Assurance Argument

Dickinson State University

Review date: 5/12/2025

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

Dickinson State University's (DSU) Mission is articulated publicly, providing accountability and transparency to its constituents, including enrolled and prospective students, the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and the community. The Mission is evident in DSU's academic programs and operations.

1.A.1.

Mission statements are developed by institutions within the ND University System (NDUS) and approved by the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) as required by [SBHE Policy 100.7 Institution Mission Statements](). DSU's Mission ([Policy 100.4.001]()) was most recently approved by the [SBHE on June 27, 2019](), with one revision as follows:

> *Dickinson State University is a regional <u>comprehensive</u> institution within the North Dakota University System, whose primary role is to contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially to Southwestern North Dakota. The University's mission is to provide high-quality, accessible programs; to promote excellence in teaching and learning; to support scholarly and creative activities; and to provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life of the citizens of the State of North Dakota. (Mission, Role and Scope Statement, SBHE originally approved 12/17/92)*

As part of DSU's 2021-2026 strategic planning process, constituent survey findings regarding the Mission indicated a majority response of no need to change the Mission at that time. The Strategic Planning Committee agreed with survey respondents ([Survey #1 Findings: Mission, Vision, Values,]()

Role/Scope Policies; Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes, February 18, 2021) and recognized that DSU's Mission remained relevant and current in guiding planning and operations.

On May 14, 2021, DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission Statement was reaffirmed at President's Cabinet (President's Cabinet Meeting Summary, May 14, 2021). In further support of the Mission, the Role and Scope Statement (Policy No. 100.4.002), Vision (DSU Policy No. 100.4.003) and Core Values and Beliefs (DSU Policy No. 100.5.001) were reviewed and approved with minor updates through DSU's President's Cabinet on May 14, 2021 (referenced above).

> *"Dickinson State University will educate a diverse population through innovative teaching, learning, scholarship, and service fostering responsible citizens who impact the world." (Vision)*

> *DSU's Core Values include integrity, accessibility, excellence, inquiry, and innovation.*

Future review of the Mission and related policies (i.e., Vision; Core Values; and Role and Scope Statement) is anticipated to occur during DSU's strategic planning process prior to the expiration of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

DSU's Strategic Plan 2021-2026 "5 Years in Focus, A Blueprint for DSU's Future" is based on DSU's Mission and Vision. The strategic priorities, goals, and objectives align with the Mission and SBHE's goals. The plan is publicly available on the website under About DSU/Mission.

The Strategic Plan was the result of a year-long process coordinated through the Strategic Planning Committee that included faculty, staff, students, and community members. Planning efforts provided a broad framework that addressed immediate and long-term goals potentially impacting DSU's efforts to carry out its Mission. Strategic Plan outcomes were reviewed, 2019 accreditation recommendations were addressed, and input was gathered from DSU constituents through surveys, consultant strategic planning expertise, campus-wide meetings, Strategic Planning Committee Meetings, and internal subcommittee meetings (Strategic Plan Committee Meeting Notes Examples).

The Strategic Plan was developed to build on DSU's existing strengths and is flexible to respond and adapt to needs, opportunities, and innovation, which was especially important given the challenges confronting higher education institutions across the country during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan was implemented in fall 2021 by campus leaders, overseen by Academic Affairs and the President's Office. Strategic priorities are focused on enrollment and recruitment, fiscal sustainability, student success, including retention, faculty and staff engagement, an enriched campus experience, community engagement and partnerships, and DSU as a dual mission institution.

DSU maintains a companion document to the Strategic Plan to track, update, and monitor the progress of strategic priorities and related goals (Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Activities/Progress Document). In spring 2024, the DSU Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) was established, and it provides oversight for planning and budgeting as a mechanism to ensure strategic priorities and related goals and objectives are positioned to carry out the mission. Various achievements have been shared with campus constituents through past DSU Newsletters and DSU Campus Highlights, a publication distributed by University Relations. Improving communication of goals will rely on the companion plan, utilizing the document and other tools to present progress updates at future campus-wide forums led by the incoming President.

In fall 2018, the SBHE formally recognized DSU as a Dual Mission institution in response to

anticipated rising workforce needs in western North Dakota and surrounding areas. DSU continues to operate as a Dual Mission institution while responding to local and regional education needs. Executive leadership works with local legislators, collaborates with community partners, and engages in fundraising to ensure Dual Mission support.

The Dual Mission is a strategic priority focusing on working directly with industries to create relevant programs that prepare students to succeed in the workforce. (DSU Strategic Plan, pp. 11-12, referenced above). Significant progress and results in support of the Dual Mission include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implemented numerous CTE programs and continue planning for programming to satisfy community needs. Programs include welding, fire science, diesel technology, meat processing, and education (MED Ed Leadership), as well as other graduate programs.
- Implemented Health Sciences CNA Training; CERT Welding Technology; Nursing Dept. CNA Course for Credit; AAS Diesel Technology; AAS Fire Science; CERT Meat Processing; Criminal Justice Associate Degree; and Nursing Simulation Project; Career Academy DHS/DSU School of Education in general coursework requirements, Intro to Education and Early Childhood Literature courses.
- DSUlive™ offers students opportunities to choose how they want to learn – F2F in Dickinson, Williston, or Bismarck; online asynchronously or synchronously through DSUlive™. Options were added to nearly all DSU programs.
- Developed an ongoing collaboration with the Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy (SWACTEA).
- Engaged in Career Academies Partnership with Dickinson Public Schools.
- Partnered with TrainND Northwest to include non-transcripted Program Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and a TrainND Northwest MOU for Automation Training.
- Continue offering a CNA program and partner with Catholic Health Initiatives to support student scholarship. The program has evolved to include a credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing option.
- Established internship opportunities with Career Academy Introductory Computer Science and Math course pathway into any NDUS program.

DSU continues to address its academic portfolio with the Dual Mission mindset, focusing on career readiness. Certificate, two-year, and four-year plans have been developed for CTE curricula. In fall 2023, the Diesel Technology lab fundraising project kicked off in collaboration with the SWACTEA to provide instructional support for the Diesel Technology program and connect industry partners with the classroom.

As of spring 2025, DSU's Mission remains aligned with its Strategic Plan and the SBHE's Mission and Strategic Plan (referenced above). This relationship continues to reflect the aspects of the Mission in serving DSU's constituents.

1.A.2.

DSU has educated students in western North Dakota since 1918. As addressed in 1.A.1, the Mission and related Vision, Core Values and Beliefs, and Role and Scope Statement are current. The Mission and value-added statements reference DSU's emphasis on the various aspects of its Mission throughout the region to "provide high-quality, accessible programs"; "promote excellence in teaching and learning"; "support scholarly and creative activities"; and "provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life" to the citizens of North Dakota.

DSU operationalizes the various aspects of its Mission in its educational programs, instruction, scholarly activities, services, and interactions with its constituents as follows:

DSU provides high-quality, accessible programs.

- Programming is responsive and relevant, offering 6 Master's Degrees, 33 Bachelor's Degrees, 9 Associate Degrees, and 28 Certificate Programs.
- Highly qualified faculty developing high-quality programs ([DSU Academic Catalog](#)).
- School Deans and Academic Program Directors identify strategy and progress within their biannual Academic Vital Signs Reports.
- Program Additions 2020-26 catalog: Associate in Science in Secondary Education, Elementary Education, and Substance Abuse Counseling; Associate in Arts Degrees in Communication, Theatre, and Music; MBA; Master of Education in Elementary Education; Master of Sport Administration-Athletic Leadership; Master in Educational Leadership; Associate in Applied Science in Diesel Technology (tentative); Associate in Applied Science in Fire Science; Meat Processing Certificate; Information Technology Certificate; Associate in Applied Science in Information Technology; Addiction Counseling Minor; Bachelor of Business Administration in Esports Administration; Bachelor of Applied Science in Esports and Business; Bachelor of Science in Education in Health Education; Corporate Innovation and Strategy graduate certificate and Associate in Applied Science in Accounting.
- Exploration submitted for a MA in History and a Master of Athletic Training for possible implementation in Fall 2025 and Fall 2026 respectively.
- Dakota Digital Academy (DDA) and Digital Literacy: DSU Department of Math and Computer Science offers basic CSCI courses as the primary means by which digital literacy instruction is provided as directed by SBHE's recent general education policy.
- Delivering classes and programs to a wide range of locations via several modes. Maintaining and improving F2F and remote delivery options. DSUlive™ offers students opportunities to choose how they want to learn – F2F in Dickinson, Williston, or Bismarck; online asynchronously, or synchronously through DSUlive™. Options added to most DSU programs.
- Active Learning Classrooms that allow for distance delivery of study areas otherwise difficult to deliver via distance.
- Dual Credit/Early Entry Programming in place for area high school students.
- Providing co-curricular programming to complement students' academic studies that contribute to intellectual, social, or cultural development.
- Partnering with Bismarck State College, Williston State College, and Lake Region State College to expand programming (e.g., welding, four-year BSN degree, and law enforcement).
- Increase K-12 and CTE partnerships. DSU has developed a Joint-Powers Agreement and is actively engaged in the planning of the SWACTEA. Welding, Fire Science, and Diesel Technology will be offered in the SWACTEA, offering students a direct pathway into these in-demand fields.
- Recent articulation agreements with Dickinson Public Schools; Bismarck State College; NDSU; Williston State College; Dawson Community College; Miles City Community College; Gillette and Sheridan Community Colleges (pending).
- DSU is working on articulation agreements on two major CTE pathways-welding and diesel technology during 2024-2025 AY with implementation during 2025-2026 AY.
- Expanded Williston State College to offer F2F business programs in Williston. Business is largest academic program at WSC, which should allow DSU access to a major student pipeline.
- Strengthening partnerships with other NDUS institutions to increase opportunities for students (e.g., NDUS technology committees and NDUS Envision 2035 workgroups).

- Address infrastructure (equipment, facilities, and technology) needed to secure a foundational platform for DSU and students to thrive into the future.

DSU promotes excellence in teaching and learning.

- Highly qualified faculty with subject matter expertise and experience providing instruction (DSU Academic Catalog).
- Ongoing commitment to invest in faculty and staff through professional development activities (detailed in 3.C.5.), and adjunct instructors assigned to faculty mentors.
- Implemented Student Success Advisor Model in spring 2024.
- Hired a social media specialist to improve visibility in key enrollment-generating areas.
- Highly qualified staff dedicated to success of the students, faculty, institution, and the community. Staff pursue conferences to stay informed of developments specific to their areas.
- Student Opportunity and Resource (SOAR) Center with services located in May Hall for convenient access by students.
- Significant steps taken throughout pandemic to establish academic environment safe and workable for students, faculty, and staff.
- Improved student connectedness and sense of belonging on campus through retention efforts (e.g., Blue Hawk Hub; Sanford Sports Facility; The Perch Dining; The University Store; Student Center as vibrant destination point; Esports; Residential life programs; Student Athletic Council; and Campus workgroups to provide input).
- DSU implemented software in collaboration with the DSU Heritage Foundation to improve communication of scholarships between the various recruiting areas, admissions, athletics, academics, etc.

DSU supports scholarly and creative activities.

- DSU's Policy on Core Values and Beliefs documents "Excellence: We value academic, scholarly and creative excellence," and "Inquiry & Innovation: We believe in the value and pursuit of life-long learning."
- Curricular and co-curricular programs and activities give faculty and students opportunities to highlight and present scholarship, creative work, and discoveries to the campus, the academic community, and the public (detailed in 2.B.2.).
- The Theodore Roosevelt Symposium brings together scholars, students, and interested members of the public annually to explore Roosevelt's life. Caters to the DSU community, as well as a broader regional, national, and international public.
- Kids Day on the Farm, held annually for over 25 years, is organized by DSU Agriculture Club students. Event offers a unique learning experience to third graders and younger about life on a farm.
- The annual Science Olympiad brings approximately 450 area middle and high school students to campus to engage in scientific explorations and experiments with faculty and college students. DSU students assist with the event.
- Despite budget realities, faculty development is a priority, and a majority of requests are granted through the VPAA/Provost and VPAA Council (detailed in 3.C.4.).
- Students participate in scholarly research with the guidance of an experienced faculty mentor. Research projects are celebrated through an annual Celebration of Scholars conference, with oversight provided by the Undergraduate Research Committee.

DSU provides services relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life to citizens of the State of North Dakota.

- Integrated Theodore Roosevelt Center with the DSU campus and community, providing outreach globally and preserving the legacy of America's 26th president.
- West River Teacher Center provides professional development graduate credit for area educators.
- Career Fair hosted by DSU creates an organized opportunity for employers and students as potential employees to connect on campus.
- Fine and Performing Arts Exhibits and Performances (e.g., art, professional performances, music, and theatre).
- Facility rentals and space are provided to community organizations and members by request.
- Host community events that foster connections and relationships outside the classroom and contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development of the greater community (e.g., Harvest Festival; Halloween Boo Hawks event; Homecoming; DSU Centennial Celebration; Day at the Farm for community youth; Mind's Eye Art Gallery exhibitions and events; Athletic activities; Foundation Fundraisers: Cowboys and Candlelight, Yuletyme, and Sweating for Scholarships; Collegiate Rodeo; Community Thanksgiving; Family Fun Day; etc.).
- Strategic connections and partnerships with community and business groups (e.g., City of Dickinson; Downtown Dickinson Task Force; Downtown Dickinson Association; Chamber of Commerce; Manufacturers Round Table; Stark Development Corporation; Dickinson Police Department; Vision West ND; Rotary; and United Way).
- DSU School of Business and Entrepreneurship fosters valuable partnerships with local businesses and nonprofit organizations. This initiative bridges the gap between the Dean, faculty, and students with companies of all sizes, allowing them to explore industry trends, workforce needs, and the essential skills required for career success.
- Growing partnership with Southwest Art Gallery & Science Center (SWAGSC), a dynamic cultural hub located in downtown Dickinson known for its rotating exhibits that highlight local art and showcase the history of southwest ND. Additionally, SWAGSC offers a variety of creative classes aimed at individuals of all ages, encouraging them to explore their artistic potential.

1.A.3.

DSU's Mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides in policy. The Mission states DSU's primary role "is to contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially to Southwestern North Dakota." It also emphasizes providing "service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life of the citizens of the State of North Dakota."

DSU's Vision documents that the University "will educate a diverse population through innovative teaching, learning, scholarship, and service fostering responsible citizens who impact the world."

DSU's Core Values and Beliefs include integrity, accessibility, excellence, inquiry, and innovation. Accessibility is defined broadly "to include diversity and inclusiveness in educating a globally responsible, astute and engaged citizenry, as well as being flexible and responsive—to our students (student-centeredness) and other constituents (collaborative relationships)."

DSU's Role and Scope Statement states that to achieve the Mission, DSU will provide students "a philosophy of education that transmits global awareness and creates a sensitivity to the values of a diverse society in a rapidly changing, increasingly interconnected, multicultural world" and "educational opportunity and resources to accommodate diverse student characteristics and

backgrounds." The Role and Scope Statement also documents that DSU will provide faculty and staff with "resources necessary to meet goals and objectives" consistent with the Mission and Vision, and the Region is recognized as a constituent that will be provided with "intellectual, recreational, and cultural services to assist in meeting the needs of the people served by the University," "promotion of educational opportunities . . . to meet the needs of the elementary and secondary educators," and "opportunities for applied research and service relationships with governmental units, school districts, health care institutions, post-secondary institutions, and industry."

DSU's Strategic Plan is aligned with the University's Mission and accompanying foundational policies, which clearly identify intended recipients of DSU's program offerings and services. Policies and the Strategic Plan are available on the DSU website.

1.A.4.

DSU's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated Mission.

Academic Offerings

DSU's Strategic Plan Goal 1 is aligned with the Mission Statement and the SBHE's Strategic Plan. Goal 1 addresses providing relevant programs students want, when and where they want them. Program offerings since 2019 include:

- Program Additions 2020-26 catalog: Associate in Science in Secondary Education, Elementary Education, and Substance Abuse Counseling; Associate in Arts Degrees in Communication, Theatre, and Music; MBA; Master of Education in Elementary Education; Master of Sport Administration-Athletic Leadership; Master in Educational Leadership; Associate in Applied Science in Diesel Technology (tentative); Associate in Applied Science in Fire Science; Meat Processing Certificate; Information Technology Certificate; Associate in Applied Science in Information Technology; Addiction Counseling Minor; Bachelor of Business Administration in Esports Administration; Bachelor of Applied Science in Esports and Business; Bachelor of Science in Education in Health Education; and Corporate Innovation and Strategy graduate certificate and Associate in Applied Science in Accounting.
- A new TRHLP director (fall 2024) is actively engaged in recruiting students and has developed plans to encourage enrollment in a diverse number of academic majors and athletic activities.
- Exploration submitted for an MA in History and a Master of Athletic Training for possible implementation in fall 2026.
- Anticipate submission of a Substantive Change Application to the HLC to offer a Master of Athletic Training for possible implementation in fall 2026.

In addition to the Higher Learning Commission, DSU maintains additional accreditations and professional memberships as follows in support of its Mission:

- Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
- North Dakota Board of Nursing (NDBON)
- International Accreditation Council for Business Education (Educational Member) (IACBE)

As required by the HLC, DSU provides specific information on the Department of Nursing webpage regarding ACEN accreditation for the programs. The most recent accreditation decision made by the

ACEN Board of Commissioners for the Practical Nursing Program is Continuing Accreditation with conditions. Public information disclosed by ACEN regarding the program can be viewed on the ACEN website (ACEN Website Language). The AASPN and BSN programs are approved by NDBON.

Student Support Services

DSU's strategic goal to equip students for success demonstrates the University is committed to providing instruction and empowering students with the skills and resources necessary for personal and professional growth. Our comprehensive student support services include student success advisors, academic advising, tutoring, career counseling, and wellness programs. By promoting a culture of holistic development, DSU ensures that students are well-prepared to face challenges and seize opportunities beyond the classroom. The hiring of Student Success Advisors in the 2023-24 academic year has proven effective. DSU allocated these resources to enhance student success, aiming to provide each student with an advocate to help them navigate the college environment, particularly during their first year at DSU. Retention data from fall to spring indicates that this program is having a positive impact, as the number of full-time students who did not return for the spring semester was significantly lower than the previous year.

Student support services are consistent with DSU's Mission to provide "high-quality, accessible programs," "promote excellence in teaching and learning," "support scholarly and creative activities," and provide "service relevant to... the citizens of the State of North Dakota." Student services are provided by appropriately credentialed and dedicated staff who meet the qualifications outlined in their job descriptions. These staff members are selected through a fair and consistent process managed by Human Resources. Looking ahead, DSU's priorities for enhancing student success will focus on expanding support services, including mental health resources, career counseling, and academic advising.

Enrollment Profile

Dickinson State's enrollment profile aligns with its Mission and related documents. The fall 2023 Student Profile shows 1,453 enrolled students, with the majority coming from North Dakota. Most students are of traditional college age, undergraduates, and attending full-time. The gender distribution is balanced, with women making up 58% of the student body. The ethnic composition includes 74% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 2% African American, 1% Native American, 1% Asian, 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 4% two or more races, 3% U.S. nonresident, and 7% unknown. (IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2024).

DSU understands the importance of prioritizing student success within the ever-evolving landscape of higher education. Since HLC's February 2019 visit, enrollment trends are predicted to decline. In 2022-2023, there were concerns regarding recruiting and retention, but overall the picture was positive, with a slight increase in headcount in fall 2023 contributing to an overall growth rate during the pandemic (i.e., since fall 2019) of over 5%, while national undergraduate enrollment trends were down by over 5%. Key findings from the fall 2022 Census Report, compared to the previous fall, included an overall enrollment headcount increase from 1415 to 1473 (4.10%), a 6.71% increase in transfer students, a 60.1% increase in early entry/dual credit students (partially explained by one-time events that will not repeat themselves), and a 14.8% increase in part-time students.

The positive trend continued into spring 2023, with a one-year headcount increase of 3.4%. DSU's tuition freeze during 2020-2021, the only one in the NDUS, significantly contributed to enrollment

success at that time. DSU adopted a tuition freeze for the next two academic years (i.e., 2023-24 and 2024-25). This extended DSU's tuition freeze for 2020-21 and 2022-23, which allowed students to have four straight years of tuition freezes. DSU is the only NDUS institution that has four years of tuition freeze commitments for its students.

Fall 2024 headcount experienced a decrease, largely due to losing approximately 43 students following the resignation of multiple nursing faculty in summer 2024. However, despite the decrease in headcount, credit production and the FTE of credit hours increased overall, which provided budget support and stability.

Creating an inclusive and supportive student-centered learning environment is fundamental to DSU's Mission. In assessing DSU recruitment, enrollment, and attainment efforts, we reported positive, though not universally so, outcomes. Despite uncertainties posed by external factors, DSU experienced consistent growth in Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) credit hours during the spring semester 2024. While 2024 fall enrollment remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease, DSU recognizes the need for ongoing vigilance and responsiveness to maintain momentum. Moving forward, DSU remains committed to refining practices, leveraging data-driven insights, and fostering collaboration across campus stakeholders to enhance student success. By staying agile and proactive, we are confident in our ability to navigate challenges and fulfill our mission of empowering students to achieve their full potential.

DSU developed an [Admissions Blueprint](#) outlining initiatives for AYs 2021-2025. Key features include expansion of dual credit, increasing part-time students, especially those accessing courses remotely, growth in Dual Mission and CTE efforts, new graduate programs, and exploration of extracurriculars (including a new women's wrestling team and competitive cheer) to serve students desiring traditional college experiences following the pandemic. Further expansion of athletic opportunities will depend upon DSU overcoming facilities limitations, as practice, competition, and locker room spaces are nearing capacity.

DSU's enrollment profile is consistent with its Mission Statement by providing "high-quality, accessible programs," "contributing to intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially [in] Southwestern North Dakota," and providing "service relevant to the economic, health, and quality of life of the citizens of North Dakota." Future planning includes development of strategic recruitment initiatives to attract a broader and more diverse student population, including rural, international, and nontraditional students; expand academic offerings in high-demand fields, such as healthcare, technology, and entrepreneurship to appeal to prospective students; and increase collaborations with regional high schools to enhance dual-credit and early University programs.

Retention

Retention rates for DSU students decreased since HLC's last visit in 2019, from 63% to 57.36% in 2021. However, retention increased again in 2022 to 60.43% and 67% for the 2023 cohort. The decrease in retention is likely attributed to three key events. First, DSU did not receive continued grant funding for its TRIO Student Support Services program. Student services, primarily direct high-touch advising, were reduced significantly without funding. Second, students enrolling at DSU were no longer required to submit ACT/SAT testing scores as the NDUS implemented a furlough on this admission requirement due to a lack of access to testing sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of ACT/SAT testing requirements led to the admission of students who were less prepared for college than previous incoming cohorts at DSU. Lastly, students who enrolled at DSU were impacted by the significant learning loss during critical high school instructional years due to

the stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a lack of preparedness for college.

As a result of decreasing retention, DSU has increased funding for Student Affairs. Additionally, Student Mental Health Services were developed in fall 2022, a critical aspect of student wellness that directly impacts retention. DSU continues to expand services to support students on their path towards graduation as addressed in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan to provide relevant programs students want, when and where they want them (Goal 1) and equip students for success (Goal 3).

A new DSU Retention Committee was established in 2022, with oversight by the Dean of Students. In January 2024, a member of the Admissions team joined the committee to better align enrollment and retention activities. In 2022, the committee focused on improving attendance reporting, which resulted in changes to the DSU attendance reporting policy to include the first 50 percent of the course (DSU Policy 440.002 Attendance). In 2023, committee members focused on improving parent involvement and communications, and in 2024, the group shifted its focus to evaluating current initiatives to determine future planning and related activities.

Various retention-related activities and outcomes are as follows:

- School Deans and Academic Program Directors identify strategy and progress within their biannual Academic Vital Signs Reports.
- Student Opportunity and Resource Center (SOAR) provides professional advising training.
- Academic and athletic programs and extracurriculars have set enrollment targets and receive reporting on progress towards goals.
- Significant efforts were made throughout the pandemic to establish an academic environment safe and workable.
- Maintaining and improving F2F and remote delivery options.
- Expand access to Academic Units through innovative and nontraditional delivery methods, including Dual Mission and CTE Programs.
- Faculty continue to be offered annual training and support through ITS and course designers.
- Reduce barriers to registering and advising returning and transfer students.
- New ND tuition rate was extended nationally in fall 2024.
- DSU implemented software in collaboration with the DSU Heritage Foundation to improve communication of scholarships between recruiting areas, admissions, athletics, and academics.
- DSU revamped its tuition model in 2020 and 2022 and made changes that positively impacted enrollment.
- Meet ND's workforce needs by recruiting students from traditional and nontraditional populations.
- Continue to create articulation pathways with other institutions, including high schools.
- Expanded Williston State College articulation agreement to offer face-to-face business programs.
- Continued work on articulation with SWACTEA for pathways for Welding and Diesel Technology.

Additional retention-related activities intended to increase students' persistence through improved participation, retention, and completion rates are as follows:

- DSU Student Opportunity and Resource (SOAR) Center continues to engage in the following activities: Retention Committee; First-Year Experience Committee; Professional Advising; Free tutoring access to online and on-campus students; Starfish monitoring and early

intervention; and Attendance monitoring. SOAR Center offers comprehensive Accessibility Services, Career Services, and Testing (placement and proctoring).

- In August 2022, revitalized the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Activities included students working on inventorying archives under faculty and administrator guidance. The committee also identified inclusive restrooms and drafted an inclusivity acknowledgement. In August 2024, DEI was transformed into the IDEA Committee (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility). The Committee is on hold until further notice.

- Maximizing affordability as it relates to students' ability to persist. DSU continues to support students' cost of attendance by providing multiple scholarship opportunities through the DSU Heritage Foundation, Presidential Scholarship, Homeschool Hawks and High Fliers Scholarships.

- Providing improved access to mental health services involved hiring a Director of Counseling and Health Services, who established an operating Counseling Center in 2021. Mental Health events and services continue to be enhanced and offered. Guest speakers spoke to various topics, such as suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention/ intervention, drug and alcohol recovery, alcohol awareness, and mental wellness techniques.

- Increased student use, increased classroom visits, and parent presentations were implemented as part of New Student Registration.

The Retention Committee meets regularly and works on key initiatives, including student payment plans and addressing continued student mental health needs. Committee Meeting Notes are available through the Dean of Students.

1.A.5.

DSU's Mission (referenced in 1.A.1.) is clearly articulated through policies (i.e., Vision, Core Values and Beliefs, and Role and Scope Statement), which are available to students, faculty, staff, and the public on the website under Policies. In addition, the Mission is documented in the Academic Catalog, Student Handbook, and Strategic Plan. The Mission can also be viewed in May and Klinefelter Halls, common areas, some offices, and other facilities on campus.

Sources

- Assigning Advisors
- Community Use of Facilities Examples
- DSU Admissions Blueprint AY21-21 and AY25-26
- DSU Highlights Publication Samples
- DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission
- DSU Policy 100.4.002 Role and Scope Statement
- DSU Policy 100.4.003 Vision
- DSU Policy 100.5.001 Core Values and Beliefs
- DSU Policy 440.002 Attendance
- DSU SP 2021-26 Progress Update 12.2024

- DSU Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- Fall 2022 Enrollment Census Snapshot
- IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2024
- Practical Nursing Accreditation (ACEN)
- President Cabinet Meeting Summary 5-14-21
- Retention Committee Meeting Notes
- SBHE DSU Mission Statement 6-27-19
- SBHE Policy 100.7 Institution Mission Statements
- Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes - Examples
- Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Summary 2-18-21
- Student Support Services Summary
- Tuition Ad Hoc Committee Report 2023 FINAL
- Weekly Digest and Events 10-2022

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1.

DSU's Mission includes a commitment to the public good. "Dickinson State University... whose primary role is to contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially to Southwestern North Dakota," and "... to provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life of the citizens of the State of North Dakota."

