



**Mitchell Technical Institute**

# **2010-2011 HLC Self-Study**







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Prepared by the faculty, administration, and staff  
of Mitchell Technical Institute and proudly submitted  
to the Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association  
of Colleges and Schools

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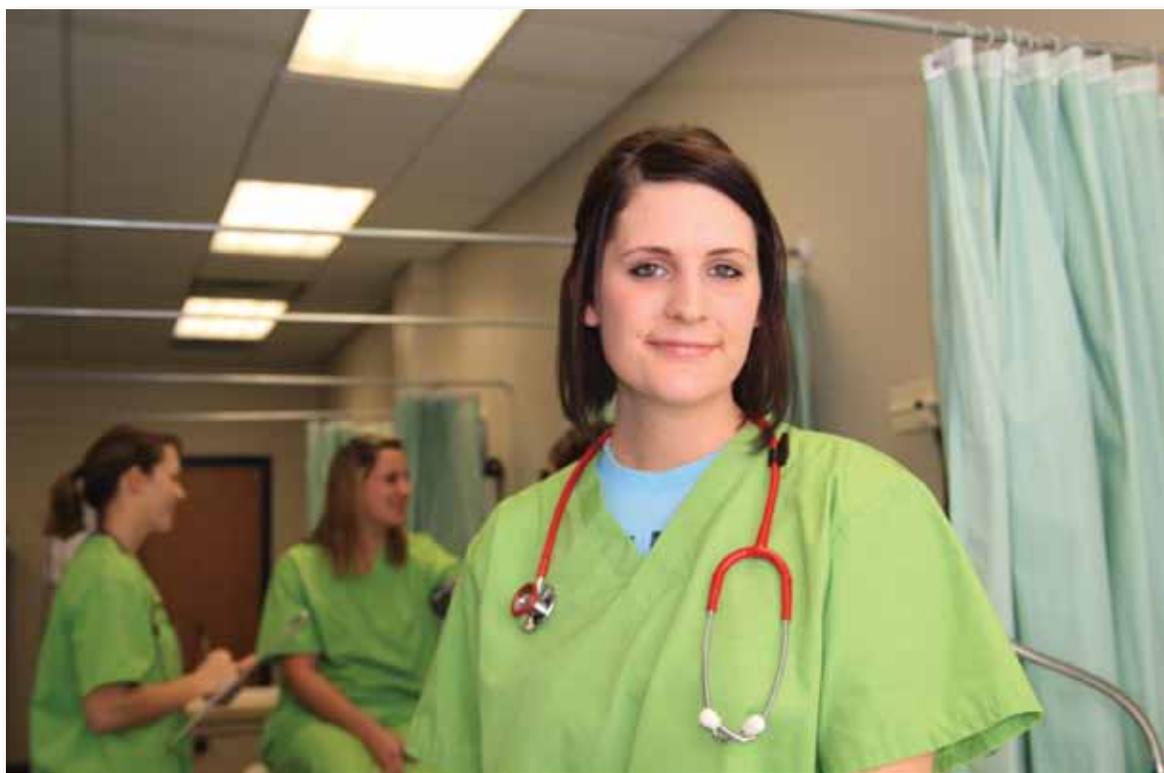
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Chapter One

# PROCESS FOR THE SELF-STUDY





Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) conducted a self-study to prepare for its application for reaccreditation with The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. The process, which began in May 2008 and culminated in this report, involved MTI's constituencies in a comprehensive self-study using the HLC's five Criteria for Accreditation.

The institution used the self-study process for several significant purposes:

- To document MTI's accomplishments and to reflect on its growth and changes over the last decade
- To demonstrate the Institute's qualification for continued HLC accreditation
- To recognize MTI's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement
- To guide ongoing institutional and program assessment and planning in order to strengthen the Institute's status as a valued educational provider
- To increase communication and cooperation among staff, faculty, and the community in a common goal of institutional improvement.



## HLC SELF-STUDY STRUCTURE

**Steering Committee** – A steering committee of five faculty members supervised the self-study and reaccreditation effort at Mitchell Technical Institute. Committee members included Michael Benjamin, Telecommunications instructor and department chair; Karen Clark, General Education instructor; LeAnn Messer, Radiologic Technology instructor and department chair; Tammie Munsen, Office Technology Specialist instructor; and Tony Russell, Automated Controls/SCADA instructor and department chair.

The committee's role was to:

- Oversee the reaccreditation process
- Provide input to direct and guide the process
- Serve as lead members of the data collection teams (criterion committees)
- Assist in assembling the self-study report
- Review and edit the self-study to emphasize student learning in all criteria
- Participate in HLC annual meeting
- Actively prepare for and assist with the reviewers' site visit.

The steering committee began by studying all five criteria and associated core components. Each committee member was then assigned one criterion for further analysis in order to understand HLC expectations and to guide the collection of pertinent evidence.

Marla Smith, Institutional Research Coordinator, was named MTI's self-study coordinator under the direction of Vice President for Academic Affairs Vicki Wiese and President Greg Von Wald. Smith focused on becoming familiar with the criteria and other requirements for reaccreditation. She participated in all reaccreditation-related activities at MTI and also served as the primary author of the self-study.

**Data Collection Teams** – To involve staff throughout the institution in the self-study process, steering committee members recruited instructors, administrators, and support staff as members of their respective criterion data collection teams. Each team of 8 to 12 members met monthly during the 2008-2009 academic year. They examined their team’s assigned criterion and its related core components to determine MTI’s strengths and challenges, identify examples of evidence, and ascertain areas where more data was needed. Teams submitted monthly reports tied to the core components of each criterion to provide the backbone of the self-study report. See Appendix A for a full roster of data collection teams.



## CONDUCTING THE SELF-STUDY

As the steering committee and data collection teams began meeting and gathering evidence for the self-study, MTI’s Strategic Planning Group (SPG) accepted a mandate to develop and implement a new strategic plan for the Institute. The three groups worked in concert to strengthen MTI. The self-study teams reviewed the Institute’s organization, operations, planning, assessment, and student learning in view of accreditation criteria, and they shared their findings and recommendations with the SPG. Many of their recommendations were accepted by the SPG and incorporated into MTI’s new strategic plan, which was formally adopted by the institution in April 2009.

As the 2009-2010 year progressed, MTI began to address recommendations and challenges brought to light through the previous year’s self-study activities. The strategic plan’s six institutional goals also guided task forces and standing committees as they worked to move the Institute forward. These efforts were undertaken even as MTI experienced a 30% increase in enrollment and an expansion of campus facilities – a very busy year indeed!

Using data collection team reports as a starting point, the self-study report was drafted in October 2010. It was circulated to MTI staff and faculty for feedback, and the final report was completed in December. The steering committee chose to organize the report in accordance with HLC’s five Criteria for Accreditation. The self-study report also includes chapters on institutional history and federal compliance.

The steering committee supervised the collection of documentation needed for the self-study and the comprehensive visit. MTI’s Assessment Committee coordinated surveys of various constituencies, including the community, alumni, parents, advisory committees, employers, students and staff. The steering committee and leadership teams gathered budget reports, board minutes, state reports, student learning assessments, strategic planning reports, and other types of documentation. All supporting documentation will be available to the visiting HLC team electronically or in the resource room.

The following timetable provides details of completed or upcoming reaccreditation activities.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Activity Completed</b>
Strategic planning in-service held with all staff. Responses compiled.	11/07	x
Institutional research coordinator hired.	4/08	x
MTI sends three staff members to HLC Annual Meeting.	4/08	x
Steering committee recruited.	5/08	x
Five-question survey (self-study, step one) completed by faculty and staff.	5/08	x
New president holds fact-finding interviews with staff.	7/08-9/08	x
Data collection team members recruited.	9/08	x
Processes and tools are developed for HLC criteria data collection teams, including an electronic site for self-study documents.	9/08-10/08	x
Leadership team synthesizes input from strategic planning in-services and staff fact-finding interviews to identify five priority goals.	9/08	x
Data collection teams receive orientation and information.	10/08	x
Strategic planning group (SPG) is recruited and begins regular meetings to address leadership's priority goals.	10/08	x
Data collection teams meet monthly to evaluate and assess MTI in relation to criteria and core components and to gather documentation. Steering committee meets monthly to review progress.	11/08-4/09	x
Data collection teams report findings to strategic planning group for incorporation into assignments for working groups.	11/08-4/09	x
Working groups assigned to each institutional goal. Each group meets as needed to develop detailed action plans for the achievement of goals. SPG meets monthly to review progress.	1/09 - 4/09	x
Steering committee members attend HLC Annual Meeting.	4/09	x
Strategic Planning Group produces detailed institutional strategic plan based on working groups' action plans.	4/09	x
Staff, standing committees, and strategic planning group continue to complete and document steps to achieve strategic objectives.	5/09-present	x
Initial draft of self-study completed based on data collection teams' findings and conclusions, to include activities and goals achieved by MTI's task forces and strategic planning group.	10/10	x
Self-study draft is circulated to MTI community for input.	11/10	x
Third party comments are requested from constituencies.	12/10	x
Final draft of the self-study report is completed.	12/10	x
Steering committee prepares for HLC team visit; electronic and paper examples of evidence are gathered for Resource Room.	12/10-3/11	x
Self-study report is sent to Evaluation Team and Commission staff liaison.	1/11	x
HLC team visit.	Mar. 7-9, 2011	



Chapter Two

# HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION





The South Dakota technical institute system was approved by the legislature during the 1965 legislative session. Both the House and Senate voted unanimously to create and add four technical institutes to the state's public education system. Mitchell was selected as a site for one of the schools.

Mitchell Area Vocational Technical School opened in the fall of 1968 at its current location on North Capital Street. A campus relocation plan began in 2003 with the opening of the Technology Center on an 80-acre parcel of property along Interstate 90. Today, that campus consists of two buildings, with a third facility under construction and expected to open in summer 2011. A fourth facility is planned in the next few years to complete the migration to the Interstate 90 location. Until this is built, the campus will remain split between the two sites at 821 North Capital Street and 1800 East Spruce Street in Mitchell.



The Institute's name has changed several times since 1968. Its current legal name, Mitchell Technical Institute, was adopted in 1992. MTI has had only four director/presidents since its inception. The current president, Greg Von Wald, was hired in 2008 and has directed the Institute through unprecedented growth, including a 45% increase in student enrollment since 2009.

In 1989, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools granted MTI authority to offer Associate of Applied Science degrees in two-year programs. That accreditation is still in effect today. Students in AAS degree programs must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 16 credit hours of general education in communication, computer science, mathematics, behavioral science, and social science. Students in diploma programs are required to complete ten hours of general education in mathematics, communication, and computer science.

The Institute is governed by the Board of Education of the Mitchell School District 17-2 and operates under rules and regulations set forth by the South Dakota Board of Education. State oversight is provided by the South Dakota Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education. MTI has established advisory committees of community and regional representatives who provide program input and support. New to the Institute is a Strategic Advisory Council, chartered and seated in 2010. MTI currently offers AAS degrees in 20 programs and diplomas or certificates in fourteen areas. Six of the original nine programs still exist in some form. The newest programs are Wind Turbine Technology, added in fall 2009, and Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, created in fall 2010. In late November 2010 the South Dakota Board of Education approved the creation of a Precision Technology Specialist program at MTI. This program will begin in fall 2011.

The Institute has also worked diligently to expand the role of the MTI Foundation. Established in 1999, the Foundation is a vital part of the Institute's fundraising and grant writing efforts. The Foundation has secured federal grants exceeding \$5 million since 2009. Scholarship funds continue to increase. Recently the Foundation partnered with local investors to provide an apartment building adjacent to the Spruce Street campus to be occupied solely by MTI students. The Foundation is also initiating a feasibility study to determine the viability of a capital campaign; study results will be available in late 2011.

MTI is currently engaged in multiple institutional initiatives designed to:

- Expand its outreach to regional communities
- Increase use of online technology
- Further expand programs into “green” and environmentally conscious career areas
- Cultivate new corporate partnerships for financial support and enhanced industry training
- Provide more and better student services as enrollment grows
- Relocate to a single campus by 2013.



MTI provides this self-study secure in the knowledge that its mission of “skills for success in technical careers” is being fulfilled every single day. The Institute has only to look to its history to see just how far it can go in the future.

## **RESPONSE TO CONCERNS FROM LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION**

After a comprehensive review in March 2001, MTI was granted a ten-year reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission and asked to provide progress reports on (1) implementation of its assessment plan and (2) development and implementation of its strategic plan. These progress reports were compiled and submitted on June 13, 2003, and were both accepted as submitted, with no further action required.

### **Assessment Plan**

After the 2001 HLC review, the Assessment Task Force was renamed the Institutional Effectiveness Task Force. Although crafting and implementing the student achievement assessment plan at MTI was its priority, this group was also charged with designing and implementing an assessment process for the emerging strategic plan. The following cyclical process for institutional effectiveness was formulated for use with programs and administrative services:

planning → implementing → evaluating → assessing → improving → planning

In its 2003 HLC report, MTI outlined a four-part institutional effectiveness process:

- (1) assessment
- (2) strategic planning
- (3) program portfolios
- (4) the South Dakota Program Improvement Process (PIP).

The newly crafted strategic plan outlined nine goals with corresponding objectives and action steps. Each action step was assigned to a group or individual, with reports required upon completion. The Institutional Effectiveness Task Force reviewed the completed reports. The task force also required programs to analyze direct and indirect measures in their program portfolios bi-annually and to develop strategies for program improvement using these results. Finally, PIP, the state’s self-assessment process for programs, required programs to be evaluated on a three-year cycle and to develop action plans.

As part of the self-study, the institution refocused its assessment efforts and reinstated a standing Assessment Committee. This group met throughout the 2008-09 school year with three objectives:

- (1) Review MTI's assessment background and HLC expectations regarding assessment
- (2) Review and modify the plan for program assessment as needed
- (3) Implement the assessment plan.

The resulting Annual Program Assessment Review instrument was introduced to instructors at in-service meetings in August 2009. It is currently in its second cycle of full implementation. The Assessment Committee also designed an institutional effectiveness plan, creating institutional scoring guides (rubrics) to measure student achievement in six institutional learning outcomes. The Institute began gathering results the following semester. This data and the process itself have underscored the importance of these outcomes, thus helping to build increased unity, ownership, and commitment in the entire faculty and staff. The data also helped MTI set its first institutional goal for 2010-11 to focus efforts and resources on improving oral communication, an area where students were not meeting expected outcomes.



The final piece of the institutional effectiveness plan was incorporated in the fall of 2010. This effort focused on nonacademic departments. The process requires each department to annually write an improvement plan describing a project the department will undertake to improve its services or operations.

MTI's updated institutional effectiveness plan is correctly aligned with its mission of providing skills for success in technical careers. Meaningful outcomes for student learning have been developed at institutional, program, and course levels, and the Institute is assessing and compiling data for continuous improvement. Assessment has become part of MTI's culture, with increased acceptance and understanding among faculty and staff.

### **Strategic Plan**

The MTI 2002-2007 Strategic Plan, which was submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in 2003, was the culmination of a year-long process involving hundreds of hours of discussions and meetings and engaging more than 100 staff, faculty, and administrators. This high level of communication and participation ensured that every employee had a stake in the future of the Institute.

The Strategic Plan established nine ambitious goals rooted in excellence, quality, commitment, higher learning, and professionalism. Emphases on learning, linkages, and growth subsequently charted MTI's course for the next five years.

As part of the process, MTI organized task forces and identified their responsibilities. These were the vehicles by which the planning process was accomplished, since each employee served on at least one task force. Task forces included the following: Governance, Administration and Finance; Marketing; Physical Services; Student Services, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment; Instructional Services; Technology; and Industry Training and Continuing Education. An 18-member Strategic Planning Steering Committee oversaw these teams. The Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Task Force was assigned administrative responsibility for the strategic planning process.

Task forces met at least twice a month to research and develop goals, objectives, action steps, responsibilities, timelines, and costs. All goals and objectives were reviewed and refined by the Steering Committee; the final draft of the plan was approved by the Mitchell Board of Education on August 26, 2002.

The MTI 2002-2007 Strategic Plan provided the institution with a clear blueprint. It created a process for significant endeavors such as exploring industry partnerships, developing a master plan for the new campus, and establishing a permanent scholarship endowment fund. It also propelled the institution to accomplish more routine but important tasks such as improving communications with prospective students, developing a technology usage policy, and creating a new instructor evaluation process.



### **Institutional Challenges Identified in 2001**

**Policies** - The HLC team encouraged MTI to develop policies for the Institute that would be separate from the Mitchell School District. A year-long effort to develop MTI-specific policies culminated in board approval of the Mitchell Technical Institute Policy and Procedure Manual on February 22, 2010. Involving MTI administrators, the Mitchell Superintendent of Schools, school board members, and faculty and staff, this process resulted in new and revised policies and practices specific to higher education and to MTI and its mission.

**Curriculum Committee** – In 2001 the review team noted that MTI had no faculty curriculum committee to act “as a clearinghouse for curriculum review, change, and approval.” The institution’s 2002-2007 Strategic Plan set a goal to “develop a curriculum development and review process that supports quality programs which meet the needs of business and industry,” but no progress was made on this goal. The objective was included verbatim in the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, and last year the Vice President for Academic Affairs created a Curriculum Committee of faculty members from each of MTI’s five divisions. This committee’s mandate is to (1) create a process for curriculum development and review and (2) to consider and approve requests for changes in current programs and the General Education curriculum. The committee has begun its task and is expected to make significant progress prior to the 2011 HLC comprehensive review.

**Instructional Services Center** – The team also viewed the Instructional Services Center (ISC) as underutilized and undervalued by the MTI community, and it encouraged the Institute to find ways to make the ISC (MTI’s library) an integral part of student learning. The ISC’s operations and collections have improved significantly since the team’s visit, and we believe these changes have made a noticeable difference. The ISC Coordinator has developed a presentation on information literacy (incorporating quality online research practices and understanding copyright and plagiarism) which she presents to freshmen in Student Success classes. She provides electronic research training for individuals and classes, and the ISC has hosted South Dakota State Library electronic research training sessions for other librarians. Links to MTI’s online research databases (provided via the South Dakota State Library) and to the online card catalog are placed on the desktops of all student computers and on the MTI website. The ISC Coordinator is a member of the South Dakota Library Association and attends its annual conferences. She has successfully increased circulation and library usage through improved book displays, student satisfaction and usage surveys, and book donations. Library services, including tutoring services, have been extended to the south campus. The new administration building currently under construction will house the ISC, and we see this as an opportunity to continue to promote the ISC as an important source of academic support.

## Response to Advice and Suggestions from the 2001 Visit

1. ***The Institute should encourage and support non-degreed faculty to pursue their degrees with continuous progress linked to the annual evaluation.***

MTI's instructors are initially credentialed by the South Dakota Department of Education based on years of job experience. They renew their teacher credentials every five years by completing 150 hours of continuing education activities prescribed by the state. MTI encourages continuing education for all faculty by giving salary increases according to MTI's Professional Development Plan (PDP); this has not, however, been linked to annual evaluations. Coursework toward degrees can be completed at MTI at no charge to the instructor. Many faculty members have achieved advanced degrees since the last HLC visit, and others are working toward this end. Ten years ago, six faculty members had master's degrees; that group has grown to 18 in 2011. We still have 13 non-degreed instructors; several are presently pursuing a degree, and all have extensive experience in industry and meet the state's requirements to teach at MTI.

2. ***The CDL fee should be listed in the tuition and fees section of the catalog and other related publications.***

The Commercial Drivers License fee is listed in the tuition and fees section of the General Catalog and MTI website for applicable programs.

3. ***The Institute should continue its review of both total credit hour and general education requirements of the radiology technology program, considering both state and external accreditation requirements.***

The Radiologic Technology program continues to require more credit hours than other MTI programs due to external accreditation requirements. The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology reviewed the program in 2006 and renewed the program's accreditation until 2014. South Dakota's administrative rule was recently amended to require 15 credit hours in general education for an Associate of Applied Science degree, a requirement which all of MTI's program meet.

4. ***The Institute should review the general education requirements and consider making revisions that all faculty will promote in advising students.***

The Institute established a general education advisory committee in 2009 to guide the development of general education offerings. General education instructors also attend program advisory committee meetings to assure that the general education program meets the needs of our graduates. In addition, the Institute has adopted general education learning outcomes, and technical instructors in all programs are encouraged to include general education outcomes in their technical courses. Faculty also serve as academic advisors and are much more comfortable discussing general education choices with students as they register for classes. Faculty advisors not only assist students with selecting their technical courses but help them choose the best general education courses for their program as well.





5. ***The Institute should explore additional nationally recognized certification and program accreditations as a way of providing additional opportunities for student credentialing.***

Students have more certification opportunities than ever; see Resource 5.6 for a list of certifications. Advisory committees have driven much of that growth, as industry values the skills these certifications require. To assure continued progress, MTI's current strategic plan includes goals to "increase the number of industry-certified programs" and "provide additional industry certifications for students."

6. ***The Institute should consider establishing a position of Institutional Research to assist with assessment and continuous improvement.***

MTI hired an institutional research coordinator in 2008 to assist with program and institutional accreditation, assessment, and institutional effectiveness initiatives.

7. ***The Institute should develop a plan for the storage of permanent student and financial records at a secure off-campus location in compliance with guidelines of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.***

MTI's archived and current student information is located in two secure locations separated by three miles. One set is in a secured area on the north campus. The second set is stored in a secure data center on the south campus which is outfitted with an environmental, fire suppression, biometric access control, and 24/7 burglary alarm service. Transcripts from MTI's first 25 years are stored electronically on CDs with back-up copies stored off-site.

## CONCLUSION

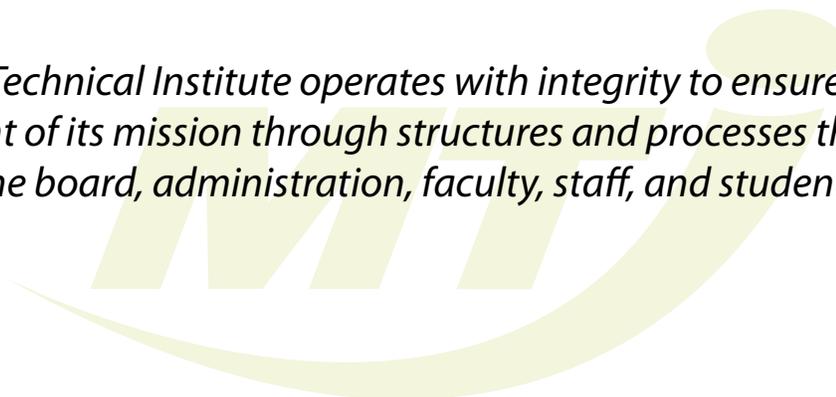
In the ten years since its last comprehensive visit, MTI has experienced continuous improvement and growth. A dynamic strategic plan has been the impetus for many accomplishments and improvements. We have made especially significant strides in creating a culture of assessment at MTI. Today, we see a broader institutional understanding of assessment; it has become ingrained, a central part of what we do. There is also a higher level of awareness and commitment to continuous improvement.

## Chapter Three

# CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY



*Mitchell Technical Institute operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.*





# CORE COMPONENT 1A

*The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.*

Mitchell Technical Institute's mission to "provide skills for success in technical careers" remains virtually unchanged since it was first articulated in 1993. Providing stability and cohesion, this mission statement has guided MTI's operations, planning, and decision-making, imparting a strong institutional identity. Today's fast-changing world and uncertain economy has only reinforced the value of technical education and MTI's commitment to its mission. The most recent institutional review of mission documents in fall 2009 reworded the Institute's primary purposes and vision statement, but left the mission statement untouched, affirming employees' shared enthusiasm and commitment to the value of quality technical education and MTI's ability to deliver it.



## MTI'S MISSION STATEMENTS

### MTI MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Mitchell Technical Institute to provide skills for success in technical careers.

### MTI VISION STATEMENT

Mitchell Technical Institute will be a leader in technical education and a valued partner in global workforce development, equipping students for career success and lifelong learning in a changing world.

### MTI PRIMARY PURPOSES

Technical Education: MTI provides high-quality Associate of Applied Science degree and diploma programs which prepare students for occupational success.

Life Skills: MTI prepares graduates for lifelong learning through general education courses that support technical education and build skills in technology, communication, professionalism, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability.

Respect and Diversity: MTI seeks and values a diverse student population, responds to the unique needs of individuals, and recognizes the dignity and worth of all people.

Excellence: MTI commits to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness through a system of assessment and continuous review.

Community: MTI builds student community through social and recreational activities, counseling support, and a student government structure administered through an organized student services office.

Human Capital: MTI recruits, develops, and invests in skilled, dedicated and student-oriented faculty and staff.

Advocacy: MTI promotes the value of technical education through broad-based marketing and public relations activities.

Access: MTI provides customized training, seminars, workshops, courses, and consulting services to business, industry, and the community.

Chapter Three  
Criterion One:  
Mission and  
Integrity

## MISSION DOCUMENT REVIEW



Mitchell Technical Institute conducted a thorough review of its mission documents in November 2009. The entire MTI staff was invited to participate in the review and provided with background reading material. The review itself took place November 18, with eleven faculty and staff members attending. The group considered examples of other institutions' mission documents, recommendations from Criterion Team #1's thorough look at Criterion One and our mission, and guidance from the HLC Handbook of Instruction regarding the role and use of an institution's mission documents. The faculty and staff involved in the review agreed that MTI's current mission statement should not be changed. "Although society has changed and our programs have changed over the last 10 years, the mission statement is still an accurate reflection of our purpose" (Minutes from the Nov. 18, 2010, mission review meeting). The reviewers did recommend that the scope of MTI's vision statement be expanded, since MTI is preparing students for a global community, not only for South Dakota. They also recommended that the bulleted purpose statements be updated. While many institutions choose to identify values as part of their mission documents, the group preferred to keep MTI's statements of purpose, which are well-suited to assessment (Resource 3.1).

The mission documents were changed as recommended and were then shared with MTI's leadership, management, strategic planning, and HLC steering committees for input and approval. The revised mission documents were formally adopted by the Mitchell School Board of Education on February 22, 2010.

## DISTRIBUTION OF MISSION DOCUMENTS

Self-study Team #1 reported several examples of evidence demonstrating that MTI's priorities and commitments are articulated publicly.

- The mission documents are included in major publications, including the Institute's general catalog, student handbook, personnel handbook, and advisory committee handbook.
- The mission statement is routinely displayed on electronic screens in each building.
- The framed mission statement is displayed in virtually every campus classroom and office.
- The mission documents are available to the public on the MTI website.

## CONCLUSION

While Team #1 concluded that MTI's mission documents are clear and publicly articulate the organization's commitments, they recommended that the Institute establish a system for regular review of the mission. This prompted the Strategic Planning Group to include reviewing the mission as a key objective of the strategic plan. The plan calls for a task force to review and revise mission documents every five years, ensuring that MTI's mission documents "remain aligned with who we are."

## CORE COMPONENT 1B

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*In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.*

MTI's newly revised mission documents include the following purpose statement:

***MTI seeks and values a diverse student population, responds to the unique needs of individuals, and recognizes the dignity and worth of all people.***



The strategic plan also includes a commitment to create a supportive environment for teaching and learning that welcomes diversity and promotes student success (Objective 3D). While our student population would hardly be called "diverse," the Institute works diligently to welcome all students and to build an accepting environment where everyone is treated with respect and equity.

### STUDENT DIVERSITY

Mitchell Technical Institute is located in central South Dakota, a region of limited racial and ethnic diversity. Ninety-five percent of the region's population is white, and 97% speak English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts, 2009). Since MTI historically draws over 75% of its students from within a 150-mile radius, it is not surprising that students tend to be predominantly white. The nature of occupational programs offered at MTI also tends to attract more males than females. While MTI values and seeks a more diverse student population, statistically we are quite homogeneous, as shown in demographics data compiled over the previous four years (Table 3.1). However, due to the Institute's wide variety of programs (from Culinary Arts and Medical Assistant to Wind Turbine Technology and Agricultural Technology), our students demonstrate healthy diversity in personalities, socio-economic backgrounds, and career goals. Thus our institution provides many opportunities to teach and learn how to get along with others who are different from oneself.

**Table 3.1  
MTI Student Demographics**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	71.5%	62.9%	62.0%	62.6%
Female	28.4%	37.1%	38.0%	37.4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	95.9%	96.4%	94.4%	95.5%
Black	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%
Hispanic	0.4%	0.2%	0%	0.5%
American Indian	2.4%	2.0%	3.3%	3.0%
Asian/Pacific	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
Unknown	0.2%	0%	0%	0%
Overall Minority	4.0%	3.7%	5.4%	4.4%
<b>Financial</b>				
Pell Grant Recipients	49%	43%	51%	47%
<b>Disabilities</b>				
Disabilities	5.47%	4.92%	5.32%	4.72%
<b>Age</b>				
Under 18	0.5%	0.6%	0%	0.2%
18-19	33.9%	37.1%	34.4%	33.7%
20-21	27.5%	22.2%	25.1%	30.1%
22-24	13.3%	13.1%	8.6%	16.6%
25-29	8.1%	10.1%	8.2%	10.3%
30-34	3.8%	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%
35-39	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	2.8%
40-49	5.6%	5.1%	6.5%	2.4%
50-64	3.4%	3.0%	3.5%	0.7%
65 and over	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0%
Unknown	0%	2.3%	3.4%	0%

## EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Due to our geographical location, MTI has focused significant effort in recruiting American Indian students. South Dakota is home to eight Indian reservations, and the Institute recruits from high schools located on or near these reservations. In 2009-10, recruiters from the Admissions Office visited 32 South Dakota schools with a high percentage of American Indian students. MTI also participated in four high school career fairs on reservations and gave presentations to groups in the Lower Brule and Wagner schools, public school districts with a high American Indian population. Recruiters attended a college planning event at the tribal school in Eagle Butte, while many other tribal schools attended similar MTI-supported events in Winner, Mobridge, Mitchell, and Watertown. In addition, MTI representatives gave campus tours for nine groups from reservation schools this past year.



