



# SUMMARY REPORT

Comprehensive Two-Year Mission  
Rebranding/Renaming Summit

Montana University System—Bozeman, MT  
December 15–16, 2011

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## SUMMARY REPORT

### Comprehensive Two-Year Mission Rebranding/Renaming Summit Montana University System—Bozeman, MT • December 15–16, 2011

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The comprehensive mission task force of the College!NOW initiative held a retreat on November 3–4, 2011 that focused on mission expansion at each of Montana’s five Colleges of Technology. A comprehensive two-year mission summit on December 15–16, 2011 engaged a broader group of stakeholders in discussions of the rebranding and renaming of the Colleges of Technology and, ultimately, Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Program, and the two-year programs at UM Western and MSU Northern. Data captured from the November retreat and December summit will inform early 2012 surveys and focus groups that will elicit the suggestions and probe the perspectives of current and prospective two-year college students regarding Montana’s two-year colleges of technology and two-year programs.

On Day One of the December summit, Andy Goodman, a nationally acclaimed communications expert, conducted an interactive workshop that focused on the power of storytelling as a vital aspect of rebranding Montana’s two-year colleges. The stories offered by participants revealed a broad range of desirable characteristics and benefits of two-year education that could be conveyed to stakeholders and the public as part of the rebranding strategy. These included, among others, *Opportunity*; *Access*; *Responsiveness*; *Personalized*; *Welcoming*; and *Connected*.

Day Two of the December summit concentrated on smaller group and full group conversations about renaming Montana’s two-year colleges and programs. Twelve mixed groups of eight individuals, each from various Montana higher education institutions and representatives of other key stakeholder groups, engaged in extensive discussions of rebranding the two-year colleges of technology and two-year college programs in order to communicate their expanded mission. These discussions revealed the importance of conducting the rebranding of two-year education in close coordination with the State’s three comprehensive community colleges and with planned University rebranding efforts.

Participants then reassembled into groups organized by specific college of technology or two-year college program to suggest and deliberate on a range of new names that might best communicate each college’s mission, place, and affiliation. A number of guiding principles arose from these conversations including, among others: New names should show *clear mission delineation between* comprehensive two-year colleges and universities; *Names should be sensitive* to telling a common story while retaining local identity; *Keep naming conventions simple*; and Be aware of possible, *shortened vernacular versions of suggested new names*.

Based on earlier College!NOW research, the comprehensive mission task force determined that the term “college” would appropriately describe the expanded Montana two-year education mission. Thus, the December summit group discussions considered the placement of the term “college” within suggested new names, comparing naming conventions such as “College of Example” vs. “Example College.” Consensus was not reached within or across the discussion groups regarding the most favorable convention.

Because each two-year college and program is currently already affiliated with a parent Montana University, group discussions regarding the affiliation aspect of new names focused primarily on where within the name affiliation should be placed. Some level of agreement within and across discussion groups supported the idea that using a convention that placed the parent university designation at the

beginning of the new name such as “UM College of Example” or “UM Example College” would draw more attention to the university affiliation and less attention to the college mission. Conversely, names such as “College of Example at UM” or “Example College at UM” would focus less importance on the university affiliation and more on the college mission. Opinion varied across discussion groups as to which convention might be most beneficial to each specific Montana two-year institution.

Group discussions regarding the “place” element of potential new names revealed substantial agreement within and across groups that words related to a Montana region or geographic feature were preferable to using names of cities. Groups identified a number of potential names that should be avoided because they are too similar to those of other higher education institutions or programs within Montana or other western states. Nearly all of the discussion groups ended their sessions with several favored “place” word options that were appealing as “Place College” or “College of Place.” Opinions across groups seemed to favor allowing some variation in place name conventions from one college to another rather than requiring, for example, that all college place words would be county names or river names.

December summit group facilitators, overall, noted that conversations were spirited and revealed strong enthusiasm and broad creativity as well as sincere concerns regarding possible missteps or unintended consequences that might arise in the absence of careful consideration of the broad range of stakeholder perspectives on rebranding and renaming. In order to maximize the benefits from rebranding and renaming processes and to avoid any potential negative effects, College!NOW will conduct statewide follow-up survey and focus group research among current two-year education students and prospective students. This research will build upon results from the October 2011 listening sessions as well as from the November 3-4, 2011 retreat and the December 15-16, 2011 summit and will inform ongoing progress of the rebranding and renaming aspects of College!NOW Strategy One: *The Comprehensive Two-Year Education Mission is Expanded So that it is Available through Every Montana Two-Year College by 2013.*

## SUMMIT INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of the College!NOW initiative is meeting Montana's need for more adults with high-quality degrees and certificates through better utilization of two-year education across the state.

Strategy 1 of the initiative focuses on the following areas: 1) Improve awareness and understanding of opportunities available through Montana's two-year colleges; 2) Extension of the comprehensive two-year mission to Montana's five Colleges of Technology (COTs); and 3) Plan for extension of the comprehensive two-year mission to Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Program, and two-year programs at MSU Northern and UM Western.

The Montana Board of Regents (BOR) approved the State's first ever comprehensive two-year mission and vision statement in May 2011 (See attachment C). In August 2011, the BOR also approved a 25-month plan for extending the comprehensive two-year mission to each of Montana's Colleges of Technology and rebranding the state's colleges of technology and two-year programs. This would include renaming the COTs. In November 2011, the BOR consented to expand their August directive to also include Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Programs, and two-year programs at MSU Northern and UM Western. The plan does not involve rebranding either the State's three comprehensive community colleges or Tribal colleges. OCHE charged a comprehensive mission committee with developing implementation plans for the BOR's decisions.

