

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

### 2.A.1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

The WSC mission statement is as follows: “to provide accessible, affordable, life-changing, and life-long educational pathways to residents of North Dakota, the Upper Plains, and Beyond.” The mission statement is visible on the Mission and Vision webpage on the college website, but it is physically visible in nearly every office and classroom space on campus. WSC devotes itself to this mission statement because of a firm belief in the four components of the mission; college personnel are familiar with this mission and make their best efforts to uphold it every day. On May 20, 2024, the mission statement was revised to this current version.

The previous version of the mission statement included the phrase “Where the people make the difference.” Though this phrase sets WSC apart from other colleges, it is more appropriate to utilize it as the college motto instead of another facet of the mission statement. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students participate in campus events to form a tight-knit campus community. Unlike large four-year universities, college employees often know students by name and have positive interactions with students daily. Faculty get to know students and their personal struggles on and off campus, and this aids in retaining students and ensuring their success both in individual classes and in programs.

One area of growth is a frequent reevaluation of the mission statement, vision, and values based on internal and external data and metrics to ensure relevance and effectiveness. [SBHE Policy 100.7: Institution Mission Statements](#) was adopted as a WSC policy, stating that NDUS institutions shall adopt a mission statement to be reviewed by the chancellor and then forwarded to the SBHE for approval. Accreditation Team 1 reviewed this policy and plan to amend it to include assessment and revision of the values

as well as the mission statement. Executive Cabinet also reviews the mission, vision, and values; the newly created [WSC Policy 100.71](#) states that the mission statement, vision, and values will be reviewed every five years.

WSC is committed to the four components of its current mission statement: accessible, affordable, life-changing, and life-long learning.

WSC provides accessibility in campus spaces and learning opportunities. Campus updates make the campus more accessible for those students, employees, and guests who have mobility issues. These include fixing handicap-accessible doors and elevators to allow for easy access to spaces across campus.

The college also provides accessibility in its learning opportunities. For example, many classes have shifted from traditional textbooks to open education resources (OERs); for those students who cannot afford the high cost of traditional textbooks, OERs provide digital textbooks and supplemental readings to aid them in their courses. [In 2023, WSC had 33 classes with low-cost or no-cost textbooks; in 2024, faculty have more than doubled the number of classes with low-cost materials or no-cost textbooks.](#) This provides students with the same learning opportunities in the classroom, and it provides quicker access to the learning materials. Some students do not have easy access to a laptop or tablet, but they can still attend class and use their phones to view OER textbooks.

WSC is an open-access institution that serves anyone looking to start or change careers and needs different educational opportunities to do so. The college houses an adult learning center that offers coursework to complete a GED and English Language Learning classes. If a student applies to the college but does not meet minimum placement scores for Math or English courses, developmental courses are available to help students become college ready. Recently, departments across campus have been reworking their schedules to allow for more night class offerings to help those students who are not able to attend classes in the middle of the day due to work obligations. The college also provides accessibility services to those students who need accommodations in the classroom to ensure their success. No matter the level of student, WSC faculty and staff are ready to meet students where they are and help them to reach their full potential.

Though WSC meets the accessibility aspect of its mission statement, there are areas of growth for the future. First, corequisite remediation will be piloted in the Spring 2025 semester for English to test its efficacy for WSC students; if successful, it will replace the current prerequisite remediation model for English composition, and it could be implemented in Mathematics as well. Second, [English as a Second Language \(ESL\)](#) offerings to the growing English language learner community could be enhanced; currently, ESL courses are only offered during the school year, but language learning often necessitates year-round coursework. ESL instruction, along with basic skills learning, could be embedded into technical education programs in the future.

In addition to OER textbooks reducing the cost of higher education, WSC is also committed to providing students with an affordable education. Students may apply for a

variety of [scholarships](#). More students attend the college tuition free, including fees, because of three amazing scholarship opportunities: the Williams County Graduate Scholarship, the Regional County Scholarship, and the Academic Achievement Award Scholarship. These scholarships cover expenses for any student who wishes to study at WSC who graduated high school from one of 53 qualifying counties stretching from the middle of Montana eastward to the middle of North Dakota. Though these scholarships don't cover housing, meal plans, or textbook expenses, they cover a significant portion of students' costs while attending.

