



Missouri State.
UNIVERSITY



Assurance Argument 2026

Higher Learning Commission
Reaffirmation of Accreditation
March 30-31, 2026

Table of Contents

Criterion 1. Mission	1
1.A. Mission Alignment.....	1
Scope of Operations.....	2
Educational Programs	4
Enrollment Profile.....	6
1.B. Mission and Public Good	9
Local Partnerships.....	9
Regional Partnerships	9
International Partnerships	10
Community Engagement.....	11
1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society.....	12
University-Level Initiatives	12
College-Level Initiatives	14
Criterion 1 Summary.....	15
Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	16
2.A. Integrity	16
2.B. Transparency	19
2.C. Board Governance.....	20
2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression.....	22
2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application.....	23
Criterion 2 Summary.....	25
Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning for Student Success	26
3.A. Educational Programs	26
Curricular Programs.....	27
Student Learning Outcomes for Academic Programs.....	28
3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry.....	30
General Education.....	30
Undergraduate	30
Graduate.....	31
Students are Adaptive to Changing Environments.....	32
3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff.....	33
Sufficient Numbers of Faculty and Staff	33
Hiring Guidelines and Process for Faculty and Staff	34
Professional Development for Faculty and Staff.....	36
Annual Review Processes for Faculty and Staff	37
On-Boarding Process for Faculty and Staff.....	38
3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching.....	40
Student Learning Support.....	40
Mentoring.....	42
Off-Campus Programs.....	43
Academic Advising	44
Infrastructure and Resources for Teaching	45
Facilities	46
3.E. Assessment of Student Learning	47
Academic Performance Measuring System (APS)	47
Assessment Coordination.....	48
Institution-Level Assessment Process.....	49

College-Level Assessment Process	51
Academic Unit- or Program-Level Assessment	52
Co-Curricular and Student Affairs Assessment.....	54
3.F. Program Review	57
Regular Program Review Process.....	57
Program Review Prior to 2020.....	57
Program Review Beginning in 2024.....	57
Spring 2025 Pilot—Cycle 1	57
Fall 2025—Cycle 2	58
Spring 2026—Cycle 3	58
3.G. Student Success Outcomes	61
Definitions and Institutional Goals.....	61
Multi-Year Trend Data and DFW Patterns	61
Evidence of Institutional Action to Improve Outcomes.....	62
Strategic Enrollment Management	63
Criterion 3 Summary.....	64
Criterion 4. Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	65
4.A. Effective Administrative Structures.....	65
4.B. Resource Base and Sustainability	69
Financial Resources.....	69
Budget Processes.....	70
Personnel Resources	71
Space Allocation, Facilities, Infrastructure.....	73
Sustainability.....	75
4.C. Planning for Quality Improvement.....	76
Strategic Planning	76
Enrollment Management	77
Planning.....	78
How MSU Uses Data	80
Criterion 4 Summary.....	82

Criterion 1. Mission

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

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

Missouri State University (MSU) defines itself as a community of citizen scholars dedicated to public affairs. The university's mission centers on innovative teaching, research and service that create transformative experiences, benefiting both individuals and society. MSU aims to be the nation's leading public affairs university. MSU's vision emphasizes cultivating civic responsibility and driving social and economic mobility in Missouri and beyond by fulfilling its mission. MSU's statewide mission in public affairs, granted in 1995 when Senate Bill 340 ([26-0002](#)) was signed into law, has been guided by three pillars of its Public Affairs Mission: community engagement, ethical leadership and cultural competence.

MSU refreshed its mission, vision, and values as part of developing the *2025–2030 Strategic Plan: "Igniting Opportunity"* during 2024–2025. The university followed a formal, multi-step strategic planning process in which the "Core Values, Vision, Mission" were revised in fall 2024. MSU gathered broad input from faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and business leaders through workshops and feedback opportunities ([26-0260](#), pp. 40-44). The refresh elevated the pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement into clearly articulated core values. Revised mission and vision statements explicitly position MSU as a community of citizen scholars and a leading public affairs university, tying values to strategic goals for 2025–2030 ([26-0001](#), p. 17).

This mission for the education and personal enrichment of its students and engagement with the community can be traced to the university's founding in 1905 as the Fourth District Normal School. Established to meet the needs of the region, the university has striven to keep pace with an ever-changing world, and MSU is now a comprehensive, doctoral-granting institution, serving over 25,000 ([26-0003](#), [26-0004](#)) regional, national and international students. As the university works to meet 21st-century challenges, its mission, vision and values inform the identity of MSU graduates and continuity with the institution's past.

The university emphasizes making informed, transparent decisions and acting with integrity to contribute to the common good. MSU values respect for individuals and fosters civil discourse with an aim to cultivate a culture of connection and mutual understanding. Additionally, MSU is committed to embracing responsibility with courage and creativity that fosters civic growth and working collaboratively to recognize and respond to community needs. These values are central to the university's Public Affairs Mission to develop a community of citizen scholars. The mission, vision and values of MSU are found throughout its website and documents and are embedded in the General Education program, upper-level coursework capstone experiences, graduate courses, and through assessing students' experiences in essays written in the Undergraduate Exit Survey.

The MSU mission positions the university as a student-centered institution focused on excellent teaching and student success with a commitment to academic integrity and continuous improvement. Demonstrating the institution's promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit and the encouragement of collaborative efforts with the wider community as part of its *2021 Long-Range Plan*, MSU founded an urban innovation park anchored in downtown Springfield ([26-0007](#)). Furthermore, while the foundations of the university grounds it firmly as part of the local community, the university remains committed to its mission to provide MSU students with opportunities to impact and have success on the global stage as evidenced by a partnership with Liaoning Normal University in China dating to 2000. In July 2025, Missouri's governor signed a bill granting MSU the authority to independently offer Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs ([26-0011](#)).

Since 2020, MSU has experienced several leadership changes, including in the offices of the president (2024), provost (2022 and 2025) and multiple deans, including the Graduate College and library. The positions of chief academic strategy officer (2023), associate provost of Institutional Effectiveness (2024), and vice president of Enrollment Management (2025) were created to serve the campus community. MSU has maintained a commitment to its students, faculty, staff and mission through this period of transition.

Scope of Operations

The institution's scope of operations aligns with our publicly stated mission in the following ways: through the development of annual action plans, long-range and strategic planning; the continuous agility process (CAP) within Academic Affairs; university realignment; the new Office of Institutional Effectiveness; and in updated key performance indicators (KPIs) ([26-0716](#)). The mission also informs Enrollment Management and the Division of Student Affairs and its numerous offices and programs that provide student support services.

MSU is under the general control and management of the Board of Governors (BOG), which according to statutes of the state of Missouri, possesses full power and authority to adopt all needful rules and regulations for the guidance and supervision of the university. Orientation for new BOG members ([26-0012](#), [26-0013](#)) includes an in-depth explanation and discussion of the mission, vision and values.

MSU maintains a Carnegie Classification of "Professional-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate." MSU is listed as a Research College and University with \$14,654,000 in research expenditures ([26-0014](#)). MSU also holds an elective classification in Community Engagement ([26-0015](#)). In 2021, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education approved a change to the university's mission to include professional doctorates ([26-0016](#)). As of fall 2025, MSU offers eight professional doctorate degree programs with fifteen options ([26-0017](#)).

MSU has an annual action plan process which includes feedback between colleges, units, the president and his cabinet (central administrators who work with the president to implement MSU's goals), and the BOG. The action plan process guides the university's work and has been refined on a continuous basis since 2015 ([26-0019](#), [26-0020](#), [26-0021](#)). Action plans are submitted to the BOG, and at year's end a response to each action plan is presented to the BOG. This process bookends the year and charts the course for the University.

The mission, vision and values have been instrumental to MSU's long-range planning process and are reviewed annually. Since producing *Welcoming the 21st Century: A Long-Range Vision and Five-year Plan (1995–2000)* ([26-0022](#)), the university has utilized long-range plans to inform policy and decision-making. Each planning cycle has included a review of the previous goals as well as a discussion and refreshment of the statewide Public Affairs Mission ([26-](#)

[0023](#), [26-0024](#)). Websites and annual documents are updated accordingly. With changes in leadership, including MSU's president, the *2021–2026 Long-Range Plan: Embracing the Entrepreneurial Spirit* was sunset in 2025.

The new *2025–2030 Strategic Plan: Igniting Opportunity* was approved by the Board of Governors in June 2025 and began on July 1. The creation of the *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* was spearheaded by the Strategic Planning Committee with guidance from a consultant from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The process incorporated feedback from students, faculty, staff, alumni, business and community leaders, and elected officials. These gathered via 18 small-group discussions and four workshops. Five goal-focused work groups of students, faculty, staff and alumni crafted the plan's goal statements, metrics, strategies, tactics and proposed actions. This plan aims to advance MSU toward its vision of becoming the nation's premier public affairs institution, fulfilling its mission by fostering civic responsibility and driving social and economic mobility ([26-0001](#)).

Implementation of the strategic plan began in fall 2025 through the creation of teams and strategy working groups assigned for each goal and major strategy in the plan, aligning work to the plan's five goals and beginning to benchmark outcomes that will be tracked through 2030. The first year (2025–26) is focused on building teams; prioritizing early actions, including enrollment and branding; and setting measurable targets for later assessment. The *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* five goals for the university are:

- Academic opportunities and innovation.
- Community partnerships and economic development.
- Institution of choice for students and employees.
- Student and alumni experience.
- Branding and identity.

Strategy workgroups record progress through Strategic Planning Online (SPOL), a cloud-based institutional effectiveness platform built for higher education that integrates strategic planning, assessment, accreditation, credentialing and budgeting in one system. ([26-0594](#), [26-0595](#)).

In 2022, MSU began a university-wide transformation plan that included university realignment. The transformation plan was informed by MSU's long-range plan (LRP). The transformation plan outlined changes designed to strengthen academic programs while streamlining the college/school/department structure where appropriate. In May 2023, the provost identified the goal to elevate MSU's academic reputation by positioning Academic Affairs as the university's central strategic initiative, directing resources and investments toward academic programs ([26-0025](#)). The provost noted initiatives to increase enrollment, collaborative reorganization of Academic Affairs, and the development of strategies to strengthen both advising and research. A new learning management system (Brightspace) was implemented. Additionally, MSU celebrated the grand openings of Kampeter Health Sciences Hall, Kemper Hall, The Darr Agricultural Innovation Hub, an addition to Blunt Hall, and the John Goodman Amphitheatre ([26-0596](#)).

The Academic Affairs Continuous Agility Process (CAP), introduced in fall of 2022, was created to keep Academic Affairs current, relevant and improving ([26-0031](#)). The current CAP includes goals to be addressed from 2024–2027 ([26-0032](#) p. 63–66), which have been incorporated into the *2025–2030 Strategic Plan*.

MSU recognized the need to reevaluate data capture and utility. In 2023, all but one staff member left the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), including its director. MSU responded

with a plan to transform OIR into an entity that is both compliance-driven and proactive in providing data, information and insights. In summer 2024, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) was created, uniting teams from Institutional Research; Assessment and Accreditation; Enrollment Management Systems and Reporting; and Project Management and Organizational Effectiveness ([26-0058](#), [26-0059](#), [26-0060](#)).

Providing appropriate support is paramount for those of the campus community to succeed and develop as leaders. MSU's Division of Student Affairs ([26-0033](#)) provides student support services. Student Affairs coordinates several units, including The Center for Community Engagement ([26-0054](#)), Living-Learning Communities ([26-0055](#)), the Counseling Center ([26-0056](#)), and the Career Center ([26-0057](#)). (*See 3.C for information on Student Affairs' programs*).

To ensure employees are invested in the university's mission, the Office of Human Resources has made the mission a central feature of the New Employee Orientation ([26-0414](#)). The mission, vision and values have a place in all of the university's public documents and on the website, including in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Employee Handbook for Administrative, Professional, and Support Staff Employees](#). Awards, including the Citizen Scholar Award ([26-0036](#)), Board of Governors' Excellence in Public Affairs Awards for employees ([26-0037](#)), Excellence in Community Engagement Award for employees ([26-0038](#)), and the annual Public Affairs Conference ([26-0039](#)), all publicize the mission to the broader community and provide opportunities for the public to engage the mission as well.

Educational Programs

The institution's educational programs align with its mission. The mission is integrated into the Student Orientation, Advisement and Registration (SOAR) program ([26-0040](#)), first-year experience courses ([26-0045](#)), General Education curriculum ([26-0042](#)), and public affairs capstone experiences ([26-0043](#)) in every academic program. Through these experiences, students at MSU are challenged to assume leading roles in shaping the future. MSU students engage in high-impact educational experiences, including student research, education abroad, service-learning courses, and a robust honors program. MSU is constantly improving, through QIPs; implementation of a new strategic plan; and institutional, college and program assessment.

As part of SOAR, students can complete the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE). From the BCSSE, advising reports with relevant survey data are provided to academic advisors ([26-0099](#)), summary college reports are provided to deans, and an executive summary is provided to administrators ([26-0098](#)). In 2023 and 2024, over 85% of incoming freshmen completed the survey. In addition to SOAR, MSU offers the optional Ursa Experience ([26-0044](#)) to new first-year and transfer students; during this summer-camp-like event, students explore MSU's Public Affairs Mission.

Student exposure to the mission continues through first-year seminar courses, including GEP 101: First Year Foundations ([26-0045](#)); UHC 110: Honors Freshman Seminar ([26-0093](#)) serves as a substitute for GEP 101 for students in the Honors College. These courses have been assessed to ensure that all students are equally served. MSU created a common course template in the learning management system, using recommended percentage points for each course goal with a set of common assignments.

To further emphasize the mission and to strengthen and define how it is integrated into the curriculum in General Education, program majors, and co-curricular activities, student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the Public Affairs Mission were adopted by the Faculty Senate more than

ten years ago. The General Education curriculum addresses the values of MSU—ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement—through its two delineated areas of Foundations and Breadth of Knowledge, the latter consisting of the Natural World, Human Cultures, and Public Affairs ([26-0046](#)).

Undergraduate programs have tailored graduation requirements with a public-affairs focus. Curriculum mapping is used to demonstrate how the mission integrates into coursework and learning outcomes. For instance, the Mental Health and Spirituality Undergraduate Certificate ([26-0049](#)) offered by the Department of Languages, Culture and Religion explores the role of religion in mental health and well-being. By developing a sensitivity to cultural artifacts, students earning this credential are empowered as healthcare professionals to utilize their knowledge to build trust across ethnic and culture divides and promote healing. The Geography and Sustainability Major promotes community engagement, and its learning outcomes include emphases on the relationship between geography and culture, human impact on the physical environment, economic systems, and the understanding of the principles of sustainable development ([26-0050](#)). The Public Affairs Mission is integrated into capstone experiences throughout academic programs ([26-0043](#), [26-0535](#)).

Graduate programs incorporate the mission into SLOs and program goals. MSU's STEM Master of Business Administration program includes SLOs related to ethical leadership and recognizing ethical dilemmas in business ([26-0052](#)). The program places an emphasis on understanding global perspectives and cultural competence. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) includes a community improvement project and emphasizes ethical leadership and a culture of caring. Students in the DNP consider health disparities in diverse populations; incorporate ethical, cultural, social, political and economic strategies aimed to transform health systems; and emphasize the need to improve the health and health care of rural and vulnerable populations ([26-0053](#)).

While there is no university-wide requirement for graduate programs to include a graduation requirement focused on public affairs, many of MSU's graduate programs also explicitly integrate the institution's values into coursework. For example, the Master of Public Administration ([26-0080](#)) offered by the Department of Political Science and Philosophy aims to produce culturally competent graduates who value civic and community engagement, and the role of ethical leadership in public service.

MSU's institutional assessment plan supports continuous improvement. As part of its accreditation cycle, MSU has participated in Quality Initiative Projects (QIPs). The process developed for the 2016–2020 QIP to assess student learning of the mission is now embedded in the Undergraduate Exit Survey. The most recent QIP (2022–2025) assessed student learning in graduate programs ([26-0062](#), [26-0063](#), [26-0064](#), [26-0065](#)). Over 50% of graduate programs across all colleges participated in workshops to improve assessment practices.

In documents articulating MSU's mission, the university's purpose is defined as being a community of citizen scholars committed to public affairs. The university's commitment to this purpose is expressed in the mission statement and is displayed on websites and in publications. This is evident through its public affairs activities and events, recognition of achievement through awards such as the Excellence in Public Affairs awards for faculty and staff, the Citizen Scholar Award for students, and through QIPs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. There are college awards for public affairs, including a public affairs research award in the College of Business ([26-0083](#)).

Over the past 30 years, the campus community has explored how the statewide Public Affairs Mission serves the educational mission of the university. With input from stakeholders across every level of the campus community, it has become part of the fabric of campus life. MSU hosts several annual signature events for the Public Affairs Mission. These events have developed over time to include:

- New Student Convocation (initiated in the mid-1990s) ([26-0107](#)).
- Public Affairs Conference, initiated in 2005 ([26-0039](#)).
- Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame Induction, initiated in 2014 ([26-0061](#)).

The *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* ([26-0001](#), pp. 20, 24–25, 44) aims to strengthen the university’s Public Affairs Mission through several key initiatives within its educational programs by:

- Expanding awareness and participation in the public affairs certificate program.
- Identifying existing public affairs courses and course elements.
- Providing incentives for faculty and departments to integrate public affairs components into newly created courses.
- Revamping the first-year seminar by transforming it into a three-credit-hour course centered on public affairs themes.
- Expanding practical learning experiences by increasing internships, high-impact practice opportunities and by integrating community-based learning and industry partnerships into academic curriculum.
- Promoting capstone projects and research initiatives that address community challenges and foster civic engagement.
- Expanding co-curricular transcripts to include experiences like internships and service-learning.
- Making public affairs a hallmark of the student experience by weaving its visual identity, storytelling and traditions into events, orientation, recognition and reporting.

MSU’s mission is to be a guiding force in the student experience from freshman orientation to graduation. Student orientation, the General Education program, first-year experiences, and upper-level coursework consistently place emphasis on the mission and students’ responsibilities as informed citizens. The institution’s success in imparting these values is assessed in essays written for the Undergraduate Exit Survey ([26-0066](#)). In these essays, students are invited to write about their experiences with cultural competence, community engagement and ethical leadership ([26-0067](#)). MSU assesses students’ feedback to measure learning informed by the mission at the university, college, and department level. Information obtained from the essays is aggregated and disaggregated for review by departments and colleges each semester ([26-0068](#)). Academic units determine how best to utilize this data for their internal evaluation processes.

Enrollment Profile

MSU’s Springfield campus enrolled 25,238 students in fall 2025 with an official Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) headcount of 24,606 after excluding students who are only auditing or enrolled exclusively in the English Language Institute (ELI), program locations in China, or education abroad programs. Of these, 21,138 (85.9%) were undergraduates and 3,468 (14.1%) were graduate students, with a gender distribution of 61% female (15,017) and 39% male (9,589). Most students are Missouri residents; 86.7% report in-state residency and 83.8% of those are within 200 miles of campus with 41.7% of all students from Greene County followed by St. Louis County (10.7%) and Jackson County (8%). By age, 70.1% of students are 21 or younger, and the average age is 22 overall (20 for undergraduates,

31 for graduate students); the largest age group is 18–21-year-olds (10,147 students, 41.2% of the total). Across 2020–2024, MSU showed continued growth in underrepresented student headcount from 3,300 in fall 2020 to 3,983 in fall 2024 ([26-0589](#), [26-0590](#)).

Academically, enrollment is spread across all colleges, with the largest 2025 totals in McQueary College of Health and Human Services (4,469 students, 18.2%) and College of Business (4,244, 17.2%); In fall 2025, there were 11,946 first-time, new-in-college applicants; 10,723 admits; and 2,684 enrolled with an average high school GPA of 3.71 and an average ACT score of 22.6, above state and national averages.

MSU’s enrollment profile also aligns with its mission. Its academic colleges and graduate college serve undergraduate and graduate students at MSU’s main campus and across 11 additional locations. MSU serves both urban and rural populations. MSU’s Off-Campus Programs office ([26-0069](#)), housed in the College of Education since 2024, oversees the additional locations, which include Camdenton, Lebanon, Nevada, West Plains, and Mountain Grove, Missouri. (West Plains is a separately accredited campus, and the other sites are locations, not campuses.) The university strives to meet the economic, technological, social and healthcare needs of Southwest Missouri.

Enrollment for the 2023–24 academic year was up, driven by the MOState Access Award, which resulted in \$0 tuition and fees for Pell-eligible students ([26-0072](#)). In 2025, the cabinet-level vice president for enrollment management position was created to provide leadership and oversight to enrollment management for MSU, including undergraduate admissions, transfer student recruitment, financial aid, adult student services and dual credit programs ([26-0073](#)). The *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* embeds a new five-year SEM plan under Goal 3.

MSU’s mission is introduced to prospective students in admissions materials and recruitment-related websites. MSU welcomes international students, and its mission has strengthened the commitment to recruit from an expanding range of countries. MSU strives to recruit a global student population while continuing to meet the specific needs of students in Southwest Missouri ([26-0071](#)).

MSU recruits, supports and retains first-generation students through coordinated efforts spanning targeted recruitment events, specialized student services, proactive advising, financial support and involvement opportunities ([26-0074](#)). First-generation scholarships and FAFSA workshops have been provided for several years in conjunction with the Office of Financial Aid and MSU Foundation ([26-0075](#), [26-0076](#)). MSU hosts a yearly first-generation celebration week to coincide with First Generation Celebration Day in November ([26-0077](#)) and publishes first-generation stories ([26-0078](#)).

MSU’s Center for Academic Success and Transition (CAST) delivers programs that support student retention and completion ([26-0079](#)). CAST accepts staff referrals and student requests for student coaching focused on time management, assignment prioritization and goal setting. In 2020, MSU received a Title III cooperative grant that continues to build support systems for retaining first-generation students. The Student Success Coach program is one of the most immediate products of the award. All incoming first-generation students at MSU are automatically assigned a success coach. However, any student can request a success coach by visiting the Student Academic Assistance website ([26-0081](#)). While this grant ended in fall 2025, the Student Success Coach program continues.

The Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) program offers students support while they take historically challenging courses ([26-0084](#)). Course mentors are embedded in these courses and offer academic enhancement group sessions. Attendance at study sessions is voluntary. First-

Year Programs recruits sophomores, juniors, and seniors with a desire to serve first-year students to be Peer Leaders ([26-0085](#)). Peer Leaders are partnered with GEP 101 instructors to serve as resources to the instructor and students ([26-0160](#), [26-0161](#)).

MSU is engaged with AACSB on the Student Success Equity Intensive (SSEI) to close attainment gaps between student groups. MSU is one of several institutions participating with the goal of transformational change for students ([26-0086](#)). Using data-informed decision-making tools, members identify and prioritize root challenges, develop and implement strategies to achieve priorities, and monitor success along the way. Ten campus leaders comprise the team and represent all levels of administration who identify priorities and implement improvement strategies.