MTI partnered with the South Dakota Department of Education's Office of Indian Education in 2008 and 2009 to assist American Indian students through the South Dakota College Access Grant program. This program assisted American Indian students in a variety of ways. MTI personnel presented financial aid seminars in 10-12 communities each year; assistance filling out the FAFSA form was provided to families; and the matriculation fee was waived for enrolling students. The program also assisted three American Indian students each year with scholarships. Although the grant wasn't continued for this year, we have made the commitment to continue to waive the matriculation fee for all American Indian applicants.

A partnership between Mitchell Technical Institute and Sinte Gleska University to offer MTI's Wind Turbine Technology diploma to students on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation is a major commitment of the Institute's resources to bring needed training to a minority, underserved population. MTI is seeking approval from The Higher Learning Commission for this additional location in conjunction with our comprehensive renewal of accreditation review (Resource 3.2).

MTI also seeks greater gender diversity in its programs. Several programs are dominated by one gender or the other (among them are Power Line, Electrical Construction and Maintenance, Medical Assistant, and Medical Office Professional), and we have worked to increase nontraditional gender enrollment in these career fields. MTI participates in several statewide events where adult and K-12 females receive information about career opportunities in nontraditional areas. MTI's learning services coordinator meets with women in nontraditional programs to help them navigate through a male-dominated program.

The Institute also works to accommodate students with disabilities and to help them meet their educational goals. Our disabilities coordinator meets with students to determine eligibility for accommodations, assists them in obtaining those accommodations, and provides support during their enrollment at MTI. All course syllabi are required to include this statement (Resource 3.3):

*I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the instruction or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with documented disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the MTI Disabilities Coordinator at 995-3023 to further coordinate accommodations.*

Discrimination is prohibited at MTI. Policy #112 prohibits discrimination in “policies, employment practices, and programs on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, disability, military status, national origin or ancestry, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal or state law” (Resource 3.4). Policy #1002 further stipulates that all students must be provided “equal access” to MTI’s programs, organizations, clubs, activities, and facilities and all other elements of programs and services provided by the institution (Resource 3.5).



All employees attend workshops on sexual harassment every three years. This workshop is also required for all new employees and is conducted for this purpose each fall. Many MTI classes also incorporate some type of sexual harassment training. Policy #115 outlines procedures the Institute will follow in handling a sexual harassment complaint (Resource 3.6).

## AN ACCEPTING ENVIRONMENT

Mitchell Technical Institute has established six institutional learning outcomes for all students, regardless of program. The ability to “work cooperatively in a team environment” is one of these six foundational outcomes within the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Alumni (98.6%) affirmed that MTI had contributed to the development of their ability to work effectively with others (Resource 3.7). Employers (95.6%) also indicated satisfaction with graduates’ ability to work effectively with others (Resource 3.8).

Self-study results led MTI to deliberately include promotion and increased appreciation of diversity in its 2008-2013 strategic plan. Action Step 3D-2 calls for the Institute to educate and promote equity issues and programs on campus: specifically, to hold two events annually to increase awareness of diversity and equity. Because of this, diversity was chosen as one of the 15 topics covered in the new Student Success course required by virtually all incoming freshmen. Sexual harassment training is also a key curricular component in the Industrial Relations (SOC 100) course taken by students pursuing an Associate degree.

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory appears to confirm that MTI effectively meets students’ needs regardless of background. In the “Responsiveness to Diverse Populations” scale, MTI’s scores are higher than the national comparison group. (See Table 3.2. Also see Resource 3.9.) The only area where the Institute scored lower than the national average was in the “institution’s commitment to evening students.” The most recent strategic plan includes a commitment to evening classes, and MTI has begun offering general education classes at night. Students gave high marks in areas reflecting MTI’s commitment to under-represented and non-traditional populations.

**Table 3.2**  
**Responsiveness to Diverse Populations Scale**

Item	MTI Satis	Nat’l Satis	Diff
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	5.58	5.43	0.15
Institution's commitment to part-time students?	5.67	5.55	0.12
Institution's commitment to evening students?	5.01	5.44	-0.43
Institution's commitment to older, returning learners?	5.81	5.51	0.30
Institution's commitment to under-represented populations?	5.66	5.33	0.33
Institution's commitment to commuters?	5.62	5.33	0.29
Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?	5.52	5.44	.08

Fall 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory

The Noel-Levitz inventory also affirmed that students feel accepted and welcomed at MTI. The institution’s satisfaction score on the “Concern for the Individual” scale was 0.52 higher than the score for the national comparison group. Indeed, MTI students rated their satisfaction higher than the national group on the following items:

- Most students feel a sense of belonging here. (SSI Item #1)
- Faculty care about me as an individual. (SSI Item #2)
- The college shows concern for students as individuals. (SSI #16)
- People on this campus respect and are supportive of each other. (SSI #22)
- Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students. (SSI #29)



In a staff survey conducted in spring 2009, 97% of employees confirmed that student ethnic and cultural diversity is respected at Mitchell Technical Institute (Resource 3.10).

## EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY

MTI’s employees are also largely “homegrown” and come from the area’s largely white population. Faculty and staff demographics are as follow

<b>Table 3.3 MTI Staff Demographics (2009-2010)</b>				
	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	64.8%	36.2%	75.0%	52.4%
Female	35.2%	63.8%	25.0%	47.6%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Age</b>				
20-29	5.7%	18.4%	0.0%	11.3%
30-39	17.0%	12.2%	0.0%	14.2%
40-49	34.0%	34.7%	0.0%	33.0%
50-59	28.3%	28.6%	50.0%	29.2%
60-69	15.1%	6.1%	50.0%	12.3%
<b>Length of Employment at MTI</b>				
Under 5 years	26.4%	49.0%	50.0%	37.7%
5-10 years	37.7%	18.4%	0.0%	27.4%
11-20 years	22.6%	24.5%	25.0%	23.6%
Over 20 years	13.2%	8.2%	25.0%	11.3%

As stated in its policy manual, Mitchell Technical Institute is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, disability, military status, national origin or ancestry, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal or state statutes (Resource 3.11).

MTI has no formal policy promoting employee diversity, seeking instead to hire the strongest, most qualified applicant for any open position. The 2009 staff survey indicated that 86.5% of employees feel the institution effectively promotes diversity in the workplace.



## **CONCLUSION**

MTI recognizes the diversity of its learners in its mission documents. We will continue to seek diversity, knowing that our graduates must be able to get along with others to achieve career, personal, and civic success. We must follow through on our stated goal to provide opportunities and events promoting diversity and equity programs at MTI.

# CORE COMPONENT 1C

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*Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.*

Mitchell Technical Institute's current mission statement has guided the institution for over 25 years. In an era when many technical colleges have broadened their mission to include the function of community colleges, MTI has remained true to its mission. We affirm the value and importance of first-rate technical education for the success of our students and the economic prosperity of our state and nation.



Nearly 99% of staff see their role as relevant to MTI's mission and believe that the actions of the institution are aligned with its mission (Staff Survey, 2009). The mission guides instructors, administrators, and support staff in carrying out their respective responsibilities – whether they are making budget choices, helping a student seek employment, designing a course and program curriculum, or fundraising for students to attend a conference.

Associate degree and diploma programs at the Institute are developed and revised (and sometimes discontinued) as dictated by the programs' success in preparing students for careers in technical fields. As Criterion Team #1's report stated, "One of our strengths is the ability to adapt existing curriculum to meet the needs of business and industry. We also are continually looking for new programs to meet industry's needs. We adapt to the needs of industry and change accordingly."

The Institute's commitment to its mission of providing skills for success in technical careers is evident:

- The best evidence of accomplishing our mission is an institutional placement rate in excess of 90% for the last 15 years. Even in times of employment uncertainty in many sectors of the economy, MTI graduates still are able to find employment, a large percentage of them in the specific area for which they were educated (Resource 3.12).
- MTI instructors regularly adjust curricula to assure students are learning the skills they will need in the workforce. For example, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) training was added to the Telecommunications program curriculum when it became clear that VoIP experience is vital for future telecommunications technicians. This required a \$300,000 investment, made possible through a new partnership with Golden West Telecommunications. The Agricultural Technology program, as another example, secured donations of equipment, software, bandwidth, and technical support to begin training agricultural technicians in GPS/GIS technology. The State Board of Education recently approved MTI's application to add a Precision Technology Specialist program to begin in the fall of 2011.
- The Medical Secretary/Transcription program was phased out in 2009-10 when transcription – a major focus of that program – was no longer viewed as a marketable skill due to the prevalence of electronic medical records. Unsatisfactory placement and wages for MST graduates was also a factor in this change. The advisory board recommended a complete program overhaul, resulting in a transition year where no new students were accepted. The new Medical Office Professional program was introduced in 2010-11 and currently has 25 first-year students studying medical terminology, anatomy, and electronic medical records.

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- A multi-year project is underway by the marketing department to produce an informative video about each of MTI's programs. These videos not only serve to recruit new students, they are frequently used by industry partners who assist with marketing and recruiting of technical programs. The story the videos help illustrate makes clear the mission and the success of MTI's students and graduates.
- MTI is expanding our Corporate Education offerings to meet the needs of business, industry, and the community. Activities sponsored by the Corporate Education office in the last year include a construction seminar, power line industry rodeo, CETP training, health EMR training, testing and certification for the propane industry, computer classes, Spanish language classes, and supervisory/management training. These and other CE activities support the Institute's vision to be a valued partner in workforce development by equipping students for career success and lifelong learning.

## CONCLUSION

Mitchell Technical Institute faculty and staff understand and support our mission to provide skills for success in technical careers. That understanding guides all activities, priorities, decisions, and educational offerings at the institutional, program, and classroom level. While not always explicitly stated, the goals of each administrative, academic, and non-academic unit at MTI are aligned with and integral to the achievement of the institution's mission.

# CORE COMPONENT 1D

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*The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.*

Like South Dakota’s other three technical institutes, Mitchell Technical Institute is authorized by state law to provide postsecondary career and technical education under the jurisdiction of the local school district. State law also dictates that rules governing the technical institutes must be determined and administered by the State Board of Education. South Dakota’s system is one of the few such arrangements left in the country, but, through cooperation and a vision shared by the local school district, the state, and MTI, the system works. MTI effectively provides high quality technical programs which prepare our students for occupational and lifelong success.



## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Mitchell Technical Institute is governed jointly by the South Dakota Board of Education and the local Mitchell School District 17-2 Board of Education.

### ***State Board of Education***

The State Board of Education is a nine-member board appointed by the Governor and authorized to create rules and regulations for the state’s four technical institutes. Specifically, the Board of Education has the authority to:

- Approve programs, course offerings, and construction projects
- Set program standards
- Receive federal funds
- Set tuition
- Determine distribution of federal and state dollars
- Approve issuance of bonds
- Certify instructors
- Evaluate programs
- Ensure compliance of civil rights
- Research workforce needs and job opportunities.

Within the Department of Education is the Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education ([www.doe.sd.gov/octe](http://www.doe.sd.gov/octe)) whose role is to advocate for career and technical education programs, administer the Perkins program, and guide the state’s technical institutes. Mitchell Technical Institute has a good working relationship with the OCCTE office and other state governmental agencies. MTI’s president meets monthly with other technical institute presidents and the OCCTE Director to review policies, plan and formulate budget requests, and outline strategies and proposals to present to the State Board of Education. This culture of cooperation allows the four technical institutes to deliver the same message to their constituents. A valuable tool since 2008 is the South Dakota Technical Institutes Annual Report (Resource 3.13). MTI makes a concerted effort to keep state government offices informed through newsletter mailings, email and telephone contacts, and visits to Pierre, the state’s capital, for meetings and workshops.

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### ***Mitchell Board of Education***

Local governance is provided by the Mitchell Board of Education. The Mitchell School Board is a five-member board that meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month throughout the calendar year. One or more MTI administrators and faculty are in attendance to represent MTI and answer questions on each agenda item presented. The Board approves proposals for personnel, policies, financial expenditures, and other requests from the MTI administration. In addition, board members serve on MTI's program advisory committees, which allow school board members to stay informed and support the institution's mission.



Until recently, board policies and practices affecting MTI were included in the Mitchell School Board of Education K-12 Policy and Procedure Manual. A year-long effort to separate and develop MTI-specific policies culminated in board approval of the Mitchell Technical Institute Policy and Procedure Manual on February 22, 2010. This effort involved MTI administrators, the Mitchell Superintendent of Schools, school board members, and faculty and staff, and it resulted in new and revised policies and practices specific to higher education and to MTI and its mission. These policies will be reviewed by the board on a rotating schedule; policy numbers in the 1000-1299 ranges were reviewed last summer and approved on June 28 and August 9, 2010. Employees have access to board policies through a printed copy in the Instructional Services Center and electronic copies available on the MTI SharePoint site.

### ***Strategic Advisory Council***

Mitchell Technical Institute achieved a long-held strategic goal (first included in the 2002-2007 Strategic Plan) with the establishment of an institutional advisory council this fall. According to the Strategic Advisory Council's charter, the council's primary goal is to improve MTI's strategic direction and positioning so as to provide the best education possible; to ensure industry requirements are being met; and to ensure the long term success of the institution (Resource 3.14). This body is made up of ten key individuals representing segments of business and industry in South Dakota, as well as MTI's president, its marketing director, and the Mitchell school superintendent. The newly created group will help MTI succeed by contributing to the formulation of our strategic vision and helping to provide the political and economic support required to reach our goals.

### ***Administrative Structures***

Mitchell Technical Institute has effective administrative structures in place that allow the institution to move forward. Recent growth and administrative changes have prompted adjustments to job descriptions and organizational structures. Institutional organizational charts are included in Appendix F. When surveyed in April 2009, 78% of employees felt that the institution was appropriately organized. A staff survey a year later showed that 81% shared that sentiment – a small step in the right direction (Resource 3.15).

In 2009, 85% of employees felt that decisions are made at the appropriate level; a year later only 72% agreed with this statement. Staff comments from the 2010 survey indicate some areas of concern: perceived ineffectiveness of divisions; decisions being made without asking for opinions; larger class sizes due to raised enrollment caps; and communication that is not meeting needs.

Eighty-two percent of employees agreed in 2009 that the organization consistently implements clear and fair policies affecting employees. An employee handbook outlines policies and expectations for MTI faculty and staff (Resource 3.16). The handbook is updated annually after seeking feedback and consensus from the Strategic Planning Group and the Mitchell Area Technical Educators (MATE) organization. The updated handbook is provided to all employees and is readily accessible on the MTI SharePoint site.

### **Leadership Team**

By board policy, the Board of Education delegates authority to the leadership team, comprised of the president and three vice presidents (Resource 3.17). While MTI enjoys a strong, harmonious relationship with district administration and board members, MTI's administrators are given autonomy and license to lead and direct the affairs of the institution.

MTI came under new leadership in July 2008 when the previous president retired after a 23-year tenure. After interviews with faculty, staff, the Board of Education, and the district superintendent, Greg Von Wald was hired as president. The former CEO and general manager of Golden West Technologies and Internet Solutions, Von Wald also has extensive military experience; he is a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps. His leadership and business expertise were viewed as important assets and were key factors in making him the hiring panel's unanimous choice.

Three vice presidents are directly responsible to the president: the vice president for academic affairs, vice president for finance and administrative services, and vice president for technology and information systems. These individuals prepare procedures, implement policies, and supervise personnel within their respective areas of responsibility.

### **Management Team**

The Management Team, which meets monthly, is comprised of the leadership team and non-academic professional staff, including directors, coordinators, and supervisors. The purpose of this team is to approach issues with a whole-institution perspective. The team is a vital communication link for distributing information throughout the institution, as well as for coordinating efforts that cut across several departments. This group truly functions as a team in doing the business of MTI.

### **Academic Divisions and Departments**

Mitchell Technical Institute's 23 academic departments are organized into five divisions. Instituted in 2006, the division structure was designed to enhance sharing of resources, curricula and staff across departments to more efficiently and effectively teach students and administer programs. However, as of 2009 only half of the faculty believed that the addition of divisions at MTI had provided more effective collaboration between programs (Staff Survey 2009). The Strategic Planning Group established a goal to evaluate and strengthen divisions within MTI's structure (Action Step 2E-1). As a result, MTI's four divisions were restructured into five, and the roles and responsibilities of division heads were reviewed and redefined.



**Table 3.4  
Division Structure at MTI**

<b>Divisions</b>	<b>Departments</b>
Business and Service Industries	Accounting/Business Management, Agriculture Technology, Culinary Academy of South Dakota, South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management, General Education, Outdoor Power and Recreational Vehicle Technology
Construction Technologies	Architectural Design and Building Construction, Electrical Construction and Maintenance, Heating and Cooling Technology
Energy Production and Transmission	Power Line Construction and Maintenance, Propane and Natural Gas Technologies, Wind Turbine Technology
Engineering Technologies	Automation Controls/SCADA, Information Systems Technology, Office Technology Specialist, Satellite Communications, Telecommunications
Health Sciences	Medical Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technology, Medical Office Professional, Radiation Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Speech-Language Pathology Assistant

Members of the faculty are appointed to serve as department heads and division heads. Departments and divisions are directed to hold regular meetings to collaborate, conduct assessment, plan, and budget, and division heads meet regularly with the vice president for academic affairs. In addition, a fairly effective line of communication with administration has been established using division and department heads. It is encouraging to note that 83% of faculty say they have the opportunity to express their ideas in appropriate forums, which is further evidenced by faculty and staff regularly contacting administration directly to deal with concerns or problems. Eighty-six percent of faculty agreed that their department head is open to everyone's ideas, opinions, and beliefs. In addition, 87% felt that important decisions are made in their department with input from all faculty (2009 Survey of Staff Satisfaction).

## **COMMITTEES**

MTI has several standing committees that work to achieve the purposes of the institution. Thirty percent of personnel at MTI currently serve on one or more standing committees, thereby lending input and contributing to the overall effectiveness of the institution. This involvement is evident in that 88% of employees say they feel able to appropriately influence the direction of MTI (Staff Survey 2009).

**Strategic Planning Group** – Under the president's guidance, the 19-member Strategic Planning Group was given the mandate to develop MTI's strategic plan. Comprised of administration, professional staff, and faculty, this group provides input for institutional policy and direction, reviews progress and achievement toward strategic goals, and makes adjustments to the plan when needed. Initially meeting monthly, this group currently meets every two months throughout the school year. Action groups involving additional faculty and staff assist the SPG in the specifics of each strategic goal.

**Curriculum** – This committee was newly formed in fall 2010 under the direction of the curriculum director. With faculty representation from all five divisions and general education instructors, as well as the registrar and vice president for academic affairs, the group reviews and makes recommendations on all curricular matters in the technical area, including new programs and courses, course revisions or deactivations, prerequisites and co-requisites, and placement of courses within disciplines. The curriculum committee also reviews and recommends changes in general education and graduation requirements; recommends procedures and policies affecting curriculum; and engages in self-directed study to improve curriculum development and implementation.



**Assessment** – The assessment committee is responsible for MTI’s overall institutional effectiveness plan. The committee devises assessment processes for program review and institutional assessment of student learning outcomes; they also provide oversight and support for faculty and staff in their assessment activities. This 10-member group has representation from faculty and support staff and operates with guidance from the vice president for academic affairs and the institutional research coordinator.

**Admissions and Marketing** – The admissions and marketing planning group is tasked with identifying strategies, projects, event management, and materials content and production that support MTI’s recruiting and outreach initiatives. The dean of enrollment serves as chair of this group. Meetings are regularly attended by the admissions and marketing staff, the vice president for academic affairs, and the president.

**Credentialing** – The institution’s credentialing committee approves faculty professional development activities that meet state credentialing requirements for technical educators. Within the guidelines set by the state, this committee assures that faculty credentials are current and that faculty complete the necessary steps to renew their credentials. Membership is comprised of five faculty members, an administrative aide, and the vice president for academic affairs.

## COMMUNICATION

MTI’s 2009 staff survey revealed that 76.3% of employees felt that information is shared within the institution; 90.1% said they received adequate information regarding important activities; and 88.1% felt that a spirit of cooperation exists at MTI. Below are some strategies recently implemented to strengthen communication within the institution:

- A weekly employee newsletter is distributed to faculty and staff via email. The president regularly communicates through the newsletter; others throughout the Institute also submit announcements, news, information, and details of upcoming events. Criterion Team #1 expressed their belief that the newsletter has improved institutional communication, and a 2010 staff survey affirmed this, with 98% of respondents agreeing that the MTI Insights newsletter has improved communication.
- A bi-monthly student newsletter, Tech Trek, is distributed throughout the institution with information pertinent to students and also of interest to staff (Resource 3.18).
- Email is a valuable source of communication at MTI. All employees and students are assigned an email address, and regular and frequent communication among staff and with students takes place via email. Staff (98%) view email as a valuable communication source for MTI (2010 Staff Survey).



- MTI also uses Microsoft SharePoint to make information easily accessible to all employees. Information available at the main site includes everything from the personnel handbook and board policies to phone directories, strategic planning documentation, a library of all organizations' minutes, and assessment results. This technology was introduced in the 2009-10 year and is only slowly being accepted by the MTI community.
- Regular staff meetings are held. Members of the criterion team pointed out the informational nature of staff meetings and suggested that time be set aside to allow for input. The team further suggested that when input is sought, better follow-up must occur so that employees recognize how their input is used and implemented by administrators.
- In 2009 MTI upgraded its phone system, installing a computer-based system that integrates our voice communications with the electronic mail system. The Exchange Unified Messaging system provides features such as instant messaging, direct dial from the user's contact list, and voice mails received via email. Employees are gradually discovering additional benefits like desktop sharing and videoconferencing.

## CONCLUSION

MTI's external governance has been a point of discussion locally and statewide for many years. We answer to the State Board of Education and to the Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education, as well as the Mitchell School Board of Education and superintendent. While the system may be unusual, it works. That said, many in the state believe technical education would be better served if moved under the auspices of the South Dakota Board of Regents, thus reducing the sense of competition between the state's seven public universities and four technical institutes. Although this debate will continue, its resolution is not a priority for MTI at this time.

MTI's internal organization has evolved and will continue to evolve as the Institute grows. Identified challenges include using divisions more effectively, enhancing internal communication, and determining the best utilization of professional and administrative staff. These elements will continue to receive attention as identified areas with room for improvement.

## CORE COMPONENT 1E

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*The organization upholds and protects its integrity.*

MTI acts with integrity in its dealings with students, employees, and external constituencies. As the report from this criterion team states, “We feel that MTI strives to maintain the integrity of its programs. Our goal is to produce a graduate who is ready for the workforce.” Students, employees and external constituencies concur that MTI’s actions are consistent with its public commitments.



In the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory administered in fall 2008, MTI’s student satisfaction exceeded the national benchmarks in the measures reading “The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent” and “The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.” Clearly, students believe that MTI delivers what it promises them.

Here are other examples of evidence that MTI consistently upholds its integrity:

- Staff is in agreement that the actions of the Institute reflect its mission and that integrity is important to the practices of the institution (Staff Survey 2009).
- Student satisfaction that MTI’s “channels for expressing student complaints are readily available” significantly exceed the national norm (Noel-Levitz SSI, 2008).
- While tuition and fees have increased the past several years, MTI makes every effort to ensure that educational costs remain affordable (Resource 3.19). We have good cooperation among the vice president for finances office, the financial aid office, and the admissions office to accurately set the appropriate fee structure, package it to be adequately covered by financial aid, and publish it so that students are prepared to cover their portion of their educational costs.
- Audit outcomes affirm that MTI has always demonstrated fiscal responsibility.
- Financial aid audits have shown no discrepancies in the management of student financial aid. The chief financial aid officer is responsible for compliance with all Title IV regulations. There have been no concerns in this area.
- MTI has a history of meeting or exceeding compliance with state and federal regulations and educational policies.
- The MTI Foundation is a separately organized, fiscally-independent 501(c)(3) entity whose sole purpose is to raise funds dedicated to the advancement of MTI’s goals, including scholarships, capital improvements, and faculty development. The Foundation is overseen by a 15-member board and an executive director. Its financial records are audited, and the Foundation has been found to comply with standard accounting practices.
- The Mitchell Board of Education is charged with oversight of MTI’s policies and procedural compliance. Minutes of all board meetings are published in the newspaper of record, The Mitchell Daily Republic.
- Printed materials are regularly updated for content, including annual publications like MTI’s general catalog, student handbook, personnel handbook, and a variety of admissions materials. In addition, the website is frequently monitored and checked for content consistent with traditionally printed materials. Every effort is made to ensure that all materials made available to the public accurately represent the Institute’s mission, policies, procedures, and pertinent data.

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- MTI students rated significantly higher satisfaction than their national counterparts when asked whether admissions counselors “accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices” (Noel-Levitz SSI, 2008).
- Student organizations operate with bylaws, and all activities are available to everyone who wants to participate.
- MTI is honest in reporting enrollment numbers, retention rates, completion rates, and job placement. Care is taken to accurately represent the institution in reports required by state and federal entities.
- Assessment results are made public on the MTI website’s About Us page. Survey results from alumni, employers, parents, advisory committees, employees, and students are published on the website.
- The MTI Insights staff newsletter devoted several issues to topics of integrity and ethics to promote awareness of copyright law, academic dishonesty, technology’s impact on cheating, and honesty in marketing.
- An institutional academic honesty policy has been adopted and is included on all course syllabi.
- Student rights and responsibilities are outlined in the student handbook and published on the website. Policies affecting students, including due process, student complaints, and student grievance procedures, are also included in the handbook, and faculty and staff are expected to adhere to these policies when dealing with incidents involving students (Resource 3.20).
- Employee handbooks, board policies, and negotiated agreements are the first-line documents referenced when addressing issues involving employees.

## CONCLUSION

MTI acts ethically and responsibly in its dealings with students, parents, employees and other constituencies. Its integrity is upheld as a point of pride among all who work and go to school here. The Criterion One team expressed concerns about maintaining future institutional integrity if programs and instructional delivery are adversely affected by budget cuts and enrollment increases. The Institute will continue to closely monitor retention and student satisfaction, especially in programs where rapid growth has occurred, to assure that integrity is not compromised. Other concerns expressed by the team in its meetings in 2008-09 have since been addressed.

## Chapter Four

# CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE



*Mitchell Technical Institute's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.*



## CORE COMPONENT 2A

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*The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.*

One of the hallmarks of technical education is its ability to assess and rapidly respond to the changing economic and job opportunities landscape. Mitchell Technical Institute is adept at keeping its finger on the pulse of economic trends and industry needs. A 2009 survey of staff showed that 94.5% agree that planning at MTI “considers factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and economic challenges” (Resource 4.1). Through the examination of internal and external issues, trends, and events, and with special reliance on program advisory boards, MTI is preparing for a rapidly evolving future.



### EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ANALYSES

Mitchell Technical Institute uses a variety of formal and informal methods to stay attuned to trends that affect the institution.

#### Advisory Committees

Each academic program at MTI is supported by an advisory committee made up of representatives from business and industry. The advisory committees, which meet twice a year, provide us with perspective, constructive criticism, and guidance that is essential to each program’s direction and development. As outlined in the advisory committee handbook, “Each advisory committee is responsible for overseeing curriculum and programming, providing guidance to the program, discussing employment trends and issues, and looking at future needs of the particular occupation” (Resource 4.2).

#### Strategic Advisory Council

In the same way the advisory boards assist the programs, MTI’s new Strategic Advisory Council (SAC) is in a position to guide the institution through strategic decisions and planning. During its inaugural meeting on November 17, 2010, the Council affirmed the importance of hiring and retaining highly skilled instructors; innovative strategies were discussed to find workable solutions to this challenge. In regard to corporate education, the Council predicted that demand for employee training will likely rise to pre-recession levels as the economy improves. The group also said that this would be a good year to start building relationships with a new executive administration taking office in state government. “The reality is that money will not be available for anyone . . . but relationship-building is the key for improving the funding structure in the future” (SAC minutes, Nov. 17, 2010).

One focus of the first Strategic Advisory Council meeting was to develop a white paper, to be used by MTI at upcoming legislative briefings, to make the case for funding technical education at levels equal to that of the state’s four-year baccalaureate universities. SAC members agreed to affix their names to this position paper, signifying their support for technical education in South Dakota (Resource 4.3).

## SWOT Analyses

MTI conducts institutional SWOT analyses on an annual basis to address perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This activity helps formulate the institution's strategic direction and allows staff to share their perceptions from "down in the trenches." Ninety percent of staff agreed that long-range planning is developed through input from staff (Staff Survey 2009).

The latest SWOT analysis took place in August 2010 (Resource 4.4). At that time, the entire MTI staff and faculty worked in small groups to identify opportunities and threats not being adequately addressed in the current strategic plan. The results of each group's discussion were compiled and the suggestions presented to the Strategic Planning Group for possible inclusion in the strategic plan. This SWOT effort brought several issues to light, and the updated Strategic Plan includes initiatives to address some of these issues.



## Environmental Scanning

MTI has no formal system in place for environmental scanning. However, administrators and instructors pay close attention to external factors that impact MTI's growth and strength. Of recent concern have been the faltering regional and global economy and a declining high school population in South Dakota (Resource 4.5). Administrators and instructors also subscribe to and read industry newsletters and trade magazines, and they belong to state and national organizations where they are kept abreast of industry trends. Through the years, MTI has responded to these trends – and to the demands of students and industry – by discontinuing, modifying, and adding programs (Resource 4.6). Most recently, the Power Line and Propane and Natural Gas programs were expanded to train more workers in demand by energy industries. Adding green technologies to the Architectural Design and Building Construction and Heating and Cooling Technology programs is another example of responsiveness to societal trends.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Mitchell Technical Institute is in the third year of a five-year strategic plan developed in 2008. The plan, which clearly outlines the institution's key goals and objectives, works with our mission documents to provide a foundation for decision-making and institutional action.

### Strategic Plan Development

When Greg Von Wald began his tenure as MTI president in the summer of 2008, he conducted a series of interviews with staff and faculty to help him become acquainted with the Institute's strengths and challenges. Compiling this feedback with that of the May 2006 campus-wide SWOT analysis and the November 2007 MTI Planning Day results (Resources 4.7 and 4.8), Mr. Von Wald then held a day-long meeting with the three vice presidents to analyze and process this information to develop a sense of direction and goals from a leadership perspective.