The comprehensive mission committee conducted community and campus listening sessions to gather feedback on challenges, opportunities, and ideas in relation to the implementation plan. Nearly 600 individuals participated in these sessions in Billings, Butte, Helena, Great Falls, and Missoula during the month of October. Data from the listening sessions was summarized and eight general themes emerged (see attachment B). Consistent feedback from these listening sessions determined that all new names must communicate mission, place and affiliation.

The comprehensive mission committee held a retreat at the University of Montana campus on November 3-4, 2011 consisting primarily of the members of the committee, expanded faculty and staff representation from each COT, representatives from the Governor's office and OCHE, and support from Strategies 360 and Public Agenda. The retreat focused on mission expansion at each of the Colleges of Technology with each campus working on its respective plans for first draft submission to the BOR in January. The committee held a second comprehensive two-year mission summit on December 15-16, 2011 at the Montana State University campus with the purpose of focusing the conversations of a broader audience around the rebranding and renaming of the State's Colleges of Technology and ultimately Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Program, and two-year programs at UM Western and MSU Northern.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Summit was to engage a broader audience around the topic of mission expansion as the driving force for rebranding and renaming the Colleges of Technology and ultimately Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Program, and two-year programs at MSU Northern and UM Western. Through these discussions, Summit participants engaged in conversations about naming conventions which embodied mission, place and affiliation. The data captured from the Summit will be used to inform subsequent research with both current and prospective students of all ages in January and early February through focus groups and surveys.

## **Post-Summit Research**

In order to implement the College!NOW strategies and the BOR's directives, it is necessary to understand the perceptions and opinions that potential students have about two-year education and assess the changes that need to be made to communicate the revised mission moving forward. Researchers will explore these perceptions with particular focus in the communities where the State's colleges of technology and two-year programs reside.

The post-summit research will seek both current and prospective student attitudes, reactions and preferences about Montana's colleges of technology and two-year programs. Through focus groups and surveys, researchers will gather information about current and prospective students' attitudes and opinions regarding possible new names based on the framework developed as a result of the listening sessions (mission, place, and affiliation). This research will also provide reactions to new COT naming ideas which surfaced as a result of the Summit discussions. In addition, the research will provide some additional insight into current and prospective student educational and career goals. Overall, this opinion research will inform and drive the rebranding process, as well as provide additional insight into the mission expansion and local needs of communities and prospective students for higher education in Montana.

## DESIGN OF THE SUMMIT

### Participant Selection

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) issued an invitation to each of the five Colleges of Technology, Gallatin College Programs, Bitterroot College Program, UM Western Two Year Programs, MSU Northern Two Year Programs, the three community colleges, and the seven Tribal colleges. OCHE also included leadership from regional and flagship universities, the Governor's Office, the Office of Public Instruction and the press. Through this invitation, OCHE requested that each of the campuses designate attendees from the ranks of faculty, staff, and the student body, as well as administrators and community business leaders. These groups were identified as *internal stakeholders* for the purposes of gathering data to help guide and inform the ongoing market research component of the rebranding of two year education in Montana.

### Day One: Building Positive Perceptions and Changing Misperceptions

Day one's presenter, Andy Goodman, was provided by the generous support of the Lumina Foundation. Andy Goodman, a nationally acclaimed communications expert, led a four hour session focused on storytelling as a vital component of rebranding Montana's two-year colleges. While mission expansion should drive and orient this work, branding is also critical, and a brand should tell a compelling story about an organization. Goodman's workshop provided a solid foundation to help internal stakeholders tell the story of the value that comprehensive two-year education holds for the state of Montana. So many conversations inevitably come back to "What can we do to change our community's perception of who we are and what we do?"—and the best answer to any question that begins with "How can we get people to..." is "Tell the story." Goodman helped participants think about and practice telling the story about the value of two-year education, and thus provided a generous professional development opportunity to help anchor and focus the branding conversations on the things that matter most to internal stakeholders: their values, communities, and institutional missions.

### Day Two: Rebranding and Renaming Discussions

Day two of the Summit included three sets of small-group discussions focused on issues related to the rebranding and renaming of Montana's two-year education. The Summit participants were pre-assigned to tables that were diverse both laterally (by geographic location across the system), and vertically (by title and position). For example, one table might have: faculty from Great Falls, student from Helena, dean from Missoula, business leader from Dillon, K12 administrator from Billings, admissions staff from Havre, and faculty from Flathead Valley Community College. Each table had seven discussion participants plus one facilitator for a total of eight. There were 13 tables (numbering 2-13) of discussion groups organized in this way (table one was reserved for the summit organizers, Commissioner's staff, and Regents who attended). This approach was intended to encourage a system-wide discussion, rather than a discussion focused entirely on local concerns. These table assignments were designed for the first and second discussions on day two. For the third discussion on day two, the participants deliberated by campus.

### Facilitator Guidance

Twelve facilitators convened on Wednesday evening for a training and briefing on the summit objectives and protocol. The facilitators were comprised of: Strategies 360 – 4, Public Agenda – 5, OCHE – 3. Facilitators were guided to encourage interaction, keep the conversation moving and on track, capture highlights of the table discussions in notes, and serve as neutral parties in the deliberations. Facilitators were provided with a uniform facilitator guide including timed discussion breakdowns and comment sections to ensure consistency from table to table. The facilitator guide was designed to open with a broad system-wide perspective and then focus participant discussions around the naming framework that emerged from the October listening sessions: mission, place and affiliation. This allowed each table to discuss the relationship between mission expansion and rebranding/renaming. This also allowed participants to engage in conversations about naming conventions which embodied mission, place and affiliation.