Mental health and well-being of the university community is one of the 10 focal areas in CAP for 2024–2027 ([26-0032](#) p. 63–66). In responding to the mental health crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the university developed resources for students, faculty and staff facing mental health concerns. MSU’s Counseling Center utilizes a stepped-care model to manage student demand for services and promote timely access to care. This includes triage and consultation services focused on developing a personalized care plan that includes interactional self-care, case management, groups and individual counseling. There is no charge for services through the Counseling Center ([26-0089](#)). Crisis services are also available to students ([26-0090](#)). Mental Health Ambassadors, consisting of both undergraduate and graduate students, offer peer support and resources to students ([26-0091](#)). The Dean of Students Office provides support and resources for anyone concerned about an MSU student's well-being. For students managing conditions such as attention deficit disorder or depression, the Disability Resource Center can assist them in determining if they are eligible for academic accommodations or other services ([26-0092](#)). Student success also requires strategies by which to identify and address concerns about students. MSU’s Behavioral Intervention Team’s (BIT) identifies students who exhibit behaviors that are detrimental to their or other campus community members’ success, and provides resources to foster an environment conducive to student achievement ([26-0087](#), [26-0088](#)).

1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

MSU's first responsibility is its educational mission to be "a community of citizen scholars" and to model the mission of public affairs in its curriculum and community. MSU serves the public good through local, regional and global partnerships and its commitment to community engagement.

Local Partnerships

MSU has been proactive in developing employer partnerships to enhance the career prospects of graduates and to add value to the region. In 2022, the university announced a collaboration with Burrell Behavioral Health to build a Doctor of Psychology program ([26-0100](#)). The partnership addresses the need for greater numbers of mental health professionals in Southwest Missouri and represents the first Doctor of Psychology degree to be offered at a public institution in Missouri. MSU maintains and operates the program, while students receive clinical and training experiences at Burrell locations. Additional employer partnerships include tuition reimbursement partnerships with Amazon Career Choice Programs ([26-0101](#)) and FedEx. The College of Business partners with Mercy Hospital to deliver cohort-based graduate programs, including the Master of Health Administration for physicians, nurses, clinical staff and other professional leaders ([26-0668](#)).

MSU strives to be an innovative leader and community partner in Southwest Missouri, putting the promise of ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement into practice. The Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Arts (IDEA) Commons is MSU's vision for an urban innovation park in downtown Springfield. This collaborative community effort has become a place where people from all walks of life can learn, create and work. The IDEA Commons includes:

- The Jordan Valley Innovation Center ([26-0103](#))
- Brick City ([26-0104](#))
- Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center ([26-0105](#))

The entrepreneurship arm of the IDEA Commons, the efactory ([26-0106](#)), is the front door to the university for businesses and employers. Since 2013, MSU has delivered nationally recognized programs to accelerate business creation, innovation and growth. Now, the University is the go-to resource for business support and talent development solutions throughout the region. MSU sees a future where innovative businesses create a ripple effect of job growth, community prosperity and a shared success story for our region.

Regional Partnerships

In 2023, the creation of The Alliance for Healthcare Education was announced. The Alliance is a partnership between MSU, Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC), CoxHealth and Springfield Public Schools (SPS). The Alliance aims to be the largest producer of health sciences professionals in the region. At the announcement, the four partners issued a joint statement, proclaiming "This pioneering collaboration promises to improve access to training opportunities while maintaining affordability. By refining and simplifying these educational pathways, our community's medical providers will have access to a larger pool of well-qualified professionals capable of fulfilling vital roles from administration to the operating room." The Alliance has the

potential to transform the landscape of healthcare education and the health sciences workforce in the Midwest ([26-0360](#)).

Pathways for Paraprofessionals is a registered apprenticeship that combines on-the-job training, education, and mentorship to help students complete teaching degrees ([26-0111](#), [26-0422](#)). Since 2021, MSU has partnered with K–12 schools statewide, the Missouri Department of Labor, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, DESE, and DHEWD to expand teacher education and address Missouri’s teacher shortage. In fall 2023, apprentices earned over \$110,000 in workforce grants. The program has 325 active teacher apprentices, with 84 graduates now certified teachers. By summer 2025, participants earned 3,268 prior learning credits, saving nearly \$987,000 in tuition costs ([26-0157](#)).

Another way MSU creates community partnerships is through its Community Graduate Assistantship program ([26-0112](#)). Organizations and businesses in the community host graduate students employed through the university.

MSU serves the community through centers and projects that enact the Public Affairs Mission by supporting community partnerships including:

- Ozarks Environmental and Water Resources Institute ([26-0113](#)).
- Bernice S. Warren Center for Archaeological Research ([26-0415](#)).
- Center for Resource Planning and Management ([26-0114](#)).
- Center for Writing in College, Career, and Community ([26-0115](#)).
- Center for Community Engagement ([26-0054](#)).
- Missouri Fine Arts Academy ([26-0118](#)).
- Joining the Age-Friendly University Global Network ([26-0119](#)).
- Housing the *Springfield Daily Citizen* on campus ([26-0120](#)).
- The Springfield Way ([26-0121](#)).
- Growing small businesses ([26-0122](#), [26-0106](#)).
- Identifying talent by connecting employers to prospective employees ([26-0123](#)).
- Research collaboration ([26-0124](#)).

International Partnerships

The university’s Division of Community and Global Partnerships connects its students with the regional community, international programs and businesses ([26-0125](#)). Community and Global Partnerships upholds MSU’s mission through multiple programs and opportunities, including overseeing International Programs ([26-0126](#)).

The Office of China Programs oversees MSU’s partnerships with 18 universities in China ([26-0008](#), [26-0642](#)). For nearly 25 years, MSU has partnered with Liaoning Normal University in Dalian, China, to operate the LNNU-MSU College of International Business ([26-0009](#), [26-0127](#)). Other programs include graduate studies collaboration with Ningxia University and a plant science program in conjunction with Southwest University in Chongqing.

The Office of International Programs provides services for international students and faculty including:

- The International Leadership & Training Center ([26-0129](#)).
- International Friends ([26-0130](#)).
- International Conversation Circles ([26-0131](#)).

- Bridge to Academic English Program (BAEP) ([26-0708](#)).
- Cambridge English Language Association (CELTA) program ([26-0707](#)).
- The Foreign Language Institute ([26-0706](#)).
- Education Abroad ([26-0133](#)).
- The I Succeed Center ([26-0134](#)).
- Global Leaders and Mentors (GLaM) ([26-0135](#)).
- The International Student Support Team ([26-0136](#)).

Missouri State partners with international institutions in over 20 countries ([26-0137](#)). These partnerships offer benefits to students from partner institutions, such as the International Partner Fee Waiver.

Community Engagement

Because community engagement is one of the three pillars of MSU's public affairs mission, campus events and community partnerships are central to the university. MSU received the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement in 2010 and has been recertified several times, most recently in 2026 ([26-0138](#), [26-0622](#)).

Examples of how MSU incorporates community engagement include:

- MSU operates the *eJournal of Public Affairs*, a national, scholarly, peer-reviewed journal in partnership with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the American Democracy Project ([26-0140](#)).
- The Ozarks Studies Institute is an initiative of MSU Libraries documents Ozarks culture ([26-0141](#)). In summer 2023, the institute traveled to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to participate in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The Institute presented "The Ozarks: Faces and Facets of a Region." ([26-0143](#)).
- Special Collections and Archives, housed within MSU's library on the Springfield campus, is available to the public. ([26-0144](#)).
- The Bear Pantry supports students' basic needs ([26-0145](#)). In 2023–2024, the Bear Pantry consistently served 1,200 students by distributing 50,000+ pounds of food and hygiene items. 6,500 visits to the Bear Pantry were supported by 200 student volunteers and more than 12,000 pounds of donated goods from organizations across campus, including the Campus Garden ([26-0146](#), [26-0154](#)).
- The Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (RCASH) offers public performances to the community ([26-0147](#)). MSU offers free concerts during its April at the Amphitheatre series ([26-0148](#)) and a Wellness Week ([26-0149](#)).
- Darr College of Agriculture opened the Small Animal Education Center in 2023 ([26-0150](#)).
- Fresh Check Day, hosted by the Counseling Center, is a suicide prevention and mental health promotion event. This event helps students to learn about the mental health resources available on campus, in the community and nationwide and is part of MSU's welcome activities ([26-0153](#), [26-0156](#)).

1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

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

MSU is committed to serving all students, faculty and staff. MSU endeavors to be a community leader. Its mission includes being a community and global partner. In 2023, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, the University evaluated its diversity-related programming and scholarship offerings to ensure they complied with this ruling. As a result, the university changed the criteria for its Inclusive Excellence Scholarship, to ensure eligibility for students of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and gender identities.

In January 2025, the university eliminated its Office for Inclusive Engagement and the Assistant to the President for Inclusive Engagement position. The Multicultural Resource Center was renamed and refocused as the Student Resource Center; its role is to provide support and opportunities for all students, irrespective of identity or background. These changes also responded to changing priorities as announced by the Missouri Governor and General Assembly, which culminated in legislative restrictions on using any state funding for any higher education contract, program, or position focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. Despite the changes, MSU provides opportunities for engagement for all students through college- and university-level initiatives and programs.

University-Level Initiatives

MSU's Public Affairs Mission shapes the experiences of citizen scholars in all aspects of university life. MSU fosters civic engagement in a globally connected world through curricular and co-curricular experiences and opportunities.

The Division of Student Affairs at Missouri State University supports all students by fostering a welcoming campus environment and providing a wide range of opportunities for civic engagement at local, regional and global levels. Student Support and Opportunity Services is a unit within the Division of Student Affairs. Key offices include the Mary Jean Price Walls Student Resource Center (The Bear Cave), the Office of Access and Success Programs ([26-0322](#)), Bears Lead ([26-0082](#)), the Engaged Citizen Award program ([26-0323](#)), and TRIO Upward Bound ([26-0324](#)). The Mary Jean Price Walls Student Resource Center was expanded in 2019. This center, nicknamed the Bear Cave, is open to all students at MSU. The Bear Cave houses a common study space, a computer lab, quiet spaces, a group study room, a retreat and refocus room, a resource library, and other spaces designed to meet student needs. The Bear Cave Closet, opened in 2016, offers professional clothing choices to students that are free and theirs to keep. The Bear Cave also publishes a newsletter, *The Shoutout* ([26-0413](#)).

MSU organizes multiple campus activities, including cultural celebrations and events such as guest speakers, workshops, film screenings, social gatherings and interactive educational sessions ([26-0328](#)). These events are open to students, faculty, staff and the public, fostering community engagement and a campus environment that values all students.

MSU provides resources and support for all students, faculty, and staff. Examples of university-level initiatives include the following centers, programs and projects:

- The Oldham Family Veteran Student Center ([26-0327](#)) provides services and support to veteran students and family members. Staff members connect veteran students with

campus and community resources, assist students with questions regarding tuition and registration, and provide support and mentorship from military veteran student transition liaisons.

- The Ursa Experience is a three-day, two-night program which immerses incoming first-year and transfer students in campus life before classes begin. Participants, or Ursa Minors, join groups led by current student leaders called Ursa Majors. Throughout the event, students build friendships; learn university traditions; and explore leadership opportunities ([26-0044](#)).
- International Programs offer opportunities that immerse students in cross-cultural experiences and global service. Through the Office of Global Education and Engagement ([26-0332](#)), students can participate in education abroad programs, international internships, and service-learning projects that address professional-world challenges in diverse communities.
- The university established Bear POWER, a two-year, five-semester college program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) ([26-0334](#)). The program was created to offer a post-secondary education opportunity to students with IDD who are transitioning out of high school.
- The Citizenship and Service-Learning (CASL) program offers students internship-style experiences, connecting academic learning with professional-world service ([26-0597](#)). Through CASL, students can enroll in 1-credit hour classes to engage with local, national and global organizations, addressing actual community issues while developing career skills and expanding their professional networks. In the 2024–2025 academic year, 8,271 students participated in service-learning, contributing over 86,000 hours of service valued at \$2.7 million. As of 2024, service-learning has over 300 available partners in Southwest Missouri.
- Paws to the Polls ([26-0336](#)) is a grassroots initiative dedicated to increasing voter participation and empowering students to make informed decisions at the polls. The program provides unbiased resources, education on voting options, and information about key issues to help students engage in well-informed voting. By advocating for voter rights, organizing campus and community events, and promoting active civic involvement, Paws to the Polls supports the university's mission to be a community of citizen scholars.
- The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) advances civic engagement locally, regionally and globally by fostering faculty development and integrating public affairs into teaching practices ([26-0338](#)). Through initiatives like faculty learning communities and the Sustainability Fellows Program, the FCTL promotes the incorporation of civic engagement, sustainability, and global citizenship into course design and campus activities. The FCTL also supports campus-wide efforts to institutionalize civic engagement, aligning with the university's mission.
- The Disability Resource Center's (DRC) mission and purpose is driven by the principles of universal design and the socio-political model of disability. The DRC provides clear and simple ways for students to report barriers, access the technology center, request interpreters, schedule out-of-class exams, and meet the needs of MSU students ([26-0339](#)).
- On its Accessibility webpage ([26-0340](#)), MSU publishes its policies and guidelines regarding accessibility and resources for advancing accessibility and campus services. The site also provides an opportunity for students to report accessibility issues.
- Education Abroad ([26-0133](#)) empowers students to engage civically in a globally connected world by offering immersive study abroad programs, international internships, and service-learning experiences that foster cross-cultural understanding and social responsibility. Students collaborate with local and international communities,

address challenges such as sustainability and public health, and develop cultural competence by participating in hands-on projects and community service ([26-0342](#)). By connecting academic learning with direct engagement in diverse settings, Education Abroad prepares students to make meaningful contributions abroad and upon their return, enriching their perspectives and equipping them to thrive in an interconnected society.

College-Level Initiatives

Faculty and administration in Academic Affairs promote civic engagement and global connectivity by strategically integrating these goals into academic programming, faculty development, and community partnerships. The provost, college deans and faculty foster a campus culture rooted in the Public Affairs Mission. Opportunities for service-learning, community-based research, and cross-cultural experiences are woven into the curriculum. Through dedicated faculty development and recognition of community-engaged teaching, academic leaders empower students to contribute meaningfully to society and to navigate an interconnected world as informed, active citizen scholars.

MSU supports the constituencies it serves. MSU's Center for Rural Education ([26-0343](#)), established in 2023 within the College of Education, is the first university-based center in Missouri dedicated solely to the needs of rural schools. With over 70% of Missouri's schools classified as rural, the center serves as a hub to organize and promote outreach, develop and sustain school and community partnerships, establish a teacher pipeline, retain and support rural educators, and secure external funding for research and advocacy. The center's initiatives include creating a consortium of rural schools, supporting grow-your-own teacher programs, promoting dual credit opportunities, and fostering professional development for teachers. The center also collaborates with local and national partners to address teacher recruitment and retention and plays an active role in national initiatives to improve student success in rural communities ([26-0344](#)).

The College of Education (COE) also houses MSU's Global Education Lab (GEL), a space dedicated to advancing global understanding and engagement among future educators ([26-0345](#)). Established in 2023, the GEL serves as a hub for teaching, learning, and cross-cultural exchange, supporting both faculty and students through a variety of grant-funded projects ([26-0346](#)). These include the Global Teacher Education Exchange, which connects Missouri State students with peers in Morocco, Libya, and beyond for collaborative learning; the Removing Barriers program, which prepares teacher candidates to work with multilingual families and refugees; and the World Teacher Makerspace, which offers resources like books, maps, and cultural artifacts for lesson planning.

RCASH engages in community-focused research and outreach. For example, in the Sociology, Anthropology and Gerontology (SAG) Department, faculty and students collaborate on projects such as the ethnographic evaluation of local food pantries, community gardens, and youth programming through the Center for Ozarks Poverty Research, which is housed within the department ([26-0350](#)). They also partner with initiatives like the Eden Village Tiny Home project for the chronically unhoused and provide financial literacy and life skills programming with organizations such as Project RISE and the Drew Lewis Foundation. In addition, students participate in service-learning and internships with local nonprofits, conduct independent research with faculty mentors addressing real community issues, and volunteer with organizations that support older adults through the Gerontology Club. SAG's public sociology emphasis and regular involvement in community assessments, surveys, and policy-influencing research ensure that students gain hands-on experience while making a tangible impact in the Ozarks region and beyond ([26-0349](#)).

Criterion 1 Summary

MSU's mission is grounded in its identity as a community of citizen scholars dedicated to public affairs through innovative teaching, research, and service that benefit individuals and society. Guided by the values of community engagement, ethical leadership, and cultural competence, this mission is woven throughout academic programs, student experiences, and institutional operations. It is introduced in orientation programs such as SOAR and the Ursa Experience, reinforced through the first-year seminar GEP 101 and general education courses, and reflected in capstone experiences. Signature programs like the Public Affairs Conference, the Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame, and university-wide awards further highlight the mission in action.

Strategic planning and continuous improvement ensure alignment with this purpose, exemplified by the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, which was shaped by extensive stakeholder input. Academic realignment strengthened programs and student support while expanding offerings to include eight professional doctorate degrees as of fall 2025, alongside major facility investments such as Blunt Hall renovations, the Kampeter Health Sciences Hall, and the John Goodman Amphitheatre. MSU's impact extends through partnerships like the Alliance for Healthcare Education with Ozarks Technical Community College, CoxHealth, and Springfield Public Schools, the IDEA Commons innovation park, and the Pathways for Paraprofessionals initiative. With international collaborations in more than 20 countries and local engagement through the Center for Community Engagement, the Bear Pantry, and service-learning courses, MSU sustains its commitment to inclusive public service and student success.

Criterion 1 Sources ([26-0636](#))

Strengths

1. MSU fosters a strong, campus-wide identity with its Public Affairs Mission.
2. The *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* reaffirms the mission with a vision for MSU to become the nation's leading public affairs university. The plan was shaped by faculty, staff, students, administration, alumni and community partners, which led to more clarity of the mission, vision and values.
3. The university has a commitment to investing in local, regional and international partnerships, demonstrating its dedication to the public good.

Opportunities

1. While public affairs is widely identified and recognized on campus, MSU could improve by developing an overarching plan or comprehensive public affairs program.
2. On July 9, 2025, Governor Mike Kehoe signed legislation that granted MSU the authority to independently offer Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs. This legislation became effective August 28, 2025. This gives MSU the opportunity to respond to workforce needs and expand academic opportunities for current and future students.
3. As MSU continues to expand its international engagement, the institution has an opportunity to strengthen internal clarity and shared understanding by refining the nomenclature used to describe international programs, coursework, partnerships and global locations. While current terminology is effective for external audiences and prospective students, more consistent internal language would help faculty and staff better distinguish between full academic programs, individual course offerings, and true campus or location-based operations.

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

In fulfilling its mission, the institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Missouri State University (MSU) has created a culture where ethical and responsible behavior is expected from all associated with MSU, is fundamental to the university's mission, and is highlighted in the Public Affairs Mission and newly adopted mission, vision, and values ([26-0001](#), p. 17) statements. Institutional policies and procedures provide a basis for ensuring that the institution operates with integrity. MSU has effective procedures for the approval and promulgation of both governing and operating policies through a comprehensive online Policy Library, which is maintained by the Office of Legal Affairs and Compliance ([26-0662](#), [26-0663](#), [26-0702](#), [26-0703](#), [26-0704](#), [26-0705](#)).

Governing policies are submitted to and approved by the Board of Governors (BOG) ([26-0094](#)); operating policies are approved by the president in consultation with the president's cabinet of administrators responsible for developing the goals of MSU ([26-0018](#)). Faculty Senate and Staff Senate actions are included in the policy library. The university's General Counsel's Office and vice president of Legal Affairs and Compliance monitor policy and send policies to be reviewed to appropriate VP units. For example, as part of continuous improvement in June 2024, the process and program for disclosing conflict of interest were revised and approved by the BOG ([26-0163](#)).

The Policy Library ([26-0162](#)) includes the BOG bylaws ([26-0164](#)); the [Faculty Handbook](#); the [Employee Handbook for Administrative, Professional and Support Staff Employees](#); [The Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#); the [Academic Catalog](#); and the Student-Athlete Handbook ([26-0632](#)). These documents ensure that students, administrators, faculty and staff have clear guidance regarding their rights and responsibilities at MSU. The Policy Library includes details about academic responsibility and fiscal responsibility policy ([26-0165](#)). Missouri's Open Meetings and Open Records Law (Sunshine Law) ensures transparency for the public in the decision-making process ([26-0166](#)).

The Policy Library contains additional policies designed to ensure the institution operates with integrity and follows fair and ethical practices, including those relating to:

- conflict of interest (including policies regarding nepotism) ([26-0163](#)).
- hiring ([26-0167](#)).
- equal opportunity ([26-0168](#)).
- prohibition of discrimination and harassment ([26-0169](#)).
- faculty workload ([26-0170](#)).

- research ([26-0171](#)).
- computer usage ([26-0172](#)).

Policies are inclusive and apply to the BOG, administrators, faculty, staff and students. MSU has benefited from having a director of Internal Audit and Risk Management for over 40 years, whose office operates with appropriate autonomy. The director of Internal Audit and Risk Management reports directly to the BOG ([26-0173](#)). The Risk Management and Audit Committee of the BOG communicates directly with the university's auditor on Internal Audit and Risk Management ([26-0174](#)). The Division of Legal Affairs and Compliance, led by general counsel, oversees university compliance, the Title IX Office, the Disability Resource Center, and the Office of Institutional Compliance.

The university ensures ethical behavior through compliance with all state and federal reporting requirements. Trainings cover topics from research compliance, which includes Institutional Animal Care and Use ([26-0175](#)) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) ([26-0203](#)), to the Title IX policy ([26-0176](#)), which includes training for Campus Security Authorities ([26-0177](#)) and Sexual Violence Prevention Training for Students, a training course for all incoming and transfer students ([26-0178](#)).

The Ethics Hotline-Whistleblower Policy ([26-0179](#)) provides an avenue for individuals to report perceived unethical practices, including violations of university policy and issues of integrity. Reports to the Ethics Hotline are monitored by the Office of Internal Audit and Risk Management, which ensures reports are confidential and appropriately addressed in a timely manner. Each report is analyzed and distributed to the proper administrator for review. The individual who made the claim also receives a report.

The university's Academic Integrity Council (AIC) ([26-0180](#)) oversees academic integrity proceedings and plans activities with the purpose of supporting academic integrity on the MSU campus. The council reports to the Office of the Provost. The faculty and students on the council work to raise awareness about potential ethical issues.

The Course Grade Resolution and Appeal policy ([26-0181](#)) addresses the procedure for course grade disputes at the undergraduate and graduate levels. MSU also outlines grievance procedures ([26-0182](#)) regarding complaints and disputes between employees and MSU, covering working relationships, working conditions, employment practices, or differences in interpretation of policies. Grievance policies for faculty, staff and student-athletes are delineated in the respective handbooks ([Faculty](#), [Employee](#), and [Student-Athlete](#)).

As a test of the integrity of its financial proceedings, MSU is audited annually by an independent external accounting firm ([26-0183](#), [26-0184](#), [26-0185](#)). For more than 30 years, MSU has received an "unqualified opinion" with no reportable findings on that external audit. Each auxiliary enterprise system has established its own procedures to ensure integrity in its operations. Auxiliary functions and information include the following:

- Magers Health and Wellness Center ([26-0189](#)).
- Residence Life and Dining Services ([26-0190](#)).
- Parking ([26-0191](#)).
- Plaster Student Union ([26-0192](#)).
- Foster Recreation Center ([26-0193](#)).
- Public Broadcasting ([26-0194](#)).
- Athletics ([26-0352](#)).

