that campus.

14. Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Helena College maintains facilities at two locations. The Donaldson Campus is the primary facility housing the majority of administrative offices and student support services, as well as academic programs including

general education, accounting and business technology, adult basic education, computer technology, continuing and online education, fire and rescue, interior design and space planning, nursing, and office technology. The Airport Campus, located approximately two miles east, houses trades programs in automotive technology, aviation maintenance technology, diesel technology, computer aided manufacturing, and welding technology.

From 2006 to 2011, approximately \$10.2 million in major expansion and renovation projects were completed at both campuses. For the Donaldson Campus this included a new library; lecture hall; science labs; student services facilities; and renovated instructional space for fire and rescue, nursing and continuing education, and student support services space for TRIO-SSS and Disability and Veterans Resources. At the Airport Campus, lab space was added and expanded for the automotive, computer-aided manufacturing, construction, welding programs, and all existing administrative and instructional facilities were renovated including replacement of the roof and HVAC system. Taken together, these expanded and renovated facilities provide the physical infrastructure necessary for the college to achieve its mission and core themes.

Helena College provides an extensive array of instructional and computer technology to support the instructional needs of students and faculty and the operational needs of administrators and support staff. The Information Technology department maintains a regular schedule for the upgrade and/or replacement of hardware and software. Classrooms, computer labs, the learning center, and library are equipped and maintained to provide robust technology services to faculty, staff, and students and all areas on both campuses are provided with wireless internet access via the college's network.

15. Academic Freedom

Helena College maintains an atmosphere that promotes intellectual freedom and independence where faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their area of study. The college adheres to Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 302 and the principles of academic freedom outlined in the negotiated collective bargaining agreement with faculty (MEA/MFT CBA).

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor300/302.pdf>

<http://www.umHelena.edu/hr/default.asp>

16. Admissions

Helena College follows an open admission policy subject to Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 301. The college's admission policy and procedures are published in the academic catalog, on the college website, and in informational materials provided by the Office of Marketing and Recruitment.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor300/301.pdf>

<http://www.umHelena.edu/catalog/admissions.aspx>

http://umHelena.edu/admissions_enrollment/default.aspx

17. Public Information

Helena College publishes accurate and current public information in a variety of sources including the academic catalog, website, student handbook, annual registration guides, and the annual report. These publications provide information on the college's mission and core themes; admission requirements and procedures; academic programs and courses; grading policies; names, titles and credentials of administrators and the faculty; the rights and responsibilities of students and the rules and regulations governing their conduct; tuition and fees; and program costs, refund policies and procedures, requirements for financial aid, and the academic calendar. The Director of Admission and Records coordinates the annual revision and

publication of the academic catalog, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs oversees the content and publication of the student handbook, and the Director of Marketing and Communication is primarily responsible for external communication of public information.

18. Financial Resources

Subject to Montana State Code, Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education policies, and following best practices in the accounting and management of institutional funds, Helena College maintains stable account balances, cash flow, and reserves necessary to fulfill its mission and core themes. The College's funding base includes revenue drawn from state appropriations, tuition and fees, revenue accounts, grants, and other sources such as rental income, donations, etc. The Assistant Dean of Fiscal and Plant, in coordination with the Dean/CEO, other members of the Leadership Team, and the Budget Committee with campus wide membership, plans a budget that covers annual expenditures, provides reserve funding for unanticipated expenses and emerging needs, and allows a sustainable amount of debt.

19. Financial Accountability

The financial records of Helena College are externally audited by qualified personnel as part of the State of Montana's biennial legislative process following generally accepted standards in accordance with policies and procedures defined by the Montana State Code and the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. The audit report, management letters, and findings are submitted to the college, the BOR, and the Legislative Audit Committee.

20. Disclosure

Helena College accurately discloses all information required by the NWCCU to conduct its evaluation and accreditation functions. The college's designated Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), currently the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, is responsible for coordinating communication and required information with the Commission.

21. Relationship with the Accreditation Commission

Helena College accepts and agrees to comply with the standards and policies of the Commission as presently stated or as may be modified subject to Commission policy. The college also agrees that the Commission may disclose any actions regarding the college's accreditation status to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.

Standard Two-Resources and Capacity

2A-Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.

The governance and administration of the Montana University System is vested with the Board of Regents, which has full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana University System, and supervise and coordinate other public educational institutions assigned by law.

<https://mus.edu/board/default.asp>

2.A.2 *In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.*

The division of authority and responsibility between the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, the University of Montana, and Helena College is defined by BOR policy and operates by means of its committee structure and procedures which interrelate with the primary administrative divisions of the institution including academic affairs, student affairs, fiscal operations, and human resources. System policies and procedures are clearly defined in the BOR policy manual and committee charges which are administered by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

<http://www.mus.edu/borpol/default.asp>

<http://www.mus.edu/board/committees.asp>

2.A.3 *The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.*

Helena College has been continuously accredited by the Commission since 1977. In 1987, the state legislature authorized transfer of institutional governance from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. The primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with the NWCCU's Standards lies with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs who serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO).

The college negotiates collective bargaining agreements with faculty represented by the MEA-MFT and classified staff represented by the MPEA and the IUO Local #400. Monthly labor management meetings between the college's Leadership Team and faculty union representatives provide a regular opportunity for discussion on the impact of the collective bargaining agreement on institutional mission, quality, and effectiveness. The Leadership Team and the designated ALO are jointly responsible for monitoring potential impacts of legislative actions and external mandates Student Services/Human Resources

Governing Board

2.A.4 *The institution has a functioning governing board consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.*

The board consists of seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. Not more than four may be from one district under 5-1-102, MCA and not more than four may be affiliated with the same political party

2.A.5 *The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.*

Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Authority Appointment and Duties Policy and Procedures proscribes any action of a board member except as delegated by the Board.

https://mus.edu/data/briefs/Board_of_Regents_Authority-OnePager.pdf

2.A.6 *The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.*

Article 2 of the Bylaws of the Montana Board of Regents provides:

The objectives of the board are to supervise, coordinate, manage and control the Montana university system (MUS) and to supervise and coordinate other public educational institutions assigned by law.”
<https://mus.edu/borpol/bor200/201-7.pdf>
<http://www.umt.edu/policies/>

Montana has shared approach to policy development:

The operating policies for the two university systems in Montana and their affiliated colleges are developed and reviewed at college level by its president.
<http://www.umt.edu/policies/>