## DISCUSSIONS

*Introduction Question: Think about 5 or 10 years from now. If this initiative, complicated as it is, is wildly successful, what would it look like for your community and for the state?*

This question was designed to help participants give life and meaning to the comprehensive mission statement of two-year education, as adopted by the Board of Regents in August 2011. It also helped participants see the real benefits of this initiative for their students, communities, and the state.

### Discussion #1 – Overall Brand of the Two-Year System

Participants were asked to give feedback about the words and concepts which emerged from the listening sessions to determine what concepts are most important to convey through the new brand of two-year education in Montana.

*What other images, descriptors or actions convey the message of the core values of Montana’s two-year education system?*

In this section, participants brainstormed some additional concepts that should be conveyed through the rebrand.

*Stepping into students’ shoes – React to the following scenarios and answer: What factors encourage you to attend a two-year college, and what factors discourage you? Which of the descriptive words above most resonate with you? Are there any that turn you off?*

- *Imagine you’re a 32-year-old single mother and a nurse’s aide, and you have completed three semesters of gen education credits. You left college before completing a degree, and you haven’t stepped onto a campus in 10 years. You have two small children, and now that they’re in school, you’re interested in a two-year RN program.*
- *Imagine you’re a graduating senior, with aspirations to attend medical school. You have done the loan calculation, and are interested in saving money along the way by attending the first two years at home.*
- *Imagine you’re a 38-year-old who has just lost your job at the local mill. You are eager to get back into the workforce earning a steady salary. The thought of attending a university with “traditional-age students” living in dorms and attending football games is not appealing to you, but you have little else to compare other than depictions of college in pop culture.*
- *Imagine you’re a 25-year-old who grew up being told (either explicitly or through other people’s lack of expectations) that you’re not “college material” and who would be the first in your family to attend college and are now at a place in life where you’re ready to give college a try but have neither the academic preparation or a clear sense of what you want to study.*

These scenarios were intended to help Summit participants view the comprehensive two-year colleges and think about naming conventions from the perspective of our target audience—prospective students who are looking for information on the next big step they take in their lives and careers. Through this discussion, participants were asked to react to the words brainstormed in the previous sections as though they were the student. For instance, if the student viewed these schools as vo-techs due to the exterior brand, would they think of two-year education as being a place for them? If the student in the third scenario saw only branded images of 18-year-olds wearing university logo gear, living in dorms—would they see this school as a good fit?



## RESULTS FROM DISCUSSION

### QUESTION #1 – OVERALL BRAND OF THE TWO-YEAR SYSTEM

#### General Summary Points (12 Tables)

- **Opportunity** – affordable, open access, flexible
- **Access** – traditionally aged students and adult nontraditional students
- **Responsiveness** – flexibility
- **Multiplicity** of Two-Year Mission – single class to certificate to transfer degree
- **Personalized** – different learning styles
- **Partnerships** – engaged with local k-12, business, & community
- **Transferability** – 2+2 with four-year degrees
- **Return on Investment** – students and community
- **Welcoming** – individualized attention
- **Connected** to University System



## Discussion #2—Developing a Consistent Framework

*How are the current names successful or unsuccessful in communicating the mission, place and affiliation of these institutions to their audiences?*

By approving a comprehensive mission and vision statement for two-year education in Montana, the Board of Regents recognized the unique needs that two-year institutions meet across the state and the need to describe and brand these institutions in a different way than four-year education. At the October listening sessions, OCHE consistently heard that two-year school names need to convey the mission (so prospective students understand what opportunities are available), place (to provide the local ownership and relevance distinctive of a community college, as well as for a simple unique identifier) and university affiliation (to convey transferability, rigor, and excellence). In Discussion #1, the tables discussed what words and concepts best describe comprehensive two-year education to external audiences. In this section, the tables had a chance to discuss the naming framework specifically, as a tactic that the system will use to convey a unified statewide brand of two-year education. When this initiative is complete, it should be clear and apparent, from community to community, where prospective students of all ages can attend a college with a comprehensive two-year mission, and know generally what that means. To communicate this consistency, the names will need to follow a uniform framework. (For instance, MSU Institute of Great Falls and Billings College –MSU do not sound like peer institutions within the same statewide system). Participants first discussed what is working and not working with the current names.

*Given the constraint of communicating mission, place and affiliation, as well as consistent naming conventions from across the country for two-year education, we must operate within some parameters. What are the pros and cons of each of these naming conventions? What other ideas have been discussed?*

- *PLACE NAME College of AFFILIATION*
- *PLACE NAME College – AFFILIATION*
- *College of PLACE NAME – AFFILIATION*
- *OTHER IDEAS?*

In this section, facilitators asked participants to think of how the naming framework/convention sounds in day-to-day conversation. They were asked to give feedback on how names might be shortened colloquially, and what should be listed first: mission, place or affiliation. They were also asked to provide some additional ideas that met the three requirements of mission, place and affiliation.

## RESULTS FROM DISCUSSION

### QUESTION #2—DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT FRAMEWORK

#### General Summary Points (12 Tables)

- **Eliminate** name “College of Technology”
- **Term “Programs”** is confusing
- **Extending Comprehensive Mission** is foundation for name change (desire for real change not simply name change)
- Name must show **clear delineation** between mission of comprehensive two-year college and universities
- **Names need to be sensitive** to balance telling a common story while retaining local identity
- **Placement of Affiliation** in naming convention is important (no consensus from Summit)
- **Place as part of identifier** is very important
- **Need to be sensitive** to not create confusion regarding existing brands of three comprehensive community colleges and Tribal colleges
- **Keep naming convention simple**



## **Discussion #3—Naming Each College**

*Brainstorm list of potential names and concerns associated with particular names.*

In the final breakout session, participants were placed into nine groups according to college/community: Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Great Falls, Hamilton, Havre, Helena, and Missoula. This was the only chance at the summit for the colleges to work specifically with their institutional peers on naming options. The purpose of this discussion was to provide the campuses with a chance to give input and brainstorm place identifier name ideas, such as city, county, geographic marker, region, or other local signifier that could be used as the place identifier in whatever naming framework is eventually picked. Participants were also asked to provide feedback on negative possible connotations for potential names; i.e. picking the same name as the local prison or prerelease center. Place identifiers, like the brand concepts and naming protocols will be tested in focus groups with prospective students.

