

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Several support services are available to students at WSC. First, [accessibility services](#) are available with the Accessibility and Retention Specialist on campus; those students who need support within the classroom, such as note-taking, extended test time, or mobility needs, can find the necessary accommodations. Second, [mental health counseling services](#) are available to students needing short-term, intervention-style counseling; students can meet providers either face-to-face or via tele-med counseling. Third, students experiencing food insecurity have access to a [food pantry that was created by the campus Diversity Club](#); although a great addition to WSC's support services, the food pantry could be enhanced. Finally, the WSC chapter of Future Business Leaders of America organized a [Career Closet event](#) where community members could donate gently used professional attire for those students who need proper clothing to interview for workforce positions. These support services suit the needs of students at WSC.

In Summer 2024, Student Services started an initiative to contact students by phone to guide them through the various admissions processes and course advising. Prior to Summer 2024, Student Services relied on a customer relationship management system to send emails and/or text messages to students at each step of the admission process. However, students reported needing more support through a process that is novel to them (and sometimes to their family). For that reason, Student Services started contacting students by phone, informing them of where they are in the admission process, and offering to provide hands-on support to help walk the learner through the process while demystifying each step.

An area of improvement for WSC was identified in the hiring of academic and retention advisors to support students. In Fall 2024, WSC will be hiring its second such advisor, followed by a third one in the following year if finances improve. Currently, retention is performed by the counselor as part of her caseload.

3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

A few examples of the academic support services available at WSC are the Learning Commons, the Communication Lab, the Math Lab, and NetTutor. The Learning Commons assists students with academic research, test proctoring, and support for the Blackboard Ultra learning management system (LMS). The Communication Lab offers supplemental instruction in written and spoken communication, including brainstorming, essay structuring, citing sources, and writing résumés and cover letters. The Math Lab aids students in math and science courses, but assistance with anatomy, physiology, and accounting is also available. Lastly, NetTutor is an online tutoring platform available 24/7 through Blackboard Ultra.

Information about placement into pre-college courses can be found on the [Placement Testing](#) webpage of the college website. [Various placement methods](#) can be used to determine if a student is college ready or if they need preparatory coursework. Students have the option of raising an insufficient placement score by using [EdReady](#).

Preparatory coursework is also available for those students who do not meet placement guidelines to enter college-level coursework. These courses are listed as prerequisite “pre-college” courses. [ASC 087: College Writing Prep](#) offers students extra practice in English grammar, writing, and composition of college-level essays; a grade of “C” or higher allows entrance into [ENGL 110: College Composition I](#). [ASC 091: Algebra Prep I](#) and [ASC 093: Algebra Prep III](#) provide basic instruction in mathematical concepts in preparation to enter [MATH 103: College Algebra](#).

In Spring 2024, discussions began about moving away from prerequisite developmental education to corequisite remediation. The current prerequisite remediation model potentially adds more time to a student’s plan of study, whereas corequisite remediation would allow more students to enroll in both a college-level course and a corequisite support course without spending an extra semester on developmental work. By Spring 2025, WSC plans to implement a pilot section of corequisite remediation with ENGL 110: College Composition I. Discussion has started about implementing a corequisite developmental Math course with MATH 103: College Algebra, but future discussions could lead to different math courses that are tailored to non-STEM major

students/programs. Moving to corequisite remediation could also lead to higher retention rates among students by reducing the gateway coursework that tends to frustrate students and prevent their completion or retention.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

Academic advising is currently offered to students by full-time faculty to plan educational interests and align those interests with professional goals after graduation. This represents an area of growth for the college; however, if the college transitions to an academic advisor in a staff position, it will enable faculty to focus more on their instructional roles on campus while also giving adequate time to begin planning for future student learning outcome assessment.

Starting in Fall 2024, WSC will hire its first dedicated academic advisor who will work with the Admissions team on advising students. Additionally, WSC expects to hire a second academic advisor the following fiscal year based on an improving enrollment outlook. Concurrently, Academic Affairs plans to create streamlined education/academic plans that will provide students with clear paths to graduation. These efforts would align with the creation of academic pathways to build toward recommendations of the Guided Pathways framework. Academic plans would also allow the institution to better predict the student demand for courses, which in turn enhances the availability of such sections to support student needs.

In parallel to academic advising, WSC is home to a counselor who supports urgent student needs and follows up with students when their attendance or academic record dips enough to trigger instructor alerts. This intervention process is critical for the retention of students and enhancing their completion of credentials. [A counselor report notes how many tracking items were created in the Starfish system to follow through the intervention process.](#)

3.D.4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

WSC's LMS transition from Blackboard to Blackboard Ultra proved to be a major upgrade in technological infrastructure. For several years, Blackboard has been the standard LMS at WSC and several other North Dakota University System institutions. In 2023, WSC upgraded to Blackboard Ultra, which provides a more intuitive feel for both faculty and students and operates similarly to other popular LMS products like Canvas. Blackboard Ultra can also use generative AI to aid faculty in instructional design. As WSC moves toward Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) as a tool for student learning outcome assessment, this upgrade to Blackboard Ultra will simplify that assessment process. Additionally, in the Summer 2024, the college acquired Blackboard Analytics for Learn. This tool will be used to electronically access the learning outcome assessment data that will be collated and provided to faculty for their evaluation and reporting in WIDS. Although this information could be manually collected by individual faculty, it is critical to assist the faculty by reducing the time required to perform such labor-intensive data gathering activities.