Shared Policy Goals and Accountability Measures for the Montana University System (MUS) represent joint efforts of the Legislature, the Executive Branch, and the University System... The goals, objectives, and measures are closely aligned with the MUS Strategic Plan developed by the Board of Regents.
http://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2013-2014/Education-and-Local-Government/Meetings/September-2014/MUS_SPG.pdf

2.A.7 *The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.*

Under the supervision of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, “Supervise[s] and direct[s] unit presidents with regard to the execution, administration, interpretation, and implementation of board policy in regard to system issues.”
<https://mus.edu/borpol/bor200/204-3.pdf>

2.A.8 *The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.*

Montana Board of Regents Policy 705.5 provides:

- I. Board Policy: This supplements the Board’s standing policy concerning the Commissioner and Board performance reviews. It details the purposes and process whereby the Board shall assess its performance at three-to four-year intervals, or as determined by the Board.
- II. Purposes: To enable the Board to strengthen its performance, identify and reach a consensus on its goals, ensure that the Board has a clear grasp of its responsibilities, strengthen relationships among Board members and with the Commissioner, and clarify expectations among Board members and with the Commissioner.
- III. Responsibility: It shall be the responsibility of the Commissioner and Board Chair to plan a special workshop devoted entirely to reviewing the Board’s work.

Leadership and Management

2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

After meeting with faculty, staff and students and reviewing all majors systems of the college, the evaluation committee determined that the college has qualified administrative staff, whose roles are well defined and appropriate. The conclusion of the evaluation committee is that the administrative leadership is successfully leading the college. .

2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.

Compliment: The Dean of Helena College, Daniel Bingham, has successfully led the college through a period of challenging growth. He has embraced the larger community and has persuaded students that Helena is a viable step to whatever is next in their lives.

2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

The evaluation committee found that clear role assignments and a willingness to support each other during peak loads have allowed the college to be very effectively run by a modest number of capable dedicated administrators.

2.A.12 Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.

The evaluators found that Helena College provides access to academic policies in a variety of formats. These include faculty handbooks, policy and procedure manuals, and as part of collective bargaining agreements. Student policies are available in the academic catalog, student handbook, and course syllabi. The evaluators observed that Helena College clearly communicates and makes these documents readily available online for students, faculty, staff, and administration.

2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced.

The Collection Management policy is linked on the library's website; information about access to and use of library resources is embedded in the description of library services on the website. The policies governing the use of the library are documented and published on the library pages of the college website. They are also published in the student handbook. These are both readily available in print and on the website.

2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.

Helena College adheres to the Montana Board of Regents policies in regard to transfer. These policies can be found in the college catalog and on the web page. The evaluators feel that in regard to transfer and mobility that Helena College is meeting the general expectations of the standard.

2.A.15 Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities—are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.

Policies and procedures regarding student's rights and responsibilities – including appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities – are clearly stated in the Student Handbook, which is available in print and online.

2.A.16 The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.

The Evaluation Committee through interviews and a review materials including the College website and academic catalog found evidence that Helena has adopted and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. The standards for academic progress for students to continue in or terminate from their educational programs are clearly stated in the academic catalog. Helena's appeals process and readmission policy is clearly stated and available online, and administered in a fair and timely manner.

2.A.17 The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.

Based on interviews and a review of documents, the Evaluation Committee confirms co-curricular policies are in place, including by-laws that govern student government and the student-run media.

Human Resources

2.A.18 The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.

Helena maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures as noted by the Evaluation Committee through interviews and a review of published documents on line and in print. If the policy is not developed locally, it is housed at the University of Montana or the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education.

2.A.19 *Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.*

Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination as a part of the on-boarding process which also includes receiving a copy of the applicable collective bargaining agreement or employee policies.

The rights and responsibilities for full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and classified staff along with the corresponding criteria for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination is outlined in each collective bargaining agreement.

2.A.20 *The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.*

The Evaluation Committee confirmed that Helena ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.

Institutional Integrity

2.A.21 *The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.*

The college carefully monitors publications to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

2.A.22 *The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.*

The college has policies that appropriately require high ethical standards for all members of the campus community, the public and the Commission.

2.A.23 *The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.*

The college has policies that ensure that conflict of interest may not occur at any college level. The college affirms that it is an academic institution with the autonomy to act within the law.

2.A.24 *The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.*

The college has clear guidelines on intellectual property.

2.A.25 The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms “Accreditation” and “Candidacy” (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The college’s representations about their accreditation are accurate.

2.A.26 If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services—with clearly defined roles and responsibilities—is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation.

To the extent that the college may ever have such contracts, they are subject to policies that ensure that the contract is consistent with the missions and goals of the institution.

2.A.27 The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

Helena is guided by the Academic Freedom Policy of the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. The policies first adopted in 1963 are based on a statement of principles by the American Association of University Professors in 1940 and last revised in 2004. The policy focuses primarily oral and written expression with no mention of instructional modality, course development, or digital expression. There is a brief mention of intellectual property rights, but no reference to the academic freedom rights of students. The essence of the policy is part of the faculty collective bargaining agreement and is also listed in the Faculty Handbook. Individual faculty affirm Helena’s commitment to the principles of free speech and expression, and affirms the right of faculty to practice academic freedom.

2.A.28 Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.

Helena promotes the spirit of academic freedom and respects faculty rights:

1. As mentioned in the preceding section, it is supported by a Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy,
2. The Faculty Collective Agreement, recognizes the right and responsibility of the faculty to be free to teach broad areas of knowledge, including those that may be considered controversial.

Although “Policy Number: 100.3, Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Stalking and Retaliation” clearly references students’ right to Academic Freedom it does not appear there is much publication of Academic Freedom as it relates to students. For example, it is not mentioned in the Student Handbook, nor does a web search produce anything other than Policy 100.2. In addition, the process is unclear regarding what a student should do in the event they feel their academic freedom has been restricted.

2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.

The Helena Library publishes Copyright and Fair Use Policy on the Library under library policies and states, “Helena College is legally obliged to pay attention to the copyright law. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.”

Finance

2.A.30 The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.

The institution has clearly defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.

2.B – Human Resources

2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.

Interviews with employees confirm hiring processes are fair, consistent and collaborative. Interviews and forums with students, staff and faculty confirmed Helena College personnel are qualified and work well as a team. While they are lean, they back each other up, to the degree possible, when necessary.