Educational Role in Serving the Public

In fulfilling its mission, DSU recognizes that its educational role extends beyond the institution itself; it also includes a responsibility to serve the public. This commitment is evident in programs where DSU actively addresses identified societal needs through its actions. Example programming includes:

- **Master of Sport Administration.** DSU created this program major in Athletic Leadership to provide in-service teachers, coaches, and other industry professionals a tailored graduate program that enhances their ability to contribute to their profession and quality of life as an administrator/coach or employee in a related field.
- **Master of Education in Elementary Education.** The MEd/ELED provides elementary education teachers and other educational professionals a pathway for upward movement, build upon skills and expertise in best practices in a program delivered entirely online, and accessible to students regardless of location.
- **Dual Mission.** DSU was designated a Dual Mission institution in 2018. Programming is significantly driven by regional and community needs. DSU works directly with industries to create relevant programs that prepare students to succeed in the workforce. Programs include welding, fire science, diesel technology, and meat processing, among others.

Community Engagement/Partnerships and Services

DSU actively cultivates relationships and partnerships with constituents and the community. For example:

- Faculty may serve as advisors to groups, organizations, and boards outside DSU, offering their

expertise and guidance.
- TrainND Northwest Partnership (CDL Program).
- Career Academies partnership with Dickinson Public Schools.
- Ongoing collaboration with Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy.
- Growing partnership with Southwest Art Gallery & Science Center (SWAGSC), a dynamic cultural hub located in downtown Dickinson.

Facilities and Resources

Constituents may reserve use of various facilities and resources available to the public on campus. For example:

- **Stoxen Library.** The library and its resources are open to the public.
- **Biesiot Activities Center (BAC).** The BAC is a state-of-the-art complex for athletic activities and is available for hosting community and regional events serving DSU, area schools, local businesses, organizations, families, and community groups. Facility rentals and space are provided to public members by request.
- **Sanford Sports Complex.** Sanford Sports Facility provides students and the public access to an alternate recreational area on campus.
- **Stickney Auditorium.** DSU allows for the rental of Stickney Auditorium but also implements partnerships for community use of the space. Through these efforts, Stickney Auditorium is utilized for cultural and artistic events, creating a vibrant space for local talent and shared expression. This collaboration supports the arts by connecting the University with diverse community voices and enriching regional cultural life.

1.B.2.

Since DSU is a public institution, it is not obligated to generate financial returns for investors, support a parent organization, or cater to external interests. Instead, DSU prioritizes teaching and learning. Accountability as an educational institution is fundamental to DSU's daily operations.

The DSU Heritage Foundation (DSUHF) works to secure scholarship opportunities for students. The DSUHF was established in January 2016 and adheres to DSU Policy and Procedure 820.003 Fundraising. The DSUHF portion of fundraising goals have been achieved each year. Due to DSUHF fundraising efforts and collaboration with Dickinson Public Schools, Parks and Recreation, and community support, DSU Sanford Sports Complex opened in spring 2023 for use by youth, high school, and collegiate sports teams to practice and compete.

1.B.3.

DSU's Role and Scope Statement, which supports the Mission, explicitly states it will provide the region "[i]tellectual, recreational and cultural services to assist in meeting the needs of the people served by the university," . . . "[o]pportunities for . . . service relationships with governmental units, school districts, health care institutions, post-secondary institutions and industry," . . . and "[a] leadership role in the development of businesses, health care and employment opportunities through consulting and cooperative arrangements and by providing access to information technology systems."

DSU engages with identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its Mission and capacity allow. This is accomplished through open lines of external

communication, connections, and partnerships between DSU, its constituents, and the community. For example:

- **DSU Nursing Student Association.** Hosts blood drives, flu shots, and health screenings, which allow students to interact and practice the profession while helping the community.
- **Theodore Roosevelt Honors Leadership Program (TRHLP).** Requires students to log volunteer hours over four years. Community projects include silent auctions and games at DSU tailgates in support of the "BackPack" program, which gives food to families in need, and the 5K Hawk Walk/Run, where entrance fees go to the domestic violence and rape crisis center in Dickinson.
- **Theodore Roosevelt Center.** The Center provides global outreach. Thousands of items are catalogued or prepared for website publication and made available to the public.
- **West River Teacher Center (WRTC).** The WRTC continues to provide professional development graduate credit opportunities to K-12 educators throughout the region to help educators maintain their licensure.
- **Community Events.** Host community events that foster connections and relationships outside the classroom and contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development of the greater community (e.g., Harvest Festival; Halloween Boo Hawks event; Homecoming; DSU Centennial Celebration; Day at the Farm for community youth; Mind's Eye Art Gallery exhibitions and events; Athletic activities; Foundation Fundraisers: Cowboys and Candlelight, Yuletyme; DSU/Dickinson Rotary Club/Foundation hosted Blue Hawk Stampede Rodeo; Community Thanksgiving; Family Fun Day). Several events are collaborative efforts with the DSU Heritage Foundation, Dickinson Area Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations.
- **Community Partnerships.** Strategic connections and partnerships with community and business groups (e.g., City of Dickinson; Downtown Dickinson Task Force; Downtown Dickinson Association; Chamber of Commerce; Manufacturers Round Table; Stark Development Corporation; Dickinson Police Department; Vision West ND; Rotary; and United Way).
- **Science Olympiad and MathCounts.** Competitions that engage area youth in academic and scholarly activities in a University setting.
- **Fine and Performing Arts Exhibits and Performances.** Professional performances, music, and theatre.

Sources

- DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission
- DSU Policy 100.4.002 Role and Scope Statement
- DSU Policy 400.001 Dual Mission Course Instruction
- DSU Policy 820.003 Fundraising

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1.

Dickinson State University's (DSU) Vision, Core Values and Beliefs, and Role and Scope Statement extend and support the Mission. These documents explicitly address and guide DSU's role related to diversity as follows:

Vision

"Dickinson State University will educate a diverse population through innovative teaching, learning scholarship, and service fostering responsible citizens who impact the world."

Core Values and Beliefs

"Accessibility: We define accessibility broadly to include diversity and inclusiveness in educating a globally responsible, astute and engaged citizenry, as well as being flexible and responsive to our students (Student-centeredness) and to our constituents (collaborative relationships)."

Role and Scope Statement

- *A philosophy which transmits a global awareness and creates a sensitivity to the values of a diverse society in a rapidly changing, increasingly interconnected, multi-cultural world.*
- *Educational opportunity and resources to accommodate diverse student characteristics and backgrounds by offering various methods of learning which are consistent with the high academic standards of the institution.*

DSU engages in recruiting international and diverse student populations, recognizing that a multicultural campus is integral to achieving its Mission and Vision. Historically, North Dakota's population reflects a homogeneous, primarily western European demographic. According to the July 2024 U.S. Census (www.census.govquickfacts), 86.4 percent of the ND population identified as White. The DSU fall 2023 Student Profile shows the ethnic composition includes 74% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 2% African American, 1% Native American, 1% Asian, 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 4% two or more races, 3% U.S. non-resident, and 7% unknown. (IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2024).

Despite fewer numbers constituting a diverse student population, DSU experiences richness in diversity on campus and remains committed to attracting and educating a diverse student body, emphasizing accessibility to include diversity and inclusiveness and promoting global awareness and sensitivity to the values and needs of a diverse society and diverse student population. The Director of International Programs, Office of International Programs (OIP) and Multicultural Affairs provides support and immigration services to international students. The Director of International Programs has over 20 years of international education experience.

The OIP coordinates with the Multicultural Committee to sponsor events for international students to highlight their home cultures to benefit students and the wider community. The OIP also coordinates study abroad opportunities with other universities for faculty and club-initiated programs and student interest opportunities.

The international student population has held steady with only a minor drop in new enrollment due to COVID. Countries represented in 2024 included Bahamas, Canada, Estonia, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Philippines, Puerto Rico, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. Campus internationalization is a goal of DSU, and to support that drive, OIP has been a part of the Admissions team since July 2024. The Director of International Programs continues to serve international student needs as part of Student Affairs and other working groups.

DSU's General Education Learning Outcomes Goal Statement for Citizenship states that students will be able to ". . . progressively maintain their personal health and well-being and consider diverse social-cultural perspectives as they integrate and evaluate approaches to local and global issues." Formal instruction and extra-curricular experiences offered contain important components designed to serve these outcomes.

Student support services contribute to the diversity of society on campus, including Accessibility Services, Veteran support, financial aid, and learning assistance. DSU's Code of Conduct Policy emphasizes commitment to tolerance, diversity, and respect for differences.

1.C.2.

DSU has a history of encouraging the growth of a diverse student population and welcomes opportunities to expand a vision of celebrating differences. The University's activities reflect attention to diversity and inclusion appropriate to its Mission and the constituencies it serves, as demonstrated below:

- The International Club promotes intercultural knowledge and learning and creates a learning environment for all DSU students and the community. This is done through educational programs designed to celebrate and promote cultural diversity. The club frequently holds cultural events on campus and visits culturally significant sites in the region, including Mt. Rushmore. All DSU students, regardless of age, gender, color, nationality, or religion, are encouraged to be active members of the International Club.
- The Multicultural Committee consists of DSU staff and faculty members dedicated to enriching students and the community with various cultural perspectives. This committee hosts diverse presentations and events such as Global Table, Global Classroom, Global Exploration, Global Gala, Global Art Show, Global Movie Night, and other sessions relevant to culture and diversity for the campus community to enjoy.
- The History Society, an academic-based student organization, is designed to promote the study

and discussion of history. This is done to attain a healthy and balanced view of current-day world events that shape our lives.

- DSU commencement includes the Display of Nations, where national flags of graduates are displayed in a salute to students who have come together to enrich the University. These same flags fly in Flag Plaza on campus. Flags include the USA, other countries, and Native American Tribes, and are changed each semester to reflect the current student population.
- DSU celebrates Native American Heritage and International Education Week in November.
- DSU international students are active volunteers in the community for several organizations, including Edgewood Hawks Point senior assisted living home, Dickinson High School, St. Benedict's Nursing Home, and Best Friend's Mentoring program, as well as for various groups and organizations on campus.
- Black History Month is observed annually to celebrate the heritage and culture of African Americans through campus events.
- DSU continues to focus on understanding the needs of all students, including financial, work, and family commitments, and is striving to provide courses online. This allows accommodations for evening courses. Support services are extending office hours to help accommodate the needs of returning adult learners. Financial assistance is available through traditional financial aid options, including Rehabilitation Consulting and Services, North Dakota Job Service, and Veterans and National Guard scholarship options.

1.C.3.

Student support services contribute to the diversity of society on campus, including Accessibility Services, Veteran support, financial aid, and learning assistance. DSU's Code of Conduct Policy and the Student Code of Conduct, found in the Student Handbook, emphasize commitment to tolerance, diversity, and respect for differences.

Sources

- DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission
- DSU Policy 100.4.002 Role and Scope Statement
- DSU Policy 100.4.003 Vision
- DSU Policy 100.5.001 Core Values and Beliefs
- DSU Policy 308.1.001 Employee Code of Conduct
- Global Table New Zealand 2.26.25
- IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2024

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

DSU is one of 11 state-supported institutions in the NDUS that is regulated and guided by state, system, and institutional policies that are intended to ensure the University operates with integrity. DSU's operations are governed by the ND State Constitution, Century Code, and the SBHE as outlined in SBHE Policy 100.1 Constitutional and Statutory Authority. Authority and responsibilities of the SBHE and NDUS institutions are documented in SBHE Policy 100.6 Authority and Responsibility of the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE), Chancellor and Institution Presidents.

2.A.

DSU is required to comply with policies established by the SBHE and NDUS procedures. DSU develops its policies and procedures within the scope of SBHE policies and legal review. DSU policies and procedures comply with the requirements of the HLC and U.S. Department of Education.

Most recently revised in February 2024, DSU Policy on Policies (No. 100.001) ensures policies and procedures are developed, implemented, reviewed, and monitored consistently and transparently. Presidential responsibility for adoption of policies, subject to oversight of the NDUS Chancellor and the SBHE (SBHE Policy 304.1 Chancellor/Commissioner of Higher Education Authority and Responsibilities; Contract Term), is confirmed by Section 15-10-73 of the North Dakota Century Code (p.28), which states, "The president of an institution under the control of the state board of higher education may adopt policies, procedures, and directives for the institution, with input but no authoritative control from faculty and others through shared governance. The commissioner of higher education and the state board of higher education may overturn or amend the president's policies, procedures, and directives."

SBHE Policy 305.1 Institution President Authority and Responsibilities; Contract Terms states each institution president shall ensure effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected. In the area of developing, amending, adopting, implementing, and complying with policies and procedures, DSU articulates decision-making and collaborative input through institutional groups, such as Senates, councils, committees, and work groups assigned on an as-needed basis.

DSU Policy on Policies (No. 100.001) documents that policies and procedures may originate within DSU Administration, Schools, Departments, Senates, and other designated institutional groups. Policies and procedures are then routed through progressive approval channels for review and consideration, with the President's Cabinet's advisory recommendation and final determination made by the President. The Cabinet is composed of the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost (VPAA/Provost), Vice President of Finance and Administration (VPFA), Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Executive Director of DSUHF, Dean of Students, and Faculty, Staff, and Student Senate Presidents.

Policies and procedures may be vetted through the Compliance Support Council (CSC) to ensure SBHE, NDUS, U.S. Department of Education, and the Higher Learning Commission or accrediting agency alignment. Since 2016, the CSC has focused primarily on providing support and guidance in the facilitation of DSU's policy and procedure development, review, and implementation process (Sample CSC Meeting Agenda Packets). CSC reviews policies and procedures, including alignment with SBHE policies and NDUS procedures, prepares policies for presentation to the President and President's Cabinet in a standard format for consistency and transparency, and ensures implemented policies and procedures are maintained centrally with online viewing access for faculty, staff, students, and the public. The CSC Chair maintains a working document to monitor the status of DSU policies and procedures (DSU Policy/Procedure Monitoring Document).

The CSC is composed of the VPAA/Provost, VPFA, Director of Special Projects (CSC Chair since August 2019), HR Director, Financial Aid Director, and Director of Campus Life. CSC members are provided an opportunity to provide reports, voice concerns, and present new or evolving compliance requirements for discussion and action. This collaboration provides an additional avenue for addressing potential integrity issues. The VPAA/Provost, VPFA, or CSC Chair may communicate concerns to the President's Office.

Proposed policies and procedures are reviewed and recommended to the President by Cabinet vote. Through shared governance, faculty, staff, and students are provided opportunities for feedback through institutional group meetings, Cabinet meetings, and during the period between first and second readings. When feedback results in potential, substantive policy changes, the President will decide whether to request additional review by the originating unit, CSC, and/or President's Cabinet.

Following President's Cabinet recommendations and NDUS Legal Counsel review, final adoption and implementation of DSU policies and procedures require the President's approval before policies and procedures take effect. The President has the authority to accept, reject, or modify Cabinet recommendations.

New and revised DSU polices are communicated to DSU constituencies. President's Cabinet and Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates provide representative voices to DSU constituent groups. Cabinet members represent campus constituents and report back to constituency groups through meetings, discussions, and/or the distribution of approved and published Cabinet Meeting Summaries (Samples) by the President's Office. Faculty, staff, students, and other DSU supporters are encouraged to notify the President's Office, an administrator, Senate member, Cabinet member, or other appropriate official or group when they believe a policy, procedure, or directive should be amended, deleted, or added due to changes in circumstances or other causes for revision. DSU employees may attend Cabinet meetings (except executive sessions) and similar DSU meetings with approval from their immediate supervisor as detailed in DSU Policy 100.002 Voluntary Attendance at Cabinet and Similar Meetings.

A significant amount of policy work was completed in 2023-2025, particularly in Academic Affairs. At a special meeting luncheon in February 2024, the former President, VP at that time, and Faculty Senators agreed that applicable former Faculty Handbook policies would be moved into official DSU policies and procedures. Former Faculty Handbook tenure-related policies and procedures were also revised and transitioned to DSU policy upon completion in spring 2025. As of March 2025, approximately five policies are under review by Finance, with an expectation of review process completion in summer 2025.

Adopted policies are posted on the DSU website and incorporated into the online DSU Catalog and online DSU Student Handbook. In fall 2021, DSU implemented PolicyStat, a policy management software system, to maintain its policies and procedures through a platform that is accessible by employees, students, and the public. Using a policy management system has improved workflow and access to policies and procedures in an organized, searchable, and timely manner, enabling DSU to collaboratively manage and maintain policies and procedures throughout an ongoing review process. The Director of Special Projects and HR Director provide assistance to PolicyStat users upon request.

SBHE policies and NDUS procedures are publicly available on the NDUS website and through DSU's website. The NDUS Chief Compliance Officer provides policy and procedure changes to institutions via the NDUS Policy-Procedure Listserv following SBHE meetings and NDUS Chancellor's Cabinet meetings. Updates regarding SBHE policies and NDUS procedures are communicated to DSU constituencies through President Cabinet Summaries as referenced above, which are distributed to the campus community via email. DSU employees who serve as members of NDUS statewide councils, committees, and groups also receive information regarding policy and procedure changes and can provide input on policies and procedures (NDUS Councils and NDUS Campus Councils). In addition, DSU HR notifies employees annually the location of DSU policies, SBHE policies, NDUS procedures, North Dakota Century Code, and the NDUS Human Resource Policy Manual for viewing (HR Annual Notification).

Existing policies and procedures are reviewed regularly at President's Cabinet. In an unforeseen situation where policy development or amendments to an existing policy cannot be completed during the full development and review process time frame needed to achieve or maintain compliance, a temporary policy may be developed following presidential approval. Policies and procedures that are no longer relevant, retired at the state level by the SBHE/Chancellor, or incorporated into another SBHE policy or NDUS procedure by the SBHE/Chancellor, are reviewed by Cabinet and Legal Counsel to verify no requirements are preventing DSU policy or procedure retirement.

DSU's leadership recognizes the importance of acting with integrity and maintaining ethical and responsible conduct, particularly during periods of institutional change and transition. Position searches may be conducted through NDUS and consultant search groups with input from faculty, staff, students, and community representatives. Searches conducted internally are supported through HR and Hiring Committees that are required to follow established SBHE policies and NDUS procedures (SBHE Human Resource Manual).

DSU has experienced leadership changes in the past 10 years. Positions were filled or restructured. In 2015, DSU's President retired. A new President was hired and served through 2019. An Interim President joined DSU in fall 2019, was named President in spring 2020, and resigned in summer 2024. The current Acting President was appointed in summer 2024 and will serve in this role through June 2025. Following a national search, a new President was selected by the SBHE on March 27, 2025, and will assume office on July 1.

A former Provost stepped down in fall 2015. A new Provost held the position from spring 2016 through summer 2019. An Interim Provost/VP filled the position until a permanent Provost/VP for Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA) was hired in summer 2020. When the Provost/VPAA elected to return to faculty status in spring 2022, the position evolved into a VP position and a separate Provost position by summer 2023. In spring 2025, the Provost resigned. DSU reorganized leadership to address institutional needs and appointed the VP to serve as VPAA/Provost.

A former VP of Student Affairs (VPSA) served from fall 2015 to spring 2017. DSU then combined the position with the existing Provost/VPAA position as Provost/VP for Academic and Student Affairs (Provost/VPASA). Following the VPASA's departure, an Interim VP of Student Affairs and University Relations held the position from spring 2021 to fall 2022. The VP role absorbed oversight of student services. As of spring 2025, the VPAA/Provost oversees student services, and the Dean of Students reports to the VPAA/Provost.

In the area of finance, the VP for Finance and Administration (VPFA) employed in fall 2016 vacated the position in spring 2019. DSU's Controller at that time served as the Interim VPFA until a CFO filled the position from fall 2020 to summer 2022. DSU's current VPFA accepted the position in fall 2022.

Executive leaders report to the President and also serve on Cabinet, systemwide councils and committees appropriate to their roles, and lead various institutional groups within DSU. Executive leaders contribute to the development of policies and procedures and are expected to implement and adhere to SBHE policies and NDUS procedures to ensure DSU acts with integrity in carrying out its mission and operations.

2.A.1.

Mission statements are developed by each institution within the NDUS and approved by the SBHE as required by SBHE Policy 100.7 Institution Mission Statements. DSU's Mission Statement (Policy 100.4.001) was most recently approved by the SBHE on June 27, 2019, with one revision as follows:

> Dickinson State University is a regional comprehensive institution within the North Dakota University System, whose primary role is to contribute to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially to Southwestern North Dakota. The University's mission is to provide high-quality, accessible programs; to promote excellence in teaching and learning; to support scholarly and creative activities; and to provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life of the citizens of the State of North Dakota. (Mission, Role and Scope Statement, SBHE originally approved 12/17/92)

As part of DSU's 2021-2026 strategic planning process, constituent survey findings regarding the Mission Statement indicated a majority response of no need to change the Mission Statement at that time. The Strategic Planning Committee agreed with survey respondents (Survey #1 Findings: Mission, Vision, Values, Role/Scope Policies; Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes, February 18, 2021). On May 14, 2021, DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission Statement was reaffirmed at President's Cabinet (President's Cabinet Meeting Summary, May 14, 2021). The next Mission Statement review is anticipated to occur during DSU's strategic planning process prior to the expiration of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

2.A.2.

DSU operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. Policies, procedures, training, and related activities are evidence that DSU's conduct is ethical and responsible.

Financial Integrity

DSU Executive Leadership supports institution integrity and accountability in its financial operations as demonstrated through DSU finance-related policies and procedures. The SBHE provides clear financial policies to meet state and federal regulations, and the NDUS provides procedural guidance that DSU utilizes in maintaining transparency and operational integrity. (See SBHE finance-related policies and NDUS procedures.) In addition, the NDUS publishes an annual financial report of NDUS institutions, including DSU (Annual Financial Report 2024).

DSU participates in the Enterprise Risk Management process through NDUS Audit Services (NDUS ERM Annual Process Document). The ERM process may be used to identify, assess, prioritize, control, and monitor risks in areas including, but not limited to, financial, facilities, emergency management, personnel, IT, athletics, and Foundation functions that may negatively impact operations and the achievement of institutional or system-wide objectives. Objectives are based on potential risk areas identified in collaboration with NDUS Audit Services. DSU engages in and is responsive to other NDUS-required audits.

The President and VPFA oversee the DSU ERM cycle process, which includes objective setting; risk identification, assessment, and response; control activities; progress updates; monitoring, and annual results. Executive Leadership meets as needed throughout the annual ERM process to discuss risk management items. Required information is then submitted to NDUS Audit Services though Strategic Planning Online ERM (SPOL ERM) for additional review by NDUS Audit Services. DSU has completed required NDUS process steps as of December 2024 for the 2024-25 ERM cycle. Progress updates were provided to NDUS in February 2025, and annual results will be reported in June 2025.

The DSU Heritage Foundation (DSUHF) was established in January 2016 and remains under DSU management. DSUHF adheres to DSU Policy and Procedure 820.003 Fundraising. Financial statements demonstrate the DSUHF continues to operate in a sustainable and ethical manner. Foundation fundraising campaigns occur annually from January 1-December 31. Dollars raised are distributed the same year. The DSUHF must raise 2/3 funds each year to help pay for the portion of scholarships. The remaining 1/3 comes from endowments and long-term commitments from donors. The DSUHF portion of fundraising goals have been achieved each year.

In 2022-23, DSUHF offered $1.1 million in scholarships to students for the second year in a row. During the 2024-25 Academic Year, the DSUHF provided $1.65 million in scholarships. DSU continues to support students' cost of attendance by providing multiple scholarship opportunities through the DSUHF, including Homeschool Hawks and High Fliers Scholarships and the Presidential Scholarship**.** The President's Cabinet created a working group to review and propose modification of the Presidential Scholarship program, which resulted in implementing a new program strategy for fall 2024. DSU also implemented software in collaboration with the DSUHF that has improved communication of scholarships between the various recruiting areas, admissions, athletics, and academics. In addition, the DSUHF manages $25 million dollars in endowments that provide scholarships to support DSU students in all disciplines, athletics, extra-curricular activities, and other areas of interest.

Due to DSUHF fundraising efforts and collaboration with Dickinson Public Schools, Parks and Recreation, and community support, DSU Sanford Sports Complex opened in spring 2023 for use by youth, high school, and collegiate sports teams to practice and compete. DSUHF is also focused on two major one-time projects. DSU is involved in efforts to raise funds for the Diesel Technology program, which is an area of DSU study offered through collaboration with the Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy (SWCTE). DSU is also working to raise funds to supplement the legislative appropriation for DSU's Agriculture building and arena renovations.

Through enhanced use of merit and needs-based scholarships, creating endowed positions to fill critical need areas, and refining alumni activities for best impact, the DSUHF continues to grow endowments and scholarships. Working collaboratively with alumni and the community, the DSUHF hosts numerous friendraising and fundraising events, exposing alumni and friends to DSU and its future direction. Ongoing fundraising events include, but are not limited to, Yuletyme, Cowboys and Candlelight, Golf Tournaments, Baseball Nights, and DSU Give Day. To a significant extent, these efforts continue to help keep the net cost lower for DSU students.

Academic Integrity

DSU continues to demonstrate ethical and responsible conduct with established and systematic application of policies in instruction; academic freedom; assessment; admissions; student rights; faculty qualifications; data protection; records retention; and admission requirements. Policies are reviewed as described in Core Component 2.A. or as needed to maintain integrity and compliance.

Policies are also provided in the online 2024-2026 DSU Catalog and address admission requirements, general education, graduate school, academic requirements, and financial needs. The Director of Academic Records oversees the Academic Catalog review and update process (Catalog Email Communication).

The software used to produce the DSU Catalog is Watermark, formerly Smartcatalog. Watermark has two modules, Content Manager, in which the actual online catalog is produced, and Curriculum Strategy, which is the workflow utilized for curriculum requests submitted by School Deans or discipline experts. Curriculum Council reviews, grants final approval, and submits updates to the Academic Catalog on a two-year catalog cycle in collaboration with Academic Records and Student Affairs. DSU began using SmartCatalog to produce the 2014-2016 Academic Catalog and Curriculum Strategy for the 2019-2020 version of the Academic Catalog. DSU moved to a two-year catalog with the production of the 2022-2024 Academic catalog per vote of Faculty Senate. The change was primarily due to advising, annual program changes, and an anticipated reduction in the number of curriculum requests.

Student Affairs provides the Student Handbook online, which includes pertinent information for potential students and existing students regarding campus life and conduct policies. Specifically, the Student Handbook addresses changing majors or advisors; class load; attendance; academic probations and suspension; cancellation and withdrawal; FERPA rights; drugs and other substances; tobacco use; and student travel requirements. The Student Handbook also provides access to the Student Code of Conduct, which includes information related to student rights and responsibilities; misconduct; student organizations and activities; disciplinary procedures; hearing procedures for potential suspension or expulsion cases; sanctions and conditions; appeal procedures; special circumstances and conditions; non-disciplinary procedures of academic misconduct; and disciplinary records. New students are introduced to student-related policies and practices through required first-year orientation courses.

Institutional data integrity remains a priority for DSU in maintaining secure confidential data. Information Technology Services (ITS) is responsible for maintaining technology resources and protecting the University from security compromises. DSU Policy 1202.2.001 Information Technology Security Incident Response documents that DSU will develop and maintain an Incident Response Plan to ensure IT security incidents are reported, documented, and resolved/remediated. Major incidents are to be reported to the appropriate DSU and NDUS staff. NDUS employees are required to adhere to SBHE Policy 1202.1 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.

DSU works in collaboration with NDUS Core Technology Services, particularly in the areas of electronic mail, file server administration, database administration, research computing, storage, application server, and hosting service. DSU continues to support consolidation of technology services, with assistance from NDUS CTS. As of May 2024, DSU was the lead institution for the latest LMS upgrade, which was implemented in 2022. DSU implemented Microsoft Office 365, including Voice, a solution hosted by CTS with support and training integrated with CTS and local ITS staff. DSU operates under a DSU-initiated CTS Team Dynamix ticket system for procurements over the $10,000 threshold. DSU has also implemented cybersecurity tools, resources, and best practices, with CTS providing the lead.