A Strategic Planning Group was formed in fall 2008. Consisting of a mix of administrators, professional staff, and faculty members, this group was given the mandate "to take the strategic planning input that had been produced over several planning iterations, distill it, reestablish measurable institutional goals, and assist in the development of an action plan that will accomplish those goals" (SPG Minutes, October 22, 2008). This group subsequently held focused discussions on how to achieve five leadership-identified objectives: (1) redefining MTI's image, (2) moving to a single campus, (3) increasing enrollment, (4) increasing funding, and (5) reviewing program curriculum and delivery.

Five working groups were formed in January 2009, one for each of the five objectives. These groups were asked to conduct detailed research “to come up with options, recommendations, and then actionable objectives needed to achieve their respective goals” (SPG Minutes, January 6, 2009). Input from these five groups was then incorporated into what eventually became the 2008-2013 strategic plan.

It is worth noting that MTI’s HLC criterion teams were meeting at the same time. As the criterion teams reviewed HLC’s core components, they too were identifying areas where improvement was needed or gaps were found. This feedback was shared with the SPG throughout the process so that strategic planning was guided by accreditation requirements in addition to the group’s insights and discussions.



The finalized 2008-2013 strategic plan was prepared by the SPG in April 2009. It provides direction and focus for academic and nonacademic departments throughout the institution (Resource 4.9).

### **Strategic Plan in Action**

From its inception, the Institute’s strategic plan has been viewed as a fluid document. Timelines, cost estimates, and action plans that don’t work as expected can be adjusted, and new objectives and strategies can be incorporated as circumstances change. The institution’s annual SWOT analyses provide continuous input for the strategic plan. Action groups have been formed, one for each goal, and given responsibility to analyze and incorporate the SWOT input as appropriate. The SPG meets every two months to review progress, accomplishments, challenges, and barriers to goal achievement. One goal is analyzed each meeting, and the assigned action group is invited to the SPG meeting to report on progress and make recommendations. Throughout the process, activities related to the strategic plan are documented using a database maintained for easy access in our SharePoint site.

We have made great strides in accomplishing the goals established through strategic planning, although much work remains ahead. Among the many accomplishments are the creation of “a comprehensive and consistent marketing plan,” resulting in a fresh, user-friendly web presence and print and promotional materials featuring a consistent, all-new look; development and delivery of hybrid, dual-credit programs for South Dakota high school students; a change in the state formula used to fund postsecondary technical education; and an upgrade to the Jenzabar electronic student management system. Other goals have ongoing performance objectives and require continuous improvement efforts. A few of these “works in progress” at MTI include building stronger partnerships between industry and our programs (and with our Corporate Education department), establishing institution-wide accident reporting and safety policies and procedures, and implementing WIDS software for consistency and efficiency in course design.

## **DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Each academic program at the Institute is involved in planning activities through the institution’s annual program assessment review process. After analyzing various assessment measures, program instructors make plans that will impact curriculum, course delivery, needed equipment, graduation requirements, etc., in response to internal and external trends. The annual program assessment review process is discussed in detail on pages 51-52.

Nonacademic departments at MTI are also involved in planning and assessment activities. Early in the fall, plans are made and documented for strategies and activities the department will undertake in the current academic year to improve its operations and services. For example, the Outreach department developed a plan to expand MTI's dual-credit class offerings to include a communications/information technology program for high school students (Resource 4.10). The Career Services department's improvement plan for 2010-2011 involves a website upgrade (Resource 4.11). Department improvement plans can be seen on the institutional effectiveness SharePoint site.



## **FACILITIES PLANNING**

Mitchell Technical Institute acquired property south of Interstate 90 in Mitchell over a decade ago with a long-range plan to build and relocate to a new campus at that location. This new campus was viewed as essential for the development of new programs and future expansion to achieve the Institute's strategic goals. Forward-thinking community members and MTI employees worked together to develop a building plan to be completed in phases. With no state funding available for the project, MTI boldly used a mix of its own resources, capital outlay certificates, and grants to move ahead with phase one of the building plan, and the MTI Technology Center was completed in fall 2002. Two programs moved to the Tech Center in time for spring semester 2003. MTI made its final payment on this building in December 2010, thus freeing up \$300,000 per year for future projects.

Phase two, an expansion of the Tech Center and the construction of an Energy Training Center, was completed at the south campus in 2009, bringing the total number of programs housed at that location to nine. Construction is currently under way on a third building; our administration and student services building (which will house seven additional programs) will be ready for the 2011-12 school year.

We are working now to procure funding to begin the final phase of construction which will allow us to move our final five programs to the south campus location. We are asking the legislature to raise the state's bonding cap so that MTI can proceed with construction.

Beautiful, state-of-the-art facilities with spacious indoor and outdoor labs located in proximity to I-90, and the prospect of all employees and programs moving soon to a single campus, have generated excitement at MTI and have heightened statewide awareness of the great things happening at the Institute.

## **STUDENT HOUSING**

Adequate housing has long been a problem for our students. As recent as April 2010, students' parents cited housing as a top concern in a survey (Resource 4.12). State law prevents the four technical institutes from building dormitories for their students, yet even before recent enrollment growth, finding appropriate housing for our students had been difficult. Viewed as a barrier to recruitment and retention, the lack of adequate housing was addressed in the Institute's 2008-2013 strategic plan (Objective 4E). A creative solution was found: MTI worked closely with local, private developers on a project to build student apartments near our campus. The 45-unit Campus Tech Apartments were completed in 2010. While the apartments are not owned or operated by MTI, they are a wonderful benefit for students and a significant step in meeting existing housing needs.

## TECHNOLOGY PLANNING

As in all higher education institutions, Mitchell Technical Institute's reliance on effective and current technology has grown almost exponentially in recent years. At the time of our last self-study in 2000, the Institute's Information Technology (IT) department consisted of one computer support technician and a part-time network administrator, responsible for the 250-plus computers on campus at that time. Today, the department has grown to two fulltime technicians and two fulltime network administrators, plus a part-time operations manager. MTI also maintains a network management contract with a third party for prepaid network administration and a network monitoring contract with a third party for monitoring and assessment.



Currently, MTI maintains seven general use computer labs with 28-34 computers per lab and nine industry-specific labs with 16-28 computers per lab. The Institute also provides a computer for each employee, with the vast majority being laptop computers for mobility and flexibility. Nine programs at MTI currently require students to purchase laptop computers, with approximately 400 students currently taking part in the laptop program. All total, over 900 computers are operating daily at MTI and supported by the IT department. We expect more programs to eventually require laptops, since the use of computers continues to grow in all sectors of business and industry.

All data traffic is routed through an enterprise-level Sonic Wall firewall. This firewall contains content filtering through a subscription service and is monitored continuously for device health and traffic that would be in violation of our acceptable use agreement with students and employees.

Currently, MTI operates 15 physical servers and six virtual servers running on two hosts. Together these devices provide many network services to our users, including a complete student management system, SharePoint services, file and print services, Exchange email, public folders, spam filtering, Office Communicator services, Windows Update services, web hosting of faculty pages, instant messaging, video conferencing, desktop sharing, and IP phones. The IT department also supports a student information display system, a community information service via a local cable TV provider, backup and disaster recovery services, wireless network services, and a wireless emergency alert system using text, page, and email.

Because technology is so vital to MTI's mission, technology is a major focus for budgeting, planning, and assessment. The Institute's 2010-2014 technology plan was a direct product of its umbrella strategic plan. The strategic planning process gave a comprehensive examination of all institutional operations and functions. Inherent to the process was the constant practice of gap analysis regarding technology resources available and required resources to meet new institutional goals. Technology challenges were clearly identified by all strategic working groups, and the framework under which this planning existed provided abundant opportunity for input by all stakeholders.

Planning solutions to meet these challenges included a third party network and systems evaluation and consultation with peer organizations, state information technology engineers, and our own faculty and staff. Recommendations and suggested actions from these sources were consolidated into a guiding plan for technology resources at MTI (Resource 4.13). Goals and supporting objectives and activities are outlined in the technology plan, along with timelines, projected costs, and evaluation method benchmarks. This plan will guide the Institution in its future efforts to maintain and strengthen technology services in support of teaching and learning.

### 2010-2014 MTI Technology Plan

Goal 1: Provide and maintain the latest possible technologies for staff and students of the Mitchell Technical Institute.
Goal 2: Provide and maintain the latest information services for staff and students of the Mitchell Technical Institute.
Goal 3: Provide and maintain high level of safety and security for staff and students of the Mitchell Technical Institute.
Goal 4: Improve and maintain a high level of technical competency in all MTI employees.
Goal 5: Improve technology integration into curricula and instruction.

## CONCLUSION

Mitchell Technical Institute is aware of industry and economic trends and positions itself to respond rapidly to changes. Through advisory committees and professional development, our instructors and administrators regularly communicate with industry leaders to receive input on curriculum, competencies, and instruction. Thus, MTI's technical and educational offerings are constantly updated and adapted to stay current and relevant based on industry input.

Planning – and documenting the results – is a time-consuming process. Despite this challenge, MTI employees positively view planning as a valued key to its present and future success. The college's strategic plan drives all planning and implementation processes – from the annual program review and department institutional plans to information technology and facilities plans. We further recognize the importance of rapid implementation and modification of plans to stay abreast of the changing world. Perhaps the strongest evidence of the Institute's successful planning and implementation is the 2010 survey finding that 100% of our employees concur that MTI is, in general, headed in the right direction.

## CORE COMPONENT 2B

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*The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.*

When MTI began its self-study in 2008, adequate funding was a significant concern. The institution had seen a 17% decline in enrollment, from a high of 906 in 2000 to a low of 755 in 2007. The enrollment decline resulted in a corresponding decrease in revenue –from lost student tuition and fees and from decreasing state aid, which was distributed solely based on enrollment. Many of the challenges and limitations identified by the teams engaged in the self-study two years ago were tied to dwindling financial resources.



Times have changed for MTI. A staff survey in spring 2010 found 87% of staff agreeing that the organization's resources are adequate to achieve educational quality. Ironically, while many institutions of higher learning are worse off today due to trust funds and investments depleted by the national economic meltdown, enrollment is up at MTI, and this school's future has never looked better. Through a combination of judicial reallocation of funds to vital areas, a strong emphasis on reengaging industry for major support, and successful pursuit of state and federal grants, MTI has greatly strengthened its financial position and enhanced the quality of its current and future educational programs.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

MTI's 2010-11 operating budget is \$11,787,896. This is comprised of expenditures related to instruction, support, and administration of the institution. (This figure excludes the \$3.3 million in grants and capital outlay certificates that will fund the purchase of a wind turbine this year.) These funds come from a variety of sources: tuition and fees, state dollars, federal funds and grants, and enterprise monies. No local tax dollars are used to support MTI. In past years, the largest share of the institution's budget has come from legislative appropriations, but those funds have been steadily dwindling in recent years. Last year, for the first time in MTI's history, tuition and fees counted for a larger share (49%) than any other funding category. Legislative appropriations contributed only 32% of MTI's budget.



## MTI Funds for Fiscal Year 2009

Actual Funds \$8,654,772

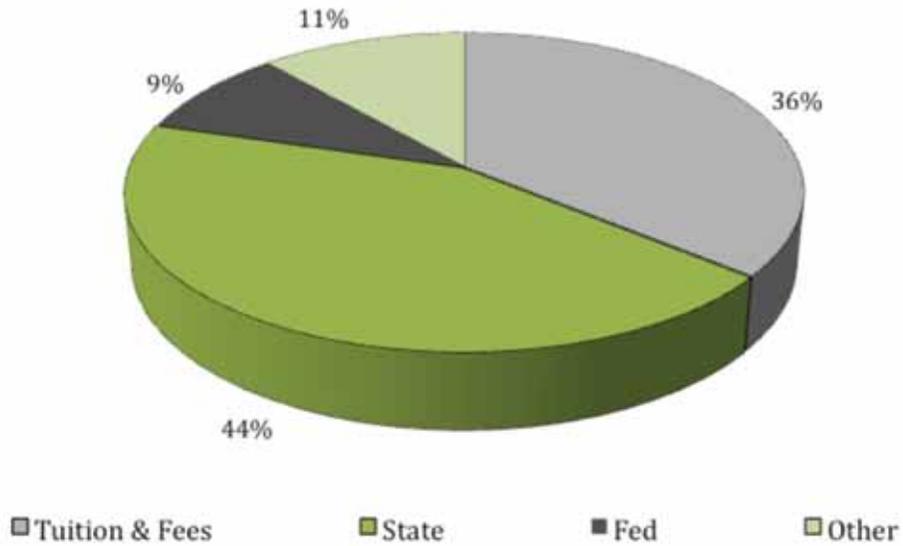


Figure 1

## MTI Funds for Fiscal Year 2010

Actual Funds \$10,254,798

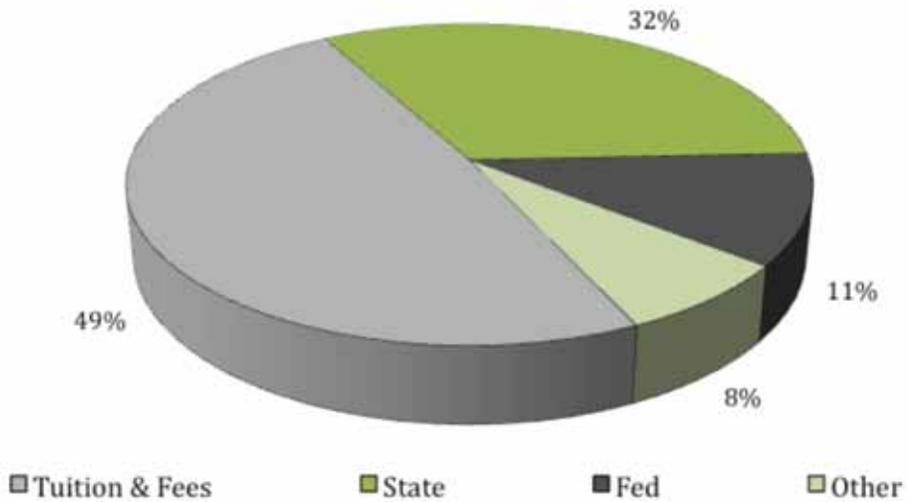


Figure 2

Besides growing enrollment, MTI has employed a number of strategies to compensate for decreases in state aid.

### ***A New Funding Formula***

State funding for South Dakota's four technical institutes (TIs) has been directly tied to student enrollment and has been regressive in nature. As the smallest of these institutes, Mitchell Technical Institute suffered the greatest from the state's funding formula. MTI lobbied to change the funding formula and successfully helped to craft a formula agreeable to all four schools. S.D. Administrative Rule 24:10:42:28, which went into effect July 1, 2010 (and will affect MTI's budget starting in FY 2011), will use a more equitable funding formula and will significantly benefit the Institute by providing resources needed to refresh and build programs. As a starting base, 25% of the total annual state allocation will be distributed equally among all four institutions to fund operations common to each technical institute. The remaining 75% will be distributed to the institutions using a funding factor based on fulltime equivalent students within three program categories: high cost/low density programs, high cost programs, and standard cost programs (Resource 4.14).



### ***Bonding Authority***

Building projects for the TIs depend upon bonding authority granted by the state. To meet a need for new building projects - particularly at MTI - the technical institutes' maintenance and repair (M&R) budget allocation was re-designated to increase the state's bonding authority for technical schools. This re-designation allowed the TIs to construct new buildings but also meant a state increase in student M&R fees. MTI is presently faced with a choice between two key priorities – securing bonding authority to complete our south campus building project or asking for more M&R funding from the state.

### ***Improving the Budgeting Process***

MTI's budgeting process begins in January, when each technical program submits a request for equipment and lab upgrades. Once state allocations are determined by the legislature in March, the leadership team meets individually with instructors to discuss operations and proposed spending of capital for their programs. At that point, administrators divide available funds among the programs. Year after year, however, budget requests for large-ticket items or upgrades (while justifiable and needed) were being refused because the equipment budget couldn't accommodate such requests across the Institution. Administration and staff came together in preparing the 2010-11 budget to improve the process. This go-around, most departments received amounts only for critically necessary items, which then allowed the Institution to make several larger investments for a few programs. In the future, other programs will receive the priority and larger allocations.

### ***Program Structure***

Prior to 2008, the Farm Business Management program existed as a non-traditional, credit-based program with no certificate of completion awarded. The program was primarily funded by a state legislated budget appropriation and was not part of the school's regular state aid funding formula. During the 2008 legislative session, funding for the program was eliminated completely. The state OCCTE stepped in and agreed to include enrollees in the FTE portion of the funding formula. Due to that funding change, it was necessary to redesign the program allowing for a completion certificate. The transition has created some challenges; however, added instructional staff, a revamped curriculum, and a strong state-wide presence will ensure the program's viability for years to come.

### **Increased Reserves**

MTI's administration has also made a commitment to increase the institution's reserves by creating a contingency fund. This fund has grown significantly already (\$0 in FY 2008; \$11,958 in FY 2009; \$62,309 in FY 2010; and \$134,014 in FY 2011) and will continue to grow until it reaches 5% of the budget.



## **INDUSTRY SUPPORT AND GRANTS THROUGH THE MTI FOUNDATION**

Technical education is a costly venture. Unlike the relatively low costs of lecture classes, technical education labs require periodic capital infusion to maintain relevancy with industry. Equipment, software, and infrastructure must be constantly updated so that educators can keep up with rapid technological changes. While MTI annually budgets for equipment replacement, it has been unable to adequately keep up with needs, so it depends heavily on industry to help fund these upgrades. Grant applications have also become more important to MTI and its ability to provide quality technical education. Both of these endeavors are facilitated through the MTI Foundation. The Foundation is also currently determining the feasibility of a capital campaign.

### **Industry Partnerships**

Our industry partners and friends support MTI through endowments, annual scholarships, and cash donations (Table 4.1). Companies also support the Institute through equipment loans and donations; last year's donations totaled \$319,097, allowing for greatly needed equipment upgrades and additions (Table 4.2). In recent years, industry partnerships have helped make possible, for example, a state-of-the-art telecommunications lab, the purchase of an operational wind turbine, and other specialized training equipment for students in programs throughout the Institute.

	<b>FY 2008</b>	<b>FY 2009</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>
Total Revenue	\$105,735.37	\$157,167.53	\$157,028.49
Number of Donors	80	92	124
Number of Gifts	108	118	305

**Table 4.2**  
**Examples of Recent Equipment Donations and Loans to MTI**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>MTI Program</b>	<b>Value</b>
American Honda Motor Co.	16 v-twin industrial engines	PWSPT	\$20,000
Barr-Thorp Electric Co.	6 PLC trainers	SCADA	\$30,828
Dr. Tamara Wheeler	Human skeleton	RAD TECH	\$10,000
Energy Maintenance Service	Bore scope	WTT	\$35,000
Golden West Technologies	Nodes, panels, routers	TEL	\$30,000
Golden West Technologies	VoIP telephone system	TEL	\$25,000
Harley-Davidson	Engine/power train	PWSPT	\$20,000
Intermountain Stihl Corp.	Training aides and tools	PWSPT	\$15,000
J & L Harley-Davidson	3 twin cam engines	PWSPT	\$10,500
Larson Cable Trailers	Cable trailer rental	PL	\$22,500
Midstates Communication	1 BLC gateway w/cards, etc.	TEL	\$136,000
SDN Communications	2 fiber dist. sys./ backup power	TEL	\$165,000
Suzlon	Wind turbine blade	WTT	\$25,000

***New Emphasis on Grants***

Grants have also been critical in strengthening the Institute’s financial position. Beginning with a \$2 million Community-Based Job Training Grant awarded in 2009, MTI has received approximately \$5 million in grants and grant-matching dollars (Table 4.3), which has freed up the Institute’s resources and assisted in achieving many strategic goals. MTI has made grant pursuits a major priority, as seen in Objective 1F. of the 2008-2013 strategic plan, which calls for an increase of grant applications to support program and division development. The MTI foundation director was given this additional job responsibility, and a fulltime support staff person was hired to assist her in the Foundation office. Grants have made it possible to launch the Wind Turbine Technology program and its outreach efforts at Sinte Gleska University; to outfit an outreach trailer for the Energy Division; to purchase a wind turbine; to expand statewide the Farm Business Management program, now known as the South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management; and to upgrade equipment for a number of programs (Resource 4.15).

**Table 4.3  
Grants Received FY 2009 and FY 2010**

<b>Granting Entity</b>	<b>Programs to Benefit</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Nordby Family Foundation	ADBC, HCT, ECM	\$5,000
ETA – Community Job Based Training	PL, PNG, WTT	\$1,999,723
Tessier Family Foundation	HCT	\$9,000
U.S. Health and Human Services	Corporate Education (HIT program)	\$65,000
Xcel Energy	SCADA, PL, PNG, UT, WTT	\$1,000
USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture	FBM	\$147,542
SD Department of Labor	HCT	\$100,000
Institute for Safety in Powerline Construction	PL	\$33,017
USDA/NIFA and University of Minnesota FBM	FBM	\$85,000
Carl B. Perkins	AG, PTS	\$75,000
National Science Foundation EPSCoR	TEL, SAT, SCADA, IST, OTS	\$32,000
U.S. Economic Development Administration	WTT	\$1,167,000
Rural Utility Service	TEL, SAT, IST	\$950,000
Matching dollars received from industry	FBM, WTT	\$560,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$5,229,282</b>

### **Capital Campaign**

Mitchell Technical Institute is in the fact-finding process of determining the viability of a proposed \$5-7 million capital campaign to help construct the last building on the south campus and to create an endowment fund. We are in the process of contracting with a consulting firm who will conduct a feasibility study. Based on this company's recommendations, MTI will decide whether it is in the institution's best interest to launch a capital campaign beginning in 2011. This effort will be conducted and facilitated by MTI Foundation staff.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The strength of MTI has always been the quality of its faculty and staff. Most of our technical instructors come to MTI from industry, and paying them a competitive wage has long been a challenge. If we are unable to compete with industry salaries, we risk losing our best and brightest faculty, which will in turn impact the education we provide. We have partnered with industry to subsidize some instructor salaries, and we hope to secure more such arrangements. We also have improved at allocating funds to personnel in lieu of equipment; while no state employees received wage increases, MTI employees received a catch-up 4% salary increase last year.

An effective organization invests in developing its human capital. The Institute is adept at recognizing potential in people and giving them opportunities to develop leadership and skills which then allow them to grow in their careers. MTI invests in training for its staff; its commitment to professional development is discussed on page 57-58 and 70-71. Grant applications have been written with specific requests for professional development funding, allowing us to further invest in our staff.

Implementing divisions has helped the Institute better utilize resources, allowing programs to share not only curriculum and equipment, but staff as well. In the past, all instructors taught strictly within their own programs. Now, with the division structure in place, one instructor teaches IT essentials to all Engineering Division students, for example, while another instructor teaches anatomy and physiology to students from several Health Sciences programs.



MTI has always maintained a satisfactory student-teacher ratio. While we have experienced a 45% enrollment increase over the past three years, some of this growth was foreseen and was largely due to expanding our Energy Division and adding new programs. (Eight new instructors and two lab assistants were hired for these programs.) We have also seen a 20% jump in enrollment in the rest of our programs, probably a result of current economic challenges. These programs have been filled to capacity, greatly benefiting MTI's bottom line, as costs were held mostly steady as revenues went up. Some faculty are experiencing a significant workload impact, and in some cases, fuller programs have stretched classroom space and training equipment to its limits. Our general education instructors have experienced the biggest workload increases, since we have added course sections and increased class sizes to accommodate additional students. The Institute responded to this challenge by hiring an additional math teacher and increasing its use of adjunct instructors.

**Table 4.4 - Staffing Trends at Mitchell Technical Institute**

	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11	
Program	Students	Faculty	Students	Faculty	Students	Faculty	Students	Faculty
<b>Business and Service Industries Division</b>								
Accounting/Business Mgt	68	2	67	2	79	2.5	88	3
Ag Technology	34	3	47	3	53	3	56	3
Culinary	29	3	27	3	32	2	43	3
Lab Assistant		0		0		1		0
Power Sports	**	**	20	1	35	1	61	2
Lab Assistant				0		1		1
Farm Business Mgt	91	2	91	2	86	2	82	3
<b>Construction Technology Division</b>								
Arch Design and Building	37	3	33	3	50	3	48	3
Electrical Const	108	6	107	6	121	5	115	6
Heating and Cooling	15	2	14	2	30	2	41	2
<b>Energy Production and Transmission Division</b>								
Power Line	55	3	56	3	74	4	97	5
Lab Assistant						1		1
Propane and Natural Gas	21	1	19	1	27	1	29	1
Wind Turbine	**	**	**	**	45	2	65	3
<b>Engineering Technology Division</b>								
AutoControls/SCADA	26	2	30	2	32	2	44	2
Info Systems Tech	26	2	22	2	35	2	40	2
Office Tech Specialist	34	3	25	3	39	3	12	3
Satellite Communications	29	1.5	30	1.5	35	1.5	50	1.5
Telecommunications	16	1.5	15	1.5	33	1.5	38	1.5
<b>Health Science Division</b>								
Medical Assistant	39	1	33	1	36	1	41	1
Lab Assistant		1		1		1		1
Med Lab Technology	38	2	26	2	32	2	29	2
Med Office Professional	34	1	27	1	11	1	25	1
Radiation Therapy	4	1	5	1	7	1	7	1
Radiologic Technology	25	3	27	3	26	3	25	3
Speech-Lang Path Asst	**	**	**	**	**	**	24	1
<b>General Education and Support Faculty</b>								
General Education		4		4		5		5
Adjunct		6		6		18		14
CDL Instructor		1		1		1		1
<b>Administration and Staff</b>								
Administrators		3.5		3.5		3.5		3.5
IT Support		2		3		3		4
Professional Exempt		15		16		18		21
Support Staff		13		13		15		14

Faculty and administrators are well aware of the challenges the Institute faces in maintaining educational quality with increased enrollment. But a 2010 staff survey shows a mostly positive view of the change and growth MTI has experienced (Resource 4.16). Comments on the survey include:

- “Increased enrollment has really changed the look of MTI, and we need to continue this growth.”
- “Our programs are full, which is an obvious benefit to the institution’s financial stability. That creates more job stability as well and an enthusiasm and excitement about what’s ahead.”
- “I know the increase in numbers has been a challenge for many, but it is my belief that it will put MTI on the map, so to speak. I think we have been one of the best kept secrets in South Dakota.”



As might be expected, growth has also brought frustrations and challenges:

- “More students means less teacher to student time... [I] lost valuable time with second year students due to the increased first year enrollment.”
- “Overworked faculty is the biggest challenge. I’m worried about burnout.”
- “My biggest challenges are classroom space, lab equipment, and time.”
- “Having classes at multiple campuses has been a challenge for instructors and students.”

The August 2010 SWOT discussions confirmed that staffing is a continued concern for many. Follow-up discussions by the Strategic Planning Group resulted in consensus to address this concern in the revised strategic plan. Objective 5G calls for research to determine appropriate staffing levels for classes and labs to assure educational quality and student safety (Resource 4.17).

Support and administrative employees have also felt the pressure of additional students to serve, but student needs are being met and, when needed, additional staff have been hired. New positions created due to growth include a retention coordinator, network administrator, network systems technician, director of interactive services, institutional research coordinator, administrative property control/maintenance supervisor, curriculum design and student management system coordinator, student account coordinator, and a dean of enrollment.

## **STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The new student management system is a significant investment critical to MTI’s future. We had long recognized the existing system as a weakness; the software was no longer supported and was not adequately meeting the institution’s needs. The problem was in finding funds for the significant costs of replacement software, installation, and training. The Institute attempted unsuccessfully to secure grants and to work with other entities for increased leverage. Realizing the investment could be postponed no longer, MTI made the commitment to proceed with the purchase on its own. Two factors allowed us to move forward: we were able to convince the vendor to spread payments over three years without interest, and we allocated our soon-to-be-retired Tech Center payments toward the \$430,000 purchase.

When the conversion is completed, MTI will have a fully integrated system that includes modules for registration, the business office, financial aid, admissions, alumni, and advising. The system will provide better communication of student information within the departments and between students, faculty, and staff, and it will accommodate continued growth.

## CONCLUSION



The vision and past sacrifices which allowed MTI to build a technology center south of the Interstate have increased the Institute's visibility. More importantly, they have provided impetus to devote energy and resources to a much-needed building project. We are now three-fourths of the way toward the goal of a campus comprised of new, state-of-the-art facilities – a goal that is critical to sustain and expand the Institute and to assure future viability.

Many additional factors have enhanced MTI's bright outlook for the future: tremendous enrollment from new programs; added sections in popular programs; economic uncertainties; increased marketing efforts; grant awards totaling several million dollars; and donations of equipment, money, and expertise from generous business and industry partners. Additionally, our work with the Department of Education and the Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education to redesign the funding formula for technical institutes was a most positive step. However, to maintain our progress, we know that MTI must continue to be careful and judicious in our spending and resourceful and determined in seeking new revenues.

We have experienced some growing pains. The enrollment increase and unprecedented demands on staff have pushed us to think creatively. We have expanded the day, added faculty members and support staff, increased section sizes, and taken other measures to accommodate the increase. We must continue to study and identify optimum staffing ratios for classrooms and labs to assure safety and educational quality.

## CORE COMPONENT 2C

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The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement. MTI regularly collects information and data and then, in turn, uses this information to make decisions affecting budget allocations, equipment purchases, hiring and replacing personnel, policy change, and adding, changing, and discontinuing academic programs. As stated in our mission documents, "MTI commits to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness through a system of assessment and continuous review."



A 2009 survey revealed that 98.7% of staff feel MTI is committed to continuous improvement. The team assigned to Criterion Two affirmed this view, concluding that MTI does an "outstanding job" evaluating and assessing institutional effectiveness. The team's report for this core component states: "The opinion was that MTI measures results and uses these results in decision-making and in improving the quality of instruction and campus life for our constituencies. MTI is committed to ongoing evaluation and assessment." The team also felt that MTI demonstrated this commitment by hiring an institutional research coordinator in 2008.

### ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Mitchell Technical Institute's programs complete the Annual Program Assessment Review process each school year (Resource 4.18). This review allows each academic department to review data collected in the past year and to set goals if the program fails to meet benchmarks set by the Assessment Committee. For example, the benchmark for program enrollment states: "Five-year data for this program will demonstrate that the program's ten-day count is at or above 75% of its enrollment cap." As instructors examine enrollment data for their program, they are asked to determine whether the most recent year's enrollment meets the benchmark. If it does not, instructors are asked to explain a one-year anomaly or (if a pattern of two or more years has emerged) to develop an action plan to address the concern. In the case of enrollment, the instructors would work with admissions staff to determine specific strategies to increase program enrollment.

The Annual Program Assessment Review includes a number of indirect measures and corresponding benchmarks used to assess the quality and viability of programs at MTI. In addition to enrollment, these measures include retention rates, graduation rates, job placement rates, student satisfaction, alumni satisfaction, and employer satisfaction. Data is collected through the institutional research office and documented in an electronic portfolio for each program on our SharePoint server. In each case, an unmet benchmark results in an action plan to address the area of concern.

Direct assessment of student learning is included in the Annual Program Assessment Review. These measures are explained in Chapter Five.

### SOUTH DAKOTA'S CONTINUING PROGRAM REPORT

The South Dakota Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education (OCCTE) also has a system in place to assess the viability and effectiveness of technical programs within the state. The current process, put into effect in 2008, is directly linked to funding; programs deemed high risk that do not show progress are in danger of losing state monies.

The OCCTE process requires each program offered by technical institutes to conduct an annual internal review, assessing program performance in the areas of enrollment, retention, and placement over the past three years (Resources 4.19 and 4.20). The OCCTE director conducts an analysis to determine at-risk programs. A high-risk program is then required by the state to complete and submit a Continuing Program Report wherein it outlines a plan of correction – actions the program is taking to address the area(s) which fell below the state’s set benchmarks. Each subsequent year, the OCCTE director reviews the high-risk program’s progress toward its action plan goals. At year three, if the program is still at risk, the director makes a recommendation to the South Dakota Board of Education whether to continue or stop funding the program.



In the first year of the state’s new review process, Mitchell Technical Institute had one at-risk program; the Accounting/Business Management program’s 2009-2010 retention rate was 56.10%, which is below the state benchmark. Instructors and staff implemented numerous strategies to improve retention, including requiring a first-year student success course; using results of the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory to advise program students; hiring a part-time instructor to reduce faculty workload; and evaluating student readiness for the program’s online courses. The report also addressed the program’s value and provided endorsements from advisory board members (Resource 4.21). Retention in the Accounting/Business Management program improved to 77% in the 2010-2011 review, so the program is no longer deemed at risk. In fact, upon completion of this year’s review, the state notified MTI that all programs meet the benchmarks.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN**

MTI recently established an updated plan for institutional effectiveness. The plan is based on assessment of six institutional learning outcomes (core abilities deemed necessary for all MTI graduates), as follows:

- Communicate effectively through both oral and written means
- Demonstrate a professional attitude and work ethic
- Apply reasoning and critical thinking to solve problems and seek information
- Work cooperatively in a team environment
- Use computer technology within a field of study
- Apply technical skills required of an entry-level technician in a chosen field.

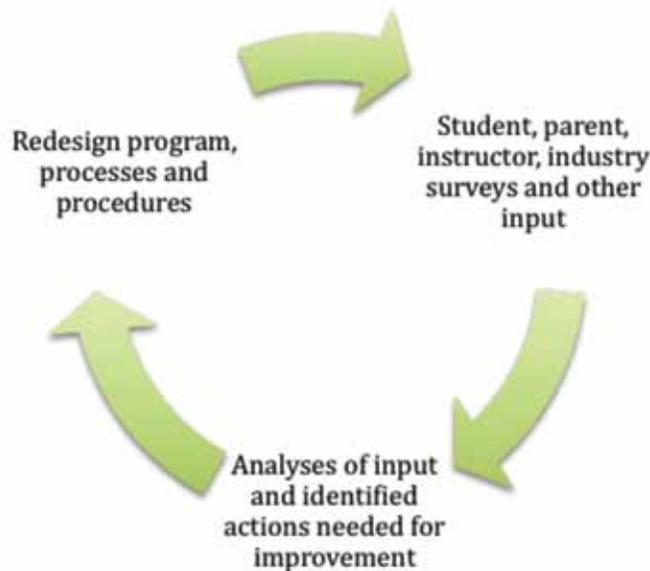
The Assessment Committee then developed and approved institutional scoring guides (rubrics) for use in measuring student achievement for these six outcomes. Rubrics for oral communication, writing, teamwork, technology use, work ethic, and using math to solve problems were developed in the fall of 2009, and the Institute began gathering results the following semester. Revised employer and alumni surveys also serve as indirect measures of assessment for these institutional learning outcomes.

With the Assessment Committee’s guidance, MTI analyzes student achievement in these six areas. The data and the process are designed to increase awareness of the importance of these outcomes, thus building increased unity, ownership, and commitment in the entire faculty and staff. The data is also used to set institutional goals each year to focus MTI’s efforts and resources on areas where students are not meeting expected outcomes. The Institute is focusing on oral communication for the 2010-2011 year, based on results from rubrics gathered last spring.

The rubrics project, annual program assessment, and nonacademic department improvement plans (see page 31-32) are all important components of an institutional effectiveness plan that is correctly aligned with our mission of providing skills for success in technical careers. At the institutional, program, and course level, we have identified meaningful outcomes for student learning, and we are assessing and using data for continuous improvement. We believe our process will help MTI to more fully achieve its mission.

## DATA COLLECTION

MTI has an established data collection plan (Resource 4.22). Set by the Assessment Committee, the plan outlines timelines for regular collection, analysis, and use of organizational information. Data collected includes enrollment, retention, completion and placement rates; satisfaction surveys from current students and their parents, MTI staff and alumni, and employers of its graduates; advisory committee surveys; and course evaluations. Results are shared throughout the institution. All of this information provides the Institute with context for its planning and budgeting for future course, program, and institutional improvements.



**Figure 3**

## CONCLUSION

MTI is committed to continuous improvement. We know that assessment (including gathering and analyzing data) is crucial to sustain and fortify the Institute’s viability and position as a valued provider of higher education and workforce development. Systems are in place that provide instructors, staff, and administrators with needed data to make informed decisions about the institution’s future. Mitchell Technical Institute feels fortunate to have not only internal processes, but we also have the state’s Continuing Program Review process. An active Assessment Committee and an institutional research coordinator both support and drive continuous improvement efforts at MTI.

## CORE COMPONENT 2D

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*All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.*



Planning at Mitchell Technical Institute is firmly centered on the Institute's mission of providing skills for success in technical careers. At every level, planning seeks to (1) strengthen the institution to offer programs and curriculum that better prepare students for careers, and (2) develop new programs that provide the trained workforce industry needs. These goals are evident in the continuous planning cycles carried out by leadership, strategic planning, divisions, departments, and support services. Everything we do at MTI is geared toward providing students with the necessary skills to succeed in technical careers.

These and other planning efforts help MTI to fulfill its mission:

- The MTI Foundation has collaborated with instructional and professional staff for more than two years to develop ongoing "wish lists" outlining equipment, training, projects, and other desirable additions for their specific programs or departments. Wish lists are shared with advisory committee members, grant writers, and philanthropic foundations which periodically have the means to fund some of the requests. As items on the lists are obtained, new items can be added, thus keeping the lists fresh and available to grantors as needed. In one recent example, a regional foundation contacted MTI at the end of its fiscal year seeking specific requests for the Heating and Cooling Technology program. As a result of this communication and a wish list at the ready, the equipment request valued at \$5,700 has been fulfilled and will be made available to the department during the 2010-11 school year.
- The Corporate Education office has worked on several industry-specific projects to raise awareness of the types of continuing education it can provide. For example, the power line industry wanted an event showcasing newer technology for young apprentice students who will soon enter the workforce. Several power line schools nationally hold annual power line rodeos to demonstrate the skills and abilities of young apprentice lineworkers. Bringing these two groups together, in spring 2010 MTI's Corporate Education hosted a regional college power line rodeo sponsored by businesses. The event combined typical power line skill competition events with a trade show featuring equipment demonstrations. The end results were increased publicity for MTI's program, satisfied industry representatives, and new relationships with other power line schools that will benefit the Institute in the future.
- A 16,000-square foot addition to the existing Technology Center opened in fall 2009. The addition was designed to bring all five programs in the Engineering Division under one roof. Project planning incorporated the layout and design of classrooms, laboratories, and offices to better facilitate collaboration and communication among departments. The results include greater sharing among faculty, more student interaction, and a stronger sense of communications-related programs learning from each other.

- Although the Institute’s marketing and advertising budget had not suffered cuts during the 2005-2008 enrollment decline, staffing was a serious concern, as there was only one employee in the marketing department. In spring 2009, the position of interactive services coordinator was added. This individual is responsible for developing a new MTI website, overseeing production of videos, working with marketing staff to develop a consistent visual presence, and exploring social media and other online marketing strategies. This new position and an increased advertising budget have allowed the marketing department to significantly expand its efforts in both traditional and nontraditional marketing methods.



Like employees at most institutions, MTI’s busy faculty and staff face challenges in finding time for long-term planning. Dealing with the day-to-day business of education can make it difficult for people to focus on the future. However, the Institute’s recent cultural changes have generated one very positive outcome - more immediate results from planning activities. An idea discussed on Monday can oftentimes be put into practice by Friday. The prompt, positive changes taking place at MTI have reenergized many overworked employees and have affirmed the clear benefits of planning activities.

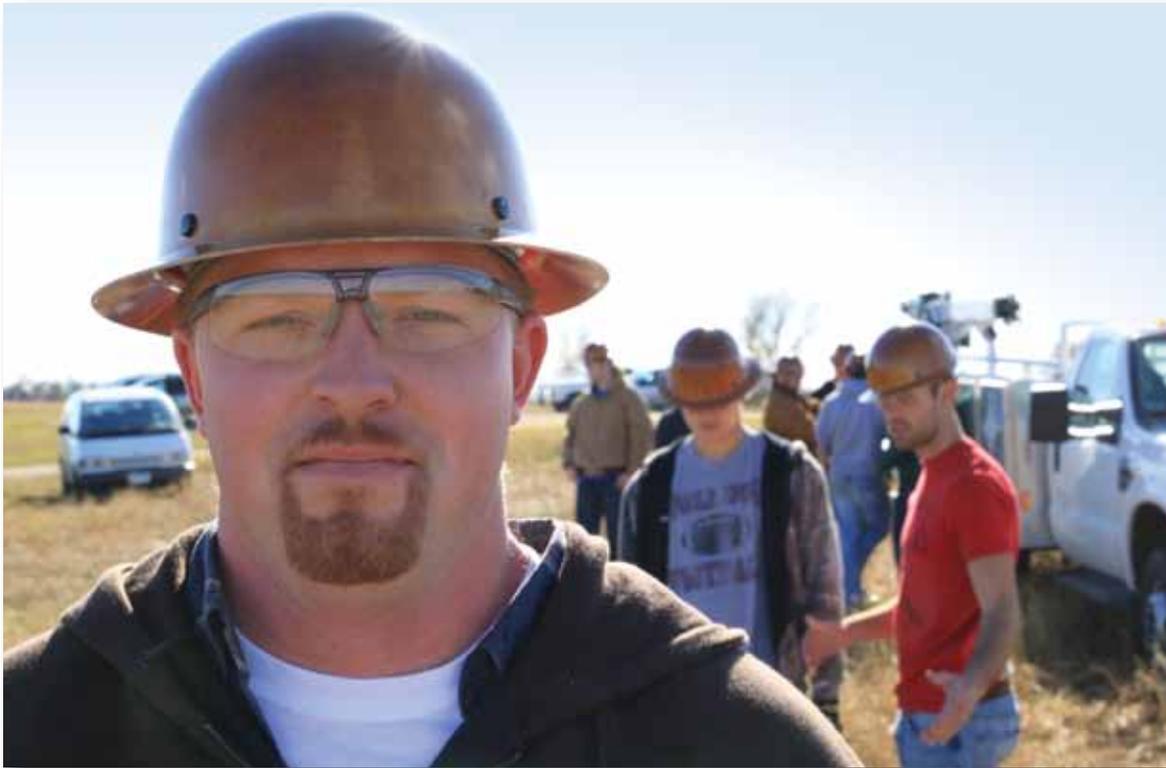
## **CONCLUSION**

Planning at MTI is aligned to its mission. Planning processes include staff, faculty, administrators, and sometimes students. Advisory committee meetings and special program summits bring in industry experts to assist with planning. In every case, it is planning with a purpose – to move MTI and its technical programs forward, assuring career success for our current and future students.



Chapter Five

# CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING



*Mitchell Technical Institute provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.*

**MIT**



## CORE COMPONENT 3A

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*The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.*

MTI has made significant progress during the self-study process in identifying and assessing its goals for student learning. Faculty develop learning outcomes with input from business and industry sources to assure that graduates are well trained and ready to meet workforce demands. Program advisory boards are asked to review outcomes and competencies as a standard meeting agenda item. The Assessment Committee has been instrumental in improving this process through the development of an updated plan for program assessment.



### MTI ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The Assessment Committee oversees the development, implementation, and review of the institutional effectiveness and program assessment plans. This committee created a new Annual Program Assessment Review form (Resource 5.1), which was introduced in fall 2009 and implemented in all programs during the 2009-10 school year. This program review process was designed to incorporate meaningful and manageable measurements of program effectiveness and student learning. It also provides a strong link with advisory committees and is aligned with the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and South Dakota's program continuation review standards.

Assessment committee members met with instructors in small groups each month to systematically work through the annual review process and procedures for the first time. Materials were developed to help build understanding of assessment and to provide guidance through the new process. Electronic program portfolios were created on a SharePoint network drive where data and documentation relevant to the review is kept updated and archived.

As part of this effort, the committee worked to give instructors in all programs a clearer understanding of assessment, including how to identify and articulate student learning outcomes that make assessment possible. In the past, many programs had identified competencies, but these were not always directly tied to assessment nor articulated for students. The Annual Program Assessment Review now requires faculty to regularly review each program's student learning outcomes to assure that they "meet industry and community trends and support the mission of Mitchell Technical Institute." Faculty are encouraged to consider input from students and advisory committees in this process.

Each program has now identified specific outcomes – six to eight broad statements that describe the skills and abilities that learners develop through completion of the program. Program outcomes are included on each program's website page. In addition, each program has identified competencies, or major skills and knowledge, which drive the development of courses, lesson plans, and assessment activities. These competencies are listed on the syllabi used within each program so that expectations are clearly articulated to students. The annual review also assures that all syllabi in each program include the course competencies and that these competencies are reviewed and updated. Several programs provide student handbooks which list the competencies mastered in the program as well (Resource 5.2).

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The Annual Program Assessment Review includes direct and indirect measures of program effectiveness and student learning. Program faculty complete the review by analyzing assessment results for each measure and planning for improvements when benchmarks are not met. Direct measures include certifications, internships, and course-level assessments. Faculty consider these assessment results and determine changes needed to assure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.



Indirect measures are also used for assessment of program effectiveness. These measures include enrollment, retention, completion, and placement rates; satisfaction surveys from employers, alumni and current students; professional development activities; and advisory committee recommendations.

Faculty completed the first cycle of assessment and program review in spring 2010. In a survey conducted at that time, 96% of employees agreed that the MTI assessment plan supports effective teaching and student learning (Resource 5.3). The 2010-11 review cycle will conclude by January 2011, allowing assessment to guide planning and budget requests.

## **WORLDWIDE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN SYSTEM (WIDS)**

MTI purchased the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) in 2009 to provide a standard curriculum design framework and to help the Institute better document program and course outcomes and assessments. Implementation began in July 2010, when 20 faculty and staff members were trained in program and course design using WIDS during a five-day, on-campus workshop facilitated by a consultant. Workshop participants were able to use up to five paid flex days to complete the training and work on their program and course design.

With these faculty and staff trained and using WIDS, our goal is to have all MTI instructors trained and using the system in the next two years, so that all curricula are prepared via this method. This will allow MTI to accurately document the connections between institutional, program, and course level learning outcomes and to better communicate performance expectations to learners, advisory boards, and other stakeholders. A curriculum director was hired this year to support this process.

## **INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

During its study of this core component in fall 2008, Criterion Team #3 noted that MTI has learning outcomes at the lesson, course, and program levels, but the only institutional-level requirement the team could find was the 2.0 GPA required for graduation. They recommended that institutional learning objectives be established.

The MTI Assessment Committee accepted this assignment and subsequently developed a list of six core abilities, or foundational learning outcomes, that articulate skills and attitudes students must possess to become productive members of the workforce and lifelong learners prepared to grow in their chosen professions. These outcomes give MTI a solid base on which to build an effective and meaningful institutional effectiveness plan. (See page 46 for a discussion of the MTI Institutional Effectiveness Plan.) Faculty are encouraged to integrate MTI's institutional outcomes within the curriculum used in their technical courses. Assessment of the outcomes is facilitated by six rubrics developed by General Education instructors and the Assessment Committee. Instructors are beginning to use these rubrics for course assessment, and the institutional research coordinator uses rubric scores for MTI's institutional effectiveness project (Resource 5.4).

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Instructors use a variety of assessment processes and tools to measure student achievement of learning outcomes. The Annual Program Assessment Review includes a measure for program assessment with this stated benchmark: “Instructors in the program will a) use a variety of assessment instruments and tools; b) assess identified program objectives and competencies; and c) include assessment of higher level thinking skills, such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.” In a 2009 survey, faculty were nearly unanimous in their belief that assessment activities in their programs provide evidence of student learning (Resource 5.5). By its very nature, technical education encourages authentic assessment of student mastery of competencies, as indicated by the following sampling of assessment activities at MTI.



- Many programs incorporate national certification tests or requirements into their programs to verify student achievement of program outcomes (Resource 5.6).
- Business Law students use case studies to apply concepts learned in the class to real-life situations. They also participate in a mock trial where each student takes on a specific role in the trial to demonstrate and apply their understanding of the U.S. judicial system.
- Architectural Design and Building Construction students develop a floor plan for a house which they must correctly draw to dimensions. They determine the required building materials, costs, and construction time based upon their plan, and the students then build the house according to the plan.
- Students in the Automation Controls/SCADA program develop lab projects that incorporate programming and controls in real-life simulations, such as water treatment, railway transportation, manufacturing, and utilities.
- Students in the Office Technology Specialist program demonstrate proficiency of production software by completing assigned projects. For example, they use Expression Web and Dreamweaver software to build a functioning website; this project also requires students to write and use HTML code in the website.
- Labs require Power Sports students to apply their knowledge by diagnosing a mechanical problem within a limited amount of time.
- Power Line students are assessed on their pole climbing using a rubric identifying mastery of 14 skills, including safety, operation of equipment, use of knots and rigging, and movement on the pole.
- Satellite Communications students troubleshoot instructor-designed problems and day-to-day breakdowns to demonstrate their mastery of course and program competencies.
- Simulations in the Radiologic Technology program are used to assess students' problem-solving skills and adaptations to unusual situations. Coursework includes the use of essays and short answers to evaluate student comprehension.

## COMMUNICATING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Mitchell Technical Institute's assessment results are communicated to state and federal government agencies, advisory committees, program accreditation bodies, and the public. Internally, all results gathered through the Annual Program Assessment Review are maintained on our SharePoint drive where the Assessment Committee, division heads, administrators, and program instructors can view and analyze results. Each program's annual review is also available to the public on the program's website page, and highlights are shared in the Annual Assessment Report (Resource 5.7). Documentation of the institutional effectiveness plan's assessment activities (rubric project) is also available internally on SharePoint and shared publicly in the annual report.



MTI has a dedicated Assessment page on its website ([www.mitchelltech.edu/aboutus/assessment](http://www.mitchelltech.edu/aboutus/assessment)) that describes assessment activities and provides our Annual Assessment Report. Recent survey results are also available as downloadable Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files.

## CONCLUSION

MTI has progressed significantly in creating a culture of assessment over the past three years of the self-study. We have strengthened internal awareness and comprehension of the purposes of assessment and have enhanced formal processes and procedures for documenting, using, and reporting assessment results. Faculty surveys in 2009 and 2010 found widespread support for assessment at MTI. An active and enthusiastic Assessment Committee and a fulltime institutional research coordinator have provided support for this project, although instructors still view workloads and time limits as a barrier.

## CORE COMPONENT 3B

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*The organization values and supports effective teaching.*

As its mission statement affirms, “MTI recruits, develops and invests in skilled, dedicated, and student-oriented faculty and staff.” The Institute values and supports effective teaching by assuring that faculty are qualified, regularly evaluated, and encouraged to engage in professional development activities. This support is further demonstrated by involving instructors in program improvement and providing opportunities for technical and instructional support and professional development.



Criterion Team #3 found ample evidence of MTI’s commitment to teaching excellence. Curricular content is created by faculty and shaped by input from industry to remain up to date. Instructors are qualified and kept current in their instructional fields. They belong to professional organizations and receive ongoing training and feedback to sharpen their teaching skills. An ongoing process of assessment assures instructional quality.

The team also found that the Institute is quick to adopt innovative learning practices that save time and money and enhance student education. MTI’s training and teaching processes are not static; they are responsive to industry demands and students’ needs. The result is a better prepared, more highly trained graduate workforce. Collaboration is encouraged among instructors, particularly within divisions.

Faculty surveyed in 2009 affirmed MTI’s commitment to supporting and encouraging teaching excellence.

- 95.6% agree that faculty are given responsibility for curriculum development and modifications.
- 73.3% agree that the current instructor evaluation process effectively leads to improved teaching.
- 82.2% agree that MTI ensures access to resources necessary to support learning and teaching.
- 91.1% agree that the organization supports students, staff, and faculty in using technology effectively.
- 86.7% agree that positive work expectations are communicated to faculty.

The fall 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory’s “Instructional Effectiveness” scale assesses the students’ academic experience by focusing on measures of faculty effectiveness in and outside the classroom, course content, and sufficiency of course offerings. In this important scale, MTI scores significantly higher than the national community college comparison group (Resource 5.8).

## QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS

South Dakota's Department of Education has set criteria for the credentialing of instructional staff at the state's four technical institutes. S.D. Administrative Rules and Regulations Chapter 24:10:45 specifies the qualifications required to teach at MTI (Resource 5.9). Instructors in technical programs can receive an initial two-year nonrenewable teaching credential from the Department of Education if they have a baccalaureate degree in the area of instruction or possess 6,000 hours of verified work experience in the related field of instruction. Technical instructors are issued a five-year teaching credential after they participate in a year-long mentoring program and complete four college credit hours in teaching methodology. All of MTI's instructors meet state requirements and possess the required postsecondary instructor credentials.



The Department of Education renews an instructor's South Dakota postsecondary credential for a five-year period upon the instructor's completion of 150 hours of professional development activities. These activities and the instructor's renewal application are first approved by MTI's credential committee. This committee evaluates and approves continuing education activities that count toward the instructor's 150 hours, based upon state guidelines.

MTI supports its instructors in their efforts to secure and renew their credentials. Support staff assists in the application process and also maintains and updates instructor files and documentation of completed professional development hours. An individual master record form for each instructor, with a record of completed hours in each category, is maintained on SharePoint in a library accessible to the instructor.

In accordance with state credentialing requirements for new instructors, veteran faculty members are assigned to serve as mentors. They observe and regularly meet with new instructors, providing advice, encouragement, and guidance throughout the new hire's first year of teaching at MTI. All participants in MTI's mentoring program meet monthly as a group to discuss issues and share strategies unique to the new teacher.

Faculty recruitment is one of the Institute's ongoing challenges. It is often difficult to convince experienced, knowledgeable personnel to leave higher paying jobs in industry to become an MTI program instructor. The economic reality is that educational organizations lack the financial resources to compete with industry salaries, especially in many of the careers for which we train. This was alleviated for two programs – Radiologic Technology and Radiation Therapy – when the local hospital board made a commitment to subsidize instructor salaries within the program. MTI will continue to seek partnerships for other programs where instructor salaries lag behind those in the industry. The updated strategic plan calls for further ways to address the issue. One step in the right direction occurred when an agreement was reached last spring between the Board of Education and Mitchell Area Technical Educators (MATE). Under this agreement, MTI is permitted to adjust salaries within a designated program when the hiring of a new instructor causes a wage disparity with current faculty members (Resource 5.10).

## INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

Mitchell Technical Institute is committed to fair, equitable training and evaluation policies for all employees. All faculty members must be evaluated at least once every two years by a supervisor. This gives the instructor an opportunity to learn about his/her strengths and weaknesses and to receive recognition or make corrections for specific behaviors. Instructors with deficiencies are placed on a plan of assistance by a supervisor.

Students evaluate their instructors each semester and also rate their educational experiences using the Noel-Levitz instrument. Students in online courses are invited to complete evaluations that are specific to distance learning courses and instructors. Results are shared with the faculty member in order to improve instruction and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Annual program assessment reviews also contribute to the evaluation process and ensure instructional quality.



Students view their instructors as qualified and effective, as evidenced by these results from student evaluations in spring 2010 (Resource 5.11).

- 96.8% agree that their instructor displays a thorough knowledge of the material being taught.
- 93.7% agree that the instructor presents information in a variety of ways.
- 95.5% agree that the instructor uses class/lab time constructively.
- 94% agree that their instructor involves students in the learning process and encourages student participation.
- 91.7% agree that the instructor offers helpful and timely feedback on assignments, projects, and exams.
- 93.8% agree that the instructor explains information effectively.
- 96.9% agree that the instructor is enthusiastic about the subject being taught.

Formal recognition of teaching excellence was initiated last year with the first-ever “Excellence in Instruction” award. The award recipient was nominated and selected by his peers for his outstanding instructional technique, program growth through recruiting efforts, extraordinary student relationships, strong ties to industry, and volunteerism, and for being a consistent role model. Each year, students also select a “Teacher of the Year;” this award is conferred by the Student Representative Board at the annual spring picnic.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mitchell Technical Institute supports and encourages professional development for instructors and staff, providing the needed time and financial support, as discussed on pages 70-71. A professional development plan is in place, giving faculty financial incentive for continuing education (Resource 5.12). The annual program assessment review encourages instructors to attend conferences and workshops and to maintain membership in professional associations. The ISC has a professional library. New faculty are also given an orientation and explanatory materials to assist them as they begin their careers at MTI.

Since last year, the institution has offered optional “flex days” – up to ten days where instructors are paid for relevant professional development activities that benefit its educational programs. Flex day activities completed by instructors in 2009-10 included curriculum development; visiting other educational institutions; attending industry and educational conferences, seminars and workshops; making contacts with industry; job shadowing; moving into new labs and classrooms; and completing technical skills courses.



MTI provides on-campus training to improve and support teaching. Workshops are given to familiarize instructors with technologies such as GradeKeeper, Microsoft Office 2007, WIDS, and WebCT. The new Jenzabar campus management system will significantly impact teaching and learning; everything from tests to homework to attendance can be easily managed with this intuitive, user-friendly platform. The Institute’s customized learning platform, MyMTI, is already used by some instructors for online course delivery, coursework management and grading, and attendance. While MyMTI provides course management technology that supports collaboration and online participation, faculty can also choose specific portlets to meet classroom needs. Options include:

- Online testing tools, with an integrated, automated grade book
- Targeted communications for sending events and tasks to student calendars and home pages
- Role-based previewing parameters for sharing course set-up and content
- Automatically populated accounts, including schedules, enrolled students and more
- A faculty bank of test questions for future exams and quizzes

Students are demanding flexible schedules, new learning methods, and a technology presence in their learning environment. MyMTI gives instructors freedom to incorporate various components into their classrooms – virtual or traditional. Instructors are just now being introduced to the new system and will be fully trained in a series of sessions planned for this spring. A fulltime staff member coordinates the campus management system and provides support to instructors on its features and use.

## CONCLUSION

Mitchell Technical Institute is staffed with qualified, dedicated, and caring instructors who are passionate about their programs and their students’ success. The institution supports and values instructors through its credential process and committee, Professional Development Plan, evaluation processes, and resources. Attracting and keeping qualified instructors will continue to challenge MTI as it struggles to compete with industry salaries available to these highly trained individuals.

## CORE COMPONENT 3C

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*The organization creates effective learning environments.*

MTI's great strength lies in its attention to students. At every step – from the strong relationships developed in the admissions process, to the instruction and advising delivered by caring faculty, to the support provided by dedicated staff throughout the Institute – our students are assisted from start to finish by individuals who genuinely care about their success. Programs, recreational activities, curriculum, and instructional resources all seek to attract, retain, and graduate students equipped to succeed in technical careers. This commitment is evidenced in the mission statement and these primary purpose statements:



- MTI provides high-quality Associate of Applied Science degree and diploma programs which prepare students for occupational success.
- MTI seeks and values a diverse student population, responds to the unique needs of individuals, and recognizes the dignity and worth of all people.
- MTI commits to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness through a system of assessment and continuous review.
- MTI builds student community through social and recreational activities, counseling support, and a student government structure administered through an organized student services office.

**Admissions** - A student's introduction to MTI generally begins with the admissions process. Our Admissions staff builds relationships with prospective students through campus tours, annual campus Exploration Days, high school visits, and frequent follow-up contacts via mail, email, and telephone. Students are guided through entrance counseling and transcript review to develop an attitude that they can succeed; they are assisted in choosing a major and registering for classes.

MTI accepts applicants into educational programs "in which they demonstrate a reasonable prospect for success" (2010-2012 General Catalog, page 5). As further outlined in the catalog, they must meet institutional admissions requirements, including minimum entrance test scores; each program has also established specific requirements to enhance a student's probability of academic success in that program.

