Montana University System

PROGRAM REVIEW

Institution: **Montana State University - Northern**

Program Years: **2025-2026**

List of the programs reviewed:

B.A. in Community Psychology; Minor in Community Leadership

Decision(s) concerning the future of the program(s), based on the program review criteria established at the campus:

Retain and continue to grow the program.

Rationale or justification for the decision based on the program review process established at the campus. Include graduation numbers and student majors for each of the last seven (7) years for every program under review.

Community Psychology/Leadership Program

Academic Year	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Major Counts (Fall)	10	7	10	8	5	19/+1	24/+1
Minor Counts (Fall)	16	7	4	3	7	7	5
Graduates (Major/Minor)	6/3	1/4	0/2	2/3	3/1	1/1	0/3*
Retention Rate	64%	56%	33%	78%	62%	40%	-

**As of 9/16/2026. Five graduates are anticipated for the spring of 2027.*
2019 Statistics: *14 Majors, 10 Minors, 0 Graduates, Retention Rate Unavailable*

As demonstrated by the table above, the Community Leadership Program experienced a period of gradually declining enrollments from 2019 to 2024; however, a major curriculum revision and corresponding name change to Community Psychology for the fall of 2025 resulted in quadrupling enrollment. Program enrollment continued to grow another 25% between fall of 2025 and fall of 2026. Previously, the Community Leadership Program struggled with a title that was not only relatively unrecognizable, and thus challenging to market, but also did not fully or accurately reflect the content, mission, and learning outcomes of the program. Based upon ongoing faculty program evaluation and stakeholder feedback, the program was therefore redesigned and rebranded. Student, alumni, and employer feedback indicated that the program lacked clear marketability and appeal to a traditional student audience under the name Community Leadership. The primary objectives of the revision, therefore, were to provide a more traditionally recognizable and appealing disciplinary focus for the program and to clarify and expand the potential fields of employment. As a result, the new curriculum combines a broad foundation in psychology and the social sciences along with the previous focus on leadership and communication studies. A unique new complementary minor option in Nonprofit Management, approved for fall of 2026, further broadens the curriculum base and expands employment opportunities.

Since the existing Community Leadership Program was already closely aligned with the core competencies published by the American Psychological Association's Division 27, Community Psychology, the proposal to redesign the program was developed to bring the program's curriculum into complete alignment with these professional competencies, as well as provide an industry-recognized credential and a more easily marketable program name. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, for example, psychology has consistently hovered around students' fifth most popular degree choice for well over a decade, representing about 6% of the bachelor's degrees awarded over that time period. The Community Leadership Program was therefore renamed Community Psychology, and the coursework in the nonprofit management and public administration tracks was replaced with a broad foundation of psychology courses. Relevant coursework in leadership studies, community-based program design and evaluation, civics, and communication studies was retained. A complementary proposal also retained the existing nonprofit management courses under a new Nonprofit Management Minor, thus expanding accessibility of that content area to a wide variety of majors across campus. The Nonprofit Management Minor also will be crucial to sustaining and further growing the Community Psychology Program, as it aligns well not only with the interests and career goals of these majors but also with employment demand.

The Community Psychology Program revision has already been very successful in terms of enrollment. The two lower division courses offered in the fall of 2025 were both well over their established caps, and both the lower division and the upper division courses offered in the fall of 2025 saw substantial enrollment increases over fall of 2024. In addition, the original curriculum proposal for Community Psychology projected 15 majors total for its first fall, and we actually had 19 majors (plus 1 remaining Community Leadership Major on teach out, and another 7 minors). Likewise, we anticipated 5 graduates at the end of the second year, and we currently have 5 students on track to graduate in the spring of 2027. Furthermore, we projected 25 majors total after the first full year of marketing, and as of September 16th (third week) the Community Psychology Major had 24 majors along with the 1 remaining Community Leadership Major on teach out for fall of 2026, another 25% increase in enrollment. In addition, the program had 5 Community Leadership Minors. The program change has obviously resulted in substantial growth, with more to come as each year new cohorts continue to both increase in size and replace the remaining much smaller Community Leadership cohorts that progress and graduate. The program is expected to meet the goals of 30 majors by the fall of 2027, 35 majors in the fall of 2028, and 40 majors in the fall of 2029, according to the timeline originally projected.*

The newly revised Community Psychology Program, with its fully online delivery, enables students from across Montana to benefit from the unique and rigorous coursework. Since many of these students (and potential students) are place-bound, MSUN's online delivery of the major enables us to meet student, employer, and community needs more completely and adequately. In particular, online course delivery expands the program's accessibility by accommodating the shifting population base of nontraditional adult learners, providing a career ladder for those who are already employed full-time but are seeking advancement opportunities within their organization and field. The program's minor requirement also encourages exploration of and collaboration with other programs at MSU-Northern and expands students' knowledge and skill bases, thus increasing their employability. In addition to the new Nonprofit Management Minor, students are encouraged to minor in programs such as Native American Studies, Integrated Health Sciences, Criminal Justice, Agriculture, Business, Accounting, and Graphic Design, among other possibilities.