Institutional policies are found in the Policy Library and include:

- The Information Security Unit of the Information Services Department ([26-0196](#)).
- Non-Discrimination Policy Statement ([26-0197](#)).
- FERPA ([26-0198](#)).
- Anti-nepotism (Conflict of Interest) ([26-0163](#)).
- Intellectual Property ([26-0199](#)).
- Prohibition of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking ([26-0176](#), [26-0197](#)).

MSU benefits from a website that includes appropriate documentation: financial documents ([26-0358](#)), internal audit reports ([26-0357](#)), a comprehensive Policy Library, agendas and minutes of most BOG and committee meetings. In addition, historically, the university publicly posted annual action plans ([26-0020](#), [26-0021](#)), and both the president ([26-0354](#)) and provost ([26-0355](#)) have regular communications within *Inside Missouri State* (a weekly employee newsletter) ([26-0215](#)) that provide updates as well as links to additional documents. With the new administration and formation of the University Council (UC) ([26-0202](#)), as well as the *2025–2030 Strategic Plan: Igniting Opportunity*, MSU is continuously improving its communication. The UC shares updates ([26-0353](#)) broadly with the campus community through council members and a website maintained by the president's office.

2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

MSU, from the BOG to the faculty and staff, is focused on students' learning and developing their commitments to lifelong learning. The university strives to keep the best interests of students at the forefront of all decisions. MSU provides information openly and transparently, most notably on its website. The website provides access to the Policy Library ([26-0162](#)), BOG's agendas and minutes ([26-0216](#)), external audit reports ([26-0183](#), [26-0184](#), [26-0185](#)), budgets ([26-0200](#)), tuition and fees ([26-0217](#)), a conflict of interest policy ([26-0163](#)), and academic calendars ([26-0218](#)). The university's website provides information in a format that is easy to use with an internal search engine and user-friendly navigation.

The university's website contains information about MSU programs ([catalogs](#)) and admission requirements ([26-0220](#)) for the public, faculty, staff and students. Tuition and fees for undergraduate ([26-0221](#)), graduate ([26-0222](#)), international ([26-0223](#)) and dual-credit students ([26-0224](#)) are on the website along with a net price calculation tool ([26-0225](#)). Graduate and undergraduate [catalogs](#) as well as the [course schedule](#) are available online.

Documents leading to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation and other specialized accreditations are also included ([26-0226](#)). The university posts notification letters about the status, review cycle, and expiration of program accreditations on the Office of the Provost's website ([26-0227](#)).

MSU continuously improves the display of tuition, costs, and fees pages to clarify costs to students. The university has moved to college fees rather than program fees, which reduces confusion for students and helps them to better understand the total cost of attending the institution. These college-level fees went into effect in July 2024. More complex undergraduate programs, such as Nursing, provide a cost breakdown on their website ([26-0228](#)).

2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

MSU is under the general control and management of the BOG, which, according to statutes of the state of Missouri ([26-0356](#)), possesses full power and authority to adopt all rules and regulations for the guidance and supervision of the university. The nine-member, statewide BOG includes at least one, but no more than two, members from each of Missouri's eight congressional districts. All members are appointed by the governor of Missouri with the advice and consent of the Missouri State Senate to serve six-year terms. Once appointed by the governor and approved by the senate, board members are sworn to act in the best interests of the university. The board also includes a non-voting student member appointed by the governor of Missouri.

Biographies for the members of the BOG are published on the website ([26-0094](#)). Board members take oaths of office and sign appointment letters. Upon appointment, board members receive a welcome letter summarizing their duties and attend a multi-day orientation, reviewing the BOG Bylaws ([26-0164](#)), Sunshine Law, Conflict of Interest, Policy Library, and other relevant information. The chair and vice-chair attend annual conferences for professional development ([26-0631](#)).

The university has a strong record of valuing the principle of shared governance with the faculty and fostering the faculty's right to academic freedom ([26-0234](#)). The provost is MSU's chief academic officer, the Faculty Senate oversees undergraduate curricular matters, the Staff Senate oversees staff concerns, and the Graduate Council ([26-0235](#)) oversees graduate programs. Undergraduate students have a role in shared governance through the Student Government Association (SGA) ([26-0236](#), [26-0423](#)) as specified in the SGA Constitution ([26-0237](#)). The president and provost both emphasize and support the concept of shared governance and the faculty's responsibility for curriculum during the orientation for new Board members ([26-0012](#)).

MSU's BOG is actively involved in approving strategic plans for MSU and the goals for the university president. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution as seen in the strategic plans and annual action plans. The BOG's priorities and involvement in establishing the agenda are articulated in the strategic plan ([26-0598](#)), the president's highlights, and the BOG's official minutes ([26-0239](#)).

The BOG meets five times per year with regular meetings and standing committees' meetings before each full meeting. The BOG has one retreat in late July/early August. As established by the strategic plan, the BOG approves an annual implementation plan proposed by the administration. The BOG then uses its five meetings and retreat to focus on specific aspects of the strategic plan and annual goals. MSU's president and administrative team develop the annual action implementation plan and recommend to the BOG a set of specific goals consistent with the strategic plan. The Executive Budget Committee, along with the president and president's cabinet, consider and anticipate both short-term and long-term events, such as the state budget and changing demographics, which can impact MSU's ability to fulfill its mission. MSU officials then develop strategies, and the president keeps the BOG advised to developments and critical decisions to be made.

The BOG has four committees: Executive, Finance and Facilities, Programs and Planning, and Risk Management and Audit ([26-0238](#)). Finance and Facilities and Programs and Planning meet with the full board meetings, while Risk Management and Audit meets as needed. The Executive committee meets when there is not a full board meeting. Programs and Planning and Finance always meet before full BOG meetings; the others meet only if there is work to report.

The BOG's regular meetings, meetings of the Finance and Facilities and Programs and Planning committees, and the monthly Executive committee meetings are open to the public. Agendas for all meetings are posted to the website in advance, as are minutes and major actions of the meetings ([26-0239](#)). Audio recordings of the regular meetings are made and maintained. The minutes of all open meetings are public record and available under the Missouri Open Meetings, Open Records Law (Sunshine Law). Some portions of the minutes from closed sessions of the board are protected under the Sunshine Law.

The BOG Bylaws ([26-0164](#)) has undergone numerous amendments. The latest major revision was completed in 2025 ([26-0599](#), p. 7). The bylaws cover, among other policies, selection and removal of members, conflicts of interest, board organization and committees, board functioning and authority.

2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

MSU embraces freedom of expression and academic freedom as part of its mission. Choosing to accept these principles suggests that each participant of the community refrains from and discourages behavior that threatens the freedom and respect each member deserves. The university is committed not only to developing educated people but also to embracing ethical conduct in daily teaching and learning. The [Faculty Handbook](#) affirms the right of faculty members to academic freedom in teaching, research and publication of research results (section 3.1.2). MSU's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) protects freedom of expression (1.1.2, 1.1.5-1.1.9). The Policy Library also outlines policies that support academic freedom and freedom of expression:

- Expressive Activity Policy ([26-0240](#)).
- Non-Discrimination Policy ([26-0197](#)).

2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

MSU ensures, through appropriate support, training, and policies, that faculty, staff and students responsibly acquire, discover and apply knowledge. The [Faculty Handbook](#) provides guidance for faculty regarding scholarship, research and creative activity (1.1.3.2); responsibilities and ethics (3.1.1); academic freedom (3.1.2); regulatory guidelines for research (9.1-9.6); and conflict of interest (10.2).

Regulatory guidelines for research are outlined in the policies of the Office of Research Administration (ORA) ([26-0241](#)). The ORA provides coordination, oversight and education in areas, which include:

- animal care and use ([26-0175](#)).
- biosafety ([26-0420](#)).
- conflict of interest ([26-0242](#)).
- export control ([26-0600](#)).
- human subject research ([26-0203](#)).
- intellectual property, radiation safety and responsible conduct of research.
-

ORA also supports faculty and staff in the acquisition, performance, and administration of projects and programs funded from sources outside the University.

The Graduate College hosts an online New Graduate Student Orientation (NGSO), which is encouraged for all incoming graduate students, and the New Teaching Assistant Training (NTAT), a mandatory training for teaching assistants ([26-0245](#)). NGSO and NTAT are both offered in fall and spring semesters. NTAT provides relevant information relating to legal issues in teaching, classroom management and teaching strategies.

Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information sources in coursework (GEP 101), presentations from the Office of Academic Integrity, Bear CLAW tutoring, and from faculty. Ethical leadership promotes integrity through events intended to educate and inspire. The [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures establish clear expectations and provide guidance for students ([26-0246](#)). Additionally, the university delivers guidance in a variety of settings:

- Statements on academic integrity/cheating/plagiarism (and/or links to policy) are included in syllabi ([26-0379](#)).
- All first-time, first-year students are required to take GEP 101 (or UHC 110 for students in the Honors College) during their first semester. Topics include information literacy, academic integrity and ethical behavior.
- Training and meetings about student conduct are held by the Office of Student Conduct.
- The Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing) provides individualized assistance for students at all stages of information use and project development ([26-0550](#)).
- Students are active members of committees ([26-0248](#)).
- MSU firmly and fairly enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity, guided by the student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures ([26-0246](#)).

MSU approaches artificial intelligence (AI) by embedding ethical guidelines and explicit academic integrity standards into its policies, including that the use of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) be clearly permitted by instructors and properly cited in coursework;

unauthorized or undisclosed Gen AI content is treated as a violation subject to departmental review and sanction. MSU's policies emphasize educating faculty, staff and students on responsible use and disclosure of Gen AI, safeguarding privacy under regulations like FERPA, and promoting transparency without mandating Gen AI adoption for all learners. Faculty develop course-specific rules to balance innovation and integrity, regularly updating practices through professional development, so Gen AI supports rather than replaces critical thinking or original work. The landscape surrounding Gen AI is ever changing. The provost's office, Faculty Senate, and SGA are working collaboratively to revise policies and procedures ([26-0416](#), [26-0417](#), [26-0418](#)).

Expectations, policies, and resources are made salient for members of the learning community, and the AIC, which includes student and faculty members in equal measure, adjudicates concerns in a manner consistent with those expectations and policies.

Criterion 2 Summary

MSU upholds a comprehensive framework of policies and procedures that guide the conduct of its governing board, leadership, faculty, and staff. The online Policy Library, accessible to all community members, includes essential documents such as the Board of Governors Bylaws, Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, and Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities, each defining expectations for professional and ethical behavior. Transparency and accountability are reinforced through internal and external audits, compliance with state and federal regulations, and mechanisms like the confidential Ethics Hotline, which enables reporting of concerns and supports a culture of integrity and responsible action.

MSU's commitment to openness extends to students and the public through ready access to accurate information about academic programs, policies, budgets, and governance. The university's website serves as a central hub for policy documents, audit reports, and Board of Governors meeting agendas and minutes. The Board operates autonomously under state statutes and university bylaws while upholding shared governance, academic freedom, and public transparency through regular open meetings and thorough member orientation.

Academic freedom and freedom of expression, formally affirmed in the Faculty Handbook, are supported by training and resources on ethical research and academic integrity. Oversight by the Office of Research Administration and the Academic Integrity Council ensures fairness and accountability, reinforcing integrity as a cornerstone of MSU's identity.

Strengths

1. MSU has a committed BOG that functions effectively, providing feedback and maintaining connections to the student body. The board demonstrates intentionality with its training, standards, orientation and bylaws.
2. The university's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency is evidenced through updates and online publication of the Policy Library, Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook for Administrative, Professional, and Support Staff, and the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
3. Transparency is demonstrated through the annual publication of student learning outcomes and student tuition and fees. All faculty use the Brightspace learning management system to post their syllabi and gradebook to ensure accessibility for all students.

Opportunities

1. In the rapidly changing technological environment, MSU has the opportunity to build on current policies and practices to address new challenges as they arise. For example, MSU has an opportunity to revise its academic integrity policy regarding the use of artificial intelligence.

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Missouri State University's educational programs align with its mission of innovative and transformative teaching, research and service. The purposes, content and learning outcomes of its General Education program, undergraduate and graduate programs support this mission by ensuring that students are provided opportunities to engage in rigorous academic pursuits to hone research skills and train them to constructively impart findings.

MSU offers 99 undergraduate majors, 121 minors, 114 undergraduate certificates, 67 graduate degrees (including professional doctorates) and 113 graduate certificates, all of which maintain an appropriate level of rigor. The quality of these educational programs is consistently maintained across modalities and locations via periodic review and curricular adjustment to ensure institutional alignment ([Catalog](#)).

Degree requirements for all programs are in the catalog. Student learning outcomes, established by faculty, are found on the Office of Assessment and Accreditation website ([26-0319](#)). All students and faculty, whether on-campus or at a distance, are held to the same academic policies and standards established for the main campus. Online courses and face-to-face courses have identical learning outcomes.

Students in off-campus programs are required to meet the same admission requirements and academic standards as main-campus students, and faculty must provide equivalent course materials across all modalities. Program assessments and evaluation techniques are established and implemented consistently for all students among all locations as noted in syllabi and

program assessment reports. Representative course syllabi from all colleges are attached to evidence files: [\(26-0490\)](#).

MSU offers cooperative degrees with Missouri University of Science and Technology (Bachelor of Science with majors in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Electrical Engineering) and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (Doctor of Pharmacy), which offers its program on the MSU campus. Learning outcomes, assessment, and degrees are the responsibility of the diploma-granting institutions and are not part of MSU's HLC accreditation.

Curricular Programs

The Board of Governors (BOG) delegates responsibility for curricular matters to the faculty. Curricular proposals approved by the Faculty Senate are subject to approval and implementation by the president and, where necessary, the BOG. Faculty develop curriculum proposals, as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty ([26-0263](#), Article VI). Proposals are reviewed by colleagues, academic unit leaders, deans, and the relevant College Council or Graduate Council. If a curricular proposal affects General Education or teacher education (leading to certification), the proposal will be sent to the Council on General Education and Intercollegiate Programs (CGEIP) and/or the Educator Preparation Provider Council (EPPC) during the review process as appropriate ([26-0433](#), [26-0566](#), [26-0567](#)). Final steps include the review and approval of the Faculty Senate and its executive committee, and the Offices of the Provost and President. The provost provides curriculum support to faculty ([26-0517](#)).

Faculty members play a central role in assessing student outcomes and curriculum effectiveness through collaborative departmental, college, and institutional assessment initiatives. Ongoing curriculum reviews ensure relevance to student and community needs. Faculty members serve on committees overseeing curriculum, assessment and academic policy that support shared governance and institutional development, while they mentor and advise students about curricular paths.

General Education

MSU's General Education curricular process emphasizes quality, shared governance and faculty input. Proposals begin in academic units, advance through dean review and move to CGEIP ([26-0364](#)), which represents all colleges and key offices. CGEIP reviews and recommends approval or rejection of curricular changes to General Education with opportunities for faculty challenge ([26-0362](#), [26-0365](#)). Approved CGEIP proposals pass to the full Faculty Senate and, then, to the senate executive committee; the process completes through the provost, president and BOG as required ([26-0263](#), Article IV).

Bachelor's (BS, BA, BAS and BSEd)

MSU's bachelor's degree programs follow a faculty-driven curricular process to ensure quality and compliance with standards. Proposals begin at the academic unit level, advance through college and university committees and require Faculty Senate approval. Interdisciplinary, teacher certification, and Honors College programs follow specialized review. After challenge periods, approved proposals move to the provost and, if necessary, the president and BOG for final approval ([26-0263](#), Article VI).

Graduate Programs

MSU's graduate curricular process emphasizes academic rigor and shared governance. New or revised programs, courses or certificates originate in academic units with interdisciplinary proposals requiring multiunit sponsorship. Units hold autonomy in developing offerings, which advance from dean review to the Graduate Council for recommendation. Proposals then undergo faculty challenge periods, possible appeals and Faculty Senate review. Final approval flows through the secretary of the faculty; Faculty Senate executive committee; provost; and, when necessary, the president and BOG.

Dual Credit

MSU's Dual Credit program ([26-0224](#)) establishes memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with partner schools, led by the director of Dual Credit. The office provides annual training for instructors and coordinators, while academic liaisons offer course-specific support. Prospective instructors apply online, upload credentials securely for review, and complete the approval process before teaching dual credit courses ([26-0367](#)).

To ensure academic rigor and consistency, academic unit leaders/liaisons approve instructors and syllabi for Dual Credit classes through an online process utilizing DualEnroll.com to manage data and workflow. This process allows requesting instructors to upload credentials into this program which are visible to the dual credit office, submitting instructor, and the approving unit liaison for the course(s) requested ([26-0623](#)).

Student Learning Outcomes for Academic Programs

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) statements for departments and programs, and General Education are found on the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) website under SLO statements. All students and faculty, on-campus or at a distance, are held to the same academic policies and standards established for the main campus. Online courses and seated courses have the same learning outcomes ([26-0458](#)).

General Education

MSU's General Education program is designed to prepare students for thoughtful, creative and productive lives with an emphasis on responsible participation in society as described in the university's mission. General Education learning outcomes are structured around a set of 15 General Education Goals, each with specific SLOs that measure achievement ([26-0368](#)). Each course in the program is aligned with one or more of these Goals, and SLOs are assessed regularly to ensure students are meeting program expectations and to guide continuous improvement. These outcomes prepare students to graduate with a foundation in intellectual and practical skills, knowledge of human cultures and the natural world, and a commitment to lifelong learning and responsible citizenship ([26-0369](#)).

Ethical leadership, Cultural competence, and community engagement are embedded in the public affairs theme of General Education courses ([26-0459](#)).

Bachelor's (BS/BA, BSEd)

Each academic major offered at MSU has outlined specific objectives for each discipline identified in the catalog and program-specific websites. SLOs for baccalaureate programs offered by the university may be found on the OAA's website ([26-0319](#)). Examples of learning outcomes from each academic college are:

- College of Business ([26-0370](#)).
- College of Education ([26-0371](#)).
- College of Natural and Applied Sciences ([26-0372](#)).
- Darr College of Agriculture ([26-0373](#)).
- McQuery College of Health and Human Services ([26-0374](#)).
- Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities ([26-0375](#)).

The Public Affairs Mission and values are annually evaluated by academic units and colleges through the Undergraduate Exit Survey, which requires students to write about their experiences, and is reviewed by college deans, academic unit leaders and faculty.

Graduate Programs

The university's SLOs for graduate programs are tailored to each program as described for:

- The Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology ([26-0376](#), [26-0469](#)).
- MSU's Doctor of Education in Leadership, Learning and Educational Change ([26-0377](#)).
- MSU's Doctor of Defense and Strategic Studies (DDSS) ([26-0378](#), [26-0460](#)).

Courses and Syllabi

At the beginning of each semester, MSU supplies faculty with syllabus templates ([26-0379](#)) focused on student success to encourage consistency across the institution and underscore its ongoing attention to learning outcomes. To integrate part-time faculty into the norms of the university, academic unit leaders provide faculty development to communicate department or school expectations, course outcomes and assessments. Part-time faculty throughout the MSU system are given access to course materials equivalent to that which is available to full-time faculty on the main campus, including textbooks, supplemental materials and technology.

SLOs in courses are the same across location and modality. Assessments might vary across course sections, learning outcomes do not. Each of MSU's undergraduate degrees ([26-0043](#)), graduate degrees ([26-0380](#)) and certificates conforms to a commonly accepted minimum program length. For example, policy dictates that all graduate programs require at least 50% of classes to be completed at the 700-level, which are courses with no undergraduate equivalent and are designed exclusively for graduate work. Program assessments and evaluation techniques are established and implemented consistently for all students among all locations. In cases where undergraduate and graduate courses are combined, faculty delineate outcomes and differentiate assignments for both levels within syllabi ([26-0461](#)).

3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

MSU's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information through a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes inquiry, research and creative work at all levels. Every degree program requires students to master modes of intellectual inquiry or creative activity, such as participating in research, scholarship and field experiences. Programs support adaptability by encouraging interdisciplinary studies, offering experiential learning opportunities and other high impact learning practices, and requiring the application of knowledge to professional scenarios.

General Education

General Education goals and requirements appropriately align with MSU's mission in public affairs, placing emphasis on public affairs courses and service-learning opportunities ([26-0382](#)). The General Education Program's 15 General Education Goals ([26-0369](#)) are approved by the Faculty Senate, ensuring appropriate alignment between the mission, educational offerings and degrees at MSU. Assessment reports from faculty who teach courses in General Education serve to review and assess the degree level ([26-0453](#), [26-0454](#), [26-0455](#)). MSU maintains a minimum requirement for General Education ([26-0381](#)).

Undergraduate

The university believes the best teachers are engaged in scholarly activity and that scholarly activity is central to teaching students critical thinking skills. MSU encourages undergraduate students to pursue scholarly activities alongside faculty and graduate students. Through coursework in undergraduate programs, students have opportunities to collect, analyze and communicate information. Coursework culminates in advanced experiences and high-impact practices including research, campus presentations, conference presentations, internships, student teaching, education abroad and service learning ([26-0518](#), p. 4). Students present at senior art and design shows, undergraduate research days, and conferences. Student teams compete in symposiums and theater and dance competitions.

High-Impact Experiences Include:

- Society for Applied Anthropology Conference ([26-0383](#)).
- Robert Hanson National Collegiate Opera Scenes Competition ([26-0384](#)).
- Mid-America American Society of Civil Engineers Student Symposium ([26-0385](#)).
- Future Business Leaders of America's State Leadership Conference ([26-0386](#)).
- McQueary College of Health and Human Services Student Research Symposium ([26-0387](#), [26-0388](#)).
- *LOGOS: A Journal of Undergraduate Research* ([26-0391](#)).
- Service-Learning ([26-0597](#)).
- Education abroad ([26-0426](#), [26-0133](#)).
- Field schools ([26-0389](#), [26-0390](#)).
- Undergraduate Literature Conference ([26-0392](#)).

- Student Anthropology Conference ([26-0582](#)).
- College of Natural and Applied Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium ([26-0393](#)).
- Honors College Distinction Projects ([26-0578](#)).
- Exhibitions in Art and Design ([26-0427](#)).

Capstone Experiences:

Public Affairs capstone courses vary by program and include education abroad, service-learning, internships and student teaching. Additional opportunities include Area Studies minors to strengthen cultural competence and increase marketable skills and include minors in Disability ([26-0394](#)) and Ozarks Studies ([26-0396](#)).

Cultural competence, ethical leadership, and community engagement are annually evaluated by academic units and colleges through the public affairs essays of the Undergraduate Exit Survey, through which students write about their experiences with public affairs at MSU ([26-0068](#)). These essays are reviewed by faculty in academic units and colleges.

Graduate

All graduate programs have a research course requirement, a comprehensive exam, or a final culminating experience that students must complete before degrees are conferred. Graduate students may contribute to university scholarship by presenting at the Einhellig Graduate Interdisciplinary Forum, a showcase of graduate student study for more than 30 years ([26-0399](#)), and participate in the 3-Minute Thesis competition ([26-0397](#)). The Graduate College offers funding for thesis and non-thesis research as well as graduate student travel to conferences or symposiums ([26-0398](#)).