DSU Policy 311.0.001 Records Retention adheres to SBHE Policy 311 Public Records to maintain a program for managing records as required by N.D.C.C. Ch. 54-56. DSU complies with the North Dakota Colleges/Universities General Records Retention Schedule. When policy guideline gaps exist and/or further clarification is needed, DSU supplements SBHE Policy 311 Public Records with Records Retention Guidelines maintained by DSU Schools and departments. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations are utilized to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of DSU student records.

Human Resources

Per DSU's March 2025 HLC Institutional Update, DSU employs 50 full-time faculty, 51 part-time faculty, 72 full-time administration, 20 part-time administration, 31 full-time staff, and 4 part-time staff. Faculty hiring is guided by the SBHE Human Resource Manual and DSU Faculty Search Procedures. DSU faculty are evaluated on an annual basis. Faculty also do a self-evaluation and complete tenure or post-tenure goals. Credentials of full-time, benefitted faculty are documented in the Academic Catalog.

Staff hiring adheres to the SBHE Human Resources Policy Manual. Per the HR Manual, Section 17, following completion of an employee's probationary period and at least one year thereafter, each staff employee participates in a performance development review. At a minimum, performance development includes a mutual review of job responsibilities to ensure accurate representation of an employee's role in department objectives and the institution's mission; a mutually agreed upon performance development plan; determination of future training needs, as needed; and discussion regarding suggestions for continuous processes and systems within which the employee works.

DSU staff complete an annual self-evaluation. Supervisors complete the performance review. Following review, discussion, and changes, if needed, documents are signed and submitted to the supervisor for review and signature and provided to HR for recordkeeping.

HR ensures employment searches are fair, consistent, and wide-reaching when seeking potential applicants. Upon hiring, qualified staff members receive a benefits orientation provided by HR. Staff are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities funded within budget

limitations. Staff are encouraged to further their higher education. Partial tuition is covered per [SBHE Policy 820 Waivers and Tuition Assistance](). Staff members also receive required training, including records management and fraud and code of conduct training. Employees are provided online Title IX training. Employees directly involved with Title IX receive additional training as needed or required. Employee retirements and years of service are celebrated annually to recognize employee contributions.

Auxiliary Services

Auxiliary services, including Sodexo food services and the University Bookstore managed by Follett Higher Education Group, must adhere to DSU/SBHE policies and DSU/NDUS procedures when conducting operations for DSU. The VPFA approves third-party contracts and oversees auxiliary services to ensure cost-effectiveness and compliance in serving students, employees, and the community.

Adherence to SBHE policies, NDUS procedures, and DSU policies and procedures is required. Policy and procedure needs are often shared through campus constituents and the review process. In addition, employees who have concerns regarding adherence to policy and procedure have access to options to report alleged policy violations through their supervisors, School Deans, department heads, administrators, or by reporting to the NDUS Office of Compliance and Ethics through an online reporting source, Syntrio Connects Standard.

The NDUS Compliance Office is an independent and objective unit that is responsible for assessing, monitoring, and reviewing compliance with SBHE Policies, NDUS Procedures, institutions' policies and procedures, the ND Century Code and Administrative Code, federal laws, and any other applicable rules, regulations, and policies ([SBHE Policy 306 Compliance Office Charter]()). The NDUS Compliance Office may request that DSU investigate complaints or conduct its investigations. Remedies and sanctions depend on findings and severity of violations.

DSU provides ongoing training to provide information, enforce adherence to policies and procedures, and preserve integrity in compliance. Examples of trainings include, but are not limited to, Theft, Fraud, Abuse, Waste, and Code of Conduct ([compliance-related policies]()); Clery; Title IX; NDUS Internal Controls Concepts and Applications; and ND Risk Management Annual Policy Review. Employees or employees with direct responsibility and involvement may be required to complete assigned trainings.

Students can report potential policy violations in various ways. The [Student Handbook, Code of Conduct](), [Guide to Residence Life](), and related DSU policies address academic integrity issues and grade appeals ([DSU Policy 530.014 Grade Appeal](); [DSU 514.003 Cross-Campus Cheating](), and [DSU Procedure 514.002 Academic Suspension Appeal]()). Students also may submit an [Incident Report Form]() or [Academic Misconduct Report Form]() available on the DSU website under Policies/Handbooks.

Title IX allegations can be reported to the Title IX Coordinator, a trusted DSU employee, who in turn may notify the Title IX Coordinator, or by submitting a Title IX Report Form found on the DSU website under Policies/Handbooks, Inclusion or Equity website page under Policies and Procedures, or the Report link found within [DSU Policy 603.1.001 Sexual Harassment](). Reports of non-sexual harassment and discrimination can be made online by submitting the [Harassment Complaint Form]() on the DSU website under the Inclusion and Equity page, contacting the Affirmative Action Officer, or speaking with a supervisor or department head, who will then forward the information to the

Affirmative Action Officer. Suspected Employee Code of Conduct violations can be reported through a supervisor, department head, administrator, legal counsel, or HR.

Overall, DSU demonstrates that DSU and the DSU Heritage Foundation consistently operate with integrity through adherence to policies, active audit engagement, and best practices. As a result, DSU ensures responsible and transparent use of state resources.

Sources

- Academic Integrity Policies
- Academic Misconduct Report Form
- Annual Financial Report 24
- Compliance-Related Policies
- CSC Meeting Agenda Packet Samples 2019-2025
- DSU 602.3.001 Faculty Search Procedures
- DSU Finance-Related Policies and Procedures
- DSU Policy 100.001 Policy on Policies
- DSU Policy 100.002 Voluntary Attendance at Cabinet and Similar Meetings
- DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission
- DSU Policy 1202.2.001 Information Technology Security Incident Response
- DSU Policy 311.0.001 Records Retention
- DSU Policy 514.003 Cross-Campus Cheating
- DSU Policy 530.014 Grade Appeal
- DSU Policy 603.1.003 Sexual Harassment
- DSU Policy 820.001 Institutional Aid
- DSU Policy 820.002 HS High Fliers and Homeschool Hawks Scholarships
- DSU Policy and Procedure 820.003 Fundraising
- DSU Procedure 514.002 Academic Suspension Appeal
- DSU Student Guide to Residence Life
- HR Annual Notification of Policies and Procedures July 2024
- Incident Reporting Form
- NDUS Campus Councils
- NDUS Councils
- NDUS ERM Process Timeline 2024-25
- NDUS Procedures
- Non-Sexual Harassment Complaint Form
- North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15-10-73
- North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15-10-73 (page number 28)
- Policy-Procedure Changes SBHE NDUS Notification
- PolicyStat Policies List 03-2025
- PolicyStat Snapshot
- President Cabinet Meeting Summary 5-14-21
- President Cabinet Meeting Summary Samples
- Review Email for 2024-26 Academic Catalog 2.26.24
- SBHE DSU Mission Statement 6-27-19
- SBHE HR Policy Manual as of 3.11.25
- SBHE Policies
- SBHE Policies and NDUS Procedures Finance

- SBHE Policy 100.1 Constitutional and Statutory Authority
- SBHE Policy 100.6 Authority and Responsibility of SBHE-Chancellor-Presidents
- SBHE Policy 100.7 Institution Mission Statements
- SBHE Policy 1202.1 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources
- SBHE Policy 304.1 Chancellor-Commissioner HE Authority and Responsibilities
- SBHE Policy 305.1 President Authority and Responsibilities
- SBHE Policy 306 Compliance Office Charter
- SBHE Policy 311 Public Records
- SBHE Policy 820 Waivers and Tuition Assistance
- Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Summary 2-18-21

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.

Dickinson State University presents itself clearly and completely to its students and the public by providing current and accurate information through its website, social media platforms, and other communication channels. Access to explore DSU engages the community and presents information that enables interested and existing students to enroll and remain at DSU to achieve their educational potential.

2.B.1.

The DSU website is inviting, well-designed, and easy to navigate for the public and potential or existing students. The website includes relevant information related to academic programs, requirements, student costs, institutional governance structure, and accreditation (Snapshots). HEA Student Consumer information is accessible through a link provided on most website pages.

DSU's Interim Director of University Relations oversees the website and reports to the President. Employees needing assistance with website content changes, design, and troubleshooting can notify University Relations through a support link at dickinsonstate.zendesk.com. Employees can contribute to the website by sharing University-related stories, activities, and achievements.

DSU presents itself clearly and completely to students and the public regarding policies and procedures. The website links to policies for DSU, the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE), and the North Dakota University System (NDUS). Students are also informed of DSU's policies and procedures through the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct on the website and presented to new students during orientation. University Relations provides online information that addresses social media platforms, content use, branding/logos, general media guidelines, and advertising on campus. Public policies and procedures documenting pertinent guidelines related to communications include DSU Policies 1918.001 Advertising, 1918.002 Advertising on Campus, and 1918.003 Logo Usage.

DSU clearly and completely communicates information about its academic programs of study to students and the public. DSU's Academic Catalog is publicly available on the website and includes detailed information about tuition rates, program requirements, and pre-requisite and co-requisite courses. The catalog includes links to the Academic Calendar, University information, Admission

Requirements, and Financial Aid information, as well as detailed information about programs offered at DSU. The Director of Academic Records oversees the Academic Catalog review and update process.

DSU presents itself clearly and completely to current students, potential students, and the public regarding faculty and staff. A faculty/staff directory is located on the website, and a listing of full-time, benefitted faculty with credentials is provided in the Academic Catalog.

Additionally, DSU communicates information to its students and the public through printed and audio/visual materials, online resources, and social media. The University strives to share information about open meetings, campus events, and activities through the Events Calendar on the website. Efforts are made to notify faculty, staff, and students of open meetings and campus forums via listserv emails. Press releases intended for the campus community are typically shared on the website and distributed to media outlets, including regional print, radio, and television contacts. Additional communication efforts may include the "President's Message" in the DSU catalog, *The Dickinson Press*, the monthly DSU Highlights publication, online news updates, and various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Issuu, LinkedIn, TikTok, X (Twitter), and YouTube. Most recently, University Relations is updating Admissions' materials, creating new video content, and featuring more students (e.g., scholarship recipients and student spotlights) to ensure DSU's social media content connects with intended audiences.

2.B.2.

DSU continues to provide curricular and co-curricular programming for its students and ensures evidence is available to support claims it makes regarding its contributions to an educational experience. DSU fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment for students by virtue of aspects of its Mission:

> *Dickinson State University is a regional comprehensive institution within the North Dakota University System, whose primary role is to contribute to intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development, especially to southwestern North Dakota. The University's mission is to provide high-quality, accessible programs; to promote excellence in teaching and learning; to support scholarly and creative activities; and to provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life for the citizens of the State of North Dakota.*

DSU's co-curricular activities align with its Mission in the areas of academic excellence, creative and scholarly activities, and service by offering and supporting students in research, community engagement, experiential learning, and economic development. DSU contributes to the economic development of the region and state as part of the NDUS.

Approximately 25 student clubs and organizations coordinated through Campus Life provide opportunities for students to acquire leadership, organizational, and fundraising skills; connect with other students, faculty, staff, and community members with similar interests; and build upon experiences that contribute to career development. Information regarding DSU clubs and organizations is located on the website under Student Life.

The International Club supports international students and those interested in the world outside of Dickinson. Membership averages around 60 members, both international and domestic, since 2022. The club hosts several events each semester to encourage international students to be active on campus and provide ways for domestic students to get involved. Typical events are holiday dinners

for students who are unable to leave during short breaks and international movie nights.

Since 2021, the Director of Campus Life and Dean of Students streamlined the process for students to develop a club/organization. As a result, students are creating an average of two-three new clubs/organizations each academic year. Clubs/organizations are tied to academic disciplines and cultural, religious, performing arts, political, honorary/professional, and special interest groups.

Campus Life provides programming to students in DSU's residence halls. Programming has increased to two monthly programs between DeLong/Lowman Walton and Selke/Woods Halls. Programming has become more intentional as Resident Assistants (RAs) create one program with a social component and another with an educational component. Programs have ranged from study nights to financial aid advice, fire safety, movie nights, game nights, planting events, and more.

The Campus Activities Board (CAB) was reestablished in fall 2021 and has had an average of seven students each semester since January 2022. As students graduate, Campus Life has recruited and obtained new members. Monthly programming typically includes two to three events per month for students. Events range from social and fun-based to having educational components.

Scholarly and creative activities are aligned with DSU's Mission and contribute to the educational experience of DSU's students as described in detail in 3.B.4. and 2.E. While DSU's primary focus is on providing high-quality programs and instruction to students when and where they want them, other components of the Mission demonstrate a commitment to scholarly and creative activities (e.g., the Celebration of Scholars, Theodore Roosevelt Symposium, and National History Day).

Community engagement and experiential learning activities are part of the co-curriculum at DSU. Activities vary each year, from service to the community to the "Annual Blue Paperclip Journey," a project based on a childhood barter game and conducted through the DSU Business Ethics class where students engage in a series of trades beginning with one blue paperclip and "trading up" throughout the process of eight trades. Students improve communication skills, negotiation skills, and collaborative skills. Blue Paperclip items are then auctioned and money donated to a class charity choice.

Student groups and organizations also conduct fundraisers for local charities, such as the annual Hawk Walk sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Honors Leadership program. Proceeds from the Hawk Walk go to charitable organizations in the City of Dickinson. Students also organize and staff programs for regional school children, such as the MathCounts Competition, Northern Plains Music Festival, and Science Olympiad. The Nursing Department invites high school students onto the DSU campus for a Healthcare Practicum Day, which is targeted at high school health career students' courses. These opportunities give students first-hand experience working with people in their chosen fields of study.

The Freshmen Orientation Course (UNIV 100) may have a service project that involves volunteering at a local organization, providing food to families in need, assisting with Christmas gifts for children from low-income families, or assisting the elderly with yard work and minor home repairs. Additionally, DSU Theodore Roosevelt Scholars are required to complete a service-learning project. The objective of service learning is to give back to the community.

Various religious organizations on campus seek to create a Christian community. Groups celebrate spiritual development of students, promote spiritual and social life of students by providing opportunities for worship and fellowship, and help interested students grow and develop through

meaningful study of the Bible.

The Office of International Programs and Multicultural Affairs (OIP) coordinates with the Multicultural Committee to sponsor events for international students to highlight their home cultures to benefit all students and the wider community. The OIP also coordinates study abroad opportunities with other universities for faculty and club-initiated programs and student interest opportunities.

DSU hosted a coordinator from the Japanese Outreach Initiative (JOI) from June 2022 to June 2024. The JOI coordinator was a fully subsidized position from Japan that provided cultural activities, language lessons, and outreach to DSU and the surrounding area. The coordinator hosted two events per month during school as well as events at public schools and libraries across the region.

In addition to campus events, the OIP has restarted study abroad opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic shutdown affected several planned excursions. In May 2024, the OIP, with the Ag Club and the support of the JOI Coordinator, took seven students to Japan. The trip included three days at Iburaki University studying Japanese small-scale agriculture, visits to several farms and food production facilities, and cultural and historical excursions. Future short-term study trips are being planned, and semester abroad programs are available through the OIP.

While the pandemic prevented student engagement for some time, the examples above are evidence that demonstrate how students are once again combining their knowledge and skills learned in the classroom and applying their learning in real world application settings that result in "... service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life...'' as promoted in DSU's Mission Statement.

Sources

- 18th Annual Theodore Roosevelt Symposium
- Active Clubs and Organizations Roster 2024-25
- Celebration of Scholars
- DSU Events Calendar
- DSU Highlights March 2025
- DSU Hosts 10th Annual Blue Paperclip Challenge
- DSU Hosts Annual Southwest Regional Science Olympiad
- DSU Hosts National History Day
- DSU Policy 1918.001 Advertising
- DSU Policy 1918.002 Advertising on Campus
- DSU Policy 1918.003 DSU Logo Usage
- DSU Website HEA Student Consumer Information
- DSU Website Snapshots
- NDUS Economic Impact Fiscal Year 2023
- Northern Plains Music Festival 2025
- Press Release Samples

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.

The North Dakota University System comprises 11 institutions, including Dickinson State University, and is governed by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education. The SBHE was first established by an initiated measure approved by voters in 1938. The constitutional authority (SBHE Policy 100.1 Constitutional and Statutory Authority) of the SBHE is located in Article VIII, Section 6, of the North Dakota Constitution. The statutory authority of the SBHE is set forth in Title 15 of the North Dakota Century Code, and certain specific powers and duties of the SBHE are primarily contained within Chapter 15-10 of the Century Code. The SBHE states its mission and vision in Policy 100.4 and documents its principles and core values in SBHE Policy 100.5.

2.C.1.

The SBHE comprises seven citizen members appointed to four-year terms by the governor and one student appointed by the governor to serve a one-year term. The Council of College Faculties selects the Board's non-voting faculty advisor, and the NDUS Staff Senate selects the Board's non-voting staff advisor.

SBHE policies document the role of the NDUS and SBHE. SBHE Policy 100.6 speaks to the authority and responsibility of the SBHE, State Chancellor, and institutional Presidents. Policy 310.2 states the role of the SBHE President/Chair and Vice Chair, and SBHE Policy 310.1 covers Board member responsibilities. SBHE Policy 304.1 describes the duties of the NDUS Chancellor, and SBHE Policy 305.1 describes the duties of the NDUS Presidents.

Per SBHE Policy 310.2 referenced above, the Chair has responsibility for assuring the beliefs and core values adopted by the SBHE are known and upheld by all SBHE members. The SBHE Chair will ensure that new SBHE members are informed of their responsibilities and oriented to SBHE operations through an orientation program, including familiarity with NDUS institutions and programs. Policy 310.1 referenced above states that Board members acquire a reasonable level of

knowledge of the mission of each institution of higher education in the NDUS and how an institution, through its administration and faculty, plans to achieve its mission. Board members receive new Board member orientation (SBHE Meeting Minutes 5.27.21) fiduciary training (SBHE Meeting Minutes 9.28.23), legal and compliance training (SBHE Meeting Minutes 10.24.24), and participate in Board self-assessment (SBHE Meeting Minutes 4.25.24).

ND Century Code authorizes the SBHE to perform all duties necessary to NDUS control and management. The SBHE may prescribe, limit, or modify the programs offered at the institutions, including DSU. The SBHE may organize or reorganize the system subject to the limitations in the State Constitution and the Century Code. The SBHE also has the authority to appoint and remove employees, fix salaries, establish retirement plans and guidelines, set tuition and fees, and regulate information technology. The SBHE may accept gifts and bequests, authorize campus improvements and building maintenance, and establish rules and regulations for the system's governance. DSU administration, faculty, and staff must adhere to SBHE policies.

As reported in DSU's 2019 Assurance Argument, prior to the HLC visit with DSU in March 2015, the HLC identified governance issues with the SBHE. Following a focused site visit at the SBHE Offices, the HLC report found that the SBHE did comply with Core Components 2.A. and 2.C. under Criterion 2 at that time.

2.C.2.

The SBHE oversees the NDUS institutions. The Board considers the needs of two research institutions, four regional universities, and five community colleges. While the Board provides oversight to NDUS, funding is provided by the state legislature. SBHE sets spending priorities based on input from the NDUS institutions and the SBHE Strategic Plan.

SBHE Meeting Minutes (Samples) since February 2020 reflect SBHE members' actions and intent to preserve and enhance DSU:

- Presidential search process. Selection of two presidents since 2019.
- Appointed Acting President in August 2024.
- Presidential evaluations and contract renewals.
- Approved funding and construction of new softball field.
- Pandemic information and guidance on adopting a response to the unprecedented crisis.
- Tuition rates (2020-22) review. Feedback from DSU students, faculty, staff, and the Dickinson community provided to the Board.
- Tuition Model change requests to allow DSU to strengthen recruitment of non-resident students and reduce tuition waivers.
- Ratify Chancellor's authorization to proceed with DSU Pulver Hall Renovation as authorized by the 66th Legislative Assembly.
- Room, Board, and Fee Guidelines.
- Authorize DSU to proceed with fundraising for the new Athletic Complex.
- Provide 2021-2023 Biennial Budget Guidelines.
- Operating Budgets and Campus Assessments.
- SW Area CTE Joint Powers Agreement.
- Education Online Resources (ECOR) Initiative. Former President participated in the initiative.
- Approved DSU Master Plan.
- Envision 2035 potential priorities and updates. Former DSU President participated in human capital reporting.

- DSU Retrenchment and Reorganization information provided to SBHE.
- DSU generator project request, Woods Hall project, and capital building funds request.
- Legislative Budget Process.
- DSU's request to increase bonding authority.

The SBHE also receives reports from various NDUS committees, including the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, and HR Committee. DSU has representatives serving on each of these committees. A DSU faculty member previously served as Faculty Advisor of the Council of College Faculty (CCF) and provided regular reports to the SBHE.

The SBHE recognizes and demonstrates awareness of the unique characteristics of DSU and challenges. As documented above, the SBHE has continued to take action in support of DSU since the HLC's 2019 campus visit. DSU Presidents are provided opportunities to establish relationships with the State Chancellor and SBHE Board members through SBHE Board Meeting attendance, workgroups created at the state level to address systemwide matters, and ongoing interactions and collaborations with the NDUS System Office and other NDUS institutions.

2.C.3.

Article VIII of the North Dakota Constitution (p. 2) establishes the SBHE and requires the Governor to "ensure that the board membership is maintained in a balanced and representative manner" and includes specific restrictions on board membership to support that objective. SBHE meetings are subject to North Dakota Open Records Laws; meetings are publicly announced, and minutes and other work products are published on the NDUS website. Meetings are recorded, which provide transparency, outreach, and communication.

An example of the SBHE's review of the reasonable and relevant interests of DSU's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations involves the most recent presidential search. The former President departed DSU in July 2024. An Acting President was appointed by the SBHE shortly thereafter. On December 15, 2024, the NDUS issued a press release informing the public that the NDUS system opened a presidential search for the position. Per the public statement, the SBHE Vice Chair and the DSU Acting President would co-chair the DSU Presidential Search Committee.

The presidential search process was posted on the DSU website and included detailed information regarding the leadership profile, position posting, and search committee members representing internal and external constituents. The search webpage provided the timeline and key milestones in the search process, ensuring transparent communication and engagement with all stakeholders. Listening Sessions engaged community and business leaders, DSU Heritage Foundation Board of Directors, DSU Alumni, students, staff, faculty, and DSU President's Cabinet. Following a national search, the SBHE selected a new DSU President expected to start no later than July 1, 2025.

2.C.4.

Article VIII of the North Dakota Constitution (referenced in 2.C.3. above) establishes the SBHE as an independent governing body and prevents Board members from being removed except by a formal impeachment process. The North Dakota Century Code further clarifies the authority of the SBHE.

SBHE Policy 308.4 implements a code of conduct for all NDUS employees and the SBHE. The code of conduct includes several provisions regarding conflict of interest. Restrictions particular to SBHE

include the responsibility to avoid other activities that create an obligation, interest, or distraction that interferes with the independent exercise of judgment in the best interest of the NDUS.

Per SBHE Policy 308.4 referenced above, SBHE members should avoid investing in or acquiring a financial interest for their accounts in any business organization that has a contractual relationship with the NDUS or NDUS institution, or that provides goods or services to the NDUS, if such investment or interest could influence or create the impression of influencing their decisions in the performance of their duties. The policy also includes prohibiting gifts (other than de minimis), preferential treatment, vendor commissions or kick-backs, and other types of improper influence.

On an annual basis, Policy 308.4 (referenced above) directs all SBHE members, NDUS Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, and institution Presidents to complete or update a conflict of interest disclosure form prepared by the NDUS Office of Audit and Compliance no later than the beginning of the fiscal year. The disclosure is expected to be updated as new interests appear.

2.C.5.

The SBHE delegates the day-to-day management of DSU to the University administration and expects the DSU faculty to oversee academic matters. SBHE Policy 305.1, as referenced above in 2.C.1., documents the authority and responsibilities of institution Presidents. The policy explicitly "delegates to the president of each institution full authority and responsibility to administer the affairs of the institution in accordance with SBHE policies, plans, budgets, and standards, including the management and expenditure of all institutional funds, within budgetary and other limitations imposed by law or by the SBHE." The policy also explicitly requires Presidents to "ensure effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected." SBHE Policy 802.6 describes how budgeting duties are divided among the SBHE, Chancellor, and institution Presidents.

Faculty oversee academic matters at DSU. The Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws, as approved by the University President, claims jurisdiction over Academic Affairs. The Faculty Senate has established several permanent councils, including the Curriculum Council, which considers requests to add, delete, or modify courses or programs, and the Faculty Policies Council, which proposes new policies or modifications to existing policies for scholastic dishonesty, adjunct faculty polices, tenure guidelines, and other academic matters. Other faculty-led University academic committees include the Student Policies Council, Teacher Education Council, Promotion and Tenure Council, General Education Council, and the Graduate Studies Council.

Sources

- Annual Board Training 10.24.24 SBHE
- Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws 2.26.25
- ND State Constitution Article VIII
- NDUS Press Release DSU Begins Presidential Search 12.16.24
- North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15-10-73
- Presidential Search Profile
- Presidential Search Website Contents
- SBHE 305.1 Institution President Authority and Responsibilities
- SBHE Meeting Minutes -- Samples
- SBHE Meeting Minutes 10.24.24

- SBHE Meeting Minutes 2.27.25
- SBHE Meeting Minutes 5.27.21
- SBHE Meeting Minutes 7.31.24
- SBHE Meeting Minutes 9.28.23
- SBHE Policy 100.1 Constitutional and Statutory Authority
- SBHE Policy 100.4 Mission and Vision of the SBHE
- SBHE Policy 100.5 Principles and Core Values of the SBHE
- SBHE Policy 100.6 Authority and Responsibility of SBHE-Chancellor-Presidents
- SBHE Policy 304.1 Chancellor-Commission HE Authority Responsibiilties
- SBHE Policy 308.4 Conflict of Interest
- SBHE Policy 310.1 Board Member Responsibilities
- SBHE Policy 310.2 Board Officers-Officer Responsibilities-Elections
- SBHE Policy 802.6 Budget Management and Control
- SBHE Self-Assessment 4.25.24
- SBHE Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Snapshot

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

DSU remains committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning for faculty and students, which is integral to knowledge in higher education. Several policies demonstrate integrity related to these concepts. DSU Policy 401.1 Faculty Rights and Responsibilities demonstrates support of academic freedom and free speech. SBHE Policy 401.1 Academic Freedom "reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that the institutions of the NDUS shall foster a free and open academic community for faculty members, students, and all other NDUS employees who engage in scholarly work." DSU Policy 401.1.001 Instructional Materials and Lectures protects faculty instructional materials. DSU Policy 503.1.001 Student Free Speech and Expression recognizes that students have a fundamental right to free speech and expression, and the DSU Student Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook includes sections on Academic Freedoms and Responsibilities and Freedom of Speech.

Staff choose to participate in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in different ways and are encouraged to further their higher education and utilize financial assistance through partial tuition waivers (DSU Policy 820.001.005 Employee Tuition Waiver and Assistance). Staff are also encouraged to pursue professional development growth opportunities. Funding support may be provided per supervisor's approval and within budget guidelines.

A Notice of Nondiscrimination that includes contact information for the Affirmative Action Officer and Title IX Coordinator is displayed on the DSU website. HR confirms the Notice of Nondiscrimination accuracy with legal counsel on an annual basis. DSU Policy/Procedure 603.1.002 Non-Sexual Harassment and Discrimination and Policy/Procedure 603.1.003 Sexual Harassment prohibit harassment and discrimination and are reviewed by the Compliance Support Council and President's Cabinet.

The DSU Employee Code of Conduct provides guidelines for professional behavior and employee conduct. The Student Handbook includes information on Harassment and Appeals or Grievances, which is accessible through the website. The Student Code of Conduct includes student guidelines for academic values, Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Misconduct. The DSU Syllabus Template includes sections on academic integrity and harassment.

