ANNUAL WORK PLANS

HELENACOLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

INTRODUCTION

This guide will assist you in developing and completing a yearly work plan for your area of responsibility (e.g. academic program, department, committee, or senate).

The annual work plan demonstrates how the activities of your area align with the defining characteristics of each of the four guiding principles in our strategic plan. Successful completion of these goals contributes to fulfillment of our mission, which we are required to document for accreditation by the NWCCU[1].

Each area must **outline 3-7 goals** for the upcoming academic year and select the defining characteristic with which they align. Supervisors or the Institutional Researcher will review the plans and provide constructive feedback. The IDEA Committee will evaluate the plans for quality and effectiveness. The results of the evaluation will help determine the extent of mission fulfillment and inform planning, prioritization, and allocation of resources, both at the area and the institution level.

An annual work plan should:

- Be a clear and concise account of the area's goals and priorities for the year.
  - While the primary audience is your area, keep in mind that others on campus will read the plans.
  - Please spell out acronyms the first time they are used, and consider providing a brief explanation of industry- or field-specific vocabulary.
- Demonstrate thoughtful planning and reflection. While we do hope to see goals completed, the plans are about the continuous improvement process as much as the performance.
- Be collaborative. Consider how your work intersects with other areas and college-wide efforts.
- Relate to employee performance reviews as appropriate, without directly referring to any specific employee's actual job performance.
- Complement and align with three- and five-year program reviews. Recommendations from program reviews are assigned to a primary responsible party and will appear in that area's annual work plans. Historical work plans will provide a summary of the area's significant activities during the review period.

HELP AND SUPPORT

Questions about annual work plans:

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[1] Northwest Commission Colleges and Universities, regional accreditor, see *Year 1 Self-Evaluation Report* (2018).

NEW THIS YEAR

AY 2023-24 Priorities

The Dean's Cabinet has selected STEWARDSHIP as the priority area of focus for the year, which coincides with institutional efforts to improve the budget process and long-term financial planning. All areas are encouraged to set at least one goal aligned to a Stewardship defining characteristic, though it is not a requirement.

Examples of goals that support stewardship include (but are not limited to) pursing professional development, creating or updating procedure manuals, implementing cross-departmental training, or completing an inventory of assets.

New in the Database

- Added to Plan Details: Professional Development Plans
  - Under the Stewardship guiding principle of our strategic plan, we have both a defining characteristic (ST-4) and a strategic goal (ST-3) focused on professional development. This section was added to encourage all areas on campus to consider professional development when planning goals and priorities for the year.
- Added to Plan Goals: Goal Statement
  - This section was added to help plan developers separate what you want to achieve from what you will do in order to make it happen.
- Recommended length for plan goal components: 400 words
  - You will be able to see the number of words you have used in each part of the Plan Goals section. There is no official limit; this is merely a guideline to encourage brevity and focused goal-setting.
- Removed "Ongoing" status
  - This status was determined to conflict with the intention of focusing on growth and improvement in annual work plans. Additionally, there has consistently been confusion between "Ongoing" and "In Progress" statuses.

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TIMELINE

In the event of a change of date, plan developers will be given sufficient advance notice.

Initial Plans

Date	Activity	Plan Status
Aug. 22, 2023	AY 2023-24 work plans open for editing	**Initial Editing**

Sept. 22, 2023	Initial work plans due for supervisor/IR review.
	
	Required sections (see Completing the Plans, Initial Plans):
	• Mission
	• Narrative
	• Professional Development Plans
	• 3-7 goals and for each:
	    o Guiding Principle and Defining Characteristics
	    o Responsible Party
	    o Planned Term Completion
	    o Goal Statement
	    o Action Item(s)
	    o Indicator(s)
	• Where relevant: selected Program Review Recommendation and Connection to Recommendation
		Developer changes to **Initial Submitted**

Oct. 6, 2023	Deadline for supervisors or IR to review plans, provide feedback, and approve plans.	Supervisor changes to **Initial Accepted**
Oct. – Nov., 2023	IDEA Committee reviews plans and provides constructive feedback to plan developers. Initial campus-wide report produced and distributed to IDEA Committee, Cabinet, and campus.	

Mid-Year Plans

Date	Activity	Plan Status
Jan. 8, 2024	Notification to complete mid-year updates	
Feb. 2, 2024	Mid-year updates due for supervisor/IR review. Required sections (see Completing the Plans, Mid-Year): • Mid-Year Update for each goal • Mid-Year Narrative	Developer changes to **Mid-Year Submitted**
Feb. 16, 2024	Deadline for supervisors or IR to review plans, provide feedback, and approve mid-year updates.	Supervisor changes to **Mid-Year Accepted**

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Final Plans

Date	Activity	Plan Status
April 17, 2024	Notified of option to complete AY 2023-24 plans before end of semester.	**Final Editing**
May 3, 2024	Recommended date for early submission of work plans. See June 21 below for required sections. Notify your supervisor/IR if you are planning to submit early.	Developer changes to **Final Submitted**
May 10, 2024	Recommended deadline for supervisor/IR to review and approve final plan. Plan developers may begin a draft of AY 2023-24 plans to be entered into the database upon return in the fall.	Supervisor changes to **Final Approved**
May 20, 2024	Notification of final deadline to submit AY 2022-23 annual work plans.	**Final Editing**

