

5.A. Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

5.A.1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

WSC created a [Constitution](#) to outline its internal shared-governance structure and address the creation and approval of campus policies and procedures. Per [WSC Policy 360.1](#), the institution follows these guidelines for approving policies and procedures. As stated in the Constitution, Faculty Council shall create or amend any institutional policies dealing with the welfare of the college and discuss and develop policies concerning institutional effectiveness and instructional quality. The WSC Constitution was approved internally in 2011 and approved by the SBHE in 2012; recently, [the Constitution has undergone revision and restructuring to be brought before Faculty Council in Fall 2024](#).

WSC's [Leadership](#) webpage explains the shared-governance structure of WSC among four main groups. First, Executive Cabinet is led by the College President, Dr. Bernell Hirning, and membership in this group involves vice presidents, directors, and officers who oversee institutional operations, in addition to a faculty member who is a voting member. Second, Faculty Senate is comprised of two faculty members per academic department and the Faculty Senate president; this is a smaller representation of the full Faculty Council but can operate with all the authority of Faculty Council. Third, Staff Senate represents the non-instructional employees of the college; this group presents information and recommendations regarding working conditions and employment practices. Fourth, Student Senate provides representation for students and

their interests on campus; this group reports to the Director for Student and Residence Life. The drop-down menus on the Leadership webpage present information about each group, such as membership, meeting minutes, etc. The Organizational Chart and the Governance and Continuous Improvement Process chart explains the internal leadership structure of WSC. The Organizational Chart maps which executive, director, or officer is responsible for various departments in the college, including instructional and non-instructional roles. WSC's shared governance is evident in committee work such as the Technology Committee, which recently discussed changes to technology fees at the college among faculty, instructional support staff, and students.

WSC is part of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). The NDUS is led by a Chancellor. The eleven NDUS institutions are governed by the State Board of Higher Education with members appointed by the governor of North Dakota and confirmed by the state's legislative representatives. The SBHE is the policy-setting body for the NDUS, and the NDUS has a set of standard policies and procedures that apply to all NDUS institutions. While presidents at NDUS institutions can create more rigorous policies, NDUS policy takes precedence.

5.A.2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

WSC administration utilizes several external data platforms and tools to collect data and make decisions for the betterment of the college. Previous reports from these platforms and tools can be found on WSC's website on the [Historical Results Documents](#) webpage. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) provides data regarding student demographics, retention and completion. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey is administered to students every other year and provides information on student engagement, which is a key indicator of learning, retention, and quality of instruction. Each year, data is compiled for the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis, which is required by the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act; this is done by all postsecondary institutions that receive Title IX funding.

The SENSE survey of 2021 (by the CCCSE), which surveys entering students exclusively, showed that students respond positively to their experience at the institution. For example, 56.6% of new students had built strong/positive early connections, in comparison to 56.3% for small college cohorts ([SENSE fig. 1](#)). Similarly, 56.1% of new students identified that their academic and social support experiences were positive, in comparison to 52% for the cohort of small colleges ([SENSE fig. 2](#)).

Internally, WSC also collects data to inform decisions in the best interest of the institution. Per [WSC Policy 475](#) and [Procedure 475](#), Student Satisfaction Surveys are distributed to students each semester in individual sections of classes; faculty use the data to make effective changes to their courses, and administration reviews the survey results to recommend performance adjustments, if necessary. A Graduate Opinion Poll is administered to graduating students each spring semester to gauge their level of satisfaction with the college. Furthermore, the three-year program review/update cycle provides data to guide decision making at the college; the timeline for program reviews and program updates includes a discussion of budget prioritization to ensure that each program's fiscal needs are addressed.

The strongest internal academic data-gathering tool at WSC is the ePortfolio process. Students must create and maintain a digital portfolio of their coursework throughout their time at the college. Each class at WSC is tied to one or several of the institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). Moreover, students must upload at least one piece of coursework, for each course, that displays their level of proficiency vis-à-vis the ILO(s). Each year, faculty evaluate the ePortfolios of recent graduates during a faculty in-service and score the digital portfolios using faculty-created rubrics that address the ILOs. Once data has been processed, an [ePortfolio narrative](#) is created to interpret the data and provide recommendations to the college administration for the betterment of the college and its services to students. For example, a past ePortfolio evaluation noted low scores regarding research and citation, so the college invested in TurnItIn and later SafeAssign in the learning management system; with these investments, students could more easily check their citation work and avoid plagiarism, thereby raising those scores in the ePortfolio evaluation. Also, ePortfolio scoring showed low scores in the wellness category, so faculty incorporated more wellness-oriented assignments into the first-year orientation course, UNIV 100. However, starting in Fall 2024, the UNIV 100 course will focus on digital and financial literacy, leaning into students' wellness in the digital world and their individual wellness regarding finances.

5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

WSC functions under a shared-governance structure in which faculty, staff, students, and administration participate. Executive Cabinet includes the College President plus the vice presidents, directors, and officers who oversee various institutional operations, in addition to a faculty representative who has full voting rights. Faculty

Senate, on behalf of the whole Faculty Council, manages academic policies and procedures by making policy recommendations to the Office of the President; Staff Senate provides insight into working conditions and employment processes at the college. Student Senate provides representation from students regarding academic policies and procedures by reporting to the Director for Student and Residence Life. [A recent revision of the WSC Constitution](#) notes that these various entities of the college will act in a spirit of cooperation to maintain effective collaboration.

WSC's Curriculum Committee is responsible for monitoring and approving proposed curriculum changes that align with the college's mission. Committee members include faculty representatives from each academic department and non-voting members of staff and administration; while the faculty recommend, discuss, and approve changes to the curriculum, staff and administrative members provide insight into the changes under review. The committee may add, change, or delete courses or programs as established in the [Curriculum Committee Policies and Procedures](#). The committee also provides insight on the [General Education Requirements and Transfer Agreement](#) and [common course numbering](#) at the NDUS level.

Instructional Cabinet is another decision-making body where faculty and staff collaboratively participate in college operations. This group is comprised of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, an administrative assistant, the Registrar, the Director for Extended Learning, and the chairs of the four academic departments at the college. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Instructional Cabinet discussed changing the advising process, creating a [common grading scale](#), and implementing in-service and [first-year orientations for new faculty](#). Having a cross-divisional membership ensures that faculty and staff may collaborate effectively and drive progress throughout the college.

Sources

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