DSU also supports the freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in teaching and learning for collaborative on-campus and off-campus presentations and research opportunities. Experiences include the annual Celebration of Scholars, Theodore Roosevelt Symposium, North Dakota National History Day, The Science Olympiad, and Constitution Day, among others as addressed in 3.B.4.

Sources

- 18th annual Theodore Roosevelt Symposium

- Celebration of Scholars
- DSU 308.1.001 Employee Code of Conduct
- DSU Constitution Day
- DSU Hosts Annual Southwest Regional Science Olympiad
- DSU Hosts National History Day
- DSU Policy 401.1 Faculty Rights And Responsibilities
- DSU Policy 401.1.001 Instructional Materials and Lectures
- DSU Policy 503.1.001 Student Free Speech and Expression
- DSU Policy 820.001.005 Employee Tuition Waiver and Assistance
- DSU Policy-Procedure 603.1.002 Non-Sexual Harassment and Discrimination
- DSU Policy-Procedure 603.1.003 Sexual Harassment 4.10.25
- DSU Syllabus Template
- SBHE Policy 401.1 Academic Freedom
- Second Annual Leadership Rising Conference

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1.

Dickinson State University (DSU) has long-established policies that call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its employees and students, which are reflected in DSU's Mission Statement; Vision; Role and Scope Statement; and Core Values and Beliefs. The following DSU policies originated in 2014, were reviewed in 2021, and are scheduled for future review prior to the expiration of DSU's existing Strategic Plan 2021-2026:

- Mission (Policy 100.4.001): DSU promotes "excellence in teaching and learning" and "supports scholarly and creative activities."
- Vision (Policy 100.4.003): DSU aspires to "educate a diverse population through innovative teaching, learning, scholarship, and service fostering responsible citizens who impact the world."
- Role and Scope Statement (Policy 100.4.002): DSU will provide "[e]ducational opportunity and resources to accommodate diverse student characteristics and backgrounds by offering various methods of learning which are consistent with the high academic standards of the institution." For faculty and staff, DSU will provide "opportunity, encouragement, and resources for professional development, and scholarly and creative activities" and a "learning community dedicated to academic freedom and the pursuit of excellence in scholarship, teaching, and learning."
- Core Values and Beliefs (Policy 100.5.001): DSU believes in and values "academic, scholarly and creative excellence," and inquiry and innovation in the "pursuit of life-long learning."

Policies at the state level continue to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice by faculty and staff, which extends to DSU students, including SBHE Policy 611.8 Employee Responsibility and Activities: Research on Human Subjects. Students and faculty must complete NIH training for Human Subjects Research and submit certification along with their research proposal for any research involving human subjects. SBHE Policy 611.2 Employee Responsibility and Activities: Intellectual Property addresses intellectual property, including any created through research, and SBHE Policy 611.5 Employee Responsibilities and Activities: Outside Employment or Consulting Practices; Use of Institution Property addresses the use of institutions' property during consulting activity.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Council supports fiscal accountability through the approval process for faculty development requests. A majority of requests are approved as described in 3.B.4.

2.E.2.

DSU provides ongoing oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. Guidelines for the integrity of research and scholarly practice are established by DSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the research to be conducted is evaluated by the IRB on an individual basis. It is an objective process that is systematically applied. All research involving human subjects conducted at or through DSU must have IRB approval prior to project initiation. This is true regardless of whether or not external funding is received. DSU students conducting research must be mentored by a faculty member. Federal regulations for human subject research are established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and documented in the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46. The DSU IRB meets monthly during the academic year. IRB information, including IRB members, instructions, forms, and resources, is accessible on the DSU website.

Research and Scholarly Work information is also available on the DSU website. DSU offers financial support for undergraduate research through undergraduate research grants. These grants provide funding to conduct supervised research across all disciplines throughout the academic year. The Undergraduate Research Program provides opportunities for students to engage in the research process and work with a faculty mentor to collect and analyze data, test hypotheses, develop an original composition, and/or participate in other appropriate scholarly and creative activities. The program emphasizes thinking critically in applying research within the larger academic community.

Research projects are celebrated through an annual conference (Celebration of Scholars), with oversight provided by the Undergraduate Research Committee. Students are invited to submit research findings, research literature reviews, scholarly critiques, literary papers, musical or dramatic performances, or visual artwork. Submissions are original work, supported by a faculty member, and fit the definition of summative production in students' academic disciplines.

DSU does not house livestock for the purpose of research. In situations where a project requires the involvement of an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, DSU ensures IACUC oversight through its long-term collaboration with other NDUS institutions.

DSU's Data Analyst provides relevant data and information about DSU for internal use and external reporting needs, with oversight by the Director of Academic Records and the VPAA/Provost. The Data Analyst also collects and maintains data related to Student Outcomes as part of HEA Student Consumer Information. The integrity of data collection and reporting is a key component in assessing data to inform planning and decision-making.

2.E.3.

DSU students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources through the required general education (GE) courses of COMP I and COMP II, CSCI-101, and a library session in Freshmen Seminar (UNIV 100). Guidelines for ethical behavior are addressed in the Student Code of Conduct as part of the Student Handbook, and various topics are covered in the Freshmen Seminar course. In addition, Stoxen Library staff supports students and faculty with research instruction and a variety of research resources.

NDUS Procedure 1208.1 Emerging Technology addresses research and application excellence. "While NDUS entities encourage emerging technology research and applications . . . projects shall prioritize human beings . . . and do not pose any unnecessary risks to users or society." NDUS use of emerging technology must comply with all applicable SBHE policies, NDUS procedures, and state and federal law.

2.E.4.

DSU enforces DSU Policy 514.003 Cross-Campus Cheating as it relates to academic honesty and integrity. Policy 514.003 seeks to "uphold the integrity of the educational process" per the Student Code of Conduct. The purpose of the policy is to clearly define DSU's consistent role in tracking and responding to incidents of academic misconduct using a Matrix range of University responses.

DSU's Syllabus Template supports the Student Handbook and states academic dishonesty is considered academic misconduct. It is an optional statement because some courses, such as practicums, do not include activities relevant to the misconduct wording. Such conduct includes plagiarism and cheating and is considered unacceptable and subject to discipline. A majority of syllabi include the statement.

DSU utilizes academic integrity resources like SafeAssign to ensure academic honesty. Starfish is the preferred attendance reporting platform utilized by DSU for the purpose of sharing student progress information electronically with students, advisors, athletic coaches, and academic support staff. Because academic dishonesty negatively affects a student's progress, Starfish is a student success and retention system that provides early alerts in identifying at-risk students with a goal of providing services necessary to promote success and prevent academic integrity issues. In addition, DSU has a Student Opportunity and Resources (SOAR) Center and a Tutoring and Peer Mentoring Center, which includes the Math/Science Center and the Writing Center. These student support service areas provide guidance and information to students about academic honesty and integrity.

Sources

- Celebration of Scholars
- DSU Policy 100.4.001 Mission
- DSU Policy 100.4.002 Role and Scope Statement
- DSU Policy 100.4.003 Vision
- DSU Policy 100.5.001 Core Values and Beliefs
- DSU Policy 514.003 Cross-Campus Cheating
- DSU Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- DSU Syllabus Template
- HEA Student Consumer Information - Student Outcomes
- Institutional Review Board
- NDUS Procedure 1208.1 Emerging Technology
- Research and Scholarly Work
- SBHE Policy 611.2 Employee Responsibility and Activities - Intellectual Property
- SBHE Policy 611.5 Employee Responsibility Outside Employment Consulting Property Use
- SBHE Policy 611.8 Employee Responsibility-Activities Research on Human Subjects

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1.

Dickinson State University (DSU) continues to meet Criterion Three. Since the last accreditation report in 2019, DSU expanded to offer dual mission programming in traditional liberal arts and career and technical education to meet the growing needs of Southwest North Dakota and beyond.

The pace in which industry has changed within DSU's service region in addition to intensifying competitive pressures in higher education, has resulted in Dickinson State University adopting more frequent reviews of academic programming and curriculum. The North Dakota University System (NDUS) governing policy SBHE 403.1.2 Institutional Instructional Program Evaluation states, "Existing undergraduate instructional programs shall be evaluated at least every seven years and graduate programs shall be evaluated at least every ten years by each institution." In fall 2020, Academic Affairs leadership, with feedback from the institution's schools and departments, adopted the Academic Vital Signs Report (AVS). AVS was created using components of the Program Review historically utilized by DSU as well as necessary elements related to retention and program enrollment. The purpose of the more frequent program reviews was to ensure that curriculum was on par with industry and student demands and that enrollment supported continuation of the degree and certificate offerings.

The Academic Vital Signs document outlines any curricular changes made by individual academic units, including discontinuation and introduction of new coursework or programs. DSU continues to require 120 credits for a bachelor's degree, 60 credits for an associate degree, and 30 credits for a master's degree. Some degree programs exceed these minimum requirements. Bachelor's degrees require at least 32 credits of upper-division courses. New programs follow these guidelines.

The new program creation process is similar to how it has been historically, with a few modifications. Historically, the institution submitted Stage I and II proposals to the State Board of

Higher Education for consideration. Stage I has been replaced by the Program Exploration proposal, which is reviewed by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) subcommittee, the Academic Affairs Council (AAC), before an institution may proceed with the next phase. As part of Program Exploration, institutions are required to consider industry demand and competition/duplication within the service region using the Lightcast System. Upon approval by AAC, institutions may proceed with a New Program Academic Request. This request utilizes pieces of the Program Exploration but requires the addition of curriculum being considered as well as an examination of budget impacts. The New Program Academic Request is reviewed first by the AAC before being forwarded to the SBHE subcommittee, Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC), for final approval.

All programs must follow a thorough evaluation procedure before being included in DSU's Academic Catalog. The evaluation process ensures that programs will prepare students to appropriate levels for their respective degrees. Additional standards are set by several discipline-based accrediting agencies.

A summary of the revised process is provided below. The process of program development and approval includes:

- Departmental/School program proposals detailing the need for program; alignment with Mission;
- Staffing and funding needs; resource needs such as library holdings, equipment, space, technology, furniture; and information on potential impact on other programs;
- Review by Teacher Education Council (TEC) if teacher education is involved;
- Review and approval by the appropriate Dean and Curriculum Council;
- Approval by VPAA/Provost;
- Review as Program Exploration proposal at NDUS level, including vetting by the NDUS Academic Affairs Council, with the intent to avoid unnecessary duplication and its ensuing costs,
  and to avoid competition within the system (See SBHE Policy 421 Academic Program Requests);
- Review by Chancellor's Cabinet (university presidents);
- Final state-level approval by the SBHE (through New Program Request); and
- In instances where HLC approval is also required, application to HLC after University-level and state-level approvals are secured.

3.A.2.

Dickinson State University, as a comprehensive, dual mission institution, is authorized by the SBHE to grant associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, certificates, and master's degrees. DSU's University Learning Outcomes are listed in the course syllabi and articulated in the Academic Catalog.

DSU's University-wide Learning Outcomes state graduates should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of human cultures, the humanities, and the fine and performing arts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the social sciences.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the physical and natural worlds.
4. Demonstrate mathematical reasoning and quantitative and qualitative analysis.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.
6. Demonstrate creative thinking and problem solving.

7. Demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge.
8. Demonstrate written, oral, and visual communication literacies and knowledge of communication technologies.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of personal and community health and wellness.
10. Demonstrate responsible ethical reasoning and social and intercultural engagement.

Department/School programs have discipline-specific learning outcomes that are stated in the Academic Catalog and include these outcomes with the institutional and course-specific learning outcomes in class syllabi. Prior to graduation, students must participate in various assessment activities, including standardized tests, capstone courses, portfolio production, or final project execution (e.g., art exhibit or musical performance). Through DSU's Writing across the Curriculum initiative, students must complete writing-intensive classes within their program of study in addition to the General Education requirements of College Composition I and II.

Certificate programs are often offered as a semester or a year of study and are directed at career preparation. The graphic design certificate program is for students who are interested in learning the field of graphic design, both from an artist standpoint and a business standpoint. The certificate provides entry-level skills for web design and creating marketing and promotional materials for individuals and companies. The one-year welding technology certificate is designed for high school graduates looking to pursue a program that will prepare them for a career as well-rounded welders in western North Dakota. The purpose of the program is to provide a continuous flow of new welders to support manufacturing and energy industries in the region.

DSU was approved to offer a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in 2017. Since then, Dickinson State University has added five master's degree options and was granted the status of a master's degree granting institution as part of its mission/student body change request on September 3, 2021. Master's degree programs have learning outcomes specific to each program that meet the institutional learning goals.

3.A.3.

DSU delivers classes and programs in traditional, online, and hybrid modalities. Traditional face-to-face classes are in Dickinson, with limited options in Bismarck and Williston for a select number of programs. DSU delivers courses online and via DSUlive™ to place-bound students and to articulated sites in North Dakota, including Bismarck and Williston. Options for distance education are presented through DSU's Distance Learning website. Dual credit and early entry courses are available to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors who meet course prerequisites. Adjunct faculty, including dual credit instructors, are hired according to DSU Policy 605.6.001 Adjunct Faculty.

Regardless of audience or mode of delivery, classes offered at DSU must meet curricular standards, and the faculty teaching them must be appropriately qualified. Faculty credential requirements are specified in the Job Opening and reviewed prior to hire. Classes taught both face-to-face and online provide equivalent syllabi, textbooks, credit hour standards, learning outcomes, tests and exams, and course calendar timelines. Students completing degree programs on the main campus, online, or through DSU Bismarck or Williston sites, must demonstrate the same mastery of content by taking the same exit exam or capstone course (See Assessment Exam List). Many online class sections are taught by the same faculty members who teach the face-to-face version, thus supporting uniformity of content and rigor.

Online classes document compliance with U.S. Department of Education credit hour requirements using the DSU Guided Instruction matrix on the DSU Syllabus Template. Faculty teaching online courses quantify the guided instruction time in courses by listing learning activities with estimated time frames on the syllabus to demonstrate how student learning would compare in a similar face-to-face course.

Faculty may choose to document all in-class guided instruction time spent, including in-class reading, listening to, or watching resources that are linked to the course main page (including recordings of lectures); reading and writing in response to posts by other students; writing in response to a linked resource; quiz or test taking; group work with other students; actual or virtual field trips or lab sessions; and reading the instructor's assignment instructions, comments on papers, forum posts, responses to questions, and content summaries, etc., thus verifying documented instructional credit hours.

A second option is for an instructor to utilize DSU's Online Guided Instruction Time Estimates. Past DSU survey findings from online instructors were used to determine the average amount of time spent on various categories of guided instruction. The table facilitates entering numbers of instances (some of which will still have to be estimated, e.g., the number of times the average student asks a question over email) and then documenting the total number of instructional hours (add up minutes and divide by 50).

Sources

- Academic Unit Vital Signs Report
- Assessment Exam List
- DSU Policy 605.6.001 Adjunct Faculty
- DSU Syllabus Template
- Lightcast System
- Online or Distance Students
- SBHE Policy 403.1.2 Instructional Program Evaluation
- SBHE Policy 421 Academic Program Requests
- University Learning Outcomes

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1.

In accordance with NDUS policy, students are required to complete 36 lower division credit hours in three specific categories: (1) Communication and Technology: This category focuses on developing effective communication skills, both written and verbal. (2) Citizenship: Courses in this category explore various aspects from a global perspective, human behavior and governance, and well-being. (3) Critical and Creative Thinking: This category examines human behavior, societies, and institutions from a scientific perspective, including human culture, creativity, and personal expression. Included are courses that focus on quantitative reasoning, scientific principles, and technological applications. These requirements ensure that students receive a well-rounded education, with exposure to various disciplines and skills necessary for their academic and professional development. Specific courses within each category may vary depending on the program of study. Students also complete one general education elective to satisfy the total General Education credit requirement of 39 per the DSU Catalog.

Common course numbering guide and help students and advisors during the transfer process. NDUS utilizes the General Education Requirements Transfer Agreement (GERTA) that recognizes courses from other institutions and more readily facilitates the transfer of general education courses.

The institution aligns its general education program with its mission, educational offerings, and degree levels. It clearly communicates the objectives, curriculum, and desired learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

3.B.2.

The University has organized its education coursework into three groups (Gen Ed Groups). These

groups represent broad categories or fields of study as follows:

Group I — Communication and Technology
Group II — Citizenship
Group III — Critical and Creative Thinking

The three groups are further divided into more detailed subgroups:
Group I
List A. English Composition I
List B. English Composition II
List C. Public Speaking
Group II
List A. Technology
List B. Global Perspectives
List C. Human Behavior and Governance
List D. Well-Being
Group III
List A. Creative Expressions
List B. Literature
List C. Mathematics
List D. Social Science
List E. Natural Science

General Education Elective

Digital Literacy Requirement

Within these groups, some classes are designed or selected for completion of a major requirement and also align with DSU's General Education requirements. General Education typically includes a variety of courses that are not part of the student's major course requirements to provide a well-rounded education. One example is that several programs at DSU require statistics. Statistics, as a major requirement, can also fulfill the mathematics requirement for General Education. Incoming DSU freshmen, as well as transfer students with less than 23 credit hours, are required to take a one-credit Freshman Seminar course. The purpose of this course is to help these students adjust to college life and increase their chances of success in their academic pursuits.

General Education courses at DSU are mostly lower-division courses. These lower-division courses often cover foundational and introductory material. General Education courses are offered regularly and frequently to ensure that students have access. The University provides information about course rotations on School websites. Students can access information about when specific courses are offered, helping them plan their academic schedules accordingly. Learning outcomes for each General Education course are clearly stated on the syllabus. This practice helps students understand what they will be expected to learn and achieve in each course, as well as provide transparency and clarity regarding course objectives. DSU employs a common syllabus template.

The DSU General Education Committee is a subcommittee of the Curriculum Council. This subcommittee is responsible for the initial review of courses proposed for inclusion in the General Education curriculum. After the DSU General Education Committee completes its review, the proposed courses advance to the Curriculum Council. The Curriculum Council is a committee that

oversees all aspects of DSU's curriculum as charged by the institution's Faculty Senate. The final approval rests with the President under the policy making authority of that position. The VPAA/Provost position is the chief academic officer of the University and consults with or guides the President in any academic-related decision making.

General Education at DSU constitutes nearly one-third of a bachelor's degree program, comprising 39 to 43 credits, including the Freshman Seminar. DSU's approach to General Education reflects its historical orientation, considering it as foundational in nature. Most of the General Education curriculum is completed during a student's first two years of study. This approach allows students to establish a strong foundation before delving deeper into their chosen major and ensures that students acquire a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills early in their academic journey. The emphasis on General Education aligns with DSU's institutional mission and learning outcomes.

The current conversations among faculty and throughout the NDUS system indicate a recognition that General Education needs to evolve. This suggests a responsiveness to changing educational needs and a commitment to continuous improvement in the curriculum. DSU's active participation in the annual General Education Summit, held by the NDUS, underscores its commitment to staying engaged in the broader discussions and developments in General Education. The North Dakota University System (NDUS), including DSU, has adopted the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative put forth by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). This initiative emphasizes four Essential Outcomes, seven Design Principles (including sequential progression of learning outcomes), and seven Principles of Excellence. The mention of a "sequential progression from first to final undergraduate years" aligns with the idea of a developmental approach to learning outcomes.

The DSU General Education committee constantly considers how the LEAP initiative aligns with DSU's educational goals and mission. The committee is looking at models adopted by other higher education institutions, both within and outside of North Dakota. The committee's discussions include exploring how DSU's mission and its various programs can be more fully realized and actualized within the framework of the LEAP initiative. A collaborative effort is put forth to assess and plan for the integration of LEAP principles.

DSU recognizes the need for more clarity and standardization in the selection process. The mention of codifying the foci and purpose of General Education groups clearly defines the intended outcomes and objectives of each group. A comprehensive review process for the General Education curriculum is a commitment to thorough evaluation and improvement. This process involves multiple stakeholders, including faculty members, administrators, and potentially students, to gather diverse perspectives. The comprehensive review process provides an opportunity to reassess the current state of General Education at DSU and identify areas for enhancement.

3.B.3.

DSU is committed to fostering an educational environment that recognizes and values human and cultural diversity. Through its curriculum and activities, DSU provides students with essential growth opportunities and lifelong skills necessary to thrive in a multicultural world. This commitment is evident across various academic programs and is particularly emphasized within the general education curriculum and specific professional disciplines.

A key component of DSU's approach to multicultural education is the inclusion of coursework within the general education curriculum that specifically promotes global awareness and cultural diversity.

Under Group II: Citizenship, List B. Global Perspectives, students are required to complete courses that highlight and emphasize multicultural awareness. These courses encourage students to explore diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to engage in a globally interconnected society. This requirement ensures that all DSU students, regardless of their major, gain exposure to diverse worldviews and develop an understanding of cultural complexities.

There are examples throughout each academic major where human and cultural diversity are a core component of coursework. Here are some examples within two academic schools:

School of Business and Entrepreneurship

The School of Business and Entrepreneurship at DSU integrates multiculturalism into its curriculum through various courses that address diversity in business practices, leadership, and international commerce.

- **Management and Leadership**: This course incorporates discussions on cultural intelligence, diversity in the workplace, and global leadership strategies. Students analyze case studies that focus on managing diverse teams and learn how cultural backgrounds impact decision-making and organizational behavior.

- **International Business**: This course explicitly explores the complexities of conducting business across different cultural contexts. Students examine international markets, trade regulations, and cross-cultural communication strategies, preparing them to navigate the global business landscape effectively.

School of Education

DSU's Education programs also place a strong emphasis on cultural diversity and inclusive teaching practices. Several courses within these programs are designed to prepare future educators to work effectively in diverse classrooms:

- **Teaching for Diversity**: This course equips future educators with the skills to create inclusive learning environments that respect and incorporate students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

- **Diversity and Exceptionalities**: This course addresses the unique needs of students from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as those with exceptionalities, ensuring that future educators are prepared to foster equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

DSU also holds a monthly event called the Global Table, which is free to the campus and broader community. Global Table is a monthly forum that highlights different cultures and the various aspects that surround them, such as cuisine, economy, and traditions. Hosted at Stoxen Library, each session features a different country or culture, providing students, faculty, and staff with an opportunity to learn, engage, and experience domestic and international cultures. Previous Global Tables have showcased cultures like Native American culture, LGBTQIA2S+ Community, and countries like Taiwan, Denmark, and New Zealand, offering insights and discussions led by students. These events often include presentations, cultural exhibits, and traditional food, fostering a greater appreciation for global diversity within the university community.

Through its thoughtfully designed curriculum and activities, DSU ensures that students are exposed

to and engage with diverse perspectives. By incorporating multicultural awareness in both general education requirements and specialized coursework, DSU prepares students to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. Whether through the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, Education programs, or other academic offerings, DSU remains dedicated to promoting cultural competence and equipping students with the skills necessary to live and work effectively in diverse environments.

3.B.4.

Dickinson State University's primary focus is on instruction, with 60 percent of annual faculty evaluations centered on teaching effectiveness. Other components of the evaluation and the Mission and Values of the University demonstrate a commitment to scholarly and creative activities. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities. Examples of such annual events from each department include DSU Annual Events.

- Celebration of Scholars, a forum in which students in all disciplines present scholarly work to an audience of peers, faculty, and community members. These scholarly endeavors include scientific research, explorations in humanities and the arts, and summations of scholarly accomplishments such as portfolios. Submissions to the conference are original work, supported by a faculty member, and fit the definition of summative production in students' academic disciplines. Along with student presentations, the conference features a keynote address by a faculty researcher who has engaged in and published research in collaboration with undergraduate students.
- The Theodore Roosevelt Symposium, which brings together award-winning scholars with students and interested members of the public for presentations and panel discussions on the latest research regarding annual topics on the lift of Theodore Roosevelt.
- The Red Paperclip Challenge, based on a childhood barter game called "Bigger and Better," Kyle MacDonald, a young man from Canada, made a series of trades on Craig's List to go from one red paper clip to owning his very own home. Students in the School of Business and Entrepreneurship engage in a similar challenge, and the final trade items go up for auction to benefit a charity of their choice.
- Marketplace for Kids, a unique educational program offering encouragement for developing young entrepreneurs. Youth are encouraged to explore entrepreneurship and self-employment skills through the recognition and development of their innovations, inspiring them to use creative thinking processes and to also utilize effective problem-solving skills.
- Dickinson Public Schools Sub Days, during which DSU School of Education students are assigned local classrooms with faculty advisors. Students practice their research-based pedagogy while helping to alleviate the shortage of substitute teachers.
- Opportunities in Agriculture, where agriculture students present senior capstone projects, learn more about the agricultural industry in the region, network with the businesses/agencies in the region, and make connections for future opportunities after graduation (including graduate school).
- Music performances each year, from concert band and chorale concerts to small ensemble performances and individual recitals including both students and faculty.
- DSU hosts the National History Day regional contest for western North Dakota. National History Day is a project-based learning program for secondary students that emphasizes critical reading and thinking skills, research, analysis, and the drawing of meaningful conclusions.
- The Science Olympiad; Over 100 DSU students come together with faculty to offer this science

competition to approximately 450 sixth-twelfth grade students. Students compete in a wide range of rigorous standards-based science challenges.

- Various events sponsored by student groups such as the Student Education Association and the Nursing Student Association. These associations are comprised of students with faculty advisors who attend conferences and are active in the campus and local communities.

DSU encourages both students and faculty to actively participate in scholarly research. The Undergraduate Research Committee offers financial support for undergraduate research through grants. The Stoxen Library supports students and faculty with research instruction and a variety of research resources. The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Council approves a majority of faculty development requests, as evidenced by the following Faculty Professional Development Funding Activity:

Year	Annual Budget	Total Funds Requested	Total Funds Approved	Number of Requests Approved
2018-2019	$100,000	$118,325	$112.178	58
2019-2020	$77,000	$56,727	$52,655	31
2020-2021	$50,000	$23,362*	$23,362	17
2021-2022	$50,000	$35,026*	$29,160	21
2022-2023	$50,000	$54,232*	$46,100	30

*The COVID-19 pandemic affected travel and available professional development opportunities.

Sources

- Celebration of Scholars
- DSU Annual Events
- General Education (2024-2026)
- GERTA
- Global Tables
- Marketplace for Kids
- Red Paperclip Challenge
- Theodore Roosevelt Symposium
- Undergraduate Research Committee

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1.

Based on IPEDS fall 2022 reporting data, DSU has 62 full-time faculty and 70 part-time faculty. DSU is in Stark County, a largely homogeneous region of the country. The student population of DSU is slightly more diverse than that of the county. The following table compares the racial/ethnic composition of the DSU faculty compared to its student body and that of Stark County (IPEDS Student Census Data; DSU Faculty and Staff Demographics; US Census Bureau Quick Facts_Stark County):

Race/Ethnicity	DSU Students	DSU Faculty	Stark County
Hispanic/Latino	7.0%	N/A	6.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.0%	N/A	2.0%
Asian	1.0%	3.0%	1.7%
Black or African American	4.0%	1.5%	3.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	0.1%

White	76.0%	90.2%	91.1%
Two or more races	4.0%	3.8%	2.0%
Race and ethnicity unknown	4.0%	1.5%	N/A

DSU is an Equal Opportunity institution that follows applicable laws. DSU engages in recruiting procedures that encourage committees to advertise in a manner as to reach as large a pool of qualified candidates as possible. The Faculty Search Procedures and Search Checklist include, but are not limited to:

- Advertisement in professional publications,
- Notification to placement bureaus and graduate schools,
- Advertisement with professional societies and organizations with records of women and minority candidates.

Additionally, DSU is committed to inclusion and equity. Diverse programming and campus events seek to celebrate all cultural heritage and foster a sense of belonging among all students and faculty at DSU. Diversity education and cultural competence help to ensure human diversity is reflected at DSU, Inclusion and Equity.

3.C.2.

