



MONTANA
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT 2025-2026

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Institutional Effectiveness

History

Montana Tech's strategic planning and institutional effectiveness processes reflect a deliberate, iterative, and inclusive approach. Montana Tech's Strategic Plan, *Deliberately Distinct: Positioning Montana Tech for the Future*, was first presented to the Montana Board of Regents in [September 2021](#) and is the foundation for institutional priorities and planning aligning with the mission. During FY22, the campus operationalized the strategic plan by implementing a structured request for initiatives and application process as the next steps. The Montana Tech Leadership Team in FY23 began developing draft objectives and indicators of achievement aligning with the three goals: student success; programs of distinction; and healthy & vibrant campus ecosystem as outlined in the [2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report](#). This work strengthened the connection between strategic priorities and measurable outcomes, reinforcing a data-informed approach to assessing mission fulfillment.

In the [2025 Ad Hoc](#) report for NWCCU, the initial framework for measuring mission fulfillment was defined with goals, objectives, and indicators of achievement with campus input solicited via surveys and refinement by the Executive Team. During FY26, Montana Tech enhanced alignment and implementation through 125 days of dialogue and the introduction of our 4-Lane Highway, identifying four institutional focus areas: Natural Resources, Infrastructure, Health & Wellbeing, and Leadership & Workforce Development. Through the Chancellor's Cabinet, our 4-Lane Highway is mapped to strategic plan goals, objectives, and indicators. Annual Cabinet priorities, with clearly assigned leadership responsibility, provide an additional layer of accountability and continuous improvement.

Together, these efforts demonstrate a cohesive and aligned institutional effectiveness system characterized by integrated planning, broad engagement, clearly defined metrics, and ongoing refinement. This approach ensures that Montana Tech systematically evaluates progress toward mission fulfillment.

Alignment

This report represents the first in an annual cycle of evaluating mission fulfillment informed by internal and external factors as evaluated through the goals, objectives, and indicators of achievement. The definition and evaluation of mission fulfillment are intentionally structured to ensure alignment across multiple levels of planning. At the system level, this framework represents an alignment of Montana Board of Regents [Policy 219.1](#) – Institutional Mission Parameters; Montana University System (MUS), [performance based funding](#), MUS Long Range Building Plan, MUS system initiatives and academic planning. At the institutional level, it is integrated with campus planning processes, including the Campus Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, Budget Guidelines, and program review. These elements are further operationalized through the strategic plan and our 4-Lane Highway thereby ensuring coherence and consistency between system-level expectations and institutional implementation.

Process

Under the leadership of the Chancellor's Cabinet, annual institutional priorities are established and aligned with strategic goals and corresponding indicators. Recommendations for priorities are advanced through the Cabinet members, while associated resource and funding requests are reviewed through the Executive Budget Committee. The Accreditation Steering Committee monitors progress and evaluates evidence of mission fulfillment.

Through the leadership of the Chancellor's Cabinet, the planning process is intentionally inclusive, engaging appropriate constituent groups through the institution's shared governance structure and providing meaningful opportunities for input and feedback. Every employee or student is formally represented by at least two Cabinet members. For example, students are represented by the Dean of Students and the Associated Students of Montana Tech (ASMT) President; staff members are represented by their Cabinet-level supervisor and the Staff Senate President; and faculty members are represented by the Provost and the Faculty Senate President.

Planning priorities are supported through the allocation of necessary resources and are evaluated to ensure they contribute to measurable improvements in institutional performance and mission fulfillment. To support effective assessment, institutional definitions, data sources, and reporting structures will be periodically reviewed and refined to ensure indicators are meaningful, reliable, and actionable. This ongoing evaluation supports a culture of evidence and continuous improvement.

Measurement

Institutional effectiveness will be evaluated annually but not all indicators will be updated each year. For example, student satisfaction and student engagement are measured through the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). To reduce survey fatigue, improve response rates, and better align results with planning and implementation cycles, the campus administers these instruments on a four-year rotation (See Table I.)

Table I. NSSE and SSI Cycle

	Survey	Data Utilization & Implementation Planning
Year 1	NSSE (North Campus only)	
Year 2		Engagement
Year 3	SSI (Highlands College and North Campus)	
Year 4		Satisfaction

While not all data are updated for annual measurement, each indicator will include documented reflections and forward-looking plans as part of our continuous improvement process.

Defining Mission Fulfillment

Montana Tech is committed to fulfilling its mission by achieving each of its strategic goals. The current definition of mission fulfillment builds upon the outline established in the [2025-AdHoc report](#). There are three goals with one objective per goal. Within the goal/objective, indicators of achievement have been identified with one or more measures of the indicator. Accordingly, each major priority and initiative is aligned with indicators of achievement. Success in a goal/objective is achieved when at least half of the indicators have been met or exceeded.

GOAL 1: STUDENT SUCCESS

Objective: To ensure that students are academically prepared, supported throughout their academic journey, and successfully transition into professional careers.

1. Enrollment
2. Academic Planning and Advising
3. Retention
4. Degree completion
5. Experiential Learning Participation
6. Post-Graduation Career Outcomes

GOAL 2: PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION

Objective: Build programs that are recognized for their academic rigor, research impact, and transformative student experiences.

1. Foster Excellence in Instruction
2. Foster Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
3. Industry and Community Partnerships
4. Mentoring Programs

GOAL 3: HEALTHY AND VIBRANT CAMPUS ECOSYSTEM

Objective: To develop a campus environment that supports faculty, staff, and students through comprehensive professional development, a culture of belonging, and sustainable facilities that promote learning and well-being.

1. Employee Retention
2. Professional Development Participation
3. Campus Facilities Upgrades
4. Campus Climate and Belonging

	Number of Indicators	Number of Indicators Necessary for Goal/Objective to be Met
GOAL 1: Student Success	6	3
GOAL 2: Programs of Distinction	4	2
GOAL 3: Healthy and Vibrant Ecosystem	4	2

While we strive for excellence across all areas of our mission and aim to surpass all benchmarks, we have intentionally set ambitious targets by benchmarking against peers, which includes some aspirational institutions. This rigorous approach recognizes that exceeding all benchmarks will present varying levels of challenge across different areas. Therefore, we define mission fulfillment as successfully meeting or exceeding the benchmarks for at least half of the indicators within each goal/objective.

This report evaluates progress toward each goal through a review of its corresponding indicators, analysis of institutional data, alignment with Chancellor’s Cabinet priorities, and planning efforts for academic year 2026–27. While many initiatives and investments contribute to progress across multiple indicators, mission fulfillment, and institutional effectiveness are addressed through the framework of Chancellor’s Cabinet priorities mapping and alignment with our 4-Lane Highway.

GOAL 1: STUDENT SUCCESS

Decidedly distinctive, refreshingly affordable, and intentionally innovative, our robust academic programs, services, and learning environment position students at the center of all we do by focusing on accessibility, engagement, and employability from first impression through graduation and beyond.

Objective: To ensure that students are academically prepared, supported throughout their academic journey, and successfully transition into professional careers.