Retention of staff and part-time faculty is a challenge due to the college being unable to offer competitive salaries compared to local K-12, city and state government positions. The staff turnover rate hovers between 17 and 21 percent. The ability of staff to manage college operations is tracked by human resources, hiring managers and leadership, and areas of inadequate staffing are discussed during budget deliberations with leadership. However, funds are largely unavailable to address anything but the most critical needs.

2.B.2 Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.

In the staff forum and interviews with human resources staff, respondents confirmed that 76 percent of administrators and staff had undergone an evaluation within the past year. The human resources office tracks the completion of administrative and staff performance reviews. The level to which these reviews are in-depth varies by manager, but at a minimum they include a review of core competencies and employee's contribution to their position and the college.

2.B.3 The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.

Helena College faculty, classified and exempt employees have opportunities for professional development. Opportunities that enhance the college or contribute to student learning are given higher priority. For example, a diesel technology instructor received funding to be trained in troubleshooting hydraulics. As a result, he can certify diesel technology students in this area of specialty. And, the financial aid staff has predictable funding to attend local, regional and national conferences to assure they keep up-to-date with the latest rules and regulations to best serve students.

2.B.4 Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, wherever offered and however delivered

The Evaluation Committee found the faculty to have appropriate education and training. In forums, students noted that faculty members are particularly committed to students' success. Students observe extremely dedicated faculty who give a significant amount of time and effort to assure student success, in and outside the classroom.

2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.

As noted in 2.B.4, Helena, like other relatively small colleges, is challenged to ensure that faculty have time for scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation. However, many have found ways to leverage their teaching and their research. For example, the chemistry instructor has done research with his classes that is innovative and professionally rewarding.

2.B.6 All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.

Full-time faculty evaluations are coordinated by the office of instruction and tracked by the human resources office. According to the human resources office, only 41 percent of faculty are being evaluated on schedule. A faculty committee is currently reviewing the assessment rubric.

Concern: Evidence indicates faculty evaluations are not being conducted in a regular, systematic, substantive, manner.

2C Educational Resources (Resources and Capacities)

2.C.1 The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

The evaluators found that Helena College strives to ensure that appropriate academic content and rigor are maintained in all courses wherever offered and however delivered. To ensure this, they have created student learning outcomes (SLO's) at the program and course level. They have also established these for each of their five knowledge areas associated with general education. There was limited evidence that they tried to evaluate and assess this. One innovative example is that the math area embeds test questions in tests throughout the semester for all courses at all locations. They use these embedded questions to assess if learning is taking place.

2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.

The evaluators found that Helena College uses a set of general education core curriculum outcomes to assess the success of students in regard to AS degrees. A.A.S. degree programs are assessed as part student learning outcomes associated with each program. Helena College utilizes a standardized syllabus template that includes SLO's for each course. These are readily available to students.

Concern: The evaluators did not find a robust use of the data collected to inform decisions beyond course level corrections. They also felt that the alignment from course level assessment through program outcome and on to the institutional core themes is not well established. It is difficult to see how each is connected in a seamless path to generate decision-making data for all levels. It is recommended that they address this standard in a more complete fashion.

2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.

The evaluators found that credit and degrees wherever offered and however delivered were based on set policies. Helena College strives to ensure that student expectations are met before awarding credit. They comply with Montana Board of Regent policies as well as their own student expectations. They require students to meet with an advisor at least one semester before graduation and ensure that all expectations are

met. They also maintain policies in regard to time in class as it relates to credits associated with courses, labs, workshops, activities, and so forth.

2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.

The evaluators felt that Helena College strives to ensure that appropriate breadth, depth, and sequencing of courses is monitored. For general education, they comply with the Montana University System Core Curriculum. For other areas, the requirements are reviewed periodically and clearly published in appropriate places on the web page.

2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Helena College involves faculty almost entirely in the design, approval, implementation, and revisions of the curriculum. An individual faculty member is the genesis of ideas related to curricular change. They are then slated with the role of shepherding syllabi through their division and Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee. This committee is comprised mostly of faculty. The reviewers found the process to be acceptable and the faculty feels as though they truly own the curriculum.

Faculty are also involved heavily in the selection of new faculty. They generally serve on the hiring committees and are involved in application review and selecting candidates for interviews. The committees then make recommendations to administration for final determination of new hires.

Concern: There was not much evidence that faculty participated in evaluation of programs and the institution beyond the course level. The evaluators could find little evidence that data collected was used by faculty to drive decision making at higher levels of the institution. It is recommended that they address this standard in a more complete fashion.

2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.

The library team actively works to build relationships with faculty to support student learning and provide relevant resources to address instructional program needs and address Institutional Competency 4, *Apply information/technology literacy across disciplines*. Most notably, the librarians created an online, self-paced library research tutorial which has been embedded in every Moodle course shell. While initial adoption of the tutorial is encouraging, predominantly among the writing, psychology, nursing and history faculty, the Evaluation Committee found no evidence that faculty actively ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process across programs, particularly at the Airport campus.

2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits

needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.

The College uses the MUS tool to address, National Test, Military Credit and challenge exams. The Faculty and Chief Academic Officer are involved in the process as needed. The review committee finds the institution in compliance with standard 2.C.7. regarding credit for prior learning.

2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions. Undergraduate Programs

The website displays articulation agreements with the Colleges listed in the self-study. Some of the listed agreements have links to their partnering Colleges which improves accessibility for students, staff and faculty. Not all articulation agreements have access links. The College is moving in the proper direction with regard to a standardized Articulation Agreement template. The committee finds the College in compliance with standard.

2.C.9 The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.

The course catalog contains the degree programs for transfer that contain an appropriate course of study for the General Education component. For the Associate of Arts Transfer Degree and Associate of Science and the Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificates also contain the necessary requirements.

2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

Helena College does not offer baccalaureate-level degrees. The College has clear articulation agreements with an exceptional relationship with Associate of Science, Elementary Education with the University of Montana's Bachelor of Arts degree.

With respect to learning outcomes, the institution has six institutional competencies that appear extremely disconnected from Program and course outcomes, including General Education outcomes. The team reviewed the Internal Program Review, self-study report, document for the General Associate of Arts –General Transfer and Associate of Science – General Transfer degrees. In this report, there are five categories of Student Learning outcomes (SLO) associated with General Education. The majority of these “Outcomes” are measurable however they are not clearly stated in relationship to the institutions mission.

2.C.11 The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas. Graduate Programs

The related instruction learning outcomes are available in the College catalog, listed with each degree listed in the catalog. Faculty are qualified to teach in their disciplines confirmed by the Director of Human Services and outlined in the appendix of the catalog.