June 21, 2024	Final annual work plans due for supervisor/IR review for all programs.
	Required sections (see Completing the Plans, Final Plans):
	• Final Budget Narrative
	• Annual Plan Final Narrative
	• Professional Development Summary
	• For each goal:
	  o Results
	  o Future Actions
	  o Goal Status
	• Where relevant (completed goal that supports a program review recommendation): New Recommendation Status and Justification for Status Change
		Developer changes to **Final Submitted**

July 7, 2024	Deadline for supervisors or IR to review plans, provide feedback, and approve plans.	Supervisor changes to **Final Accepted**
July / August 2024	IDEA Committee reviews plans and provides constructive feedback to plan developers. Final campus-wide report assembled and distributed to IDEA committee, Cabinet, and campus. Database is down for updates. Plan developers may begin planning for AY 2024-25.	
Mid-August 2024	Database opens for AY 2024-25 work plans.	

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HOW TO ACCESS THE PLANS

1. Access the annual work plans from the **Employee Portal** on the Helena College website. Go to **Assessment Database** in the Academics section.

2. Sign in with your NetID.

3. You may need to navigate to **College Assessment** in the top menu and select **Annual Work Plan**.

4. You will be able to view plans for which you are the designated plan developer or supervisor. Select the plan you wish to edit from the drop-down menu.

5. Complete the required areas for each phase of the work plans
   a. For more information about each section, see "Completing the Plans, beginning on page 6.
   b. Any goals that were marked <u>In Progress</u>, <u>Ongoing</u>, or <u>Deferred</u> in the previous year's plan will automatically populate in your current plan. Please review the content to ensure it contains up-to-date information. If you decide not to continue work on these goals, please make a note in the Narrative section.

6. Submitted plans will be reviewed by a supervisor or the Institutional Researcher (IR). Supervisors are encouraged to provide constructive feedback and change the plan status to Accepted when all work on the plan is complete.
   a. If your plan does not have a supervisor listed under Plan Details, the IR will review your plan.

> The database is set to time out after 125 minutes. Save your work frequently and/or work in a Word document, then copy and paste your content into the database.

> ### Want to share your plan with your department or see previous years' plans?
>
> Select **View Plan Report for exporting** at the top of the Plan Details section. First, select the desired year on the right side of the screen, then select the area.
>
> You can then download a PDF of your plan.

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COMPLETING THE PLANS

For each phase of the work plans (initial, mid-year, submitted), you will only see the sections that have already been completed or are required for the given phase.

Initial Plans

1. In the Plan Details section, complete the following:
   a. **Mission:** Enter the mission statement for your area. All areas are strongly encouraged to develop mission statements.
   b. **Narrative**: Enter additional information about your area that may be relevant, such as the names of committee members or officers, additional background, or unusual circumstances affecting your area for the current academic year.
   c. **Professional Development Plans**: Identify and describe your area's professional development and/or training needs and plans for this academic year.
2. In the Plan Goals section, complete the following for each goal:
   a. **Select Plan Goal**: The database displays one goal at a time. Each area must have between 3 and 7 goals.
      i. To add a new goal, select Add Goal # from the **Select Plan Goal** menu.
      ii. Delete a goal by clicking **Delete this Goal** at the bottom of the goal.
   b. **Goal Statement**: Briefly describe what you want to achieve this year and the desired impact.
   c. **Guiding Principle & Defining Characteristic**: You must first select a guiding principle in order to select a defining characteristic. Refer to the current Strategic Plan. You may choose any combination of characteristics from different principles or multiple characteristics related to one principle.
   d. **Responsible Party**: The person/people responsible for carrying out the action item(s) and assessing the results. This may be the plan developer, another member of the area, or the entire area.
   e. **Planned Term Completion**: Select the term you expect to complete the action item(s).
   f. **Goal Statement**: Briefly describe what you want to achieve this year.
   g. **Action Item(s)**: Describe the action(s) your area will take *this academic year.* Effective action items are SMART, meaning they possess these five qualities:
      o **S**pecific
      o **M**easurable
      o **A**chievable
      o **R**elevant
      o **T**ime-bound
      o Watch a video from your IR about writing effective action items and indicators
   h. **Indicator(s)**: Describe what successful completion of the action items looks like. These may also be considered outcomes or anticipated results. Effective indicators are measurable. Examples include (but are not limited to) reaching a target number (40 students in a program) or percent change (reduce expenses by 5%), or publication of a document.
   i. **Save Goal**.
3. Above the Plan Details section, change the plan status to Initial Submitted and click **Save Plan Status**

For Areas Completing Program Reviews Since 2021-22

If any program review recommendations have been assigned to your area, you will see an additional section below Goal Status, titled **Assigned Recommendation(s)**.

a. If the goal supports a recommendation, select the relevant recommendation.
b. The **Connection to Recommendation** box will display. Briefly describe how the action item(s) support(s) the recommendation.
c. **Save Recommendation Work**.
d. **Save Goal**.