**Registration** - Summer registration is held in June; at these sessions, students meet instructors and receive information relevant to success at MTI. They are introduced to our technology resources and given log-in and email account information so they can access their email and receive information over the summer. Students also complete the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory during registration. CSI results identify at risk students early so that they can receive prompt assistance and support to minimize the chance of falling behind in coursework or attendance. The results are also shared with each student's advisor.

**Financial Aid** - Over 80% of MTI's students received federal financial aid last year. The Institute has a very busy Financial Aid office which assists students through the entire process of securing financial aid. Office staff communicate with all students through email and letters, and they are available to give assistance and answer questions. The Financial Aid office sends out award letters, processes loan requests and Pell grants, and administers the federal work study program. Students applying for loans for the first time are required to complete entrance counseling online.

Chapter Five  
Criterion Three:  
Student Learning  
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The financial aid coordinator visits graduating students before the end of the year for exit counseling. Students are given information about loans and payments, how much they owe, and what they can expect their monthly payments to be. They sign a form indicating that they have received this counseling and understand their obligation to repay their loans. Historically, MTI's student loan default rate has been low (most recently 4.7% in 2008).



**New Student Orientation** - Orientation activities are held for new students the first week of classes. Activities include meetings with program instructors and classmates, information sessions, special social activities in the evenings, and food. A particular challenge at MTI is promoting the interaction across programs. Students frequently spend entire school days in classes made up of students in their same academic program.

Giving them opportunities to meet and socialize with peers in other programs remains a challenge. The past two years MTI has used new student orientation as an opportunity to facilitate that interaction by including activities that are integrated across programs. Surveys have shown that what students like best about orientation is the opportunity to meet other students – although, ironically, they don't give high marks to the games and activities MTI creates to accomplish this (Resource 5.13).

**Student Success Course** – Beginning with the 2009-10 academic year, MTI has required all entering, first-year students to take and complete a one-credit student success course. This course includes weekly units specifically tailored to study skills, strategies, and attitudes necessary for success in college (Resource 5.14). We do not yet know whether the course is having an impact; some are convinced that it should not be required of all students. These discussions will continue.

**Developmental Courses** - To be accepted at MTI, applicants must meet minimum entrance test scores. Depending on these scores, some students may be accepted, but required to complete preparatory courses in English or math. Although these courses do not meet the Institute's general education requirements, they allow students to strengthen their skills and to prepare them for success in the required English and math courses.

**Academic Advising** – Each first-year student is assigned an academic advisor; they meet at least once per semester to insure that the student completes the required coursework to graduate within the timeframe established for the program. A half day is set aside in the calendar when classes are cancelled, allowing one-on-one advising sessions to be scheduled. An advising packet is prepared for each student with a checklist of relevant information for the advisor to discuss with the student (Resource 5.15). Advising is designed to give students guidance and support in making good academic decisions. The 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory highlighted advising as one of MTI's strengths.

**Tutoring/Study Groups** - Tutoring is available to MTI students at no cost through the ISC. Regular tutoring sessions are held throughout the week for general education classes, such as math, English, and computer applications. Tutors are also available for courses in advanced computers, electrical construction, culinary, accounting, radiologic technology, satellite communications and more. These content area tutors will arrange to meet with students on a one-to-one basis as need arises. Tutoring programs are widely publicized via email, flyers, and other media. Study groups are also promoted as a means to assure student success. Mostly self-initiated, study groups are sometimes made mandatory for a class.

**Technologies** – To accommodate special needs, MTI provides an oversized computer monitor and a Kurzweil scanning program that reads textbooks to students with reading difficulties. In addition to technologies that support individual learners, MTI employs technologies to enhance communication and the overall learning environment. Laptops are provided for most instructors, and computers are available for student use at all locations. LCD projectors and network access are available in most classrooms; additional classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards. Nine programs require student-purchased laptops that provide technology and software utilized by employees in the field. The new MTECH system ensures a safer environment by facilitating rapid contact in emergency situations, and electronic bulletin boards help educate students about academic opportunities, tutoring, and special events.



**Distance Learning** – Online courses provide an alternate way of learning for the millennial student. Not all students desire online learning; however, MTI provides that option to students who may not otherwise be able to take certain needed courses. Besides learning course content, students who engage in online learning develop additional skills such as time management, self-discipline, and critical thinking. MTI currently offers 8-10 online or hybrid courses each semester, but plans are underway to increase our online offerings in the future.

**Retention Plan/Coordinator** – MTI devotes considerable attention and resources toward keeping students enrolled in school and on track to graduation. An annual retention plan is developed under the direction of the vice president for academic affairs. Key points of the 2009 retention plan included hiring a retention coordinator, implementing a student success course, requiring the Noel-Levitz CSI for all incoming freshmen, and providing increased extra-curricular activities and organizations (Resource 5.16). A retention coordinator was hired in fall 2010; this individual works with the learning services coordinator to oversee advising, student activities, and counseling for students with academic, attendance, or other problems. Her responsibilities also include the student success course, new student orientation, the early alert program, CSI data analysis, student exit interviews, and development of the retention plan.

**Disabilities/Learning Services Coordinator** – Students with identified disabilities receive appropriate accommodations coordinated by the learning services coordinator. This staff member directs services for students requiring educational assistance and develops academic plans for students with disabilities as well as students on academic probation. She also is available for personal counseling and will refer students to professional counseling services when warranted.

**Student Activities** – A wide variety of activities are held throughout the year to build collegiality among students. Under the direction of the Student Representative Board, activities in the past year included dances, bowling, game shows, poker nights, grocery bingo, a dodgeball tournament, a magician show, picnic, Christmas party, and much more. Many co-curricular activities are also available through MTI's programs. For example, Information Systems Technology students compete in the TigerNet Challenge; SCADA students compete at the International Society of Automation national conference; Power Line students hosted and competed last spring in a college lineman rodeo; Radiologic Technology students present research projects at the South Dakota Society of Radiologic Technologists; Telecommunications students hosted the "Telecom Technician Challenge" this fall; and Culinary Arts students prepare entries for the state soybean cook-off. MTI has a local Student Veterans Organization chapter which supports students who are veterans or current members of the armed services. SkillsUSA is open to all MTI students, providing opportunities for leadership development and skills contests at the state and national level. Additional extracurricular activities include the Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization, the Technology Club, the Rodeo Club, and a variety of intramural sports.

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**Career Services** – MTI’s career services coordinator provides assistance for students seeking part-time jobs while attending school. The coordinator also helps graduates connect with potential employers, assists with resume writing and job interview skills, and organizes a campus job fair. Several workshops and job seeking-related activities are also planned each year.

## CONCLUSION



It is abundantly clear that MTI provides an environment that is supportive and effective. High retention and graduation rates and student satisfaction assessment results support this claim. Institutional strengths identified by Noel-Levitz in 2008 (Table 5.1), for example, clearly depict an institution that is focused on students and their successful experience at MTI.

The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.	5.85*
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.	6.18
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.	6.01
My academic advisor is approachable.	6.09
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	5.94
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	5.95
Program requirements are clear and reasonable.	5.93
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.	5.83
Faculty care about me as an individual.	5.83
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts	5.88
Administrators are approachable to students.	5.84
The campus staff are caring and helpful.	5.87

Fall 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory - Strategic Planning Overview  
\*Scores are out of a possible 7.00

Furthermore, the Institute utilizes assessment, constituent feedback, and technologies to continually improve its curricula, learning environment, and student services. MTI provides services and resources that effectively deliver education to all learners.

As MTI grows, it must take care to maintain its high level of personal customer service. A split campus has required creative solutions to meet the needs of students at both locations. The ISC coordinator has provided reading material and tutoring services at the South Campus, and members of the Student Services office have staffed an office at the Technology Center on a rotating basis. Students and staff have adjusted well to the split campus, and current students for the most part have not known it any other way.

Outreach programs at Yankton, Huron, and Sinte Gleska University are of special concern. MTI’s outreach coordinator wears many hats and does a commendable job serving as advisor, registrar, counselor, and retention coordinator for these students. However, we recognize that these students do not receive the same level of services and opportunities as on-campus students, and the Institute must better address this responsibility.

## CORE COMPONENT 3D

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*The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.*

Mitchell Technical Institute's general and program-specific learning resources give students, faculty, and staff the tools they need to thrive in today's ever-changing workforce. Continued evaluation, feedback, and improvements assure the strongest possible educational experiences for students. MTI's strong partnerships with business and industry, as well as educational and other networks, help us deliver the latest research and innovations to our students.



### EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING LABS

As a technical institute, MTI recognizes the need to provide students with opportunities to train on the equipment and technology currently utilized in the field for which the students are preparing to work. Whether the equipment is electronic medical records (EMR) software or a 280-foot tall wind turbine tower, our students are better served when they can train on the same equipment they will use on the job. Not surprisingly, providing the necessary equipment is an ongoing challenge. It takes consistent effort on the part of instructors, administrators, and program advisory committees to find unique, creative ways to acquire or purchase the training equipment needed for effective hands-on learning.

- A grant from the state of South Dakota allowed MTI to purchase a mobile satellite truck in 2002. This has given students real-world experience in providing a satellite uplink for such events as news coverage of high profile political campaigns, state high school sports broadcasts, and national news events in this region.
- The Telecommunications program has benefitted from a recent \$900,000 grant for equipment purchases and upgrades. Our faculty will receive training from the equipment vendors and can in turn provide training to members of the telecommunications industry and our students.
- The equipment in the Radiologic Technology lab was obtained through the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) funding in 2005. The lab is equipped with a Siemens Multix table and overhead system and computed radiography from Fuji. Computed radiography, which captures an image in digital format without the use of a darkroom or caustic chemicals, is the new industry standard. This allows students to train on current equipment. The lab also includes a full complement of x-ray accessories like those used in the clinical setting.
- In 2009, MTI received a Community-Based Job Training Grant of nearly \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. This grant allowed MTI to purchase needed trainers for the new Wind Turbine Technology (WTT) program and newer vehicles and equipment for expanded Power Line and Propane and Natural Gas programs. Through the grant, we were able to train WTT instructors and to develop an outreach program for a diploma wind technology program for Native American students in western South Dakota.
- A grant secured in fall 2010 will allow MTI to purchase its own wind turbine at the Crow Lake wind site being developed by Basin Electric near White Lake, SD. The grant money will be combined with funds from the South Dakota GOED, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, General Electric, and MTI to cover the entire cost of the turbine, which will be used in training WTT students.

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Pursuing grants has been a major strategy to meet the need for up-to-date trainers and equipment. In the past year, grants have also allowed MTI to purchase geothermal and solar trainers to instruct Heating and Cooling Technology students on alternative energy sources, as well as equipment to augment precision farming and animal science courses in the Agricultural Technology program. Valued industry partners have helped the Institute provide costly equipment, supplies, and technical training for our programs, instructors and students. These partnerships are further discussed on pages 102-103.



Most MTI programs have specialized labs with appropriate space, equipment, simulators, and trainers to enhance learning and provide students with real-world experience.

- The 85-acre Agricultural Technology land lab gives students experience in all areas of the farming operation: budgeting, planning, planting, spraying, fertilizing, harvesting, and marketing.
- Each year, students in the Power Sports Technology program build a custom motorcycle in the lab. A dynamometer allows students to complete horsepower and operational checks and to tune and modify the motorcycle's fuel injection without having to take it on the road. The program's 1,800 square foot marine lab includes a 6,000-gallon indoor test tank that allows students to test inboard and outboard motors in a controlled lab setting.
- The Propane and Natural Gas Technologies program has indoor and outdoor labs for real-world training. The students train outdoors on a natural gas system which uses compressed air to simulate gas distribution. The field also features an actual working LP bulk plant system. Students learn how to transfer product, evacuate and flare containers, and install and maintain a residential distribution system. They also learn how to safely operate equipment used in the industry, such as backhoes, trenchers, and horizontal directional drilling equipment.
- Culinary students master techniques of food preparation, sanitation, and service in the program's three working kitchens, bakery, cafeteria, and Oak Room restaurant. The Oak Room provides a fine dining experience open to the public by reservation. Students operate all aspects of the restaurant, from service and food preparation to receiving final payment.
- Each year students in the Architectural Design and Building Construction program construct a 1,600-sq. foot home indoors in the 4,000-sq. foot ADBC shop. Second-year students build a student-designed three-bedroom house on a lot in the Mitchell community.
- Electrical Construction and Maintenance students get hands-on wiring experience from almost their first day in the program. In 2009 the department constructed a first-year wiring lab with double the square footage of its existing labs.

## FACILITIES

Well-planned facilities are essential for optimal learning, and MTI has made exciting strides in this area, providing classrooms and labs designed especially for respective programs. In 2002, the Technology Center was constructed at the south location with 35,163 square feet of space, featuring classrooms, labs, offices, a spacious amphitheatre, and corporate education training classrooms and computer labs. The Satellite Communications and Telecommunications programs have been located at the Technology Center since spring 2003. An expansion in 2009 increased the building's square footage by 15,594 square feet, providing relocation space for four additional programs, allowing for better collaboration and resource sharing among similar programs in the Engineering Division. The 39,989-square foot Energy Training Center was also constructed in 2009. With its unique indoor training ground, this facility houses energy programs and allows for year-round training regardless of the weather. Classrooms in both buildings are equipped with LCD projectors, docking stations, data networking, and audio and visual cabling. Select classrooms also have interactive light board technologies. Labs provide necessary infrastructure to support the unique training taking place in classes such as data cabling and wireless communications (in the SCADA program) and gas installation and gas operations and maintenance (in the Propane and Natural Gas program). In addition, we have installed electronic displays in the hallways and entryways of all buildings to provide important information and announcements, including emergency announcements, for students and staff.



Underway now is the construction of a third building at the south campus. Starting in fall 2011, this 70,539-square foot building will house Student Services, Admissions, additional administrative offices, the Culinary Arts Academy, and all six health programs. The bookstore and Instructional Services Center (ISC) will be moved to this new building, and most general education courses will be taught here as well. Like the Technology Center and Energy Training Center, the new building will provide infrastructure that meets the differing needs of its programs. Classrooms will also be equipped with LCD projectors, docking stations, data networking, and audio and visual cabling. The five programs that will remain at the north campus buildings are our construction and agricultural programs and Power Sports. Plans are being drawn now for a building to house these programs, all of which need large lab spaces; this facility will be constructed in the near future to facilitate long-term growth. The next step is to procure bonding through the Department of Education. The four state technical institutes are working together to prepare a convincing argument for the state legislature to raise its current ceiling on bonding capacity. If that happens, MTI is well on its way to building the final structure and completing the migration to a single campus – an important step in planning for the future.

## INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES CENTER

MTI's Instructional Services Center serves students, faculty, and staff with a library of nearly 3,000 books, 40 national magazines, and seven regional newspapers. Thousands of additional titles and periodicals are available through a partnership with the Dakota Wesleyan University library and the Mitchell Public Library, and interlibrary loan services are available from hundreds of libraries nationwide upon request. The ISC's 23 lab computers provide access to numerous Internet academic research databases via MTI's membership in the South Dakota Library Network. Laptop computers are also available for instructor checkout to facilitate classroom instruction anywhere on campus. Free tutoring services are provided in all general education subjects, with additional topics available as requested.

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While the size of the ISC may warrant some concern, student surveys show strong satisfaction with its resources and services. The 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory showed high marks for student satisfaction in regard to adequacy of MTI's library resources, computer labs, and tutoring services.

## ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND TEACHING



- MTI gives faculty and students effective equipment and training for technology use. Instructors are provided with laptops, and recent training areas have included Technology for Teaching and Learning (TTL) classes and courses in the use of the MyMTI learning management system and Microsoft Office 2007. Students receive technology training in orientation sessions and in their individual program areas. All students are required to take CIS 105, where they learn the basics of using a computer, Office 2007 applications, and the Internet. The ISC computer lab is open until 6:00 p.m. most days to give students access to computers and the Internet.
- Adequate staffing and support is provided for learning resources. In program areas, labs and classrooms are staffed appropriately, and instructor credentials must be current. The ISC's fulltime staff member assists students with research, tutoring, circulation, and technology, and tutors assist with coursework. Adaptive learning resources (including an oversized monitor and the Kurzweil text-reading program) are also housed here.
- MTI regularly evaluates the use and effectiveness of its learning resources. Labs and clinical experiences have stated objectives and measured and assessed outcomes. Program lab sites are continually evaluated by students and faculty. Use of ISC resources is evaluated via the Noel-Levitz SSI tool, an annual ISC survey, and statistical data for circulation, laptop use, and tutoring.
- Industry-based advisory board members work with faculty to suggest program additions and changes. Ineffective learning resources are improved or replaced. For example, MTI no longer offers a class in peripherals because the latest technology employs USB connections. Clinical sites which offer too few lab tests have been dropped in favor of those that provide more numerous experiences for students.
- MTI's educational resources benefit from strong partnerships and openness to innovation. Collaboration with business and industry partners assures that instructors are prepared and opens new avenues for student learning. Clinical externships and business internships, developed from industry partnerships, are vital to program success. Conferences, field trips, seminars, tours, and job-shadowing experiences give students needed insights to help them excel in their chosen field.

## CONCLUSION

Technical education by its very nature is hands-on, performance-based education and therefore demands current, relevant equipment and facilities. Providing adequate facilities and equipment is a continuing challenge for technical colleges, and MTI is no exception. The 2010 staff survey found that only 76% believed that facilities and equipment at MTI meet the needs of student learning. A 2010 survey of advisory committee members was more encouraging; over 90% of these industry representatives felt that MTI's facilities, equipment and technology are adequate to meet the training and educational objectives of the respective program (Resource 5.17).

MTI has made enormous progress in updating its facilities through its ambitious construction project at the South Campus. When the last building is completed (hopefully in the next three years), we believe that our students will have access to the finest training facilities available anywhere. Mitchell Technical Institute will continue to prioritize its budget, develop partnerships, and pursue grants to maintain up-to-date training facilities and equipment to stay abreast of evolving workplace technologies.





Chapter Six

# CRITERION FOUR: KNOWLEDGE FOR LIFE



*Mitchell Technical Institute promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.*



## CORE COMPONENT 4A

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*The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.*

MTI's commitment to lifelong learning is evident by our mission's primary purpose statements:

- MTI provides high-quality Associate of Applied Science degree and diploma programs which prepare students for occupational success.
- MTI prepares graduates for lifelong learning through general education courses that support technical education and build skills in technology, communication, professionalism, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability.
- MTI provides customized training, seminars, workshops, courses, and consulting services to business, industry, and the community.



As a technical institute, MTI of necessity pays close attention to the changing world in which our graduates will live and work. We know that as technology continues to evolve, our programs must evolve, which means that instructors need to continually pursue additional training, certifications, and experience in the industry. One recent example is the “green” technology initiative researched and adopted by our construction division. The instructors developed new skills and expertise in environmentally-friendly building practices; two instructors are now Certified Green Professionals and Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Raters. MTI can now offer the only Energy Star-certified building and construction training program in South Dakota.

Instructors maintain memberships in professional organizations and cultivate strong ties with industry leaders, helping them to stay current with industry developments. Instructors never stop learning, and this commitment to lifelong learning is modeled for students and emphasized in the classroom. Our students are encouraged and often required to pursue program-related certifications and to join professional organizations. Extra-curricular activities like SkillsUSA, the Postsecondary Agriculture Student Organization, the Technology Club, and the Student Representative Board give participants leadership and learning opportunities that will benefit them throughout their careers. These, as well as special seminars held for students, develop the skills and attitudes necessary to continue learning long after they leave MTI.

In addition, MTI has articulation agreements with high schools (Resource 6.1) and post secondary institutions (Resource 6.2), offering high school students a smooth transition into postsecondary education and opportunities for graduates to earn advanced degrees after they leave the Institute. We also have dual enrollment opportunities for high school students and allow non-degree students to take courses at MTI. Marvelous Meaningful Monthly Math is a program the Institute co-sponsors to highlight the importance of math for career success. Math problems are emailed each month to teachers at participating high schools nationwide and then distributed to students. Monthly prizes are given by random drawing to students who send in their solutions.

Corporate Education activities also show a commitment to lifelong learning for alumni, staff, students, and the community at large. The department provides customized training, continuing education opportunities, community education courses, and applicant-based training that meets training and continuing education needs for many sectors of South Dakota's workforce. (See pages 100-101 for more information about Corporate Education.)

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Faculty professional growth is attained through membership in professional organizations, attending workshops and seminars, and completing college classes. Together, these activities assure that instructors are current in technical skills and knowledge vital to our graduates' career success. MTI faculty hold membership in state and national associations affiliated with their respective technical areas. Many also belong to the Association for Career and Technical Educators.



Faculty members are encouraged to attend at least one professional seminar or workshop related to their field of instruction each year. The vice president for academic affairs monitors and evaluates funding requests for professional development and plans on-campus activities as appropriate. Faculty members are also encouraged to find ways to expose students to industry through a variety of means: speakers on campus, field trips, conferences, trade show attendance, etc. Many faculty members take students on yearly field trips to job sites or regional metropolitan areas like Minneapolis, Sioux Falls, Denver, or Omaha to gain first-hand knowledge of an industry or service.

MTI offers financial reimbursement for attending the annual conferences of the South Dakota Career and Technical Educators and the American Careers and Technical Educators. Additionally, the Office of Academic Affairs provides funds for faculty members to grow in their areas of instruction. (See Table 6.1.) Funds can be used to pay for instructor attendance at workshops, seminars, classes, or other educational activities. However, the Criterion #4 team noted that this particular funding line item had not increased for a number of years. They also noted that even available funds are not always used, because faculty often opt to pay for professional development activities themselves to qualify for pay raises through MTI's Professional Development Plan (Resource 6.3).

The President's Office budget can be used by the president to send employees for trainings beneficial to the institution. Last year, these funds were used to send employees to a conference on the new student management system, a telephone system training, and a farm business management workshop and to train two instructors to become HERS trainers. The Program Research budget provides stipends to faculty members who wish to devote time to researching and developing curriculum improvement plans.

**Table 6.1  
MTI Professional Development Budget**

	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
Academic Affairs Office Budget	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
President's Office Budget	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$28,500	\$27,500
Program Research Budget	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>	<b>\$58,500</b>	<b>\$57,500</b>

In a 2009 survey, 80% of MTI administrators, faculty and staff agreed that “professional development and training opportunities are available and encouraged.” One possible explanation for this finding is that the professional development plan currently in place applies to instructors only. The self-study team assigned to Criterion #4 identified this as a challenge, pointing out that staff at MTI have fewer obvious opportunities and incentives to pursue additional learning.

Employees at Mitchell Technical Institute are granted professional leave for attendance at conventions, institutes, workshops, or other professional opportunities. Employees receive compensation for these days according to applicable contracts and negotiated agreements. The institution also supports continuing education and professional development for faculty through its flex days program (Resource 6.4). In its first year (2009-10) of providing flex days, approximately \$170,000 was paid in salaries and benefits to instructors who used the days to develop curriculum, attend professional conferences, job shadow in industry, and participate in educational workshops.



Upon the retirement of MTI’s former president, Chris Paustian, the MTI Foundation established the Chris and Sandi Paustian Endowment Fund. When fully funded, this endowment will provide funds each year for staff development to help ensure that MTI has a well-trained staff. The Foundation Office will administer the awarding of funds.

In-service activities are also initiated in a variety of ways: through management team meetings, credential requirements, and faculty request. Several in-service days are scheduled each year with a variety of activities planned to assist faculty and staff to better serve students and fulfill their job responsibilities.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Customer Service			x	x
Gradekeeper	x	x	x	x
Jenzabar Learning Management System				x
Microsoft Office 2007			x	
Microsoft Office Communicator 2007			x	
OSHA-10 Safety				x
Sexual Harassment	x	x	x	x
Stress Management/Wellness	x			
WIDS				x

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Board of Education allows MTI employees, their spouses, and legally dependent children to attend community, non-credit classes at no charge whenever sufficient paying students have enrolled to justify holding the respective classes. In addition, there are tuition waivers for all full-time employees to attend MTI courses. (Tuition is discounted 75% for employees' dependents or spouses who become full-time students at MTI.) These benefits demonstrate the district's commitment to lifelong learning for employees and to helping instructors attain their Associate of Applied Science degrees.



MTI instructors are required by the state to complete 150 hours of professional development activities every five years to retain their teaching credentials. Hours completed are also tied to advancement on the pay scale. The institution's Professional Development Plan (PDP) allows for additional compensation as instructors accumulate and document professional development activities through workshops, seminars, work experience, or college courses. Instructors who advance their degrees receive a salary increase based on the plan.

## RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The Institute recognizes achievements through news releases, newsletters, and special recognition events.

- A president's list released to statewide newspapers recognizes students who have achieved a 3.5 or higher grade point average in the most recent semester.
- Noteworthy employee and student achievements are celebrated by publicizing the details in the Tech Trek and Star Tech (for alumni) publications, local newspapers, and the MTI Insights newsletter and on the MTI website.
- Commencement exercises are held at the Corn Palace in Mitchell each May. Members of the Mitchell Board of Education are given the honor of awarding degrees and diplomas to graduates. Students graduating with high honors (3.75-4.00 GPA) and honors (3.50-3.74 GPA) receive special recognition in the program.
- One student from each program is selected to receive the Spirit of MTI award. These awards are announced at graduation.
- A Student Recognition Event is held each spring in conjunction with graduation to honor student recipients of scholarships, awards, certifications, and contests. Members of Who's Who Among America's College and University Students are announced at this time.
- MTI has created two annual awards to recognize the achievements and contributions of faculty and staff. Peers nominate and select the recipients of the Excellence in Instruction Award and the Above and Beyond Award.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

At Mitchell Technical Institute, academic freedom is safeguarded through approved board policy. MTI Policy #934, Academic Freedom, states that faculty members “have both the right and obligation to adequately investigate and present their students with the available information to a given question,” while at the same time they are to “make responsible decisions” regarding grading, course matter, and the manner of teaching (Resource 6.5). Faculty members are furthermore able to freely express themselves outside of the classroom or institution without fear of institutional censorship or discipline and to recognize the responsibility they have to clearly indicate that they are “communicating as individual citizens and not as institutional spokespersons.” This policy is included verbatim in the personnel handbook (Resource 6.6).



Students are also afforded freedom of inquiry and expression. The student handbook (page 8) outlines that students have the right to expect classes conducted under certain provisions:

- Faculty will strive to generate respect and understanding for academic freedom by students and at the same time protect students from irrelevant and trivial interruptions or diversions.
- Faculty will insure students the right to raise relevant issues, doubts, or alternative opinions during classroom discussion without concern for academic sanctions.
- Students who publish student publications have the right to be free from censorship. However, students who publish such documents must observe the recognized canons of responsible journalism, including the avoidance of libel, indecency, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, and the techniques of harassment and innuendo.

## CONCLUSION

MTI values learning. By providing and encouraging professional development, supporting and encouraging academic freedom, and recognizing achievements, MTI models the value of lifelong learning for its employees and its students.

## CORE COMPONENT 4B

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*The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.*

General education is integral to Mitchell Technical Institute's degree and diploma programs. Not only are general education courses a required component of each degree and diploma offered at MTI, but our general education learning outcomes are integrated into the day-to-day curricula of technical courses throughout the institution.



Our mission statement includes the following primary purpose:

MTI prepares graduates for lifelong learning through general education courses that support technical education and build skills in technology, communication, professionalism, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability.

Institutional student learning outcomes also strongly signify a commitment to the broad knowledge and skills of general education. MTI prepares students to:

- Communicate effectively through both oral and written means
- Demonstrate a professional attitude and work ethic
- Apply reasoning and critical thinking to solve problems and seek information
- Work cooperatively in a team environment
- Use computer technology within a field of study
- Apply technical skills required of an entry-level technician in a chosen field.

Attention to general education is also included in the current strategic plan. Goal Five states that MTI will "provide relevant, high-quality programs that prepare students to live and work in a global, diverse and technological society," and includes an objective specifically dedicated to general education: "Assure that general education requirements are current and relevant" (Objective 5E). This objective included the following action steps:

- 5E-1. Establish a general education advisory board
- 5E-2. Assess and revise the general education student learning goals for a graduate of MTI to include citizenship and interpersonal skills
- 5E-3. Assess and revise the general education component of each program.

MTI established an advisory board for the General Education department in 2009. General education student learning outcomes have been established and are included in the general catalog and on the MTI website. Assessment of the general education requirements of each program is under way.

## GENERAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

MTI has adopted the following philosophy regarding general education, as found in its general catalog:

General education at Mitchell Technical Institute is that part of our students' education that goes beyond learning technical skills and allows students to become well-rounded, higher-functioning citizens of the world. As an institute of higher learning, we are committed to the inherent value of general education and know that critical thinking ability, communication skills, information literacy, math and problem solving skills, and more, are crucial for our graduates' success in their future technical careers. We also recognize that an associate's degree or diploma at Mitchell Technical Institute must mean something more than job skills. Our students must be equipped to become lifelong learners with the ability to adapt to a changing world and ever-increasing job expectations.



While general education has been included since the institution's earliest "vo-tech" days, learning outcomes for general education had not been expressly articulated prior to the current self-study. This need was pointed out by the team assigned to Criterion Four, and, in response, the General Education department dedicated three days during the summer of 2009 to work with the Assessment Committee to spell out and adopt learning outcomes for general education (Resource 6.7). We believe we have succinctly communicated those common attitudes and skills that are necessary for our graduates to become lifelong learners and contributing and capable citizens of the world. These outcomes are published on the MTI website and in the general catalog.

## GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All degree and diploma programs at MTI include a core of general education courses. South Dakota Department of Education Administrative Rules 24:10:43:01 and 24:10:43:03 stipulate that programs that award an Associate of Applied Science degree at the state's technical institutes require a minimum of 15 credit hours of general education, with one or more courses completed in each of the following areas: communications, behavioral sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and computer literacy. Diploma programs at MTI require the completion of courses in communications, mathematics, and computer literacy. Individual departments may require additional credits. All incoming students at MTI must also complete a student success course as part of their general education requirements.

Based on placement test scores, some students may be also required to complete review or preparatory courses in communication and/or mathematics to strengthen their skills and prepare them for success in diploma or degree courses.

