

# Choosing Promise: Montana State University's Strategic Plan

## Adopted 2019 -- Amended 2023

In 2019, the university adopted its strategic plan, called "Choosing Promise," articulates the university's strategic direction and will serve as its roadmap through 2024.

In October 2023, University Council voted unanimously to extend the Strategic Plan for two years -- until 2026 -- to recognize the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the university's progress while also underlining the enduring features of the plan. The amended, updated plan proposed by Planning Council and approved by University Council reflects the living nature of Montana State University's Strategic Plan. It is not a static document; rather it is responsive to the changing circumstances in which the university finds itself.

Accordingly, there are three types of changes reflected in the amended plan of 2023. Changes will be noted with a letter to describe the nature of the recommendation:

- A. These are minimally- or non-substantive changes that update the plan through 2026. They extend or remove timelines for many of the metrics and actions to reflect the ongoing attention MSU is devoting. A word or phrase was changed to better reflect how the university is implementing the metric or action.
- B. Notation of those metrics or actions that the university has accomplished, which allows the university to focus more intently on those it has not yet accomplished. Metrics achieved will be monitored in the interest of continuous improvement.
- C. A few metrics or actions were tied to time-bound understanding, technologies, or environmental factors that have changed in the intervening years. One of these no longer serves the Goal or larger Intentional Focus. The priority on this metric was lowered in favor of achieving the remaining metrics and actions.

The Mission, Vision, Values, Intentional Focus Areas, or Goals remains unchanged. Planning Council reviewed these in 2021 and 2022 and found them to be relevant, important, and descriptive of the university are and what we as its faculty, staff and students want to achieve.

### Mission, Vision, and Values

The Mission, Vision and Values are the foundation of the strategic plan, defining what we do, why we do it and how we do it. Together they describe Montana State University's strategic direction.

#### MISSION

As the state's land-grant university, Montana State integrates education, creation of knowledge and art and service to communities.

#### VISION

Montana State University will transform lives and communities in the people's interest.

## VALUES

### *Excellence*

We pursue exceptional outcomes.

### *Integrity*

We commit to honesty, ethical behavior and accountability.

### *Inclusion*

We create a civil, supportive and respectful environment where difference and diversity are sources of strength.

### *Collaboration*

We believe that working together produces better outcomes.

### *Curiosity*

We expect inquiry, exploration, creativity and innovation.

### *Stewardship*

We care for and conserve the human, economic, physical and environmental resources entrusted to us.

## Areas of Intentional Focus and Goals

The Areas of Intentional Focus are the most important places for Montana State University to focus in the next three to seven years to fulfill our mission and vision. They are not the only things we will do, but they are the areas that we need to prioritize at this time if we are to move in our strategic direction.

*Goals* lend further specificity by describing the specific outcomes we hope to achieve in each Intentional Focus.

### Metrics and Actions

Metrics help us measure progress toward the goal, though they do not necessarily capture all of the aspirational or qualitative dimensions of a goal.

Actions define the concrete steps that must be taken at the institutional level, at a minimum, to be successful in each Goal.

Colleges, departments and other units will develop and pursue tailored metrics and actions that contribute to Montana State University's strategic direction. Actions prescribed at the University level should underpin and enable widespread effort across the University community and not preclude dispersed progress.

## INTENTIONAL FOCUS 1: Drive Transformational Learning Experiences Creating Outstanding Educational Outcomes for All Students

Montana State University students are challenged and changed by their active participation in high quality, innovative experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate level, becoming learned professionals and global citizens.

**GOAL 1.1:** Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in education.

As the state's land-grant university, Montana State invites participation in exceptional higher education, widens participation of under-represented student populations and improves student success outcomes overall.

### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Enrollment of students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities will increase in each group's share of the student body by two points by 2026.<sup>A</sup>
2. Eighty percent of student financial need will be met by 2026, compared to the current 74%.<sup>A</sup>
3. Montana State University will increase the number of 1-year and 2-year degrees and certificates awarded by 50% by 2026 (to 360).<sup>A</sup>
4. Montana State University will increase the number of Dual Enrollment students by 40% by 2024 (to 700).<sup>B</sup>
5. Montana State University will increase developmental education and co-requisite course completion rates to 75% by 2026.<sup>A</sup>
6. Montana State University will increase retention (from 72% to 85%) and six-year graduation (from 48% to 60%) rates for all incoming Montana State students and will reduce disparities for students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities by 2026. Graduate persistence and graduation will also be measured and improved.<sup>A</sup>
7. Montana State University will increase the number of students who receive national and international awards, honors and prestigious scholarships.

### GOAL 1.2: Expand high-quality graduate education

Montana State University will enroll and graduate more degree-seeking students at the graduate level and enhance the quality of graduate degree programs.

### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will enhance its graduate education portfolio with appropriate balance across programs including the social sciences, humanities and arts.<sup>A</sup>
2. Montana State University will match up to 20 additional externally funded graduate research assistantships with institutionally supported and competitively awarded graduate research assistant appointments, aligned with Grand Challenge areas, annually by 2020.<sup>B</sup>

3. Montana State University will increase the number of research doctoral degrees (to 90 from 66), professional practice doctorates (to 30 from 25), and Master's degrees (to 650 from 566) awarded annually by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

4. All graduate degree programs will undergo systematic review and, if appropriate, redesign to ensure that they are structured to meet the diverse career paths of today's students by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

GOAL 1.3: Implement evidence-based high quality, high impact teaching and learning practices for every student

Montana State University improves the curricular and co-curricular experience with demonstrated educational practices integrated with discovery and engagement that enhance learning and develop engaged global citizens and informed professionals.

#### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Each student at the undergraduate level will engage in at least one sustained curricular or co-curricular high quality, high impact practice<sup>i</sup>, demonstrated to positively affect educational or personal development, each year.<sup>A</sup>

2. The university will demonstrate that all graduating seniors have achieved Core learning outcomes<sup>ii</sup> and career competencies<sup>iii</sup> by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

3. All undergraduate students will use e-portfolios for sustained reflection on curricular, co-curricular and dynamic learning by 2024.<sup>C</sup> (*discontinued*)

4. At least 70% of undergraduate students will demonstrate sustained campus and community engagement by annually participating in one significant student engagement activity or leadership role, and attending 20 or more university events annually by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

## INTENTIONAL FOCUS 2: Improve Lives and Society through Research, Creativity, and Scholarship

Montana State University faculty, staff, and students are known nationally and internationally for discovering, applying, testing and sharing knowledge and creative works that expand understanding and positively impact lives and society.

GOAL 2.1: Enhance the significance and impact of scholarship

Montana State University research and creative activity demonstrates impact on the state's and the world's pressing challenges through application of our discoveries in communities, industry and organizations, as well as through academic indicators of the expansion of knowledge.

## *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will foster four Grand Challenges of Montana responsive to regional and global needs:

- Caring for our environment: environmental science, design, engineering, architecture and social structure
- Promoting wellness in our communities: access and equity in education and health outcomes, community-based participatory research, biomedical sciences and entrepreneurship
- Food and fuel security: sustainable food systems, precision agriculture, energy production, transmission and storage
- Securing the future of Montana: cybersecurity, photonics and optics, defense, governance and public policy<sup>B</sup>

2. Montana State University will define outcome measures that reflect success in the Grand Challenge areas by 2024, and will monitor these for demonstrated research-related improvement.<sup>A</sup>

3. Montana State University will enhance education of undergraduates and graduate students through increased participation in research, creative, and entrepreneurial activities by 10% by 2025.<sup>A</sup>

### GOAL 2.2: Expand interdisciplinary scholarship

Montana State University's interdisciplinary expertise as the University of the Yellowstone™ carries unique possibilities for inference, translation and impact. Our research and creative activity throughout the university increasingly spans traditional disciplinary boundaries to solve the world's pressing challenges.

## *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will secure at least one new interdisciplinary training grant or center grant for each Grand Challenge area by 2024.<sup>B</sup>

2. Montana State University will increase the grant expenditures associated with investigators in multiple academic units by 25% by 2022.<sup>B</sup>

3. Montana State University will increase the number of scholarly products that are authored or created by faculty from two or more academic units by 10% each year.<sup>B</sup>

4. Montana State University will review policies, resources and facilities that affect interdisciplinary scholarship and develop sustainable models for shared interdisciplinary resources by 2022.<sup>B</sup>

#### GOAL 2.3: Strengthen institutional reputation in scholarship

Montana State University's success in scholarship results in increased state, national and international prominence.

##### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will annually increase scholarship standing when compared to peer institutions.
2. Montana State University faculty will be recognized as regional and national leaders in Grand Challenge areas by 2026.<sup>A</sup>
3. Montana State University will demonstrate improved institutional reputation through the increased size of faculty applicant pools, increased diversity of applicant pools and increased ratio of offers accepted to offers made.
4. Montana State University will increase the number of faculty with membership among national academies, professional society fellows and state/federal/international advisory committees.
5. Montana State University will increase the number of faculty who receive national and international awards, and honors.
6. Montana State University will establish a baseline by 2020 and increase its number of international projects and collaborations in learning, scholarship and engagement by 10% by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

#### GOAL 2.4: Elevate expectations for scholarship

Montana State University faculty, staff and students hold themselves to the highest standards of research and creative outcomes.

##### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Colleges, departments, and centers will set goals and document progress in their annual research reports by 2020.<sup>B</sup>
2. Montana State University will have annual contract and grant expenditures exceeding \$200 million spanning all units by 2024.<sup>B</sup>

3. Publications, presentations of creative works, translational research and creative activity, and other evidence of dissemination of scholarship will meet or exceed peer benchmarks by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

4. Montana State University will increase the number of research faculty, research staff, post-docs and graduate students funded on external contracts and grants by 2022.<sup>B</sup>

### INTENTIONAL FOCUS 3: Expand Mutually Beneficial and Responsive Engagement for the Advancement of Montana

Montana State University students, faculty and staff work together and with partners across the state and around the world to enhance the well-being of individuals, organizations and communities.

#### GOAL 3.1: Increase mutually beneficial collaborations with Tribal nations and partners

Montana State University works cooperatively with Tribal governments, colleges, community groups and Indigenous students to develop and achieve beneficial outcomes.

#### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will build and maintain an inventory of partnerships with Tribal partners, and their mutually-defined intended outcomes, by 2024.<sup>A</sup>

2. Montana State University will work closely with partners to develop a plan to improve and increase Tribal partnerships with mutually-defined outcomes by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

3. Montana State University will enhance partnerships with Montana Tribal colleges to increase the number of graduates who enroll at MSU by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

4. Montana State University will complete construction on the American Indian Hall by 2022.<sup>B</sup>

#### GOAL 3.2: Grow mutually beneficial partnerships across Montana

Montana State University and its partners attain collaboratively defined outcomes that improve the lives and livelihoods of Montanans.

#### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will build and maintain an inventory of partnerships with state and local government, education, business and industry and non-profit organizations, and their mutually-defined intended outcomes, by 2024.<sup>A</sup>

2. Montana State University will develop a plan to improve and increase responsive partnerships with mutually-defined outcomes by 2026.<sup>A</sup>

3. Montana State University will develop and/or strengthen structures for Montana stakeholders to contribute to the research and engagement agenda of the university.<sup>A</sup>

4. New workforce and academic degree programs will be tailored to demonstrated state and regional needs with attention to national trends.<sup>B</sup>

GOAL 3.3: Foster a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, and individual growth

Montana State University and its students, faculty and staff engage in a reciprocal relationship that values each member and improves the university environment.

#### *METRICS and ACTIONS*

1. Montana State University will improve and increase collaborations between curricular and co-curricular units to support student success.

2. Montana State University will increase the number of collaborative grant applications and awards with investigators across curricular, co-curricular, the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, Extension and other units.

3. Montana State University will increase the average faculty and staff compensation to the representative peer market average.<sup>A</sup>

4. Montana State University will increase faculty and staff participation in health and wellness, personal, management and professional development opportunities.

5. Montana State University will make and annually monitor progress on the [2017 MSU Diversity & Inclusion Framework](#) themes (Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations, Education and Scholarship, Access and Success, Leadership and Accountability, Communication).<sup>A</sup>

6. Montana State University will develop a comprehensive sustainability framework by 2021 with measurement and annual progress reports to campus.<sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> Amended 2023

<sup>B</sup> Completed

*i High quality high impact practices include:*

*First year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, global learning experiences, diversity experiences, service learning, community-engaged projects, internships and co-op experiences, capstone courses and projects ([AAC&U](#)).*



ii The learning outcomes for Core 2.0 are:

*Demonstrate critical thinking abilities; Prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation; Demonstrate analytical, critical, and creative thinking in written communication; Demonstrate themselves to be reflective writers; Show willingness to take risks in new writing situations; Collaborate with other writers; Demonstrate ability to read rhetorical situations; Demonstrate control of situation-appropriate conventions of writing; Integrate source material in their writing; Interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, diagrams or tables; Represent mathematical information numerically, symbolically and visually; Employ quantitative methods in symbolic systems such as, arithmetic, algebra, or geometry to solve problems; An analytical and critical understanding of diversity within societies, nations, and cultures; Knowledge of a language other than English and the culture(s) that speak(s) that language; An analytical and critical understanding of particular, traditionally marginalized, or less frequently studied societies, nations, and/or cultures and an understanding of cultural difference in relation to those societies, nations, and/or cultures; Explain how science contributes to analyzing complex problems in the contemporary world; Describe the scientific method, the kinds of questions asked by scientists and the methods used to explore those questions; Demonstrate critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills; Work effectively in small groups; Understanding of disciplinary methods, including the kinds of questions asked in the discipline and the methods that practitioners use to explore those questions; Demonstrate critical thinking skills within the field; Demonstrate communication skills; Locate relevant information from broad and diverse sources; Apply critical and creative thinking to synthesize information; Produce a scholarly product based on both existing information and student effort (e.g., analysis, synthesis, design, etc.); Demonstrate the ability to successfully collaborate as a member of a team (when applicable); Demonstrate an understanding of the responsible conduct of research. ([Core 2.0 General Curricular Requirements](#))*

iii [NACE](#) describes career competencies as:

*Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.*

*Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.*

*Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.*

*Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.*

*Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.*

*Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal*

*communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.*

*Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.*

*Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.*

*<sup>c</sup> Discontinued*