Again, as evidenced by the enrollment statistics, interest in the Community Psychology Program is growing, particularly due to the broad variety of career opportunities available to graduates of the program, not only within a vast array of nonprofits, but also within local, tribal, state, and federal government. Past graduates have been employed in such professional fields as social services, mental health, behavioral health, public health, public relations, criminal justice, domestic abuse prevention, youth mentoring, substance abuse prevention, childhood enrichment programming, community recreation programs, and community service organizations. Others have continued their education through graduate studies in public administration, public relations, social work, counseling, and law.

Community psychology graduates, as the name implies, tend to work in community-based rather than clinical settings. Whatever students' specific field of interest, upon graduating the greatest percentage will go to work for either nonprofit organizations or government agencies. The nonprofit and public administration sectors are both in Montana's top five industries by share of employment and wages. According to the Montana Nonprofit Association, in its 2025 economic impact report, the non-profit sector accounts for 11.8% of Montana's total employment, the third highest percentage after retail trade and accommodation and food services. Furthermore, the nonprofit sector accounts for the largest share of Montana's total wages at 12.6%. In Montana, nonprofits alone account for well over 2,850 employers, approximately 60,000 employees, and over $3.6 billion in wages. Furthermore, public administration is the fifth largest industry for employment in Montana, with 7.3% of the workforce and 8.5% of total wages. The state and federal governments are also the first and second largest employers in Montana, respectively. Combined, the nonprofit and government industries account for approximately one-fifth of all Montana jobs and wages.

The nonprofit sector in Montana is also growing. According to the IRS, the number of 501(c)(3) organizations in Montana has increased by nearly 1,000 since 2020, bringing the total to over 8,500. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, community and social service occupations are expected to grow by 6.6% between 2024 and 2034. Federal employment also grew by 9.7% between 2014 and 2024, and state and local employment grew by 6.4%. The need for qualified employees is strong and increasing, requiring a postsecondary program to prepare these professionals. Over one-fourth of Montana nonprofits have reported being unable to hire qualified applicants for some of their positions. All of these statistics ensure the need for (and potential for growth of) MSUN's Community Psychology Program well into the future. The redesigned and rebranded program meets at the intersection of workforce demands with student education and career desires. Obviously, these professionals require postsecondary coursework to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to bridge the gap. We anticipate the new curriculum and recruiting efforts will continue to bring steady growth to the program, which again clearly aligns with two critical sectors of Montana's economy. Under an industry recognizable title with broad student appeal, recruiting students to fulfill the workforce need is no longer an obstacle.

Not only should the Community Psychology Program be maintained, but due to the workforce need and opportunity for growth the program should be targeted for meaningful marketing and expansion. The program has already begun to receive word of mouth referrals from graduates as well as transfers from community and tribal colleges. In addition, the Community Psychology Program should be considered for expansion into the Great Falls market through collaboration with Great Falls College MSU. As of 2024, 1,137 nonprofits operated in the central Montana region, including 494 in Cascade County alone (10.8% growth since 2020) employing well over 5,000 people. Another 128 nonprofits operated in Hill County (7.6% growth since 2020). These organizations present a sizable market for graduates. Their current employees also present a sizable market of potential students, as many will require at least a bachelor's degree as a career

path into management level positions. Regardless, the Community Psychology Program is currently delivered by a single dedicated faculty member, along with a variety of social science, liberal arts, humanities, and business faculty for support, making it one of MSUN's lowest cost programs. As an aside, the Community Psychology Major also shares considerable coursework with the general Psychology Minor, which currently has 47 declared minors, and the Community Leadership Minor, which currently has 5 declared minors. In addition, the introductory course for the Community Psychology Program is included in the MUS's general education offerings for the social sciences and draws steady enrollments each year (currently 19 enrolled for fall 2026).