## **RESULTS FROM DISCUSSION**

### **QUESTION #3—NAMING EACH COLLEGE**

#### **Montana State University**

NOTE: Each group demonstrated no consensus regarding placement of affiliation in front or back – arguments for front placement were primarily centered around the desire to maintain clear affiliation with the Universities.

Arguments for placing affiliation in the back included desire to create a recognizable comprehensive two-year brand that was parallel with existing three comprehensive community colleges. Also, the proponents for placing the affiliation at the end argued the colleges would remain clearly linked with their university parents.

#### **GALLATIN COLLEGE PROGRAMS:**

“Gallatin College of MSU”

Other ideas:

“Gallatin Valley College of MSU”

\*\* No consensus on placement of affiliation – front or back

They also considered “Bridger College”, “Headwaters College”, “Big Sky College”, but the consensus was that Gallatin College is best. “Gallatin Valley College” could also work. The group also noted a tag line would work well (such as “*your regional two-year education provider.*”)

## **MSU BILLINGS COT:**

“Yellowstone College of MSUB”

“Yellowstone Valley College of MSUB”

“Yellowstone River Valley College of MSUB”

“Beartooth College of MSUB”

“Elk River College of MSUB”

“Yellowstone” resonated with the entire table. They talked about various iterations and about name recognition, coolness, geographic area, and whether Yellowstone is overused. “Yellowstone River Valley College of MSUB” and “Yellowstone Valley College of MSUB” were discussed. However, participants didn’t like the acronyms YVC or YRC.

## **MSU-GREAT FALLS COT:**

“Central Montana College of MSU”

“Cascade College of MSU”

“Missouri River College of MSU”

“Electric City College of MSU”

Don’t want to use “Great Falls” because possible confusion with private U of GF (previously College of GF).

However, place is key. They considered: “Central Montana College”; “Falls College”; “Golden Triangle College”; “North Central College”; “Missouri River College”; “Cascade College”; “Electric City College”; “Windy City”; “Three Rivers College”; and “Russell College”.

Some want to keep the affiliation. Each of the names could be followed with “of MSU”

Some think that if we want to rebrand, the name should shift the focus away from the affiliation; if name focuses on MSU or UM, then that’s what the message of the brand will be.

## **MSU-NORTHERN Two Year Programs:**

“Hi-Line College of MSU Northern”

They liked Hi-line best—inclusive and accurate. Havre is too city-specific and too often mispronounced. Hill County is not descriptive.

In addition to “Hi-line College”, they discussed “U.S. 2 College”, “Golden Triangle College”, “Hill County College”, and “Milk River College”.

“Northern Institute of Technology” was also suggested. They have no negative connotations with the term “technology,” and it could help in branding their programs.

They are open-minded. They want to expand. They are tracking students and they are incredibly embedded in their four-year structure.

## University of Montana

### **BITTERROOT COLLEGE PROGRAM:**

“Bitterroot College of the UM”

(or)

“Bitterroot Valley College of the UM” \*\*

\*\* Indicates broader place and sounds good, especially if the Missoula COT goes with “Missoula Valley College of the UM”.

### **MONTANA TECH COT:**

“Highlands College of Montana Tech” OR “Montana Tech College of the Highlands”

“Pintler College of Montana Tech”

Montana Tech is already associated with a place--Butte. Affiliation takes care of place. Butte doesn't have a strong reputation as a city/place.

“Silver Bow” is problematic, and Butte is a college in California--the group didn't like that either.

Considered “East Ridge College;” “Pintler College;” and “Highlands College of Montana Tech.”

Where does mission get captured in the name; special issue for embedded schools? We are unique in recruiting widely, including internationally for particular programs.

Need to change both campus names in vernacular.

### **UM-HELENA COT:**

Helena is what it is. Helena is good.

Close to three counties. There are five other schools within 100 miles and that must be taken into account.

The term “University” is too scary to some, while it is a pull to others. Need to market to both groups.

Our real capacity is not marketed well by MUS.



## **UM-MISSOULA COT:**

“Missoula Valley College of UM”

Missoula is both city and county name. Most are happy with it as having positive connotation, particularly for youth.

“Missoula Valley College [MVC]” would expand the footprint and it would cover the urban/rural divide.

Other potential names: “Five Valleys College [FVC];” “River City College;” “Garden City College;” “Big Sky College;” and “Grizzly College.”

UM Missoula is in the midst of a rebranding initiative and whatever is done with the two-year branding must be integrated into the affiliated four-year brands.

## **UM-WESTERN Two Year Programs:**

No discussion notes available. NOTE: UM-Western participants needed to return to Dillon following discussion two.



## **ATTACHMENT A: DISCUSSION QUESTION 1**

### **PART A: TABLE FACILITATOR NOTES**

*Think about 5 or 10 years from now. If this initiative, complicated as it is, is wildly successful, what would it look like for your community and for the state?*

#### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 2**

A larger percentage of adult learners are enrolled (move from 25% to around 50%).

Good percentage of those that attend move forward to a four-year institution.

Public perception is more accurate about what we do (away from vo-tech).

Higher retention rate for the four-year programs (i.e. success in two-year will have a positive impact on four-year programs).

People will realize that a four-year education is not required, and that a two-year degree is a valid, viable option for many well paying careers, particularly in health care.

