

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

## 1.B.1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

WSC serves the public via connections to the community and the region. Each career and technical education (CTE) program has an advisory board consisting of community and regional experts to advise on the relevance of the curriculum being delivered. Per WSC procedure, advisory boards meet no less than once per year to discuss programs. Additionally, college administration, faculty, and staff members hold seats in various community, region, state-wide, and national organizations.

WSC serves the public firstly by providing educational opportunities to get students college-ready in two major ways. First, the [Adult Learning Center \(ALC\)](#) on WSC's campus is largely funded by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Adult learners are offered basic education, GED prep and success courses, English Language (EL) learning, and career and college planning services. These services will also be offered in Watford City (approximately 50 miles from WSC campus) starting in the fall of 2024. The ALC also acts as a testing center for Pearson VUE and other testing platforms. Second, WSC partners with numerous area high schools to provide [dual-credit and early-entry](#) opportunities for those students who wish to start earning college credits prior to their high school graduation. Tuition for dual credit courses is provided at a substantially reduced level compared to full college tuition, making this a strong service to the public good. Furthermore, starting Fall 2024 cohorts of students at Watford City High School (ND) and Sidney High School (MT), respectively, will be starting a middle college program aimed at completing the general education requirements and the first year of the nursing program. These cohorts will be co-located at the local hospital to provide students with the opportunity to start working at the facility, in addition to earning an income.

For those students who want to join the workforce, [TrainND Northwest](#) delivers the highest quality of diverse safety, technical, and professional training for an evolving and

ever-changing workforce. This workforce-training division of WSC leverages the expertise of qualified faculty to facilitate the expansion of knowledge, skills, and confidence in various trades. The northwest division is one of four in North Dakota and offers training in the cities of Dickinson and Minot and its home campus in Williston. The most impactful programs are One-Basin-One-Way (OSHA safety training), the commercial driver's license program, the crane operator program, and the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) program. TrainND Northwest also offers a robust CNA (certified nursing assistant) program to assist with healthcare shortages in northwest North Dakota. Because TrainND Northwest does not qualify for federal financial aid, a [foundation](#) has been established to secure scholarship funds for students to assist with financing their educational pursuits.

WSC students are also offered the opportunity for career and technical education. Students can earn a two-year [Associate in Applied Science \(AAS\)](#) degree in various CTE fields, or they can choose to complete a one-year certificate program or certificate of completion program to enter the workforce with the skills needed to successfully gain meaningful employment. CTE programs are each governed by an advisory board from area industries, providing these programs with insightful feedback on the curriculum being delivered and advice on how to make CTE programs relevant and competitive in the region. The AAS degree can be used to go directly into the workforce or to transfer to a four-year program based on the field of study.

Most students at WSC earn a two-year degree with the intent to transfer to a four-year program. WSC offers an [Associate in Arts degree \(AA\)](#) and an [Associate in Science degree \(AS\)](#). Both programs offer students lower division coursework in preparation for transfer; the AA focuses on communication, humanities, and social science, and the AS centers on math, science, computer science, and lab courses. Within their two years at WSC, many students earn both degrees in preparation for transfer.

WSC has developed and continues to explore [articulation agreements](#) with various four-year institutions within the North Dakota University System (NDUS) and beyond. These academic agreements are designed to create a seamless transfer experience for students moving from community college to four-year programs. WSC has articulation agreements in 63 bachelor's degrees and nine certificate programs with various institutions, including private institutions like the University of Mary or Western Governors University.

[Consortium agreements](#) also create academic pathways for students at WSC to fulfill the public's need for education. Currently, WSC has five different consortium agreements with institutions within the NDUS:

- The [Dakota Digital Academy](#) provides students with a certificate in cybersecurity and software development with relevant coursework in information technology fields.
- The Northern Information Technology Consortium facilitates the delivery of information technology courses among Dakota College at Bottineau, Minot State

University, Lake Region State College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Williston State College.