Indicator 1: Enrollment

Indicator 1a: Fall Headcount:

Benchmark: Headcount meets campus master plan goal

Fall headcount	Fall 2023	Fall 2024 (Baseline)	Fall 2025 (Year 1)
Master Plan (Benchmark)	1866	1927	1980
Actual	1866	1927	2024

SOURCE: MUS Enrollment

Indicator 1b: FY Resident FTE:

Benchmark: % of MUS FY Resident FTE meets or exceeds previous 3-year average

FY Resident FTE	FY23	FY24	FY25 (Year 1)
MUS (Less Community College)	20,064	20,233	20,746
3 Year Average	20,692	20,307	20,348
Montana Tech & Highlands College	1,503	1,474	1,567
3 Year Average	1,536	1,508	1,515
% Montana Tech & Highlands College	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%

SOURCE: MUS Enrollment

Indicator 1: Evaluation

Institutional effectiveness as related to enrollment is defined by two indicators. The first (Indicator 1a) is fall headcount. This benchmark is tied to the [Master Plan](#) which assumes an average 3% year-over-year increase. In 2024, there were a total of 1927 enrolled on-campus students across the Main Campus and Highlands College. Using this figure as the baseline, Montana Tech met the Master Plan goal, enrolling 2024 students in fall 2025. Fiscal Year Resident FTE is the second Indicator (1b). Montana Tech regularly monitors this figure as it is one component of the [Montana University System's \(MUS\) performance-based funding model](#). The benchmark examines the percentage of MUS FY Resident FTE with the goal of meeting or exceeding the previous 3-year average. Using FY25 as Year 1, Montana Tech held a steady 7.4% over the last three years.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 1: 2/2 measures achieved

Indicator 1: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized additional marketing staff, enhanced digital advertising, and an accessible virtual campus tour among the strategies intended to support enrollment growth.

- The Executive Budget Committee approved the following requests for FY27:
 - A brand communications coordinator position (\$55,000 salary + \$24,000 benefits) will be partially funded through a reallocation of existing publication funds (\$39,000) and additional funding (\$40,000).
 - Digital advertising will receive an additional \$83,000, increasing the current digital advertising budget within admissions of \$45,000 to support expanded components within that effort.
- With intentional planning and awareness to the [Dear Colleague Letter on Online Accessibility at Postsecondary Institutions](#), the campus reviewed several options related to the virtual campus tour, opting for enhanced features within the current campus tour platform resulting in a minimal investment and aligning with federal regulations.

Aligned with our 4-Lane Highway, all these efforts lean into Montana Tech's special focus designation through the website and promotional materials. The Montana Tech Foundation continues to support enrollment growth through fundraising for renewable scholarships. As progress is made toward accomplishing the 25/26 Cabinet strategies, the Chancellor's Cabinet leaders will transition to new priorities for 26/27 including website accessibility, a re-imagined brand, and enhanced digital campaign implementation.

Indicator 2: Academic Planning and Advising

Indicator 2: Student satisfaction with experiences with course selections, academic planning, and overall advising.

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds national comparators Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)

Question 69. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	2019	2025 (Year 1)
Montana Tech	5.50	5.63
National 4 Year Public	5.85	5.84
2a: Satisfaction Difference (Montana Tech-National)	-0.35***	-0.21**
Highlands College	5.93	6.12
National Community College	6.04	6.22
2b: Satisfaction Difference (Highlands College-National)	-0.11	-0.1

Scale 6 Academic Advising Effectiveness	2019	2025 (Year 1)
Montana Tech	5.71	5.84
National 4 Year Public	5.76	5.70
2c: Satisfaction Difference (Montana Tech-National)	-0.05	0.14*
Highlands College	5.98	5.68
National Community College	5.69	5.95

2d: Satisfaction Difference (Highlands College-National)	0.29*	-0.27*
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SOURCE: RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory™

Statistical Significance

*Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.05 level

**Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.01 level

***Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.001 level

Indicator 2: Evaluation

Results from the spring 2025 Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) indicate modest improvement in student perceptions of academic planning and advising. For course availability, Montana Tech increased from 5.50 in 2019 to 5.63 in 2025, narrowing the gap with national peers from -0.35 to -0.21. Advising effectiveness improved more substantially, with Montana Tech increasing from 5.71 to 5.84 and exceeding the national average (5.70), resulting in a positive difference of +0.14. Since the previous SSI was administered in 2019, significant efforts were made institution wide to more effectively streamline advising services. This includes investments in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) where professional advisors for first year students in the Lance College of Mines and Engineering (LCME) and the College of Letters, Sciences, and Professional Studies (CLSPS) are housed. These results suggest progress in advising quality and student experience, particularly in advising effectiveness, while also highlighting continued opportunity to improve perceptions related to course availability and overall planning.

The course availability satisfaction score difference between Highlands College (6.12) and the National Community Colleges (6.22) are not statistically significant; thus, the measure is met. The scale score for academic advising at Highlands College decreased -0.30 while the national comparison increased by +0.26. This change resulted in Highlands falling below national comparators, with statistical significance. Throughout this time, Highlands College advising was faculty led. The Associate of Science program at Highlands College underwent substantial change between 2019 and 2025, with Montana Tech becoming test optional ([COVID MUS Guidance](#) and subsequently [Policy 301](#)). These changes altered the student population served by the program and contributed to staffing changes.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 2: 2/4 measures achieved

Indicator 2: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized analyzing and sharing SSI results collected in Spring 2025. Through the Dean of Student's leadership, results were presented to the Dean's Council and Chancellor's Cabinet, as well as the shared governance bodies of Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and ASMT. The current assessment cycle allows for analysis, planning, and implementation with the next SSI administered in Spring 2029.

Intentional strategies related to advising are mapped to Goal 1 Objective 1 Indicator 4, Degree Completion and further documented there. In 26/27, campus priorities will be explored through further communication of SSI results and data will be utilized to target areas of lower satisfaction and close remaining gaps with national comparators.

Indicator 3: Retention

Indicator 3: First-to-second-year retention

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds regional and national peer comparator retention rates

Full Time Cohort Retention	2023	2024 (Year 1)
Montana Technological University	76	77
3a: Regional Median	81	81
3b: National Median	85	86
Highlands College of Montana Tech	64	55
3c: Regional & National Median	61	62

SOURCE: Full Time Retention IPEDS (2024 Reporting is fall 2023 cohort)

Indicator 3: Evaluation

First-to-second-year retention at Montana Tech improved slightly from 76% to 77% between 2023 and 2024. While this is below the regional median (81%) and national median (86%), it remains one of the highest among all public four-year institutions in the State of [Montana](#). At Highlands College, retention declined from 64% to 55% and is below the combined regional and national comparator (62%).

Since these retention results were reported, Montana Tech has implemented several intentional initiatives/programs designed to support retention of students at both the Montana Tech and Highlands College campuses. These include:

- Supporting High Achievement, Readiness and Persistence (SHARP) Summer Bridge Program – An initiative coordinated by both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, this program invites at-risk students to participate in a two weeklong bridge program. Students receive not only additional preparation in gateway course topics, such as math and writing, but also holistic strategies for being successful at college.
- New Student Orientation – Montana Tech completely reimaged new student orientation and the student onboarding experience, which has resulted in significantly higher participation and satisfaction rates.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 3: 0/3 measures achieved

Indicator 3: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor’s Cabinet prioritized the SHARP program and student wellness among the strategies intended to support increased student retention. In FY26, the Executive Budget Committee approved \$83,000 for Navigate360 and \$155,000 for Mantra Health to the state budget to support these efforts.

Retention improvement efforts for 26–27 will focus on scaling proactive, data-driven interventions that support early engagement and persistence. Montana Tech will be operationalizing its approved initiatives/funding from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) for the Institutional Innovation Project (\$126,770). This project’s priority is to improve student retention and on-time graduation.

- Navigate360/Canvas integration will support real-time identification of at-risk students, enabling automated and targeted outreach from advisors and faculty based on academic performance indicators (\$37,500 Navigate & \$55,000 Degreeworks).