Graduate education places an emphasis on providing cutting-edge and innovative education to support advanced talent and workforce development. Graduate programs foster a foundational understanding of research methods to equip all students with critical thinking and data-based decision-making skills to serve as leaders or explore additional academic pursuits. Graduate programs strive to develop student progress toward maturity of thought and discipline-related capabilities. Learning objectives for graduate study are established by graduate faculty, who are committed to teaching, research and service as well as mentoring graduate students in the practice of their disciplines.

Examples include:

- Theses ([26-0456](#)).
- MCHHS Student Research Symposium (open to graduate and undergraduate students) ([26-0388](#)).
- Doctor of Defense and Strategic Studies program also runs an online journal, *Defense & Strategic Studies Online* (DASSO) ([26-0400](#)).
- Exhibitions in Art and Design ([26-0457](#)).

Funding

The university has seen a substantial increase in external funding in recent years. MSU competes for and secures an average of more than \$105 million annually in external funding for sponsored programs. Funding sources range from the National Science Foundation to the

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. MSU provides funding to research and other scholarly activities for faculty and students. The Provost's Office supports faculty research grants, summer research fellowships, and grant proposal assistance ([26-0495](#), [26-0496](#)). Additional grants support animal research, subsidize vivariums, travel, and course buy-out funding. Academic colleges and the Provost's Office provide grants and research support totaling more than \$200,000 annually. MSU topped research funding records in 2023 and 2024 ([26-0491](#)).

Students are Adaptive to Changing Environments

Students at MSU develop skills adaptive to changing environments in every college and unit. Examples are listed below.

Students at MSU develop skills adaptive to changing environments in every college and unit. Examples are listed below.

- CNAS: MSU's Ozarks Environmental and Water Resources Institute ([26-0467](#)).
- RCASH: Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Gerontology (SAG) students, who are members of the Health Equity Research Collective (HERC), presented at the Midwest Sociological Society conference ([26-0401](#)).
- MCHHS: MSU Physical Education and Exercise Science majors take an adapted physical education course combining lectures with hands-on experiences in schools and community organizations such as Rivendale and Arc of the Ozarks ([26-0402](#), [26-0468](#)).
- COE: MSU's Internship Academy offers COE students a year-long, in-school teaching experience as an alternative to traditional student teaching ([26-0405](#)).
- The Springfield Way Internship Program: ([26-0406](#)).
- The Career Center: The MSU Career Center actively engages students in developing transferable skills by first helping them understand themselves through career assessments. In one-on-one appointments or through the IDS 120: Exploring Majors and Careers course ([26-0462](#)), students discover their skills, interests and abilities and how they relate to the working world. The Career Center offers events such as Résumé Café and Mock Interview Day. Students also have access to a comprehensive Career Guide ([26-0407](#)). The Career Center supports students in learning job search strategies and equipping them to adapt to shifting professional environments.

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

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

Sufficient Numbers of Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff strive to support the goals of the university by providing effective and high-quality programs. MSU employs 3,524 faculty and staff members. The university has 2,033 full-time employees (faculty and staff) and 1,491 employees (faculty, staff and graduate assistants) working part-time in spring 2025. Of the full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty, approximately 96% hold a terminal degree in their fields. Many non-instructional employees also hold advanced degrees. A sample of CVs includes ranked faculty ([26-0581](#)).

Faculty

In fall 2024, MSU had 704 full-time faculty (ranks are defined in the Faculty Handbook):

- 29% are distinguished and/or full professors.
- 28% are associate professors.
- 23% are assistant professors.
- 18% are instructors.
- 1% other ranking.
-

(*Note: Clinical professors are included in these statistics. They are identified by rank [clinical—professor, clinical-associate professor, *etc.*] and added to overall faculty counts [professor, associate professor, *etc.*] and federal reporting requirements.)

Adjunct and dual-credit faculty, regardless of location, must meet the same standards for qualifications and evaluation as faculty on the main campus. Prospective faculty are vetted, hired and trained by the pertinent academic units on the main campus or by regional administrators. Academic units provide support to these faculty by assisting with obtaining resources such as textbooks and syllabi and connecting them with lead instructors on the main campus for assistance. Training is available at each location, and IT engineers arrange to meet and assist faculty as needed. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate their courses and faculty at the off-campus site through end-of-course evaluations.

According to the [Faculty Handbook](#), every instructional employee is required to be available to students by holding a specified number of office hours. For full-time faculty this is five hours per week with times noted on course syllabi. Evidence of student perceptions of faculty availability can be found in the 2025 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data ([26-0463](#)). MSU continues to rate significantly higher than other NSSE institutions in its Carnegie classification among first-year students and seniors reporting they “talked about career plans with a faculty member” and “worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework.” Seniors scored also significantly higher than their peers on the items “discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a member outside of class” and “discussed academic performance.”

Many faculty members use technology to connect to students. MSU adopted Brightspace as its learning management system, where faculty are required to provide syllabi and grades. Advisors use Zoom to connect with graduate and professional students who are unable to attend meetings

in person. The Center for Academic Success and Transition began using a text messaging system for students to ask questions during the pandemic in 2020.

In 2025, this evolved into Boomer Bot, an AI-powered text messaging system that aims to connect students with resources through an interactive medium that responds on demand when students ask questions about anything related to academic or personal experiences. In spring and summer 2025, 92% of students have opted into the system, with 50% engaging with Boomer Bot ([26-0408](#)). Boomer Bot is also used as a low-key way to reach out to students and inform them about campus events, important updates and check in with students about how they are doing. In spring and summer 2025, 75 students indicated that they would not be returning to MSU, were contacted by staff, and 23 registered for classes for the following semester ([26-0521](#)).

Staff

MSU provides programs and student services that support academic success, personal development and student engagement. MSU employs enough staff to provide the necessary student services that support student success.

The university provides resources that meet student needs. For example, Residence Life has staff to provide services to students in the residence halls ([26-0624](#)). Staff engage in professional development opportunities and training, including cyber security. MSU regularly sends staff members to professional conferences. Staff may obtain membership in professional organizations. Many staff members serve as officers in professional organizations.

MSU staff, including those within The Division of Student Affairs provide resources for student success and retention and demonstrate the university's mission. The following highlight how staff within Student Affairs fulfill these goals through:

- Magers Health and Wellness Center ([26-0189](#)).
- Campus Recreation ([26-0464](#), [26-0465](#)).
- The Career Center ([26-0057](#)).
- The Counseling Center ([26-0056](#), [26-0089](#)).
- Family Programs ([26-0409](#), [26-0410](#), [26-0411](#), [26-0466](#)).
- The Office of Student Conduct ([26-0412](#)).
- The Veteran Student Center ([26-0327](#), [26-0470](#)).
- Office of Student Engagement ([26-0485](#)).
- Orientation and Transition Programs ([26-0040](#)).
- Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services ([26-0190](#)).
- TRIO Student Support Services ([26-0324](#)).
- Access and Success Programs ([26-0322](#)).
- Center for Community Engagement ([26-0145](#))

Hiring Guidelines and Process for Faculty and Staff

The university has the faculty and staff needed for high-quality programs and student services. The sections below describe the quality programs, student services, and employment information.

Faculty

MSU employs nearly 3,500 faculty, staff, and graduate assistants. The [Faculty Handbook](#) outlines faculty expectations and minimum qualifications, which typically include a terminal degree (PhD or equivalent), scholarly publications (or equivalent) and professional experience. Workload for most faculty, as described in the Faculty Handbook, depending on their research, consists of a 4–4 load. All regular full-time faculty, including instructors and senior instructors, teach 30 equated hours per academic year. Research-active faculty generally teach an 18-hour teaching load over the academic year, with a total of 12 hours of release for both research and service. Instructors and senior instructors usually teach 24 equated hours over an academic year, with a release of six hours for service. In the absence of a service assignment, they teach 30 credit hours per year.

To teach classes at the 700 level or above and direct theses or dissertations, faculty must have graduate faculty status ([Faculty Handbook](#), section 3.11, p. 25-26). Criteria for this status are developed at the academic unit level and approved by the Graduate Council.

Staff

All full-time positions have documented job descriptions that specify minimum qualifications used for screening applicants and selecting the most qualified applicants. Staff members who provide student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, as seen in a sample of staff résumés and job descriptions ([26-0641](#)).

Hiring Processes

MSU's online hiring process, facilitated by an applicant tracking system (ATS), is used to track and manage the hiring of all employees, including student employees and full- and part-time faculty and staff. Positions are fully analyzed, updated and reviewed whenever a vacancy occurs. All new positions are reviewed using the same analytical standards for proper placement and compensation. The ATS collects information which search committees analyze to identify the candidates best suited to the advertised job postings. The ATS allows for accurate reporting of the process, both for the individual search and annually. Search committees made up of appropriate faculty and staff develop screening questions, which are added to the ATS and are linked to the appropriate job description to ensure candidates selected for interviews have required credentials and experience ([26-0167](#)).

Benefits

The university's benefits enrollment program (BEP) allows new and continuing employees to select among a group of university-paid benefits programs and programs paid voluntarily by employees. Employees are eligible to enroll upon hire, during an annual enrollment period, and if they experience a qualifying life event. The system assists Office of Human Resources (HR) by allowing employees to access their benefits and explanations at their convenience ([26-0500](#)).

HR oversees benefits, compensation and classification; employee development and performance; and employment and employee relations using current technology to ensure required and preferred qualifications are met in the hiring process and to train employees and maintain skills throughout the duration of employment. Hiring resources are available on MSU's website for hiring managers ([26-0522](#)).

Professional Development for Faculty and Staff

The HR learning management system (LMS), My Learning Connection, supports full- and part-time faculty, staff and student employees for orientation, professional development, employee wellness and compliance training. It serves as a central library for professional and personal development opportunities available to employees and provides an individual training record to track accomplishments while providing MSU with a means of documenting and storing training information. University units utilize the LMS to support instructor-led classes, web-based training and blended learning sessions for employee professional development, wellness opportunities and compliance training. Program categories include faculty development in teaching and learning, staff development in job skills, professional development, compliance training, orientation, workplace safety and employee wellness.

Faculty Professional Development

MSU supports professional development for faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct) at the unit, college and university levels. The university utilizes Watermark Faculty Success to collect information on research, teaching and service. The system enables faculty leaders, program coordinators, those in charge of accreditation within academic units, and key administrators to produce a variety of reports.

MSU provides opportunities for professional development in teaching, service and research, as outlined in the Faculty Development ([26-0494](#)) and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) web pages ([26-0337](#)). The FCTL holds an annual Showcase on Teaching and Learning ([26-0492](#)) that provides faculty a chance to share teaching practices and learn from national speakers. Speakers have included Dr. Jim Lang (2023), Dr. Lisa Blue (2024), and Dr. Sidney Dobrin (2025).

Travel money is available to full-time faculty to attend professional conferences from either their academic units or colleges. To support growth in their discipline, faculty can apply for a course release for writing a grant, travel funding for professional conferences, and grant preparation assistance.

Faculty participate in engaged inquiry by contributing to the development of scholarship, creative work and knowledge discovery. Faculty are recognized for their accomplishments each spring at the Faculty Recognition Reception. Some specific ways in which engaged inquiry and professional development by faculty are supported and encouraged include:

- Summer Faculty Fellowships ([26-0495](#)).
- Faculty Research Grants ([26-0496](#)).
- Sabbaticals ([26-0493](#)).
- University Foundation Award for Teaching, Research and Service ([26-0497](#)).
- Grant Preparation ([26-0498](#)).
- Compliance Training and Monitoring ([26-0523](#)).
- Endowed Professorships: ([26-0570](#)).

There are many examples of faculty and student contributions to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge in accordance with departmental and school educational goals and the university mission. Faculty are recognized for their intellectual contributions at the Faculty Recognition Reception each spring ([26-0471](#)). Faculty research is highlighted in MSU's publication, *Mind's Eye* ([26-0243](#)). External grants from faculty ([26-0491](#)) are celebrated at the

Faculty Recognition Reception. MSU's publication of the *eJournal of Public Affairs* is further evidence of the university's efforts to support and promote research ([26-0140](#)).

Staff Development

To support employees in educational endeavors, the university provides 15 hours of undergraduate or graduate fee waivers annually for full-time staff and faculty. In addition to programs offered through HR, staff have access to noncredit professional development courses, may attend professional development conferences and workshops, and may apply for the year-long University Staff Ambassadors (USA) Program ([26-0524](#)). The Staff Senate offers events and sponsors initiatives annually ([26-0473](#)).

Staff can access a wide range of courses, workshops and training sessions through My Learning Connection. Registration for professional and personal development programs is managed through the platform, often at no cost or using employee benefits. Employees have free access to LinkedIn Learning, an online library of more than 16,000 courses ([26-0525](#)). MSU provides leadership development programs, computer skills training and workshops aligned with its Public Affairs Mission and long-range plan. These programs support continuous learning and organizational effectiveness ([26-0551](#)).

Many units offer their own professional development opportunities, which staff can find and register for through My Learning Connection. This includes opportunities with the Office of Public Affairs, Campus Recreation, The Small Business Development Center, and Computer Services ([26-0472](#)).

Annual Review Processes for Faculty and Staff

Faculty

The criteria for initial faculty appointment consists of verifying appropriate credentials evidenced by academic degrees, experience, and achievement. For tenure and promotion, faculty members must meet the requirements for teaching, research and service established by their departments or schools, colleges, and the university.

Performance reviews are consistent with reappointment, tenure and promotion guidelines proposed by the faculty, approved by the dean and provost and posted on the provost's website. Select academic unit reappointment, promotion and tenure policies include:

- Agribusiness, Agricultural Education, and Agricultural Communication ([26-0474](#)).
- Art and Design ([26-0475](#)).
- Communication, Media, Journalism and Film ([26-0476](#)).
- English ([26-0477](#)).
- Criminology ([26-0478](#)).
- Finance, Economics and Risk Management ([26-0479](#)).
- Information Technology and Cybersecurity ([26-0480](#)).
- School of Teaching, Learning and Developmental Science ([26-0481](#)).
- Biomedical Sciences ([26-0482](#)).
- Biology ([26-0483](#)).
- School of Earth, Environment and Sustainability ([26-0484](#)).

External reviewers are required for ranked faculty promotions.

At minimum, faculty are evaluated annually by their direct supervisors, typically academic unit leaders or program directors. For promotion and tenure reviews, personnel committees conduct initial reviews and forward evaluations and recommendations to academic unit leaders. Their recommendations are forwarded to deans for review and recommendation. The Faculty Performance Evaluation Process is found in Section 4 of the [Faculty Handbook](#). Tenure-track faculty members are expected to be actively engaged in teaching, research and service throughout their careers and participate in annual performance reviews.

Adjunct faculty members must receive a performance evaluation after a semester or summer term. Academic unit leaders are responsible for conducting evaluations, focusing on reliability and effectiveness in teaching as well as meeting appointment requirements and departmental criteria. Departments must have plans in place to provide feedback to adjunct faculty within established timelines, ensuring all evaluations are completed and communicated as required ([Faculty Handbook](#), p. 42).

Staff

The appraisal and development plan (ADP) for staff at MSU is the annual formal evaluation system for all full-time staff. All eligible staff members (those who have completed their probationary period) participate in annual performance evaluations each fiscal year ([26-0502](#)). Supervisors and employees meet to discuss and document job duties, objectives and specific goals for the upcoming year. This is documented in the ADP form and ensures alignment with university and departmental goals. In 2025, MSU updated its ADP with a new online platform accessible through My Learning Connection. The updated system streamlines performance planning and review and offers new features ([26-0501](#)).

New employees at MSU complete performance reviews during a six-month probationary period. Supervisors initiate goal setting and planning within the first two weeks of employment, conduct a documented check-in at three months, and complete the official performance review by the employee's six-month anniversary. These evaluations assess progress, identify training needs and determine suitability for continued employment ([26-0503](#)).

Supervisors are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback throughout the year. Mid-year meetings may be held to review progress and address performance issues. If performance is below expectations, performance improvement plans (PIP) may be initiated, outlining areas for improvement, expected changes and timelines for progress. This structured process ensures continuous communication, supports professional development, and aligns staff performance with the university's mission and goals ([26-0504](#)).

On-Boarding Process for Faculty and Staff

Faculty

Adjunct: The onboarding process for adjunct instructors at MSU is structured to prepare new faculty for their semester-based appointments and familiarize them with policies and campus resources. After departmental and dean approval, adjunct instructors receive an online appointment letter via the BearPAF system. Adjunct faculty are limited to a maximum of twelve credit hours taught in any 12-month period at the Springfield and Mountain Grove campuses, and their employment automatically ends after the appointment period. While they enjoy access to campus facilities like libraries and wellness centers, adjunct instructors do not receive retirement or insurance benefits. The hiring process requires position posting and affirmative

action efforts but not a full search and must be approved by the academic unit leader, dean, and provost ([26-0505](#)).

New Faculty: Onboarding for new faculty at MSU involves several steps to ensure a smooth transition and compliance with university requirements. New faculty complete administrative paperwork, set up university accounts, obtain campus keys, attend orientation sessions, complete mandatory compliance training and set up emergency notifications. New faculty may also register for additional training, such as Showcase for Teaching and Learning, and Brightspace training for course management ([26-0506](#)).

Each department must provide new faculty members with current departmental tenure and promotion guidelines upon hire. Within the first month of full-time employment, new faculty are required to meet with the academic unit leader to discuss these guidelines, clarify expectations and review the procedures that govern tenure and promotion.

Staff: All new employees at MSU participate in an onboarding process that includes attending an orientation session led by HR, completing the ADP for formal evaluation, and fulfilling online training with the Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance ([26-0501](#)). To support professional growth, employees have access to ongoing training opportunities through My Learning Connection. Staff with advising responsibilities benefit from specialized development through workshops and the Master Advisor Program.

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Student success at MSU is an institutional priority, focusing on supporting students from admission through graduation, with the goal of enhancing retention, persistence, and degree completion. MSU delivers a range of academic and co-curricular support services, including academic advising, tutoring, first-year transition programs, and targeted support for populations potentially experiencing barriers to success, including first-generation and low-income students.

MSU provides students with broad access to multiple support services. Student Success, The Center for Academic Success and Transition, and the Division of Student Affairs provide resources to students including advisement, student learning assistance, disability accommodations, tutoring, wellness, counseling and funding. MSU provides support for student learning through faculty office hours and offices including free student-led tutoring and writing services at the Bear CLAW ([26-0519](#)), Disability Resource Center and the Counseling Center ([26-0056](#)).

MSU's Off-Campus Programs, Adult Student Services ([26-0513](#)), Dual Credit, and Missouri State Online work with academic units to recruit partner schools in dual credit, coordinate initial steps in the articulation process, and communicate learning outcomes consistently across all locations and modalities. Curriculum and syllabi are housed and developed in the program with faculty ([26-0569](#)).

The university's commitment to student success is illustrated by its wealth of diverse student support services at every level. The Computer Science Department maintains a tutoring center, and the Department of Mathematics offers graduate assistant tutoring to undergraduate students. The Reynolds College Center for Student Success offers workshops on résumé creation; student events; and a Success Pantry that provides food, clothing, and other items to support student needs. At the campus level, MSU supports students through many units, including those in the Division of Student Success. The Bear Pantry at MSU is an on-campus resource that provides free food, hygiene items, and necessities to MSU students, staff, and faculty experiencing food insecurity. The Bear Cave Closet in the Student Resource Center offers free, gently used professional and everyday clothing to help students meet individual needs and prepare for work, internships, and other opportunities.

Student Learning Support

Office of the Provost

The provost is the chief academic officer responsible for supporting and enhancing student learning. The Office of the Provost ([26-0547](#)) maintains oversight of all colleges, departments and academic programs to ensure high-quality teaching, relevant curricula, and strong student engagement. The provost collaborates with the associate provost for student success and other university leaders to develop and implement initiatives aimed at improving retention,

graduation rates and overall student outcomes, including academic advising, tutoring, first-year experience programs and targeted support for students encountering barriers to success.

The provost fosters integration between academic units and student support services, such as the Learning Commons, Disability Resource Center, and Career Center, to create a coordinated approach to student learning and development. The Provost also oversees ongoing curriculum development, program review and assessment to maintain academic rigor and responsiveness to both student needs and workforce demands ([26-0517](#)). Through these efforts, the provost ensures that MSU remains committed to academic excellence and provides students with a strong foundation for future success.

Office of the Dean of Students

The Office of the Dean of Students plays a vital role in supporting student learning by addressing personal and educational barriers that may hinder academic success. Its mission is to empower students to achieve personal and educational goals through targeted actions ([26-0552](#)).

The office supports the university's mission by raising awareness of MSU's public affairs role and fostering a welcoming, respectful campus environment. The office encourages student involvement in governance and committees, advocates for student inclusion in decision making, and informs students of their rights and responsibilities. The office listens to student concerns and promotes civility throughout campus. It also provides opportunities for students to learn and practice ethical behavior, holds them accountable for their actions, and responds to threats or concerns within the university community.

The Dean of Students office offers services to students, including:

- The Bearisters Free Legal Advice is a program that offers enrolled MSU students the opportunity to meet with a local attorney free of charge ([26-0507](#)).
- Case Managers serve as a connection point for any student facing a situational or on-going stressor. This group helps students communicate with faculty, communicate with campus and community resources, and find other supports for students that could be helpful ([26-0646](#)).

Associate Provost for Student Success

The associate provost for Student Success coordinates activities that promote student success across the university, including oversight of key academic support units (*see below*). The associate provost for Student Success collaborates with faculty, staff, administrators and community partners to develop and implement initiatives that improve retention, graduation rates and overall student outcomes and serves as the campus articulation officer, overseeing transfer credit evaluations and General Education assessments. This work is supported by a team of directors and staff who manage advising, first-year programs, the Honors College, service learning, and student learning services, all contributing to a comprehensive student success ecosystem ([26-0510](#)).

The Center for Academic Success and Transition coordinates the delivery of student support services, focusing on academic support beginning with student transition into university life and persistence until graduation through:

- First-Year Programs ([26-0564](#)).
 - First-Generation Student Support ([26-0527](#)).
 - Student Academic Assistance ([26-0528](#)).
 - College Proactive Advising.
 - Maroon Milestones ([26-0534](#)).
- Other support systems include:
- Learning Commons ([26-0158](#)).
 - Student Learning Services ([26-0550](#), [26-0549](#), [26-0084](#)).
 - Dr. Mary Jo Wynn Academic Achievement Center for Student-Athletes ([26-0532](#), [26-0548](#)).
 - Academic Advising and Transfer Center ([26-0512](#)).
 - Academic Standards and Opportunities ([26-0530](#)).
 - Student Grievance Resources ([26-0509](#))

Mentoring

MSU mentors students from orientation to graduation. The Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) program assists first-time freshmen in the transition to MSU. Every college provides academic advising during SOAR. Every student meets with an academic advisor, and each college provides academic advising specific to its programs. Incoming international students participate in The New International Student Orientation, which offers equivalent introduction and advising support. First-Year Programs (FYP) is committed to assisting new students achieve a successful transition to MSU, beginning with GEP 101: First-Year Foundation or UHC 110: Honors Freshman Seminar. GEP 101 is designed to prepare students for academic success and integrate them into university life. Students are assigned to first-year seminar course sections based on like majors or demographics such as commuter students or first-generation status.

Transfer students admitted to MSU complete orientation either online or in person. The orientation is specific towards the transfer population and recognizes the experience students bring with them from different institutions. Orientation focuses on MSU's academic policies, procedures and campus resources. It is an interactive experience where students participate by answering quiz questions throughout the program ([26-0432](#)).