The tension between the goal of supporting the value of two-year degrees and encouraging more students to go on to two-year institutions was seen as a difficult duality. Discussion centered around the fact that some students are not four-year bound, and that two-year schools can serve all aspects of needs (adult ed, two-year vocational, pathway to four-year, etc.). We need to be everything to everyone, and available to all (credit recovery, high achievers with low incomes, two-year career).

Success would be a seamless path from K-12 or GED to developmental ed, two-year, and four-year. Clearly articulated system, this system would be well known statewide, regardless of where they are, they know the path.

At least going to a two-year is the norm.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 3**

Overcome history of COTs.

Perception of quality as not second-rate.

Greater connectivity and collaboration across system.

Well defined functional organizational structure including OCHE, with individual prominence for important components, and individual college structure.

Continued academic program growth.

People understand opportunities locally so they don't go away and fail if local is better fit.

Tax documents stop using the term votech.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 4**

There would be a clearer sense of institutional/college identity, especially in the community, that was not an association with vo/tech.

The internal adjustments would be complete – two-year schools would be “more successfully” embedded in four-year schools; “more successfully” meaning having resolved integration issues in terms of budget/resources as well as in terms of elitism/class-discrepancy.

Two-year colleges would be a part of boosting the economy of the state that is demanding more high wage and high-skill jobs (more industry jobs rather than retail or fast food jobs).

There would be strengthened academic opportunities across the state.

Expanded/improved facilities for two-year programs.

AAS degrees would be ‘on par with’ B.A. degrees.

There will be consistency – we will not have gone through a process of renaming/rebranding multiple times since this conversation in 2011 and we won't be needing to go through it again in the near future.

There will be more seamless transitions from K12 – AAs.

Two-year programs will have maintained some degree of clout or reputation where it exists today; we won't lose credibility in our communities.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 5**

Graduates have added value to their careers.

Community businesses have high quality workforce to draw from.

Can remain in community to work.

Across state students have choice.

Greater enrollment.

Greater degree attainment.

Under-utilized neighbors seize opportunity of education.

Better transferability between two- and four-year.

- Better Communication
- From K→12→two-yr to either workforce or four-yr→workforce or advanced degree

Have facilities & resources to support expansion.

Small classes & individualized attention (current strength and does not get lost in expansion).

Formal legislation & infrastructure support.

Montana nationally recognized for transforming lives.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 6**

Nimble portable programs.

No reinventing the wheel.

More faculty, more programs, more facilities to unify – marketing – more responsive to needs of the evolving economy.

Full faculty Gallatin cc – dual enrollment / training for 50% who aren't four-yr bound.

Community would recognize that this is a good school / flexible times / option.

Helena Public Schools – Increased Partnerships / Dual Enrollment / Industry Growth – work ready community.

Gallatin College – family decision making about college will change – more recognition or robust options, transferability.

Billings COT – Public perception would change / more facilities / gen-ed core full / flexible schedules - better use of existing facilities.

Changing public perceptions / Help people understand opportunities – flexible schedule – change perception among employers.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 7**

### **NORTHERN**

We are embedded.

Concern for sustainability.

We have a lot of gen ed students.

Direction change could be positive for our identity.

We are open-minded but don't want to be competing with better tuition rates.

We are experiencing a population loss. The only population in our region that is growing is on the reservation, so we'll have to look at how we can better serve that population, put more focus on what they're coming here to study.

Local identity is tied to Industry.

More students will transfer to Northern or Western with AA degrees.

### **WESTERN**

Remediation is not a choice, it is mandated.

We could be tracking students better, so that they're not going into a four-year program if it's not what they need or want.

Have more seamless services, for two-year that means they would be supported more at the beginning to help them move forward efficiently.

### **HELENA**

Want to see honors program, which may make the two-year colleges more desirable to high achieving prospective students. Kids should know they could get the same quality at a two-year school.

Would like to see more certificates, building on programs, celebrating.

Eight-week blended classes.

Alternative delivery of classes.

Retain high quality faculty.

Develop certificate in general studies.

Specialization. We will dispel myths. Two-year is as valuable as four-year (depending on student needs).

## **GALLATIN COLLEGE**

K12 integration seamless.

More responsive to work force needs and career exploration.

Asking for a new definition of workforce. What does it mean?

At embedded colleges, need more scaffolding - tiers of completion different locations, affordability and accessibility would be more visible.

Want to see success seen and celebrated differently because two-year has a different engagement and different goals.

Building more resources for success such as partnerships / pathways, meaning more workforce partnerships but also more access partnerships such as making day-care affordable and accessible.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 8**

Community colleges will grow and become more successful.

Taking away the name MT Tech could be a detriment; students go to the school because of this name association.

Easily transferrable credits within Montana University System as well as being accredited out of state.

Same pride and honor as in the stories that were told on Thursday.

What is the process moving forward for Western and Northern?



### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 9**

Everyone would know where to go for information.

The entire community would refer people.

The stigma of a two-year (*not* MSU or UM) gone!

Business and industry would turn to us first.

We would be proud to work here.

Community, (public, business, parents) would honor mission.

Simple, easy, “guaranteed” transfer / articulation.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 10**

Enrollment growth, greatly expanded programs.

Overlapping K12-higher ed enrollment, easy transition from K12 to higher ed.

Not sure if COTs currently offer dual enrollment. Smoother transition to the labor force.

Community confidence in two-year education, more reliable.

COTs have been thought of as schools of last resort—would like to see changed to a choice students want to make.

Always a good option, one of many good options.

Liked the idea of a brand being a “promise,” would like to see the perception of that at the two-year schools improve. Improved advising.

Affordability.

What do you think of when you say affordable... cheap? Need to also maintain quality, and communicate quality. Cost shouldn't be the only selling point. Accessibility is better.

