

5.B. The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

5.B.1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Human Resources and hiring managers ensure that all applicants, whether faculty or staff, are qualified. When a position becomes available, the President approves a hiring committee, typically consisting of an administrator, a director, a department staff member, and a faculty member. The hiring manager, working closely with Human Resources, creates a job description, which includes minimum and preferred qualifications; this is used to create the qualification matrix that the hiring committee uses to score applicants. Top-scoring applicants are interviewed, and the top-ranked candidate is recommended for hire to the President, who has final hiring authority. Specifically for faculty hiring, a [minimum qualifications rubric](#) was developed by and amended in Instructional Cabinet to more clearly explain what minimum qualifications are necessary for an applicant to teach an academic subject and which qualifications would be deemed equivalent.

Once hired, WSC provides several training opportunities to new employees. Human Resources provides the bulk of new employee training with onboarding materials, such as data privacy training. In-service training prior to the start of the academic year also offers more information on a variety of subjects. [WSC Procedure 625: New Faculty Mentoring](#) specifically guides new faculty into their roles by assigning them a mentor from their academic department; a list of mentorship topics is provided in the procedure. In the Spring 2024 semester, three new pieces of faculty training began development; a subcommittee of Faculty Council began reworking a faculty handbook, and Instructional Cabinet created a list of topics and timelines for [faculty training prior to the fall in-service](#)

[schedule](#) and for [first-year faculty development plans](#). Opportunities for professional development are available for both faculty and staff.

WSC receives funding in four general forms to ensure its infrastructure is sufficient to support operations. First, student tuition and fee rates are the primary source of the college's revenue; these are set by Administrative Council, in consultation with the Office of the President, as part of the budgeting process and approved by the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE). Second, the State of North Dakota's general fund appropriations support programs across campus; each biennium, the North Dakota Legislature approves the North Dakota higher education funding formula used to generate the state appropriations for the next two years. Third, when possible, federal, state, and local grants are pursued to assist in program enhancements, student support, and meeting additional needs that develop because of emerging technologies. Finally, the WSC Foundation raises funds annually to support scholarship awards and instructional programming; fundraising events, such as Giving Day, support capital building projects across campus and other special projects in various academic departments.

5.B.2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

The goals incorporated into the mission statement are realistic given the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities. With four major tenets to the mission statement, these are all realistic and achievable with the infrastructure at WSC.

Accessible learning is provided by academic support services across campus. The Learning Commons, Communication Lab, and Math Lab are available for students who need extra support to achieve their academic goals. Accessibility support services are offered by staff members on campus to coordinate student learning needs with instructors. WSC also delivers courses in several different teaching modalities to best accommodate different learning styles, two of the most popular being online asynchronous learning and face-to-face learning. Furthermore, TrainND Northwest offers a variety of workforce development courses, and will start to offer community education opportunities in Fall 2024, to further enhance the accessibility of higher education in northwest North Dakota.

Affordable education is also realistic and attainable at WSC. Currently, [WSC maintains the lowest base-band tuition rate across all North Dakota University System \(NDUS\) institutions](#). Scholarship opportunities at WSC make it possible for a student to earn an

associate degree with almost no out-of-pocket expense, in large part due to the WSC Foundation's regional scholarship. Students qualify for this scholarship if they have graduated with their high school diploma or earned a GED from one of 53 participating counties in eastern Montana or western North Dakota. This brings traditional and non-traditional students to WSC, and the college's affordability is often noted as a key reason for student enrollment.

Life-changing and life-long learning are also realistic and achievable tenets of WSC's mission statement. Again, the college's affordability makes it an ideal choice for learners of all ages. For non-traditional students, the [Adult Learning Center](#) on WSC's campus provides opportunities for English as a Second Language learners, GED students, and students who are required to attend continuing education for vocational rehabilitation. Students who earn their GEDs from the Adult Learning Center are also eligible for the WSC Foundation's regional scholarship. For those seeking advanced certification or a career change later in life, many Career and Technical Education programs at WSC offer certificate programs or degrees. [The Small Business Development Center](#) also provides opportunities for life-changing learning by teaching students how to create a new business or support an existing business with all facets of owning and operating a small business. Moreover, TrainND Northwest (non-credit workforce training arm of WSC) is exploring offering community education, professional development, and continuing education classes. The latter two are intended to enhance the opportunities of local professionals who may not be able to commute to the eastern side of the state to acquire such education.