- The [Agriculture Exchange and Delivery Consortium](#) involves the cooperative efforts of Dakota College of Bottineau and Williston State College in agriculture-related fields.
- The [Dakota Nursing Program](#) links Bismarck State College, Dakota College of Bottineau, Lake Region State College, and Williston State College to deliver standardized and comprehensive nursing education.
- The [North Dakota Early Childhood Education Consortium](#) represents an agreement between all NDUS institutions to collectively offer early childhood education courses.

In forming these consortia, respective academic institutions demonstrate their commitment to academic excellence, cooperation, and innovation by delivering specialized education across multiple disciplines. Through such partnerships, students gain access to a broader range of resources, expert faculty, and diverse learning experiences, thereby creating opportunities for public education.

WSC's upcoming healthcare training facility shows that the college supports the region's need for public education. Throughout northeast Montana and northwest North Dakota, medical providers are facing shortages in trained medical professionals to staff their facilities. [Sanford Health announced that it planned a new clinic on the site of Williston Square.](#) This new clinic would bring primary and specialty services, an infusion clinic, imaging equipment, and lab facilities, and with so many extra medical services offered, more trained healthcare professionals are needed. To address this growing issue, WSC proposed the creation of a healthcare training facility on the college campus; [the North Dakota legislature recognized this regional need and provided \\$28.6 million in funding to build the facility and WSC, with the help of the WSC Foundation, raised \\$8 million in local funds.](#) WSC is a public institution of higher education that is also growing its campus and academic program offerings based on public funding from the legislature, further cementing the college's commitment to public education in the region.

**1.B.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.**

While WSC pays close attention to its financial reserves, its financial resources are primarily marked for educational responsibilities. In the 2023 fiscal year, WSC spent approximately 56% of its budget toward educational purposes, including Student Services, scholarships and grants, and academic supports for students; the bulk of this percentage, however, was housed specifically allocated to instruction. In addition to instruction costs, the college has a specific fund in its budget to provide professional development for faculty and staff in the form of special training, conference attendance, and online learning. In Fall 2024, WSC plans to send certain faculty and staff members to a conference about student learning outcome assessment.

With education as the institution's primary role, WSC has used its budget to provide more time to faculty for instruction and student success. In the 2023-2024 school year, the college purchased curriculum software from [Worldwide Instructional Design System \(WIDS\)](#). The college brought a WIDS consultant to campus in February 2024 to train faculty on learning outcome creation and assessment. As WSC moves forward with WIDS, faculty will need to update learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level, and WIDS will be a vital tool in the learning outcome assessment that faculty do on campus. Leveraging WIDS with WSC's current operations will streamline curriculum development and syllabus creation, thereby allowing faculty to focus more on instruction and student support.

Though not part of the college budget proper, scholarship opportunities at WSC show that the college is committed to education. The [WSC Foundation](#) is instrumental in WSC's primary role of education regarding [scholarships](#). Through the generosity of donors, community members, and organizations, the WSC Foundation awarded over \$3.1 million to WSC students in the 2024 fiscal year; in the 2025 fiscal year, the WSC Foundation has budgeted over \$3.7 million scholarship awards. Scholarships were accessible to both full-time and part-time students seeking associate degrees. [These scholarships allow nearly 90% of WSC students to receive significant assistance toward funding their tuition and fees, housing, and other educational expenses.](#) There are approximately 70 "buckets" of scholarship dollars available to students to assist their financial needs and thereby achieve their educational goals.

WSC's primary focus is education, though not all that education will happen at WSC. One of the main functions of the college is that of a transfer school: students complete two years at the college to earn an associate degree, and they transfer to a university to complete baccalaureate programs. As such, WSC administrators and faculty continue to foster relationships with other NDUS institutions and create academic pathways for students. For example, the college has created pathways for several programs with the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and Valley City State University, and more talks are happening with Minot State University and Dickinson State University. These agreements with larger institutions provide for a seamless transfer for students to attain four-year degrees.