### Student Success Course

All incoming students without prior college success (defined as the successful completion of nine college credits in one semester) are required to complete a one-credit student success course. The course is designed to help students build skills and attitudes that are important for success as college students. Topics covered include time management, study skills, information literacy, note-taking, reading for comprehension, critical thinking, communication, diversity, memory, and more. Of course, these are the same skills and attitudes that are important for success on the job and throughout life.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

Ten years ago, MTI's self-study identified the need for instructors throughout the institution "to have a clear understanding of the mission and philosophy of the General Education department." The HLC evaluation team also noted this need in their report, urging the Institute to review general education offerings so that "all faculty promote this component with all students." We believe that this issue is of less concern today; current faculty at MTI are generally very supportive of the formal general education coursework their students must complete. In a survey of staff in 2009, 86.7% of faculty agreed that "MTI's general education requirements develop the attitudes and skills requisite for success in life" (Resource 6.8). In fact, instructors in the technical departments include learning activities and coursework that encourage and build the development of general education skills.



- Students in the Medical Laboratory Technology program are required to design a 12' x 12' room for urinalysis testing. This assignment includes determining the cost of the equipment and staffing for the laboratory in order to perform a cost analysis. Students then present their design to the class using a handout, graphs, charts, and a recommendation as to the viability of the designed laboratory.
- Power Line Construction and Maintenance students write a report for their utility safety class where they are asked to find, document, and write a report about a utility safety violation found in the real world.
- Automation Controls/SCADA students are required to research elevations and calculate path losses as they design a wireless system to send a signal between two given positions located 20 miles apart. The written report serves as a final evaluation in one of their courses.
- Math is used extensively throughout the Agricultural Technology curriculum. For example, students use math as they work together in small groups to compute yield potential evaluations for corn and soybean fields; these estimates are later compared to the actual yields. Students also calculate the proper fertilizer blends needed to meet specific soil and crop requirements for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.
- The culminating assignment for students in the Radiation Therapy program's modern radiation therapy research class is a scientific research paper. This requires students to research an emerging technology in the field of radiation therapy, write a 10-page paper, and prepare and deliver a 10-20 minute oral presentation that includes PowerPoint slides as visual aids.

Technical and general education instructors frequently work in partnership to strengthen ties and increase relevancy between technical and general education courses. For example, English instructors seek out ideas from technical instructors on writing assignments that will be relevant to the students in their field of study. Technical instructors seek assistance from general education instructors as they develop projects and coursework that incorporate skills such as writing or using PowerPoint. A representative from the General Education department is present at each program advisory committee meeting to further strengthen ties between the department and technical programs.

Throughout the Institute, students use math, communication, computer technology, and problem-solving skills in applications specific to their technical courses. MTI's revised institutional effectiveness plan uses six faculty-developed rubrics to assess our institutional student learning outcomes. In the first semester of implementation, over 1,100 scores were turned in by faculty and staff who are using the rubrics to assess oral presentations, written reports, teamwork, work ethic in labs and internships, and computer skills (Resource 6.9). There were 32 instructors who used the rubrics in this first go-around of the plan; they represented nearly 60 percent of faculty. We hope to build on the success of this initial semester with increased faculty participation as we go forward.



Based on analysis of rubric results from the spring 2010 semester, the Assessment Committee chose oral communication as the focus of our institutional effectiveness project for 2010-11. Monthly activities and mini-training sessions at staff meetings are encouraging faculty to provide increased opportunities for students to “speak up” in front of others (Resource 6.10). Through simple tips and suggestions, faculty are being taught to model good speaking for their students and to help students develop their public speaking abilities. Many faculty members have responded to the challenge and are reporting creative ways they are helping students practice oral communication.

## GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

The self-study team assigned to Criterion Four agreed that our General Education program is integral to our mission, but felt that we lacked documentation needed to demonstrate this. Therefore, the Assessment Committee was asked to develop an assessment plan appropriate to general education. Meaningful benchmarks and assessment processes for general education were thus established at the same time they were established for the technical programs. In 2009-10, instructors in MTI's General Education department worked together to complete an annual assessment review of student learning related to general education. In this process, instructors examined outcomes, course syllabi, assessments, and surveys of students, alumni and employers (Resource 6.11).

Alumni were surveyed in spring 2009 and asked about their satisfaction with the education and preparation they received at Mitchell Technical Institute (Resource 6.12). When asked about the extent to which MTI had contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas, alumni were resoundingly satisfied:

Acquiring a broad general education	97.6%
Writing clearly and effectively	95.3%
Speaking clearly and effectively	92.3%
Thinking clearly and effectively	96.7%
Using computers and information technology	95.7%
Working effectively with others	98.6%
Learning effectively on your own	98.1%
Understanding people of varying backgrounds	95.3%
Analyzing quantitative problems	95.3%
Social responsibility	97.2%
Work ethic (appearance, attitude, dependability, etc.)	98.1%

Employers of graduates were also surveyed in 2009 and asked to rate their satisfaction with the general education or “soft skills” possessed by our graduates when they enter the workforce (Resource 6.13). They also indicated strong satisfaction with the level of general education skills that their MTI-trained employees had at the time they were hired:

Writing clearly and effectively	88.1%
Speaking clearly and effectively	97.0%
Working effectively with others	95.6%
Adjusting to new job demands	89.7%
Being dependable and on time	92.7%
Leading others	81.8%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds	97.0%
Working well independently	85.3%
Customer service	89.6%
Critical thinking skills	79.1%
Using computers and information technology	90.5%
Acting responsibly and ethically	95.6%

## **GENERAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

For years, MTI’s technical programs have been guided by expert advice offered by their respective program advisory committees. General education instructors have attended these semi-annual meetings so they can align their courses with what these industry leaders say our students need beyond technical skills. While this is beneficial, one suggestion that arose from the self-study for this core component was that MTI should form an advisory board to guide the general education component of its student education. We were excited to have the general education advisory board organized and meeting by fall 2009 (Resource 6.14). Made up of representatives from a mix of industries, the group is enthusiastically reviewing MTI’s general education offerings and will lend helpful perspectives on skills that make the difference between a mediocre employee and one with lifelong advancement and leadership opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

The 2001 peer review team was greatly concerned about the value of general education at MTI. The Institute has now moved far beyond its days as a “vo-tech,” and general education is widely viewed throughout the MTI community as necessary and advantageous for every student. The employers who hire our graduates consistently remind us that workers distinguish themselves from their peers through their work ethic and skills in oral and written communication, math, computers, and working with others. Faculty and staff at MTI know these skills are important. Nevertheless, it is a continual challenge to convince some of our students that general education has inherent value. This may be due to a public perception that technical education is not college education. Despite our best efforts, some students think that MTI is only about hands-on, technical skills (building and climbing and x-raying), and those students are not necessarily happy to include math or English in their course schedules.



We are determined to strengthen general education courses and more fully integrate general education outcomes in technical courses. This will be accomplished through our institutional effectiveness project (institutional rubrics and subsequent annual institution-wide goal), annual assessment activities, the general education advisory committee, and continued work to promote the importance of general education to our students, faculty, and external constituencies.

## CORE COMPONENT 4C

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*The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.*



The hallmark of technical education is its proactive attention to assure a current and relevant curriculum. We recognize that students choose to attend MTI primarily because they believe that the education they will receive will help them obtain and succeed at a well-paying job. Our mission statements clearly articulate our commitment to meet this expectation. Furthermore, our mission to “provide skills for success in technical careers” demands that we assess our curriculum with regular and unbiased consideration to assure that it is “useful” and will equip graduates with “career success and lifelong learning in a changing world” (MTI Vision Statement).

Goal Five of our strategic plan, which deliberately includes the language of this core component (“provide relevant, high-quality programs that prepare students to live and work in a global, diverse and technological society”), guides our efforts to develop and maintain programs that meet changing trends, provide additional industry certifications, increase the number of accredited programs offered, and develop a curricular review process supporting quality programs that meet the needs of business and industry.

### INDUSTRY OVERSIGHT

Program advisory committees are the key to MTI’s efforts to provide “high-quality Associate of Applied Science degree and diploma programs which prepare students for occupational success” (from MTI Primary Purposes). MTI Policy #331 specifies that the Institute will utilize program advisory committees to “invite input from business and industry in order to improve technical education offered by the Institute” (Resource 6.15). An advisory committee is comprised of 6-12 active members representing a cross-section of the business or industry served by the program (Resource 6.16). Each committee establishes bylaws and meets at least twice a year and at other times as needed (Resource 6.17).

MTI’s Annual Program Assessment Review is intentionally tied to advisory committees because we so strongly believe in their value to our programs’ curricula. For example, as the Assessment Committee developed the assessment plan, it included provisions whereby program outcomes and competencies would be reviewed annually with advisory committee input. Program instructors share outcomes and competencies with the advisory committees to ensure that they include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for workplace success. Instructors are also asked to review 2-3 courses per semester with their respective advisory committee for the same purpose.

An advisory committee survey in spring 2010 (Resource 6.18) found that business and industry representatives who serve on these committees believe in the value of their service to MTI and maintain strong support for the usefulness of the program curricula. The many suggestions and concerns expressed in the survey provide instructors and administrators with insights that add to what is shared in the biannual advisory committee meetings themselves.

**Table 6.5  
Advisory Committee Survey - Spring 2010**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
The advisory board is a valuable asset to this program.	61	26	0	0
Expectations about the role of the advisory board in providing advice and support for this program are clear and well communicated to me.	49	38	1	0
The number of members on this board is appropriate.	39	49	0	0
Instructors in this program request and value my input.	64	23	1	0
Program instructors are open to suggestions and constructive criticism.	61	26	0	1
MTI administrators and staff are open to suggestions and constructive criticism.	51	33	1	1
Recommendations made by the advisory board are generally implemented by this program.	30	55	1	1
The board operates efficiently and effectively (by-laws, processes, procedures, meeting length, etc.).	46	41	0	0
The program's curriculum is up-to-date and relevant to industry's needs.	44	43	1	0
MTI effectively markets this program.	31	54	1	0
The facilities used in this program are adequate to meet the training and educational objectives of this program.	43	39	5	0
The equipment used in this program is adequate to meet the training and educational objectives of this program.	30	54	2	0
The technology used in this program is adequate to meet the training and educational objectives of this program.	28	57	2	0
There is adequate market demand to support the graduates of this program.	47	34	7	0
This program meets the needs of the community and region.	45	43	0	0
This program responds to trends in the industry that affect the training of the workforce.	45	41	0	0

## PROGRAM SUMMITS

Two program summits were held during the 2008-09 year to bring in industry experts for a two-day intensive look at curricula. These summits resulted in a significant revision of the Telecommunications and Computer Systems Technology (CST) programs. This effort actually began in 2005 with the recognition of changes in the telecommunications and information technology industries. Convergence among different technologies was occurring in industry, with voice, video, data, and image being integrated into one flexible network. The Institute's Telecom and CST programs had not kept up with these developments.



Utilizing his telecommunications industry background, MTI's new president brought in partners from industry and state government to work with Telecommunications faculty to disassemble the old program and reconstitute a whole new curriculum. The consensus was that the program needed to adapt its curriculum to include training on data networks, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and security issues. The resulting changes would also impact the Satellite Communications and Automation Controls/SCADA programs, since all three programs (again, convergence) would benefit from streamlined basic electronics courses for first-year students and increased instruction in VoIP and networking (Resource 6.19).

The Computer Systems Technology program (now known as Information Systems Technology) held a summit the same year. Representatives from industries relying on computer and network technicians spent two days examining the CST curriculum and defining skill sets required for graduates of the program. The summit resulted in revision of the curriculum and the discontinuance of stand-alone labs. Summit participants also affirmed the importance of networking and the Cisco CCNA curriculum – not only for CST graduates but also for graduates in other programs (Telecommunications, Wind Turbine Technology, SCADA, and Satellite Communications) where networking knowledge has become increasingly vital to employers. The summit also resulted in new program options for CST students. Students can now exit with a diploma after the first year, prepared for entry-level jobs as a computer support technician or network support technician. A second-year AAS degree is available in Network Administration or System Administration (Resource 6.20).

Several instructors needed specialized training in order to teach the new curricula resulting from the program summits. Instructors were busy the next two summers attending conferences and taking classes on a variety of technologies, including Microsoft Server 2008 Administration, Exchange Server, Active Directory, Cisco Discovery I and II, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), fiber in the home, and network traffic engineering.

## PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

Mitchell Technical Institute currently has three programs with national accreditation. We are pursuing additional program accreditations as part of our strategic plan.

- The Medical Laboratory Technology program is accredited by The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).
- The Medical Assistant program at MTI is accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).
- The Radiologic Technology program is accredited by The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT).
- The Radiation Therapy program is presently researching and reviewing the requirements to achieve initial accreditation with JRCERT. The requirement that the program director hold a master's degree is a barrier that may impede MTI from moving forward at this time.
- The Wind Turbine Technology program meets the eligibility requirements for the American Wind Energy Association's new Seal of Approval. Program instructors have submitted a compliance portfolio for the first-year diploma program and are waiting to learn if the program has been accepted.
- MTI's Satellite Communications program is certified by the Society of Broadcast Engineers. Students who complete the program with a B or better and apply for certification are awarded the classification SBE Certified Broadcast Technologist (CBT).



## STUDENT CERTIFICATIONS

MTI programs are increasing the number of national certifications and credentials available to students (Resource 6.21). This meets a strategic plan objective and supports our belief that industry certifications benefit our students and validate the technical education offered at MTI. Students are encouraged to pursue certifications to demonstrate achievement of skills valued by industry.

## INTERNSHIP AND CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS

Mitchell Technical Institute has required clinical and internship experiences in several programs for many years. These experiences are an authentic assessment of the preparation students have achieved in their technical and general education courses at MTI. Internships are thus included, if applicable, in those programs' annual assessment review.

The institution's strategic plan seeks to increase opportunities for learning experiences in the workplace (Objective 5B). The strategic plan also calls for the development of a consistent methodology for implementation and evaluation of internships. An internship handbook has been developed to serve as a guide for students, the site sponsor, and the program internship coordinator. The handbook assures that the internship experience is carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit and includes an intentional "learning agenda" (Resource 6.22).

Internships with specific credit hour requirements are required for graduation in several programs:

- Administrative Office Specialist, 3 credits
- Agricultural Chemical Technology, 6 credits
- Architectural Design and Building Construction, 6 credits
- Culinary Academy, 6 credits
- Heating and Cooling Technologies, 5 credits
- Medical Office Professional, 8 credits
- Power Sports Technology, 4 credits
- Satellite Communications, 4 credits
- Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, 6 credits
- Telecommunications, 6 credits
- Wind Turbine Technology, 6 credits



Optional internships are available in the following programs:

- Accounting, 3 credits
- Agricultural Technology, 6 or 12 credits
- Business Management, 3 credits

Medical programs that require clinical experiences follow specialized requirements, procedures, guidelines, and responsibilities, according to their program accreditation requirements.

The programs include:

- Medical Assistant
- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Radiation Therapy
- Radiologic Technology

## **SOUTH DAKOTA CONTINUING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to MTI's internal assessment processes, the SD Department of Education requires each technical institute in the state to complete an internal review of each of its academic programs according to the department's Continuing Program Review guidelines. In accordance to these guidelines, MTI annually evaluates each program's performance over the past three years in the areas of enrollment, retention, and placement and submits summary data to the state Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education. See pages 45-46 for additional details.

## **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

MTI established a curriculum committee in the 2010-11 year. Under the direction of the curriculum director, this committee is assigned Objective 5A of the strategic plan, to "develop a curriculum development and review process that supports quality programs which meet the needs of business and industry." This committee will review proposed changes affecting curriculum and will oversee the curriculum development and implementation process (Resource 6.23). The committee has faculty representation from each of MTI's divisions.

## ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT OF CURRICULUM

- Placement rates in MTI's technical programs have historically been over 90%, and in many cases nearly 100%, year after year. This consistently high placement is indicative of programs that effectively prepare students to work in a diverse and technological society.
- Employer surveys are conducted every three years to determine satisfaction with the MTI graduates they have hired. The survey also identifies areas where students were unprepared.
- Alumni are also surveyed every three years and asked to rate the quality of their MTI education and how well it prepared them for employment.



## CONCLUSION

Mitchell Technical Institute assesses the usefulness of its curricula to ensure that students are equipped with attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for success in their careers and in an ever-changing world. MTI's instructors review the curriculum in their respective programs. Guided by advisory committees, external surveys, and graduate placement success, faculty make adjustments to keep the curriculum relevant and current. Since advisory committees are our best resource in this endeavor, our challenge lies in assuring that committee meetings are as effective and functional as possible. We have many energetic, dedicated committees who actively oversee curriculum and programming, while others are possibly not being utilized to their full potential.

An area of concern that must be addressed is program length. Ten years ago, the average length of MTI's AAS degree programs was 74.2 credits. Today, that average has grown to 78.7 credits. Programs have added internships and new safety and technical courses in response to industry demands. At the same time, we know that foundational courses in theory cannot be discarded. We know this is higher than standard practice for associate degree programs and bears close scrutiny.

## CORE COMPONENT 4D

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*The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

The MTI community operates within a structure that supports responsible learning and ethical application of knowledge. This structure includes policies, procedures, and codes of behavior that encompass all members of the MTI community.



### POLICIES

Mitchell Technical Institute's board-approved policies support responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. MTI Policy #551 covers guidelines related to the doctrine of fair use as it applies to the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976. This policy is summarized in the personnel handbook and is found in its entirety in the student handbook and the electronic and physical copies of the MTI policy and procedure manual. A notice regarding compliance with copyright law is attached to the main-usage copiers in the Institute.

MTI's intellectual property policy (MTI #752) makes it clear that the Institute owns the intellectual property rights in works produced by or for MTI. The institution's private enterprise acceptable conduct policy (MTI #751) prohibits employees from using Institute property, including instructor certifications paid by MTI, for their own personal gain. It also prohibits hiring or using students for an employee's business activities.

The Institute also has a comprehensive policy dealing with technology usage. Policy #744 (Policy #976 for students) addresses the ethical and legal standards that apply to information technology, including "rights of authorship, confidentiality, privacy, and dissemination." The policies affirm the institution's commitment to respect "the codes of honesty, integrity, and intellectual freedom upon which institutions of higher learning rely."

Other board policies supporting responsible acquisition and use of knowledge deal with such issues as teaching about religion (MTI #931), academic freedom (MTI #934), student publications (MTI #937), and distance education (MTI #977). (See the MTI Board Policies and Procedures Manual in the Resource Room or SharePoint.)

### RESPECTING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF OTHERS

One of MTI's general education student learning outcomes for communication is that students will be able to "conduct, examine, interpret, and document research responsibly." To this end, information literacy and responsible research is included in the curriculum of all English courses, the freshman student success course, and Microcomputer Software Applications I (CIS 105), all of which meet MTI's general education requirements. Class lectures, syllabi, and exercises in English courses, for example, include a reminder of the definition of plagiarism and review the proper methods of documentation and research, involving hard copy and electronic sources. Students utilize MLA style documentation as found in their English textbooks and on the Diana Hacker reference site. MTI's instructional services coordinator gives a presentation on information literacy, copyright, and plagiarism to all first-year students in the student success courses.

While the institution's policies dealing with copyright and the appropriate use of technology prohibit students from illegally copying others' work, it is up to instructors and staff to enforce the policies. MTI has adopted an academic integrity policy which is published in the student handbook and is included on all official course syllabi throughout the institution. The policy states:

Students are expected to do their own work unless advised that collaboration is acceptable. When taking a test, students are expected to keep their eyes on their own papers and protect their test papers from being copied by classmates.

To avoid plagiarism when using facts, quotes or ideas from another person or source, students must cite the source they used, even if they rephrase the content in their own words. Failure to use proper citation procedures is considered plagiarism. Students should be given a grade of "0" if the plagiarism is flagrant and/or deliberate. Copying from another person's paper or test is academic dishonesty; it should also result in a grade of "0" for that assignment.



The self-study team assigned to Criterion #4 was concerned with the challenges of assuring academic honesty in distance learning. MTI assigns individual log-ins and passwords for students to access online learning materials and tests through the MyMTI learning management system. The team recognized the shortcomings of this system to prevent students determined to cheat and felt this should be addressed should the Institute further expand its distance education offerings. Programs that rely on MyMTI for quizzes and tests have developed additional policies and practices to encourage honesty. For example, the Radiation Therapy program has an online learning policy which is included on course syllabi. All tests are password-protected and proctored by the students' clinical instructors (Resource 6.24).

The Information Technology department, in compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, outlined its efforts to monitor and discourage illegal downloading and peer-to-peer file sharing on the MTI network (Resource 6.25). Using local resources and a contract with Golden West Technologies of Rapid City, MTI is able to receive "real time alerts on potential security threats and the misuse of our production network," including peer-to-peer file sharing and illegal file downloading. IT staff inspect student and staff computers brought in for repair for the presence of file-sharing software. MTI network administrators also scan student network drives twice per semester for unusually large numbers of music and video files. These students are then contacted to insure that the material was legally obtained.

Students are notified by an emailed letter from the vice president of information technology during the first week of classes of the legal penalties that could be levied against individuals who illegally download copyrighted material (Resource 6.26). This information is also found in the student handbook.

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF KNOWLEDGE

The responsible use of knowledge is integrated throughout the curriculum at Mitchell Technical Institute. Ethical practices and expectations in the classroom are communicated and upheld; furthermore, workplace ethics and responsibility are reinforced in all programs to prepare students for the choices they will make in the real world.



- Students in the Information Systems Technology program agree to abide by “white hat” guidelines pertaining to ethical hacking. They are made well aware of their responsibility to not use their knowledge to harm or destroy others’ data and networks.
- Students in health sciences programs complete HIPAA training curriculum to learn the guidelines of protecting patient privacy. They are taught the legal implications of breaching patient confidentiality, and this is reinforced throughout the curriculum.
- Students discuss issues dealing with ethical behavior in the workplace in SOC 110 Industrial Relations. Topics include social responsibility, employee codes of conduct, and the implications of unethical business and research practices.
- The ethical use of equipment in regard to electronic eavesdropping, network surveillance, broadcast surveillance, and similar technologies is frequently discussed with students who have daily access to the technology that would make these activities possible.
- MTI’s internship students understand, adhere to, and manage all organizational policies and professional standards they might be subject to during their internship at the organization. They accept the responsibility to respect the confidentiality of the workplace, its clients, and its employees and to abide by the standards of conduct established by the site sponsor and the internship coordinator.
- Student rights and responsibilities are included in the student handbook and are published on the MTI website (Resource 6.27).
- MTI is involved in developing the Mitchell Underage Drinking Coalition in conjunction with community groups and Dakota Wesleyan University students. This task force will strive to implement programs, events, and curricula for students to reinforce the dangers of binge drinking.

In a 2009 survey of employers, 95.59% of respondents were satisfied with their MTI graduates’ ability to act responsibly and ethically. Over 97% of alumni gave MTI credit for contributing to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in social responsibility.

## FOCUS ON ETHICS

Based on a recommendation by the self-study team assigned to Criterion #4, MTI included a series of articles in the MTI staff newsletter dealing with ethics and its application in the college setting. Topics included copyright law and implications for educators; technology and cheating; academic freedom; ethical behavior in dealing with students; ethical marketing of MTI; and plagiarism.

Mitchell Technical Institute includes a code of professional ethics in the personnel handbook. This document has been adopted by the South Dakota Professional Teachers Practices and Standards Commission and provides guidance to all professional staff. The code of ethics describes our obligation as educators to our students, the public, and the profession.

## CONCLUSION

As an institution of higher learning, MTI has an obligation to model ethical behavior and to expect integrity in our students. The Institute recognizes its responsibility not only to assist students in acquiring knowledge and skills, but also to communicate the importance of using that knowledge ethically and responsibly. Through its policies and codes of conduct, MTI provides a structure that reinforces and supports ethical behaviors. We recognize that distance learning poses a special challenge to assuring academic integrity, and in this area we must continue to stay aware of developing technologies that can address this challenge.



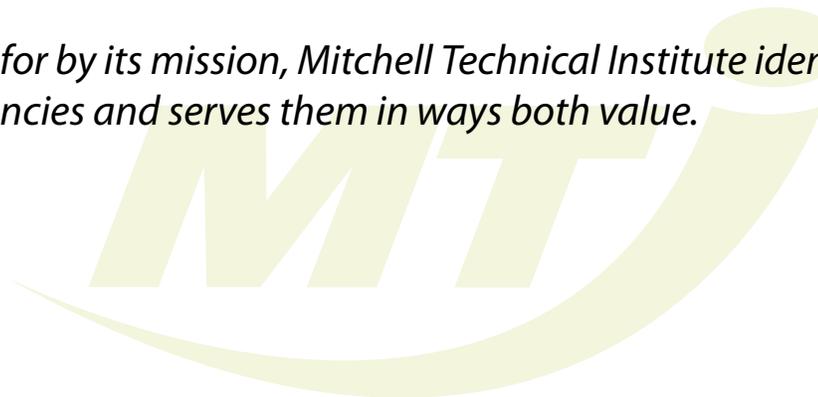


Chapter Seven

# CRITERION FIVE: SERVICE TO SOCIETY



*As called for by its mission, Mitchell Technical Institute identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.*





## CORE COMPONENT 5A

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*The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.*

Mitchell Technical Institute is deeply interested in understanding the needs and expectations of its many constituencies. Through surveys, focus groups, advisory boards, and other means, MTI gathers concrete and anecdotal data that can be analyzed to better respond to our constituents' needs. We focus first on the students who invest their time and financial resources to pursue a technical degree at MTI. We strive to understand why they enroll, why they stay, and why some decide MTI is not for them. We also value the expectations of the employers who will hire our students. MTI is committed to serving as a valued partner in workforce development and higher learning in the state of South Dakota and beyond.



MTI's constituencies are regularly surveyed to determine their perceptions about MTI and the education and training opportunities we provide. Besides our students and their future employers, we also survey the parents of our students as well as our alumni, staff, advisory committees, and the community. Survey responses help guide the Institute's planning and improvement efforts at the institutional and program level. Results, including comments, are compiled and disseminated to leadership and management teams and to appropriate departments or programs, where the data helps drive decisions and goal-setting. A plan for regular data collection assures that MTI continues to learn from its constituencies and to make improvements based on that feedback (Resource 7.1).

### **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

Mitchell Technical Institute actively seeks input from its program advisory boards to learn what the related industry expects and needs from entry-level employees trained at MTI. These 22 committees, comprised of approximately 250 representatives from industries and businesses that hire our graduates, usually meet twice a year to provide input on the technical skills newly trained employees should have to meet industry needs. Advisory board members voice opinions and make recommendations; they vote on proposals and review curriculum. Their input serves as critical information in developing MTI's programs. For example, the advisory committee for the Agriculture Technology program recommended that the curriculum add a precision farming component. The committee's follow-through on this proposal eventually led to industry donations that made it possible for MTI students to use sophisticated GPS technology to enhance crop production in the program's land lab (Resource 7.2). A proposal for a stand-alone precision technician program was presented to the board at a later meeting; positive feedback resulted in a motion to approve the proposal. This program is currently under development to begin in fall 2011.

A 2010 survey of advisory board members found that these industry representatives consider MTI instructors, staff, and administrators to be open to suggestions and constructive criticism. They also affirmed that instructors request and value advisory board input and that advisory committee recommendations are generally implemented by the program. Advisory committee members agreed that MTI's programs have up-to-date and relevant curriculum and that the programs respond to industry trends that affect the training of the workforce (Resource 7.3).

MTI recently hosted two separate program summits to bring industry experts to campus for two days of intense examination of curriculum, goals, learning outcomes, and recruitment. These summits led to major changes in the Telecommunications and Computer Systems Technology programs. See page 82 for additional details regarding the summits.

We also seek feedback from employers who have hired our graduates (Resource 7.4). A database tracks businesses and organizations where MTI graduates are employed, and each employer is invited to participate in a triennial survey. Survey results help us understand how well our students perform on the job; this feedback is used for annual program and institutional effectiveness assessment. MTI's Medical Assistant, Radiologic Technology, and Medical Laboratory Technology programs annually survey employers of their most recent graduates as part of their program accreditation requirements.



## STUDENTS

Students, as our primary concern, are provided opportunities to share expectations and needs.

- Course evaluations are administered for all instructors each semester to gain student perceptions of the instructor's effectiveness (Resource 7.5). Students in online courses evaluate the effectiveness of the online learning platform, as well as the instructor and materials (Resource 7.6).
- The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is administered every three years, and these results are shared with faculty and staff for review and as impetus for change.
- Students in ENG 202 Technical Communications develop proposals suggesting ways to improve the Institute. These proposals are presented to MTI's leadership; over the years, they have been instrumental in bringing attention to issues which have led to campus change. Because of one such student-led proposal, SCADA students now have their own PLCs (programmable logic control devices). Other proposals have led to a garage for the Satellite Communications truck, LED message boards in hallways, a mobile laptop lab, recycling, and changes in new student orientation.
- A variety of topical surveys are used to gather student feedback to improve services and departments. Recent surveys have assessed usage of the Instructional Services Center; student preferences for food served in the cafeteria; satisfaction with orientation and other first week activities; preferences regarding SRB-sponsored student activities; and the annual MTI job fair, to name just a few. As we learn the preferences and needs of our students, we are better able to provide services to their satisfaction.
- Students participated in a focus group as part of the current year's SWOT analysis and strategic plan update. They were given the opportunity to identify what they liked and didn't like about MTI, and their views were shared with the Strategic Planning Group and department heads (Resource 7.7). As a result of this session, improving the online learning experience for students was incorporated into the updated strategic plan.
- We regularly survey our graduates to determine their job placement success. We also survey alumni to determine their satisfaction with the preparation they received at MTI for their current careers. These results are then used in annual program assessment.