The cost per credit at WSC is significantly less expensive than other institutions within the North Dakota University System (NDUS).

- [The estimated cost per credit for an in-state student at the University of North Dakota is \\$384.88 with fees of \\$71.42, which is a total of \\$456.31.](#)
- [Dakota College at Bottineau, a school within the NDUS that is more comparable to WSC, estimates that a student will pay \\$188.76 per credit with fees of \\$34.04, a total of \\$222.80 per credit.](#)
- [At WSC, students will expect to pay \\$137.92 per credit for base-band tuition with fees of \\$57.73, a grand total of \\$195.65.](#)

This shows that WSC is attainable in its per-credit pricing for students when compared to four-year institutions and comparable two-year institutions within the NDUS. Also, [WSC has the lowest tuition costs throughout the entire NDUS.](#)

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 upcoming fiscal year, the WSC Foundation has budgeted \$3.7 million toward scholarship opportunities. 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.

Life-long learning is the final cornerstone of the college's mission statement, and this learning starts in the traditional classroom setting. The [Adult Learning Center](#) located on the college campus accepts students of all ages to participate in skill-building courses; for example, the English Language Learning program accepts students of all ages and nationalities to develop their skills in written and spoken English as well as English reading comprehension. College courses ask students to connect their coursework to their lived experience, such as [HPER 100: Concepts of Fitness and Wellness](#), wherein students evaluate their health choices and create a personal program that emphasizes a healthy lifestyle moving forward. The college also offers many program certificates that students can complete in a shorter timeframe or with a more flexible schedule. This is popular with

non-traditional students who are already in the workforce but need additional training. These examples show that WSC's educational pathways affect students throughout their lifetimes.

Life-long learning also happens outside of the traditional classroom, and this is acknowledged in three major ways. First, the college works with students who have industry experience to earn credit for prior learning, especially in Career and Technical Education [programs](#); this aligns with [SBHE Policy 441: Degree Credit, Non-Degree Credit and Non-Credit Instructional Activity](#), which was adopted in [WSC Policy 467](#) and [WSC Procedure 467](#). Second, the COOP 197: Cooperative Education/Internship is a cooperative work experience course that allows students to experience and learn about specific industries in the field. Their job supervisor must establish an educational plan with the student and discuss what skills they should learn throughout their time on-site; these skills will be useful to students in their respective industries throughout their lives. Finally, the college provides community outreach events where students plan, organize, and implement said events, thereby building life-long skills outside of the classroom. For instance, a Communication instructor had students plan an annual [Veterans Symposium](#), wherein students would interview veterans and tell their stories at the event.

Life-long learning is also about personal growth, and WSC offers students opportunities to [get involved](#) on campus to focus on various facets of health throughout their lifetime. Social health is encouraged by participation in various student organizations, clubs, and residence life activities. Student Senate also provides students with decision-making and leadership skills to allow them to advocate for their peers. Life-long learning about mental health can be found in behavioral health programming on campus, and physical health can be attributed to the numerous athletic events and physical activities afforded by [Student Life](#). Students can also participate in cultural activities to support their community's health and cultural diversity programs to foster a global perspective of diversity. An English instructor offered extra credit points for students who participated in an event where English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the Adult Learning Center would hold conversations with native English speakers; this strengthened the ESL students' conversational abilities in English while also giving WSC students an opportunity to hear the life stories of the ESL students.

Opportunities for life-long learning are also available to faculty and staff. They, their spouses, and their dependents can receive full or partial tuition waivers as explained in the 2023 Benefits [at a Glance](#) webpage of the college website. Professional development opportunities are made available to employees throughout the year to provide relevant training on new systems and products and to enhance students' learning inside and outside the classroom. Professional development opportunities also ensure that faculty and staff are up to date with market demands and industry standards while also providing them with important networking prospects and collaborations within the community, region, and state. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, more professional development funds have been set aside to invest in the professional growth of WSC's faculty and staff,

thereby ensuring that life-long learning is not just for WSC's students, but its employees, too.