5.B.3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

WSC trains its employees on budgeting and ensures that employees can monitor their departmental budgets. Any employee in a budget manager role must pass virtual trainings regarding purchase cards and the procurement process; these trainings are created by the [North Dakota Office of Management and Budget](#) (OMB). Proper use of purchase cards, examples of misuse, and the consequences of violating purchase card procedure are outlined in [SBHE Procedure 803.4](#). The procurement process details what vendors a budget manager may use to purchase items or services, and depending on the amount of the expenditure, procurement training is broken down into several levels; if a purchase is too expensive, an employee will need to complete a higher level of procurement training. Budget managers can access their respective departmental budgets using the NDUS Financial Portal to monitor expenditures regularly. Additionally, the controller shares a detailed video of the procedures required to monitor the budget.

Institutionally, WSC has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and monitoring its finances. Each spring semester, a preliminary budget is drafted that forecasts all anticipated expenses and revenues; this is prepared by faculty and staff during a formal budget review process. For academic programs, the three-year program review cycle starts the budgeting process; in the cycle's first year, a full program review identifies the strengths and areas of growth for the program, while the second and third years of the cycle ask for program updates. In each year, the program faculty discuss their fiscal needs with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to ensure that the upcoming year's budget adequately reflects the fiscal needs of the program. The faculty collaborate with the VPAA to forecast expenses and revenues based on previous years. This budget includes all anticipated expenses, including lab supplies, equipment, instructional materials, professional development, hardware, software, and travel. The budget is presented to the Vice President for Business Services (VPBS) and the Office of the President for review and approval. Annual budgets for the upcoming fiscal year are formulated over several months, and these are submitted to the NDUS in May for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Funds are allocated with or without revisions based on multiple fiscal factors.

Additional fiscal oversight is provided at the State level by the NDUS and the OMB with a biennial budget. Biennial budgets are formulated in late spring through mid-summer and are submitted to the NDUS and OMB in July or August of the fiscal year preceding the start of a new biennium. The OMB biennial budget is prepared as the starting point for legislative consideration in the appropriations process.

The North Dakota Office of the State Auditor (OSA) also provides oversight of WSC's finances and transactions. WSC submits all fiscal transactions and federally funded programs to be reviewed by the OSA and complies with their recommendations. The OSA conducts financial and federal compliance audits every year and operational audits every two years. When WSC receives audit findings from OSA, the proper departments and employees are identified to address the findings to develop action plans for swift resolution.

WSC carefully monitors its finances by conducting financial reviews. After financial statements are completed, the WSC Controller conducts a financial review in collaboration with the NDUS. This review gives ratios that measure the financial health of the institution. The ratios include a viability ratio, primary reserve ratio, current ratio, working capital ratio, operating income margin, and net income margin; it also shows net tuition and fees dependency, state appropriations, net tuition and fees per enrollment full-time enrollment (FTE), FTE Fall Enrollment, net liquid assets, and long-term liabilities. The review assigns a Composite Financial Index (CFI) calculation with a desirable calculation being greater than 1.1; including the WSC Foundation, WSC's CFI has tracked as follows:

- 2019: 2.54
- 2020: 2.26
- 2021: 2.56

- 2022: 3.48
- 2023: 3.7

CFI values between 1.10 and 10.0 require no review. In contrast, CFI values between 0.0 and 1.0 require an OSA review, if the value is recurrent over two or more years. Also, values between -4.0 to -0.1 trigger a yearly review by the OSA.

5.B.4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

WSC ensures that fiscal allocations serve its educational purposes. WSC's appropriated budget includes unbudgeted, undesignated cash reserves equaling 5-7% of the total net tuition revenue and state appropriation of the preceding fiscal year as mandated by [SBHE Policy 810.1](#). This allows the college time to deal with negative fluctuations in revenue sources; cost centers that do not depend on tuition and state appropriations also carry cash reserves to minimize the impact of revenue fluctuations. This ensures that WSC's educational purposes can still move forward in the event of negative revenue fluctuations.