The Learning Commons provides students and faculty with the most up-to-date materials possible. Significant investments have been made in the Learning Commons in digital and electronic serials compared to peer institutions. Students often begin their research or research solely using electronic sources, and WSC has effectively allocated its budget to handle this trend. [Figure 27 from the 2023 IPEDS report](#) shows that WSC's digital and electronic serials holdings are significantly higher than peer institutions.

The Information Technology (IT) department at WSC has upgraded nearly all classroom spaces throughout the main WSC campus and TrainND Northwest. These classrooms have become "bring your own device" spaces, which means there is no longer a teaching station computer; instead, individual faculty bring their college-issued touchscreen 2-in-1 laptop to the classroom and either plug into the classroom system or wirelessly cast their device to the projector or television screen in the room. This allows faculty to use their device irrespective of the classroom, and to provide instructional tools to support learning. Furthermore, IT has added more technology to classroom spaces in preparation for expanding HyFlex instructional modality at WSC. Equipment necessary for

high-definition lecture capture, including upgraded microphones and presenter-tracking cameras, have been installed. IT plans to move toward digital whiteboards to maintain connection between faculty and students during classroom activities and allow for the capturing and dissemination of written materials through the video conferencing tools or on the LMS. These upgrades to classroom spaces enhance faculty instruction and student interaction with peers and faculty.

Laboratory spaces throughout WSC's Science Wing are maintained and upgraded as necessary. New spectrophotometers, microscopes, and anatomy models have replaced older equipment to maintain high-end laboratories. As WSC expands its healthcare offerings, every attempt will be made to equip the new programs with the highest level of quality equipment possible for the most optimal learning experience for students.

Several career and technical education programs purchased new equipment and improved the learning spaces to support student learning and matching industry standards. Twelve professional grade high-performance drones were acquired for the Unmanned Aerial Systems program. The Agriculture program added a meat processing trailer, which created more coursework specifically for students on butchering and food preparation processes; Agriculture also installed an indoor greenhouse in the instructional space for additional gardening classes. Furthermore, given that WSC provides remote synchronous instruction in Agriculture to two other colleges in North Dakota, the space was equipped with instructional technology to allow the faculty to provide HyFlex instruction to learners across distant campuses.

The Health and Wellness department, specifically the Nursing program, houses state-of-the-art space and technology. The Fall 2020 semester saw the completion of [WSC's "P3" project](#) to renovate the Leonard P. Nelson Health and Wellness wing. This project created new and upgraded classroom spaces for Health and Wellness courses. The Nursing program's 2019-2022 self-study assessment asked students to complete a Likert scale survey of several criteria, some of which specifically noted the physical spaces, classrooms, and clinical labs for the program; students scored the Nursing program's infrastructure positively in each survey conducted. Also, WSC purchased several high-definition teaching simulators, including high fidelity manikins for obstetrics, pediatric, and adult healthcare simulation (delivered in June 2024), in addition to a virtual dissection/anatomy simulation equipment (expected to be delivered by the end of 2024). Several high-end hospital beds were acquired, and the ordering of several more is planned before the end of 2024.

The new healthcare training facility presents an area of growth for the Health and Wellness department. As stated above, students found the Nursing program's facilities acceptable for their education, but the new building adds the opportunity to add more simulation spaces. This would engage more students in hands-on practice to hone their skills and be ready for the workforce after graduation. Opportunities also arise regarding the massage therapy program: currently, the massage lab and clinic are in the same space, meaning there is no confidentiality for clinical students working with their clients.

The space is adequate for the program as it is, but it will be enhanced in the new building with seven private massage rooms and an eight private “wet room” where students can practice scrub and wrap treatments.

Though WSC is primarily a teaching college, research is guided by the college’s [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). By [WSC Procedure 477](#), the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) leads the group as the chair; the IRB is comprised of the chair, three department chairs or faculty from different academic departments, and one community member who is not affiliated with the institution, and the VPAA leads the group as the chair.

Sources

- WSC website, “Accessibility”
- WSC website, “Counseling”
- WSC website, “Teton Food Pantry”
- WSC website, “WSC FBLA Career Closet helping students in need”
- WSC website, “Placement Testing”
- WSC website, “Placement Testing Guidelines.pdf”
- WSC website, “EdReady Quick Start Guide for Students”
- WSC website, “ASC 087 COG.pdf”
- WSC website, “ENGL 110 College Composition I COG.pdf”
- WSC website, “COG ASC 091.pdf”
- WSC website, “COG ASC 093.pdf”
- WSC website, “COG MATH 103.pdf”
- WSC website, “Academic Advising”
- FY24 Counselor Report.pdf
- 2023 IPEDS Report, Figure 27.png
- WSC website, “Extensive Stevens Hall renovations scheduled”
- WSC IRB Form Final.pdf
- WSC website, “Procedures”