Adult Student Services supports students who have been out of high school for three or more years or who are 22 years of age or older and have received a passing score on the GED or HISET exam. The office hosts an Adult Student Welcome that includes an orientation experience designed to help adult learners transition to MSU. Transfer students are encouraged to attend this event ([26-0513](#)).

MSU ensures that entering students are placed in courses and programs that meet their level of preparation. This process includes early advising, placement into mathematics, and English courses based on ACT/SAT scores or placement exams ([26-0645](#)), and use of a co-requisite program in English and math.

Within the last five years, roughly 32–37% of incoming, degree-seeking fall semester students have been transfer students. During spring and summer semesters, the percentage is higher, roughly 74–84% ([26-0516](#)). A student transferring with 12 or more credits from a participating Missouri institution is placed into CORE 42 as their General Education program. They may

request to be placed into MSU's General Education program by completing a simple online form. Advisors work with students to determine which program will work best for them. The associate provost for Student Success serves as the leader and transfer articulation officer for CORE 42.

In commitment to advising transfer students, each college has designated transfer advisors to meet with incoming transfer students. MSU's AATC supports students who have transferred to the university but who have not declared a major. Additional resources for transfer students include 2 + 2 Plans (*see below*) for students transferring from many 2-year state institutions. The process for transferring to MSU is clearly articulated on MSU's website ([26-0515](#)), which includes a checklist for admitted transfer students.

The university provides the following information for transfer students regarding pathways to graduation:

- 2+2 guided pathways/transfer plans are drafted and maintained by Adult Student Services. They are sent to department heads or school directors for review and approval, then sent to the partnering institution for review and approval before being posted on the university website ([26-0487](#), [26-0488](#), [26-0489](#)).
- Students, faculty and staff can readily find transfer equivalencies for individual courses through MSU's online resource ([26-0514](#)).
- MSU maintains articulation agreements with community colleges that help students more easily transfer ([26-0533](#)).

Off-Campus Programs

MSU works to provide support to students at additional locations such as Cassville from the moment the student expresses interest in an MSU program until they graduate. Regional administrators work with prospective students, assisting with applications for admission, offering academic advisement, supplying resource information, and connecting them to relevant university units as needed, such as the Office of Financial Aid or Veteran Student Services. Additionally, academic units from MSU send representatives, including admissions coordinators and academic advisors, to these locations to recruit students and serve existing students.

The director of Off-Campus Programs mails a welcome letter to new students, providing basic information about their campus, the regional administrator's contact information, and the campus home page. Also included is a magnet imprinted with names, phone numbers and web addresses of all major MSU student service departments as well as a link to the academic calendar. Support services continue to be offered to students throughout their academic careers. Off-Campus Programs staff organize various workshops for students, in-person and through web conferencing. Off-Campus Programs staff work directly with the Bear CLAW to provide services for students at a distance. Students are notified each semester of available resources. The regional administrator meets individually with students at these locations at least once per semester for advisement and checks with each student to determine if they have any unanswered questions or require any support services, connecting them with university resources as needed.

Students in Off-Campus Programs are provided with support services equivalent to students on campus. They have computer lab and internet access at the university's satellite locations and

access to Meyer Library. Oversight of Off-Campus Programs falls under the guidance and supervision of academic units offering the courses. Faculty hiring decisions are made by the academic unit offering the course, and any adjunct faculty hired must meet the same requirements as full-time faculty. Some units ask distance education faculty to attend regular meetings in person or virtually. Off Campus education faculty receive the same communications from academic units as main campus faculty.

Academic Advising

MSU's college advisement, student success centers, and Academic Advising and Transfer Center (AATC) help students make informed decisions about their educational journeys. The AATC provides services and programs for faculty and staff advisors, including the award-winning Master Advisor Program; regular professional development opportunities; publications to assist staff and faculty in academic units in providing quality advising to all MSU students ([26-0512](#), [26-0713](#)).

MSU has a mixed model of advising with professional staff advisors and faculty advisors, all of whom are guided by the Provost Academic Advising Council ([26-0712](#)). Each college maintains a professional advising center. All advisors are encouraged to complete the Master Advisor Workshop ([26-0555](#)). The AATC works with undecided students to select majors. The AATC partners with the Graduate College to offer graduate-specific breakout sessions. MSU recognizes excellence in advising through advising awards for staff and faculty advisors ([26-0556](#)). In 2024, MSU began recognizing graduate advisors ([26-0557](#)).

All undergraduate students are required to meet with an advisor prior to registration until they complete 75 hours. All graduate students are also required to meet regularly with advisors. In addition to face-to-face advising, the university implemented Degree Works, an online degree audit and educational planning system. This tool provides students with a comprehensive view of their academic progress while allowing advisors, academic unit leaders and deans to address potential concerns or questions.

Degree Works allows standardization and quality of information available to students and advisors. As part of Degree Works, students and advisors have a Student Educational Planner to create a 4-year path to graduation. Degree Works can be programmed to create a degree audit for transfer students to compare CORE 42 with MSU's General Education program to advise students toward efficient degree completion.

The AATC and college advising centers are hubs for advising. Advisors are trained using National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) best practices. MSU recommends face-to-face advising appointments but recognizes the need of some students for virtual appointments. Students can book advising appointments online through the university website.

The AATC offered the program Jump Start until 2024. This program allowed some students to begin college in the summer in a supportive and challenging environment. In 2024, this evolved into Bear Launch ([26-0558](#)). This program allows conditionally admitted students, admitted through MSU's supplemental application process, to begin college in the summer.

Infrastructure and Resources for Teaching

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) ([26-0337](#)) aids in ensuring the quality of instruction across locations and modalities by providing resources and services to faculty members. Faculty hold primary responsibility for curriculum and assessment in their academic units as described in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty ([26-0263](#)). Faculty have written and adopted program-specific student learning outcomes (SLOs). Academic units and schools collect assessment data, analyze outcomes and make curricular decisions based on the outcomes. These are reflected in program reports and curricular actions by college councils ([26-0571](#)), which operate as committees within Faculty Senate ([26-0565](#)).

University Libraries provide students and faculty with collaborative support for teaching and learning. Services include customized information literacy sessions (for seated online courses), discipline- and course-specific subject guides, online tutorials and videos, direct research consultation services (seated and online), and additional research support through Ask a Librarian (24/7 chat along with text and email support) ([26-0562](#)). Meyer Library's Innovation Lab has been open to the university community since 2019. The lab supports cutting edge research, including 3D printing, virtual and augmented reality, and robotics ([26-0563](#)). Library spaces fit a variety of student user needs and preferences, from group study to individual concentrated study and browsing areas. Meyer Library provides access to more than 600,000 print books; more than 300,000 digital books; 419,409 government documents; more than 72,000 electronic journals; more than 200 online databases; more than 200,000 media items; and an extensive digital collection archive ([26-0559](#)).

Every academic unit at MSU has a designated library liaisons for faculty, facilitating communication between the library and academic units ([26-0560](#)). They ensure that faculty and students have access to resources and services that support teaching, research and learning. MSU was selected to participate in the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)'s 2023–24 Institute on Open Education Resources (OER). In 2024, MSU developed a task force to study OER. Meyer Library has an OER specialist to support faculty in adopting, adapting or creating OER, reducing textbook costs while enhancing access to high-quality, customizable learning materials ([26-0561](#)).

MSU provides resources and infrastructure to support student success and its long-range goals:

- Technological infrastructure emphasizes the support of academic programs and the learning community through the application of established and emerging technologies.
- Scientific laboratories have received improvements ([26-0291](#)). MSU maintains the Agricultural Innovation Hub, the Small Animal Education Center, Bull Shoals Field Station, Baker Observatory, Journagan Cattle Ranch, the Fruit Experiment Station, vivariums, and other facilities for student learning ([26-0584](#)).
- Performance spaces range from the renovated Ellis Hall to the 2,264-seat Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts to the long-running outdoor summer Tent Theatre, now housed in the new John Goodman Amphitheatre. MSU maintains an All-Steinway School designation ([26-0429](#)).
- The Judith Enyeart Reynolds Performing Arts Complex will expand MSU's arts offerings and serve as a community gateway for the arts, social sciences and humanities ([26-0028](#)).
- Academic units provide clinical practice sites for Nursing; Physical Therapy; Audiology; Sports Medicine; and the College of Education, which include on-campus sites at

Greenwood Laboratory School and the Childhood Development Center. The Ozarks Regional Herbarium is an active resource of MSU for community, regional, state and federal agencies; it contains well over 100,000 cataloged specimens, including 48,000+ mosses and 66,000+ vascular plant representatives from throughout the United States, the oldest collections dating from 1936.

- The Art and Design Department operates University Galleries, which are comprised of Brick City Gallery, Carolla Arts Exhibition Center, Cabot Gallery, Taylor Gallery (within Magers Health and Wellness Center), Park Central Branch Library Museum Studies Exhibition space, and virtual programming in the form of exhibitions and student research ([26-0587](#)).
- Every residence hall has a computer lab available to building residents 24 hours/day and offers computer support for residential students during business hours ([26-0592](#)).

Facilities

MSU uses a detailed room classification system within its administrative system to identify and assign classroom technologies for course scheduling. Each classroom is categorized with clear labels like “General Classroom,” “Computer Classroom,” “Distance Education Classroom,” “Class Laboratory,” and “Computer Class Lab.” These labels specify the type of technology available in each room ([26-0575](#)).

Special technology tags are appended to room classifications to indicate specific instructional features. These tags, updated by fiscal year, help ensure that classes requiring specific technology are scheduled in appropriate spaces. The process is managed by the Office of the Registrar and Room Scheduling teams, who use these classifications and technology tags in Banner to assign rooms that match each course’s instructional needs ([26-0576](#)).

MSU’s director of Space Management oversees rooms, labs and facilities on campus ([26-0577](#)). To ensure appropriate infrastructure and resources, facilities are monitored by various campus constituents and a Space Allocation Advisory Committee ([26-0568](#)). (*For detailed information on Space Management and current Planning, Design, and Construction efforts, see Criterion 4.C.*)

Presently, there are 372 technology-enhanced classrooms on the Springfield campus ([26-0593](#)), including:

- 372 technology-enhanced classrooms (at a minimum PC, projector or flat-panel display, and audio).
- 205 technology-enhanced classrooms.
- 136 technology-enhanced classroom lab spaces.
- 11 technology-enhanced computer classroom spaces.
- 17 technology-enhanced computer classroom lab spaces.
- 3 technology-enhanced computer open lab spaces.
- 3 technology-enhanced classroom spaces equipped with iTV.

3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Academic Performance Measuring System (APS)

The academic performance measuring system at MSU (APS) is a comprehensive guide outlining the structure and use of measures and indicators for assessment across all university units, colleges, departments, programs and co-curricular activities (26-0430). The APS includes institutional, college and department/school measures of assessment and codifies assessment cycles. The APS illustrates an aligned system focused on continuous improvement through data-informed assessment. It clarifies who reviews performance measures, how information is communicated, and how data is used to enhance student learning. The APS document outlines a data-driven approach to assessment and continuous improvement at MSU. It details the roles of various offices, the processes for data collection and reporting, and the importance of stakeholder engagement. The system is designed to support student learning, ensure accountability, and foster a culture of excellence and innovation across all levels of the institution. The guide was developed by the academic leadership team at MSU, including the provost, associate provost, and deans, and shared with academic unit leaders for feedback.

A central feature of the APS is alignment: institutional learning outcomes (public affairs outcomes and General Education goals), program student learning outcomes, and course-level outcomes are designed to connect vertically, so evidence gathered at one level can both inform and be informed by evidence at another. This alignment is reinforced by the statewide Public Affairs Mission, built around the values of community engagement, cultural competence and ethical leadership, which are intentionally integrated into both curricular and co-curricular experiences. The APS makes explicit how student learning is assessed through institutional surveys, course-embedded assignments, capstone experiences and co-curricular programs.

Institutional Outcomes	Program Outcomes	Course Outcomes
<p>Public Affairs Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Competence • Community Engagement • Ethical Leadership <p>General Education course learning outcomes are aligned to the general education program goals and institutional learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Program-level outcomes are aligned to institutional learning outcomes and disciplinary outcomes are derived from external sources (e.g., accrediting bodies, professional advisory councils, industry literature, etc.).</p>	<p>Faculty and departments develop and select learning outcomes and assess those learning outcomes through assignments in coursework.</p>

Figure 1: Missouri State University Learning Outcomes

The APS identifies key data infrastructures and offices that enable assessment. University data are housed in enterprise systems such as Banner, Brightspace, Watermark, EMS, and CRM Advance and moved into an operational data store (ODS) and an enterprise data warehouse (EDW) managed by the Office of Institutional Research in partnership with Information Services. The ODS provides current, integrated operational data with periodic freeze snapshots, while the EDW supports trend analysis aligned with recruitment and registration cycles. These systems make it possible to generate timely and accurate data about enrollment, student

progression, human resources, finance and other indicators that are important for assessment and reporting.

Assessment Coordination

Organizationally, assessment is coordinated through the Office of the Provost. The provost also serves as the vice president of Academic Affairs and ensures that assessment is not an isolated activity but a core mechanism for decision-making, program development and resource allocation. The provost supervises key units involved in assessment, such as the OIE, the FCTL, and academic colleges. The provost supports the development and implementation of university-wide assessment policies and ensures that results inform decision making at all levels. The provost is responsible for maintaining compliance with accreditation requirements, which includes oversight of the HLC accreditation process and related assessment activities. The provost communicates assessment priorities to deans, department heads and faculty, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The provost allocates resources and supports initiatives that enhance assessment capacity, such as assessment grants and professional development for faculty and staff. The provost ensures that assessment of student learning is aligned with the university's mission, supports academic excellence, and meets external accreditation standards.

The OIE, established in 2024 under an associate provost for Institutional Effectiveness, brings together the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to support and expand strategic data, accreditation, compliance reporting, assessment, data analytics, dashboards, research, and surveys. Prior to 2024, these offices operated separately with directors reporting to the provost. OIR focuses on establishing objective standards, compliance reporting, and external surveys, while OAA focuses on administering university-wide assessments, supporting units in their assessment work, leading the most recent two quality initiative projects and facilitating interpretation and use of assessment data.

Deans maintain assessment plans and reports for departments and schools. Academic unit leaders report on assessment to deans, who review, provide feedback, and summarize assessment results for the provost as one section of their college's annual reporting.

The APS emphasizes assessment as a collaborative and consultative process rather than a purely compliance-driven activity ([26-0431](#)). OAA aims to be a flexible thinking partner for academic and co-curricular units and structures its work around consultation, workshops, assessment grants and shared data. The Assessment Council, comprised of faculty, members of OIE, and representatives from the Division of Student Affairs, reviews assessment activities, provides feedback on surveys and initiatives, and shares assessment practices within their units ([26-0443](#)). CGEIP, operating within Faculty Senate governance, plays a parallel role for General Education, overseeing curriculum, reviewing General Education assessment reports, and collaborating with OAA on processes and improvements ([26-0364](#)).

Assessment processes have regular cycles. Data freezes for student records occur four times per term (beginning of term, 20th day, census, end of term). Finance freezes occur on January 1 and July 1 each year. NSSE, administered to first-year and senior undergraduate students, runs on a three-year cycle (most recently in 2019, 2022, and 2025). The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) is administered during SOAR. It was most recently administered in 2024. Graduate outcomes surveys are administered annually around graduation windows.

Across all levels, MSU's assessment process emphasizes alignment, consultation and continuous improvement. The APS makes clear that assessment is not only about compliance but also about using evidence to strengthen student learning, advance the Public Affairs Mission and ensure the institution remains responsive, accountable and innovative.

Institution-Level Assessment Process

What is Being Assessed?

At the institutional level, MSU assesses a broad set of outcomes and performance indicators that capture the effectiveness of MSU's mission and student learning. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) represent the primary framework for assessing student learning across the university. ILOs are tied to core knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including those connected to the Public Affairs Mission. Public affairs learning outcomes in community engagement, cultural competence, and ethical leadership span General Education, upper-division coursework, capstone experiences, and co-curricular activities.

In addition to student learning outcomes, MSU tracks key performance indicators (KPIs) such as degrees and certificates awarded, total enrollment, retention and graduation rates, student financial obligation, and student success after graduation and measures of economic and workforce development. Indicators related to tuition and fees, external funding, global partnerships and the performance of professional doctorate and MFA programs are also part of the KPI framework ([26-0589](#), [26-0716](#)).

Institution-wide surveys assess dimensions of student engagement, satisfaction and experience that complement learning and performance outcomes. NSSE evaluates how undergraduates engage in educationally purposeful activities ([26-0541](#)). In collaboration with SOAR, BCSSE has been administered to students since 2014 to evaluate student expectations for college and their high school experiences. In 2023 and 2024, the survey was administered on-campus during SOAR with a completion rate over 85% ([26-0098](#)). Locally developed surveys, such as the Undergraduate Exit Survey (UES), the Bears Care survey, and the Graduate Exit Survey capture institutional learning outcomes, students' perceptions of their experiences, the Public Affairs Mission, and responses to university priorities ([26-0540](#), [26-0630](#)).

CGEIP is a key faculty governance body responsible for overseeing and advancing the university's General Education curriculum and intercollegiate programs ([26-0364](#)), operating within the Faculty Senate's curricular approval process. CGEIP includes two representatives from each undergraduate college, the chair of the Faculty Senate (as a non-voting ex officio member), and the provost or designees (also non-voting). Members serve staggered three-year terms to ensure continuity with only one-third of the membership changing annually. CGEIP is responsible for the assessment of General Education. Assessment occurs within each academic unit, when faculty write annual reports ([26-0453](#), [26-0454](#), [26-0455](#)) about General Education courses that are submitted to CGEIP for peer feedback ([26-0539](#)).

Participation of faculty is vital for university assessment. Faculty representatives are active in the Assessment Council, which supports the OAA in administering a comprehensive program assessing student learning outcomes and evaluating academic programs. The council meets monthly to review university assessment activities, provide feedback to the OAA on assessment initiatives, review survey data, and share assessments that are occurring within their units ([26-0536](#)).

What Evidence is Produced?

Institutional assessment generates several main categories of evidence. Survey data from NSSE, BCSSE, the Undergraduate Exit Survey, the Graduate Exit Survey, Graduate Outcomes Survey, Bears Care, and other instruments yield quantitative and qualitative information about student learning, engagement, satisfaction, and post-graduation outcomes.

Institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) are assessed through the UES at the institutional level. Information obtained from ILOs is aggregated and disaggregated for review by academic units and colleges each semester. Academic units use of the UES data varies. The UES is administered to 100% of students with 102+ credit hours. The survey includes questions about experiences related to the academic mission of the university, obstacles, and a rotating set of questions based on university goals. For example, questions relating to library services, sustainability, and education abroad have been added for a semester or academic year. These essays provide direct evidence of how students understand and enact public affairs learning, and essays are sorted by college and department or school for targeted review ([26-0067](#)).

The core of the UES is students' writings about the Public Affairs Mission ([26-0540](#)). Historically, the OAA held workshops for faculty to review this writing. After having built a community of assessment, these reviews are now happening in colleges and academic units on their own. The essays are sorted by college and academic unit and emailed to deans, academic unit leaders, and Assessment Council. Survey data is collected through a Brightspace site. The Graduate Exit Survey was revised in fall 2025 to meet changing needs of graduate program directors and the Graduate College. There are current efforts on the way to make the Graduate Exit Survey mandatory, like the Undergraduate Exit Survey, to ensure complete data collection.

Each General Education course undergoes a biennial review to describe how it addresses selected General Goals, how student success is evaluated, what the data show, and what changes are planned. Course coordinators lead the review with participating faculty, write reports, and provide representative syllabi. CGEIP members review reports and send feedback to coordinators and academic unit leaders. CGEIP feedback and academic unit oversight drive decisions about revising assignments, changing how General Education goals are addressed, and adjusting courses to strengthen achievement of the 15 General Goals.

Who Reviews the Evidence?

Institution-level evidence is reviewed by a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including university administration, the provost, and academic leaders. The provost has primary responsibility for overseeing the assessment of student learning and ensuring that assessment results inform institutional decisions. The provost supervises OIE, the academic colleges, and key support units, such as the FCTL communicate assessment priorities and monitor how assessment is incorporated into curriculum changes and the allocation of resources.

Within OIE, OIR manages compliance reporting, KPIs, and participation in external and ranking surveys, while OAA manages institutional surveys and assessment support. OAA works with the Assessment Council to administer and disseminate survey data such as NSSE, BCSSE, and the Undergraduate Exit Survey. It uses tools like the NSSE Item Campuswide Mapping tool to break out and share results with colleges, schools and departments ([26-0601](#)).

Assessment Council members review data, provide feedback on instruments, and relay information to their units. CGEIP reviews evidence from General Education assessment, including annual or biennial reports on General Education courses and aggregated data related

to General Education goals and public affairs outcomes ([26-0453](#), [26-0454](#), [26-0455](#)). The Student Affairs Planning and Assessment Team reviews co-curricular learning evidence that intersects with institutional goals. At the governance level, the BOG and university leadership review KPI dashboards and strategic planning data that incorporate assessment results. Externally, HLC, state agencies, and other accreditors review institutional evidence through regular cycles.

What Changes are Made?

Institutional survey results are used to inform policy, resource distribution, and strategic initiatives. For instance, the Bears Care survey was used during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic to assess students' experiences and needs in areas such as mental health, food security and academic support. Based on these results, MSU directed resources to outreach and support in those areas ([26-0626](#)). UES results, public affairs essays, and Graduate Exit Survey results are used not only to assess ILOs but also to identify areas for institutional improvement in public affairs programming, curriculum and co-curricular partnerships. NSSE and BCSSE data are used to understand engagement patterns and expectations, helping MSU identify and address barriers to student success ([26-0099](#)).

Participation in initiatives like HLC's Quality Initiative also leads to institution-level changes. Graduate program assessment work under the Quality Initiative engaged 56 graduate programs, resulting in revised learning outcomes, assessment practices and program improvements ([26-0627](#)).

College-Level Assessment Process

What is Being Assessed?

Colleges serve as intermediaries between institution-wide priorities and program-level work. At the college level, deans and their teams assess student learning across the college's programs, with attention to how program-level outcomes align with institutional learning outcomes and the Public Affairs Mission. Deans at MSU support student learning by overseeing program development, curriculum quality and retention efforts. They collaborate with faculty and staff, use data to assist students, and advocate for resources like tutoring centers and research opportunities. Deans also promote good teaching practices and academic excellence within their colleges.

Colleges monitor curriculum quality, program demand, retention, graduation rates and accreditation expectations. They are responsible for ensuring that assessment is occurring consistently across units and that evidence is being used to support student success and academic excellence.

Colleges assess the effectiveness of their own strategic initiatives and student-success projects. For example, the MCHHS implemented the MCHHS Student Success Innovation Projects (MSSIP), which funded innovative efforts to improve undergraduate student success across the college. The COE uses assessment to guide initiatives like the Global Education Lab, which supports global learning and intercultural competence ([26-0345](#), [26-0346](#)). These kinds of projects are evaluated at the college level, using both institutional data and unit-level evidence.

What Evidence is Produced?

