



Montana Board of Regents

Conference Call Meeting

Dec 4, 2008

Thursday, December 4, 2008

The board convened at 1:30 PM.

Roll call indicated a quorum present.

Regents Present: Stephen M. Barrett Chair, Clayton Christian Vice Chair, Lynn Hamilton, Lila Taylor, Todd Buchanan, and Mitch Jessen, all by phone. Regent Pease was absent. Commissioner of Higher Education Sheila Stearns, *ex officio*, was present in person and Governor Brian Schweitzer, *ex officio*, was represented by Pat Wise by phone.

Sites represented by phone were: Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), UM-Missoula, UM-Western, UM-MT Tech, UM-Helena COT, MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern, MSU-Great Falls COT, Flathead Valley Community College, Dawson Community College, Miles Community College, BVCC-Effort Trustees Elect and BVCC-Effort group.

Chairman Barrett explained that this was a continuation of the agenda item from the November 20-21 Board of Regents meeting regarding the creation of a proposed new community college. He acknowledged the involvement and dedication of all involved.

Continuation of Public Comment by BVCC-E Trustee Elect Chair

Debra Rogalla, BVCC-E Trustee Elect, urged support of the proposed Bitterroot Valley Community College.

The following people offered public comment: Patti Furniss, Greg Selzer, Dixie Stark Cathleen Driscoll, Carlotta Grandstaff, John Beacon, Victoria Clark, Senator Rick Laible, Patricia Beacon Wilson, Daryl Cooper and Representative Bob Lake.

Lynette Brown, OCHE, read the motion as follows:

The action of the Board of Regents with regard to the proposed new community college is two-pronged:

- 1) We recommend that the Montana legislature NOT approve the proposed new community college district in Ravalli County. However,
- 2) We also charge the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to work with the trustees-elect in Ravalli County, in consultation with representatives from the Postsecondary Education Planning and Budget Interim Subcommittee, to establish an innovative two-year education model in Ravalli County, guided by local stakeholders, supported by the infrastructure of the Montana University System and its multiple campuses, and making use of successful programs and services offered by Montana's two-year colleges.

Regent Taylor moved approval of the Board of Regents' proposal as stated by Ms. Brown



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for the proposed college district.

In deliberation on the motion, regents raised the following issues as concerns about the proposed new community college district in Ravalli County:

- Problems with the budget and academic plan submitted by the Bitterroot Valley Community College Effort
- The need to identify workforce development needs and high-growth industries
- Hamilton Higher Education Center issues
- The effects of an additional college on existing campuses and the Montana University System as a whole
- Whether access to higher education is an issue in Ravalli County
- Whether a community college is the best way to address higher education needs in Ravalli County
- Economic concerns in Montana as well as nationwide
- Whether the mandatory local levy for the new community college will draw from scarce educational resources in the community
- Whether there really is a demand for higher education in Ravalli County
- Distance education potential
- Concern about investing in “bricks and mortar” in the 21st century
- The need to simplify/scale down the start-up plan
- Accreditation and financial concerns

The Board of Regents pledged commitment to providing two-year educational opportunities in Ravalli County by using a combination of distance education and other innovative methods of delivery.

Regent Barrett directed OCHE to begin working on the creation of an innovative two-year education platform in Ravalli County.

ACTION

Recommendation to the Montana Legislature on the Approval of a New Community College District in Ravalli County ITEM 141-101-C1208

Motion passed 6-0, with Regent Pease excused.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Posted on

Approved by the Board of Regents on

Sheila M. Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

Stephen M. Barrett
Chair, Board of Regents



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