In the spring semester of each year, WSC drafts a preliminary budget that specifically allocates money for educational purposes. Each WSC program goes through a three-year program review cycle. In the first year, the program faculty conduct a full self-study to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program while also noting the program's continued fiscal viability at the college. The next two years of the program review cycle ask program faculty to provide updates made to the program and note budgetary needs to continue and enhance it. At the end of each year, program faculty meet with the VPAA and discuss a preliminary budget for the upcoming school year based on program review findings. This preliminary budget outlines all expected expenditures and revenues to be submitted to the NDUS in May for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Expenditures include lab supplies, equipment, instructional materials, professional development, hardware, software, travel, and faculty salaries. This budget is driven by faculty input and collaboration with the VPAA to ensure that the educational purposes of the institution are achieved.

The college seeks external funding whenever possible to mitigate the financial impact of new programs or campus projects. As new programs are added through strategic planning processes, outside funding from the community is sought to meet industry and community needs. For example, the healthcare training facility under construction on WSC's campus was approved by the North Dakota State Legislature in 2023 to solve shortages in trained healthcare employees in northwest North Dakota and northeast

Montana. In November 2022, the college hired a full-time grant writer to take advantage of potential grant awards. One of these grants added a [nursing/lactation space on campus](#); this allows nursing mothers a place to pump and conveniently store breast milk without impacting their class schedules, thereby lowering class absenteeism. The Nursing program has received Carl Perkins, Mental Health Consortium, and Nursing Simulation Consortium grants to enhance student learning. The North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education offers grant money for program enhancement which may be used to purchase equipment for various career and technical education programs at the college.

Faculty collaborate with the VPAA to forecast expenses and revenues based on previous years' data. The budget includes all anticipated expenses, including lab supplies, equipment, instructional materials, professional development, hardware, software, and travel. The budget is presented to the VPBS and the Office of the President for review and approval, after which funds are allocated.

At the state level, WSC's funding is allocated using a biennial budget. Biennial budgets are formulated and submitted in late spring to mid-summer to the NDUS and to the [OMB](#) in July or August of the fiscal year preceding the start of a new biennium. The OMB biennial budget is prepared as the starting point for legislative consideration in the appropriations process. The allocation process begins with the development of the biennial budget, which is prepared for departments that receive appropriations from the North Dakota State Legislature. These departments comprise WSC's appropriated budget and include both tuition revenue and state appropriations as sources of funding.

WSC's budget has been allocated with its instructional mission at the forefront. Classroom technology has been enhanced throughout campus for the past few years to enhance student engagement and streamline instructional workflow; for example, some classrooms have been turned into "bring your own device" classrooms wherein an instructor can bring their WSC-issued laptop and either plug directly into the classroom projector or wirelessly cast their screen to the classroom projector; this allows faculty to showcase software that is relevant to their courses, and it removes the need to bring a flash drive with presentations and learning materials to each class meeting. More technology has positioned some WSC classrooms to be hybrid and HyFlex capable with high-definition, presenter-tracking cameras and high-quality microphones. The college additionally allocated funds to adopt software systems like Blackboard Analytics for Learn and Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) for student learning outcome assessment; professional development money was allocated, as well, to bring a WIDS consultant to campus to discuss student learning outcome assessment with faculty. WSC also allocated money to hire a full-time nursing instructor to teach in Watford City.

Sources

- WSC website, “Minimum Qualifications”
- WSC website, “Procedures”
- Faculty Bootcamp outline.docx
- Proposed WSC Faculty Mentoring Program – Year 1 & Year 2.xlsx
- North Dakota University System website, “Cost to Attend”
- WSC website, “Adult Learning Center”
- WSC website, “Small Business Development Center”
- North Dakota Office of Management and Budget website
- SBHE Procedure 803.4: Purchasing Cards
- SBHE Policy 810.1: Appropriated Funds Reserve
- WSC website, “Williston State College Designated as ‘Infant Friendly’”