Life-long learning also fosters life-long connections with WSC. At graduation practice each spring semester, the [WSC Foundation](#) asks students to register their information to keep in touch with graduates through their alumni magazine, the [Teton Thunder](#), and through alumni outreach events. Through these connections, alumni can get information about new state-of-the-art capital projects happening on campus.

Though WSC fulfills this aspect of its mission statement, there are two opportunities for growth. First, [TrainND Northwest is preparing to offer community education classes aimed at the general public at affordable prices, including basic car maintenance, bike maintenance, gardening, crafting, and safety courses](#). Second, Academic and Student Affairs are working to develop a series of badges through the [Modern Campus](#) platform in areas such as leadership and customer service; as students attend extracurricular events on campus, they will earn badges in the Modern Campus platform that can link to their LinkedIn profiles and other social media.

## 2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Evidence of operational integrity is found throughout the policies and procedures that govern the college and all its various functions. The institution's policies are often adopted from those provided at the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE), the governing board that oversees WSC and the other higher education institutions within the NDUS.

Financial integrity at WSC shows compliance with SBHE policies and procedures. The [800-series of SBHE policies](#) safeguard the institution's financial integrity, and many of these policies have been adopted in WSC's internal policies; topics include budget management and control, purchasing and purchasing cards, and asset management. The biennial budget report shows that WSC's sources of funding and uses of funding are appropriately reported. The [2021 Williston State College audit](#) from the Office of the State Auditor provides areas of growth for the college's financial integrity along with WSC's responses to those findings. Mandatory training for theft, fraud, abuse and internal control training maintains employee responsibility to the institution's financial integrity.

WSC complies with SBHE policies regarding integrity in academic affairs, research, scholarship, and creative works. The [400-series of SBHE policies and procedures](#) outline various areas of academic affairs to create a culture of shared ethical standards across the NDUS, and WSC has adopted many of these policies into its internal policies. Evidence

of WSC's commitment to integrity in academic affairs, research, and scholarship can be found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#), [WSC policies and procedures](#), and the [WSC course catalog](#). Faculty must follow SBHE policies and procedures to create standardized, ethical processes for all academic affairs.

Integrity in Human Resources centers on the [600-series of SBHE policies](#). Several of these policies were adopted internally by WSC. Human Resources provides training for new faculty and staff, including data privacy training, oaths for teachers, and substance abuse in the workplace forms. Annual training topics include theft, fraud, and abuse prevention, violence against women, and campus safety reporting. Clery Act and Title IX trainings explain mandatory reporting for all employees. WSC employees may use the [NDUS Fraud Hotline](#) to anonymously report unethical practices on campus. WSC is an [Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer](#).

WSC provides several auxiliary functions for the benefit of students. Despite being separate departments, these auxiliary units still function under the umbrella of WSC, meaning that all WSC policies and procedures, as well as those from the SBHE, are still applicable to these areas of campus. WSC's auxiliary functions include:

- [Andrea's Bookstore](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Student Services](#)
- [WSC Athletics](#)
- [Accessibility Services](#)
- [TrainND Northwest](#)
- [The Teton Grill](#)

As a community college, WSC engages with key members and groups within the Williston community and in the northwest region of North Dakota to achieve its stated mission. Per [WSC Procedure 469](#), advisory boards for career and technical education programs are a vital part of those programs' success, and these partnerships help the college enhance educational offerings in the community, such as the [construction of a new healthcare training facility](#) to add trained healthcare workers in the region. Integrity with these community partners is safeguarded by [SBHE Policy 308.4: Conflict of Interest](#).

## Sources

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- WSC website, “Scholarships”
- University of North Dakota website, “Estimate Your Tuition and Fees”
- Dakota College at Bottineau website, “Cost of Attendance”
- WSC website, “Tuition & Fees”
- North Dakota University System website, “Cost to Attend”
- WSC website, “WSC Foundation”
- IPEDS 2023.pdf
- WSC website, “HPER 100 COG.pdf”
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- SBHE Policy 441: Degree Credit, Non-Degree Credit and Non-Credit Instructional Activity
- WSC website, “Procedures”
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- Modern Campus, WSC Student Portal
- North Dakota University System website, “800 Series – Financial Affairs”
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- SBHE Policy 308.4: Conflict of Interest