Need to think about what elevates without tearing down the other schools. Variety is appealing to students.

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 11

Notes not available.

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 12

Bozeman – more K-12 common core prep and SC will be ready to serve, remove some of the two- year elitism.

GF- transfer is important, but two-yr and certificate are important as post – secondary is important

Missoula – more use of two-yr and better-educated population. Community will warmly embrace the expansion.

Butte- new Vo-tech; future changed image but steep hill to climb (confused comm.), clear messaging is needed.

- lowest education attainment in MT
- conflict between Tech (north ) - and Vo-tech (South) (Tech – very tough academic standards)
- need message on how north and south connect
- need clear truth and articulation
- more likely two and three programs
- more open pathways to four-yr
- Cert to workforce
- Two years to workforce, but also to transfer
- Two years only to transfer
- message must be simple and w/o jargon

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 13**

Increase in two-year education enrollment (greater than 26%.)

Statewide increase in adult enrollment.

Increased credibility in and better public perception of two-year education; no more fighting institutional labels.

The new brand and name will do what we say it will, or we'll lose our credibility with the public.

Higher visibility to legislature and to the public.

Increase in number of Montanans who have gone beyond high school.

Employers value AA degrees.

Recognition that work to provide education at the two-year level is labor intensive and that resource allocation reflect this.

Statistics that reflect an increase in statewide educational allocation per student. (Accompanied by questioning about Montana being "efficient or anemic" in funding).

K-12 students will be more college ready than they are right now.

College students will be better supported so that fewer of them will need to work full-time while attending college.

Our two-year students will be able to actually complete a credential, a program, etc. in two years.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

### PART B: FACILITATOR NOTES

*Responses to previously developed lists from listening sessions and storytelling session...Which of these words resonate with you and why? Which do not and why? What other images, descriptors or actions convey the message of the core values of Montana's two-year education system?*

### SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 2

Triad of Success + Opportunity + Access. These three are critical and rely on each other. There are many definitions of success; varies by student. Open admission provides opportunity for all students; many things to many people.

Access. This is hugely important. Online for place-bound students and night classes for students employed full time.

Multiplicity of the Two-year mission. Some two-year college students only want to enroll in a single or few classes versus those who are pursuing a full certificate or associate degree.

Personalized. Two-year colleges are more personalized.

Caring. Belief in the importance of the role two-year colleges play in caring for their students.

Affiliation. Will be marketing to internal as well as external audiences to change any misperceptions/myths which may exist as well as build positive perceptions; when engage four-year faculty.

### SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 3

Multi-mission of two-year colleges--makes this a difficult exercise. Being everything to everyone is a problem. The multimission aspect of comprehensive two-year colleges makes it challenging to craft overall branding and messaging to appeal to specific students.

Two-year colleges serve a broad array of different types of students. Choice of words depends on the population. Different words resonate with different students.

Opportunity. Front Porch (PORCH = Persistence, Opportunity, Risk, Caring, Hope)

Access. Open admission, affordability, gateway/portal to career or degree.

Partnerships. Dual enrollment; medical centers

#### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 4**

Opportunity. Positive word that communicates an end goal of betterment (certificate, degree, employment)

Affordability. Access. Being less costly than universities makes us more accessible. A key factor for transfer and employment.

Personalized. Valued. We get to know students and value their goals. Get students on a pathway that is right for them. Degrees and certificates earned are valued in the community and state.

Availability. A strength that Montana's two-year colleges are strategically located around the state.

Affiliation. With the parent university as well as affiliation with community partners.

Responsive. Meet individual student, community, and workforce needs.

#### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 5**

Opportunity. Opens doors for many different types of students on many different pathways. Consensus that two-years need to become more respected – both in their own communities and within the greater educational community.

Transferability. As in transition from high school to two-year college; from two-year college to workforce; and from two-year college to university.

Risk. But not in the sense of “risky,” but of “taking a chance on change for the better.”

Success. Solid support structure.

Compassion. From faculty and staff.

Accessible. Open door.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 6**

(These words were noted as being in a different order depending on the type of student being considered).

Opportunity.

Hope.

Student- centered / Student-focused. Recognizing that different students need different things.

Work-ready. Goal-oriented. Return on Investment.

Risk. Meaning fear, doubt (or self-doubt); fundamental anxiety over such an endeavor.

Transferability.

Flexibility.

Perceptions. What communities, faculty, and everyone think of two-year education.

Unique. Two-year colleges are not “Four Year Lite”

Recognize two-year colleges serve a wide variety of student types. It will be important to step into the shoes of the students we serve when thinking about branding and naming conventions.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 7**

Flexibility. Emphasized to fit the present needs of students.

Partnership. In terms of K-12, adult-education, industry, and other community partnerships.

Versatility. Responsiveness. In programming

Relevance. To students’ lives, to community, and in benefiting four-year universities by providing well prepared transfer students

Facilitating. Learning and opportunity.

Success. Has specific meaning for the students they serve.

Specialized. Quality.

Local pride. Ownership and identity

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 8

Access. Biggest word because it addresses geographic location, affordability and access to support.

Opportunity. Understanding the difference between two-year and four-year institutions. What it means to be a four-year or a two-year student; concluded that students want to see students like themselves, a feeling of being at home. Two-year colleges have other students who are more “like them” than universities. Important that students develop a sense of belonging.

Adult education. Stumbled over the term adult. Need to explore through focus groups what “adult,” “lifelong learning,” and “non-traditional student” mean.

Transformation. What does this mean?

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 9

We are “Colleges of opportunity.”

Success and Completion.

Adult education/learning and Lifelong learning. This terminology needs updating. “Reskilling”?

Simplify and clarify so people will understand what we do.