> If you have not completed any required sections or exceeded the maximum number of characters, the plan status will automatically change to <u>Initial Issues</u> and you will see a box at the top of the plan describing the errors. Resolve the errors and change the plan status back to <u>Initial Submitted</u>.

Mid-Year

1. In the Plan Details section, complete the following:
   a. **Mid-Year Narrative**: Summarize the progress you have made overall. Mention any obstacles or changes that have come up.
2. For each plan goal, complete the following:
   a. **Mid-Year Update**: Provide any updates regarding progress toward a goal, whether it has been accomplished, you have started the work, or something has caused you to change your original plan.
   b. **Goal Status:** You are have the option to update your goal status at this point. See Final Plans for more information about the goal status options.
   c. **Save Goal.**
3. Above the Plan Details section, change the plan status to <u>Mid-Year Submitted</u> and click **Save Plan Status**.

> If you have not completed any required sections or exceeded the maximum number of characters (2000), the plan status will automatically change to <u>Mid-Year Issues</u> and you will see a box at the top of the plan describing the errors. Resolve the errors and change the plan status back to <u>Mid-Year Submitted</u>.

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Final Plans

1. In the Plan Details section, complete the following:
   a. **Final Budget Narrative**: Provide a brief summary of spending activities for the year. Describe how your financial resources supported goal completion or impeded progress. Compare your original budget and final/anticipated expenses. Even though your expenses will not be finalized yet, you can use both current UMDW reports and your own records. Address any discrepancies between allocations and expenditures and any budget modifications. In short, document how you have demonstrated good stewardship of your allocated resources.
   b. **Annual Plan Final Narrative**: Reflect on the plan and academic year as a whole. Summarize your progress and how it will influence your next year of work. Mention any anticipated changes, challenges, activities, or opportunities in the next academic year.
   c. **Professional Development Summary**: Briefly describe the professional development and training activities completed by staff/faculty and how they have or will contribute to continuous improvement for your area.
2. Complete the following for each goal in the Plan Goals section:
   a. **Results**: Describe what actually happened this year, including the actions taken and the outcomes of the actions. This should correlate to the action items and indicators described at the beginning of the year. <u>Even if you weren't successful or didn't accomplish an action item, state that here</u> and mention any contributing factors.
   b. **Future Actions**: What's next? Reflect on how the outcomes will influence future plans. For example, you may continue a successful activity or improve on it. An action item may be completed and need no further action. A goal may be passed on to another area. You may scrap an unsuccessful goal altogether, describing what you learned and how you will adapt or pivot.
   c. **Goal Status**
      1. <u>Completed [term]</u>: Goal has been completed to the fullest extent possible. This goal will not appear in future work plans.
      2. <u>Not completed</u>: Actions item(s) have not been started and goal was not completed, with no future plans for completion.
      3. <u>In Progress</u>: Action item(s) have been started, but more work is needed before the goal is completed. Goal will automatically be included in the next plan.
      4. <u>Deferred</u>: Action item(s) were not started, but will be part of next year's goals. These goals will automatically be included in the next year's plans.
   d. **Save Goal**
3. Above the Plan Details section, change the plan status to <u>Final Submitted</u> and click **Save Plan Status**.

> If you have not completed any required sections or exceeded the maximum number of characters (2000), the plan status will automatically change to <u>Mid-Year Issues</u> and you will see a box at the top of the plan describing the errors. Resolve the errors and change the plan status back to <u>Mid-Year Submitted</u>.

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Following each phase of the annual work plans, there is a week for supervisors to review all annual plans for areas they oversee. Supervisors can review each area's priorities for the year and are encouraged to provide constructive feedback on any parts of the plan.

Areas of focus include:

- Goals are clearly articulated and reflect departmental priorities.
- Goals are appropriately aligned to the strategic plan.
- Indicators are measurable.
- Timelines for completion are realistic.
- Goal status is appropriate.

Once satisfied with the plan, supervisors will change the plan status to Accepted and save it.

BACKGROUND & ORIGINS OF THE ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The implementation of the annual work plan represents the continual evolution of Helena College's planning and assessment framework in response to feedback and recommendations from the NWCCU. Two recommendations emerging from our Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability report and site visit prompted a comprehensive revision of our mission, strategic plan, and core themes. The IDEA Committee (formerly SPAA – Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Accreditation) developed these revisions and the NWCCU accepted the report in 2018. More information can be found on the Accreditation page of the Helena College website.

We began our next seven-year accreditation cycle with a refined mission, a more focused strategic plan, and a set of reframed core themes to improve planning, decision-making, allocation of resources, and determination of mission fulfilment. The annual work plans have replaced the former annual program assessment plans, in order to provide a more straightforward and effective method to demonstrate how all areas on campus are working to achieve the College's mission as guided by the strategic plan and core themes.

The College adopted a new strategic plan for 2022-2027. While the structure of the plan has changed, the expectations remain for each area to demonstrate how their work aligns with and supports the strategic plan. A primary goal for the new strategic plan was to ensure all departments, programs, and committees could see their work reflected in the document and easily document their contributions.