DSU employs highly effective faculty and staff in its four Schools to ensure that students have the best learning experience during their time in college. There are 62 full-time faculty and 70 part-time (as referred to IPEDs Report 2023) with a tenure rate of 75 percent for its full-time faculty, with both general education and upper division classes taught by tenured and terminally degreed faculty. The teacher-to-student ratio average is 1 to 13, ensuring that faculty know their students and are invested in their academic success. School Deans are responsible for reviewing course syllabi to ensure they align with course objectives and student assessment expectations. Faculty are required to track student performance regularly in Starfish.

Student advising is performed by both the content major department and the professional advisor to monitor student progress. Students must meet with their advisors at least once per semester and are sent regular reminders by them. (See Student Advising Overview.)

3.C.3.

DSU employs instructors who have graduate or terminal degrees in the content areas they teach. For CTE coursework, faculty may be identified by the professional certification within that career field rather than an academic degree. Each School Dean is responsible for ensuring that each faculty member in their purview has academic credentials in accordance with HLC qualified faculty requirements. This evaluation includes all dual credit courses which are offered in their content area. The majority of faculty at DSU are qualified through their academic credentials, but due to the dual mission that DSU enjoys some faculty possess professional degrees and certificates relevant to their respective fields. DSU currently offers graduate programs in education, business, and entrepreneurship. The instructors teaching in these programs hold terminal degrees appropriate to the discipline and are active within their field.

3.C.4.

Faculty members are subject to an annual administrative review as mandated by SBHE Policy 604.3 Performance Evaluations: Benefited Employees and SBHE Policy 605.1 Academic Appointments. The evaluation process is presented in DSU Policy 702.4.002 Faculty Annual Review (FAR). The criterion for evaluation includes four components: Teaching Effectiveness, Scholarship Activities and Self-Improvement, Service to the University, and Service to the Community.

Component 1: Teaching Effectiveness is measured through a variety of methods including student evaluations, peer or mentor reviews, and administrative evaluations. Component 2: Scholarship Activities and Self-Improvement includes Research & Professional Development Activities and Educational & Pedagogical Activities. This component is discussed in the next section. Component 3: Service to the University includes required service, such as Advising, committee and/or Faculty Senate service, and additional recommended activities. Component 4: Service to the Community includes a variety of services to community and professional organizations. Components 2, 3, and 4 are measured by documentation or evidence of each completed activity.

3.C.5.

As discussed in the previous section, DSU faculty are required to engage in Scholarship Activities and Self-Improvement as outlined in DSU Policy 702.4.002 Faculty Annual Review (FAR). Many of these activities (such as continuing education in professional field, participation in professional organizations, attendance and/or presentations at professional or teaching meetings, personal performances, and continuing education in teaching) are eligible for Faculty Professional Development Funding.

In each of the past five academic years, DSU has approved funding more than 80 percent of the total funds requested for Faculty Professional Development Funding.

Faculty Professional Development Funding Activity

Year	Annual Budget	Total Funds Requested	Total Funds Approved	Number of Requests Approved
2018-2019	$100,000	$118,325	$112.178	58
2019-2020	$77,000	$56,727	$52,655	31
2020-2021	$50,000	$23,362	$23,362	17
2021-2022	$50,000	$35,026	$29,160	21
2022-2023	$50,000	$54,232	$46,100	30

The COVID-19 Pandemic affected both the availability and demand for professional development funds starting in March 2020 and continuing through the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years.

3.C.6.

As documented in DSU Policy 702.4.002 Faculty Annual Review (FAR), faculty members are expected to hold a minimum of five office hours per week and to offer additional office hours by appointment to be available to their advisees and students who wish to consult with them. The office hour schedule should be posted outside the faculty member's office door. For online students, DSU expects faculty members to respond in a timely manner, within 24 hours during the work week and a reasonable time during weekends and holidays.

3.C.7.

Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development. Qualifications are reviewed upon hire. Staff members are encouraged to attend professional development and conferences as appropriate to their responsibilities and are encouraged to join professional organizations as support within their field. As discussed earlier, professional development dollars are set aside each year. In addition, the Staff Senate plans general professional development opportunities for staff. Tuition waivers are also available to staff, encouraging them to take courses on campus or at other North Dakota University System institutions.

Staff units are under the leadership of members of the President's Cabinet. As part of the annual evaluation process, staff members are asked about their needs to complete their responsibilities, including listing any training, further education, or other supports/resources needed. Following is a listing of the credentials of student support providers:

- Dean of Students requires a master's degree.
- Director of SOAR requires a master's degree.
- The Career Services Coordinator requires a bachelor's degree, but a master's preferred.
- The Accessibility and Tutoring Coordinator requires a bachelor's, but a master's preferred. Peer tutors work heavily with the Tutoring Center Coordinator upon hire and are required to complete a peer tutoring educational module supervised by the coordinator within the first eight weeks of their first semester tutoring.
- Early University and Online Education Coordinator requires a bachelor's degree, but a master's preferred.
- The Bismarck/Williston sites are supported by two staff members, one full-time faculty member and two traveling faculty members. The staff is comprised of a Lead Programming Specialist/Collaborative Coordinator in Bismarck and a Site Coordinator & Advisor in Williston. Both require a bachelor's degree. Professional development is highly encouraged and supported in the areas of recruitment, retention, admissions, advising, and technology.
- The Stoxen Library personnel includes a Library Director with an ALA-accredited master's degree in Library & Information Science, a Library Services Technician with a bachelor's degree, and two part-time support staff with bachelor's degrees.
- Services to DSU's veterans are provided by the Office of Academic Records. The staff person entrusted with these responsibilities has a master's degree.
- Campus Life staffing consists of the Director of Campus Life and Housing Operations Coordinator. The Director position requires a bachelor's degree, although a master's degree is preferred. The staff engages in regular professional development through on-campus workshops and off-campus conferences and meetings.
- Student Health Services is staffed by a licensed registered nurse who works closely with local health-care providers and the state Department of Public Health.
- Counseling service is staffed by a licensed social worker.

- Financial Aid personnel hold bachelor's degrees and engage in annual training on the most current regulations and policies, as well as the various software tools available to them. Training occurs at both the state and federal level each year, as regulations are changed and modified.
- Advising is staffed by four Student Success Advisors. A bachelor's is required, but a master's is preferred.
- Director of International Programs & Multicultural Affairs, PDSO (Primary Designated School Official), holds a master's and is certified by USCIS, SEVP, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) to implement and interpret immigration rules and regulations.
- All student support personnel who work with student records receive training in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Residence life personnel also train on the Clery Act, fire safety procedures, and crisis intervention. Staff members are sent to various professional conferences (e.g., First-Year Experience conference, HLC annual conference, AAC&U General Education and Assessment conference, student government conferences, housing conferences, etc.) as funding permits.

Sources

- 602.3.001 Faculty Search Procedures
- Assigning Advisors
- DSU Faculty and Staff Demographics
- DSU Policy 702.4.002 Faculty Annual Review (FAR)
- Inclusion and Equity
- IPEDS Student Census Data
- SBHE Policy 604.3. Performance Evaluations Benefited Employees
- SBHE Policy 605.1 Academic Appointments
- Search Checklist
- USCENS~1

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D.1.

DSU meets the needs of students by offering support services through the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. Academic Affairs services include Academic Schools, DSU sites in Bismarck and Williston, Stoxen Library, Academic Records, and Veteran services. The Division of Student Affairs includes the Student Opportunity & Resource (SOAR) Center (career services, accessibility services, testing, advising, early university, and online support), campus activities, residential life, health services, and counseling services. All student services that do not require to be in person are available to distance education students.

Advising Center: As provided in the Advising Center, DSU offers an advising support on campus referred to as the Student Opportunity and Resource Center. The SOAR Center can assist with academic planning, major exploration, life after graduation, and more. Student advisor contact information, including name and phone number, is listed in the student's Campus Connection portal. Students may change advisor using the *Change of Major/Change of Advisor* e-form located in Campus Connection. Academic advising includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Advising incoming first year students and, for undeclared/deciding students, working with them through personality and career inventories to determine a major by 39 credits hours.
- Advising incoming transfer students and working through personality and career inventories (if needed) to determine a major if not already selected.
- Assisting with course registration during NSR summer events.
- Attending advisor training and subsequent meetings.

Distance education students are provided an online advisor, and our Williston or Bismarck sites are provided advising by our site coordinators located in Bismarck and Williston.

Accessibility Services: Accessibility Services provides accommodation and advocacy for students with disabilities. As provided in the outline of Accessibility Services, the office coordinates documentation of the disability and application for services and serves as a liaison between the student and each faculty member. The office uses software and various digital technology to provide

services, as well as private testing areas for students who need testing accommodations. Furthermore, the office also provides note-taking services, secures audio recordings of textbooks where appropriate, and checks out equipment to students who may need digital recorders or SmartPens for classes.

Bismarck and Williston Sites: As described in the attachment titled [Distance Education - BSC-WSC](), DSU offers satellite campuses in Bismarck and Williston that offer a limited number of degrees. In person advising and proctoring are also offered at these locations. Bismarck and Williston sites are active, additional locations that do not offer a full degree or certificate program under HLC definition.

Campus Activities: Campus Activities are supported by student fees, and the budget is therefore closely tied to enrollment. Programming activities are planned and executed by student groups and supervised by the Director of Campus Life. Campus Programming includes Campus Leadership (DSU Campus Activities Board, Student Ambassadors, and Student Senate). A few examples of student activities as provided in the information on [Clubs and Organizations](), include various clubs and organizations spanning different categories such as: academic, cultural, honorary and professional, performing arts, political, religious, social service, and special interest. Films, dances, casino nights, musical, and comedy performances are a few examples of other student activities as well. Campus Programming also provides opportunities for students to plan, budget, advertise and execute events and activities.

Career Services: Career Services provides employment information and job listings to students, connection information, and opportunities for employers. To increase the usage of FOCUS 2, the onboarding process of new students started providing an informational session in the summer of 2023 at new student registration to introduce the tool, show students how to create an account, and how to use the tool continuously throughout their academic careers. As provided in document on [Career Services](), the office also sponsors career events geared toward resume and cover letter creation, networking skills, interviewing skills, and industry exploration such as: the "Careers in Athletics" panel, Schmoozapalooza, graduate school fair, resume masterclass, cover letter/application masterclass, reverse career fair, on-campus career fair, odd topics/human resources panel, online career fair, and internship/job fair. Handshake is an online recruiting and job search platform that allows students, recent graduates, and alumni free access to job listings, resume uploads, and links to employer websites and online career events. The Career Services Coordinator liaises with faculty who teach career-focused classes (including junior/senior seminars) to present career information and online tools information directly to students.

Counseling Services: Counseling Services provides counseling services to students enrolled at the University. As provided in [Counseling Services](), the office provides counseling and support services that enhance students' emotional, relational, and psychological well-being. Some of these services include addressing personal challenges, academic concerns, substance use, or abuse issues and helping to navigate the college experience. The counselor is available from 8:00 am-4:30 pm, Monday-Friday. The Counseling office provides short-term counseling, case management, crisis intervention, and referrals to community resources. The Counseling office also provides educational opportunities to faculty, staff, and students regarding a variety of topics related to well-being, prevention, intervention, and behavioral health.

Early University: As provided in the [Early University](), Early University (Early U) includes all opportunities for students to earn college credit through DSU while they are in high school, including preparation and studying toward a degree program while attending high school. Early U students can

expect to share the same traditional experiences as their peers, including participating in their school's extracurricular activities, while pursuing college coursework or degree programs. Students may attend Early University through Dual Credit at their high school or Early Entry on the DSU campus, from a distance via DSUlive™, or online.

Online: As provided in [Online or Distance Students](), Online Education provides support to students in online and DSU Live courses. Services provided include technical support, online student programming, online student onboarding, enrollment, student intervention, and provision of tutoring services for online and DSU Live students.

Residential Life: Residence Life staffing consists of a Housing Operations Coordinator and student resident assistants (RAs). The mission of Residence Life is to provide quality housing services for undergraduate students in an educational living/learning environment. Residential Life often liaises with Campus Programming to provide activities and events for students in the residence halls as provided in [Housing and Dining]().

Library: As described in [Library](), Stoxen Library provides spaces for library users including students to study and work on assignments, individually and collaboratively. Library users can find information and inspiration in our extensive collection of books, journals, media, and electronic resources and databases. Professional library staff are available to provide information and research needs. Stoxen Library also provides desktop and laptop computers, printing, photocopying, scanning, Wi-Fi, and fax services. Indeed, information literacy training is becoming more critical than ever in higher education in an age of disinformation and AI use.

Testing Center: Testing Center provides services that are centralized under a Testing Coordinator. Some of these services include placement tests and credit-by-exam tests (e.g., CLEP). As provided in the [Testing Center](), testing services also provide exit exams for DSU's assessment program. The DSU Testing Center also provides secure, professional, and proctored testing environments, while the DSU Bismarck and Williston sites offer in-person proctoring. Online students are provided with resources and directions to get test proctored online.

Tutoring Services: As provided in the [Tutoring Center](), the Tutoring Center provides academic support to students and strives to promote intellectual growth and self-confidence. The Tutoring Center is equipped with reference materials, textbooks, netbooks, and other tools to support tutors in their work. Online students also have access to online tutoring. Administrators (School deans) and faculty recommend that students serve as peer tutors. Interested students apply, are interviewed/screened by the Center Coordinator, and receive on-the-job training during their first semester tutoring. Interested students must have a 3.25 cumulative GPA and have received an A or B in each class they intend to tutor to be considered for hire. Peer tutors are also expected to engage in ongoing training during their tutoring career.

Veteran Services: The Office of Academic Records provides services to veterans at DSU. These services include assistance with the GI bill, military credit establishment, and liaison with the county Veterans' Affairs Office as provided in the [Military Benefits]().

Health Services: As provided in the [Health Wellness and Counseling](), Student Health Services are available from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Monday through Friday when classes are in session. Services provided include health education, health assessment, healthy college lifestyles, diagnostic testing, screening and monitoring, immunizations, and treatment of minor health problems. Health Services

also offers different educational programs and services that are designed to help students achieve and maintain good physical, mental, social, and sexual health.

3.D.2.

Students who do not have placement test scores or ACT cut-offs are encouraged to take placement tests. Students who score under ACT cut-offs for College Composition I or College Algebra are encouraged to take placement tests to see if they can place into the credit-bearing classes and bypass the developmental courses. DSU students are encouraged to take the ACCUPLACER-Next Gen Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics (QAS) and/or the ACCUPLACER-Next Gen Advanced Algebra Functions math exam and/or the ACCUPLACER-Writeplacer English Composition placement test. Students may also present NDUS approved tests as stated in NDUS Course Placement Policy and Procedure.

DSU English and Mathematics Composition Placement Test Scores

DSU Policy 413.1.001 Placement Test/Retest is based on NDUS Policy 413 and Procedure 413.1 to determine placement in English Composition and Math courses.

Applicants without a qualifying English placement score will be required to complete a developmental English writing course with a grade of "C" or higher that fulfills a prerequisite for English, complete an institutionally approved co-requisite course while taking a degree credit-bearing course (e.g., ENGL 110), or other required support services as defined by the institution.

Applicants may retake a placement test to meet prerequisite requirements for college-level English course per institutional policy. Students are encouraged to take ACCUPLACER - Writeplacer or an NDUS-approved test.

Applicants without a qualifying mathematics placement score must successfully complete a developmental mathematics course sequence with a grade of "C" or higher before enrolling in a degree credit-bearing course or enroll into an institutionally approved co-requisite course while taking a degree credit-bearing course.

Students are encouraged to take ACCUPLACER - Next Generation (Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra & Statistics or Advanced Algebra Functions) or an NDUS-approved test.

DSU offers two writing classes (ASC 087 College Writing Preparation and ASC 088 Writing Lab in conjunction with ENGL 110 Composition I) that are considered developmental, and three math classes (ASC 091 Algebra Prep I, ASC 092 Algebra Prep II, and ASC 093 Algebra Prep III) that are developmental. Students can count the credits for financial aid or housing purposes, but they do not count for athletic eligibility and are not included in the student's total credit hours toward graduation.

Most programs at DSU are not size-limited. However, some exceptions exist. Admission to the Associate in Applied Science in Practical Nursing (AASPN) and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Completion programs have separate application processes, and students must meet admission criteria to be accepted into the respective programs. Enrollment in the AASPN Program is limited to 60 students, and the BSN Program is limited to 32 students. Teacher Education also limits its enrollment through specific admission, retention, and exit criteria for accreditation purposes.

Prerequisite course requirements are required in all majors but may be waived with approval from the

department.

DSU evidence gathered to date indicates that non-completion of the college level course is not due to the inability of remedial classes to prepare students for the college-level class, but due to students who make the choice not to continue their education. DSU surveys of withdrawing/non-returning students suggest that they leave due to full-time employment, transfer to another institution, health issues, or uncertainty about the value of a college education. Academic problems are well below the list of reasons given.

Students who plan to enroll in dual credit classes at their respective high schools must also demonstrate that they are appropriately placed. Some of these students have ACT scores. Those who do not are required to take a placement test prior to enrolling as a dual credit student in mathematics or English courses.

3.D.3.

DSU requires advising prior to course registration for all new students. Mandatory advising takes place through New Student Registration (NSR) and each new semester prior to when the registration period opens.

Academic advising is provided in a co-advisor model to all students at DSU. All students entering DSU are assigned a Student Success Advisor who assists with the onboarding process and selection of initial classes. The Student Success Advisor also helps connect the student with their appropriate faculty advisor who serves as the content-expert and specializes in graduate school and career preparation.

During the student's first year, most of the advising is done by the Student Success Advisor. As students' progress in their academic programs, they rely more heavily on their faculty advisor to assist with advising needs. Both advisors remain in contact with the student throughout their academic journey. The included Assigning Advisors Overview demonstrates how students are assigned an advisor upon admission to DSU.

Student advisor contact information, including name and phone number, is listed in the student's Campus Connection portal. Students may change advisor using the change of major/change of advisor form located in Campus Connection. Academic advising includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Advising incoming first year students and, for undeclared/deciding students, working with them through personality and career inventories to determine a major by 39 credit hours.
- Advising incoming transfer students and working through personality and career inventories (if needed) to determine a major if not already selected.
- Assisting with course registration during NSR summer events.
- Attending advisor training and subsequent meetings.

Schools offer advising resources for faculty, staff, and students, such as four-year planning sheets/program-of-study road maps, general education requirements sheets, multi-year course rotations, academic calendars, etc. Class schedules are available online in Campus Connection or through the DSU Academic Records website. The use of automated Academic Requirements Reports allows students and their advisors to easily track the student's progress to completion of their program. Degree audit workshops have been (and continue to be) offered by staff in the Office of

Academic Records to assist faculty and staff in becoming both familiar and facile with the automated degree audit functions.

3.D.4.

Classrooms. Almost all classrooms, conference rooms, labs, and other instructional spaces have multimedia equipment with which instructors can present information to students. This equipment includes but is not limited to ceiling-mounted projectors, computers, document cameras, and sound systems, which have been integrated to work together and can be operated with remote controls. DSU offers five classrooms that have been equipped with SMART Board technology. For those instructional spaces that do not have multimedia installed, laptops, projectors, and tablets may be checked out for use in those spaces.

Technological Infrastructure. The entire campus has wired and wireless Internet access in all administrative, housing, and instructional spaces. DSU has computer labs located throughout the campus, including two in the Stoxen Library. These labs combined have over 250 computer stations, audio, and USB ports available for multimedia use. All computers have access to printing, for which DSU credits each student's account for 500 pages per semester. The Stoxen Library has 40 laptops that can be checked out by faculty or students for educational use at home or off campus. DSU has many applications that can be used on mobile devices for advising, course enrollment, and scheduling. Computers available to students and faculty have many major software packages available for use, including but not limited to:

- Adobe Suite – Website development, Drawing/Illustration, and Video capture/editing/production.
- Microsoft Office Suite – Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Presentations, Publications, and Database.
- Software for Employees and Students, including: Five floating licenses (which can be deactivated/re-activated on different devices if needed) for Microsoft Office 365 (Windows/Mac – PC or Tablet), which can be used for free while enrolled as a student.
- Other software includes but is not limited to ESRI-ArcGIS, Minitab, QuickBooks, and SPSS.

Information Technology Services (ITS) and Education Services. The DSU ITS office facilitates DSU Live and distance learning. Technology training is also offered to faculty and staff to improve the instruction and learning environment of DSU. The DSU ITS office also provides support to the Roughrider Area Career and Tech Center (RACTC) by providing training and technical support on the Blackboard learning management system. In addition, the ITS office maintains multimedia equipment that instructors may check out for use including digital cameras, headsets, microphones, projectors, screens, tablets, and tripods. The DSU ITS office has 30 iPads and 20 MS Surface tablets for faculty and K-12 teachers for dual-credit classes to check out.

Further educational services are provided by DSU's tutoring center, the SOAR Center, and Stoxen Library. Each of these departments works together to create a high-tech and high-touch environment for DSU's faculty and students to reach a higher potential through better instruction and a better learning environment.

Scientific Laboratories. There are 4 biology labs, 4 chemistry labs, 1 physics lab, and 1 geology lab for use by the School of Applied Sciences with each lab equipped with at least 24 stations. The labs are all housed in Murphy Hall, which also houses 4 research rooms and an attached greenhouse. Between the greenhouse, labs, and research rooms, DSU provides ample resources for students to

conduct a wide variety of research. In addition, the herbarium collection is being digitized for use by researchers worldwide through the Consortium of Northern Great Plains web portal. The School of Applied Sciences has a wide range of equipment in the various labs for use by students and faculty in their research. A sample of that equipment includes an AD-6 Autobalance, a Centrifuge Sorvall Legend RT, a combined calorimeter, a 14" Meade LX200 telescope, a Genesis 6 UV-VIS scan printer, a Labsystems multiscan MCC/340, a Leco CHNS analyzer, an NMR Spectrometer-pico spin, a photo documentation system, a real-time PCR system, a Spectrometer AA, a Spectrometer IR100, and a Tuttnauer Autoclave MDL 3850M, among other equipment.

Performance Spaces. DSU has many spaces that can be used for many performances, activities, and other gatherings. The largest is the Stickney Auditorium which seats 735 people and has a proscenium which is 40' wide by 16' high. Other features include a balcony, a Yamaha sound system, a concert-quality Baldwin DS-10 grand piano, and 150 light circuits throughout the theatre.

The Stickney Auditorium **Backstage Theatre** seats 50-100 people, depending on its arrangement, creating the ability to perform "theatre in the round." The Backstage Theatre has its dedicated grid lighting system, creating a more intimate feel. Beck Auditorium is a 223-seat hall that can host smaller performances, music recitals, public author readings, awards ceremonies, open forums, and many other types of gatherings.

May Hall houses both a band room and a choir room for small intimate musical performances. The band room has portable furniture so the room can be easily arranged for a variety of musical performance types, as well as having an upright piano. The choir room is similarly designed with a grand piano, computer, and projection equipment.

Klinefelter Hall hosts the Badlands Art Gallery on the lower level, which has about 1,500 square feet to display art exhibits. This space also includes 71 feet of carpeted wall for hanging artwork. Heavy pieces can be hung due to the plywood underneath the carpet. Pedestals and spotlights are also available to display other forms of artwork.

The **Stoxen Library** is also used to host various smaller events involving speakers on a wide range of topics. The gathering area at the front of the library can easily accommodate 50 to 65 people for events such as the Multi-Cultural Committees Global Table series, mental health events, and the occasional movie or game nights for students, staff, and faculty.

The **Student Center** has a 51-seat movie-style theater which can be used to show films, have presentations, and other events to improve the quality of life on the DSU campus.

DSU occasionally uses other facilities throughout Dickinson, ND, which may have better acoustics, the right setting for the event, or to better interact with the local community and its members.

Clinical Practice Sites. Clinical practice sites for the Department of Nursing's AASPN degree program (Nursing Clinical Learning Experience Agreements) include two primary-care clinics, one acute-care hospital, two long-term care facilities including the psychiatric unit at St. Luke's Home, and one rural access hospital (West River Health Center in Hettinger). In addition, there is an on-campus Nursing Simulation Center (Nursing Facilities) where students practice and learn basic-to-advanced nursing skills using supplies, equipment, and patient simulators.

The BSN Completion Program has access to the same clinical sites noted above as well as additional sites, including other hospitals in North Dakota and the surrounding area's community-based

healthcare facilities. There are approximately 15 major clinical facilities utilized in the BSN clinical experiences, and other sites are added as needed for "expanded role" learning opportunities. Some of the community-based agencies DSU collaborates with are the Southwest District Health Unit; Badlands Human Service Center; Community Action Head Start; Southwest Multi-County Correction Center; and Dakota Women's Correctional and Rehab Center, which is utilized for correctional nursing experiences; and the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center. Other agencies, such as Country House, which is an assisted living facility, offer students the opportunity to work with residents and provide dementia care training. A collaboration with ABLE Inc. provides an opportunity for students to learn firsthand by assisting persons with disabilities in a communal home setting, Other collaborations such as with KinderKidz Learning Center and the surrounding area public schools, provide opportunities for students to interact with children of various ages, complete assessments, practice their speaking and leadership skills and educate the students on numerous topics.

Students in the BSN program also utilize the on-campus Simulation Labs, which include access to various high-fidelity patient simulators – three "adult," one "five-year-old child," and two "childbearing" simulators. Faculty-led simulations with patient care scenarios provide students with various learning opportunities to practice in a safe, controlled setting. The simulation experiences otherwise may or may not be available in the acute care or the community clinical setting. In addition, the simulation labs have video capability to record the simulation experience, which can then be utilized during the post-clinical debriefing and allow for student learning and self-critique.

Library Services. The Stoxen Library, with its roughly 27,500 square feet, houses a significant collection for use in research by DSU's faculty and students. The library website allows for 24-hour access to the electronic collections offered by the library. This includes over 66,000 eBooks, 62,000 online videos for educational use, 1,100 audiobooks, and access to over 467,000 journal items through licensed full-text databases.

In addition to electronic items, Stoxen Library also offers over 112,000 print resources, which include books, magazines, journals, newspapers, and maps. Of that collection, there are over 9,500 physical multimedia copies of DVDs, microfilm, videocassettes, and CDs. Stoxen Library understands that more students are of the non-traditional model and has thus added resources for students trying to study while also giving their children space and activities. A desk with a child corral, or play area, has been set up for parents with a small child and two more will be brought in. Four portable LEGO or Duplo tables have also been set up to give children something to do while their parents study. The LEGO tables are also part of the library's initiative to better serve students, faculty, and staff's mental health. In addition, a board game collection has been built and an 86-inch television has been purchased for monthly movie showings and presentations held in the library. Dry-erase tables have been added to most study rooms so students can work out problems and ideas right on the table they are studying on. Contrary to many libraries' hours, the Stoxen Library has expanded its hours from the current 61.75 to 69.5 while classes are in session.

Theodore Roosevelt Center. The main purpose of the Theodore Roosevelt Center (TRC) is the digitization and description of all of Theodore Roosevelt's documents and artifacts for presentation online and has recently added an exhibit space and a growing research library. As of March 2024, the TRC has published more than 87,000 letters, telegrams, newspaper clippings, and more in its online collections, and contains more than 1,200 books and magazines among its research library and archival collections. The TRC houses a portion of Stoxen Library's special collections as part of its archives and research library.

Agriculture and Technical Studies. Dickinson State University has added new technical education programs and resources for instruction. These include a Diesel Technology program, a Welding program, a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program in collaboration with TrainND, and a Meat Cutting program. DSU has partnered with local business partners and Dickinson High School (DHS) to convert existing building spaces into welding bays, meat-cutting stations, and training spaces for the diesel technology program. By working with the DHS, both DSU and DHS can provide facilities for their students at a lower cost while creating an avenue for DHS students to easily transition into a program at DSU upon graduation from high school. Further, there is a computer lab in the agriculture building for students to take classes, conduct research, create presentations, and deliver their presentations. The agricultural building has one small amphitheater that can be used for classroom activities or to host events.