* *NOTE: Approval and implementation of the Community Psychology degree was delayed two full years from the original curriculum proposal, but our projections are otherwise on track if adjusted accordingly. While the Community Psychology Major was technically listed in the course catalog for fall 2024, the program change approval occurred too late and was not officially advertised, marketed, or recruited as such for the 2024-2025 academic year. Thus, the 2025-2026 academic year was the first time that the program began to be recruited and marketed on the institution's website and recruiting materials. The fall of 2025, therefore, essentially begins the actual and intentional delivery of a new online Community Psychology Program through MSU-Northern.*

Montana University System

PROGRAM REVIEW

Institution: **Montana State University - Northern**

Program Years: **2020-26**

List of the programs reviewed:

B.A. in Graphic Design, Minor in Graphic Design

Decision(s) concerning the future of the program(s), based on the program review criteria established at the campus:

- **Maintain the Graphic Design B.A. and minor**

For purposes of the Board of Regents Program Review process, the following information is presented.

Rationale or justification for the decision based on the program review process established at the campus. Include graduation numbers and student majors for each of the last seven (7) years for every program under review.

The employment rate of MSU-Northern Graphic Design graduates is excellent. Students are finding jobs within the field of Graphic Design and beyond. Our program mixes traditional art media, print media, digital media, social media curation, photography, motion design and web development. In addition, our graduates are strongly encouraged to gain understanding of business and marketing (often through a Marketing Minor). Thus, job prospects range from freelance Graphic Designers (making upwards of $60/hr.) to working for industry performing a variety tasks, ranging from design of print and digital media, illustration, website development, and marketing services. The integration of all these skills ensures flexibility and success in employment for our graduates.

MSU-Northern Graphic Design graduates report gaining successful employment. Some graduates are entrepreneurs who run their own design and marketing companies, with services ranging from website development, print media creation, marketing support, video production and art direction. Several graduates have gone on to positions as designers and publishers for companies outside of our state. While others have gone on to voids in our local job market that otherwise may have remained empty. One graduate is currently working for a local telecommunications company as a Graphic Design & Marketing Specialist. While another graduate is working full time at a local print shop. Another is currently working at MSU-Northern as a Recruitment Specialist. And yet another is working as a Front Desk Coordinator in the Recruitment department.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of graphic designers is projected to decline 2 percent from 2025 to 2035, while employment of marketing managers is projected to grow 7 percent and employment of web developers and digital designers is projected to grow 5 percent over the same period. Related fields in media and communication also provide opportunities for graduates, including public relations and digital content creation. BLS projects employment of public relations

specialists to grow 2 percent from 2025 to 2035 and notes that the continued use of social media is expected to create opportunities for professionals who help organizations effectively communicate through these platforms. These career areas should be considered in evaluating the range of skills acquired by students graduating from the Graphic Design Program at MSU-Northern, including visual communication, digital design, content creation, and creative problem-solving.

The breadth of skills developed through the Graphic Design Program at MSU-Northern supports graduates' ability to pursue and adapt to a variety of career pathways. Students build a portfolio that demonstrates competencies in visual communication, graphic and web design, photography, marketing and social media content, public relations, and multimedia production. This interdisciplinary preparation reflects the increasingly integrated nature of visual communication and enables graduates to apply their skills across multiple occupational settings and evolving digital platforms. One thing worth mentioning is that several of our graduates have gone on to support MSUN directly by being employed during and after graduation in the recruitment and marketing departments where their skills have proven to be invaluable as our university has a hard time finding qualified and talented individuals to fill these positions.

The table below illustrates the Enrollment and Graduation data for the Graphic Design Program at MSU-Northern. The number of BA majors over the past seven years averages 15.8 students per year (which has increased 3.8 students from our last review cycle), with the inclusion of the minor we are at 18.4 as an average for enrollment over the seven-year cycle. This is up substantially since our last review cycle which did not include any minors and an average enrollment number at 12. Our graduation average has remained steady at close to 3 students annually. The retention rate in the program has also remained steady as in 2018-2019 it was 64% and is still 64% in 2025-2026.

Enrollment							
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
BA Graphic Design	18	16	19	17	14	16	10
Minor Graphic Design[i]	0	4	1	4	3	4	3
Total:	18	20	20	21	17	20	13
Graduation							
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
BA Graphic Design	0	1	4	5	4	1	3
Minor Graphic Design	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total:	0	1	5	5	4	1	4

Over the past seven years, the Graphic Design program has continued to adapt its curriculum and recruitment strategies in response to student needs, enrollment trends, and changes in the graphic design profession. From 2020 through 2026, the program averaged 18.4 students annually, including an average of 15.7 students pursuing the BA in Graphic Design and 2.7 students pursuing the Graphic Design Minor. The Minor has become an important contributor to program enrollment, accounting for approximately 15% of total enrollment over the seven-year period and reaching four students in several years. Total program enrollment reached a seven-year high of 21 students in 2023.