Colleges collect and synthesize several types of evidence, the most central of which is assessment reporting from academic units. This includes program-level learning outcomes, direct and indirect measures, results and analysis. Deans maintain assessment plans and reports for academic units, ensuring that outcomes and methods are defined and periodically reviewed. Academic units submit their assessment results and analyses, and deans summarize these results in periodic reporting to the provost that include reflections on student learning, program performance and planned improvements ([26-0628](#)).

Colleges also receive disaggregated institutional survey data. OAA provides NSSE, BCSSE, Undergraduate Exit Survey, and General Education assessment data ([26-0546](#), [26-0601](#)). This data allows colleges to understand how students in their programs compare to institutional averages and to identify areas where college-level interventions may be needed. In some cases, colleges receive targeted analyses produced by OAA or OIR, such as BCSSE reports that highlight incoming student expectations and potential barriers to success at the college level.

Who Reviews the Evidence?

Deans are the primary reviewers of college-level evidence. They receive assessment reports from academic units, provide feedback, and ensure that assessment plans are maintained and updated on schedules they establish. Deans also compile and interpret data for the provost, where they document assessment results, actions taken, and future plans. These reports become part of the evidence base for institutional planning and accreditation ([26-0629](#)).

The Assessment Council and OAA play supporting roles. They review examples of college and unit-level assessment, highlight strong practices, and offer professional development in response to identified needs ([26-0536](#), [26-0064](#)). CGEIP reviews General Education assessment reports submitted from across colleges and provides feedback that deans and units then act upon. For some initiatives, such as MCHHS's the Alliance for Healthcare Education, colleges also work with external partners and advisory groups that review outcomes and help shape future directions ([26-0108](#), [26-0424](#)).

What Changes are Made?

Evidence at the college level is used to shape academic programming, student support and strategic initiatives. Deans use assessment results to inform decisions about curricula, such as adjusting course sequences, introducing new courses, revising capstones or altering modes of delivery to better support learning outcomes. They also use data to advocate for resources like tutoring, advising or research opportunities, where evidence shows that additional support would improve student success. College-level initiatives demonstrate how assessment drives change. Colleges use disaggregated survey data and Undergraduate Exit Survey essays to identify patterns and then coordinate curricular and co-curricular responses across programs.

Academic Unit- or Program-Level Assessment

What is Being Assessed?

At the academic unit and program level, assessment focuses on student learning, program quality and fitness for purpose in a specific discipline or field of study. Faculty in each program have written and adopted program-level SLOs that reflect disciplinary expectations and alignment with institutional learning outcomes. These outcomes are typically assessed using a combination of direct measures, such as exams, projects, portfolios, performances, clinical

evaluations or standardized tests and indirect measures, including surveys, reflections or exit interviews ([26-0050](#), [26-0052](#), [26-0053](#), [26-0378](#)).

Programs also assess academic rigor and alignment in specialized contexts like dual credit. Dual credit courses must meet Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) standards and are overseen by academic departments that approve instructors, syllabi and grading practices. Some units use common final exams to ensure rigor and comparability across sections and delivery modes, including dual credit ([26-0224](#)). At upper levels, many programs incorporate public affairs SLOs into capstone courses and assess how well students can integrate and apply public affairs learning in their majors ([26-0535](#)).

Colleges maintain a structured program review cycle using common criteria. Program reviews examine demand, student learning, enrollment trends, completion rates, faculty expertise, facilities, and other aspects of program health. Units consider strengths, strategic opportunities and recommendations for the upcoming cycle.

What Evidence is Produced?

Each academic unit develops an assessment plan that identifies learning outcomes, specifies direct and indirect measures, and sets a cycle for data collection and review. Units collect evidence and submit assessment results and analyses to their deans. This evidence often includes rubric scores on key assignments, performance on standardized or locally developed exams, ratings from clinical or field supervisors, capstone projects, portfolios, and course-embedded assessments.

Programs also receive and use disaggregated institutional survey data. For example, UES data and public affairs essays are sorted by college and academic unit and sent to deans and academic unit leaders. Programs can then look at their students' responses and essays to identify patterns in learning and experience. NSSE and BCSSE data, broken out by major or academic unit where possible, provide additional indirect evidence. General Education course assessment reports, particularly for those courses housed in specific departments, also provide program-relevant evidence about foundational skills and public affairs learning.

Who Reviews the Evidence?

Academic unit leaders in collaboration with faculty direct the review of program-level evidence. They work with faculty to interpret assessment results, discuss outcomes and trends, and identify needed changes in curriculum or pedagogy. They then compile assessment reports and submit them to their deans, who review them and provide feedback ([26-0628](#)).

The OAA supports these processes by providing data, consultation, and professional development. OAA staff meet directly with units to present disaggregated survey data, help design or revise assessment measures, and guide units through analysis and use of evidence. Assessment grants offer additional support for faculty projects focused on improving assessment within their programs; over 100 grants have been awarded since 2017, many of which have generated useful models for program-level assessment ([26-0442](#), [26-0545](#)).

Program-level evidence is also reviewed by the Assessment Council and by relevant accrediting bodies. Assessment Council minutes document how unit-level assessment actions and issues are discussed at council meetings ([26-0536](#)). Professional accreditors in fields such as teacher education, health, and business review program-level assessment as part of their accreditation

standards. For dual credit, departmental liaisons review syllabi, assessments and grading scales and maintain communication with dual-credit instructors to ensure alignment.

What Changes are Made?

After program review was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic and a period of leadership turnover, the university developed a new process in 2024, piloted it in 2025, and re-launched regular cycles, explicitly tying program review to evidence of student learning, demand, cost, and other metrics. (See 3.F for information on program review.)

Program-level assessment leads directly to curricular and pedagogical changes. Faculty make curricular changes due to annual assessment processes (26-0710). Assessment of capstone projects may lead to restructuring prerequisites, updating course content, or changing the design of assignments to better align with desired outcomes (26-0711).

Assessment grants support projects such as creating curriculum mapping, developing new assessment tools, implementing standardized patients in simulation-based learning, and forming student advisory committees for program assessment. Assessment grants have a high return on investment to support and encourage assessment of student learning and collect information on student learning. Findings from these projects often lead to sustained changes in teaching strategies, assignment design, or program structures, and their stories are shared with the campus through blogs and campus communications to encourage diffusion of practice (26-0545, 26-0715). Sample projects include:

- Program Assessment through a Student Advisory Committee (26-0438).
- Athletic Training Program Assessment and Curriculum Mapping (26-0440).
- Examining the Impact of Standardized Patients on Student Success in Simulation-Based Learning (26-0441).
- Exit Survey of the MNAS Program and its Assessment (26-0439).

Faculty, staff and students assess student learning in workshops led by the OAA, where participation in assessment workshops is voluntary. During the last cycle (2022–2025), 112 unique faculty, staff, administration, and graduate and undergraduate students participated in assessment workshops. Assessment workshops have been offered since 2013. From 2012–2019, these workshops focused on the Public Affairs Mission, while workshops from 2022–2025 focused on graduate program assessment. These workshops also served as the foundation of MSU’s Quality Initiative Projects (QIP) for HLC (26-0538).

Co-Curricular and Student Affairs Assessment

What is Being Assessed?

Co-curricular assessment at MSU focuses on student learning and development outside the classroom, particularly in units within the Division of Student Affairs. The Student Affairs Planning and Assessment Team has identified seven common student learning domains that guide assessment across units (26-0573, 26-0574). These domains articulate how co-curricular experiences contribute to the university’s overall learning goals and Public Affairs Mission.

Individual Student Affairs units assess programs and services using national CAS standards and internal learning outcomes. They examine how their activities foster the seven learning domains, support student success, and contribute to campus climate and community.

What Evidence is Produced?

Co-curricular assessment produces qualitative and quantitative evidence. Departmental program reviews, often structured around CAS standards, require units to conduct self-assessments, gather data on participation and outcomes, and reflect on performance relative to national guidelines. These reviews generate comprehensive reports and action plans that document strengths, challenges and planned improvements ([26-0428](#)).

Ongoing assessment projects within Student Affairs units collect data on student learning, satisfaction and engagement with co-curricular programs. This may include surveys, focus groups, usage and participation data, learning reflections and evaluations tied directly to the seven learning domains. Institutional surveys such as the UES and Bears Care survey also include questions relevant to co-curricular experiences, providing an additional source of evidence that crosses academic and co-curricular boundaries ([26-0630](#)).

The OIE partners with Student Affairs to collect, manage and analyze co-curricular data as part of the APS framework. This partnership ensures that co-curricular evidence is integrated into institutional dashboards and reporting, not treated as a separate or secondary system. In 2025–2026, OAA has been working with the Planning and Assessment Team to plan a workshop in May 2026 on Student Affairs assessment to include how SPOL could be utilized. MSU began using the SPOL platform for program review and strategic planning and will begin a pilot for general assessment in SPOL in summer 2026.

Who Reviews the Evidence?

Within Student Affairs, the Planning and Assessment Team plays a central role in coordinating and reviewing assessment activities. The team meets monthly to initiate, review and discuss assessment projects across the division and includes representatives from several units ([26-0572](#)). Individual departments review their own assessment data and program review findings, develop action plans and report progress to division leadership ([26-0573](#)).

The vice president for Student Affairs and the division's executive staff evaluate program review reports and action plans, connecting them to broader divisional and institutional priorities. OAA staff collaborate with Student Affairs to ensure that co-curricular assessment aligns with institutional learning outcomes and to integrate co-curricular findings into the broader APS narrative. Co-curricular assessment results are often shared with the Assessment Council, particularly when they intersect with curricular or public affairs initiatives.

What Changes are Made?

Co-curricular assessment results in changes to programs, services and student support structures. CAS-based program reviews lead departments to adjust or redesign services, revise learning outcomes, and strengthen alignment with national standards and institutional goals. For example, evidence about student wellbeing may prompt expanded outreach, new programming or enhanced partnerships with counseling and health services.

The Student Affairs Planning and Assessment Team uses assessment to refine divisional priorities and support units in developing more intentional, learning-focused activities tied to the seven domains. Co-curricular units work with OIE to update processes, improve data collection and integrate their outcomes more clearly with the APS, ensuring that student learning in co-curricular spaces is visible and valued. Survey results have led to targeted outreach on mental health, food security and academic questions, demonstrating how co-curricular assessment directly informs services and resource allocation. Co-curricular

assessment partners with academic assessment to provide a holistic view of student learning and development at MSU.

3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Regular Program Review Process

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MSU paused program review. Following the pandemic, MSU experienced multiple leadership changes between 2022–2024. The university also experienced academic realignment in 2023 and the loss of key personnel in the Office of Institutional Research, including its director to retirement. During this period of transition, program review continued to be paused. With a goal of continuous improvement, a new process for program review was deemed necessary. Below is a summary of the regular program review process that was in place prior to 2020 and details of the new program review that was developed in 2024, piloted in spring 2025, and completed a full cycle in fall 2025.

Program Review Prior to 2020

MSU's program review policy consisted of three integrated components: strategic planning, annual reviews, and comprehensive periodic self-studies accompanied by external reviews. The strategic plan enabled programs or units to establish a five- to seven-year vision outlining their mission, priorities and objectives, along with a concrete plan to achieve them. The process included an orientation led by an associate provost, a reorganized website, and new systems to support departments during self-study. Annual reviews allowed programs to document achievements and evaluate progress toward their goals. The self-study involved an in-depth departmental analysis prepared before an external reviewer visit. Following the review, departments responded to recommendations in a report submitted to deans and the provost. The self-study, external review report, and resulting Action Plans were publicly available ([26-0450](#), [26-0451](#), [26-0452](#)).

Program Review Beginning in 2024

MSU developed a new program review process in 2024. New criteria and evaluation questions were developed for program review ([26-0449](#)). The program review cycle will repeat annually, resulting in all programs within an academic college being reviewed every five years. Programs that have external accreditations may use those processes to serve as their program review. These programs will report about student learning outcomes on a schedule.

At the conclusion of a program review cycle, the OAA creates an executive summary of all programs reviewed during the cycle. This executive summary, program review reports, and post-cycle survey results are made available to deans, associate deans, academic unit leaders, and members of the Provost Leadership Team.

Spring 2025 Pilot—Cycle 1

For the pilot, the deans of each college chose one program to complete program review. The COB was exempt, because all programs have external accreditation, which serves as their program review. Deans selected programs for review that included those from the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. Program coordinators and additional faculty authors completed the program reviews. The OAA and OIR supported faculty by providing consultations and data ([26-0448](#)).

After reviews were submitted, faculty were asked to complete a survey, which offered feedback about what worked and didn't; what data were useful, available, and missing; and how the process could be improved prior to the first full cycle of review. Of the five surveys offered, four were returned ([26-0447](#)).

Key Themes from Feedback

What Worked Well	Support from OAA Helpful data Useful templates and structures
Areas for Improvement	Delays in data delivery Missing data (<i>e.g.</i> , graduate placement) Unclear documentation in some review areas

Fall 2025—Cycle 2

The OIR collaborated with the pilot programs in summer 2025 to develop a self-service dashboard for all common data needs related to the program review process ([26-0444](#)). This dashboard was launched in Fall 2025 and was used during the first cycle. The OAA in collaboration with the pilot programs developed training materials on the program review process and held regular "office hours" to support faculty ([26-0445](#)).

In fall 2025, MSU began using SPOL as the central software platform to track program review. Presently, programs are able to enter, edit and update program reviews; assign tasks; and directly add status and progress remarks in SPOL. This software platform is used for its ease, standardization, the ability to access materials from one cycle to the next, and transparency and accessibility. The OIE provided SPOL training to faculty completing program reviews.

After program review reports were submitted, two surveys were sent to programs. The first, a faculty rating report, was provided to faculty who did not author the program review report ([26-0657](#)). The survey asked faculty to rate how accurate the program review was and to rate their program. 28 faculty members completed this survey. Responses were included in the executive reports provided to administration and campus leadership. The second, a revised version of the survey provided after the pilot, was an evaluation of the program review process and was provided to faculty who authored the program review report. This survey asked for feedback on the data, SPOL, training and support, and any additional comments ([26-0655](#)).

Deans, associate deans, academic unit leaders, and members of the Provost Leadership Team were provided with program review reports, executive summaries, and results of the faculty rating reports, as appropriate ([26-0658](#)). As part of the program review cycle, the OIE will follow up with programs who have completed program review regarding what improvements or curricular changes were made by faculty and how student learning has been improved.

Spring 2026—Cycle 3

In spring 2026, MSU began its third cycle of program review. Changes were made to the process based on feedback from the evaluation survey. For example, adjustments were made to training materials, and a recorded training was made available to faculty. Programs from five colleges are participating in the current cycle of program review ([26-0659](#), [26-0660](#)).

Annual Reports

Another part of the program review cycle will be the completion of a short annual report by all programs ([26-0446](#)). This report will be submitted by academic unit leaders for review. Deans will then forward the reports to the OAA. Questions may be disaggregated and saved for future HLC processes.

Advisory Boards/Councils

Advisory boards at MSU play a crucial role in connecting academic colleges, schools, departments and programs with industry professionals, alumni and community leaders, who provide valuable guidance on curriculum development, educational trends and workforce needs. Boards meet regularly to advise faculty and help ensure that programs remain relevant to employer demands. Board members are typically accomplished alumni or industry experts who share insights into their fields and support the continued improvement and innovation of the university's academic offerings ([26-0252](#), [26-0253](#), [26-0254](#), [26-0255](#), [26-0256](#), [26-0257](#), [26-0258](#)).

Each of the academic colleges has a college Council ([26-0433](#)), whose primary purpose is to act upon undergraduate curricular matters referred to it by academic units within the colleges/schools as articulated in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty. Each council is empowered to approve, reject or amend the curricular proposals.

The Educator Preparation Provider Council (EPPC) is the representative body to the Faculty Senate that governs the professional education curriculum. Professional education programs are offered in five colleges. The EPPC was established to encompass all professional education certification programs across colleges ([26-0567](#)).

Specialized Accreditation for Certain Programs

Specialized accreditation help the university maintain rigor and quality. Thirty-one of MSU's academic programs have achieved specialized accreditation. Academic programs having an external accreditation review process may utilize that process as their periodic review. Programs may use their accreditation cycles with approval from the provost and respective deans. College, academic unit and specific program information concerning the accrediting or certifying body, the accreditation cycle length and status, and dates of future site visits may be found on the university's website ([26-0434](#)).

Evaluation of Quality of all Transcribed Credit

MSU has a credit by assessment/examination policy that stipulates which credit is awarded. That policy notes that the university accepts credit for Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, International Baccalaureate, and Dantes/DSST. MSU awards regular transfer credit in compliance with existing transfer credit policies (undergraduate and graduate) ([26-0435](#)). Additionally, the university has a policy regarding the awarding of credit for military education or experience that is based on American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations ([26-0436](#)). The university a policy for prior learning assessment ([26-0544](#)). In all cases, the awarding of credit is policy-driven and based on institutional review and/or established standards.

MSU has a policy regarding transfer of undergraduate credit that is consistent with the Joint Statement on Transfer and Award of Credit developed by the American Council on Education, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Deans and academic unit leaders have ultimate authority over

the awarding of credit. The university also has a separate policy regarding the transfer of graduate credit.

The Registrar's Office developed a dashboard of reports to identify short courses that do not meet the traditional start and end dates. A position in that area is tasked with oversight of curricular change, including communication with deans, academic unit leaders and faculty to confirm that course expectations are commensurate with credit hours awarded ([26-0437](#)).

Evaluation of Success of Graduates

MSU's Career Center conducts a graduate outcomes survey which asks graduating seniors to explain their future plans and articulate their graduate destination outcomes ([26-0701](#)). Additionally, the Career Center maintains data about questions relating to students' career development experiences.

Historically, the Undergraduate Exit Survey provided graduate and first destination information. In 2025, it was determined that there was duplication of efforts with the survey conducted by the Career Center, so the graduate destination questions were removed from the Undergraduate Exit Survey.

The Graduate Exit Survey, administered by the OAA, also includes destination data for graduate students ([26-0591](#)). The survey has been fully revised and a pilot launched in fall 2025.

3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Definitions and Institutional Goals

MSU uses the following operational definitions for student success outcomes.

- **Fall-to-spring retention:** Percentage of first-time, new-in-college (FTNIC), transfer, and first-time graduate students enrolled at fall census who enroll in the subsequent spring term.
- **Fall-to-fall retention:** Percentage of FTNIC, transfer, and first-time graduate students enrolled at fall census who enroll in the subsequent fall term.
- **Persistence:** Percentage of all degree-seeking students enrolled at census in a given term who either enroll in the next academic term or graduate.
- **Completion:** Percentage of FTNIC students completing a degree within 150 percent of normal time, consistent with IPEDS definitions.

These definitions align with IPEDS reporting standards and are used consistently for institutional reporting, target setting, and monitoring progress toward goals. Missouri State's 2026 institutional goals include 82 percent fall-to-fall retention for FTNIC students and 60 percent completion within 150 percent of normal time. While retention has improved in some recent cohorts, the university has not yet met these stated targets, which has prompted targeted interventions described below.

Multi-Year Trend Data and DFW Patterns

Retention is a goal in the *Strategic Plan*, is reported annually to the BOG, and is monitored by stakeholders. MSU tracks multi-year retention, persistence, completion, and DFW outcomes to understand student progress. MSU's OIE collects information on student retention, persistence, and program completion and shares it with stakeholders ([26-0589](#), [26-0716](#), [26-0665](#), [26-0666](#)). This information is also reported through the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) page on MSU's website. MSU uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

From 2020–2024, fall-to-fall retention for FTNIC students ranged from 75.2 percent to 79.3 percent, remaining short of the 82 percent institutional goal. In the same period, retention for Black/African American FTNIC students ranged from 53.6 percent to 67.2 percent, while retention for Hispanic/Latino FTNIC students ranged from 69.8 percent to 79.8 percent. First-generation FTNIC retention ranged from 63.7 percent to 70.7 percent for freshmen and from 84.8 percent to 87.4 percent for sophomores, indicating both progress and persistent gaps compared with non-first-generation students ([26-0590](#)).

DFW (grades of D, F, and course withdrawals) are used as an early indicator of academic risk and a predictor of fall-to-fall retention. For the fall 2023 FTNIC cohort, the combined DFW rate across fall 2023 and spring 2024 was 16.5 percent, and 71.2 percent of students completed at least 24 credit hours in their first year, while 35.4 percent completed at least 30 hours. These data guide course redesign, supplemental instruction, and advising strategies aimed at helping more students complete a momentum-building first year.

Evidence of Institutional Action to Improve Outcomes

Strategic Planning and Student Satisfaction Measures

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan includes student satisfaction measures. The university’s strategy is to use the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to establish baseline satisfaction data and then set measurable improvement goals based on these results for future years. The plan calls for achieving a statistically significant improvement in student satisfaction by 2030, using the data collected from the SSI to guide campus improvements and strategic decisions. The university also plans to use survey data to measure students’ sense of community and feeling valued with baselines set by 2026 and targets for meaningful increases by 2030. These metrics are part of broader goals to improve student and alumni experiences, retention rates and overall engagement ([26-0001](#), p. 33).

Early Academic Risk Monitoring (DFW)

DFW rates are monitored each term and made available through the university’s academic dashboards for use by faculty, academic unit leaders, deans, student success leaders, and advisors. Academic deans, academic unit leaders, the Student Success Committee, and advisors use these data to identify courses with elevated DFW rates, initiate course redesign discussions, plan supplemental instruction and tutoring, and conduct targeted outreach to students receiving early alerts. In this way, DFW data function as an actionable metric, linking course-level performance to first-year retention and longer-term completion.

Technology-Enabled Engagement (EdSights/”Boomer Bot”)

In 2025, MSU began using the EdSights’s AI-powered SMS platform, specifically through the Boomer Bot chatbot, to increase student engagement and to identify underlying challenges affecting student persistence and success. The platform enables personalized outreach; identifies students who may benefit from enhanced support using a machine-learning framework focused on academic engagement, financial distress, wellness, and belonging; and provides real-time connections to campus resources. Notable results include high student opt-in rates (92%), active engagement (50%), substantial student feedback (over 27,000 texts), and the flagging of hundreds of students for timely intervention relating to academic, financial and wellness concerns. Additionally, the student voice score (SVS) was implemented to quantify student satisfaction and collect actionable qualitative feedback for continued institutional improvement ([26-0521](#)).

MSU intends to continue targeted retention campaigns, integrating EdSights’s data with internal systems (ATLAS) and further tailoring support resources based on student responses. Insights from SVS and chatbot interactions are intended to drive improvements in student outcomes, inform university advancement efforts, and enhance the overall student experience, through more meaningful advising, outreach and intervention strategies. MSU is addressing recurring barriers and the needs of its specific population, emphasizing a data-driven, student-centered approach to retention and satisfaction.

Targeted First-Year Interventions

Trend data showing lower retention among first-generation and underrepresented students have led to specific first-year interventions. Missouri State has implemented first-generation sections of GEP 101, the required first-year seminar, as well as college-based sections that better connect students with their academic homes and support services. A Title III grant supported Student Success Coaching, and the university has committed to continuing success coaching after the grant ended in 2025. In addition, the Bears Lead two-year college transition program was developed to support students who need structured guidance in navigating the college environment, with the goal of improving both first-year retention and long-term completion ([26-0082](#)).