2.C.12 Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. They differ from undergraduate programs by requiring greater depth of study and increased demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.

NA

2.C.13 Graduate admission and retention policies ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the institution's mission and the program's requirements. Transfer of credit is evaluated according to clearly defined policies by faculty with a major commitment to graduate education or by a representative body of faculty responsible for the degree program at the receiving institution.

NA

2.C.14 Graduate credit may be granted for internships, field experiences, and clinical practices that are an integral part of the graduate degree program. Credit toward graduate degrees may not be granted for experiential learning that occurred prior to matriculation into the graduate degree program. Unless the institution structures the graduate learning experience, monitors that learning, and assesses learning achievements, graduate credit is not granted for learning experiences external to the students' formal graduate programs.

NA

2.C.15 Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research, professional practice, scholarship, or artistic creation are characterized by a high level of expertise, originality, and critical analysis. Programs intended to prepare students for artistic creation are directed toward developing personal expressions of original concepts, interpretations, imagination, thoughts, or feelings. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research or scholarship are directed toward advancing the frontiers of knowledge by constructing and/or revising theories and creating or applying knowledge. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for professional practice are directed toward developing high levels of knowledge and performance skills directly related to effective practice within the profession.

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

NA

2.C.16 Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.

The College offers a broad array of non-credit and continuing education programs which are consistent with the life-long learning and community needs portion of the College's mission.

2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.

The College has a highly efficient Continuing and Community Education department. The department was praised for its success and excellence by students, staff and community members. Faculty are actively engaged in the development and planning of course offerings. Credit courses when offered are reviewed and approved in accordance with the appropriate college processes for curricular review and approval. When collaborating with external institutions, the College remains in control of the academic integrity of the offerings.

2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.

The College has a well-established method for the awarding of CEUs which involves tracking student seat time, appropriate learning objectives and securing appropriate approval from the agency or organization which accepts the CEUs.

2.C.19 The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.

Student CEU Records are retained in the electronic student information and registration system used for non-credit instruction.

Standard 2.D – Student Support Resources

2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.

Helena College provides comprehensive programs and services to support learning needs, including college-wide collaborative advising, tutoring, early-alert retention interventions and mandatory orientation. Mandatory orientation for new students and students returning after two semesters is resulting in an increase in CCSSE and SENSE scores related to students having the college knowledge they need to succeed, and employees knowing students' names.

2.D.2 The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.

The college does not regularly participate in safety and security drills. The facilities staff works closely with the student affairs department to assure crime statistics are collected; the Clery Act report is easily found on the college website. The report shows virtually no crime happening on either campus.

2.D.3 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

Helena College follows the open admissions policy as set by the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. Admission and placement processes are clearly articulated in the college catalog and website. Guidelines for student continuation in and termination from educational programs, including an appeals and readmission process, are included. In interviews on-site, students and staff confirmed that these procedures are administered fairly and consistently.

2.D.4 In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

In the event of program elimination, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs coordinates official communication with students and support students in the completion of their programs of study. Students also have the option of requesting a change to the catalog year governing their program requirements if that assists them in earning their intended degree or certificate.

2.D.5 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes:

- a) Institutional mission and core themes;*
- b) Entrance requirements and procedures;*
- c) Grading policy;*

- d) Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings;*
- e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty;*
- f) Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities;*
- g) Tuition, fees, and other program costs;*
- h) Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment;*
- i) Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and*
- j) Academic calendar.*

Helena College publishes all required information related to the student's academic life-cycle in the catalog.

2.D.6 Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on:

- a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;*
- b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.*

College publications, including the catalog and student handbook include the required elements necessary to inform students of college policies. The catalog provides a comprehensive set of college policies and information, including: the college mission, entrance requirements, grading policies, tuition policies and the academic calendar.

Each division within Student Affairs is guided by extensive administrative procedure manuals that include numerous student-services-related procedures that dictate the way college procedures are executed. Procedures range from serving students with disabilities to processing transcripts. Procedures most pertinent to students are published in the catalog and student handbook.

2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.

Through personal observation, evaluators confirmed the college maintains the security and appropriate confidentiality of student records. Confidential student records are kept in locked, fire-proof cabinets, with only a handful of employees possessing keys. The registrar assures compliance with FERPA. New employees are required to take FERPA training when starting employment and a renewal training every three years. The registrar attends division meetings to talk with faculty, and provides training to students during orientation.

Concern: Faculty often advise students in cubicles due to a lack of faculty offices, allowing for employees and students to hear private information outside the cubicle walls.

2.D.8 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

Helena follows the guidelines of Board of Regents Policy & Procedures Manual section 500 that is available online. The state policies explain a number of state-supported scholarships and other student assistance.

Federal financial aid program is also available on campus, with information available online and at the Financial Aid Office.

2.D.9 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.

The financial aid department is working hard to recover from a high default rate. They recently implemented several staff-intensive strategies to overcome this issue, including staggered payment disbursement accompanied by book vouchers, and mandatory loan counseling for all students. The rate lowered from 15.3 to 12.3 in the first year of these efforts, however, indications show the default rate will rise again for the current year.

2.D.10 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.

Helena's student affairs department is focused on student support and completion. Interviews with students, staff and faculty confirmed recently improved levels of support and communication on this front. Staff implemented Starfish software to track student progression toward graduation. Students are contacted when they reach 60 credits, and guided through to graduation. Starfish is also used as an early alert system and the database houses comprehensive advising notes across the college. An advising committee – made up of members of student affairs and academic affairs – is creating a common culture of comprehensive advising and student support across the college.

Compliment: With minimal resources, the staff and faculty are combining high-tech and high-touch strategies to assure greater success amongst many at-risk first-generation college students.

2.D.11 Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.

Faculty and staff engage in numerous, meaningful co-curricular activities that enhance student learning and engagement, and even contribute to the larger community. In the absence of having a student programs department, student affairs staff provide students with a wide range of activities from bringing professional masseuses to campus during finals week, to organizing craft-making projects so low-income students can make Christmas presents for loved ones. Faculty and students are engaged in an interdisciplinary project to restore an historic playground slide at the local rodeo grounds. The Machine Technology students designed and built missing parts; Aviation students refurbished the fiberglass, complete with durable aircraft paint matching the original color. Students taking English classes completed classroom assignments by interviewing local residents to collect their oral histories of playing on the slide as children, and then wrote about their interviews. The recorded histories will be permanently housed in the college library. The slide will be unveiled at graduation at its original site as part of the ceremony.