- On-site Navigate360 advisor training.
- Expansion of the SHARP program to a targeted cohort of at-risk incoming students, focusing on academic preparation, help-seeking behaviors, and sense of belonging. (\$12,320)
- New student orientation was first reimagined and launched in the fall of 2024, and as a result of Innovation Project funding, the institution will continue to make research-informed adjustments to the program for fall 2026 and beyond. Through professional development opportunities, orientation leadership continues to modify the program's design to strengthen early student engagement, improve first-year persistence, and align with institutional goals of increasing retention and academic momentum.

Indicator 4: Degree completion

Indicator 4: Percentage of students graduate within 150% of normal time to completion for 2-year and 4-year programs, for groups with attainment gaps (gender and Pell)

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds the 150% graduation rate compared with regional and national peer institutions

Cohort Graduation Rate	2023	2024
Graduation rate total cohort		
Montana Technological University	58	58
4a: Regional Median	59	56
4b: National Median	62	61
Highlands College of Montana Tech	29	45
4c: Regional & National Median	37	40
Graduation rate men		
Montana Technological University	59	55
4d: Regional Median	59	53
4e: National Median	61	58
Highlands College of Montana Tech	42	55
4f: Regional & National Median	35	30
Graduation rate women		
Montana Technological University	56	66
4g: Regional Median	69	64
4h: National Median	72	71
Highlands College of Montana Tech	11	17
4i: Regional & National Median	37	42
Pell Grant recipients - Overall graduation rate within 150 percent of normal time		
Montana Technological University	41	49
4j: Regional Median	53	51
4k: National Median	53	52
Highlands College of Montana Tech	22	42
4l: Regional & National Median	37	36

SOURCE: Graduation Rate IPEDS (2024 Reporting is fall 2018 cohort Montana Tech and fall 2021 cohort Highlands College)

Indicator 4: Evaluation

Montana Tech's 6-year graduation rates were stable overall (58%) but remain behind national medians, with variation across student populations. While gains were observed for Pell-eligible students and women, gaps in completion persist, particularly in relation to national benchmarks. Some key contributors to delayed completion include high-credit degree programs, misalignment between student placement and required gateway courses, and inconsistent academic planning. Students beginning below calculus or college-level writing often require extended time to progress through prerequisite sequences, contributing to longer time-to-degree. Since the fall 2018 cohort, many structures have changed; for example, the freshman engineering experience, math placement and offerings, all designed to impact these lagging indicators. Structural support systems such as [TRIO Student Support Services](#) and the [Academic Center for Excellence](#) continue to adapt while implementing best practices in meeting the student demographic.

Highlands College's 150% of normal time graduation rate exceeds peers in total, men, and Pell students; but is substantially below peers for women (17% vs 42%). The men's success rate is heavily influenced by the 1semester Pre-Apprentice Line program. The women's graduation rate is impacted by the Radiological Technology program, a competitive program with a limited number of clinical sites. Fall 2021 was the first cohort entering with a redesign of 2-semesters of prerequisites prior to program entry to increase success.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 4: 6/12 measures achieved (Tech 3/8, Highlands 3/4)

Indicator 4: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized the evaluation of the academic advising model. The Chancellor charged the Provost and Student Affairs division with conducting a comprehensive review of academic advising across the institution. The committee, consisting of staff, faculty, and students, has convened throughout the 25/26 academic year and will be producing recommendations to the Provost for consideration.

Looking ahead to 26/27, the implementation of the academic advising recommendations will be prioritized to focus on improving academic preparedness and reducing time-to-degree.

Indicator 5: Experiential Learning Participation

Indicator: Percentage of students engaged in undergraduate research, internships, co-ops, and other high-impact practices (HIPs)

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds comparators in National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

NSSE HIP	2018	2022
Montana Technological University		
Senior 2 or More High End Practices	70	78
Senior Participating in High End Practices	92	98
Work with a faculty member on a research project? (Done or in progress)	33	39
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement? (Done or in progress)	54	70
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam, etc.)? (Done or in progress)	59	65
Carnegie Class		
Senior 2 or More High End Practices	61	64
Senior Participating in High End Practices	85	87
Work with a faculty member on a research project? (Done or in progress)	22	25
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement? (Done or in progress)	48	50
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam, etc.)? (Done or in progress)	48	53

SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Indicator 5: Evaluation

Montana Tech continues to demonstrate strong student participation in experiential learning and other high-impact practices. The most recent NSSE data show that Montana Tech seniors exceeded Carnegie Classification comparators across all listed HIP measures, including participation in two or more high-impact practices, undergraduate research, internships/co-ops/field experiences, and culminating senior experiences. Notably, 98% of seniors reported participating in at least one high-impact practice, compared with 87% for the Carnegie Classification comparator group, and 78% reported participation in two or more high-impact practices, compared with 64% for the comparator group.

These results reflect Montana Tech's continued emphasis on applied learning, faculty-student engagement, career preparation, and discipline-based experiential education. Participation in high-impact practices remains a strength of the institution and aligns directly with the university's mission to prepare students for professional careers.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 5: 5/5 measures achieved

Indicator 5: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor’s Cabinet prioritized the development of a peer mentorship and leadership program, as well as student-athlete leadership initiatives, in alignment with our 4-Lane Highway framework. To advance this priority, a committee composed of the Provost, faculty, staff, and an athletic coach was convened and charged with designing and implementing a new student leadership curriculum, set to launch in Spring 2027. Development of the program was informed by input from current student leaders to ensure relevance and a student-centered approach. In support of this effort, the Executive Budget Committee identified funding for FY27 of a 0.5 FTE Director of Leadership Programs position (\$36,000 salary + \$14,000 benefits).

During academic year 25/26, Montana Tech will continue to sustain and expand student access to experiential learning opportunities, with particular attention to internships, undergraduate research, field experiences, and culminating senior experiences. The university will also continue strengthening partnerships with employers, industry, agencies, and community partners to support career-connected learning opportunities across academic programs. The NSSE was administered in Spring 2026 beginning the data utilization and implementation planning phase within the assessment cycle. Montana Tech continues to review processes and identify opportunities to align institutional data for analysis alongside NSSE results.

Indicator 6: Post-Graduation Career Outcomes

Indicator: Average starting salary for graduates by degree level
Benchmark: Meets or exceeds averages from previous year

Outcomes Survey Results by Award Level	Average Salary 2022	Average Salary 2023	Average Salary 2024
Certificate	\$ 56,135	\$ 65,925	\$ 62,318
Associate	\$ 48,053	\$ 45,608	\$ 61,929
Bachelors	\$ 68,861	\$ 72,535	\$ 74,198
Masters	\$ 93,200	\$ 91,569	\$ 87,157
Doctorate	ID	ID	ID
Total	\$ 66,280	\$ 71,875	\$ 73,562

SOURCE: Montana Tech Career Services Outcomes Survey
Insufficient Data (ID)

Indicator 6: Evaluation

Average starting salaries for graduates increased overall, with gains in several degree categories, particularly at the bachelor’s and associate level. However, variability across award levels indicates that outcomes are not consistently improving year over year. In some cases, observed fluctuations may reflect the impact of small response counts rather than meaningful changes in graduate earnings. Outcomes collection for the 24/25 academic year exceeded National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Knowledge Rate standards and continued to show strong outcome trends for most programs at the university.