Engagement and Intent-to-Graduate Monitoring (BCSSE/NSSE)

NSSE is used to assess the quality of student life, student learning and satisfaction ([26-0541](#)). Survey results point to areas where MSU is performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved. BCSSE collects information about incoming students' high school experiences and their expectations for their first year of college. BCSSE is paired with NSSE administration at the end of the first college year.

Residence Life Survey

MSU also measures student satisfaction through the Residence Life survey. A satisfaction survey for students living in university housing in 2024–2025 included the following: 95% of students feel safe in their rooms, 94% state that living on campus enhanced their ability to meet other people, 95% of students feel accepted by other students on their residence hall floor, and 96% were satisfied with their building placement ([26-0620](#)).

Strategic Enrollment Management

MSU began developing its strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan in 2019 with dedicated committees, a consultant, and a campuswide feedback process, but progress was hampered in 2020 due to COVID-19. Leadership later resumed work, revising committee structures and completing the plan in December 2020. Over the following years, new committees were formed under SEM senior leadership, and organizational changes in 2022 placed enrollment management under a new executive vice president, temporarily delaying SEM progress. A refreshed SEM plan was implemented for 2023–2024, continuing earlier goals. The current *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* includes developing a new five-year SEM plan led by enrollment management leadership and slated for completion in 2026. (*See 4.C for details on MSU's efforts in SEM.*)

Criterion 3 Summary

Missouri State University demonstrates systematic and mission-driven assurance of academic quality and institutional effectiveness across all programs, modalities, and locations. The University's comprehensive array of undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates, and minors is grounded in clearly defined, faculty-established learning outcomes that are regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with institutional standards and external expectations. Academic policies and degree requirements are consistent university-wide, and online offerings maintain equivalent rigor and outcomes as their seated counterparts. Faculty governance, through department, college, and university-level review, upholds the integrity and relevance of the curriculum.

MSU's programs actively engage students in research, creative inquiry, service-learning, internships, and other applied learning experiences that reflect the University's Public Affairs Mission of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement. A qualified faculty and staff of over 3,500 support high-quality instruction and student services, reinforced by clear expectations for continuous professional development, accessibility, and the strategic use of technology to promote equity and engagement. Comprehensive learning support, including advising, tutoring, disability services, and career development, is coordinated to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

Assessment of student learning and academic quality is institutionally embedded and data-informed, guided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the provost, and faculty-led councils. The restructured program review process, fully implemented beginning in 2025, provides strategic oversight ensuring academic quality, relevance, and alignment with MSU's mission of preparing educated, ethical, and engaged citizens.

Criterion 3 Sources ([26-0638](#))

Strengths

1. MSU's faculty are highly qualified. More than 90% (tenured/tenure-track) hold a terminal degree in their fields.
2. Support services for students are comprehensive and available to all students on campus, off campus and online. This includes attention to student success and a commitment to mental health.
3. In 2024, MSU created the OIE, committed to a data-informed, customer-service oriented framework that includes the OIR and the OAA.
4. MSU created an academic performance measurement system document that describes assessment processes at the university, college, and academic unit level.

Opportunities

1. MSU has a history of comprehensive program review process. However, the university paused program review during COVID-19, an academic realignment, and a need to rebuild the Office of Institutional Research. The university took the opportunity to develop a new program review process in 2024 and piloted it in spring 2025. MSU has an opportunity to fully implement program review in fall 2025, using dean and faculty feedback from the pilot.
2. Building on student success initiatives, MSU has an opportunity to strengthen collaboration among all stakeholders to improve student retention.
3. MSU has an opportunity to revise its general education program.

Criterion 4. Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

4.A. Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

The Board of Governors (BOG), members of which are appointed by the Missouri governor, holds the ultimate authority and responsibility for adopting policies and procedures relevant to Missouri State University (MSU) management ([26-0249](#)). The BOG supervises and directs university operations. The president serves as the chief executive officer, responsible for implementing BOG policies, managing daily operations and appointing key administrators with board approval. The BOG meets six times each year. Two subcommittees, Finance and Facilities and Programs and Planning, meet before full BOG meetings. The Audit and Risk Management subcommittee meets as needed. Budget analysis and planning occur throughout the year with the preparation of the Operating Budget.

The president's cabinet includes central administrators to coordinate business and support systems and ensure efficient and cooperative operations across MSU. The cabinet meets weekly and is chaired by the president ([26-0018](#), [26-0664](#)). The University Council (UC) meets monthly to update employees on operations across campus and give input on university initiatives. Its purpose is to enhance campuswide communication, provide information to stakeholders and collaboratively address challenges facing MSU ([26-0202](#), [26-0353](#)).

The MSU Foundation engages with the community through extensive partnerships, fundraising initiatives and support for projects that benefit MSU and the local region. By fostering relationships with private and corporate foundations, facilitating crowdfunding for campus and community projects, and funding awards that recognize outstanding volunteerism, the Foundation actively advances MSU's Public Affairs Mission ([26-0602](#), [26-0603](#), [26-0604](#)).

MSU Foundation's Board of Trustees advises the foundation on gift planning, fundraising and the investment of private funds for university projects and programs ([26-0251](#)). The membership brings regional and national perspectives, ensuring strategic guidance and broad

community representation. The foundation board fosters collaboration among university leadership, alumni and community stakeholders by guiding philanthropic initiatives and advancing partnerships that directly benefit students and local organizations ([26-0635](#)).

External advisory boards at MSU play crucial roles in connecting academic colleges, schools, departments and programs with industry professionals, alumni and community leaders, who provide valuable guidance on curriculum development, educational trends and workforce needs. Boards meet regularly to advise faculty and to help ensure that programs remain relevant to employer demands. Board members are accomplished alumni or industry experts, who share insights into their fields and support the continued improvement and innovation of the university's academic offerings. Examples of advisory boards include:

- McQueary College of Health and Human Services Advisory Board ([26-0252](#)).
- Hospitality Leadership Board of Advisors ([26-0253](#)).
- Information Technology and Cybersecurity Advisory Board ([26-0254](#)).
- Chemistry Board of Advisors ([26-0255](#)).
- School of Accountancy Advisory Board ([26-0256](#)).
- Construction Management Advisory Board ([26-0257](#)).
- Entertainment Management Advisory Board ([26-0258](#)).

MSU demonstrates a commitment to shared governance and maintains an administrative structure through documented policies and organizational practices ([26-0259](#)). Detailed policies in the Policy Library specify administrative responsibilities and procedures to ensure consistent and accountable management throughout the institution. MSU follows a policy-driven approach to curricular and personnel matters with established channels for employee input, standing committees that review and advise on key issues, and operating policies updated to include community input and BOG approval.

In 2025, MSU exemplified shared governance through the collaborative development and approval of its new *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* ([26-0598](#)). This process engaged faculty, staff, students, community members and key stakeholder groups, including Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association and the Administrative Council, in interactive workshops and formal review sessions. The plan's development included small group discussions, opportunities for broad campus feedback, and structured reporting from each group to ensure representation of diverse perspectives and needs before final adoption. This multiphase process highlighted a transparent, participatory approach to major institutional decision-making. The BOG and campus leadership publicly recognized individuals for their commitment to shared governance.

In 2025, the Faculty Senate led a review of the [Faculty Handbook](#) that engaged representatives from all academic units. This process included open forums, working groups with faculty from diverse disciplines, and feedback sessions with administration and staff. Key changes and proposals were debated, amended and voted on by the Faculty Senate before being forwarded to the president and BOG for final approval. Faculty voices were central in shaping the policies impacting their work and the academic mission of the university. Key changes to the Faculty Handbook ([26-0605](#)) include the following:

- Mission and public affairs sections were updated, aligning them with the *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* and reframing teaching, research, service, collegiality and support programs as the core of the university's general mission.

- Roles of the president, provost, vice president for community and global partnerships, deans, academic unit leaders and faculty governance bodies (Faculty Senate, Academic Leadership Council) were clarified, including the place of Staff Senate and the Student Government Association (SGA) in shared governance.
- Sections on appointment, rank, tenure and promotion were updated to more explicitly spell out criteria for teaching, research and service for each rank (assistant, associate, professor, distinguished professor) and provide more structured expectations for non-tenure-track roles (clinical, instructor, senior instructor, research faculty and various “-in-residence” titles).

MSU advanced shared governance through the creation and launch of collaborative Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) in 2024–2025. The FLCs focused on initiatives such as sustainability, active learning and ethical integration of artificial intelligence in teaching. These FLCs brought together faculty, staff and students from across disciplines to design curriculum enhancements, develop best practices and create university-wide frameworks. The programs were co-sponsored by the FCTL, colleges and the SGA ([26-0261](#)).

Shared governance at MSU is not limited to faculty and administration. The Graduate Council, Staff Senate, and SGA all play roles in governance, providing recommendations and representing the interests of staff, graduate students and undergraduates. The university is committed to participatory governance and open communication. Public forums, published recommendations and opportunities for feedback are integral parts of the governance process.

- The Staff Senate ([26-0264](#), [26-0473](#)) communicates staff interests and concerns directly to the administration, functioning in an advisory capacity during the development, review and implementation of university policies affecting staff.
- The Graduate Council ([26-0566](#)) drives graduate education policies, acts on curricular matters, reviews new graduate programs, recommends general policies to the dean of the Graduate College and represents the academic needs of graduate students.
- The SGA ([26-0236](#), [26-0265](#)) is the official voice of the student body, advocating for student interests, participating in university committees, and influencing institutional decisions, through regular meetings and legislative action.

Faculty are responsible for developing curriculum proposals, which undergo a review process involving academic leaders, councils, and, as necessary, specialized committees. Final approval of curricular proposals requires review by the Faculty Senate, the university president, and in some cases, the BOG, with support provided by the provost's office. Actions of the Faculty Senate are subject to challenge by the faculty and final approval by the president and, if policy dictates, the BOG. The Faculty Senate is empowered to establish policy in bylaws and Faculty Handbook revisions, initiate action on curricular and non-curricular matters, and create functional bodies to carry out its powers ([26-0263](#)). Representatives are elected from various faculty ranks, ensuring broad participation in governance ([26-0267](#)). Faculty Senate is currently redefining representation and revisions to the Bylaws are expected in 2026. The Faculty Handbook underwent a seven-year review and was approved by the BOG in June 2025 ([26-0605](#)).

Offices and committees throughout the organizational structure are involved in financial review and planning: faculty, college committees, Financial Services, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and the budget committee process. The budget process includes college budget committees, the academic leadership budget committee, and the Executive Budget Committee ([26-0586](#)). The Executive Budget Committee is comprised of university leadership, faculty, staff

and student representatives. The committee gathers input from academic and administrative budget committees, helps determine budget levels assigned to university units (including athletics and auxiliary services), and makes recommendations to the president on budget allocations, who then presents them to the BOG.

MSU has the fiscal resources, faculty, and staff, space and technology to deliver courses face-to-face, online, blended, and at multiple locations, including dual credit. MSU has a faculty-student ratio of 21:1([26-0625](#)). The VPAF leads regular analysis of expenditures and revenues to ensure the resource base continues to support MSU's educational programs ([26-0590](#), [26-0614](#), [26-0615](#)).

MSU has used expanded web and electronic communication to make data more accessible to the campus community. The Office of Institutional Research had numerous staff changes in 2023–2024, including the retirement of its director. This impacted data collection and communication to the campus community. In 2024, however, the university reimagined and then rebuilt the office by creating the more robust Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). This office is led by the associate provost for institutional effectiveness and currently includes the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of Assessment of Accreditation, and a project manager. As of November 2025, this office has 14 full-time employees ([26-0609](#)).

The creation of the OIE is evidence of MSU's commitment to building a data-informed culture at MSU. The office aims to serve all employees and to promote decision-making that relies on high-quality data ([26-0058](#)). OIE collaborates with faculty to utilize their expertise and experience to build academic data dashboards that are useful. When piloting the new program review process, faculty input was requested on what data are most useful to them and where data could be improved ([26-0447](#)). Feedback on the program review process from faculty, academic unit leaders, deans and the provost was received from the Academic Leadership Institute and Dean's Team in fall 2024 ([26-0633](#)) and was integral in launching the pilot in spring 2025.

4.B. Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

Financial Resources

MSU's financial history, available to employees through records of annual audits and reports located on the website ([26-0200](#)) and in Meyer Library, reflects the institution's financial stability and its ability to meet growing needs, especially as a statewide institution with a mission in public affairs. MSU's financial status is sound as evidenced by credit and bond ratings, such as Standard & Poor's ([26-0269](#)) and Moody's ([26-0270](#)), which have designated the university A+/Stable and A1/Stable, respectively.

MSU's Financial Services department operates in compliance with university, state, and federal policies ensuring fiscal responsibility and proper use of funds ([26-0165](#), [26-0272](#)). Operations are guided by the Fiscal Responsibility Policy, which outlines expectations for budget planning, expenditure approvals, procurement, grants, contracts, and more. Use of university resources must be justified as necessary and directly related to official business, with transactions subject to review and audit. Financial Services manages accounting and budgeting functions, prepares and monitors the internal operating budget, maintains accurate records, oversees accounts receivable, and ensures compliance with laws and institutional guidelines ([26-0669](#)). Consistent application of these policies promotes transparency, accountability, and stewardship of resources in support of MSU's educational mission.

MSU can run reports on demand. Access follows a defined process in which an existing "Organization" approver grants View, Originator, or Approver status to others. Employees can verify their access in several ways ([26-0709](#)). In Academic Affairs, Deans typically have access to all organizations in their cost centers, and each AUL is granted access to the organizations they oversee. Staff assisting administrators may receive View or Originator access but, to maintain separation of duties, are not approvers. Those with Organization access can run departmental reports on demand, including Operating Fund, Non-Operating, Grant and Project Fund, and Activity Reports—all Argos reports generated from the Ellucian Banner ERP system ([26-0714](#)).

Each cost center has a primary and backup Financial Services analyst ([26-0275](#)). In addition to Financial Services, financial resources are closely monitored by a network of roles and offices designed for robust oversight and accountability:

- The VPAF provides executive oversight of Financial Services, Human Resources, University Safety, Facilities Management, and Planning, Design, and Construction, ensuring effective stewardship of resources, directing capital projects, and advancing operational efficiency, campus safety, and mission-aligned fiscal management.
- The BOG provides oversight of the university's financial resources, approving the annual budget, maintaining solvency, and setting policies for major financial decisions, including investments, capital projects, and expenditures. Through committees such as Finance and Facilities and Risk Management and Audit, the BOG reviews financial reports, monitors audits, and ensures compliance. The BOG delegates daily operations to administrators, but retains final authority for fiscal policy and long-term planning.

- The provost serves as chief academic officer and monitors resources supporting the university's academic operations. The provost collaborates with deans, academic leaders, and university leadership to align budgets with academic priorities, drive cost-saving initiatives, and ensure financial stewardship. The provost oversees transparent budget allocation, sets funding priorities across colleges and academic units, and engages in strategic planning to sustain academic excellence.
- Individual unit managers monitor departmental expenditures and budgets, complying with university-wide guidelines while facilitating external audits and regular reporting. For example, the Office of Financial Aid ensures all federal, state and university aid is properly distributed and documented.

Budget Processes

The budget processes include the Executive Budget Committee and committees at the academic unit, college and academic leadership levels. The budget process is as transparent as possible through committee involvement and public communication of results and is available to external as well as internal constituents primarily on the university's website ([26-0273](#), [26-0274](#), [26-0200](#)).

Several committees are involved with the allocation of financial resources, including an Executive Budget Committee ([26-0586](#)). These committees review and make recommendations on the allocation of resources, which are sent to the president for consideration before presentation to the BOG. These groups are involved in an annual cycle, beginning in the fall semester, to review and make recommendations concerning upcoming fees that are approved by the BOG each April. Committees meet as necessary throughout the year as financial conditions change, and additional funds become available or funding assumptions change.

Based on the recommendations from the Executive Budget Committee, the president presents preliminary budgets to the BOG for discussion and input in May. The final budget is presented to the BOG for approval in June. Throughout the process, the university tracks the budget through the legislative process. The fiscal year begins July 1.

In recent years, the Executive Budget Committee:

- Recommended a balanced FY2023 budget including a 4% across-the-board pay increase and a 15-dollar minimum wage for full-time employees (May 2022).
- Recommended presenting to the Board a one-time retention payment option (either 1,000 or 1,500 dollars), with a committee preference for 1,500 dollars for qualifying full-time employees (April 2023).
- Supported a strategy to increase graduate tuition at a higher rate than undergraduate tuition while monitoring competitiveness (January 2024).
- Reached unanimous consensus to recommend a 3% across-the-board pay increase for all employees for FY2025, rather than more complex equity-pool models (April 2024).
- Focused discussion of compensation using updated CUPA comparisons and salary history (April 2025).

Also, during the BOG's Finance and Facilities Committee meetings ([26-0543](#)), year-to-date financial reports are presented. University divisions, including academic colleges and departments, student affairs and administrative services, can track and monitor expenditures alongside budgeted allocations through Banner. Banner is the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, which has become more fully utilized since being implemented several years ago.

The process is enhanced by various budget analysts ([26-0275](#)), serving the cost center heads across campus under the coordination of the VPAF and the assistant vice president of finance and accounting.

Personnel Resources

MSU monitors personnel resources through a structured, multilayered system involving HR, the provost's office, and academic units. HR oversees recruitment, hiring, onboarding, job classifications, compensation ([26-0608](#)) and employee evaluations of all employees and maintains confidential personnel records, utilizing electronic systems for applicant tracking and performance management to ensure compliance and protect privacy. At the academic level, the provost's office works with deans and academic unit leaders to manage faculty personnel matters, maintaining official records of faculty appointments, reviews, contracts, and tenure or promotion actions as prescribed by university policy. Both offices facilitate regular evaluations, uphold policy compliance, and collaborate on organizational development. This ensures workforce quality, equity, and alignment with the university's mission through transparent documentation at every step of an employee's lifecycle ([26-0607](#), [26-0501](#), [26-0502](#)).

MSU maintains a systematic, collaborative process, led by HR, to ensure that positions are filled by qualified personnel. Each role begins with a detailed job analysis defining essential duties, required skills, education, and experience. HR collaborates with academic unit leaders and the provost's office to align descriptions with institutional policies and state and federal regulations. Before recruitment, job descriptions are reviewed for accuracy, and minimum qualifications are strictly applied through applicant screening and credential verification. Regular audits, performance evaluations, and updates to job descriptions ensure relevance, equity, and compliance, maintaining a skilled workforce aligned with the university's strategic and operational objectives. More detailed information regarding staff and faculty sufficiency is found in Criterion 3.C ([26-0625](#)).

The BOG, along with the administration, has identified employee compensation as a high priority for funding support. There are regular reviews and periodic analyses regarding financial planning and support for staff and faculty. Annual reviews of salary comparisons for faculty and staff have been made and adjustments implemented to maintain the integrity of the compensation system. The process also has provided data for comparisons with peer institutions to ensure the university remains competitive with compensation. Yearly comparisons are made by HR completing and reviewing annual College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) data on salaries for faculty and staff ([26-0608](#)). CUPA survey reports are published on the HR website and available to faculty and staff through secure login ([26-0611](#)).

The university tracks the key performance indicators that measure the percentage of faculty at each rank, full-time and part-time, those with terminal degrees, *etc.*, and provides an annual update to Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate's Budget and Priorities Committee annually reports on these issues ([26-0276](#)).

Short-Term Priorities and Long-Term Planning

Within the annual budgeting process, MSU distinguishes between short-term operational needs (e.g., staffing adjustments, operating expenses, one-time investments) and long-term commitments (e.g., permanent positions, debt service, major capital and technology investments). Long-term commitments are evaluated for multi-year sustainability and alignment with strategic priorities before inclusion in the budget.

MSU's current short-term priorities include sustaining enrollment growth, enhancing student and employee satisfaction, supporting technology and facility upgrades, and expanding financial aid access as outlined in its strategic plan and its budget priorities ([26-0598](#), [26-0294](#), [26-0302](#)). To address these needs, MSU's financial management employs annual budgeting overseen by the BOG, operating expense reviews, planning for state appropriations, and allocation of resources for strategic initiatives such as campus renovations and technology investments. MSU ensures ongoing sustainability by including diversification of revenue streams through tuition, state support, philanthropic gifts and auxiliary operations. Transparent financial reporting and adaptive budgeting enable the university to meet immediate priorities, build reserve funds, and invest in key growth areas.

The VPAF reports on efficiency with bond refinancing and renegotiation of contracts, for example, with banks who hold the university's funds, to increase our return on those funds. MSU has redesigned scholarship packages to recruit traditional and transfer students. Scholarships are funded by MSU, by MSU donors and from outside organizations. Forty percent of MSU students graduate with no debt ([26-0280](#)).

MSU looks to the future in its financial planning by developing strategies that anticipate institutional needs and changes in the higher education landscape. MSU's *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* ensures that financial priorities align with shared goals and anticipated challenges for campus and community stakeholders. This approach includes regular assessment and allocation of resources for infrastructure, technology, scholarships and employee benefits as well as the diversification of revenue streams to maintain operational flexibility and sustainability. Financial management is guided by transparent budget practices, scenario planning for state appropriations and enrollment shifts, ongoing investment in campus improvements, and support for retirement and savings programs that secure the university's fiscal future. These efforts collectively allow MSU to prepare for emerging opportunities and risks, sustaining its mission and educational quality over the long term.

MSU uses a cost-center budgeting model in which centrally allocated funds are distributed to colleges, departments and administrative units known as cost centers. These cost centers are charged with making day-to-day financial decisions within annual budgets set according to strategic institutional priorities and reviewed by Financial Services ([26-0275](#)). Any remaining balances at year-end can be carried forward, providing incentives for fiscal responsibility and flexibility in long-term departmental planning. The FY26 Board Approved Budget ([26-0359](#)), for example, details summary and detailed allocations by cost center, ensuring that each unit knows its resources and responsibilities for faculty, staff, space and technology needs in the coming year.

This centralized oversight and decentralized decision-making process promotes transparent resource distribution and stewardship, fostering institutional sustainability and supporting MSU's mission to deliver quality education across all modalities. The cost-center model with its structure of centralized allocation and decentralized decision-making under rigorous oversight allows MSU to match resources consistently with institutional priorities.

In long-term planning, MSU is guided by its mission and strategic plan. Each year, the university identifies and focuses on a few specific goals that move it forward toward the vision identified in the strategic plan. Collaborating with the President's Cabinet and academic leaders, working groups dedicated to each of the components of the plan develop specific goals and performance measures. The goals and performance measures are added to the plan and

reported on regularly, including with the strategic plan's oversight group, the BOG, and the annual "State of the University" address. This process ensures the goals are in line with the institution's resource capacity, consistent with the strategic plan, and successfully fulfilled. Actions from annual goals are annually submitted to the BOG ([26-0260](#)).

Space Allocation, Facilities, Infrastructure

MSU manages its space resources through its Space Management office, which provides comprehensive facilities planning and ensures the efficient use and scheduling of physical resources for academic and administrative needs. Services include allocation of classrooms, teaching laboratories and event spaces as well as specialized facilities like research labs in Cheek Hall ([26-0287](#)) and the Department of Physics ([26-0288](#)), which offer advanced tools for computing, engineering and scientific discovery. MSU also maintains multipurpose student and faculty spaces, such as study lounges, group and individual study rooms in Meyer Library ([26-0610](#)), and flexible event and common areas in the Student Resource Center ([26-0289](#)).