Compliment: For a small college, Helena College faculty and staff go above and beyond to provide meaningful co-curricular opportunities to enhance the college experience and contribute to the greater community.

2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.

The bookstore and food service has recently improved, receiving positive feedback at the Donaldson campus forum, and mixed reviews at the airport campus. At Donaldson, a renovation created a larger space, a common area shared by the bookstore, coffee stand and enhanced food service at a lower institutional cost than a full-fledged cafeteria. At the Airport campus, food offerings are not as expansive, and hours of operation do not cover the wide range of hours students are on campus. The college is exploring lower textbook options to address the needs of low-income students.

2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.

Helena does not have a traditional intercollegiate athletic program.

2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

Helena College uses a central authentication and password management system, which requires students to enter personal information to secure a username and password. Student passwords will not be changed by staff without I.D.

2.E – Library and Information Resources

Standard 2.E: Library and Information Resources

2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The library houses a small print and media collection with an appropriate level of currency, depth and breadth to support the college's mission and programs. The library's collection development plan is comprehensive and appropriately addresses the space and budget constraints of the library. The local collection is supplemented by access to holdings of the sixteen academic libraries participating in the Montana TRAILS consortium. The consortium agreement also provides access to over 150 databases, a remarkable resource for a college of this size.

A small library space was established at the Airport campus in 2015, with a collection that directly supports the trade programs at that location. While students commented that they rarely use the space, librarians are building a presence on the campus by staffing the library 1 ½ to 3 hours a week.

2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Five Faculty members serve on the Library Advisory Council. This groups meets twice annually to review statistics and make adjustments to library procedures. They are also active in selecting items for collections and improving the services to students. The evaluators were persuaded that the faculty have sufficient input into the library and learning resources. The library conducted a survey of user priorities in 2012 and has acted on the two highest priorities identified by users: an increased focus on collection development and improved website usability.

Planning for library resources and services is enhanced by library staff involvement in campus committees and governance. The library is represented on the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee, the Instructional Council, the College Council, the Faculty Senate, the Information Technology Committee, the Staff Senate and the Professional Development Committee. The Library Director is a member of the newly formed Scholarly Research Council, which has established goals that include increasing research activity at Helena College, formalizing pedagogy around research and improving students' library research skills.

2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The library has a website with extensive, relevant, high quality content for library users. The library offers email reference and chat and telephone reference during open hours. The library is staffed by a professional librarian or library technician during all open hours. The librarian adjusts her schedule to provide classroom information literacy instruction evenings and Saturdays when requested by faculty.

Every Moodle course shell includes a link to the library homepage and access to the self-paced library research tutorial. The tutorial has five modules which can be assigned separately or as a whole, each including a pre- and post-test that enables faculty and librarians to assess students' mastery of research concepts. The librarians are encouraged by the adoption rate of the research modules and identify continued and deeper partnership with faculty on developing meaningful assessment of students' information literacy skills as the next step. The Library Advisory Council has identified contextual information literacy for trade and technical programs at the Airport Campus as a "forward focus" goal.

2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.

The library collects, analyzes and shares data related to the quality, adequacy and utilization of library information resources and services including library visits, reference interactions, instruction sessions, and website, database, resource guide and tutorial utilization. Examples of data driven decisions made by the librarians include cancellation of low use electronic resources and adjustment of the library technician's annual schedule to better match library usage.

2.F – Financial Resources

2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities

Compliment: The College senior leadership and the fiscal management team are congratulated for maintaining cash flow and providing for enrollment reserves given state allocation unpredictability. Also, the Committee recognizes senior leadership for working within the shared governance structure (for example, the budget committee) for engaging in transparent conversations around where college cuts could be made in order to bridge budget shortfalls.

2.F.2: Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.

The Committee expresses concerns regarding Helena's current funding structure that does not provide sufficient autonomy for the college to have its budget audited. It is urged that the UM system/ Commissioner develop a predictable and sustainable funding structure that allows for greater local accountability to meet Helena College's current and future educational needs.

Compliment: The College is recognized for its extensive leveraging of federal grants as well as donations sought through the College Foundation.

2.F.3: The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation and constituencies.

The Committee recognizes the transparency of the shared governance structure at the College. It is especially significant that college councils and committees, including budget advisory committee, have agendas and minutes that are accessible through the college website.

It was also confirmed at the college staff and faculty meetings that multiple staff and faculty serve on several committees and councils.

2.F.4: The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.

The Associate Dean for Finance and Facilities works diligently within the University of Montana finance system to daily upload information to the system accounting system resulting in a cumulative audit (Helena's budget aggregated with the budgets of the University of Montana) that resulted in no findings for Helena College.

Concern: The current model does not foster local accountability and will likely not be conducive to growth or long-term fiscal stability.

2.F.5: Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled and justified, so as to not create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.

The Committee recognizes the College for the extensive renovations to the Donaldson Campus and the Airport Campus. The College should also be recognized for an updated facilities master plan that details the College's educational, student support, and student housing needs in a comprehensive way.

Concern: Again, the Committee recognizes the current state funding structure of the College presents both operating and capital budget constraints which impact the future growth of the College.

2.F.6: The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.

The College has made significant improvements to the Donaldson campus bookstore that has resulted in positive feedback from the students the Committee spoke with. The College has clearly made a fiscally conservative effort to not use Bookstore revenue for college ongoing costs.

Concern: The College may also want to note some Airport Campus student concerns regarding the Airport Campus Bookstore. Student concerns centered on the lack of food offerings and the abbreviated hours. Students appreciated the easy accessibility of safety glasses, etc.

2.F.7: For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.

Concern: The Committee is concerned about the lack of transparency for Helena College within the current University of Montana/Legislative Audit structure. The current structure does not allow for the College to receive a full and independent audit. The Committee recognizes that the audit does highlight the cumulative UM system management letter and that there are no audit findings for Helena College. This cumulative audit does present concerns as it is truncated and Helena is an independently accredited institution.

2.F.8: All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.

Compliment: The Committee compliments the College's efforts to stand-up a community foundation that supports Helena College through generous student scholarships. Moreover the Foundation Board supports the College through no dedicated College staff and minimal indirect support. This community volunteer

effort is to be applauded both for its thorough approach to setting up an independent 501 (c) (3) organization and for its commitment to supporting Helena College students.

Physical Infrastructure

12 2.G.1: Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.

The Committee recognizes the very thorough renovation that has taken place. The renovation has been impressively maintained resulting in clean and secure facilities.