Montana Tech's outcomes reflect strong alignment between academic programs and workforce demand. This data also highlights the need for more consistent data tracking and stronger integration of career development throughout the student experience.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 6: 2/4 measures achieved

Indicator 6: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized strong alignment between academic programs and workforce demand while expanding on enriching opportunities. In 25/26, Career Services began implementing a new software, Career Forge, which improves outcomes tracking, as well as the user experience for both students and employers. While Montana Tech regularly exceeds the NACE Knowledge Rate for outcomes collection, there are further opportunities for engagement to more efficiently and effectively collect the data.

Institutional efforts in 26–27 will focus on strengthening the connection between academic programs, experiential learning, and career outcomes. SHARP and the redesigned orientation support student engagement and career readiness from entry through graduation. Expanded use of advising technologies and structured academic planning tools will support earlier and more intentional alignment between student academic choices and career goals. These efforts align with institutional priorities to improve retention, completion, and return on investment through stronger workforce outcomes.

Evaluation of Goal 1: Student Success

The Chancellor's Cabinet led an intentional approach related to the Student Success Goal in FY26 aligning priorities and resources, recognizing the indicator's lag.

Of the 6 indicators related to student success, 5 of the 6 indicators achieved at least half of the measures. Retention as compared to the peer institutions is the only indicator not met. While Montana Tech and Highlands College's retention is high compared to others in the Montana University System (MUS), the peers contain some aspirational schools with higher entrance requirements. Planned institutional investments in FY26 support a systematic approach to retention and align with emerging trends in supporting students.

Indicator	Number of Measures/Indicator	Number of Measures Met	At least half?
1. Enrollment	2	2	Met
2. Academic Planning and Advising	4	2	Met
3. Retention	3	0	Not Met
4. Degree completion	12	6	Met
5. Experiential Learning Participation	5	5	Met
6. Post-Graduation Career Outcomes	4	2	Met

In FY26, the Student Success Goal was supported with funding from the state budget for \$83,000 for Navigate360 and \$155,000 for Mantra Health.

In FY27, the Student Success Goal will be supported with the following investments:

- A brand communications coordinator position will be partially funded through a reallocation of existing publications funds and additional funding. (\$79,000)
- Digital advertising will receive an additional \$83,000, increasing the current advertising budget within admissions of \$45,000 to support expanded components within that effort.
- Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) for the Institutional Innovation Project. (\$126,770)
 - Navigate360/Canvas integration and on-site Navigate360 advisor training. (\$92,500)
 - Expansion of the SHARP program. (\$12,320)
- Director of Leadership Programs position. (\$50,000)
- Implementation of the Academic Advising Implementation Plan.

GOAL 2: PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION

Deliberately committed to excellence in all programs, we provide transformational experiences in learning, research, and service through experiential learning, mentoring, community and industry engagement. We empower collaborative problem solvers, determined doers who make an impact in their profession and our world.

Objective: Build programs that are recognized for their academic rigor, research impact, and transformative student experiences.

Indicator 1: Foster Excellence in Instruction

Indicator: Percentage of faculty who demonstrate the use of evidence-based teaching practices, active learning strategies, and instructional technologies that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Benchmark: Annual increases in the percentage of courses and academic programs that incorporate evidence-based instructional approaches, active and experiential learning methods, and appropriate instructional technologies, as documented through program review, curriculum assessment, and faculty development activities. These improvements should be associated with measurable gains in student learning outcomes and academic success metrics.

Indicator 1: Evaluation

To ensure that the cornerstone of who we are as an institution, excellence in instruction, is measured in a way that is both meaningful and sustainable, we are taking additional time to evaluate this indicator. This intentional delay is focused on developing measures that are valid, actionable, and aligned with our mission and institutional priorities.

Although the measurement will be delayed evaluating structures to support this indicator, Montana Tech continued to advance instructional excellence through programs that emphasize applied learning, faculty-student engagement, experiential education, and discipline-specific preparation. Across academic programs, faculty continued to incorporate active and experiential learning approaches through undergraduate research, field-based learning, laboratory instruction, internships, capstone experiences, clinical placements, project-based learning, and other high-impact practices that support student achievement of learning outcomes. While this indicator is primarily academic in nature, it is also closely connected to the university's research and workforce missions, as modern instructional approaches increasingly integrate research experiences, industry-informed projects, emerging technologies, and real-world problem solving into the curriculum.

Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 1: measurement and mechanism under review, baseline 26/27

Indicator 1: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized the following: academic road maps and budget aligned with our 4-Lane Highway; focus on artificial intelligence (AI); and fundraising to support advancement of academic excellence.

- Each college, through the dean and faculty, developed maps with our 4-Lane Highway, providing a forward-looking framework. These roadmaps outline a multifaceted plan to:
 1. Expand workforce-aligned infrastructure programming

2. Strengthen infrastructure demonstration and applied learning environments
 3. Expand computing and digital infrastructure integration
 4. Strengthen dual enrollment and workforce pipelines.
- During 25/26, an AI Working Group met regularly to develop an institutional roadmap for AI capacity building and implementation across the university. To advance these efforts, the Executive Budget Committee reallocated resources in FY27 to establish and support its inaugural full-time Chief AI Officer position (\$120,000 salary + \$37,000 benefits). This position is funded through strategic initiatives funding and student fees. This position has been filled, and programming is underway, including a faculty/staff workshop scheduled for the start of the 26/27 academic year.

The Executive Budget Committee approved funding for the addition of 3.05fte faculty in FY27 to support excellence in instruction and alignment with our 4-Lane Highway.

- Lance College of Mines and Engineering (2.05 fte)
 - o Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering (\$80,000 salary + \$29,000 benefits, 1.00 fte)
 - o Assistant Professor, Electrical Engineering (\$44,000 salary + \$16,000 benefits, 0.55 fte)
 - o Assistant Professor, Environmental Engineering (\$45,000 salary + \$16,000 benefits, 0.5 fte)
- Highlands College (1.00 fte)
 - o Instructor, Civil Engineering Technology (\$55,000 salary + \$24,000 benefits)

Indicator 2: Foster Excellence in Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity

Indicator: Faculty engaged in funded research.

Benchmark: Research expenditures exceed the previous 3 year average

Total R&D expenditures (dollars in thousands)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Montana Tech	14,933	14,188	18,375	22,588	21,666
3 year average				15,832	18,384

SOURCE: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Higher Education R&D Survey

Indicator 2: Evaluation

Montana Tech demonstrated strong performance on the benchmark of growth in research expenditures based on the most recent Higher Education R&D Survey data available. While total R&D expenditures decreased slightly from 2021 to 2022, and again from 2024 to 2025, expenditures increased from \$14.933 million in 2021 to \$21.666 million in 2025. This increase indicates substantial progress toward fostering excellence in funded research, scholarship, and creative activity.

This performance reflects Montana Tech's continued strength in applied research and its capacity to secure external funding in areas aligned with institutional expertise and regional, state, and national needs. Continued growth in research expenditures supports the university's goal of building programs of distinction that are recognized for academic rigor, research impact, and transformative student experiences.

Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 2: 1/1 measures achieved

Indicator 2: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, priorities around excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity identified by the Chancellor's Cabinet included: research and Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) maps aligned with our 4-Lane Highway; additional graduate assistantships; endowed research funding; and increased collaboration with campus and MBMG.

- Both the research and MBMG maps have been developed aligning with our 4-Lane Highway, providing a forward-looking framework. These roadmaps outline a multifaceted plan to:
 - Strengthen research infrastructure and reduce barriers to faculty participation in sponsored activity and
 - Expand student involvement in research and further strengthen the connection between faculty scholarship, program distinction, and student learning.
- In 25/26, the Executive Budget Committee approved the creation of a new position titled Executive Director of Critical Mineral Initiatives (\$155,000 salary + \$42,000 benefits). Through the leadership in this position, the campus has strengthened collaboration with campus faculty and MBMG staff, industry partners, and national laboratories to create research teams for proposal writing and submission. Several large proposals are pending.