The program has also maintained consistent student completion, with 20 total graduates during the seven-year period, including 18 BA graduates and two Graphic Design Minor graduates. Recent enrollment should be considered in the context of student completion, as the program graduated three students in 2026. While current enrollment of 10 students is below the seven-year average, the program continues to develop multiple pathways for students to enter and participate in Graphic Design. The Minor, Certificate, expanded recruitment efforts, articulation agreements, and developing industry partnerships provide opportunities to strengthen enrollment and support continued program growth.

The Graphic Design Minor has been particularly valuable in expanding the reach of the program beyond students pursuing the BA degree. The Minor provides students in other disciplines with an opportunity to develop visual communication and digital design skills that complement their primary areas of study. As the Minor has only recently been added to the university's current program offerings and becomes more visible within the university system, additional time is needed to establish awareness and enrollment patterns. The program will continue to monitor enrollment in the Minor and its contribution to overall program participation.

The program has implemented several additional recruitment and retention strategies. A Graphic Design Certificate has been added to provide an additional credential pathway for students seeking focused preparation in the field. Recruiting visits to Havre High School have provided opportunities to introduce high school students to the program, its facilities, and the range of careers available in graphic design and related fields. These activities are intended to create greater awareness of the program and establish relationships with prospective students before they enter college.

The program has also increased its emphasis on experiential and professional learning. Faculty are developing relationships with industry partners to create opportunities for internships. Last year Faculty worked with Jesse Copen from FastSigns in Great Falls and John Walton at Ultra Graphics in Billings to create internship opportunities for MSUN Graphic Design students. Recently Faculty have incorporated more cooperative education credits in the major and minor in order to provide opportunities for deeper learning in areas of interest for students. Last year one BA student internship at Triangle Communications in Havre, MT as a co-op credit and is now working there full-time. Another minor student worked with MAT Theatre to design sets and costuming for our local plays, thus supporting the university and community through her work while simultaneously utilizing skills she wished to develop further.

The Annual Student Art Show provides opportunities for students to present their work and is also a recruitment opportunity as we have included local area high school work in the last two years. Every year, the Graphic Design Program is involved in the ShowCASE recruitment drive. This year we expect to meet 60

students through our track and are excited to hopefully gain new students through this effort. These activities allow our students and program to engage with audiences both on and off campus and also strengthen student engagement while providing practical experience in presenting and communicating creative work.

Curricular revisions have been undertaken to ensure that the program remains responsive to changes in the design profession. The curriculum has been reworked to strengthen students' preparation in current digital design practices, with plans to further expand opportunities in video and motion design. These areas complement the program's existing instruction in graphic design, photography, visual communication, and digital media and provide students with a broader portfolio of transferable skills applicable across contemporary creative and communication careers.

The program has also pursued articulation agreements with Miles Community College and institutions in Great Falls and Helena to create clearer pathways for students interested in continuing their education in Graphic Design. Together with the Graphic Design Minor and Certificate, high school recruitment, industry partnerships, experiential learning opportunities, showcases, and ongoing curricular development, these initiatives provide multiple pathways for students to enter and progress through the program. The program will continue to monitor enrollment, graduation, and participation trends as these initiatives become more established.

The Graphic Design program faculty are invested in the following growth-strategies:

- Entering student work regularly into design contests across the nation
- Revising courses to ensure the most recent technologies, software and programs are delivered
- Expanding partnerships with employers within the state
- Participating in MSU-Northern's ShowCASE Recruitment Drive
- Traveling to local area High Schools in order to recruit
- Articulation agreements with Miles City Community College, MSU in Great Falls, Helena College University of Montana and Carroll College.
- Producing student generated media designed to reach audiences on and off campus.
- Continuing to update Facebook & Instagram pages for the Graphic Design Program and implementing social media-based design contests in our local communities
- Integrating internship and co-op opportunities whenever possible into student schedule to enhance learning and employment opportunities.

The Graphic Design program does currently have a promising number of new recruits. And despite challenges including but not limited to a global pandemic and the recruitment limitations of our college (our marketing and recruitment department has been unstable until just recently) our major and minor numbers continue to perform. With the recent graduation of 3 students that has brought our numbers down. But I expect to recruit at least one or two more students before spring semester starts this year. I also am expecting at least one more student to return in spring to finish his graphic design degree as he had to withdraw this fall due to a recent surgery. It is recommended that the B.A. and Minor in graphic design be maintained. The Graphic Design program has unexplored potential for higher enrollment and graduation numbers and through the proposed modifications that potential is expected to be fulfilled.

[i] Fall 2013, the Associates in Graphic Design was terminated. The nature of an associate's degree, with lower division courses, it was determined the graduates were less competitive in the job market; graduation data confirmed the lack of interest by students.