Compliment: A special note of thanks to the maintenance and custodial teams for a well-cared for facility at the Donaldson and Airport campuses.

2.G.2: The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.

The College has a policy in place to publicize MSDS data and make that information available in the college labs. The College is also recognized for using more sustainable and green cleaning solutions.

2.G.3: The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.

The College published its 2002 facilities master plan and updated the plan again 2014. It is encouraged that as the College develops the 2020 facilities master plan it does so in alignment with the College's mission and core themes in an overt manner. The current plan aptly calls out how to address the College's short and long-term educational, student services, and student housing needs.

2.G.4: Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.

The Committee recognizes that the College has had state funding constraints and has had to be flexible in leveraging grants and donations to fund current program equipment. The College is to be applauded for its efforts to participate and maximize grant and non-state funding to meet equipment needs.

Technological Infrastructure

2.G.5: Consistent with its mission, core theme, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems, and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The College IT department is appropriately staffed, leverages trained student interns, and maximizes state and local (fee) funding to meet the College's technological needs. The College IT department also maximizes technological efficiencies gained through College's affiliation with the University of Montana system including the management of the student information and personnel systems, firewall maintenance, and cloud computing services.

2.G.6: The institution provides appropriate instructional and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services and institutional operations.

Compliment: The College is to be recognized for leveraging student computer and technology fees to bolster state funds for technology infrastructure and computing needs. Computers are typically replaced on a three year cycle and infrastructure projects are addressed on a reasonable timeframe.

Concern: It is suggested that the IT department engage student government in a more proactive way than presenting a list of computing/technology needs for final input. Some interviewed students suggested that they would like to provide greater input than a final review.

2.G.7: Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services. The Information Technology department is appropriately staffed and is perceived as being proactive with meeting the needs of the college community by regularly assessing its help desk software program results and through regular college interactions.

The IT department team strives to leverage the close-knit college community and regularly assesses technology needs across the campus. Through the engagement of student interns from the College's computer networking program, the IT department regularly engages students in assessing and addressing College technology needs.

2.G.8: The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.

Compliment: The Information Technology department is recognized for striving to meet the technology needs of students and the College. The IT Director regularly gathers technology needs from throughout the College, including students, senior leadership, and the College community to prioritize a regular technology refresh plan.

Concern: Again, it would serve the College well to illustrate this extensive community engagement in Core Theme Three

Chapter 3: Core Theme Planning

Planning and Implementation

3.B.1 Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institution's comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme's objectives.

The college has identified five strategic initiatives that are intended to align with the Mission of the College:

1. Partner for Student Success,
2. Integrated Planning and Assessment,

3. Attain Excellence,
4. Support the Community, and
5. Advance the Institution

The evaluators found that many of the objectives associated with the strategic initiatives did not align easily with the objectives that have been identified for the core themes, which creates the potential for more data collection that does not result in clear institutional direction. For example, the objective “maintain relevant academic programs” may inform Access, Academic Excellence and Community. However, it is unclear how they fit with the objectives and indicators that the college identified in the core theme table.

Access

CORE THEME 1: PROVIDE ACCESS AND SUPPORT	
Objective 1: To provide appropriate access to lifelong learning opportunities.	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Participation in credit-bearing programs and instruction
	2. K-12 participation and partnerships in credit-bearing programs and instruction
	3. Participation in non-credit/credit continuing and community education programs
Objective 2: To provide high quality support through institutional processes, student services, and academic experiences	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Availability and utilization of financial support for students with an emphasis on grants and scholarships
	2. Persistence towards achievement of educational goals
	3. Completion of certificate and degree programs
	4. Student engagement and satisfaction with academic experience and support services

While there has been some data collection for the enrollment indicators associated with Access Objective 1, there is not a clear path for improvement. For example, under Indicator 1, the Average Annual FTE Baseline of 1,112 exceeds the target of 1,050. Similarly, the average semester headcount in high school CTE dual credit courses has the same baseline and target.

The indicators for Objective 2 are measurable and appear largely meaningful. However, like some of the indicators under Objective 1 it is unclear why the baseline on the Community College Survey of Student Engagement would be higher than the target. It well may be that the college has a rationale for these apparent discrepancies but the evaluators couldn’t ascertain from the report the reasoning for the baseline exceeding the targets.

Academic Excellence

CORE THEME 2: DEMONSTRATE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	
Objective 1: To enhance learners’ college level skill development	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Successful completion of developmental coursework
	2. Successful completion of gateway math and writing courses subsequent to developmental coursework
Objective 2: To facilitate transfer	
Indicators of	1. AA/AS transfer degree production
	2. Transfer to four-year institutions

Achievement	3. Transfer success
Objective 3: To prepare the 21st century employee	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Professional license and certification pass rate
	2. Career and technical education degree production
	3. In field placement rates

Helena College has a plan in place to ensure academic excellence. The intent of the plan is to align their strategic goals from strategic planning with the core themes and indicators used to assess academic success.

However, it appears that there may be some disconnects in the entire process from the course level assessment through the program level to the three institutional core themes. Although the information is intended to roll up and inform at each level, evidence that this is occurring was challenging to find by the evaluators. While the objectives and indicators of academic excellence appear to be relevant and measurable, some of the targets seemed low, given the baselines. For example, the Math baseline of 69% pass rate with a target of 70% appears inconsistent with a process of continuous improvement. As with the indicators with Core Theme 1, there may be a well thought out reason for this apparent incongruity, but it was unclear to the evaluators what that rationale might be.

Community/Work Force

CORE THEME 3: STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY	
Objective 1: To be responsive to regional workforce needs	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Employer satisfaction with graduates and customized trainings for employees
	2. Implementation of advisory council recommendations into career and technical education program curriculum
Objective 2: To serve as a facility and cultural resource for the community	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Community use of campus facilities
	2. College entity sponsorship of social, intellectual and/or cultural events or activities open to community participation
Objective 3: To meet community needs through learning, volunteer and service collaborations	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Collaborations with community stakeholders
	2. Service to community by faculty, students and staff
	3. Foundation and alumni activities
	4. Use of credit and non-credit programs to support community needs
Objective 4: To develop and strengthen employee knowledge, skills, and engagement	
Indicators of Achievement	1. Faculty and staff participation in professional development activities
	2. Retention of college employees
	3. Employee engagement and satisfaction with campus community and working environment

Community/Work Force

While community impact is hard to ascertain, the objectives and indicators seem well thought out. However, the addition of rationale for the targets would allow the indicators to be used more effectively. Otherwise, the only target becomes, simply “more.” With the college’s limited resources, this seems to be an incomplete basis for decision making.