Through the Executive Budget Committee and strategic funding, an Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Solutions will provide visionary leadership that integrates research and K–12 outreach, advances university research priorities, and elevates the Center's regional and national impact and reputation. (\$105,000 salary + \$34,000 benefits).

The Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School proposed the following request for FY27 with endorsement by the [Research Advisory Committee](#) and approval from the Executive Budget Committee:

- One research faculty/staff member specializing in critical minerals research (\$100,000 salary + \$33,000 benefits). This is a major focus area based on federal funding opportunities and industry partner feedback aligned with our 4-Lane Highway. This new individual will help elevate these research activities while also supporting faculty in departments that are operating at capacity already.

Continued collaboration with the Montana Tech Foundation related to philanthropic support for graduate assistantships and endowed research are ongoing. As progress is made toward accomplishing the 25/26 Cabinet strategies, the Chancellor's Cabinet will transition to new priorities for 26/27 including a proposal to fund instrument technician(s) focused on training appropriate use of equipment and maintenance and exploring opportunities encouraging externally funded work such as a course release (buyout) policy and indirect cost (IDC) return policy to principal investigators (PI). Aligning with the research and MBMG maps, the campus will emphasize proposal development support, strategic partnerships, interdisciplinary collaboration, and alignment with federal, state, industry, and community funding priorities.

Further discussion and review of this indicator is planned in 26/27 to strengthen the alignment of the indicator and benchmark. The planned review will include considerations of information captured by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to add additional measure(s) of faculty engagement through proposals as related to excellence in research, scholarship and creative activity.

Indicator 3: Industry and Community Partnerships

Indicator: Number of active partnerships with industry, government, and community organizations.

Benchmark: Increase number of active partnerships with documented activity in the past 12 months.

Indicator 3: Evaluation

During AY 25/26, Montana Tech continued to strengthen partnerships with industry, government, and community organizations in ways that support research growth, graduate education, workforce development, and student experiential learning. These partnerships provide opportunities for externally funded research, applied projects, internships, field experiences, access to specialized facilities and expertise, and direct engagement with employers and agencies in areas aligned with Montana Tech's mission.

Partnership activity remains especially strong in areas connected to our 4-Lane Highway: natural resources, critical minerals, energy, environmental stewardship, infrastructure, health and safety, and workforce development. These collaborations help distinguish Montana Tech's academic and research programs by connecting faculty and students to real-world problems, externally sponsored projects, and career pathways in sectors that are important to Montana, the region, and the nation.

Montana Tech currently has 13 active industry-sponsored research projects.

Industrial Advisory Boards (IABs) bridge the gap between academia and industry. They help define and review Program Educational Objectives and review Student Outcomes. IABs provide feedback on curricular content and recommendations for improvement. Beyond curricular functions, IABs help identify and provide internship opportunities, industry-sponsored capstone projects, and employment opportunities after graduation. All Montana Tech departments/colleges have IABs. IABs are a required component for a program to be ABET accredited, impacting the Lance College of Mines & Engineering (LCME). Highlands College has one IAB that meets twice a year with over 20 industry partners supporting all areas within the college.

Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 3: measurement and mechanism under review, baseline 26/27

Indicator 3: Future Plans and Measurement

Due to IAB feedback, Highlands College submitted a request to plan in 25/26 to the Board of Regents. This request aims to expand the current residential-focused construction program to include new tracks in commercial and restoration construction. Additionally, in partnership with Montana Resources, which recently donated 16 welders valued at \$70,000—Highlands College will launch a new [Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance](#) program in Fall 2027 to support the local and area mining industry.

Highlands College has also partnered with the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center to implement an Advanced Manufacturing program, securing \$150,000 for a launch in 26/27. Backed by Butte-Silver Bow local government, the Economic Development Council, and the Butte Chamber of Commerce, Highlands College remains a deeply collaborative member of the Butte community and a vital workforce pipeline for the local region and the State of Montana.

During AY 26/27, Montana Tech will continue to expand and formalize strategic partnerships that support research impact, graduate education, student success, and workforce development. Emphasis will be placed on partnerships that create opportunities for funded research, internships, applied learning, shared facilities, technical collaboration, and graduate student engagement. Examples of

expanded federal funding opportunities include DOE, DOI, and DOW pending proposals of more than \$500 million.

New and expanding areas of partnership include engagement with Idaho National Laboratory in areas such as nuclear energy, critical minerals, and related workforce needs; developing collaboration with the National Energy Technology Laboratory in critical minerals, oil and gas, coal, and energy-related research; and continued partnership with Montana Resources in areas such as diesel technology, heavy equipment, mining, research and applied workforce preparation. These partnerships will help Montana Tech build programs of distinction by aligning academic and research strengths with regional and national priorities.

In 26/27, the review of this indicator and measure will include defining active partnerships, timeframe of measure, and establishing systems to track the information while ensuring accuracy and completeness of information captured.

Indicator 4: Mentoring Programs

Indicator: Impact of peer and faculty mentoring on student success and satisfaction.

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds regional and Carnegie peers quantitatively through NSSE, and qualitatively through SSI (RNL).

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	2018	2022
Student-Faculty Interaction		
Freshman		
Montana Technological University	20.8	20
Carnegie Class	21.7	22.3
Seniors		
Montana Technological University	27	26.9
Carnegie Class	25.2	25.8

SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Indicator 4: Evaluation

NSSE results indicate mixed performance in student-faculty interaction, a key proxy for mentoring impact. Freshman engagement declined slightly from 20.8 to 20, remaining below Carnegie peers (22.3), while senior engagement remained strong at 26.9 and continues to exceed comparator levels (25.8). These results suggest that while upper-division students benefit from strong mentoring relationships, likely through faculty interaction, research, and applied experiences, early-stage students are less consistently engaged. Additionally, graduate students mentoring is embedded within all graduate programs from advisors, graduate committee, and curriculum, documented throughout [the Graduate Student Handbook](#).

Considering the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), peer tutoring services were identified as a strength for the institution, with Montana Tech’s Spring 2025 satisfaction results exceeding the average of national four-year publics as well as our own results from when the inventory was last administered in fall 2019.

Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 4: 1/2 measures achieved

Indicator 4: Future Plans and Measurement

For 26/27, Montana Tech will strengthen mentoring structures by investments and efforts linked to Goal 1-Student Success through the Chancellor's Cabinet.

- Integration of Navigate360 will allow advisors and faculty to identify students early in their academic journey and connect them with mentoring, support services, and faculty engagement opportunities in a more systematic way. By embedding mentoring more intentionally within a coordinated, data-informed advising and student engagement framework the gap in freshman experience to peers will be targeted. (Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 3)
- Led by the Provost's Office, plans are underway to hire a Director for the Leadership Program. This role will unify existing leadership initiatives and introduce an intentional, consistent curriculum, enhancing students' holistic academic experience and cocurricular journeys. (Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 5)
- Looking ahead to 26/27, measures related to the mentoring of graduate students will be considered for future evaluation of effectiveness related to this indicator.

Evaluation of Goal 2: Programs of Distinction

The Chancellor's Cabinet prioritized efforts related to the Programs of Distinction Goal in FY26 aligning academic and research priorities with our 4-Lane Highway with academic roadmaps and planning to diversify applied research providing clarity of purpose and differentiation.