Sources

- 413.1.001 Placement Test
- Accessibility Services
- Admissions
- Advising Center
- Assigning Advisors
- Career Services
- Clubs and Organizations
- Counseling Services
- Distance Education - BSC-WSC
- Early University
- Health Wellness and Counseling
- Housing and Dining
- Library
- Military Benefits
- NDUS Course Placement Policy and Procedure
- Nursing Clinical Learning Agreements 2024-27
- Nursing Facilities
- Online or Distance Students
- Testing Center
- Tutoring Center

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

4.A.1.

The North Dakota University System (NDUS) recommends that all undergraduate instructional programs be evaluated at least every seven years and all graduate programs be evaluated at least every 10 years. In fall 2020, Dickinson State University (DSU) moved to the current evaluation method, the Academic Vital Signs (AVS), replacing its previous seven-year review process.

Under the AVS model, programs submit a program review every spring semester on odd years, which coincides with the North Dakota state legislature biennial budget process. The AVS consists of curriculum changes, credit generation, enrollment and retention, outcomes assessment, and goals for each academic unit. (See AVS Report Examples from 2021 and 2023 Submissions.)

DSU maintains program-specific external review and accreditation in the following areas:

- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Full reports are scheduled every eight years; updates annually. Copies are stored by the Director of Nursing.

- North Dakota Board of Nursing (NDBON). Full reports are scheduled every five years; updates annually. Copies are stored by the Director of Nursing.
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Full reports are scheduled every seven years; updates annually. Copies are stored in the School of Education.

In addition, all programs are required to assess their programs annually. Each program has on file:

- Set of measurable learning outcomes. (See University Learning Outcomes from DSU Catalog.) Learning outcomes are currently required for master's, bachelor's, and associate programs.
- Plan indicating how and when data will be assessed for each outcome at both the introductory and proficient/mastery levels. (See Sample Assessment Reports.)
- Annual reports summarize the collected evidence, reflections on the program's success, and changes that need to be made. (See Sample Assessment Reports as referenced above.)

The annual reports are reviewed by faculty who teach in the program, Assessment Committee members, Assessment Coordinator, and VPAA/Provost.

4.A.2.

DSU's Academic Catalog states how credits are assigned to coursework. (See DSU Policy 403.7.001 Credit Hour Assignment Guidelines.) The credit hour assignment guidelines cover courses with fixed credits, such as traditional lectures and laboratory courses; discretionary courses with variable credits, such as seminars, special topics classes, undergraduate research, and service learning; directed studies; and competency-based credits earned through exams, military training, or a prior-learning assessment. Additional individualized policies state how DSU awards credits for repeat courses, directed study courses, and experiential learning opportunities, such as internships.

Students who have life experience or prior competency in a subject can earn credits through a variety of options that are listed in the DSU catalog and outlined in DSU Policy 403.7.001 Credit Hour Assignment Guidelines as referenced above. Minimum score requirements are set in order for students to earn credits from challenge exams. Credit for military training can be awarded if that training directly relates to a specific course or a major or minor program. DSU uses the American Council on Education's website, "Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services" to determine credit eligibility. (See ACE Military Guide.) Additionally, up to 10 credits of "free elective credit" may be awarded for U.S. armed services training without direct relation to any specific course via the Competency Based Credit-Earning Options Procedure by submitting the Request for Evaluated Non-College Coursework Credit Form. The Deans can assist in assigning an appropriate prefix. Catalog numbers 292/492 or 299/499 are usually appropriate. Faculty, usually with content expertise, and the School Dean, evaluate documentation in the form of a portfolio.

Certain courses are available either within the regular academic semester, structured over eight weeks, or during the summer, condensed into a two or five week timeframe. Despite the accelerated pace, these courses adhere to the same instructional standards and expectations for out-of-class engagement as those on the standard schedule. Typically, students can enroll in up to 18 credits during a regular semester, barring any exceptions granted for additional workload. Incorporating an eight-week course allows students to distribute their academic responsibilities more evenly across the semester by potentially enrolling in a second eight-week course. Conversely, with five-week courses, it is recommended that students enroll in a maximum of eight credits. Such permissions are contingent upon factors such as cumulative GPA and performance in the previous semester.

Faculty members instructing in the online setting are required to document the directed guidance provided in their online courses. Recognizing the challenges of defining guided instruction in this context, DSU undertook a search for leading national practices in online pedagogy that qualify as guided instruction. These practices were compiled into a survey distributed to DSU's online faculty, prompting them to estimate the average duration students would spend completing each technique. Survey responses were averaged for each technique, and these averages were tabulated into a grid format (DSU Syllabus Template) with Online Guided Instruction Time Estimates found on the syllabus last page) to aid faculty in calculating the total hours of guided instruction.

As students approach graduation, every student's complete academic file is examined by the staff of Academic Records to ensure that all required coursework has been completed and all necessary criteria have been met (Graduation Evaluation Process).

4.A.3.

The institution has established policies to uphold the quality of transferred credits. DSU Policy 412.0.001 Evaluation of Transfer Credit Dickinson State University (DSU) accepts college/university level coursework recognized by the United States Department of Education from accredited organizations or nationally recognized agencies. Both transfer and high school student applicants who have completed college-level courses are required to include official transcripts in their admissions packets. These transcripts undergo evaluation by personnel in Academic Records, in consultation with School Deans, to determine whether the credits are equivalent to DSU courses or fulfill general education or program requirements. Credits without direct equivalencies or specific program alignments may be accepted as general electives, contributing to the overall credit requirement for graduation. Additionally, DSU Policy 412.0.001 Evaluation of Transfer Credit incorporates an appeals process. College-level courses that cannot be transferred to DSU include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Developmental courses by definition of the transferring institution or equivalent to a developmental course at DSU. Developmental courses may fulfill pre-requisite requirements.
- Continuing education courses.
- Institution-based credit by standardized exams.
- Credit granted for prior learning assessment, armed service credit or evaluated non-college coursework credit.
- Courses with a "W" grade, with the exception of NDUS collaborative credits from provider institution.

DSU requires international students to submit their transcripts to an accredited evaluation service for a comprehensive course-by-course evaluation.

Articulation agreements that are specific to DSU are housed in Academic Affairs and posted on the DSU website under HEA Student Consumer Information/General Institutional Information. NDUS Procedures 460.1 GERTA and 460.5 Articulation Agreements provide a state-wide articulation agreement for the transfer of general education completion and other courses. Common course numbering within the NDUS allows seamless transfer of general education credits within the system.

4.A.4.

Prerequisites. Prerequisites are clearly outlined in both the Academic Catalog and class syllabi. The Registrar ensures course prerequisites are input into the University's PeopleSoft system or Campus

Connection. Advising sessions are opportunities to discuss prerequisite requirements, particularly for first-year students guided by advising holds to ensure they consult with their advisors before enrolling in courses. Students not meeting prerequisite courses cannot enroll on Campus Connection without approval of the instructor or School Dean. The Registrar runs end-of-term processing each term and administratively withdraws students who do not meet prerequisite requirements for the upcoming semester.

Rigor. DSU aligns many of its introductory courses with common-course numbers across the NDUS, ensuring consistency and rigor across institutions statewide. This practice promotes cross-institutional standards, fostering academic integrity. Each semester, DSU provides Grade Distribution reports to the Academic Deans. These reports are reviewed by School Deans and the VPAA/Provost. The School Deans utilize this data to monitor faculty performance and address any instances of grade inflation.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) prepares and disseminates Grade Distribution reports, available for scrutiny in School Deans' Offices. Institutional averages from fall 2018 to spring 2024 in the Grade Distribution Analysis Report consistently align with national norms, reflecting DSU's commitment to academic excellence. Additionally, School Deans conduct thorough assessments of syllabi each semester, while the VPAA/Provost conducts spot-checks to gauge course rigor. Furthermore, both the School Deans and peers conduct classroom visits to evaluate teaching quality and the depth of course material delivery, especially for new faculty and those whose grading patterns raise concerns, as highlighted in the Grade Distribution reports. These evaluations are integrated into faculty annual evaluations, ensuring continuous improvement and adherence to academic standards.

Expectations of Student Learning. DSU has implemented a comprehensive framework of learning outcomes spanning the University, Program, and course levels. Both University and program outcomes are detailed in the Academic Catalog, and they, along with course-specific outcomes, are prominently featured in course syllabi. These elements, alongside teaching methodologies and assessment strategies, constitute the DSU Syllabus Template, a standardized tool guiding syllabus development across the institution. The interconnectedness of these outcomes is emphasized, with course objectives directly linked to program outcomes, which in turn align with University-wide objectives. Program outcomes are meticulously mapped to corresponding courses and regularly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. The DSU Assessment Committee makes a concerted effort to enhance assessment practices. The Assessment Committee hosts frequent meetings involving faculty members from across disciplines, aimed at refining and supporting assessment practices campus-wide. These initiatives are geared towards maintaining academic rigor and fostering continuous improvement in student learning outcomes.

Student Resources. Students can tap into a broad spectrum of learning tools by leveraging their login credentials. These resources encompass the Stoxen Library, email services, computer lab amenities, and services provided in the Blackboard Learning Management System. The computer lab facilities undergo a systematic upgrade at least every four years unless there is a disruption due to planned facility maintenance or other considerations. In 2021 and 2022, DSU replaced additional student-accessible computers that were approximately three years old to meet increased video and audio streaming and recording demands. Through their login credentials, students gain access to course-specific resources available online or through Stoxen Library reserves, provided by their instructors. Oversight of these resources falls under DSU's jurisdiction and is managed by departments and key positions, such as the Directors of Stoxen Library and Information Technology

Services. Both faculty and students seamlessly interact with these support departments.

Faculty Qualifications. Faculty members at DSU are required to possess at least a Master's degree within their respective field or a closely related discipline from an accredited institution unless they are instructors in fields where a Master's degree is not required, such as in a career-based program like welding or diesel technology. See DSU Policy 400.001 Dual Mission Course Instruction. Exceptions are rare regarding this policy; however, individuals with a Bachelor's degree, professional certification, and substantial years of practical experience can apply for consideration through a comprehensive portfolio submission. This application undergoes evaluation by the School Dean and VPAA/Provost. If both concur that the applicant's experiential background is equivalent to a Master's degree, they may be offered a teaching position. Upon hire, faculty members must furnish official transcripts to Academic Affairs. Faculty Development funds are available to support further graduate coursework aimed at enhancing qualifications. Academic Affairs periodically conducts reviews of faculty files to ensure all requisite documents are in order. Additionally, the standards applied to on-campus faculty are upheld for dual credit faculty members.

Dual Credit. DSU mandates that dual credit courses align closely with their on-campus counterparts in terms of content and pacing. These guidelines encompass several key aspects, including adherence to the DSU Syllabus Template for dual credit syllabi, alignment of learning outcomes between dual credit and regular DSU courses, and the use of textbooks approved by DSU faculty content experts for their collegiate-level material. Furthermore, dual credit students must meet specific criteria regarding class standing and standardized test scores (ACT or PSAT) to enroll in these courses.

High School students are encouraged to consider enrollment in early entry courses, courses taught by DSU full-time faculty, versus dual credit courses. To incentivize early entry enrollment, DSU created the Early University program and allocated a staff position to serve as the Early University Coordinator. Early University includes all opportunities for students to earn college credit through DSU while they are in high school, including studying toward a degree program while attending high school. Early University students can expect to be able to be involved in the same traditional experiences as their peers, including participating in their School's extracurricular activities while pursuing college coursework or degree programs.

4.A.5.

DSU maintains specialized accreditation for the following programs as appropriate to its educational purposes:

Program Accreditation:

- Education: Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP); Expiration Year 2030.
- Nursing (BSN): Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); Expiration Year 2031.*
- Nursing (AASPN): Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); Expiration Year 2029.*
- Business: International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). The School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SoBE) has chosen to maintain its IACBE accreditation. An IACBE visit is scheduled for 2026.

*Due to recent accreditation visits, expected expiration dates were utilized.

In recent years, DSU discontinued its additional accreditation for environmental health and music, and instead utilizes institutional assessment standards and best practices for evaluating and maintaining program quality.

4.A.6.

Surveys of Employers of Graduates. A survey of employers (as identified by DSU graduates who responded to the Graduate Exit Survey) and members of the Dickinson Chamber of Commerce was conducted by DSU Institutional Research in summer 2023. (See DSU Employer Satisfaction Survey.) In all, 450 employers received the survey via email. Emails were obtained through the official registry of the Dickinson Chamber of Commerce. Forty-one surveys were returned, for an overall response rate of 9%. Of those, 85% indicated that they currently employed a DSU graduate. Fifteen percent stated that they had never employed a DSU graduate. Fifteen trades were represented. The most frequently represented included healthcare, hospitality, professional services, and education. Eighty percent strongly agreed or agreed that DSU graduates were well prepared for employment in their businesses.

Employers responded to questions ranging from their own business demographics (e.g., number of employees, education required for hiring, education required for advancement, etc.) to perceptions about DSU's Mission, Vision, and Values, to accreditation, to their perceptions specific to DSU graduates' "well-rounded college education," and intellectual and practical skills. Eighty percent agreed or strongly agreed that "DSU is providing its students with a well-rounded college education." Employers rated DSU graduates "Adequate" to "Ideal" as follows:

- Intellectual and practical skills 80%;
- Mathematical reasoning 70%;
- Quantitative analysis 60%;
- Qualitative analysis 75%;
- Critical thinking 65%;
- Creative thinking 75%;
- Problem-solving 70%;
- Written communication skills 75%;
- Oral/spoken communication 85%;
- Visual communication skills 90%;
- Technology/computer proficiency; and
- Information literacy 75%.

Employers also evaluated DSU graduates on selected professional attributes and work habits. They were most positive about DSU graduates' willingness to learn and ability to work as a team. They were also positive about the graduates' personal standards for work performance, respect for others, and ability to work with people unlike themselves. Of the 15 attributes listed, only "Time Management" and "Attendance/Dependability/Punctuality" were noted as "inadequate" by more than 25% of respondents. Additionally, the respondents evaluated DSU graduates on personal attributes. DSU graduates were rated highest on professional attitude. The ability to adapt to change, ethical behavior, and leadership skills were also high. The next survey is anticipated to be distributed in 2027.

Surveys of Students. During the spring 2022 semester, DSU elected to utilize the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to determine student perception of preparedness for the workforce due to turnover in Career Services and low response rates to the former Graduate Exit Survey. DSU

specifically opted to add the NSSE career module to the survey to gauge student perception.

The NSSE surveys undergraduate students in their freshman and senior years at institutions across the nation to assess their levels of engagement and their experience. Hundreds of institutions participate semi-annually in this survey. According to NSSE, "Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning."

An impressive 99% of DSU seniors indicated that they had a clear idea of their career paths. This percentage is significantly higher than DSU's peer institutions. Also higher than peer institutions, 97% and 92% of seniors noted that what they learned at DSU was relevant to their career plans and that the institution helped in clarifying those career plans, respectively. DSU also outpaced its peers, with 81% of seniors noting that an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement helped them to solidify their career goals. DSU plans to issue its next NSSE Survey in 2026.

Eighty-eight percent of DSU seniors indicated that they were working for pay in fields related to their career plans while studying, much higher than the average of other peer institutions. Additionally, at greater rates than peer institutions, DSU seniors utilized alumni networks to form relationships to make career connections. Over 90% of DSU students indicated they had engaged with DSU Alumni in career networking, a tribute to the close-knit community and a benefit of an institution of DSU's size.

Sources

- Academic Vital Signs
- ACE Military Guide
- AVS Report Examples from 2021 and 2023 Submissions
- Competency Based Credit Earning Options Procedure
- DSU Policy 400.001 Dual Mission Course Instruction
- DSU Policy 403.7.001 Credit Hour Assignment Guidelines
- DSU Policy 412.0.001 Evaluation of Transfer Credit
- DSU Policy 530.003 Excess Load-Overload
- DSU Syllabus Template
- Early University
- Employer Satisfaction Survey
- Evaluated Non-College Coursework Form
- Grade Distribution Analysis Report
- Graduation Evaluation Process 3-2025
- HEA Student Consumer Information
- NDUS Procedure 460.1 GERTA
- NDUS Procedure 460.5 Articulation Agreements
- NSSE 2022 Admin Summary and Engagement Indicators
- Sample Assessment Reports
- University Learning Outcomes

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Dickinson State's four academic schools, School of Applied Sciences, School of Business and Entrepreneurship, School of Education, and School of Professional Studies, and the various programs work collaboratively to maintain and improve DSU's academic programming. This process is overseen by Academic Affairs and Academic Records. Assessment is crucial in this process and involves the establishment of clear and measurable learning outcomes at the university, program, and course level; mapping the curriculum to ensure attainment of those outcomes; scheduling and implementing a range of discipline-appropriate direct and indirect assessment measures; and analyzing the results of assessments to establish action plans for continual improvement.

DSU programs submit a program review every spring semester on odd years. (See Criterion 4.A.1.) Reviews include reports of ongoing assessment activities and actions taken based on their results. The Assessment Coordinator plays a vital role in these activities. The position had been unstable for two academic years, but a new Coordinator was appointed in the summer of 2023. Adding the new Coordinator and revitalizing the Assessment Committee has led to a renewed assessment climate reflecting DSU's commitment to continuous improvement and data-informed decision making.

In 2019, the Higher Learning Commission encouraged DSU to make a concerted effort to document the effectiveness of teaching and learning within academic programs utilizing Directed Studies. DSU created policies and procedures in 2019 to address this feedback, which was included in the 2020 interim report. Independent Studies according to DSU Policy 530.006 were defined as approved courses within the DSU catalog typically listed in the 290 and 490 sequences (seminars, independent research, internships, service learning, etc.) and capstone courses that are not normally scheduled as stand-alone classes or do not have sufficient enrollment to warrant "class" status. Directed Studies courses according to DSU Policy 530.004 were defined as approved courses within the catalog that a student cannot take in the term that the course is normally scheduled or at the time within the term that the course is scheduled because the student is out of rotation or has a time conflict. DSU has since implemented electronic form processing for both Directed Studies and Independent Studies, which requires submission of approved syllabi with the consistent outcome and assessment expectations.

DSU continues to maintain tracking of Directed Studies in an effort to reduce the use of this type of instruction within academic majors. Course scheduling shows that DSU made progress in reducing the use of Directed Studies for course instruction since fall 2020. During the 2023-2024 academic

year, the number of Directed Studies rose as a result of the institution's retrenchment process, which discontinued seven low-enrolled programs. To ensure students had access to the required coursework needed to remain on track for graduation, faculty within these programs enrolled students in directed study courses, as many were outside of the normal rotation.

Directed Studies

Term	Number of Courses
Fall 2020	32
Spring 2021	43
2020-2021 AY	**75**
Fall 2021	29
Spring 2022	23
2021-2022 AY	**52**
Fall 2022	18
Spring 2023	28
2022-2023 AY	**46**
Fall 2023	27
Spring 2024	42
2023-2024 AY	**69**

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the course catalog was updated to implement course requirement and course sequence sections to provide additional guidance to students and advisors as well as reduce the potentiality of students falling out of rotation. During the 2024-2025 academic year, School Deans were tasked with developing five-year rotations for all coursework, and publishing those rotations on the DSU website SoBE Course Rotation.

Further analysis shows that a majority of Directed Studies occur for students taking required courses in low-enrolled programs, for placement of internships in certain fields, and for students who fall out of rotation for various reasons, including transfer students.

4.B.1.

DSU has clearly stated goals for student learning. The General Education Outcomes and the University Learning Outcomes guide assessment at the university level. DSU has 10 University-wide Learning Outcomes published in the Academic Catalog under Academic Affairs. The 10 outcomes align well with DSU's mission to provide high-quality, accessible programs, to promote excellence in teaching and learning, to support scholarly and creative activities, and to provide service relevant to the economy, health, and quality of life for the citizens of the State of North Dakota. The Learning Outcomes are as follows:

    I.   Demonstrate knowledge of human cultures, the humanities, and the fine and performing arts.

II. Demonstrate knowledge of the social sciences.

III. Demonstrate knowledge of the physical and natural worlds.

IV. Demonstrate mathematical reasoning and quantitative and qualitative analysis.

V. Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.

VI. Demonstrate creative thinking and problem solving.

VII. Demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge.

VIII. Demonstrate written, oral, and visual communication literacies and knowledge of communication technologies.

IX. Demonstrate knowledge of personal and community health and wellness.

X.   Demonstrate responsible ethical reasoning and social and intercultural engagement.

DSU's General Education Outcomes focus on three essential skills that are key to students' future success in the workplace and beyond: communication (written and oral), citizenship, and critical and creative thinking. Courses in the General Education program are divided into "Groups" aligned with one of these essential skills and broken down into discipline-/theme-based "Lists" to provide students with multiple exposures to each skill while also fulfilling the North Dakota University System's (NDUS) General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement (GERTA). As students complete their coursework in the General Education curriculum, they choose one class from each General Education List so that the key skills are emphasized and repeated in various disciplines.

The General Education Program expects student achievement in all University Learning Outcomes except Outcome VI. Each academic program has phrased learning outcomes for student achievement that align to the University-wide learning outcomes (2022-2023 Program Assessment Reports). These program-level outcomes focus on key knowledge and skills required for a graduate in each major and minor. Outcomes are currently required for master's, bachelor's, and associate programs. The Academic Catalog lists such outcomes for each major and associated minor, and outcomes for minors that do not have an associated major. Additionally, course syllabi identify how course-specific outcomes align with University Learning Outcomes and program outcomes.

Assessment of the University Learning Outcomes and the General Education Outcomes is guided by the University Assessment Committee, which meets several times each semester (Assessment Committee Minutes October-November 2023). Currently, the general education program is assessed by course instructors using the Gen Ed Assessment Rubrics and Gen Ed Assessment Spreadsheets and is overseen by the Assessment Coordinator. Data collected from this assessment is analyzed in the annual Assessment Report (Assessment Report AY22-23). The DSU Assessment Plan delineates where, when, and by whom the University Learning Outcomes are assessed, reported, and reviewed. Thus, the process of evaluating student learning outcomes has become more intentional, productive, and inclusive of all faculty. Additionally, the process is primarily driven by faculty. Faculty evaluate course outcomes that align with program outcomes, which in turn align with university-wide outcomes.

University Assessment Plan

Assessment Task		Timeline	Collected/ Completed By:
General Education Assessment		Data collected each Fall and Spring Semester	Gen Ed course instructors submit data to Assessment Coordinator for report compilation
Academic Program Assessment	Annual Program Assessment Reports	Reports due each spring	Program faculty (using DS standard assessment report template)
	Academic Vital Signs	Every two years	Program faculty and School Deans
	Program-Specific Accreditation	Varies by program	Program faculty
University-Wide Assessment		Annually	Assessment Coordinator/ Assessment Committee

Assessment of the University Learning Outcomes currently occurs indirectly at the program level. Each academic program completes a Program Assessment Template annually to assess program and University Learning Outcomes. This template consists of the following components: a list of measurable learning outcomes for the program; the outcome statement; alignment of each outcome to the University Learning Outcomes; assessment findings from the previous academic year; and recommendations for the future based upon those findings. These reports are submitted to the Assessment Committee and the VPAA/Provost. Assessing the University Learning Outcomes has been identified as an area of growth, and the Assessment Committee is actively working to address this concern (Assessment Committee Minutes October-November 2023).

In addition to the Program Assessment Template, some programs use nationally normed exit exams. Some programs produce their exit exams, linking questions to their programmatic learning outcomes (Assessment Exam List). The Nursing and Teacher Education programs also maintain program-specific external reviews and accreditation. (See Criterion 4.A.1.)

Students are also requested to evaluate each instructor/course at the end of every term (Student Evaluations). The aggregate data for the most recent semester highlights positive student perception of DSU courses and faculty. For example, on the question "I feel I have learned fundamental principles and/or theories in this field of study," 274 of 523 respondents selected "Strongly Agree" and another 203 of the 523 selected "Agree." Over 90 percent of evaluation respondents are confident in the content learned. On the question "Overall, this instructor was," 282 of 523 respondents selected "Excellent" and another 130 selected "Very Good" (Student Evaluation Aggregate Data).

Currently, student response rate is low on these evaluations. DSU has identified this issue and three main reasons for it: the current evaluation is too long, many of the questions are not relevant to students, and the system does not allow for completion on student mobile devices. In response, DSU has procured Anthology's Course Evaluation system and has edited the evaluation questions. The anticipated result of these changes is a higher response rate, leading to more student data of course evaluations.

The institution assesses two co-curricular programs, student athletic programs, and the Theodore Roosevelt Honors Leadership Program (TRHLP). These programs reinforce DSU's Mission and Values and complement the formal curriculum. Athletic programs are assessed by average GPA per athletic team (Athletics GPA Report) and Individual Athletic Academic Achievement Honors. TRHLP utilizes a Program Assessment Template and submits an annual assessment report (TRHLP Assessment Report 2022-2023).

DSU also surveys employers every three to five years. The most recent DSU Employer Satisfaction Survey was conducted during summer 2023. (See Criterion 4.A.6.) Employers responded to questions ranging from their business demographics to perceptions about DSU's Mission and their perceptions specific to DSU graduates' "well-rounded college education," and intellectual and practical skills. Eighty percent agreed or strongly agreed that "DSU is providing its students with a well-rounded college education." Employers rated DSU graduates "Adequate" to "Ideal" in other key categories such as Intellectual and practical skills, Mathematical reasoning, Critical thinking, Problem-solving, and Communication skills, among others.

Another area for growth identified by the Assessment Committee is the process of gathering assessment data. DSU has recently established a relationship with Anthology Collective Review to digitally collect assessment data to assess the General Education Outcomes and the University Learning Outcomes (Anthology Assessment Proposal). The goal of this partnership is to streamline data collection and to ensure accuracy in reporting. Collective Review integrates with DSU's current learning management system and allows for input of current assessment rubrics. Also, the system will enable integration of artificial intelligence to help with data analysis. The implementation of Collective Review started in fall 2024 and is expected to revolutionize assessment processes at DSU.

4.B.2.

The Program Assessment Plan represents the most significant contribution to University and program assessment at DSU. Every year, each department submits a Program Assessment Template as described in 4.B.1. to identify current findings regarding student achievement of outcomes and share recommendations based upon these findings. The Assessment Committee reviews the Program Assessment Reports to identify current trends and areas of concern. This reporting has been inconsistent since the last HLC review, but this has been identified as an area of concern and the VPAA/Provost and new Assessment Coordinator are actively collaborating with departments to address the matter. The enhanced reporting will allow for analysis of longitudinal data.

Every other spring, each program completes an Academic Vital Signs (AVS) report. The AVS report requires each program to evaluate curricular changes, credit generation, enrollment and retention, program outcomes assessment, and goals for the next two academic years. This system requires each program to evaluate assessment information and to act upon it to improve student learning. Excerpts from the 2023 AVS illustrate changes spurred by assessment information:

- "The SoE continues to offer its coursework in multi-modalities which allows students to

essentially 'pivot' and choose which modality works best for them. This means that all SoE faculty have students attending their classes F2F, synchronously remotely via DSU live, and remotely asynchronously. This flexibility makes DSU unique in the NDUS and is the only institution that allows students to attend multi-modally. Distance students in particular like to be able to attend both synchronously and asynchronously, and our retention rate of 79% for our distance students is above the national retention rate of 68%. The success of our retention efforts is apparent in the difference in the charts below, particularly in the Spring 22 data, where there was an increase." (School of Education Vital Signs 2023)

- "The HPER Advisory board and feedback from current students prompted the HPER faculty to evaluate a couple courses in the program. The scores do not indicate a problem, but feedback says we can be more effective with a change in our curriculum. The HPER Department has requested and implemented a new course EDUC 390P Teaching K-12 Physical Education to replace two separate education courses. This did several things; it lowered the credit load and took out some redundancy. The Advisory, alumni, faculty, and current students give feedback for the need for this course to be pertinent to Physical Education." (School of Kinesiology Vital Signs 2023)

- "In fall 2023, the department will re-envision the computer science degree to make it more appealing and useful for those students going into industry. At present, the degree matches NDSU. The degree at NDSU is focused on theoretical aspects and is designed for students to continue to graduate school....We will adjust our offerings to make them more relevant to the industry focused student. Our guide will be the curricular framework of the Association of Computing Machinery." (DMCS Vital Signs 2023)

- "SoBE will continue to investigate opportunities to streamline curriculum in accordance with business school accreditor recommendations, industry hiring trends, and program demands from the business community in western and central North Dakota. In addition, SoBE continues to offer ultimate flexibility by offering tri-modality options for pre-major and core courses. Thus, SoBE will continue to implement best practices in course delivery, including the use of DSUlive™, and the additional adoption of popular and effective 8-week one and 8-week two course offerings in all programs." (School of Business and Entrepreneurship Vital Signs 2023)

The annual Assessment Report analyzes the assessment data for the General Education programming according to the General Education Outcomes. This analysis includes identification of areas of strength and areas for growth. The report is disseminated to DSU Administration and faculty for review and to improve student learning at the institution. With the change in the Assessment Coordinator position and the revamping of the Assessment Committee, a culture of action will be established based on the Assessment Reports.