3.B.2 Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.

Access

Some of the Core Theme indicators under Access may need to be reconsidered or re-structured to ensure that they are meaningful guides to improvement of the access of students. For example, Core Theme 1.1.1 was used by the college and the rationale was that it is state funded and a resource measure. However there is not a clear indication of how this metric contributes to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.

Academic Excellence

The evaluators found policies and practices that establish an expectation that each year, every program and committee is expected to complete an annual assessment plan. The purpose of this review is to ensure the alignment of core themes, strategic goals, and the particular goals of the program. Midway through the year, each program produces and update and at the end of the year, they produce a summative report. This process is part of the overall assessment plan as well as a budget analysis. Departments also go through a five year review that is required by the Montana Board of Regents. Recently the institution has been doing a mid-cycle program review.

The evaluators feel that, in regard to academic excellence, at the course level and in some programs at the program level, this is functioning adequately. In other programs, there was little evidence that collected data is being used to inform decision-making. There appears to be a disconnect between the some course and program assessments and the institutional core themes.

Community/Work Force

There is some indication that assessment of community/workforce core theme programs and services guide the selection of components and actions to contribute to achievement of the goals and indicators listed in the Core Theme and Strategic planning documents, but this alignment is not as sustained or as explicit as it might be with some core objectives not having data indicators determined.

3.B.3 Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

Access

As noted under 3.B.1, Helena College has a collection of appropriately defined access indicators that could be analyzed and used to evaluate the core theme objectives. A reconsideration of some of the targets might strengthen their value tool for strategic planning.

In regard to Access and Lifelong Learning opportunities it does not appear as if planning for programs and services is informed by this collection of data. The Evaluation Committee encourages the college to continue efforts to use the Institutional Effectiveness committee to evaluate achievement of the goals and determine changes in direction or emphasis.

Academic Excellence

In regard to academic excellence, Helena College relies upon three objectives to inform the core theme. These are related to college level skills, transfer, and employment preparation. The evaluators feel that this narrow scope of measurement may not adequately inform the core theme with regard to academic excellence.

It appears that some of the expectations they have established are quite low. For instance, the target for those passing with a C- or better in the math and writing classes directly after a remedial course is set at only 35% and 50% respectively. In regard to transfer success, they indicate that a target of only 18% of their students will transfer to four-year institutions within 3 years. The enrolled GE students that they hope to receive an AA/AS degree is only 7%. These goals seem a bit low to the evaluators, who could not find explanations that would help to explain these targets.

Community/Work Force

It is not evident that an appropriate analysis of data is being used consistently across all objectives. There are some indicators for which the impacted staff are unable to explain the relevance, suggesting the need for some in-service to assist those in the impacted areas to understand and use the data more effectively.

Chapter 4: Assessment and Improvement

4.A – Assessment

4.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

Access

Helena College list two objectives under Core Theme Providing Access and Support.

Goals/targets have been set, however the evaluators were unable to find the rationale for those particular goals (i.e. Why will the goal improves institutional Access and Support and enhance student learning outcomes?) and why are the goals important to the Mission of the College?

Academic Excellence

Helena College appears to engage in an ongoing systematic collection and analysis of data. The self-study report includes a chart system that includes three categories. These are Indicator of Achievement, Metrics, and Targets. What appears to be missing is an explanation of how they use the data. It was difficult to see how the data was used to make institutional changes. In the language of “assessment” there appears to be a weakness in either “completing the loop” or explaining the completion of the loop.. The data collection seems to be robust, but there didn’t seem to be much information on how the data is used it to inform decision making.

Helena College lists three objectives under the core theme of demonstrating academic excellence. These are to enhance learners’ college level skill development, facilitate transfer, and prepare 21st century employee’s. These appear to be appropriate measures for informing the core theme objective, yet may be problematic without further explanation of how the listed objectives help the college to achieve its mission..

Community/Work Force

As discussed in section 3.B.3., the process for translating the data into decisions was unclear to the evaluators.

4.A.2 The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.

The Evaluators found that the college is in compliance with standard 4.A.2. Helena College strives to engage in the evaluation of its programs and services. They do this within the respective organizations inside the college. These include the budget committee, Strategic Planning Committee, the Senior Leadership team, various standing committees, and the College Council. Each group evaluates itself in an appropriate interval with. The college provided evidence that changes have been made based on these

evaluations. For instance, program now undergo a mid-cycle review to ensure the resources are allocated appropriately. They also mention that changes such as providing one instructor release time to make connections with local industry is a directly result of their program evaluation process.

Access

The college has enhanced its access through expanding its mission to include transfer degrees, which has required additional General Education courses. New funding being developed by the Community Foundation promises more ways to fund new targeted populations.

Academic Excellence.

The Evaluators found that in regard to academic excellence, there were pockets of excellence and areas that could use improvement. For instance, as noted earlier, mathematic concepts are embedded in all mathematics course tests throughout the semester, to help to assess student learning in every course wherever taught and however delivered. Such data will be extremely useful for assessing whether there is consistency in their offerings. It is recommended that other areas include better assessment tools in their programs and services to assess quality.

Community/Work Force

The College is still working on their performance indicator tracking system and needs to more fully develop their gathering and use of the data in each of the four objectives of this core theme. At this point, only Objective 2 of this theme has data for all indicators.

4.A.3 The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Access, Academic Excellence, Work Force

Helena College has an evaluation plan that is intended to ensure academic excellence. This includes evaluation at the course and program levels. At the course level, Outcomes are identified and approved by the ASCR committee.

In regard to academic excellence, the evaluators found that at the course level, Helena College is doing an excellent job of assessment and utilizing the data to make decisions. For example, the evaluators found that the Continuing Education Department to be a good example of successful assessment and use of data. The department collects and tracks data that focuses on student fulfillment, instructional objectives and instructor effectiveness.

4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.

Academic Success

For programs, the ASCR also approves learning outcomes with some programs also having independent outcomes derived from national organizations or advisory boards. Examples are outcome that need to be met for nursing derived from NCLEX or NATEF for automotive. Other programs include data from standardized exams, as is the case in chemistry using the ACS course specific exams. Helena College assesses components of their general education as well. They utilize testing to examine the success in both mathematics and writing courses.

Community/Work Force

The College is still working on their performance indicator tracking system and needs to continue its efforts to develop robust indicators that can assist the college in its planning.