The University Space Allocation Advisory Committee reviews use of university space ([26-0568](#)). The committee reports to the vice president for administration and finance (VPAF). The committee operates within policies and procedures that consider requests for facility additions, modifications, and utilization changes ([26-0285](#)). Requesters submit online Facilities Request Forms ([26-0290](#)), which are reviewed at the monthly committee meetings. The committee analyzes the requests, then approves, rejects, or tables each request (*e.g.*, pending additional information regarding the request). Each requestor is contacted with the committee's response, given the opportunity to answer further questions or provide supplementary information and kept abreast of the issue until resolution.

Between FY21-FY25, new construction and renovations at MSU total 1,632,476 square feet. These projects were funded internally (\$141,918,231) and externally (\$227,957,768) ([26-0718](#)). Since 2021, Blunt Hall (previously Temple Hall), Kampeter Hall, and Kemper Hall have been renovated and additions have been built ([26-0291](#)). The Agricultural Innovation Hub was completed, providing the Darr College of Agriculture with specialized space focused on current technological innovations in the agricultural industry and includes classrooms and collaboration spaces ([26-0596](#)). The John Goodman Amphitheatre was completed in 2022. Several significant capital developments are currently underway, including the Judith Enyeart Reynolds Performing Arts Complex and the Clifton M. Smart University Advancement Center ([26-0027](#), [26-0028](#)). Other ongoing projects ([26-0296](#)) include major additions and renovations to facilities such as Kemper Hall and the development of campus spaces like the IDEA Commons ([26-0297](#)), aimed at strengthening experiential learning and student engagement.

MSU's *2025–2030 Facilities Master Plan* is a five-year framework aligned with the *Strategic Plan*. It guides campus growth; prioritizes capital projects; and phases work as underway, planned, proposed, and future to support academic expansion, safety, and student experience across the main, downtown, and Darr agricultural campuses, while addressing significant deferred maintenance and reducing reliance on leased space ([26-0305](#)).

The Maintenance and Repair (M&R) and Classroom Upgrades budget decreased from \$2.45 million in FY19 to \$1.2 million in FY25, a total of \$7.5 million over six years. Maintenance decisions are prioritized around life safety, structural and building envelope integrity, utility infrastructure, and repair or replacement of building finishes. For FY25, \$200,000 is allocated for inspections and \$1 million for deferred maintenance reduction. Additional projects totaling \$6 million, approved by the BOG in 2023, further address deferred maintenance. One-time

capital project funds from federal, state, and private sources also contribute to campus renovations that reduce the backlog. Strategic reductions in leased properties have redirected savings to the M&R budget, including \$1.3 million annually from the Park Central Office Building beginning FY26 (raising the budget to \$2.5 million) and \$482,000 annually from the Meyer Alumni Center beginning FY27 (raising the budget to \$3 million) ([26-0717](#)).

MSU has proposed new projects utilizing the state MoExcels program to enhance workforce readiness in fields like data science, computer science, and math. In recent years, MSU has received funding for interdisciplinary clinical training facilities in health care workforce development (\$1,600,000), construction training education environment (\$2,000,000), and a workforce training initiative (\$2,550,000) ([26-0648](#)).

A \$500,000 MOBEC grant from the Missouri Technology Corporation ([26-0295](#)), which supports MSU’s efactory (a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation), will expand physical space and resources for regional startups, business incubation, and talent development over the next three years.

Graduate and undergraduate research spaces also continue to be funded with grants supporting student use of labs and specialized equipment in fields from computer science to the physical sciences ([26-0298](#)).

The university’s infrastructure includes the following property data ([26-0593](#), [26-0667](#)):

Campus	Gross Square Footage
Springfield	6,066,861*
Mountain Grove	55,261

*Gross square footage includes all buildings, education and general (classroom), auxiliary (residence halls, dining centers, athletics, etc.), and leased spaces.

Springfield campus infrastructure includes the following net square footage:

Category	Net Square Footage
110 Classroom	192,033
111 Computer Classroom	18,570
112 Outreach Classroom (iTV)	5,069
210 Class Laboratory	241,897
211 Computer Class Laboratory	14,587
220 Open Laboratory	17,964
221 Open Computer Laboratory	16,730
250 Research Laboratory	64,013
Grand Total	570,863

The university has additional in-state locations including those in Mountain Grove, the Cassville Instructional Center (with Crowder College), the Ozarks Technical College Lebanon Center, the Crowder College Campus, the Nevada Instructional Center, Springfield Public Schools, and Waynesville Central Office.

Sustainability

The statewide Public Affairs Mission is part of MSU's *Strategic Plan* and is enacted in a variety of ways, as evidenced through service learning and the pursuit of ethical leadership, community engagement, and cultural competence. Five-year goals are included in the *Strategic Plan*. Action plans include detailed list of action items for the year that propel MSU toward the goals outlined in the *Strategic Plan*. Program reviews evaluate how programs incorporate the mission into student learning outcomes and curriculum ([26-0449](#)).

MSU provides technical support to all users with user support specialists distributed across campus. Technology upgrades are available to seated and online students and to students taking courses at additional locations. MSU's Information Technology (IT) Council oversees the planning, coordination, and evaluation of strategic technology initiatives. Acting as the institution's central body for reviewing and approving technology projects, the council ensures that initiatives are well-aligned with institutional goals, sustainable, and supported through appropriate funding mechanisms. In 2024, the process of migrating all devices and PCs to Windows 11 was initiated. Also in 2024, Information Services and the OIE collaborated on a proposal ([26-0299](#)) to utilize EdSights's AI-powered chatbot to improve student retention, persistence and success ([26-0521](#)).

Total enrollment at MSU has increased by 9.4% over the last 10 years. Fall 2025 enrollment was 25,238 on the Springfield campus ([26-0590](#)). The university continues to allocate resources to academics and support units that are expanding. For example, related to the Alliance in Healthcare Education, particularly the nursing program, there is an increase in the budget for the McQueary College of Health & Human Services between FY25 & FY26 of 11.2% over a single year. (FY25 budget of 21,453,633 & FY26 budget of 23,860,139). MSU's resource allocation process ensures that funding goes to educational purposes rather than elective or superordinate entities. In FY2026, revenue from student tuition and fees accounts for 59% of the university's Education and General (E&G) operating budget. The state provides 38%. Other resources fund another 3% ([26-0613](#), [26-0303](#)).

MSU's commitment to affordability is a reflection of its statewide Public Affairs Mission. Due to the tuition rate structure, MSU offers competitive rates for out-of-state students. Its statewide and national draw continues to increase. In 2024, MSU enrolled students from 50 states, the District of Columbia, the military, Puerto Rico, Guam, and 95 foreign countries. MSU continues to be among the most affordable universities in the state ([26-0585](#)).

4.C. Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Strategic Planning

Approximately every five years since 1995, MSU has conducted a process to evaluate, revise, and publish a new long-range or strategic plan. The plans, including specific goals, are posted to the university website and available to the public. Individual academic and administrative units also plan and map progress toward goals on an annual basis. In addition to strategic planning, the Operating Budget Book details the allocation of resources ([26-0583](#), [26-0359](#)).

MSU's *Long-Range Plan 2021–2026: Embracing the Entrepreneurial Spirit* ([26-0024](#)) aimed to infuse the university's operations and culture with innovative, future-focused thinking. The plan addressed quality improvement by promoting experiential and interdisciplinary learning, clarifying the value and relevance of academic programs, and increasing equitable access to educational opportunities. In 2024, a decision was made to sunset the 2021–2026 long-range plan a year early, and planning began to develop a new strategic plan as well as update MSU's mission, vision, and values ([26-0616](#)).

MSU's *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* embeds quality improvement as a central focus across all institutional operations and academic programming. The plan emphasizes measurable outcomes and continuous enhancement through five overarching goals: developing academic opportunity and innovation, enhancing community partnerships and economic development, becoming an institution of choice, elevating student and alumni experience, and reimagining branding and identity. Quality improvement is measured through explicit performance metrics, regular data collection, and transparent reporting. For example, each strategic goal includes desired outcomes, such as meaningful increases in experiential learning participation, employee and student satisfaction, and retention and graduation rates with precise timelines for establishing baselines and tracking growth by 2030. The university commits to annual progress assessments using instruments like the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and Modern Think's "Great Colleges to Work For" survey, along with program reviews, satisfaction surveys, and targeted action plans to address gaps and enhance institutional effectiveness.

Measurement of priorities is tightly coupled with budget planning and resource allocation. The *2025–2030 Strategic Plan* calls for comprehensive capacity and resource analyses to ensure that each priority receives appropriate funding based on data-informed needs. Enrollment growth, retention improvement, scholarships and faculty support are all tied to specific budget strategies. Budget decisions are guided by documented priorities, which include increasing scholarships, investing in facilities maintenance, expanding professional development, and funding experiential learning opportunities with the intention of maintaining financial solvency while advancing academic and operational quality. Annually, budget plans and allocations will be reviewed, allowing for adjustments to sustain momentum and address new challenges ([26-0302](#), [26-0613](#), [26-0614](#), [26-0615](#)).

Enrollment Management

2019-2024

In 2019, Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) committees were developed with charges, a consultant was hired, a website and blog were published, and development of the SEM plan began. A university town hall was offered at the end of fall 2019 to present goals and collect feedback about which strategies to use. Strategy development began during spring 2020 semester; however, due to COVID-19 and the closure of campus, SEM plan development was put on hold. At that time, a draft of strategies had been created, but a final draft was not completed.

During summer 2020, leadership met and determined to continue with the SEM plan and start a new long-range plan development at the beginning of fall 2020 with a plan to coordinate both efforts. From that, two committees (Academic Programs and Deliveries and Marketing and Communications) were removed from the SEM plan, so work under those topics could move to the new long-range plan, also condensing the SEM plan. The SEM plan was completed in December 2020. Over the next year, a new SEM Council, Outreach and Recruitment Committee, and Student Success and Retention Committee were developed. These committees reported to the SEM Senior Leadership Committee. In summer 2022, a new executive vice president (EVP) and interim provost joined MSU. Enrollment Management and Services (EMS) was moved under the EVP. During this transition, action on the SEM plan was temporarily suspended. In fall 2023, a SEM plan was created to cover the 2023–2024 academic year. The plan linked to goals and strategies developed in 2020 ([26-0301](#)).

2025-present

In 2025 MSU elevated strategic attention to enrollment through the creation of a cabinet-level Vice President for Enrollment Management position. This leader oversees undergraduate admissions, financial aid, academic support, transfer and adult student services, and dual credit initiatives, and is responsible for coordinating recruitment efforts. The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan: Igniting Opportunity incorporates the development of a five-year SEM plan as a strategy under “Goal 3: Institution of Choice for Students and Employees.” A strategy workgroup was created and led by the vice president of Enrollment Management and assistant vice president of Enrollment Management--Admissions and Outreach. The SEM plan is underway with a final version to be published in 2026.

Recruitment

MSU recruits students through a multifaceted approach that combines targeted outreach, comprehensive support, and a strong focus on access and affordability. The Office of Admissions actively engages prospective students by offering virtual and in-person campus tours; personalized guidance from admissions counselors; and information on academic programs, scholarships, and financial aid options. The Office of Admissions uses a data-driven approach including academic, financial, and geographic information to inform recruitment communications and outreach ([26-0700](#)).

Recruitment efforts highlight experiential learning experiences, internships, and career opportunities available in Springfield. In addition, committees coordinate and monitor strategic recruitment tactics, ensuring data-driven priorities and resource alignment to meet enrollment

goals. The university also supports student populations through dedicated offices for international and rural students, dual credit and scholarship programs, and partnerships with local schools and community organizations:

- MSU actively recruits international students through a suite of dedicated services and programs. MSU's International Services office supports prospective students through application guidance, visa documentation, and robust onboarding resources, ensuring a smooth transition to campus life. MSU also participates in international education fairs and partnerships, highlights global alumni success stories, and maintains an accessible online presence to attract students worldwide.
- MSU established the Center for Rural Education, which acts as a hub for outreach, partnerships, and support for rural students. The university develops connections with rural school districts across Missouri and builds teacher pipelines through grow-your-own programs.
- MSU supports dual credit and scholarship opportunities like the Ozarks Teacher Corps scholarship, which is offered through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, that enables rural students to pursue teaching degrees with a commitment to return to their hometowns. MSU regularly convenes with rural educators and school administrators for networking and professional development, including the annual Rural Summit, to enhance engagement and access.

Community partnerships are central to MSU's recruiting strategies. The university collaborates with local organizations, schools, and employers through programs facilitated by the Division of Community and Global Partnerships and the Citizenship and Service-Learning (CASL) office. These partnerships include service-learning projects, placement of college and career advisors in rural high schools via statewide alliances, joint scholarship initiatives, and community-aligned recruitment events. Such collaborations allow MSU to reach potential students, who, otherwise, may not have considered pursuing higher education, and to offer them pathways into academic programs and future careers through hands-on community involvement and professional networks ([26-0656](#)).

Planning

MSU plans and monitors its budget on an annual basis through a structured and collaborative process that includes participation from academic and administrative leadership and formal approval by the BOG. Each year, internal operating budgets are developed for academic departments, administrative units and auxiliary operations, which factor in projected enrollment, tuition and fee revenue, state appropriations and strategic institutional priorities ([26-0583](#), [26-0359](#)). These budget drafts undergo multiple rounds of review by financial committees and university leadership with attention to alignment with the university's educational mission. After revision, the consolidated budget proposal is presented to the BOG for final approval ahead of the new fiscal year, which begins July 1. Throughout the fiscal year, Financial Services systematically monitors revenues and expenditures assigned to various cost centers, producing regular reports that compare actuals to budgeted figures. This approach provides accountability and transparency and allows for proactive adjustments, if financial conditions change, and ensures the university's resources remain aligned with institutional goals and financial health ([26-0617](#)).

MSU's budgetary committees review and make recommendations to the president on the allocation of university financial resources. The BOG's Finance and Facilities Committee reviews

budgets every other month. The president provides regular communication through the weekly employee newsletter *Inside Missouri State* to the campus community; through the newsletter, the president can address key budgetary item recommendations and potential tuition increases as well as other financial concerns and accomplishments of the university. Advisory committees, which include informed external constituents, provide individual academic and administrative units with insights and advice during the planning process. Recommendations from faculty and staff lead to policy changes. Two recent examples include the expansion of the dental benefit and the enhancement of parental leave, both of which were advanced through direct Staff Senate efforts in collaboration with Human Resources and administrative leadership, including support from the Healthcare Benefits and Planning Committee (HCBPC) ([26-0652](#), [26-0653](#)).

MSU's facilities master plan ([26-0305](#)) serves as a strategic blueprint, guiding campus growth, sustainability, and the efficient use of university resources. Reviewed every five years (most recently in 2025) and aligned with MSU's *Strategic Plan*, the master plan identifies and prioritizes realistic projects, such as new academic buildings, renovations of key facilities, sustainability initiatives, improved parking and green spaces, and infrastructure enhancements to support both academic and community needs. The plan is developed with broad participation from campus stakeholders, the BOG, and state planners, ensuring that each project receives dedicated resources and aligns with institutional goals for an adaptable, innovative, and future-ready campus environment.

MSU's president and administrative team develop the university's annual legislative priorities and recommend to the BOG a set of specific goals consistent with the strategic plan for each annual session of the Missouri General Assembly. University officials then meet regularly during the session and throughout the year with legislators, the Missouri governor, and other statewide, elected officials to discuss these priorities. The Executive Budget Committee, along with the president and president's cabinet, consider and anticipate both short-term and long-term events, such as the state budget and changing demographics, which can impact the university's ability to fulfill its mission. MSU officials then develop strategies, and the president keeps the BOG advised of developments and critical decisions to be made.

MSU's strategic planning anticipates demographic shifts, such as the decrease in high school graduates and the increasing numbers attending Missouri's two-year institutions. The planning also anticipates the resources the university will require to meet the needs of this changing population. The university continues to support international students and to pursue goals of accountability and improvement in education abroad programs, which helps all students, faculty and staff to improve their understanding of issues associated with globalization.

MSU's Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance Committee is responsible for supporting the university's efforts to identify, communicate, prioritize, and manage risks from a university-wide perspective. The committee draws its members from areas including administration, academics, legal affairs, student affairs, athletics, financial services and information technology, to ensure comprehensive oversight and alignment with institutional goals. Its duties include assessing potential risks that could affect the achievement of university objectives, reviewing federally mandated reporting and disclosure requirements, and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. The committee communicates risk-related information to university stakeholders, the president, and the BOG, providing recommendations and updates on significant risk issues. The committee's process involves regular meetings to review risk assessments, monitor risk mitigation progress, analyze emerging risks and coordinate university-wide action plans. The Internal Audit and Risk Management Office director also

serves as chair and maintains direct reporting lines to the BOG's Risk Management and Audit Committee and the president.

MSU works closely with the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Springfield, and other major employers in the Springfield metropolitan area to anticipate and encourage employment opportunities. Examples include:

- The creation and ongoing development of the IDEA Commons innovation district in downtown Springfield, which was established through joint efforts with the Chamber of Commerce, city government, and local businesses. This district houses the Roy Blunt Jordan Valley Innovation Center (JVIC) and efactory business incubator, where corporate partners, university researchers and start-ups work together to create high-wage jobs, drive technology commercialization and retain university graduates in the Springfield area ([26-0307](#), [26-0308](#), [26-0310](#), [26-0313](#)).
- The Missouri Mentoring Partnership pairs Greene County youth with area businesses and engages employers as mentors to provide professional-world job readiness training and employment opportunities for young people ([26-0309](#)).
- MSU's efactory coordinated with the Springfield Chamber and regional partners to secure a \$200,000 grant from the Missouri Technology Corporation, building a regional innovation-friendly network to support startups, provide entrepreneurial training, and create stronger job pipelines throughout southwest Missouri ([26-0311](#), [26-0312](#)).
- Through the 7th and 8th Graders Go to Work program, MSU partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to connect over 600 middle school students with 20 local employers for career exploration ([26-0314](#)).
- MSU worked with the city and Greene County on workforce development initiatives such as job readiness programs for youth and new pre-apprenticeship pathways in essential sectors like healthcare, education, and construction; these efforts were supported by major employers and guided by regional needs, which expand career access while addressing workforce shortages in the Springfield metropolitan area ([26-0309](#), [26-0316](#), [26-0317](#) pg. 38-41).
- MSU offers career fairs for colleges and academic units ([26-0618](#), [26-0619](#))

How MSU Uses Data

MSU incorporates data from multiple sources to drive strategic planning and continuous improvement. Through enrollment forecasting and environmental scanning, MSU analyzes trends in high school graduate populations, monitors shifting demographics, and anticipates market changes to guide recruitment, retention, and academic program strategies. These analyses inform institution-wide planning priorities and resource allocation decisions. In response to projections of declining first-year and transfer student enrollments and anticipated decreases in regional high school graduates, the university established data-informed enrollment objectives supported by campuswide collaboration among faculty and administrators ([26-0301](#)). Regularly updated dashboards and progress reports ensure that institutional leaders monitor performance against targets and adjust strategies as conditions evolve.

Financial capacity and institutional operations are closely aligned with enrollment forecasts, leveraging data to ensure that budget allocations and resource investments reflect university priorities and emerging realities. Annual budget planning includes capacity reviews of academic programs, facility needs, and staffing, integrating external financial pressures and enrollment

trends. MSU recently introduced innovative funding streams, such as the Competitive Excellence Fund ([26-0318](#)), designed to strengthen recruitment and retention of student-athletes, and strategically adjusts scholarship offerings to support projected enrollment and institutional goals. The OIE has shifted from focusing on compliance to providing decision-makers with predictive and prescriptive analytics, enabling adaptive reallocation of resources and long-term financial health ([26-0059](#)).

Comprehensive data on student learning outcomes at MSU, including graduation and retention rates, licensure exam performance, and results from nationally benchmarked surveys like the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), provide actionable insights at the course, program, and institutional levels. These metrics inform ongoing curriculum revisions, targeted student support initiatives, and co-curricular programming, which are tracked through regular public reporting and academic dashboards. MSU incorporates external environmental data, such as statewide policy changes and employment trends. By uniting insights from all these streams, MSU engages in continuous, systematic strategic planning that prioritizes measurable improvement, transparency, and institutional effectiveness.

Learning about and improvement to MSU comes from a review of annual efforts to address action items tied to the *Strategic Plan*. Each year the president, president's cabinet, and BOG establish an action plan consistent with the mission of the university and provide updates on progress toward these goals, which are presented to the BOG. The goals include topics such as academic opportunity and innovation, community partnerships and economic development, institution of choice for students and employees, student and alumni experience, and branding and identity. Each year progress towards the university's goals will be compiled and published in an annual report-out that will be presented to the BOG and made publicly available. MSU's financial documents, action plans, and responses to action plans are available on the website.

MSU uses a variety of means to measure performance to improve effectiveness. These include financial records, external audits, committees, regular communications and summary reports from the president to the public and the BOG, department- and college-level planning, assessment of student learning, reports to Missouri's Department of Education, and reports to accrediting bodies at the state and national levels. Academic units practice continuous improvement through an annual planning and reporting process. Deans participate in action planning and the strategic response to action plans. Academic units participate in a regular cycle of program review and accreditation. Library holdings are reviewed and analyzed regularly. Student Affairs programs participate in departmental reviews aligned with standards set forth by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS).

Criterion 4 Summary

MSU demonstrates effective administration, shared governance, and transparent resource management through a defined structure that involves faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. The BOG provides institutional oversight and policy direction, while the president, cabinet, and advisory councils manage daily operations and campus coordination. Shared governance is realized through the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Graduate Council, and Student Government Association, which contribute to decision-making and continuous improvement through open communication and regular collaboration.

Financial and personnel resources are closely aligned with the university's mission through an inclusive budgeting process using a cost center model that prioritizes educational goals. MSU maintains financial stability through annual audits, competitive compensation reviews, and strategic investments in facilities, technology, and academic programs. Enrollment growth, increased diversity, and new or renovated learning spaces underscore MSU's commitment to accessibility and sustainability, strengthened by partnerships with employers and community organizations.

Systematic planning and continuous improvement guide institutional progress, supported by strategic planning cycles, data-informed decisions, performance indicators, and regular reporting that ensure accountability and promote excellence in student success and institutional effectiveness.

Criterion 4 Sources ([26-0639](#))

Strengths

1. MSU demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in its strategic planning process. In 2024–2025, stakeholders, which included administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members, identified shared values and five strategic goal areas in its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan.
2. The university's budget process is made as transparent as possible through committee involvement and public communication of results. These are available to external as well as internal constituents, primarily on MSU's website.
3. The university is dedicated to developing its infrastructure. Numerous campus buildings have been upgraded and improved, including Roy Blunt Hall. New structures, such as the John Goodman Amphitheatre, have been built. Others are in development, including the Judith Enyeart Reynolds Performing Arts Complex and the Clifton M. Smart University Advancement Center.

Opportunities

1. MSU is committed to developing its strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan. The SEM plan is a data-informed process that aligns fiscal, academic, co-curricular and enrollment resources with the university's changing environment to accomplish its mission and ensure long-term enrollment success and fiscal health.
2. The university has an opportunity to implement the strategic plan that was developed in 2024–2025 and approved by the BOG in June 2025.