Indicator	Number of Measures/Indicator	Number of Measures Met	At least half?
1. Foster Excellence in Instruction	Measurement and mechanism under review, baseline 26/27		
2. Foster Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity	1	1	Met
3. Industry and Community Partnerships	Measurement and mechanism under review, baseline 26/27		
4. Mentoring Programs	2	1	Met

Based on the two indicators measured during AY 2025–26, Goal 2 met the institution's current threshold for mission fulfillment. Two additional indicators remain under development and will be incorporated into the AY 2026–27 evaluation. Consequently, this determination should be interpreted as an initial baseline assessment rather than a complete evaluation of all Programs of Distinction indicators.

Of the 4 indicators related to Programs of Distinction, 2 of the 4 indicators were not measured in 25/26. The 2 indicators not measured had significant campus investment to establish frameworks and processes to measure in 26/27. These efforts included establishing academic roadmaps for each College and AI Working Group.

The 2 indicators measured were both met with at least half of the measures achieved.

In FY26, the Programs of Distinction goal was supported with the hiring of an Executive Director of Critical Mineral Initiatives. Through the leadership of this position the research and industry partnerships were strengthened (\$197,000).

In FY27, the Programs of Distinction goal will be supported with the following investments:

- A Chief AI Officer will help sustain the momentum of the AI Taskforce and move forward with identified strategies, recommendations, and action items (\$157,000).
- The institution's investment in faculty strengthens instructional quality and capacity tied to our 4-Lane Highway. (\$309,000)
- The Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Solutions provides a coordinated opportunity to provide leadership integrating research and K-12 outreach, aligned with the university research priorities. (\$139,000)

- Critical mineral researcher presents an opportunity to align the natural resource lane from our 4-Lane Highway with federal funding and industry partnerships. (\$133,000)

GOAL 3: HEALTHY AND VIBRANT CAMPUS ECOSYSTEM

Opportunistic and innovative, we embrace our rich cultural heritage and abundant recreational environment to foster an inclusive and sustainable campus ecosystem. We provide exceptional service and invest in effective infrastructure that creates opportunities for social, intellectual, and professional growth.

Objective: To develop a campus environment that supports faculty, staff, and students through comprehensive professional development, a culture of belonging, and sustainable facilities that promote learning and well-being.

Indicator 1: Employee Retention

Indicator: Rate of faculty and staff turnover

Benchmark: Between 10% and 15%, [CUPA-HR Annual Workforce Survey](#).

Full-Time Employees	2022	2023	2024
1a: Faculty	13%	12%	9%
1b: non-faculty	17%	12%	14%
Faculty and non-faculty	16%	12%	12%

SOURCE: IPEDS HR Reporting

Indicator 1: Evaluation

Institutional effectiveness in employee retention is monitored through two indicators: (1) faculty turnover and (2) staff turnover. Benchmarks are informed by national post-COVID trends and account for variation across employment groups. For example, national data indicate full-time nonexempt staff turnover often exceeds 15%, while exempt staff turnover is typically lower. The established ranges intentionally accommodate expected levels of retirement, voluntary separation, career advancement, internal mobility, and strategic hiring cycles.

Current results indicate that non-faculty turnover remains within benchmark. Full-time faculty turnover is below the benchmark at 9%. The lower faculty turnover in 2024 is attributable to fewer voluntary departures; notably, the margin between meeting and exceeding the benchmark was one individual, underscoring the sensitivity of this measure to small changes. Within the measurement period ([Spring 2024](#)), Faculty Senate requested a presentation from Human Resources (HR) based on a perception of high turnover; however, the data indicate the opposite. The benchmark was not met because turnover was below, not above, the established range.

Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 1: 1/2 measures achieved

Indicator 1: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor’s Cabinet identified onboarding and orientation as a strategic priority. These efforts build upon earlier efforts that centralized [resources](#) and established a formal, comprehensive onboarding [checklist](#) to support supervisors and improve consistency in the new employee experience. In FY25, the Executive Budget Committee approved the addition of a Human Resources (HR) Specialist (\$60,000 salary + \$23,000 benefits); however, the position was not filled until FY26. The position has strengthened institutional capacity to support these initiatives.

Looking ahead to 26/27, the increased HR capacity allows the institution to expand its focus beyond onboarding. While onboarding is an important part of employee integration, long-term retention depends on employees feeling valued, connected, and supported in their growth. Employees are more likely to stay when they receive meaningful recognition, feel a sense of belonging, see clear opportunities for development, and managers who actively advocate for their advancement.

Managers play a critical role in retention by understanding employees as individuals, creating psychological safety, providing regular feedback, removing obstacles, and helping employees connect their work to the institution's mission. Employees want to see the impact of their contributions, receive credit for their work, and have managers who actively support their career growth. Fair and transparent promotion processes, access to learning opportunities, and clear pathways for advancement help employees envision a future with the institution and remain engaged over time.

Retention ultimately requires that employees feel included as part of the team, and aligned with the university culture, have plenty of professional development opportunities, and pathways, within the evolving needs of the institution. Through collaboration and intentionality, priorities identified for FY27 include improving the on-boarding process and experience, review of search processes, and supervisor training.

Indicator 2: Professional Development Participation

Indicator: Percentage of faculty and staff participating in professional development opportunities and/or programs.

Benchmark: Year-over-year increase in participation and institutional investment in externally and internally offered development and advancement opportunities, Baseline information capture AY 26/27

Indicator 2: Evaluation

While professional development was identified as a priority during the development of the strategic plan, baseline data were not centrally collected and standardized definitions were not established. Opportunities and expectations for professional development vary across campus constituents, reflecting differences in budget capacity, staffing, and time availability.

Coordinated, broad based trainings have been offered through the [Center for Academic Innovation](#), Staff Senate Lunch and Learns, and Welcome Back Week; these are not representative of the necessary professional development required in the employee's field of expertise. For example, certain faculty and staff roles include externally mandated professional development requirements tied to licensure or certification (e.g., Registered Nurses, Certified Public Accountants, Professional Engineers), while others lack clearly defined expectations.

Evaluation of this indicator demonstrates the need for an institutional framework that establishes consistent definitions and systematic data collection processes. Such a framework is necessary to develop a reliable baseline from which participation, alignment, and effectiveness of professional development activities can be measured and assessed over time.

Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 2: No Measurement, pending establishing a baseline

Indicator 2: Future Plans and Measurement

During academic year 25/26, the Chancellor's Cabinet identified key priorities including expanded professional learning opportunities for managers and improved process efficiencies (including the integration of AI solutions). In FY26, the filled Human Resources Specialist position strengthened institutional capacity to advance these priorities (Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 1).

Demonstrating a commitment to emerging technologies, under the leadership of the provost, the institution established an artificial intelligence (AI) team to address rapid developments in AI and support instructional innovation and skill development. Additionally, philanthropic support enabled athletic coaches to engage in external benchmarking through shadowing experiences and informing improvements in athletic administration efficiencies.

Looking ahead to FY27, this enhanced capacity (Human Resources and Chief AI Officer, Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 1) positions the institution to more intentionally prioritize and coordinate professional development activities across the campus. Human Resources is using the Cascade Development Model and will begin phase one of building the framework. The Cascade Development Model is based on educating managers first, so they can develop others. The idea is to have the manager become the primary person responsible for developing their employees. Human Resources will begin providing managers with the training needed to develop their employees.

Indicator 3: Campus Facilities Upgrades

Indicator: Institutional investment in modernizing instructional, research, and office space

Benchmark: Continuous institutional investment

Indicator 3: Evaluation

Montana Tech invests significantly in modernizing campus facilities, including instructional, research, and office space. Approximately \$500,000 is allocated annually to support the purchase, maintenance, or lease of equipment that primarily benefits educational programs.