The new healthcare building capital project is expected to attract more students to the campus and fill a considerable gap in healthcare training in northwest North Dakota

and northeast Montana. New space inside this building will also house a multi-purpose auditorium that could host extracurricular events for students, further pointing to educational opportunities as WSC's primary focus.

### 1.B.3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Representatives from WSC engage the regional stakeholders on numerous governing and advisory boards. College personnel foster deep connections in every sector of the market that WSC serves, including area high school CTE centers, regional economic development boards, regional workforce training boards, or healthcare advisory boards. More specifically, WSC is currently building professional relationships with administrators and instructors at Watford City High School and more locally with Williston High School. Additionally, WSC hosts strategic planning sessions including all faculty and staff. Fostering these connections shows that WSC is committed to its constituents and its mission to make students' educational experiences life-long and life-changing. Two areas that WSC supports in the community are CTE education and healthcare education.

Public school districts in Williston and Watford City are also served by WSC's outreach. WSC is creating more dual credit opportunities for students in these locations, including Communication, English, Psychology, and Math courses. Both Williston and Watford City's school districts are building new regional CTE centers to expand educational opportunities for their students. WSC has agreed to connect with their new CTE centers and provide dual-credit or early-entry courses at each facility as they come online in the future; other courses will be delivered using TrainND Northwest's workforce training model. WSC also has representatives on the Williston High School Strategic Planning Committee and the Bakken Area Skills Center Advisory Board to ensure that the college is communicating with area public schools to best serve the students in the region.

WSC has been at the forefront of discussions to address a severe lack of healthcare training in the region. Throughout northwestern North Dakota and northeast Montana, medical facilities in Williston, Tioga, Crosby, Watford City, and Sidney cited a need for trained medical personnel to combat staffing shortages; the WSC President also serves on the [Sanford Health Advisory Board](#), which anticipates a new medical clinic's construction in the Williston community, further underscoring a need for healthcare education in the region. WSC created a proposal to bring to the North Dakota State Legislature to request funding for the college to build a new healthcare training facility. The State of North Dakota provided 80% of the funds needed to construct the facility, and the remaining dollars were raised through local fundraising efforts. Construction began in June 2024 and should be

completed by November 2025. A task force was assembled from a cross-section of college leadership and community members to guide the planning of the facility in biweekly meetings. This facility will house about a dozen new certificates and associate degree programs to help the region provide a trained workforce and expand healthcare facility staffing.

Internal advisory boards are a large component of WSC's commitment to serving its constituents. At the highest level, the President's [Executive Cabinet](#) represents college leadership from all areas of the campus, including TrainND Northwest and the Small Business Development Center, to discuss campus and community opportunities for improvement. Internal advisory boards also exist for the following areas:

- Department and CTE Advisory Boards
- TrainND Northwest Advisory Board
- [TrainND Foundation](#) Governing Board
- [WSC Foundation & Governing Board](#)

As an institution training tomorrow's workforce, WSC personnel serve on numerous external advisory boards regarding economic development in the region. For example, the [Western Region Economic Development Governing Board](#) consists of area leaders from Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams counties in western North Dakota; this group facilitates and promotes the region's diversified and sustainable economy. Among other external advisory boards with representation from WSC leaders are the [Tri-County Regional Development Council Governing Board](#), the [Vision West ND Governing Board](#), the [Williston Area Economic Diversification Group Governing Board](#), and the [Williston Area Recreation Center Advisory Board](#).

Transparency and communication in the community solidifies the institution's commitment to its constituents. WSC personnel are also involved throughout the community in various other organizations. These include Rotary, the Lions Club, the Downtowners Association, and the Chamber of Commerce. Each Thursday morning throughout the calendar year, WSC personnel visit [the local FM](#) radio station for interviews about activities and business at the college; the [local AM radio](#) statement hosts biweekly interviews for the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to discuss college updates and events. Presentations to the [City Council for the City of Williston](#) and to the [Williams County Board of Supervisors](#) also happen twice per academic year to address the community's educational needs and update local leadership of updates at the college.

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