Welcoming. Caring. Make it safe. Emphasize resources and support available. Intrusive support is important.

We are Responsive. Flexible. Nimble.

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 10

Partnerships and Responsiveness. To serve the community.

Opportunity. Access. Transfer. Can be complex to walk through the doors. Nonthreatening to nontraditional students returning to school. Let people know certificates and associate degrees available.

Welcoming. Like this word.

Options. People at forks in the road are looking for options.

Adult. Need more thought into what it really means.

Affordable. Concern because can be interpreted as cheap.

We want Quality; Community and student confidence.



### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 11**

Pathway to success. Continue to be a starting point and pathway for student success.

Build on brand success. Build on the success of brands we already have. Be conscious of working on what has already been built, not stepping backwards.

Communication about the brand. Key audiences are faculty, students, and partners. Educating specific audiences about brand of the two-year mission. Dispel stigma of being a place for underperformers.

Job Creation. Economic Development. Integration. As found in the funding tie between community, employers, and students. Need to attract partners.

Expansion. Of mission, awareness, facilities, programs, opportunities. Need for more resources for adequate facilities to fulfill promise of two-year college mission in MT.

Don't want to use the term "vo-tech."

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 12**

Responsiveness. Proactive. Flexible. Serving local needs

Academic excellence. Not just a place to attend if couldn't succeed elsewhere.

Affiliation. Connection with four-year campus is clearly reflected on student transcript / credential.

Engaging. Example of the FVCC website: Found a nice flavor in terms of a sense of place, a sense of community, a destination, a place people would choose to attend.

Sense of place.

Affordable.

Opportunity. Desire.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 13**

Value. Local. We need to look from potential students' perspective of "less is more."

Learning. Individualized attention.

Affiliation. Students like having a certificate / degree from the affiliated university (e.g. from "Montana Tech").

"To learn you must come out of your house, both literally and figuratively;" implies risk/reward, persistence, hope and caring.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTION #2: FACILITATOR NOTES**

*How are the current names successful or unsuccessful in communicating the mission, place and affiliation of these institutions to their audience? What are the pros and cons of each of these conventions?*

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 2**

It is important to tell a common story, but it may be difficult to find the right balance to tell the story without losing uniqueness.

Recognized that there is confusion around current names, but a common name may be confusing too since institutions are different– a tag line might be important.

Emotional attachment to the name must be considered.

The name must be a clear delineation between mission of the comprehensive two-year colleges and the universities.

If we are trying to communicate that each college is part of a whole, how can that be done without giving the impression that all two-year colleges are very similar? Need consistency without taking away local flavor.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 3**

We need to remain cognizant of what the acronym will be. Long or cumbersome names will be condensed in common usage.

The initial word or words may end up being used casually as the name.

Consider the tradeoffs of whether the affiliation appears at the beginning or end of the name. If University affiliation is used first, it will likely be emphasized more than the “college name;” this may cause confusion. If University affiliation is used last, there will be a greater focus on mission and place and less on affiliation.

Could affiliation be MUS for all rather than either UM or MSU? Or could a two-year system brand be used as affiliation? It would have to be a strong brand to replace current university brands, which are very strong.

#### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 4**

Naming conventions A – C all miss something by not conveying enough of the mission.

People don't like using dashes in names; they can't be verbalized and are often written incorrectly.

The foundation of the MUS is what might need to change. There is no "two-year" in the MUS.

"Two-year" is a misnomer because many different opportunities including one-year certificates. Also, it often takes students longer than two years to complete an associate's degree.

Montana's two-year colleges get "masked" in the political realm – overshadowed by the universities.

How do we address the embedded and stand-alone campuses? There is a feeling we are not heard; we are masked by the university façade.

Along with changing the name we need to do some foundational work. Looking forward to embracing the comprehensive mission and then moving on to change; how will the brand help us change?

#### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 5**

"Technology" should be dropped from names; doesn't represent what is offered.

"College" should be retained; indicates broad offerings.

Consensus was that there is no difference in the A through C options provided. They seemed cumbersome.

If affiliation comes at the front, it seems to give a different message—that it is not a local college.

What does this mean? Does the affiliation go to the Montana University System or to the four-year campus? Could affiliation be switched to MUS from the specific universities; would this work for all two-years?

Challenge to pick a location name that captures all communities a college is marketing to.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 6**

Agreement that the terms “programs” and “COT” are unhelpful obstacles and have to go.

Affiliation is critical, but different audiences see affiliation differently. Affiliation at the front is important to be consistent with mission expansion; at the back important to be consistent with affiliation. Some think it doesn’t matter--no consensus at this table.

How does this affect the free-standing two-year institutions? There is no great rigidity in this.

Mission change must drive name change. Name change alone won’t change perceptions, but have to start someplace, so name change is a good place to start.

Need to come up with a recommendation to balance place and affiliation.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 7**

The terms “programs” and “COT” are limiting and confusing.

Embrace a name that has more flexibility.

Place is important; should come first. Majority of students are from surrounding counties; place is a strong identifier and deciding factor.

Place is more important in some communities (Billings) than in others (Bozeman).

Affiliation first helps understanding of which university is the parent institution and transfer opportunities. Can be aspirational.

How to deal with the embedded institutions? Western and Northern students don’t self-identify as two-year students. Don’t want to make these students feel separated.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 8**

Each campus is unique and it creates confusion to change the names.

The mission is not portrayed in options A – C.

Affiliation is important—current names already resonate.

Changing the names doesn’t matter as much as how we brand (identify) the schools.

Stories we tell are more important than the name.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 9**

There is some reluctance to change, but if we do change, want a real change, something really different. Montana has amazing geography; use it in geographic identifiers such as “College of \_\_\_\_\_,” with affiliation at the end and using either UM or MSU.