An additional \$315,000 per year supports campus-wide technology infrastructure, including computing equipment, software, maintenance, and computer networks. Montana Tech also invests approximately \$700,000 annually in other campus facility upgrades.

Research equipment purchased through external funding—averaging \$2.5 million per year—has further contributed to the continuous modernization of campus facilities. Collectively, these investments represent over 5% of Montana Tech's annual \$83 million budget across all fund sources.

Since 2020, Montana Tech has further benefited from major infrastructure investments by the State of Montana with \$53 million allocated to the university including \$38 million allocated for renovations to Main Hall and Engineering Hall, as well as for deferred maintenance and major repair projects across campus. This level of state support represents a substantial increase compared to the \$6.8 million received between 2010 and 2019, reflecting a strong commitment by the State of Montana to Montana Tech's campus facilities.

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	4yr Total	4yr Average
Equipment	\$380,211	\$722,657	\$344,262	\$508,781	\$1,955,911	\$488,978
Technology Infrastructure	\$149,979	\$340,751	\$329,000	\$513,139	\$1,332,869	\$333,217
Campus Upgrades	\$662,078	\$850,688	755,956	\$714,365	\$2,983,087	\$745,772
Auxiliary Upgrades	\$267,354	\$225,683	213,885	\$673,620	\$1,380,542	\$345,136
Research Equipment	\$633,849	\$2,252,571	4,164,661	\$2,817,129	\$9,868,210	\$2,467,053
Total	\$2,093,471	\$4,392,350	\$5,807,764	\$5,227,034	\$17,520,619	\$4,380,155

On average in the last four fiscal years, over \$4 million per year has been invested in modernizing campus infrastructure.

Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 3: 1/1 measures achieved

Indicator 3: Future Plans and Measurement

During fiscal year 26, a proposal was presented to the Executive Budget Committee by the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration to establish reserve (plant) fund benchmarks to be used for deferred maintenance of academic and administrative space in addition to an auxiliary renewal and replacement fund. This strategic investment will allow Montana Tech to continue funding sustainable facilities that promote learning and well-being.

The national benchmark for maintenance is 3% of replacement value.

- Replacement value of academic buildings totals \$300 million.
- Benchmark for academic and administrative space would be \$9 million.
- State funding from the MUS Long Range Building Plan addresses half of the \$9 million so Montana Tech's goal/benchmark would be to build up the fund balance for the additional 50% (\$4.5 million).

The national benchmark for auxiliary renewal and replacement is to set aside 10-15% of annual auxiliary revenue per year.

- 15% of auxiliary revenue (excluding dining since this is contracted out) is about \$690k.

The budget supports university priorities and resources are allocated in alignment with our 4-Lane Highway and strategic plan. Examples of priorities include increasing enrollment, improving retention, addressing student-to-faculty ratios that fall outside institutional goals, and meeting infrastructure, technology, and operational needs.

Indicator 4: Campus Climate and Belonging

Indicator: Faculty, staff and student satisfaction with the overall campus climate and sense of belonging.

Benchmark: Meets or exceeds comparators for externally validated surveys or previous year for internal surveys.

	2024 Tech	2025 Tech
Faculty and Staff		
Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work.	73	59
Percent Respondents Faculty	46%	100%
National 2020 Comparison Provided by GPTW	97	97
Scale 12 Campus Climate	2019	2025
Montana Tech	5.56	5.72
National 4 Year Public	5.57	5.49
Satisfaction Difference (Montana Tech-National)	-0.01	0.23***
Highlands College	5.59	5.82
National Community College	5.74	6.02
Satisfaction Difference (Highlands College-National)	-0.15	-0.2*

SOURCE: Faculty and Staff Senate surveys

SOURCE: RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory™

Statistical Significance

*Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.05 level

**Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.01 level

***Difference Statistically Significant at the 0.001 level

Indicator 4: Evaluation

Faculty/Staff:

The Faculty Senate Bylaws outline the function to include conducting a faculty satisfaction survey. In 2022, the campus administered the Great Places to Work® (GPTW) survey to faculty and staff in lieu of the Faculty Senate developed survey. Since administering GPTW, Montana Tech created a similar annual survey and uses the 2020 GPTW comparison results.

In the 2025, Montana Tech staff participated in the Montana University System Staff Association (MUSSA) survey and were not included in the campus survey. In 2025, the MUSSA survey results were not available exclusively for Montana Tech but reflected a consensus across all participating institutions. The 2025 (59%) institutional results mark was a significant decline from 2024 (73%); however, these results reflect only the faculty perspective in 2025. Montana Tech faculty and staff have consistently not met the overall satisfaction of the 2020 comparison from GPTW.

Students:

Student satisfaction with campus climate improved overall, with Montana Tech increasing from 5.56 to 5.72 and surpassing the national 4-year public average (5.49), resulting in a positive satisfaction gap. At

Highlands College, student satisfaction also improved (5.59 to 5.82) but remains below national comparators (6.02). While the university has made meaningful progress in fostering a positive student climate and sense of belonging, there are still gaps in the student experience, particularly for certain populations.

Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 4: 1/3 measures achieved (campus staff satisfaction not measured)

Indicator 4: Future Plans and Measurement

The Chancellor's Cabinet did not identify priorities for the 2025-26 academic year related to this measure. Cabinet membership includes the chairs from each shared governance body: [Faculty Senate](#), [Staff Senate](#), and the Associated Students of Montana Tech ([ASMT](#)). While a process for submitting requests for consideration was established, no written recommendations were submitted during the 2025-26 year. By definition in the Faculty Staff Handbook, the Employee Relations Committee (ERC) is charged with reviewing and monitoring morale survey results. The ERC shares these results with the Faculty and Staff Senates, which can then submit written recommendations to the administration.

In fall 2025, the Cabinet developed a Culture Statement with feedback from faculty, staff, and student governance bodies.

At Montana Tech, we:

- Support each other through empathy and care.
- Encourage open dialogue and professional communication.
- Strengthen collaboration and interconnectivity.
- Celebrate our diverse experiences and perspectives.
- Embrace collective responsibility and personal accountability.

The Culture Statement establishes the desired workplace culture while setting behavior expectations.

In spring 2026, the 2024 results of survey were [presented](#) to the Faculty Senate and the 2025 results were discussed by the senate officers but not reported to the faculty senate or full faculty due to leadership transition. The modified GPTW survey was [administered](#) to faculty members. As of this report, MUSSA has not conducted an additional staff survey since 2025. During AY 26/27, the ERC, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate will continue to coordinate employee satisfaction goals that align with regular survey administration cycles. Survey findings and documented recommendations will be prioritized based on areas within the institution's ability to influence and address, with recommendations advanced to the Chancellor's Cabinet and aligned with our 4-Lane Highway. For example, while employee feedback regarding benefits is valued, employee benefit packages are determined outside the institution's direct authority and, therefore, are not areas in which institutional action can be taken.

For 26/27, Montana Tech will continue to prioritize strengthening students' sense of belonging through coordinated, evidence-based interventions aligned with institutional innovation strategies. These strategies include documented plans within Goal 1, Objective 1, Indicator 4: Degree Completion.