DSU implemented a new faculty evaluation system in March 2024 that requires faculty to analyze their student evaluations and their teaching effectiveness (FAR Policy Chart). The expected result of this new system is enhanced use of assessment data to improve teaching practices.

4.B.3.

DSU is committed to the use of best practices regarding assessment. As described in Criterion 4.B.1, there is a wide variety of direct and indirect assessments that gather a range of data. Some

assessments are provided by national organizations, and some have been produced locally (Assessment Exam List). Except for some of the general surveys, the program faculty members choose the appropriate assessment techniques as determined by their understanding of best practices in their discipline across university systems nationwide. Additionally, in summer 2023, the DSU named a new Assessment Coordinator. The new coordinator is the faculty member who instructs the assessment courses in the School of Education and therefore has a strong background in assessment best practices.

DSU encourages substantial participation of faculty in the assessment process. The University Assessment Committee is composed of multiple members from each of the four schools. This composition is intentional, to ensure each academic program has a resource to complete each required assessment report correctly. Each instructor of a General Education course is involved with assessment of the General Education program, with oversight provided by the Assessment Committee. Results of the General Education assessment are communicated to the General Education Committee, which determines future actions and reports to the Faculty Senate. The University-wide assessment is an aggregate of program-specific assessment processes involving all faculty.

The commitment to best practices is also evident in the improvements implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. The integration of Anthology Collective Review will allow for more seamless assessment of General Education and University Learning Outcomes while minimizing the risk of human error. Additionally, this system will allow for blind juried assessment. The analytics component of the system will provide a wide range of data analysis to help inform future practice.

Sources

- 2022-2023 Program Assessment Reports
- Academic Vital Signs
- Anthology Assessment Proposal
- Assessment Committee Members
- Assessment Committee Minutes Oct-Nov 2023
- Assessment Exam List
- Assessment Report AY 2022-2023
- Athletics Academic Honors
- Athletics GPA Report
- DMCS Vital Signs 2023
- DSU Assessment Plan
- DSU Policy 530.004 Directed Study
- DSU Policy 530.006 Independent Study
- Employer Survey
- FAR Policy Chart
- Gen Ed Assessment Rubrics
- Gen Ed Assessment Spreadsheets
- General Education Outcomes
- Program Assessment Template
- School of Business and Entrepreneurship Vital Signs 2023
- School of Education Vital Signs 2023
- School of Kinesiology Vital Signs 2023
- SoBE Course Rotation

- Student Evaluation Aggregate Data
- Student Evaluations
- TRHLP Assessment Report 2022-2023
- University Learning Outcomes

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1.

DSU implemented several initiatives across campus to maintain student retention and graduation rates. DSU formed four schools after completing a retrenchment and restructuring process. All schools set enrollment goals per program with mission-appropriate actions and success metrics for access, retention, completion, and post-graduate success outcomes. DSU implemented the continuation and expansion of the First Year-Experience Program, which contains New Student Orientation during the school year, content-focused first year advisors, Week of Welcome, Freshman Seminar courses, and a month of programming. DSU also implemented an on-demand registration process that allows students to enroll in class in a timeframe that works better with their schedules. Apart from these, DSU has discontinued the summer on-campus requirement of New Student Orientation due to the low attendance. It was replaced by summer groups with individual tours as needed in summer with full-time staff.

The SOAR Center is still present in May Hall. This Center encompasses Student Success Advising, Tutoring Support, Accessibility Support, and Career Services. Another essential service that DSU provides is tutoring, which is available for all students free of charge.

DSU collects retention, persistence, and completion data through Starfish by an Institutional Research analyst. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DSU offered increased course-delivery modality options. These modalities continue today to improve learners' accessibility with diverse family backgrounds, enrollment status, distance learners, employment levels, ages, and health concerns. DSU acknowledges the future forecast of decreasing overall enrollment in U.S. universities by graduating high school students. To combat this challenge, faculty are held accountable with a newly developed Faculty Annual Review (FAR) program that scores faculty on involvement in recruitment and retention strategies. The FAR program scores faculty in four areas, teaching effectiveness, scholarship activities and self-improvement, service to DSU, and service to the community. Including

recruitment and retention scores ensures faculty are dually committed to students in their courses.

The Curriculum Council reviews changes the Schools propose to course offerings and major course requirements. The council questions proposals for likelihood of student retention after changes, accuracy, completion, and relevance to the degree accreditation.

DSU also implements School-specific social media content to maintain engagement with students, faculty, staff, and public. It advertises student engagement events and highlights student achievements. In DSU, enrollment and admissions services report directly to the DSU President to allow unified oversight.

DSU has enhanced outreach to high school counselors to increase dual credit/early enrollment offerings. This position is housed within the SOAR Center. DSU practices utilization of Handshake software to deploy its First Destination Surveys to graduating students. TRiO Student Support Services have been discontinued since the 2019 HLC assessments. Instead, the university invested in additional positions in the SOAR Center that cover the duties held previously by TRiO.

DSU continued implementing a Housing and Dining Training Curriculum for Resident Assistants (RAs). An official policy change was implemented for course scheduling, prohibiting courses from 3-5 p.m. The policy ensures student athletes have limited interference between regular practices and all academic courses. DSU Admissions and Campus Life were advised to create a parent listserv to keep parents informed and connected to DSU events/achievements. DSU has reached its goal of increasing students' use of campus housing facilities. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (now called the IDEA Committee) has developed new and continuing initiatives. The IDEA Committee is new to campus since the 2019 HLC visit. Notable work includes a custom lactation pod in the student center, a lactation room in May Hall, and on-campus housing suites with private restrooms.

The Dean of Students Office tracks the list of students who are not registered, including those who have financial holds preventing enrollment. Coaches, faculty, and Student Success Advisors contact students on this list. The threshold of initiating a financial hold is $300.00.

4.C.2.

Retention rates for students in DSU decreased since HLC's last visit in 2019 from 71% to 57.36% in 2021. However, retention increased again in 2022 to 60.43% and 67% for the 2023 cohort. The decrease in retention is likely attributed to three key events. First, DSU did not receive continued grant funding for its TRIO Student Support Services program. Student services, primarily direct high-touch advising, were reduced significantly without funding. Second, students enrolling at DSU were no longer required to submit ACT/SAT testing scores as the NDUS implemented a furlough on this admission requirement due to lack of access to testing sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of ACT/SAT testing requirements led to the admission of students who were less prepared for college compared to previous incoming cohorts at DSU. Lastly, students who enrolled at DSU were impacted by the significant learning loss during critical high school instructional years due to the stay-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a lack of preparedness for college.

As a result of decreasing retention, DSU has increased funding for Student Affairs. Key initiatives included campus-wide adoption of Student Success Advisors for all students in spring 2024. Additionally, Student Mental Health Services were developed in fall 2022, a critical aspect of student wellness that directly impacts retention. DSU continues to expand services aimed at supporting

students on their path towards graduation as addressed in the [2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#) to provide relevant programs students want – when and where they want them (Goal 1) and equip students for success (Goal 3).

The number of students enrolled in early entry/dual credit are as follows:

Term	Number of Students Enrolled
Fall 2019	160
Spring 2020	142
Fall 2020	187
Spring 2021	167
Fall 2021	143
Spring 2022	203
Fall 2022	229
Spring 2023	224
Fall 2023	236
Spring 2024	273

The increase in Dual Credit is attributed to several initiatives. First, DSU partners with Dickinson Public Schools, which provides access to Dual Credit and Early Entry instruction. Second, DSU expanded Dual Credit offerings to high schools in Montana, due to the institution's proximity to this territory. Third, DSU created an Early University program, encouraging students to engage in Dual Credit and Early Entry programs to accelerate time to graduate, especially in workforce fields experiencing critical shortages.

Currently, DSU utilizes Starfish software to track the retention of students, attendance, meetings, and to warn advisors and coaches of potential academic problems during the semester. Starfish appointments have increased since implementation and centralization. This system records scheduled appointments. Further implementation across academic staff is necessary for students reporting to opening office hours. Appointments created in Starfish Software are reported in the Evidence Section. The withdrawal process is now initiated through an electronic form in Campus Connection. The Dean of Students' Office reviews the withdrawal forms that are submitted and reaches out to students when students post questions/concerns.

4.C.3.

DSU experienced a transition from the Education Advisory Board Student Success Collaborative app to Starfish for more unified data collection. DSU expanded training for faculty and staff use of Starfish to track student progress, mark attendance, raise flags, give kudos, and schedule meetings with students. DSU encouraged instructors to utilize Starfish for early interventions, allowing advisors and coaches to help students address academic concerns in the middle of the semester when there is still time for corrections.

DSU implemented Student Success Advisors in spring 2024, campus-wide, and requested that all

students adhere to a student-centered, intrusive advising model. Student Success Advisors are members of NACADA and engage in professional development activities regularly. (See Implementation Approval, Cabinet Meeting Summary 8-2023, Cabinet Meeting Summary 9-2023, and Request to Hire.)

The Office of Campus Life attends regular training and conferences. This includes recruiting programming scheduled throughout the academic year to increase student community engagement and retention. DSU also enabled the Dean of Students to hold professional memberships to NASPA, ACPA, NABITA, and ASCA.

DSU no longer has teams solely responsible for the Starfish initiative. This is managed by Student Success Advisors, Dean of Students, and VPAA/Provost. First Year Experience curriculum is reviewed by the School Deans. The School Deans request course sections and assign instructors as needed to introduce students to faculty within their major as early as possible. Professional advising is funded through the SOAR Center and utilizes funding for professional memberships, trainings, and conferences. Full-time instructors, as designated by their respective Deans, provide academic advising to students within their majors. The SOAR Center offers peer-tutoring, preparatory classes, developmental classes, assistive technology, career and major exploration software, and basic computer/printer needs for all students.

Cancellation/withdrawal is initiated by e-form in Campus Connection. The Dean of Students Office reaches out to students to address questions, concerns, or ambiguity on the form. The form is then processed by financial aid and academic records.

All new students will have advising holds on their accounts, as determined by the School Deans, to prevent registration until they have met with an academic advisor. This process catches scheduling conflicts that can be resolved with communication among the disciplines, and ensures students have first-hand understanding of their own proximate and ultimate schedules. Athletic coaches also assist in this effort. DSU utilizes "three free credit" giveaways to promote registration. Advisors send weekly emails to students encouraging them to meet with their advisor.

Along with developing new initiatives, existing support services were enhanced following a thorough review of the collected data. These changes included updated housing and dining capacity. DSU also reestablished its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in September 2022 to enhance the experience of all students regardless of background, familial status, disability, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, age, religion, gender identity, creed, marital status, veteran's status, or political belief. The committee was subsequently renamed the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee at its first meeting of the 2023-2024 Academic Year to reflect an emphasis on inclusion. Table tent marketing was utilized to raise awareness surrounding Title VI, Title IX, and ADA. Campus events are open and accessible to all students.

The IDEA Committee works in conjunction with the established Multicultural Committee to host events to engage in positive growth conversations and activities within the campus community as well as with the Dickinson community at large. These activities are hosted as Global Tables, which are monthly forums showcasing culture, history, art, and other key elements of different demographic groups (Multicultural Committee Global Table Examples). DSU also introduced the Student Advising Center advising model in spring 2024.

DSU has hired a full-time Accessibility and Tutoring Center Coordinator. Career Services is covered by the Student Success Advisor for the School of Business and Entrepreneurship. DSU also updated

the structure of test proctoring in spring 2024. This new model houses proctoring within each academic School.

Processes and policies have been updated to support students facing various academic and non-academic challenges. Key updates include:

- A full-time mental health counselor has been on staff since fall 2020.
- Disability Services has been rebranded as Accessibility Services, which continues to provide supportive services such as note-taking assistance, assistive technologies, testing accommodations, and location accommodations.
- The Federal Work-Study program remains in place to ensure students have available positions to earn funding.

Additionally, DSU is actively exploring further initiatives to increase student retention. Currently identified student populations facing challenges include transfer students, nontraditional students, international students, family dependents, veterans, and established professionals seeking to expand their skills and marketability within their industries.

4.C.4.

DSU is committed to maintaining rigorous and transparent processes for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data on student retention, persistence, and program completion. Methodologies align with best practices in higher education while being tailored to the unique needs of the student population.

DSU employs a multifaceted approach to tracking student success, utilizing a combination of institutional data, student surveys, and external benchmarking tools. DSU monitors key indicators such as:

- Retention Rates. Measured annually for first-time, full-time, and part-time students and transfer and online learners.
- Persistence. Measured semesterly by the SOAR Center while evaluating and maintaining the Not Registered Update Notice.
- Completion Rates. Monitored through graduation data, degree audits, and time-to-degree measures.

These metrics are collected through Institutional Research which reports to the Office of Academic Records, ensuring accuracy and consistency in reporting.

To enhance student success, DSU integrates data-informed decision-making into institutional planning. Key strategies include:

- Early Intervention Systems: Utilizing faculty reporting through the Starfish system to identify at-risk students and provide timely support.
- Academic and Support Services: Implementing targeted advising, tutoring, and mentorship programs through the SOAR Center based on student performance trends. (See Student Affairs Organizational Chart, Peer Mentoring, Tutoring Center Hours Spring 2024, Tutoring Center Hours Fall 2024, Professional Development Conference Notes.)
- Program Review and Continuous Improvement: Assessing degree completion patterns as part of Academic Vital Signs to refine curriculum pathways and remove barriers to student success. (Also see Nursing Advisory Board Minutes.)

While DSU adheres to national reporting standards such as IPEDS, it also recognizes the importance of defining success in ways that reflect student demographics and institutional mission. To maintain the validity of our measures, the DSU engages in:

- Regular data collection and review of data within best practices.
- Collaboration with faculty and staff to interpret findings and apply insights.
- Public reporting of student outcomes to stakeholders (advisory boards), ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Sources

- Academic Unit Vital Signs Report
- Cabinet Meeting Draft Summary 8-15-23
- Draft Cabinet Meeting Summary 9-21-23
- DSU Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- Example of Starfish Early Alert Intervention
- IPEDS Graduation Rate - 150 Percent of Normal Time
- IPEDS Retention Rate
- Multicultural Committee Global Table Examples
- North Dakota ADA Training PPT Slides March 2025
- Not Registered Update Notice
- Nursing Advisory Board Minutes
- Peer Mentorship (1)
- Request to Hire Staff - Student Success Advisors
- Student Affairs Organizational Chart 1.29.25
- Student Success Advisors Implementation Approval
- Tutoring Center Hours Fall 2024
- Tutoring Center Hours Spring 2024

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1.

Dickinson State University's (DSU) leadership is committed to thorough, inclusive, and effective shared governance planning processes and an organizational chart that enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

The North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) is the governing board for DSU. The SBHE is comprised of seven North Dakota citizens appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Additionally, a student attending one of North Dakota's 11 public institutions of higher education is appointed by the governor for a one-year term. The Council of College Faculties, a statewide organization representing NDUS faculty, selects a non-voting faculty advisor, and the NDUS Staff Senate selects the board's non-voting staff member. The SBHE sets policy for the 11 public institutions and advocates for the North Dakota University System (NDUS).

Shared governance with the SBHE occurs not only through faculty and student representation on the Board, but also through administrative-level advisory groups. Within the state system, campuses share governance on issues related to system-wide decisions and policies through NDUS councils, including the Academic and Student Affairs Council, Administrative Affairs Council, Chief Information Officers Council, Human Resources Council, Diversity Council, and the College Technical Education Council. The councils generally consist of NDUS staff members and campus administrators. Other campus councils include the North Dakota Student Association, the ND General Education Council, State Staff Senate, and Academic Discipline Groups, where students, faculty, and staff contribute to the NDUS through their involvement in campus-based and systemwide organizations.

[SBHE Policy 305.1 Institution President Authority and Responsibilities; Contract Terms](#) states each institution president shall ensure adequate and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected. In the area of developing, amending, adopting, implementing, and complying with policies and procedures, DSU articulates decision-making and collaborative input through institutional groups, such as senates, councils, committees, and work groups assigned on an as-needed basis.

Shared governance is demonstrated through [DSU's Policy on Policies (No. 100.001)](#), which ensures policies and procedures are developed, implemented, reviewed, and monitored consistently and transparently. The Policy on Policies documents that policies and procedures may originate within DSU units, including Executive Leadership areas of responsibilities, schools, senates, and other designated institutional groups. Policies and procedures are then routed through progressive approval channels for review and consideration, with advisory recommendations by the President's Cabinet and final determination made by the President.

Through shared governance, faculty, staff, and students are provided opportunities for feedback through institutional group meetings, President's Cabinet meetings, and during the period between first and second readings, as appropriate. When feedback results in substantive policy changes, the President requests additional review by the originating unit, the Compliance Support Council, and the President's Cabinet.

President's Cabinet and Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates provide representative voices to DSU constituent groups. Cabinet members represent campus constituents and report to constituency groups through meetings, discussions, and the distribution of approved and published [Cabinet Meeting Summaries](#). Members of the DSU community are encouraged to inform the Office of the President, an administrator, a Senate member, a Cabinet member, or another appropriate official or group if they believe that a policy, procedure, or directive should be revised, removed, or added due to changing circumstances or other valid reasons for revision.

C.2.A. addresses the development and implementation of policies and procedures involving administration, faculty, staff, and students in greater detail.

5.A.2.

DSU's administration engages in data-driven decision-making to support the use of resources, evaluation of performance, and assessment of outcomes in all academic, co-curricular, and administrative programs. The following examples demonstrate ways data are used for these decisions:

DSU modified its budget methodology for the 2024-2025 Academic Year. The Office of Business Affairs initiates the Annual Budget Process by preparing Electronic Budget Request workbooks, which are sent to DSU leadership and unit heads. Unit heads use data from the budget workbook to request funding for non-salary and benefit-related operating expenses, one-time purchases, facility upgrades, and staffing changes. The Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) then reviews the budget books. The PBC, which includes the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, Athletic Director, Heritage Foundation Executive Director, and Vice President for Finance and Administration, reviews funding requests and makes final allocation decisions. Once completed, the budget and supporting materials related to requested adjustments, including changes in tuition, fees, and room and board, are submitted to the NDUS leadership for review, with the final step being approval by the SBHE.

DSU has made strides in the integration of the budget process with strategic planning. In addition to the PBC, which reviews both planning items related to academic and operational strategies, the committee discusses the impact of proposals on the budget. A recent example is the review and approval by the PBC of the Comprehensive Hiring Plan submitted by the VPAA/Provost. Additionally, the President leads the DSU leadership team on the review of strategic initiatives that address enterprise risk management (SPOL ERM) items. Lastly, the DSU leadership team, working with direct reports, creates an annual Strategic Plan Progress Update to review how initiatives are impacting operations. Finally, the President's Cabinet holds monthly meetings where members discuss key initiatives in their respective areas, seek feedback on operations, and propose updates to policies and procedures. The diverse composition of the Cabinet ensures a wide range of perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) provides data about DSU to the campus and publishes it on the DSU website. DSU's Common Data Set (2018-19) (2019-20) and IPEDS Data Feedback Report are used by administrators, directors, department heads, and various committees for institutional comparisons and benchmarking. DSU administration reviews enrollment trends (DSU Admissions Blueprint AY21-22 and AY25-26) and Weekly Not Registered Update) to analyze application trends.

The admissions and enrollment marketing team typically meets with the President on a weekly basis. Team members include the Director of Admissions, Assistant Director of Admissions, Development Officer for Athletics and Rodeo, Director of Strategic Initiatives, and the Director of University Relations. In 2024-2025, in response to stagnant enrollment trends, the committee analyzed external and internal data and key performance indicators for academic departments/divisions, seeking higher education trends and anticipated outlook for academic programs. The committee met with each academic department/division and shared the results. Department/division faculty used the information to set enrollment targets, identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative degree and delivery options, and determine action steps to improve their recruiting and enrollment. (See DSU Admissions Blueprint AY21-22 and AY25-26.)

The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (Part 1 and Part 2) includes Clery Crime Statistics for a two-year period. The information and data presented in these reports were utilized to advocate for the reestablishment of the Campus Security Office, which was eliminated in 2020 due to significant budget cuts. Additionally, the report highlights the need for safety enhancements on campus, such as improved lighting and an expansion of the existing video surveillance system. DSU is currently working on carrying these initiatives forward.

DSU has recently appointed a new President, with the start date set for July 1, 2025. The expectation is that the incoming president will guide the campus through its next strategic planning cycle and build on the progress made in integrating strategic planning and budgeting processes since the last HLC visit. This planning exercise will also inform the upcoming Admissions Blueprint.

5.A.3.

The institution's administration ensures that faculty, and when applicable, staff and students are involved in establishing academic requirements, policies, and processes through effective collaborative structures, as outlined in section 5.A.1 above. There are established processes for setting and changing academic requirements and policies. Meeting minutes from the Faculty Senate illustrate this involvement and provide examples of curricular and policy changes from 2019 to the present.

When faculty develop new courses or curricula, they start by identifying a need and then present a detailed description to their program's faculty. Any new academic requirements or policies proposed are reviewed, approved, or rejected by the Curriculum Council on behalf of the Faculty Senate. All new academic programs must also be reviewed by the VPAA/Provost, and DSU Administration if there are budget impacts, before being sent to the NDUS review and approval. (See criteria 3.A.1 for a detailed explanation of the new program creation process.)

Faculty Senate committees regularly engage in activities that support the academic and administrative goals of the campus. Administrative committees also play a crucial role by offering valuable input on these matters. Student representatives are involved in significant governance committees and serve as non-voting members of the Faculty Senate. Each of the Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates holds a seat on the President's Cabinet, acting as representatives for these important groups and reporting back on upcoming planning and decision-making. (See Faculty Senate Minutes, Staff Senate Minutes, and Student Senate Minutes.)

Sources

- 18-19 Common Data Set
- 19-20 Common Data Set
- 23 IPEDS Data Feedback Report
- 24 Annual Campus Safety and Security - 1
- 24 Annual Campus Safety and Security - 2
- Annual Financial Report 24
- Comprehensive Hiring Plan
- DSU Admissions Blueprint AY21-22 and AY25-26
- DSU Policy 100.001 Policy on Policies
- DSU SP 2021-26 Progress Update 12.2024
- DSU SPOL ERM
- Faculty Senate Minutes
- NDUS Audit Report Examples
- Organization Chart 2025
- Planning and Budgeting Committee Minutes
- President Cabinet Meeting Summaries - Examples
- SBHE Policy 305.1 President Authority and Responsibilities
- Staff Senate Minutes
- Student Senate Minutes
- Weekly Not Registered Update

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1.

Operational staff cover all areas typical for an institution like DSU. Many operational departments maintain information on DSU's public website detailing the services provided, personnel, upcoming events, responsibilities, and contact information.

DSU's fiscal resources are derived from public investment, tuition and fees, and other sources. For the past four years, the University has experienced an annual negative change in net position each year. Net Student Tuition and Fees have decreased over the past five years, having gone from $7.57 million in the 2019-2020 Academic Year to $6.956 million in the 2023-2024 Academic Year. This decrease has been driven primarily by a five-year freeze on tuition increases and the increase in the number of waivers offered to students in an effort to keep education affordable, a key objective of DSU's Strategic Plan 2021-2026.

The Higher Learning Commission requirements and SBHE policies guide the hiring process of all employees at DSU. DSU Human Resources-related policies can be found in PolicyStat, located on the DSU website, and are aligned with the NDUS Human Resource Policy Manual. Sections 2-4 of this manual include policies regarding staff appointment, qualifications, and probationary periods. DSU uses the NDUS state-provided software, Recruiting Solutions, to attract applicants, aid them in submitting applications, and assist those who are reviewing candidates. Open jobs appear first in Recruiting Solutions and are then automatically posted on the DSU website, HigherEdJobs.com, Indeed.com, and Job Service of North Dakota. Final hiring decisions rest with the appropriate supervisor and the DSU President.

DSU HR provides guidance to administration, faculty, and staff. The HR Director assists in campus hiring, training, retirement negotiations, and salary benchmarking to ensure that DSU recruits and retains highly qualified individuals. HR maintains comprehensive website information, as well as policies and procedures.

While supervisors are encouraged to meet regularly with their staff to discuss responsibilities, changes, and assistance in helping staff attain their full potential, supervisors are required to provide each of their staff with an Annual Performance Review (DSU Policy 702.4.003 Maximum Mean for

Staff Annual Reviews). The online Annual Performance Review (APR) program is used throughout the NDUS system. As part of the process, staff complete a self-evaluation and set goals for the upcoming year with their supervisor, then meet with their supervisor and discuss ways they can improve as well as how the University can better support them.

DSU and its affiliated offices offer a variety of staff training opportunities, including the Employee Development Conference. The Human Resources department provides access to numerous retirement webinars. Additionally, DSU employees are provided annual online training on topics such as fraud, the Clery Act, and Title IX, as mandated by the SBHE and DSU.

The institution also supports professional development by allowing employees to take up to three free classes per calendar year. Employees can also access waivers to pursue academic programs at other NDUS institutions. These opportunities complement the training that employees engage in each year as part of their roles at DSU.

The campus spans 165.5 acres and includes 11 buildings, two athletic complexes, and eight residences. The total building area is 604,228 square feet, and the campus provides 100 percent wireless access to its network. There are 696,894 square feet of parking space available, totaling 2,720 parking spaces. Additionally, the campus features 76,250 square feet of institution-owned and maintained roadways, as well as 115,910 square feet of institution-owned and maintained sidewalks (DSU Campus Map).

Klinefelter Hall – Academic Building
Klinefelter Hall was constructed in 1932 as a women's residence hall. The facility was renovated in 1998 and converted to faculty office space, classrooms, conference rooms, and a mid-sized auditorium (Beck Auditorium). In 2021, Dickinson State approved an ~$800,000 renovation of the Nursing Simulation labs, proposed originally in Murphy Hall but moved to Klinefelter Hall due to logistics (Murphy Health Sciences Center). Currently, Klinefelter Hall houses the Schools of Professional Studies and Education as well as the department of Nursing.

Stickney Hall - Offices
Stickney Hall was constructed in 1921 as a residence hall and later converted to offices. Currently, Stickney Hall is utilized for Student Health and Counseling Services and by faculty and staff for office space.

May Hall – Academic and Administrative Building
May Hall was constructed in 1924 for use as a classroom and administrative building. In 1931, two wings were added, providing an additional 10 classrooms. May Hall has had numerous renovations since its construction.

Stoxen Library – Student Services
Stoxen Library was constructed in 1960 with a capacity of approximately 50,000 volumes. The lower level of the library originally housed the college museum, library classrooms, the bookstore, and 16 faculty offices. The library has library classrooms, staff offices, and study spaces for students in addition to the vast physical and digital resources it provides.

Selke Hall – Residence Hall
Selke Hall was constructed in 1960 and is available to house DSU students.