## **OTHER CONSTITUENCIES**

MTI strives to meet the needs of all of our constituents and actively seeks to know how we can better meet those needs. In the past year, we have surveyed high school guidance counselors, parents of our current students, and the Mitchell community and surrounding area. We also surveyed our staff several times to determine overall satisfaction and to gain feedback to help plan future recruitment activities and the expansion of internships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mitchell Technical Institute makes a concerted effort to learn from its constituencies. We use the results to assure that the Institute is meeting constituents' needs and fulfilling our mission to provide skills for successful technical careers. It is an ongoing challenge to keep the survey cycle fresh and current. Every effort is made to accumulate adequate data from all constituents in order to be useful when conducting program and institutional assessment.



## CORE COMPONENT 5B

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*The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*



Mitchell Technical Institute demonstrates an ongoing commitment to its constituents as evidenced by our partnerships with business and industry, educational institutions, and governmental agencies. MTI's commitment and capacity to engage with its constituencies is reflected throughout our strategic plan.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Mitchell Technical Institute strategic plan demonstrates our commitment to engage with our constituencies and communities. For example, Objective 2A calls for MTI to “establish a regional, institutional advisory board” comprised of key members of the community and industry leaders. Strategic Advisory Council members were recruited this fall, and the board held its inaugural meeting November 17, 2010, providing a vehicle for the college to build even stronger relationships with our constituencies.

The strategic plan includes a focus on efforts to define MTI as a “regional institution” (Objective 3A), as opposed to one with perceived relevance limited to Mitchell, South Dakota. MTI's employees are encouraged to serve on local boards and in local organizations, building relationships of understanding and cooperation within Mitchell. The objective also calls on the college to “develop and leverage relationships with companies with a regional presence.”

MTI is also building partnerships with business and individuals to “fund programs, recruitment and marketing efforts, scholarships, and equipment to enhance opportunities for student learning,” as stated in Objective 3B. We are pleased to report that donations to the MTI Foundation have increased by 36% in the past two years, exceeding our targets for this action step. MTI also created a workforce recruitment program wherein an interested company works with the Institute to recruit students who will receive a level of financial support determined by the company. In return, the student will work for the company upon graduation for a pre-determined length of time (Resource 7.8). The first student accepted through this program now attends the Telecommunications program; several other companies are completing the process, and we anticipate 5-10 more stipends available next year.

The sixth goal in MTI's strategic plan is our “outreach” goal: Deliver instruction and training through a variety of methods to better serve the needs of industry and other external constituencies. As a result of this strategic goal, MTI's outreach effort has grown to include an energy-related, dual enrollment program and additional for-credit offerings for high school students; additional locations for students to complete MTI courses in Yankton and Huron, SD; and a partnership with Sinte Gleska University to offer our Wind Turbine Technology diploma program on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in western South Dakota. This goal also focuses our efforts on strengthening the Corporate Education department with enhanced long-term partnerships with private industry, public institutions, and non-profit organizations.

## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

MTI's governance and administrative structures and processes have created strong, productive relationships with education, government, and private entities. These connections have proven mutually beneficial for the Institute and its partners.

- MTI works closely with South Dakota's Office of Career, Curriculum and Technical Education, the State Board of Education, the State Department of Labor, and the three other state technical institutes. Together, they work to promote technical education and build South Dakota's workforce. It remains a challenge, however, to receive adequate state funding in times of tight budgets.
- Members of the Strategic Advisory Council represent many of the industries that MTI serves. These individuals are typically the decision-makers within their organizations and are invaluable in providing links with industry.
- Program advisory boards also include business and industry representatives, giving MTI strong connections to the constituencies they represent.
- Mitchell Board of Education members are elected by voters and thus represent the taxpayers and residents within the district. Board members serve as ex-officio members of each program advisory board, and the superintendent of schools is an ex-officio member of the Strategic Advisory Council. MTI representatives attend each semi-monthly board meeting.



## FOUNDATION

The MTI Foundation was created in 1999 as a separate 501(c)3 entity to help the Institute achieve its mission through raising money, pursuing grants, developing scholarships, and allowing for tax incentives. The Foundation has oversight from a board of directors and employs an executive director and a coordinator of alumni and donor relations.

## JOINT VENTURES WITH EDUCATION PARTNERS

- MTI's popular Wind Turbine Technician diploma program is now being delivered to students at the Sinte Gleska University campus in Rosebud, South Dakota, through a combined effort of instructors and staff at both institutions (Resource 7.9).
- A grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding a joint effort by Bellevue College, Dakota State University, and Mitchell Technical Institute to develop and deliver health information technology (HIT) curriculum. MTI's Corporate Education office will offer three eight-week modules online to hospital and clinic employees. The course curriculum was developed by Bellevue College and is approved by the American Association of Medical Assistants for continuing education credit.
- Mitchell Technical Institute has made its energy and electronic communications programs more accessible to residents of the nearby cities of Yankton and Huron. MTI worked with the South Dakota Department of Labor and the Regional Technical Education Center (RTEC) of Yankton to develop the James Valley Displaced Worker Initiative which brings an introductory first-year curriculum to displaced, unemployed, and underemployed workers seeking career retraining (Resource 7.10). MTI also partnered with the Department of Labor and the Huron Community Campus for a similar career retraining opportunity in Huron (Resource 7.11).



- MTI's Admissions staff have developed strong working relationships with guidance counselors and school personnel at high schools across South Dakota and neighboring states.
- MTI's dual-credit programs and classes are made available to high school students statewide through the South Dakota Virtual School ([www.sdvs.k12.sd.us](http://www.sdvs.k12.sd.us)), a clearinghouse for distance high school courses approved by the South Dakota Department of Education. SDVS provides online information about dual-credit courses and an online registration system. The Institute's courses are offered through the Mid-Central Educational Cooperative/DIAL ([www.sddial.k12.sd.us/ilc/vschool](http://www.sddial.k12.sd.us/ilc/vschool)), an approved SDVS provider.
- MTI developed a dual-credit energy program in partnership with the High Plains Technical School in Chester to introduce high school students to MTI's four energy-related programs. While HPTS has since closed, MTI continues to make the program available to students statewide through the South Dakota Virtual School. Students enrolled in the program can earn up to 12 credits from MTI while still in high school through a combination of online work and monthly, hands-on labs on our campus.
- MTI partnered with Mid-Central Educational Cooperative to submit a proposal for an EPSCoR Grow Dakota Program Grant to help develop a high school dual-credit program for communications/information technology to be offered in fall 2011. Course information and registration for the hybrid program will be available through the SD Virtual School.
- Through MTI's Tech Prep program, students in middle and high school are introduced to various careers, offering them options based on their goals, abilities, and commitment. Tech Prep provides a planned sequence of courses from secondary through postsecondary education, often including the opportunity for worksite learning which helps students become qualified for their chosen career.
- The state of South Dakota offered MTI use of two tractor/trailers to create mobile units that take the Institute's programs "on the road" for career exploration, recruiting activities, and hands-on interactive learning in the areas of energy production, transmission, distribution, and applications. These units are a huge hit with middle and high school students who experience them. The second trailer will be equipped for use in career exploration and recruiting activities for MTI's Engineering Division.

## ENGAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

MTI has developed a widespread culture of service. The Institute and its staff and students are actively involved in the community. The staff's contribution to the local United Way campaign totals well over \$4,000 each year. For the past three years, a team of staff members has participated in the Mitchell-area United Way Day of Caring. MTI also sponsors several blood drives on campus to support a regional blood bank, with over 200 units of blood donated each year by students and staff.

### Human Capital

Staff and faculty provide students with extraordinary examples of what it means to be good citizens in our communities. MTI employees are involved in civic organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and the Boy Scouts. Their community involvement includes serving as leaders and volunteers for groups as diverse as community theater, PTA, music boosters, Habitat for Humanity, youth hockey, and the United Way. Through their churches, clubs, professional associations, and civic groups, they are active in helping build Mitchell and especially its youth.

MTI students are also active in the Mitchell community. Co-curricular activities bring many benefits to the community and also allow students to put their learning into practice.

- Students in the Satellite Communications program periodically volunteer to assist with broadcasts of state high school sporting events covered by South Dakota Public Broadcasting. MTI provides use of its mobile uplink truck as well as highly qualified staff and instructors to support these projects.
- Since 1969, the Oak Room has offered the public the opportunity to experience fine dining prepared and served by Culinary Arts Academy students. Approximately 2,000 meals are served at the Oak Room each year. Students rotate responsibilities and serve as chef, waiter, bus person, etc., each day.
- Two major ice storms in four years required the services of dozens of students in the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program. Students were asked to assist crews in retrieving downed power lines and erecting new power poles in rural areas across South Dakota.
- MTI annually participates in a competitive food drive with a local university. Nearly 10,000 pounds of food has been collected and donated to the local food pantry since its inception four years ago.
- Faculty and students in the Construction Division volunteered countless hours on a local Habitat for Humanity house, including framing, roofing, windows, siding, electrical wiring, heating and cooling, painting and more. The house was turned over to its new owners in the fall of 2009.
- For the second consecutive year, students and staff contributed to the design, installation, and operation of a music and lighting holiday show to benefit a local home for troubled youth. Over 530 hours of labor were volunteered for this endeavor this year.
- Power Sports Technology students perform full tune-ups on lawn mowers and tillers brought in by community members for a small donation.
- MTI's Medical Assistant students participate in Mitchell-area health fairs, health screenings, immunization clinics, and disaster drills. They also donate at local blood drives.
- For several years, students in the Culinary Academy have participated in an annual fundraising event for the local cancer care fund. The students plan, prepare, and serve gourmet food at this popular event. The proceeds support individuals undergoing cancer treatment.
- Almost half of MTI's programs include an internship component, placing our students in clinics, hospitals, construction sites, business offices, and other work settings throughout Mitchell and the surrounding area.



## Facilities

MTI's facilities provide a valuable resource for the community. Last year alone there were more than 10,000 individuals on campus for events or trainings:

- 172 events were held on campus by outside visitors, with 9,779 participants
- 93 trainings were held on campus for outside industries, with 1,002 participants

Community events held at MTI include school board meetings, legislative cracker barrel sessions, candidate forums, Red Cross disaster planning, United Way donor luncheons, and Scouting courts of honor. Area businesses regularly utilize our facilities for receptions, employee training, and customer appreciation events.

Industry training events are also held at MTI, often coordinated and facilitated by Corporate Education staff. Examples of training events at MTI include pole climbing training for telecommunication companies; “rubber gloving” and “underground school” for South Dakota Rural Electric Association employees; and OSHA 10 safety training. Other training events regularly held at and sponsored by MTI include sessions for commercial drivers’ licenses, energy auditors, and propane safety.



Special events such as college lineman rodeo competitions, construction seminars, and telecom technician challenges bring large groups to MTI; these events help promote the Institute and also provide a valuable opportunity for participants to network and gain insights from industry experts and vendors.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mitchell Technical Institute demonstrates its capacity and commitment to constituents through its strategic plan, administrative structure, and connections with community and educational organizations. MTI has long been a contributing member of the Mitchell community, and staff and students alike are regularly involved in activities which serve community needs and contribute to student learning. We have begun efforts to serve students not located on our Mitchell campus. We have made significant investments of resources to assure the success of these endeavors; it will take continued attention to modify and restructure these programs, should intended outcomes not be achieved as expected.

## CORE COMPONENT 5C

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*The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.*

Mitchell Technical Institute is committed to fulfilling its role in meeting the labor needs of industry in South Dakota. We have expanded, adapted, and created programs to respond to the state's training and educational needs. Working with a variety of educational, industry-based, and private organizations, we have consistently demonstrated over the last 40-plus years an ability to quickly respond to the needs of many constituencies.



### CREDIT-BASED EDUCATION

One recent example of this responsiveness is our brand new Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLP) program. This is a direct result of repeated requests from school districts and educational cooperatives within South Dakota who view an associate's degree SLPA program as a solution to the current shortage of certified speech language pathologists (SLPs). Because SLPAs can deliver services under the direction of a certified SLP, MTI's new program will help alleviate the difficulties school districts and cooperatives currently experience. Furthermore, the South Dakota Speech Language and Hearing Association has offered its resources and expertise to help guide the new program, and members of the association serve on the program's advisory board (Resource 7.12).

In response to advisory committee input, MTI developed a second year curriculum and added an AAS degree for students in the Power Sports Technology program. Advisory committee members saw a clear need for advanced service skills, marine technology skills, and advanced metal fabrication and paint skills for graduates of the program. Committee members and industry representatives helped us develop the curriculum, secured equipment and facilities for training, and provided much-needed support.

### ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER OF CREDIT

#### ***Articulation***

Articulation is a cooperative effort between the state of South Dakota, South Dakota's high schools, and the state's four technical institutes to provide students with an opportunity to receive credit for skills previously learned in high school. (Mitchell Technical Institute also allows students from out-of-state to articulate Algebra II/Advanced Algebra.) High school courses eligible for articulation are courses in a South Dakota state-approved career and technical program. To qualify for articulation at MTI, the student must have earned a "B" or better in the course, and the course (or sequence of courses) must have been completed within the last three years. MTI's Tech Prep Coordinator verifies the articulation of high school courses for all incoming students.

#### ***Transfer of Credit***

Published in the general catalog, MTI's transfer policy outlines the criteria used for determining credit awarded for students' previous coursework. The process supports MTI's mission by ensuring that credits considered for transfer are from accredited institutions and are appropriate and relevant to the students' programs of study. Credit for relevant life and work experience, including military experience and training, is also applied toward degree requirements. The Institute's registrar has the final say and faithfully follows the policy in determining credits accepted for transfer.

Chapter Seven  
Criterion Five:  
Service to Society

MTI maintains 2+2 agreements with Dakota Wesleyan University and National American University. Students transferring from one South Dakota technical institute to another also receive transfer credit.

One challenge that the Institute has been unable to resolve is solidifying comprehensive transfer agreements with the South Dakota university system. The nature of programs and degrees offered at Mitchell Technical Institute do not lend themselves to faculty with advanced degrees; instead, our instructional staff has very specific industry experiential requirements. This creates a barrier, since the universities require faculty of record to have master's or doctoral degrees.



## **SOUTH DAKOTA CENTER FOR FARM/RANCH MANAGEMENT**

Agriculture is the leading industry in South Dakota, and the Farm Business Management program provides a much-needed, structured educational program for producers to enhance their business and financial analysis skills. A byproduct of this program is the South Dakota Annual Report, which contains verifiable data on the status and operations of farms and ranches in the southeast quadrant of South Dakota. After many requests, meetings, and study sessions, it was determined that the program should expand to include the entire state of South Dakota. Hence, the newly named South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management was established this past fall. The expanded program, along with a new partnership involving the state of Minnesota, will allow the data gathered to become part of a national benchmarking project. The Center will eventually employ five instructors and will increase its use of distance learning technology to expand its reach to producers throughout the state.

## **CORPORATE EDUCATION**

MTI's Corporate Education (CE) office has a keen interest in understanding and providing for the needs of business and industry and the Mitchell community. This is expressed in the department's mission to support and enhance economic development and to ensure the citizens of South Dakota customized training programs in a technologically advanced society. As industries come to MTI with training needs, the CE office coordinates and plans events tailored to the continuing education needs of South Dakota's workforce. MTI also offers high-demand training to the public on a regular basis and continuing education courses as required for industry certifications.

- MTI has committed its resources to develop a cadre of professionally trained instructors – not only to meet industry training requests, but also to prepare students in credit-based programs with the same requirements for safety skills, certifications, and specialty training. Recent examples include a certified OSHA instructor and HERS/Energy Auditors on staff.
- Licensed electricians must complete a set of continuing education units every three years. MTI offers National Electrical Code (NEC) training biannually, and 75-90 electricians attend these sessions.
- MTI is a Cisco Learning Partner and offers authorized Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA) certification training for area IT professionals who want to increase their skills in networking, routing, and WAN technologies.
- MTI provides courses for heating and cooling technicians that are approved for National Association for Technician Excellence (NATE) continuing education credit.



- MTI is a certified testing center for the U.S. Postal Service and the Traffic Safety Administration. We are also a certified testing center for Microsoft Office certification.
- AutoCAD training is regularly offered for open-enrollment applicants. We have also created customized AutoCAD training based on requests by industry and have even held a customized training for cabinet builders from area Hutterite colonies.
- The Mitchell Area Manufacturers Association came to MTI for training in OSHA safety, facilities maintenance, and lockout/ tag out. Employees from local manufacturing facilities completed the training in the past year.
- Telecommunications companies had a need for their employees to be trained in bucket truck use and pole climbing. With a Power Line program in place, MTI is a natural fit to provide this training and now trains about 30 employees from these companies each year.
- MTI is a certified practical center for SlingPath, a British company that provides online, competency-based certification for mobile satellite uplink truck operators. Students can complete the SlingPath certification by attending a three-day practical, hands-on course at MTI, one of three such centers worldwide.
- As a direct response to industry requests, MTI Corporate Education (in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Labor) is providing energy auditor certification training in 2011. This four-day training is led by MTI's HERs-certified instructors using the latest training equipment for energy auditing, including a house demonstration model, thermal imager, and blower door/fan.
- Heating and Cooling Remediation Certification will also be offered in 2011. This 3-day certificate training trains participants on residential HVAC systems and principles of renewable energy systems so they are able to recommend energy-saving measures to homeowners.
- Over 50 community education classes offered each year are open to the public. Most are computer courses, but other topics can include food preparation, writing, photography, and home inspection based on interest and availability.
- MTI's Corporate Education partners with Ed2Go, a third-party training service for online educational non-credit courses.

## CONCLUSION

MTI is responsive to constituencies that depend on it for service. We keep our finger on the pulse of workforce needs in the region and develop educational programs to meet those needs. Our new technical programs, such as Wind Turbine Technology, Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, and the recently approved Precision Technology Specialist, are the direct result of industry trends and requests for trained workers in these fields. Our Corporate Education office also regularly provides training and continuing education in response to identified needs and business and industry requests.

Serving the needs of the K-12 and postsecondary educational systems is also a priority for MTI. We have successfully developed articulation opportunities for high school students entering MTI. We are less successful in helping our graduates who choose to continue their education at one of South Dakota's public universities. In the latest fall student demographics survey, 15% of our students indicated an intention to transfer credits in the future to another college, university, or technical institute. We feel obligated to address this issue and to reach more liberal articulation agreements with the South Dakota Board of Regents.

## CORE COMPONENT 5D

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Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides. Mitchell Technical Institute is committed to provide valuable services for the internal and external constituencies of the institution. Generous contributions and support from individuals, organizations, and companies who are loyal friends of MTI, and from those who work and go to school here, demonstrate the value that its constituencies place upon MTI.



### EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES

There is no doubt that MTI-trained graduates are valued by the businesses and industries that employ them. Surveys show that the education students attain at MTI is valued by both their new employees and the alumni themselves.

- In a 2009 survey, 91.18% of employers were satisfied with their MTI-trained employees' job-related technical skills. They also report a 90.55% average satisfaction for their employees' non-technical skills such as working effectively with others and adjusting to new job demands.
- 95.28% of alumni expressed satisfaction with how MTI had contributed to their attainment of job- or work-related knowledge and skills. 96.2% were satisfied with the non-technical skills they had developed during their time at MTI (Resource 7.13).

The many partnerships between MTI and companies and businesses in South Dakota and beyond demonstrate that external constituencies strongly value MTI's contributions to workforce development by meeting their needs for skilled workers.

- Over 250 individuals from businesses and industries throughout the region serve on MTI's program advisory boards. The companies that employ these individuals allow them time away from work to attend meetings twice a year; these companies also support the programs with scholarships, equipment donations, political clout, and technical expertise.
- The Farm Business Management (FBM) program has received financial and political support from South Dakota's wheat, corn, pork, and soybean growers, agricultural lenders, the Farm Service Agency, and FBM participants in order to qualify for a \$147,000 USDA grant allowing the program to expand its resources and instructors to reach agricultural producers statewide.
- Motorcycle and snowmobile dealers in the area have enthusiastically helped MTI to get its Outdoor Power and Recreational Vehicle Technology program off the ground. The program has also attracted national interest and support, including invitations for students to compete at national bike building competitions.
- The Agriculture Technology program received a \$50,000 donation last year from local business F & L Crop Services, Inc., to be used for scholarships and needed equipment.
- The Telecommunications program has benefited from tremendous industry support, including equipment donations worth several hundred thousands of dollars. In addition, SDN Communications, Hickory Tech, Golden West, and Midstate Communications technicians give extensive time and expertise to enhance the program's cutting-edge curriculum.



- Avera Queen of Peace Hospital donates \$45,000 a year in support of the Radiologic Technology and Radiation Therapy programs. These grants are provided specifically to support instructor salaries in these high cost programs.
- Black Hills Corporation sponsored MTI's Propane and Natural Gas Technologies program as an educational member of the Center for Energy Workforce Development. This allows MTI to access industry information and statistics and to advertise as a leading school that can be viewed by potential students.
- Two area dealerships are providing the Agricultural Technology program with the use of brand new tractors to give students the capability to utilize precision technology in planting, fertilizing, and harvesting at the program's land lab.
- Scholarships for MTI students are provided by nearly 40 individuals, groups, and corporations; more than \$58,000 in scholarships were provided last year. Donors include large corporations like Ottertail Power Company, Enertech Manufacturing, Pegler Sysco, and Lodgenet, as well as area small businesses like County Fair Foods and CHS-Farmer's Alliance.
- Over 450 alumni and friends attended a reunion and auction to honor two retiring Ag Tech instructors. The auction raised \$10,000 for the Brian Larson Memorial Scholarship.

Survey results also affirm that MTI's external constituencies value the services provided by the institution. A survey of residents and business owners in Mitchell and the surrounding area last spring demonstrated that MTI is viewed as a good neighbor (Resource 7.14). Ninety-eight percent of respondents agreed that MTI makes a substantial contribution to the economy of Mitchell and the surrounding area. Over 95% of respondents also felt that MTI's student body and employees both contribute in positive ways to the Mitchell community.

## INTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES

Employees and students alike believe in the mission of MTI and support the institution with their time and money.

### Employees

- The faculty and staff annually donate to the MTI Foundation's Freshman Scholarship Fund. The fund was used this year to award \$500 scholarships for ten incoming freshmen. In the five years since this employee-funded scholarship first began, \$21,500 in scholarships has been given to students.
- Faculty and staff may choose to wear MTI spirit wear and jeans on Fridays while supporting the new MTI Spirit for Scholarships Campaign. Twenty-six employees participate by each donating \$72 per year to the campaign.
- The Mitchell Area Technical Educators (MATE) faculty group sponsors a \$500 scholarship each year.
- Faculty take an active role in recruitment efforts for their programs, regularly participating in activities such as the annual Career Expo, Exploration Days, MyTI Days, and summertime academies. They also regularly meet with prospective students and parents.
- Staff and faculty donate their time to serve on standing committees, advise student organizations, and lead students in community service projects.

- Faculty work hard throughout the year to build relationships with the industries that hire their students. This involves attending industry-related conferences, workshops, and trainings, as well as initiating direct contacts with industry leaders and employers.
- A staff survey last spring revealed that 98.67% of employees believe that MTI provides valuable services to industry.

## Students

- Students' satisfaction (5.71 out of 7) on the Campus Climate scale of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory exceeded the score of the national comparison group (5.27). This scale is defined by Noel-Levitz as the extent that the institution provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging (Resource 7.15).
- Thirty-nine students serve as ambassadors for their respective programs. These students represent their programs at all campus-wide high school visit days, welcoming our visitors to MTI and helping them learn about the Institute and its academic programs.
- Farm Business Management participants responding to a 2009 survey unanimously agreed that the FBM program had increased their farm management skills, and all would recommend this program to other beginning farmers and ranchers (Resource 7.16).
- The fact that so many students persist and complete their degrees at MTI is evidence that our students value the services we provide. Of 1,004 students enrolled in fall 2009, 80% either completed their degree or have returned to MTI this fall.

## CONCLUSION

Mitchell Technical Institute is clearly valued by its external constituencies. We enjoy tremendous support from business and industry, as evidenced by advisory committees, donations and loans of equipment and services, and financial contributions. MTI is also viewed as an important member of the community; students and employees are involved in many activities that utilize their talents and skills for the benefit of Mitchell and the surrounding area.

Our internal constituencies also value their association with MTI. Students and employees demonstrate this by giving their time, money, and talents back to the institution. This is also evidenced by positive survey results. As demonstrated by an excellent retention rate, students believe that MTI delivers on its promise to equip students for "career success and lifelong learning in a changing world" (MTI Vision Statement).

Chapter Eight

# FEDERAL COMPLIANCE





Mitchell Technical Institute complies with the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and the Title IV financial aid program. Documents related to Title IV compliance will be available in the Resource Room.

## CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH, AND TUITION

Mitchell Technical Institute has a semester schedule approximately 16 weeks in length. As stated in MTI's general catalog, the credit hour is the academic unit used at MTI; it is defined as "the credit earned for the completion of a course covering a semester, not less than 15 weeks long, consisting of one class period, not less than 50 minutes, weekly." In practice, MTI awards one credit for each hour of lecture and for each two hours of lab in a semester. The expectation for MTI internships is that students will complete 40 hours (one working week) at the internship site for each credit earned.



Requirements for completion of each Associate of Applied Science degree or diploma program are outlined in the MTI catalog. Programs are periodically reviewed to confirm that they meet federal financial aid guidelines for eligibility. Two-semester diploma programs average 42 credit hours; four-semester AAS degree programs average 78 credit hours.

The South Dakota Board of Education sets the tuition for the state's four technical institutes. Fees are determined through the MTI budgeting process, and the budget is subsequently approved by the Mitchell Board of Education. All students are charged a per-credit tuition amount, fees unique to their specific technical program, and institution-wide fees that cover such items as technology access, student activities, and graduation.

MTI does not charge a different rate for out-of-state or international students, nor does it charge adjusted rates for online programming.

**Challenges** – In response to industry demands for increased graduate skills, credit hour requirements in several programs now significantly exceed the institutional average. Programs are also longer due to new internship requirements, another response to industry recommendations. MTI is currently reviewing program courses, length, and costs to assure alignment with desired higher education practices.

## STUDENT COMPLAINTS

MTI maintains a formal process for resolution of formal student complaints, grievances, grade disputes, and revocation of academic suspension. Each of these policies is outlined in the Student Handbook. MTI encourages communication between the involved parties whenever possible; often this can help to solve an issue before it reaches the point of official complaint status. When a formal complaint is filed, the institution resolves the complaint in a timely manner according to established policies. Documentation of specific complaints is kept in a secure area and will be provided to the team during its visit.

**Challenge** – MTI has had just one formal student complaint in the past three years. This makes identifying patterns difficult. Board policies – including those dealing with student complaints, due process, and grievances – are reviewed on a four-year cycle. However, policies can be changed at any time should a need become apparent.

## TRANSFER POLICIES

Mitchell Technical Institute publishes its transfer policy in the general catalog (page 15). The transfer policy, which is reviewed annually, clearly outlines criteria used in awarding credit toward degree or diploma requirements for courses and, in some cases, life experiences completed by the student prior to enrollment at MTI. Each student's prior coursework, life experience, and work experience are evaluated, and administrators and faculty collaborate to make a credit determination.

The current year's catalog is available on the institution's website.



## VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

MTI has a username and password procedure in place to verify student identity in online instruction. It also helps that most of our distance learning courses include at least some face-to-face interaction between faculty and students.

## TITLE IV PROGRAM AND RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES

MTI's financial aid office fulfills its obligations in regard to federal requirements and student need with integrity and compassion. In the past year, the federal financial aid program has implemented significant operational changes; during the same timeframe, MTI experienced major enrollment growth and associated financial aid applications and awards. MTI processed 614 financial aid packages in 2008-09; that number increased to 983 in 2009-10.

MTI fulfills its Title IV responsibilities as stipulated by the U.S. Department of Education and has had no adverse findings to report. The past three years' audits of the Institution's financial aid program have been satisfactory, with no limitations, suspensions or terminations imposed on the processing or programs of financial aid at MTI. We have had no audit exceptions in the past three years. MTI successfully maintains a low default rate on student educational loans, well below the national average of 8.5% for two-year colleges. This is attributable to MTI's strong placement record – students with jobs are able to pay their debts – and to the financial aid office's default prevention plan, which actively works to keep rates low.

MTI's default prevention effort begins before students even enter MTI. Its financial aid coordinator visits 10-12 area high schools every year to speak to student and parent groups about postsecondary financial aid. He also presents sessions at each visitation day held for prospective students throughout the year. As students enter MTI, the financial aid office provides counseling and assistance in applying for financial aid, including a discussion of the student's debt capacity. Students also are tracked to assure they complete required online entrance counseling before receiving their student loans.

Prior to graduation, the financial aid coordinator visits with the future graduates in every program as part of the institution's default prevention plan. The students are counseled about loan repayment and educated about their obligations. Graduates who begin to miss payments are identified by financial aid personnel; they receive follow-up letters emphasizing the importance of loan repayment and the options available to help those in financial difficulties.

Student Loan Default Rates		
2006	2007	2008
6.5%	3.0%	4.7%

MTI's financial aid coordinator submits campus crime information every August in compliance with Department of Education requirements. Fortunately, no serious crimes have ever occurred on the campus, so none have been reported. This information is also reported in the student handbook. In addition, MTI Board Policy #114 (Crime Awareness Act and Campus Security Act of 1990 Compliance Policies and Procedures) is included in its entirety in the student handbook, available to the public on the Institute's website. Consumer disclosures in the financial aid section meet the requirements, and no negative findings have occurred. As stated in the general catalog, graduation rates and placement rates are available to the public upon request. Placement data is also available to the public on the website.



MTI's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy is in the student handbook and general catalog, both of which are available on the website. The institutional attendance policy (also in the handbook) allows instructors to establish course-specific or program-specific attendance policies and requires such policies to be included on all course syllabi. Sessions at registration and orientation emphasize the importance of attendance.

MTI maintains no contractual relationships with third-party entities not accredited by federally recognized accrediting agencies.