Placing university affiliation at the front does not convey our mission.

System needs to come up with a new reference for all nine two-year institutions. We need to stop referring to ourselves as “two-year.”

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 10**

This was extremely difficult.

Want to drop COT and “technical.”

Want affiliation, then place.

How does “college” communicate mission?

Didn’t come up with anything definitive. Will require a lot more thought in the process.

### **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 11**

Losing “COT” is not a great loss, with possible exception of MT Tech, where “brand equity” related to “technology” is strong.

There is a lot of brand equity behind certain attributes of each of the COTs; important not to lose that equity and affiliation.

Overall, preferred place + mission + affiliation, in that order.

We need to be sensitive moving forward not to devalue the community colleges and tribal colleges and their respective roles.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 12**

Take “technology” out of the name; too limiting; doesn’t convey comprehensive mission.

Location may also be limiting; may want to reflect a larger area than just the city.

The names don’t have to be identical; differences in who they serve now.

Affiliation is important, but we have no consensus on whether front or back. It depends on the campus as to how the name is organized and what comes first.

The big challenge is to convey the mission. Does the term college mean the same to everyone?

There are differing needs of the embedded and stand-alone institutions to consider.

Simple is better, but not too narrow.

## **SUMMIT PARTICIPANT TABLE 13**

We had a difficult time reaching consensus. Various options were discussed.

Affiliation and location are important, but it is hard to find a location convention that works everywhere. Conventions are cumbersome.

“Place + College + Affiliation” promotes a sense of ownership locally, but co-located COTs will be difficult to name because they are not local/ separate campuses.

“College of Place + Affiliation” creates names that are too long and thus will be shortened for common use.

Simplify names. Consider a tagline to address mission.

We need be sensitive to the future; need to think broadly enough to get something that will last and not be limiting.

## **ATTACHMENT B: LISTENING SESSION EIGHT THEMES**

### **EIGHT GENERAL THEMES EMERGED**

Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula

College!NOW Listening Sessions

#### **Theme 1: Changing the Organizational Culture**

- Rebranding Issues
  - Maintain affiliation with universities
  - Maintain affiliation with place
  - College of Technology name needs to be dropped
  - Some consistency needs to be considered with renaming
  - Current perceptual issues/challenges exist – vo-tech, second best, etc
  - Need for better overall community understanding of what COTs provide
- Benefits
  - Believe college credibility will increase with mission expansion and rebranding
  - Increased public understanding and awareness will occur
  - Need to connect more with business and industry
- Opportunity to COTs as affordable access to higher education

#### **Theme 2: Expanding the Comprehensive Mission is Important**

- University Transfer mission is important and desirable
- Adult friendly programming/delivery opportunities need to be expanded
- COTs need to play lead role with Developmental Education
- University partnerships are important component of mission expansion effort
- Need to also strengthen Career and Technical AAS and CAS programs (important role of workforce development)

### **Theme 3: Funding and Facility Issues**

- Space is a challenge based on current configuration of courses
- Staffing to accommodate expansion of mission is concern
- Funding to support mission expansion is a concern
- Sustainability
- Funding for rebranding
- Campuses need to be locally engaged with planning

### **Theme 4: Expanding Services to Support Students**

- Embedded COTs will need to address needs for expanded support services
- Expanding support services beyond traditional 8-5 pm classroom day is needed at most campuses
- Expanded services for disadvantaged students needed at most campuses
- Opportunities exist to better reach out to returning veterans
- Childcare needs surfaced at most campuses

### **Theme 5: Workforce and Community Connections**

- Need to better engage business and industry with mission expansion effort
- Community connections will be integral to success of mission expansion
- COTs are essential for providing workforce development opportunities

### **Theme 6: Embedded COTs have Unique Issues to Address**

- Coordination of services
- Concern about duplication of services
- Concern about perceived or actual competition with parent university
- General education coordination with parent university
- Affiliation



### **Theme 7: Flexibility/Responsiveness**

- Reaching new and different markets
- Rapid response
- Laddering of programs

### **Theme 8: K-12 Coordination**

- Pathways need to be articulated and promoted
- Dual enrollment opportunities should be expanded
- Changing perceptions/misperceptions
- ABE/GED coordination and challenges



**ATTACHMENT C:**  
**COMPREHENSIVE TWO-YEAR EDUCATION MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT**

**MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM COMPREHENSIVE TWO-YEAR EDUCATION**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of two-year education in Montana is to provide a comprehensive, accessible, responsive, student-centered learning environment that facilitates and supports the achievement of individuals' professional and personal goals, and enhances the development of Montana's citizens, communities and economy.

**MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM COMPREHENSIVE TWO-YEAR EDUCATION**

**VISION STATEMENT**

Montana's two-year education: Transform lives and create opportunities through educating the citizens of the state of Montana.

**KEY PURPOSES AND ATTRIBUTES**

Montana's two-year education is centered around the attributes of the comprehensive community college mission and is committed to providing:

- Transfer Education Through the Associate's Degree
- Workforce Development, Including Certificates and Applied Associate's Degrees
- Developmental and Adult Basic Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Community Development
- The attributes of two-year education in Montana include:
  - Open Access Admissions
  - Affordable
  - Student-Centered
  - Adult Focused and Accessible Learning
  - Responsiveness to Local Needs
  - Cultivation of Partnerships

## **CORE VALUES**

- Require Excellence
- Provide Rigor and Relevance
- Embrace Diversity
- Expect Civic Engagement
- Encourage Innovation
- Insist on Integrity
- Be Accountable
- Retain Transparency
- Embody Inclusivity
- Offer Consistent Unified Support
- Promote Lifelong Learning
- Celebrate Student Success