Student Center – Student Services, Dining, Bookstore

The DSU Student Center was originally constructed in 1963 to house food service, bookstore, snack bar and lounge area for students. In 2000, a major renovation and addition was completed.

King Pavilion – Outdoor Public Space
King Pavilion was constructed in 1998 through gift funds provided by the King Family. The pavilion is used for campus events, alumni functions, and occasionally private events, such as weddings, through facility rental arrangements.

Woods Hall – Residence Hall
Woods Hall was constructed in 1965 with a capacity of approximately 167 beds. A major renovation of the second floor and a portion of the first floor was completed in 2019. Additional construction to complete the remaining floors is set to be completed in 2025. Woods Hall is available to house DSU students.

Murphy Hall – Academic Building
Murphy Hall was built in 1961 as a science building, and it was designed to accommodate a second-floor greenhouse. In 2004, the building underwent an expansion funded by an appropriation authorized during the 2003 legislative session. Additional funding provided in 2005 allowed for the renovation of the original structure. Today, Murphy Hall is home to the applied science faculty, as well as classrooms and laboratories.

President's Home – Residential Housing
The University President's home was constructed from an appropriation received in the 1959 legislative session. The residential housing continues to be used by DSU Presidents.

Lowman Walton Hall – Multi-Use Residence Hall, Offices, Theodore Roosevelt Center
Lowman Walton Hall was originally built in 1966 as a residence hall for 172 male students. A significant renovation began in 2020 to transform the building into a multi-use facility, with completion projected for 2022. The updated structure will include a museum level, office spaces for faculty and staff, instructional areas, and residential rooms.

Delong Hall – Residential Housing
Delong Hall was constructed in 1969 as a women's residence hall for 172 students. Today, Delong Hall remains a residence hall for DSU students.

Heating Plant
The original Heating Plant structure was built in 1921 and included two coal-fired boilers. In 1929, an apartment for an engineer and additional storage space were added. The plant was expanded to the west in 1936 to accommodate a third boiler. In 1961, the facility converted from coal to natural gas. In 1966, two of the boilers were replaced at a cost of $200,000.00.

Maintenance Shop
The garage/shop was built in 1937 with the intention of serving as a vocational agriculture building for the campus high school. However, it was never utilized for that purpose and instead functioned as the maintenance building. In 1965, an addition was constructed at a cost of approximately $200,000.00.

Scott Gymnasium
Scott Gym was built in 1950 as the primary physical education facility at DSU. It continues to host men's and women's basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, and men's and women's wrestling. The

gymnasium floor and bleacher seating has received several upgrades to ensure the space is suitable for competition and viewing.

Wienbergen Hall
Constructed in 1973, Wienbergen Hall provides an indoor track, basketball courts, and the lower floor serves as the location for coaches' offices, classrooms, and the Ben Frank Performance Center (i.e., strength and conditioning room).

Main Campus Apartments
Constructed in 1961 primarily for married students and their families, these apartments are currently used as both family and single student housing. Main Campus Apartments consist of three eight-plex apartments, each building contains eight single-bedroom, dual occupancy apartments.

Agriculture & Tech Building and Indoor Arena
Built in 1981, this facility accommodates the Department of Agriculture and Technical Studies classrooms and faculty offices. The Arena, constructed in 1979, is connected to the Agriculture Classroom and serves as a venue for indoor rodeos, agriculture trade shows, roping events, and rodeo team practices. Currently, DSU is renovating its Agriculture facility and the indoor Arena.

Biesiot Activity Center (BAC)
The BAC, which stands for the Dickinson Athletic Complex, was built in 2010 to replace the original Whitney Stadium. This modern facility features state-of-the-art athletic amenities and is also equipped to host a variety of events, including meetings, weddings, and retirement parties. Funding for the BAC was primarily sourced through philanthropic contributions raised by the DSU Heritage Foundation, along with substantial financial support from the City of Dickinson.

Sanford Sports Complex
With support from the North Dakota Legislature, the City of Dickinson, and Stark County, as well as approval from the SBHE, DSU constructed a softball and soccer complex for $7 million on the northwest portion of DSU's campus. The new softball and soccer facilities went into operation in spring 2023.

Technology Resources
DSU Information Technology Services (ITS) work in conjunction with the NDUS centralized technology services (CTS). NDUS, through the CTS office, provides technology services designed to support students, faculty, and staff in achieving their goals and fulfilling their responsibilities.

DSU's ITS staff report to the University CIO, who reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The CIO also works very closely with the NDUS CIO and other institutional CIOs in collaborative efforts. Services include infrastructure that parallels what is provided by other campuses in the NDUS. ITS maintains and provides access to a campus-wide data network, as well as access to the statewide high-speed fiber network.

DSU is committed to consolidating technology services with the help of CTS. In the 2023-2024 period, DSU took the lead in upgrading its Learning Management System (LMS). The university also implemented Microsoft Office 365, which includes Voice, a solution hosted by CTS, supported by training from both CTS and local ITS staff. DSU continues to use a ticket system initiated by CTS Team Dynamix for procurements exceeding the $10,000 threshold. Moreover, DSU has adopted various tools, resources, and best practices in cybersecurity, with CTS leading these efforts.

DSU has several physical and virtual computer labs available in academic buildings, residence halls, and remotely. ITS works to ensure that campus buildings have comfortable technology spaces equipped with computers and Wi-Fi coverage. There are also lounge spaces where students can connect and charge their own devices and spaces for personal or group study sessions. DSU students and employees have access to a variety of centralized resources, which include the Blackboard LMS, software streaming, and cloud storage.

Several tools are used by students and faculty to facilitate online learning. Digital face-to-face sessions use Microsoft Teams with integrations to the Blackboard learning management system. Asynchronous online learning allows faculty to record learning sessions and share with their students. ITS also consults on all new campus construction and renovations, ensuring that the technology infrastructure is designed and installed properly, with attention to future needs and opportunities.

5.B.2.

DSU goals are realistic in considering DSU's organizational structure, resources, and opportunities. Dickinson State University's Strategic Plan 2021-2026, "5 Years in Focus, A Blueprint for DSU's Future" (referenced above in 5.B.1.) is based on DSU's Mission, Vision, and Values. The strategic priorities, goals, and objectives are aligned with DSU's Mission and the SBHE's Mission and goals (also addressed in Criterion 1.A.1.).

The Strategic Plan 2021-2026 was the result of a year-long process coordinated through the DSU Strategic Planning Committee that included faculty, staff, students, and community members. Planning efforts provided a broad framework that addressed immediate and long-term goals impacting DSU's efforts to carry out its Mission. Strategic Plan 2016-2021 outcomes were reviewed, 2019 accreditation recommendations were addressed, and input was gathered from DSU constituents through surveys, consultant strategic planning expertise, campus-wide meetings, Strategic Planning Committee Meetings, and internal subcommittee meetings. DSU maintains a companion document related to the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan to track, update, and monitor the progress of strategic priorities and related goals (Strategic Progress Update).

The Strategic Plan was created to leverage DSU's strengths while remaining adaptable to meet emerging needs and opportunities, especially in light of the challenges faced by higher education institutions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of the Strategic Plan began in fall 2021 under the guidance of campus leaders and oversight from the Office of the President. The strategic priorities focused on key areas such as enrollment and recruitment, fiscal sustainability, student success (including retention), faculty and staff engagement, enhanced campus experiences, community involvement and partnerships, workforce development, and DSU's commitment as a Dual Mission institution.

In fall 2018, the SBHE formally recognized DSU as the first Dual Mission institution in the state. This designation allowed DSU to expand course offerings beyond the bachelor's degree to include continuing education, certificates, associate degrees, and graduate degrees, providing the programs needed to prepare a workforce for the growing region (DSU Policy 400.001 Dual Mission Course Instruction). DSU continues to operate as a Dual Mission institution while responding to local and regional education needs. The current DSU Mission Statement was changed in 2019 to recognize and include the comprehensive nature of programming. DSU's leadership works with local legislators, collaborates with community partners, and engages in fundraising to ensure support of the Dual Mission.

DSU's Strategic Plan Priority 2 Financial Sustainability, Goal 2, states it "will develop a financial plan that will support its Mission and Vision," which includes an Objective to tie funding and budget to the Strategic Plan. In spring 2024, the DSU Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) was established and currently provides oversight for strategic planning and budgeting as a mechanism to ensure strategic priorities and goals are positioned to carry out DSU's Mission. The PBC works to ensure that strategic planning is an integral part of decision-making during the budget process in determining how both operating and capital dollars are allocated (Annual Operating Budget Workbook). The PBC meets regularly and currently includes the DSU President, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Heritage Foundation Executive Director, and Athletic Director.

DSU has made progress in integrating the budget process with strategic planning, as referenced in the response required by HLC in 2019, and will continue to implement best practices in regard to planning and budgeting. PBC, which reviews both academic and operational strategy proposals, the committee also discusses how proposals and projects impact budget resources. DSU has recently appointed a new president, whose start date is set for July 1, 2025. It is expected that the incoming president will lead the campus through its next strategic planning cycle and build on the advancements made in coordinating strategic planning and budgeting processes since the last HLC visit. Additional details about this process are highlighted in section 5.A.2 as part of the embedded response.

5.B.3.

Monitoring finances is a critical function for maintaining the fiscal health of DSU, which must take advantage of mission enhancement opportunities, ensure a realistic budget, and avoid financial crises. The DSU administration continuously monitors budgets and finances with particular focus during reporting and annual budget development. The budget monitoring and development processes ensure that DSU's finances remain sustainable, and that resources are allocated beneficially to advance the quality of offerings and services.

Revenue projections help ensure adequate resources will be available to meet budgeted and unexpected expenditures. DSU monitors new admittance applications and enrollment data and uses that data in conjunction with historical data and trends to project tuition revenues. (See Fall 2022, Fall 2023, and Fall 2024 Census Reports.) State legislative funding is more difficult to project since it depends on legislative appropriations. Funding for the next biennium is primarily based on weighted, completed credit hours generated in the prior biennium. Using historical weighted credits, DSU projects the potential for material fluctuations in the portion of the NDUS funding formula that is driven by those prior biennium credits. Auxiliary and local fund data are also tracked to project revenues.

Expenditures are also closely monitored to ensure budget compliance. DSU's Office of Business Affairs maintains purchasing and expenditure controls that prevent department/division expenditures from going over budget unless the system is overridden or a budget transfer from another source allows the expenditure to go forward. Budget Overview reports are generated on a quarterly basis and made available to DSU departments. In addition, Schools and departments can run a variety of reports from the financial system, allowing them to monitor their areas on a more frequent basis, if desired.

Every benefited personnel position is budgeted as a separate line item in the position control system. DSU's position control in the Peoplesoft Financial system integrates those position control numbers

with the HR system. Changes to expected expenditures for any position are tracked and projected for impact to DSU budgets.

DSU administration tracks, projects, and regularly reviews the overall budget picture by component area through the Projected Period. Highlights of DSU's appropriated funding through fall 2024 include:

- FY25 projected tuition revenues are coming in close to budget. DSU is projecting a range from 1% below budget to 1% better than budget. Salary expenditures are coming in less than budget by approximately 3%.
- DSU is projecting a net appropriated operating surplus for FY25.
- The projected FY26 operating budget will occur during the first half of the state's biennial budget and as a result, it will not be able to be completed until the ND Legislature finishes its work, which is typically in late April.
- FY24 and FY25 will be more challenging because DSU is expecting reductions in base state support due to previous declines in enrollment, which will impact the funding formula.
- The FY26 budget (under development as of this writing) will be impacted by the look-ahead to the reduction in state funding for FY24 and FY25.

As a part of developing the integrated planning and budgeting process, DSU will start to project future budgets (typically for two years) to run concurrently with the ND State Budget Biennium period and track progress and outcomes with the Strategic Plan in place. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. DSU is dedicated to excellence in education, as defined by its Mission. DSU ensures that its fiscal allocations are geared toward this through a budget process that includes linking budget requests to the Strategic Plan.

DSU reserves are an important resource and are carefully monitored and projected. Those reserves are routinely used for one-time DSU expenditures and to help address downturns in revenue or emergencies. SBHE Policy 810.1 Appropriated Funds Reserve requires five to seven percent of University-appropriated revenues be maintained as "undesignated" appropriated reserves at all times. DSU is in compliance with this requirement.

DSU also closely monitors other available reserves. Additional appropriated and local reserves include local indirect cost reserves and local interest earning reserves. DSU's reserves are sufficient despite emergency infrastructure repairs over the last few years.

In addition to revenues, expenditure, reserves, and budgets, DSU also monitors its fiscal health using Composite Financial Index scores and ratio analysis. Much of that information is required as annual reporting to the HLC through the University's annual Institutional Update. DSU's fiscal health remains sound despite some reduction in the quality of the ratios over the last several years.

Evidence showing DSU's careful management of University finances can be found in the Administration's analysis and restructuring of academic departments into Schools. Reducing administrative costs associated with providing academic courses and the realignment of departments allowed for a reduction in the number of FTEs.

When reviewing the institution's processes for maintaining the health of its finances, it should be noted that the NDUS monitors the fiscal health of all NDUS institutions. In addition to audits, required annual financial statements, CPI scores, and reserves, DSU reports to the SBHE Budget and Finance Committee on a semi-annual basis if there is a variance of +/- $100,000 or two percent or

more, whichever is greater, in any fund or revenue item. (See Annual Financial Report 24 and NDUS Audit Report Examples.)

The institution's detailed, inclusive budget development process and subsequent fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. DSU is dedicated to excellence in education as defined by its Mission. DSU ensures that fiscal allocations are geared toward this goal through its detailed budget process that includes linking budget requests to the Strategic Plan while safeguarding resources.

5.B.4.

DSU is committed to fulfilling its educational mission by allocating resources that ensure academic units have what they need to provide high-quality instruction. This allocation is based on enrollment figures and a process that focuses on continually enhancing students' educational experiences and expanding opportunities. During the University's annual budget process, DSU identifies essential needs and allocates resources to key areas that enhance the student experience. Specifically, the institution funds central units to guarantee the delivery of high-quality academic experiences through technology and invests in strategic opportunities with central funds.

Enrollment growth is supported by:

- Academic fees, related to the costs of delivering programs, are allocated to units offering those programs through the use of specific funds.
- Other student fees, allocated to student support services that advance the student experience.
- Funding of new academic and athletic programs.

Sources

- 24-25 Annual Operating Budget
- 24-25 Dept Budget Workbook Samples
- 25-27 State Funding Formula
- Annual Financial Report 24
- Budget Overview Reports
- Campus Master Plan 2022
- Composite Index and Financial Ratio
- Core Technology Services - CTS
- DSU Budget Book 1-8-24
- DSU Campus Map 3-2025
- DSU Policy 400.001 Dual Mission Course Instruction
- DSU Policy 702.4.003 Maximum Mean for Staff Annual Reviews
- DSU SP 2021-26 Progress Update 12.2024
- DSU Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- Employee Development Conference
- Fall 22_23_24 Census Reports
- Murphy Health Sciences Center Concepts and Maps
- ND SBHE HR Policy Manual as of 3.11.25
- NDUS Audit Report Examples
- Online Training
- Planning and Budgeting Committee Minutes

- PolicyStat Snapshot
- SBHE Policy 810.1 Appropriated Funds Reserve
- Staff Training Opportunities

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

In 2019, the HLC Visit Team documented a concern that DSU did not provide sufficient evidence of systematic planning and decision-making processes that are informed by operational assessment. The Visit Team noted its confidence in DSU's ability to remedy this factor, that key institutional leaders in 2019 identified a lack of planning as an important issue, and that DSU had demonstrated a recent record of successfully addressing difficult problems. As a result, the 2019 Visit Team recommended the matter be addressed as part of DSU's 2025 Assurance Argument Criterion 5.C. and decennial re-accreditation visit by HLC. Strategic planning is addressed in Criterion 5.B.2. and Criterion 1.A.1. as it is related to DSU's Mission.

5.C.1.

DSU has made progress with integrated budgeting since the visit in 2019. Immediately following that visit, the institution implemented a process to provide academic and staff units opportunities to express needs each year of the budget cycle. This process involved providing an allocated budget and allowing unit leadership the opportunity to propose changes. (See Budget Example.) Each year, the institution has examined new methods to ensure that it progresses with integrating planning, institutional objectives, and strategy into the budgeting process.

Recently, DSU engaged in an Annual Budget Request Process, initiated during academic year 2023-2024 with the development of budget workbooks by the VPFA. The budget process is designed to allow for robust links between planning, support of the teaching and learning environment, and budget prioritization, and ensures sustainability beyond current personnel. Based on individual needs related to strategic goals and initiatives, units will complete budget workbooks to request resources that address assessment outcomes and operational objectives, including enrollment and retention. The process will require units to align their requests with DSU's strategic plan, mission, and goals. The DSU Strategic Plan priorities and goals directly support student learning. Unit workbooks are summarized under the appropriate administrator. Budget workbooks reviewed in 2022-2023 for 2023-2024 allocations were Academic Affairs, Administration, Finance, and Vice President,

including Student Affairs and Athletics.

The PBC reviews and recommends resource allocation guided by the DSU mission and the institution's strategic priorities. The PBC is charged to:

1. Implement DSU's strategic plan and advise on the budget development and required budget request processes.
2. Identify priorities and create implementation calendars and the funding mechanisms to ensure DSU's success.
3. Review DSU's strategic goals, objectives, action items, and metrics.

To further clarify its role in aligning budget priorities with the DSU mission, the PBC purposes are to:

1. Review annual budget requests via the annual budget process and decide what should be included in the final budget. Get progress reports from those leading strategic planning initiatives (i.e., document progress and hold people accountable).
2. Review new academic and co-curricular program requests, new positions, space requests, and other related requests before proceeding.
3. Assist with program prioritization and budget cuts when appropriate.
4. Communicate with campus constituency groups (e.g., Senates) and seek total understanding and commitment by the campus.

During the annual budget review process, the PBC begins its review with a presentation from the VPFA, who shares the current and trending budget picture. PBC members will be assigned to view specific sections of information. Members will discuss the provided information and rate the requests based on questions like the ones below.

1. Is the budget request a new or an existing budget item?
2. Which strategic goal(s)/objective(s) does the request support and how?
3. What is the evidence to support this request? (e.g., assessment, satisfaction, or other data)
4. How does the request contribute to DSU's bottom line?
5. Is the request a necessity or not?

Using the information gathered, the PBC members deliberate, prioritize requests, and develop a list of recommendations that the Business Affairs area will add or delete from the proposed budget. DSU is dedicated to continually assessing and implementing budget cycle processes that align with best practices. The leadership team, under the President's direction, is actively defining the budget process.

5.C.2.

DSU's Annual Budget Request Process enables each unit to advocate for its operational needs. For academic units, deans assess needs based on the teaching and learning environment as it impacts student outcomes. For example, upgrades were made to the nursing simulation labs (Murphy Health Sciences) to provide direct support for students as they study complex topics in the field of nursing. These upgrades also help support the program as it has restricted access to healthcare facilities to provide clinical training due to DSU being located in a small rural city. DSU also recently approved the creation of digital and physical cadaver labs. This process included proposal presentations to the PBC. The Project Proposal for Digital Cadaver Lab and the Project Proposal for the Development of a

Cadaver Lab in Murphy Science Building clearly outline the academic and budget impact of both projects. Academic Schools track progress of programs in meeting credit production, enrollment and retention, and other expressed goals as part of the biennium Academic Vital Signs process.

Furthermore, academic and staff units evaluate operations while conducting planning and budgeting. As described in 5.C.1, this comprehensive process requires programs to clearly align requests for resources to the mission and strategic priorities of the institution. Departments/divisions reflect on the results of their objectives, establish goals and action steps, and determine their budget needs. Budget requests focus on student learning improvement and align with the goals of the Strategic Plan. As an example, the VPFA oversees the Business Office, Facilities Management, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Information Technology Services, and Safety and Security. The VPFA meets with each area regularly to discuss operational needs. During the Annual Budget Request Process, the VPFA submits a budget request workbook on behalf of their reports. The most common requests are for updates to technology, increased utility budgets, security, and facilities/campus maintenance.

5.C.3.

DSU's planning process is designed to be comprehensive, involving various internal and external constituents to ensure that strategic objectives align with the needs of the broader community it serves.

The strategic planning process actively involves campus community members and external stakeholders, ensuring a well-rounded and inclusive approach. Faculty, staff, administration, and students regularly participate in planning activities, providing valuable insights and feedback drawn from their experiences and expertise. Alumni contribute perspectives that help assess the University's long-term impact and garner support for future initiatives. Additionally, engaging legislators and policymakers ensures alignment with state educational policies and strengthens advocacy efforts for securing the resources needed to achieve institutional goals.

DSU has implemented various campus initiatives designed to address current challenges. These initiatives are often developed through collaborative efforts brought forward to the President's Cabinet or involving stakeholders across the University. Improvements to academic programs, enhanced student support services, infrastructure upgrades (Student Center Proposal), and targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing the campus are often initiated through individual committees from across campus, including the Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates. For example, Student Senate presented a Campus Safety Proposal to the DSU Cabinet, which was supported and implemented. This proposal included adding lighting to areas of campus as well as additional cameras and crosswalks. This is just one example of the origination and execution of planning from DSU constituents.

5.C.4.

DSU adapts its operational plans to respond to changing market conditions and educational trends. One example of this flexibility is the University's teaching technology upgrade, which allows most classes to be offered in various formats: face-to-face, interactive video, online synchronous, online asynchronous, and hybrid. This was initially done due to the pandemic so that courses could be converted quickly due to the changing needs. However, the flexibility has continued as part of DSU's education operations. Another example is the recent implementation of operational software for functions such as scholarship applications, electronic signatures, and electronic ticket processing.

The University administration's careful monitoring and conservative budgeting are clearly reflected in its investments in information technology, the upgrading of outdated infrastructure, the construction of new facilities that enhance the student experience, and the renovation of residence halls to improve students' living environments. DSU has opportunistically reduced positions and operating budgets over the last five years to reduce expenditures while carefully avoiding negative impacts on the quality of programs

Credit hours drive tuition revenues and the state funding formula, and are important for DSU's financial viability. Contrary to the nationwide trend, DSU has experienced a slight decrease in 2023 and 2024, after having four consecutive years of increases in the number of credit hours, as shown by the changes in the FTE count:

- Fall 2019 FTE Count: 1,093.45
- Fall 2020 FTE Count: 1,147.13
- Fall 2021 FTE Count: 1,154.23
- Fall 2022 FTE Count: 1,155.18
- Fall 2023 FTE Count: 1,118.20
- Fall 2024 FTE Count: 1,120.31

As mentioned in 5.A.2, DSU leadership analyzed internal and external data and presented program-specific information to each department/division. Departments/divisions were asked to develop a plan for addressing their future by setting enrollment targets, identifying opportunities and challenges, considering alternative degree and delivery options, and determining action steps (Enrollment Goals by Degree Type).

DSU understands the necessity of building reserves and deleveraging debt. As the impact of anticipated demographic changes in the national number of traditional college-age students becomes clearer later this decade, flexible finances will be important as DSU adapts to those anticipated market changes in student preferences and overall demand. The University works to keep the campus community apprised of these concerns and routinely asks for employee help to achieve that financial stability and flexibility.

5.C.5.

Although DSU works to be nimble and flexible in its operations, operational improvement decisions are grounded in various plans. Larger master plan initiatives are dependent upon state funding information. Smaller projects are typically covered within department/division budgets or with reserves. Many of the initiatives are driven by the NDUS. For example, Core Technology Services (CTS) plans and oversees the implementation of major technology projects throughout the NDUS system. Recent technology upgrades include facilities management software, an electronic grants administration program, and an updated academic library system to replace the current ODIN system.

DSU anticipates and plans for emerging trends in education, including changing student demographics. As mentioned in 5.A.2 and 5.C.4, DSU leadership, in response to declining enrollment trends, analyzed external and internal data and key performance indicators for academic departments, seeking higher education trends and the expected outlook of academic programs. The committee met with every academic department/division and shared the results. Faculty used the information within their departments/ divisions to set enrollment targets, identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative degree and delivery options, and determine action steps to improve

recruiting and enrollment.

DSU's vision focuses on flexible delivery, technological challenges, innovation and creativity, and preparation for the future. DSU embraces technology and innovation in preparing students for 21st-century jobs in a global economy. To this end, DSU continues to increase distance offerings, especially online, incorporate technology, and develop new programs addressing societal needs.

Using federal HEERF and CARES Act funds received in September 2020 and in March, June, and December 2021, nearly all DSU classrooms were upgraded to technology. The University also took advantage of the federal funds to upgrade its network and IT infrastructure. Faculty collaborated and were trained in non-traditional pedagogical delivery, allowing for increased flexibility in delivering coursework through a variety of modalities. This flexibility allows DSU to be more competitive, expand into new markets, and provide students with the variety of coursework delivery modalities that they demand as changes in higher education play out in the coming years.

Campus facilities are directed by the bi-annual campus master plan required by the NDUS and SBHE. Past projects within this plan include additional security cameras, outside lighting, and energy savings projects.

5.C.6.

Since the 2019 HLC visit, DSU has made progress in developing an integrated budgeting process that aligns institutional objectives with strategic goals. Immediately following the 2019 visit, the institution implemented a process that allows academic and staff units to submit budget requests annually, ensuring alignment between financial planning and institutional objectives. This iterative process has continued to evolve and improve each year.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, DSU implemented the Annual Budget Request Process, initiated with the development of budget workbooks by the VPFA. This process enables units to submit requests that align their needs with DSU's strategic plan, mission, and goals, while also providing evidence-based justifications for their proposals. Units are required to demonstrate how their requests support teaching, learning, enrollment, retention, and other institutional objectives.

PBC plays a critical role in reviewing and prioritizing budget requests related to the systematic improvement of operations. The PBC evaluates proposals based on criteria such as alignment with strategic goals, evidence of need, and overall institutional impact. Recommendations from the PBC are incorporated into the final budget proposal.

DSU's Annual Budget Request Process serves as a mechanism for units to advocate for operational resources that directly support student outcomes. Academic units, for instance, base their requests on needs identified through assessment of the teaching and learning environment. Recent improvements include upgrades to nursing simulation labs and the creation of digital and physical cadaver labs, which were approved based on documented academic and budgetary impact (Project Proposal for Digital Cadaver Lab and Project Proposal for the Development of a Cadaver Lab in Murphy Science Building).

The institution's Academic Vital Signs process tracks the progress of academic programs by monitoring metrics related to credit production, enrollment, retention, and other performance indicators. Additionally, the VPFA engages with various departments to ensure budget requests are aligned with institutional priorities and focused on enhancing student learning.

DSU's investments in technological upgrades, including improved scholarship application processes, electronic signatures, and ticket processing systems, reflect its commitment to operational improvement. Additionally, the institution remains proactive in responding to enrollment trends by setting targets and identifying opportunities for growth through its Enrollment Goals by Degree Type initiative.

Operational improvement decisions at DSU are grounded in well-defined plans that consider both immediate needs and long-term institutional goals. Master plan initiatives, overseen by the North Dakota University System (NDUS), guide technological upgrades, infrastructure improvements, and campus safety projects. DSU also recognizes the importance of financial flexibility and sustainability.

Dickinson State University has made measurable progress in addressing the concerns raised by the 2019 HLC Visit Team. Through integrated planning and budgeting processes, strategic goal alignment, and inclusive engagement across campus, DSU continues to improve its operations and student outcomes. The institution remains committed to implementing effective strategies that support its mission and enhance its capacity to respond to future challenges.

Sources

- 24-25 Annual Operating Budget
- 24-25 Dept Budget Workbook Samples
- Academic Unit Vital Signs Report
- Budget Process Example
- Campus Master Plan 2022
- Core Technology Services - CTS
- Enrollment Goals by Degree Type
- Murphy Health Sciences Center Concepts and Maps
- Project Proposal for Digital Cadaver Lab
- Proposal for the Development of a Cadaver Lab in Murphy Science Building
- Student Center Proposal
- Traffic Safety Proposal Presentation

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

Sources

There are no sources.