## **INSTITUTIONAL DISCLOSURES AND ADVERTISING AND RECRUITMENT MATERIALS**

MTI accurately reports its affiliation status with The Higher Learning Commission and other accrediting agencies in all major college documents and publications, as well as on the website. Our materials are created with a high level of integrity and honesty. Any publication, presentation, representation, or information provided to prospective students is assured to be accurate through annual review by the MTI Marketing office.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES AND WITH STATE REGULATORY BODIES**

MTI is in good standing with the South Dakota Board of Education and the Office of Career, Curriculum and Technical Education, which provides state oversight of the technical institutes in South Dakota. Several technical programs at MTI are also affiliated with or accredited by additional agencies:

### **Accreditations**

- Medical Assistant – Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs on recommendation of the Curriculum Review Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants Endowment
- Medical Laboratory Technology – National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- Radiologic Technology – The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology

## Affiliations

- Architectural Design and Building Construction – Associated General Contractors, National Association of Home Builders
- Automation Controls/SCADA – The International Society of Automation
- Electrical Construction and Maintenance – South Dakota Electrical Council
- Heating and Cooling Technology – American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers
- Power Line Construction and Maintenance – South Dakota Rural Electric Association
- Propane and Natural Gas Technologies – Center for Energy Workforce Development
- Telecommunications – South Dakota Association of Telephone Co-Ops Association, Minnesota Telecommunications Association



## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT AND THIRD PARTY COMMENT**

MTI notified its constituencies regarding the March 2011 comprehensive visit and solicited third party comment through a variety of methods. We used email and newsletters to notify students, alumni, employers and advisory board members to invite them to submit comments to HLC. Additionally, we placed ads in our regional newspaper and published an announcement on our website in order to notify the public and to seek comments.

Chapter Nine

# SUMMARY AND FORMAL REQUEST FOR RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION





## SUMMARY

Mitchell Technical Institute has conducted a self-study for the past two-plus years. Beginning in 2008, teams began meeting to carefully consider the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and MTI's status in relation to those standards and minimum expectations. We have examined our processes, policies, handbooks, planning documents, and organizational structures. We have talked to and learned from our students, alumni, faculty and staff, employers, and educational and industry partners. We have worked diligently to make improvements wherever improvements were needed.



As we reflect on the past two years, we celebrate MTI's strengths:

- The review of our mission documents has convinced us that our mission to “provide skills for success in technical careers” is more relevant and necessary today than ever. Faculty, staff, administrators, and partners are committed to providing quality technical educational programs for our students.
- We are growing in enrollment as well as in our educational offerings. Once completed, our ambitious campus building project will give our students a learning environment second to none. Fiscal responsibility, new initiatives, and enrollment growth have helped to assure MTI's future sustainability and viability.
- A dynamic strategic plan is guiding MTI forward. This plan will shape decisions regarding educational programs, curriculum, services, student experiences, staffing and community relations for years to come.
- Strong industry partners provide support and vital direction for our programs and the institution as a whole. Our Strategic Advisory Council and 22 program advisory committees are key to our continued ability to deliver high-quality technical education.
- Understanding of assessment has significantly grown as we have made a concerted effort to focus time and resources on the important activities of identifying and assessing course, program, and institutional learning outcomes.

We also know that MTI has opportunities for growth. The self-study has helped us identify challenges:

- Communication is vital to build institutional unity and collaboration, both internally and externally. We have worked to improve communication and know that this process must expand so that all constituents are kept informed and given the opportunity to contribute.
- Increased enrollment is unquestionably a good thing for MTI. However, along with more students come increased demands on faculty and support staff. We must determine optimal teaching loads and student-teacher ratios, especially in labs where safety is a primary concern. We must also assure adequate time for critical activities like planning, assessment, documentation, and committee meetings.
- Meeting the needs of our fulltime on-campus students is a challenge with MTI's currently split campus, and migration efforts must continue. As our outreach programs and distance learning options expand, we must also deliver high-quality programs and services to students in other communities via traditional and electronic methods.



- Finances are a continuing challenge due to the high cost of maintaining updated technology and training equipment and highly qualified technical instructors. We must seek innovative methods, including grants, business partnerships, and budget prioritization, to assure quality in instruction.
- Continued attention must be given to the length of our associate degree programs to determine ways to decrease total credit hours while maintaining program and mission integrity. We are also committed to working with South Dakota's public university system to create beneficial transfer opportunities for our students.
- We must undertake a process to discover what diversity means in a small, Midwestern community and work to instill more forward-thinking awareness of diversity in all its various expressions for our faculty, staff, and our students.

## **FORMAL REQUEST FOR RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION**

Mitchell Technical Institute demonstrates, and has documented through the self-study process, that it meets each of the Criteria for Accreditation and the associated core components as defined by the Higher Learning Commission. Furthermore, MTI is in full compliance with all federal guidelines and requirements.

As the Institute concludes the self-study process, faculty, staff, and administrators are confident of MTI's proven track record and its continued ability to deliver high-quality educational programs aligned with its mission of preparing students for successful technical careers. MTI therefore respectfully requests renewal of accreditation for a period of ten years.

# Appendices





# Appendices

Appendix A .....Self-Study Volunteers

Appendix B .....Mitchell Board of Education Membership

Appendix C .....MTI Strategic Advisory Council Membership

Appendix D ..... Acronyms Used at MTI

Appendix E ..... Resources Cited in Self-Study

Appendix F .....Organizational Charts

Appendix G ..... Institutional Snapshot

# Appendix A

## Self-Study Volunteers



### Steering Committee

Michael Benjamin, Instructor  
Karen Clark, Instructor  
LeAnne Messer, Instructor  
Tammie Munsen, Instructor  
Tony Russell, Instructor  
Marla Smith, Self-Study Coordinator  
Vicki Wiese, Vice-President for Academic Affairs

### Criterion #1 Team

Karen Clark, Team Chair  
Cheri Cross, Instructor  
Doug Fuerst, Instructor  
Julie Hart-Schutte, Learning Services  
Jim Mahoney, Instructor  
Janet Nicolaus, Instructor  
Cal Puetz, Instructor  
H. Jean Starr, Instructor

### Criterion #2 Team

Michael Benjamin, Team Chair  
Julie Brookbank, Marketing  
Terry Bush, Information Technology  
Janet Greenway, Registrar  
Heather Lentz, Foundation  
Mark Munsen, Instructor  
Greg Nepl, Instructor  
Amanda Nepl, Career Services  
Grant Uecker, Financial Aid  
Dave VerSteeg, Instructor

### Criterion #3 Team

Tammie Munsen, Team Chair  
Debbie Asmus, ISC Coordinator  
Julie Brookbank, Marketing  
Roger Carlson, Instructor  
Deb Giblin, Instructor  
Carol Grode-Hanks, Curriculum  
Laura Miller, Instructor  
Kelly Odens, Instructor

### Criterion #4 Team

LeAnne Messer, Team Chair  
Randy Doescher, Instructor  
Paula Freeman, Instructor  
Dave Garton, Instructor  
Carol Grode-Hanks, Curriculum  
Eric Schaffer, Instructor  
Jen Schumacher, Instructor  
Ruthie Swartout, Instructor

### Criterion #5 Team

Tony Russell, Team Chair  
Kelvin Albertz, Instructor  
Linda Case, Instructor  
Roger DeRouchey, Instructor  
Scott Fossum, Enrollment  
Doug Greenway, Corporate Education  
Janet Greenway, Registrar  
John Heemstra, Outreach  
Heather Lentz, Foundation  
Jimmie Nicolaus, Trainer  
Mike Puetz, Instructor  
Myron Sonne, Instructor

# Appendix B

## Mitchell School Board of Education Membership

Dr. Joe Graves, Superintendent

Steve Culhane, Business Manager



### Board Members

Brenda Freidel, President

Dana Price

Neil Putnam

Theresa Kriese

Eric Christensen

## Appendix C

# MTI Strategic Advisory Council Membership

Roger Musick, Chair  
Innovative Systems

Lewis Bainbridge  
Ag Producer

Tom Bohnet  
Applied Engineering; RTEC, Yankton

Dick Muth  
Muth Electric

Jeff Nelson  
East River Electric Power Cooperative

Wayne Puetz  
Puetz Corporation

Tom Rasmusson  
Avera Queen of Peace Health Services

Tom Simmons  
Midcontinent Communications

Doug Sombke  
South Dakota Farmers Union

Jim White  
Huron Community Campus

Greg Von Wald, Ex-Officio  
Mitchell Technical Institute

Julie Brookbank, Ex-Officio  
Mitchell Technical Institute

Joe Graves, Ex-Officio  
Mitchell School District



## Appendix D

### Acronyms Used at MTI

ADBC	Architectural Design and Building Construction
BIT	Business and Industry Training (now Corporate Education)
CAA	Culinary Arts Academy
CDC	Child Development Center
CE	Corporate Education
CSI	Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory
CSS	Computer Software Specialist (now Office Technology Specialist)
CST	Computer Systems Technology (now Information Systems Technology)
ECM	Electrical Construction and Maintenance
ETC	Energy Training Center
FBM	Farm Business Management (now South Dakota Center for Farm and Ranch Management)
HCT	Heating and Cooling Technology
ISC	Instructional Services Center
IST	Information Systems Technology
MA	Medical Assistant
MATE	Mitchell Area Technical Educators
MCEA	Mitchell Classified Educational Association
MLT	Medical Laboratory Technology
MOP	Medical Office Professional
MST	Medical Secretary Transcriptionist (now Medical Office Professional)
OCCTE	Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OTS	Office Technology Specialist
PAS	Postsecondary Agriculture Student Organization
PDP	Professional Development Plan
PNG	Propane and Natural Gas Technologies
SAC	Strategic Advisory Council
SGU	Sinte Gleska University
SPG	Strategic Planning Group
SRB	Student Representative Board
TABE	Test for Adult Basic Education
TI	Technical Institute
WTT	Wind Turbine Technology



## Appendix E

### Resource Cited in Self-Study



- 3.1 Minutes of Nov. 18, 2009, Mission Revision Meeting
- 3.2 MTI Change Request – Additional Location
- 3.3 MTI Syllabus Template
- 3.4 MTI Policy #112 Non-discrimination
- 3.5 MTI Policy #1002 Equal Educational Opportunities
- 3.6 MTI Policy #115 Harassment
- 3.7 Spring 2009 Alumni Survey Results
- 3.8 Spring 2009 Employer Survey Results
- 3.9 Fall 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
- 3.10 Spring 2009 Survey of Staff Satisfaction Results
- 3.11 MTI Policy #116 Equal Opportunity
- 3.12 2009 Graduate Follow-up Report
- 3.13 South Dakota Technical Institutes Annual Report 2010
- 3.14 MTI Strategic Advisory Council Charter
- 3.15 Spring 2010 Survey of Staff Satisfaction Results
- 3.16 2010-11 Personnel Handbook
- 3.17 MTI Policy #302 The Administrative Team
- 3.18 MTI Tech Trek (Binder in Resource Room)
- 3.19 MTI Cost Sheet
- 3.20 2010-11 MTI Student Handbook
  
- 4.1 Spring 2009 Survey of Staff Satisfaction Results
- 4.2 2010-11 Advisory Committee Handbook
- 4.3 MTI SAC White Paper
- 4.4 August 2010 SWOT Results
- 4.5 High School Graduate Change 2004-2015
- 4.6 Program History at MTI
- 4.7 May 2006 SWOT Analysis
- 4.8 November 2007 MTI Planning Day
- 4.9 2008-2013 MTI Strategic Plan
- 4.10 2010-11 Outreach Department Improvement Plan
- 4.11 2010-11 Career Services Department Improvement Plan
- 4.12 Spring 2010 Parent Survey Results
- 4.13 2010-2014 MTI Technology Plan
- 4.14 Formula for Funding (24:10:42:28)
- 4.15 Foundation Grant Report
- 4.16 Spring 2010 Survey of Staff Satisfaction Results
- 4.17 Updated Strategic Plan (2010-2015)
- 4.18 MTI Annual Program Assessment Review
- 4.19 Application of Continuing Programs (24:10:42:24)
- 4.20 Continuing Program Reports – The Process
- 4.21 BOE Continuing Program Form - Accounting
- 4.22 Data Collection Plan

- 5.1 MTI Annual Program Assessment Review
- 5.2 MTI Medical Laboratory Technician Program Student Handbook 2010-2011
- 5.3 Spring 2010 Survey of Staff Satisfaction Results
- 5.4 MTI Institutional Rubrics
- 5.5 Spring 2009 Survey of Staff Satisfaction (filter for faculty only)
- 5.6 Program Certifications Offered at MTI
- 5.7 2009-10 Annual Assessment Report
- 5.8 2008 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
- 5.9 Postsecondary Technical Institute Credential (24:10:45)
- 5.10 2010-11 MATE Agreement
- 5.11 Spring 2010 Compiled Student Evaluations
- 5.12 Professional Development Plan
- 5.13 2010 Student First Week Survey
- 5.14 SSS 100 Student Success Syllabus
- 5.15 Academic Advising Checklist
- 5.16 2009 Retention Plan
- 5.17 Spring 2010 Advisory Board Survey Results

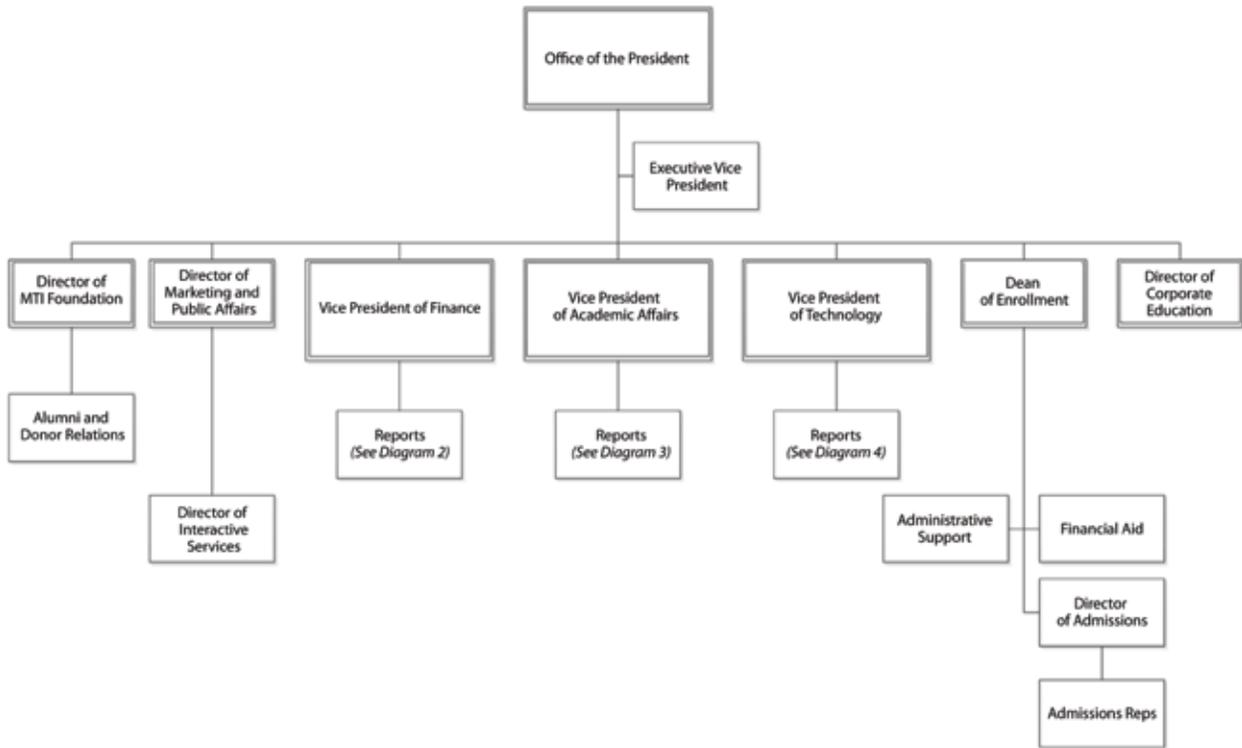
- 6.1 Articulation Guidelines
- 6.2 Postsecondary Articulation Agreements (binder in Resource Room)
- 6.3 Professional Development Plan
- 6.4 Flex Days Guidelines and Forms
- 6.5 MTI Policy #934 Academic Freedom
- 6.6 MTI Personnel Handbook
- 6.7 General Education Learning Outcomes
- 6.8 Spring 2009 Survey of Staff Satisfaction (filter for faculty only)
- 6.9 Spring 2010 Rubric Project Results
- 6.10 Speak Up! Institutional Effectiveness Project
- 6.11 2009-10 Annual Review of General Education
- 6.12 Spring 2009 Alumni Survey Results
- 6.13 Spring 2009 Employer Survey Results
- 6.14 Fall 2009 General Education Advisory Committee Minutes
- 6.15 MTI Policy #331 Program Advisory Committees
- 6.16 2010-11 Advisory Committee Handbook
- 6.17 SLPA Advisory Committee Bylaws
- 6.18 Spring 2010 Advisory Board Survey Results
- 6.19 Telecommunications Summit Minutes
- 6.20 Computer Systems Technology Summit Minutes
- 6.21 Program Certifications Available at MTI
- 6.22 MTI Internship Guide
- 6.23 New Course Proposal
- 6.24 RTH 212 Registry Review I Syllabus
- 6.25 Compliance with Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA)
- 6.26 Student Annual Notice (HEOA)
- 6.27 Student Rights and Responsibilities



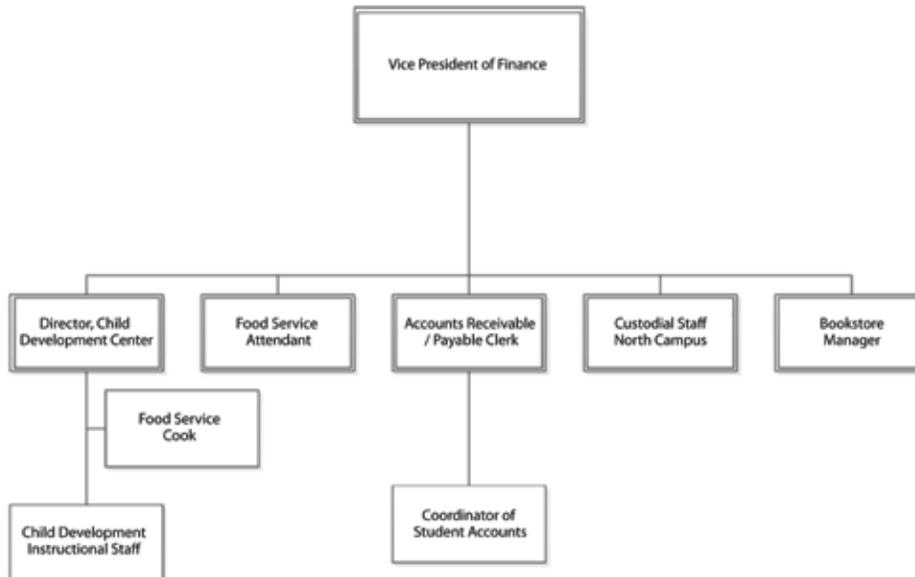


- 7.1 Data Collection Plan
- 7.2 Spring 2009 Agricultural Technology Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
- 7.3 Spring 2010 Advisory Board Survey Results
- 7.4 Spring 2009 Employer Survey Results
- 7.5 MTI Student Evaluation of Instructor
- 7.6 MTI Online Course Evaluation
- 7.7 Fall 2010 Student Focus Group Summary
- 7.8 Workforce Recruitment Program
- 7.9 Memorandum of Understanding between MTI and SGU
- 7.10 MTI Yankton Flyer
- 7.11 MTI Huron Flyer
- 7.12 Program Proposal for Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
- 7.13 Spring 2009 Alumni Survey Results
- 7.14 Spring 2010 Community Survey Results
- 7.15 Fall 2008 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
- 7.16 2009 FBM Participant Survey Results

# Appendix F Organizational Charts



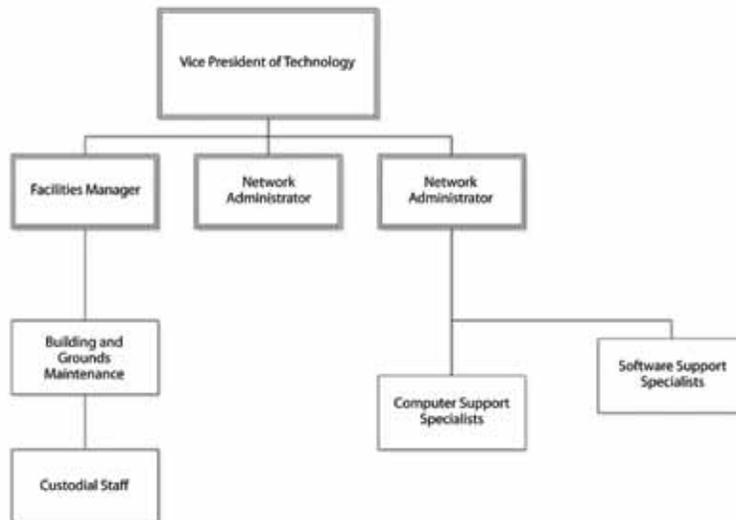
**Diagram 2**



**Diagram 3**



**Diagram 4**



## Appendix G Institutional Snapshot

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 1A. Undergraduate Enrollment by Class Level

	Freshman		Sophomore	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Fall 2010	789	71.1%	320	28.9%
Fall 2009	751	75.3%	247	24.7%

**1B. Students by Degree Seeking and Non-degree Seeking Status**

	Fall 2010 Enrollment			Fall 2009 Enrollment		
	Degree Seeking	Non-Degree Seeking	% Total	Degree Seeking	Non-Degree Seeking	% Total
<b>Men</b>						
Nonresident alien	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	4	0	0.5%	4	0	0.6%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	20	0	2.6%	15	0	2.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	0	1.3%	4	0	0.6%
Hispanic	7	0	0.9%	3	0	0.4%
White, non-Hispanic	688	52	94.6%	632	53	96.3%
Race/ethnicity Unknown	1	0	0.1%	0	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Women</b>						
Nonresident alien	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	3	0	0.9%	2	0	0.1%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	12	0	3.6%	10	0	3.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	1	0.0%	2	1	1.0%
Hispanic	0	1	0.3%	1	0	0.0%
White, non-Hispanic	255	62	95.2%	216	61	94.5%
Race/ethnicity Unknown	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>All</b>						
Nonresident alien	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	7	0	0.6%	6	0	0.6%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	32	0	2.9%	25	0	2.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	1	1.0%	6	1	0.7%
Hispanic	7	1	0.7%	4	0	0.4%
White, non-Hispanic	944	116	94.7%	848	114	95.8%
Race/ethnicity Unknown	1	0	0.1%	0	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Appendices

1C. Does not apply.

1D. Age Range of Students

Age	Fall 2010		Fall 2009	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
24 and under	783	70.2%	692	68.9%
25 and older	304	27.2%	245	24.4%
Age unknown	29	2.6%	67	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1116</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS**

2A. Student Recruitment and Admissions

	Fall 2010			Fall 2009		
	Applications	Admissions	Enrollments	Applications	Admissions	Enrollments
Freshmen	1057	453	427	1018	482	453
Transfer	524	261	232	377	198	190
Total	1581	714	659	1395	680	643

2B. Admission Test Scores of Accepted Students

Tests Used	Mean Scores	
	2010	2009
TABE Reading	80.86	78.60
TABE Math Comp	84.76	84.26
TABE Algebra	64.87	63.78
TABE Writing	80.51	73.92
COMPASS Reading	79.55	80.21
COMPASS Writing	63.43	65.66
COMPASS Pre-Algebra	52.40	52.91
COMPASS Algebra	32.61	34.15
ACT Composite	19.47	19.46
ACT English	18.15	17.87
ACT Math	19.51	20.29
ACT Reading	19.52	19.50
ACT Science	20.31	20.08

Appendices

## FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

### 3A. Percent of Enrolled Students Who Applied for Financial Aid

	2009-10	2008-09
% Applied for Financial Aid	87%	80%

### 3B. Percent of Enrolled Students Who Received Financial Aid

Type of Financial Aid	2009-10		2008-09	
	Count	Percent of Total Enrollment	Count	Percent
Loans	741	76%	566	73%
Work-study	58	6%	54	7%
MTI Scholarships	87	9%	49	6%
Grants	575	59%	419	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>81%</b>

## STUDENT RETENTION AND PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

### 4A. Retention Rates

	Fall 2010			Fall 2009		
	Number Entering	Number Returning	Percent Retained	Number Entering	Number Returning	Percent Retained
Nonresident alien	0	0	NA	0	0	100%
Black, non-Hispanic	3	2	66.7%	3	2	66.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	24	13	54.2%	11	6	54.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2	66.7%	2	2	100.0%
Hispanic	2	1	50.0%	3	3	100.0%
White, non-Hispanic	557	421	75.6%	371	306	82.5%
Race/ethnicity Unknown	2	2	100.0%	5	2	40.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>74.6%</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>81.3%</b>

Appendices

### 4B. Does not apply.

#### 4C. Count of Graduates by CIP Code

<b>Instructional Programs</b>	<b>2010 Grads</b>
Agriculture/Natural Resources	23
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology	54
Biological and Physical Science	0
Business	42
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts	10
Education/Library Science	0
Humanities/Interdisciplinary	0
Health	47
Law	0
Mathematics/Computer Science	24
Military Technology/Protective Services	0
Personal Services/Consumer Services/Fitness	3
Psychology/Social Sciences and Services	0
Trades/Production/Transportation Health	175
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>

#### 4D. Pass Rates on Licensure Examinations

<b>Radiologic Technology – American Registry of Radiologic Technologists</b>			
<b>Year Graduated</b>	<b>Number Candidates</b>	<b>Number Passing</b>	<b>Percentage Passing</b>
2010	10	10	100%
2009	13	13	100%

<b>Medical Laboratory Technology – American Society for Clinical Pathology</b>			
<b>Year Graduated</b>	<b>Number Candidates</b>	<b>Number Passing</b>	<b>Percentage Passing</b>
2009	7	6	86%
2008	7	6	86%

<b>Medical Assistant</b>			
<b>Year Graduated</b>	<b>Number Candidates</b>	<b>Number Passing</b>	<b>Percentage Passing</b>
2010	8	6	75%
2009	9	8	89%

<b>Radiation Therapy – American Registry of Radiologic Technologists</b>			
<b>Year Graduated</b>	<b>Number Candidates</b>	<b>Number Passing</b>	<b>Percentage Passing</b>
2010	7	7	100%
2009	5	5	100%

## **FACULTY DEMOGRAPHY**

### **5A. Faculty by Highest Degree Earned**

<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Fall 2010</b>		<b>Fall 2009</b>	
	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Doctorate	0	0	0	0
First Professional	0	0	0	0
Master's	16	5	15	5
Bachelor's	13	5	13	6
Associate's	17	3	14	2
None	13	2	12	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>16</b>

### **5B. Faculty by Race/Ethnicity and Gender**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Fall 2010</b>		<b>Fall 2009</b>	
	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Hispanic or Latino	0	0	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Black or African American	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
White	59	14	54	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	38	6	34	7
Female	21	9	20	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>16</b>

## 5C. Faculty by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)

CIP Areas	Fall 2010	Fall 2009
Agriculture/Natural Resource	6	5
Architecture/Engineering/Engineering Technology	10	9
Biological and Physical Science	0	0
Business	9	8
Communications/Communication Technology/Fine Arts	1	1
Education/Library Science	0	0
Health	9	8
Humanities/Interdisciplinary	11	14
Law	0	0
Mathematics/Computer Science	4	4
Military Technology/Protective Services	0	0
Personal Services/Consumer Services/Fitness	3	2
Psychology/Social Sciences and Services	0	0
Trades/Production/Transportation Health	21	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>70</b>

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AND AVAILABILITY

### 6A. Technology Resources Dedicated to Supporting Student Learning

MTI has eight general use computer labs providing over 200 computers between our two campus locations. The Institute also provides computer kiosks at several common student gathering locations on campus. Specific use engineering labs on campus have been reduced by most engineering programs going to 1:1 laptop programs. We still provide an additional four occupation-specific labs with over 100 computers for student use. Each location is equipped with enterprise-level printing stations.

MTI provides production and public network access over all of our south campus buildings, and wireless hotspots are provided in common areas on the main campus. The MTI Ag Lab and Power Sports Marine Lab are leased facilities and are provided only with the production network.

Technologies used in courses include the Jenzabar eRacer online course platform, SmartBoards, podcasting, streaming video, computers, LCD projectors, and overhead graphics cameras. Dim dim will be the webinar, online meeting and tutoring software launched this year.

Information Services staff provide, maintain, and support student computer labs, campus networks and all 1:1 laptop programs.

Information Services and a dedicated on-line learning coordinator provide, maintain, support, and implement course-related technology resources. The Instructional Services Center Coordinator provides on-site computer assistance in the library for students.

MTI has engaged the services of a third party network monitoring company providing 24/7 network and systems health real time monitoring. The services provided confirm our local monitoring and observation of network and systems availability and use.

The South Dakota Network's Network Surveillance Center provides for real time and historical data reporting on activity and use.

MTI deployed Global Managed Services four years ago, and this service provides 24/7 monitoring of the traffic type moving through our network. This system provides us with alerts related to potential peer to peer file sharing, intrusion prevention, and virus attack alerts.

Additional subjective evaluations of use are done through observation of student use in the available labs and use of other technology resources available on campus.

## FINANCIAL DATA

### 7A. Actual Unrestricted Revenues

Sources of Revenue	FY2010		FY2009
Tuition and Fees	5,159,442.36		3,272,755.79
State/Local Appropriations	3,318,777.34		3,775,864.11
Investment and Annuity Income	158,817.29		100,085.63
Contributions	9,000.00		0
Auxiliary	460,084.53		735,956.96
Other - Federal	1,148,676.84		770,148.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,254,798.36</b>		<b>8,654,810.49</b>

### 7B. Actual Unrestricted Expense

Expenses	FY2010		FY2009
Instructional/Departmental/Library	4,282,455.14		3,933,270.02
Student Services	1,474,981.12		1,415,690.32
Operation and Maintenance of Plant	812,696.84		710,206.18
Administration	1,038,031.97		741,451.08
Auxiliary	473,314.04		766,663.47
Other	1,772,818.91		1,034,310.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,854,298.02</b>		<b>8,601,591.18</b>

### 7C. Does not apply.





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