Evaluation of Goal 3: Healthy & Vibrant Campus Ecosystem

The Chancellor's Cabinet provided leadership and focus related to the Healthy and Vibrant Campus Ecosystem Goal in FY26 aligning priorities and resources, recognizing the breath of the goal. Of the 4 indicators related to Healthy & Vibrant Campus Ecosystem, 1 indicator was not measured with plans to collect baseline information in 26/27 and 2 of the 3 indicators achieved at least half of the measures. Campus climate and belonging of North Campus students exceeding national comparisons. Faculty and Highlands students' satisfaction was below national comparisons, while the staff satisfaction was not collected. The Employee Relations Committee's charge, coupled with its participation in the Chancellor's Cabinet shared governance model, supports continuous evaluation and ongoing recommendations for improvement.

Indicator	Number of Measures/Indicator	Number of Measures Met	At least half?
1. Employee Retention	2	1	Met
2. Professional Development Participation	0 (Baseline being established 26/27)		
3. Campus Facilities Upgrades	1	1	Met
4. Campus Climate and Belonging	3	1	Not Met

In FY26, the Healthy & Vibrant Campus Ecosystem Goal was supported through the filled Human Resource Specialist position and over \$5 million in infrastructure modernization.

In FY27, the Healthy & Vibrant Ecosystem Goal will be supported with the following investments:

- Budget principles where reserve (plant) fund benchmarks are established for deferred maintenance of academic and administrative space in addition to an auxiliary renewal and replacement fund.
- Data feedback loops within a shared governance model.

Conclusion

Montana Tech has demonstrated mission fulfillment by successfully meeting or exceeding the benchmarks for at least half of the indicators within each goal/objective. The evaluation of mission fulfillment demonstrates an alignment with the strategic plan, our 4-Lane Highway, and Chancellor's Cabinet priorities, recognizing that investments can impact multiple indicators and goals. For example, the resources utilized for Navigate360/Canvas integration positively impact all three goals through advising (Goal 1), mentoring (Goal 2), and satisfaction (Goal 3).

	Number of Indicators	Number of Indicators Measured 25/26	Number of Indicators Meeting Benchmark 25/26	50% or more of the indicators met?
GOAL 1: Student Success	6	6	5	Goal Met
GOAL 2: Programs of Distinction	4	2	2	Goal Met
GOAL 3: Healthy & Vibrant Ecosystem	4	3	2	Goal Met

The three indicators that were not measured in this report will be reviewed, revised, and baselines established through the leadership of the Chancellor's Cabinet priority leaders.

- Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 1: Foster Excellence in Instruction
 - Chancellor's Cabinet Lead: Provost
- Goal 2, Objective 1, Indicator 3: Industry and Community Partnerships
 - Chancellor's Cabinet Lead: Provost and Vice Chancellor of Research
- Goal 3, Objective 1, Indicator 2: Professional Development Participation
 - Chancellor's Cabinet Lead: Vice Chancellor of Administration & Finance and Director of Athletics

The strategic investments of \$295,000 in FY26 and \$943,770 in FY27, followed strategies of Chancellor's Cabinet and approved resource allocation of Executive Budget Committee. Through this initial institutional effectiveness report, the campus has identified opportunities to improve processes and foster a culture of evidence informed continuous improvement.

Appendix A

Chancellor's Cabinet

Chair: Chancellor

Membership: Faculty Senate Rep., Staff Senate Rep., Student Senate Rep., Provost/EVCAA, VCAF, VCR, Chief of Staff, Vice Provost/Dean of Students, Executive Director of Admissions and Enrollment, Executive Director of Communications, Athletics Director, MBMG Director, MT Tech Foundation CEO

Frequency: Bi-weekly – Every other Monday – 8:30-10:00am.

Charge: The Chancellor's Cabinet is responsible for overseeing the university's highest priorities and governance processes to ensure alignment with the institution's mission, strategic goals, and operational needs. The Cabinet's responsibilities include:

- **Strategic Prioritization:** Assess, prioritize, and advance institutional initiatives based on potential impact, resources required, and alignment with the university's mission and purpose.
- **Policy Review:** Review and recommend proposed revisions to university policies, ensuring they reflect current best practices, legal requirements, and the university's values.
- **Board of Regents Proposals:** Evaluate and approve high-level proposals that will be submitted to the Board of Regents for final approval, including major curricular changes, budget plans, and facilities proposals.
- **NWCCU Accreditation and Strategic Plan Fulfillment:** Regularly monitor NWCCU accreditation requirements and the implementation of the university's strategic plan, reviewing progress and providing recommendations for adjustments to ensure fulfillment of the institution's mission and purpose. The Director of Institutional Research and the Accreditation Liaison Officer will be invited to present regularly.
- **Regulatory Compliance Oversight:** At a high level, ensure university operations and decisions comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as relevant accreditation and reporting requirements.
- **Senate Priorities:** Ensure priorities raised by the Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates are addressed and resolved.

University Committees

Committee chairs will determine the membership and meeting frequency for their respective committee. Each committee's charge is described below.

- **Dean's Council** – Advance the Montana Tech's Special Focus designation and advance our mission and purpose related to academic affairs, industrial partnerships, and research focus. Chair: Provost/EVCAA.
- **Budget Committee and Executive Budget Committee** – Strengthen the institution's Special Focus designation and advance our mission and purpose through strategic, data-informed, and transparent resource allocation. <https://www.mtech.edu/about/admin-services/budget/> Chair: VCAF.
- **Research Advisory Committee** – Ensure the quality, integrity, and vitality of research programs aligned with the university's Special Focus designation, mission, and purpose. <https://www.mtech.edu/facultystaff/committees/research-advisory/index.html> Chair: VCR.
- **Communications Committee** – Foster clear, consistent, and strategic communication across the institution to strengthen engagement, promote institutional priorities, and enhance the university's visibility and reputation. Chair: Director of Communications.
- **Student Affairs Leadership Team** – Ensure a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive campus life experience by advising on programs, policies, and services aligned with the institution's mission and purpose. Chair: Vice Provost/Dean of Students.
- **Philanthropic Campaign Council** – Foster a collaborative partnership between the university and the Montana Tech Foundation, ensuring strategic philanthropic alignment with the University's institutional priorities. Co-Chairs: Executive Director of the Foundation and the Chancellor.
- **Strategic Enrollment Planning Council** – Develop and manage a comprehensive, data-informed strategic enrollment plan to foster long-term enrollment and fiscal health. Chair: Exec. Director of Admissions and Enrollment.
- **Athletics Department** – Advance the university's mission and purpose through student-centered athletics programs that promote character, integrity, and long-lasting connection with students, alumni, and the community. Chair: Athletics Director.
- **Administration Support Network** – Foster collaboration, professional development, and shared best practices among administration professionals across the university. Chair: Chief of Staff.

Appendix B

Accreditation Steering Committee Members (2025-2026)

Johnny MacLean, Chancellor
Tim Elgren, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Provost
Hilary Risser, Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), Professor, Mathematical Sciences
Ron Muffick, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Katie Hailer, Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of Graduate School
Joe Cooper, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs/Dean of Student Success
Tammy Burke, Dean, Highlands College
Michele Hardy, Dean, College of Letters, Sciences and Professional Studies
Jack Skinner, Dean, Lance College of Mines and Engineering
Sarah North Wolfe, Associate Dean of Students/Executive Director, Student Success
Amanda Badovinac, Executive Director, Marketing and Communications
Leslie Dickerson, Executive Director, Admissions & Enrollment
Heather Skocilich, Registrar
Carleen Cassidy, Director of Finance and Budget
Scott Juskiewicz, Director of Library
Melissa Kump, Director of Institutional Research
Jennifer Simon, Director, Information Services/Chief Information Officer
General Education Committee Chair - Vacant