4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Access, Academic Excellence, Community/Work Force

In their reports, Helena College provided examples of how they use assessment data to guide the college. In regard to academic excellence, but it was not clear if the data informed decision making to the extent that the evaluation committee would expect. It appears that there is much planning and effort in regard to collecting data while their mechanisms for using that data effectively to inform decision making are not as fully developed. .

Holistic evaluation of the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of programs or services within programs covered under Core Theme, Strengthen Communities does not appear to be consistent across all activities.

4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.

In their reports, Helena College provided examples of how the SPA committee largely oversees assessment. The College appraises authentic achievements and included in the narrative that changes have been made to the annual assessment process, “changes were made to the form,” to collect achievements. The committee would like to see how these results lead to improvement.

4.B – Improvement

4.B.1 Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

Access

Helena College has institutionally identified indicators of achievement. The use of the SPA committee allows these indicators to be made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

Academic Excellence

The evaluators found Helena College to be using the results of the assessment data to drive course level decisions and to some degree program level decisions. They have developed an assessment plan that allows the decision making to be made as close to the educational activity as possible. In essence, they would like to see data driven decisions where the rubber meets the road. The evaluators felt that this was a great model for many areas. What they suggest now is that the assessment process be linked from top to bottom. There appears to be a need to align all levels of the process from the course level to the overall mission and clearly link the strategic plan to that process.

Community/Work Force

This process is limited within the theme of Strengthening Communities due to the lack of clarity regarding indicators and the lack of targets for some objectives. The College needs to have a broader and deeper discussion regarding the definition and clarification of indicators and targets to ensure data is relevant, aspirational and serves to inform meaningful improvement strategies.

4.B.2 The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

Access, Academic Excellence, Community/Work Force

Helena College indicates that they use a decentralized model of assessment in an attempt to keep the improvements at the course/program level and create immediate improvement for courses/programs. This immediate improvement to student learning, based on outcomes was present during faculty interviews. The results of student learning assessments are made available through the SPA to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner. The committee would like to see evidence that learning-support planning and practices are incorporated into this level of assessment.

Chapter 5: Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability

5.A.1 *The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.*

The college collects data at multiple levels to assess indicators of achievement to support the accomplishment of outcomes and core theme objectives. However, as noted in sections 4.A and 4.B many of the core theme indicators are not representative of the initiatives associated with the strategic priorities they represent and the assessments conducted in support of those initiatives,” nor did the committee “find evidence that the results of core theme assessments are currently used to inform aspects of the planning process.” While the committee believes that the college understands the intent of the standard and is dedicated to fulfilling its intent, the committee is concerned that results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are not based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; or made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.”

Concern: “The institution is not fully using the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements at the program level.” In addition, it is important for the institution to, “document that students who complete degrees and programs achieve general education, program and degree outcomes and make these results available to constituencies in a timely manner.”

5.A.2 *Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicates its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.*

The target and threshold figures for the Core Theme indicators that were reported by the college were premised on a 2012 -2022 timeline, so it is difficult to determine precisely the degree of present mission fulfillment. The evidence gathered by the evaluators during the visit suggests that there is significant progress being made and that the college has established a standing committee that will address this in the future.

Standard 5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability

5.B.1 *Within the context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Although the college has not gathered much evaluative data explicitly dealing with the long-term adequacy of resources.. However, the evaluators saw indications that the college is in the process of establishing structures and processes to ensure the ongoing and regular evaluation of adequacy of resources, capacity, and operational effectiveness. The college appears to be very committed in its efforts

to integrate its planning processes, including the Core Theme and strategic planning activities to get a data-informed understanding of the needs and challenges of the institution.

5.B.2 The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.

The college is documenting its extensive planning efforts which include regular review of the strategic plan and an effort to integrate the planning processes with budget allocation. Although there is a procedure for program reviews, as noted above, the past utilization of the data has not resulted in regular schedule or systemic program reviews.

5.B.3 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.

Committee recognizes that, in a changing institution, new assessment and planning efforts become complicated by growth and change. The Committee is satisfied that the college will continue to improve the integration and effectiveness of these processes.

Commendations & Recommendations

The Evaluation Committee would like to thank Helena College for the support and cooperation of the faculty, staff and students during our visit. We feel that we leave the campus with many insights and many new friends.

Commendations

1. The Evaluation Committee commends Helena College for their dedication and transparent commitment to student success and community engagement by faculty, staff, and leadership.
2. The Evaluation Committee commends the college for its careful and judicious fiscal planning, responses to external factors, and the use of reserve policy to smooth year-to-year cash flow concerns.
3. The Evaluation Committee commends the college for its exemplary support from the community foundation board, composed of dedicated and passionate volunteers who are committed to student success through scholarships.
4. The Evaluation Committee commends Helena College for its dedicated and long-term leadership in the outgoing dean who has served expertly as an advocate for Helena College in the community and within the UM system, highlighting the benefits of long-term stable leadership.
5. The Evaluation Committee commends Helena faculty and staff for organizing a wide variety of meaningful co-curricular activities that engage students on campus and in the greater community, providing significant student learning opportunities and enhancing the region.
6. The Evaluation Committee commends the college for the obvious care for the learning environment that is evident in the condition of the physical facilities at both campuses.

Recommendations:

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the college fully define mission fulfillment for each core theme, objective, and indicator. The Committee has some concerns with the definition of mission fulfillment with respect current thresholds and targets. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the college revisit core theme three in order to bridge the disconnect between its exemplary community engagement and the incomplete quantitative and qualitative examples. (1.A.)
2. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the college ensure that all indicators of its core theme objectives are meaningful, assessable and verifiable; that the planning for each core theme guides the selection of programs and services contributing to the achievement of goals and that the results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are:
 - a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement,

b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making and allocation of resources and capacity and

c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner. (1.B.2, 3.B.2, 4.B.1).

3. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the college address and strengthen its system for regular and systematic evaluation of all faculty. (2.B.6)

4. The Evaluation Committee recognizes the concerted effort that Helena College has put toward addressing Recommendation 4 from the 2010 comprehensive evaluation. To continue with that effort, the committee recommends that the college continue to :

a. systematically develop student learning outcomes and assessments for each program of the college, including general education,

b. ensure that the learning outcomes and assessments align with the mission and core themes of the college,

c. use the program assessment data to improve teaching and learning as well as to inform decision making at all college levels.

(2.C.2, 2.C.5, 2.C.9, 2.C.10, Core Themes: 4.A.1, 4.A.2, 4.A.3).