Montana University System

PROGRAM REVIEW

Institution/Department: **MSU-Northern Nursing Program**

Years Under Review: **2020 through 2026**

List of programs reviewed and decision(s) concerning the future of the program(s), based on the program review criteria established at the campus: Choose from Continue, Continue with Modifications, Discontinue

PROGRAM	DECISION

1. **Provide a rationale or justification for the decision based on the program review process established at the campus. Identify any program modifications that may result from this process.**

2. **Provide a high level overview of the programs' assessment of programmatic learning outcomes.**
ASN and BSN programs are nationally accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Both programs incorporate professional nursing standards, guidelines, and competencies established by the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN), and the American Nurses Association (ANA) Scope of Practice. The ASN program is a state-wide curriculum that includes general education and nursing courses. The ASN, being a pre-licensure program, is approved by the state regulatory agency known as the Montana Board of Nursing. The ASN program is designed to progress from basic nursing courses to advanced complex nursing courses which allows students to learn and master basic knowledge, skills, and competencies prior to progressing to an advanced level. Both programs utilize end-of-program learning outcomes developed using the QSEN conceptual framework and core competencies such as patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, and informatics.
The end of program learning outcomes of ASN and BSN program are listed below.

ASN program outcomes

Upon completion of the program the graduate will:

1. Provide coordinated patient-centered care which respects patient values, preferences, and needs
2. Collaborate with patients and interprofessional teams to foster mutual respect, open communication, and shared decision making.
3. Analyze evidence-based practices for delivery of optimal health care across the lifespan.
4. Explain the use of patient and health care data to monitor care outcomes for quality improvement.

5. Provide safe patient care across the lifespan in all practice settings.
6. Use technology to communicate, inform, and support decision making while providing patient-centered care across the lifespan.

BSN Program Outcomes
Upon completion of the program, the graduates will:
1.
2.

Each end-of program outcomes are systematically aligned with appropriate assessment methods across various nursing courses. Faculty have developed rubrics and set benchmarks for assessment methods utilized to measure end-of-program learning outcomes. The programs use a Systematic Program Evaluation (SPE) form to track the data collected for each end-of-program learning outcomes. The SPE outlines assessment methods, data for each assessment method, and provides an analysis/action plan for each end-of-program outcomes for both ASN and BSN programs. In addition, data on NCLEX pass rate, program completion rate and job placement rate are tracked and recorded in SPE form.

Student progression
In each ASN course, students must pass all tests and quizzes (prior to including assignments) with an 80% average whereas in each BSN course students must pass all assignments including tests with an 80% average to successfully progress in the programs.

Data collection
The faculty and the nursing program administrator work collaboratively to collect data for each end-of program learning outcome to record in SPE through Canvas Learning Management System. The faculty and the program administrator will review and engage in discussion during faculty meetings to evaluate how each outcome is met and identify strengths, weaknesses, and improvement areas. Faculty will develop an analysis/action plan to improve for future cohorts. The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) pass rate for Registered Nurses is one among the data collected in the ASN program. The program director will receive quarterly reports of NCLEX pass rates from Montana Board of Nursing.

In addition, the program utilizes electronic reports generated by National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) known as Mountain Measurement reports that provide an overview of the performance of the graduates in ASN program. The report provides detailed information on the performance of first-time NCLEX test takers. The report describes the performance of graduate on several nursing topics that come under seven Nursing frameworks. The report will assist the faculty in evaluating strengths and weaknesses and decision making to improve the ASN program.

3. What is the alignment of these programs with the institution's strategic plan? (i.e. university mission, vision, values, and/or goals)

4. Provide enrollment and degrees awarded for the past 7 years for each program under review.

UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT									
DEGREE	MAJOR	CONCENTRATION	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT:									
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT									
DEGREE	MAJOR	CONCENTRATION	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
TOTAL GRADUATE ENROLLMENT:									
TOTAL ENROLLED:									
MINOR ENROLLMENT									
MINOR			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
TOTAL MINOR ENROLLED:									
AWARDED DEGREES									
DEGREE	MAJOR	CONCENTRATION	Year 1 2026	Year 2 2025	Year 3 2024	Year 4 2023	Year 5 2022	Year 6 2021	Year 7 2020
AS	Nursing		13	17	15	17	21	20	22
BS	Nursing		10	9	15	18	19	23	15

TOTAL DEGREES AWARDED:	***23***	***26***	***30***	***35***	***40***	***43***	***37***
AWARDED MINORS							
MINOR	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
TOTAL MINORS AWARDED:							