

American Indian and Minority Achievement Council Recommendations

In fall 2017, the Montana University System saw American Indian student enrollment grow from 2147 to 2286 students, a 6 percent increase. In an effort to continue to grow American Indian student success, the AIMA Council presented recommendations at the November 2017 Montana Board of Regents meeting. At that time the Board directed AIMA director Angela McLean to conduct campus based listening sessions about the recommendations and assist campuses with the development of implementation plans.

In January 2018, McLean traveled across the MUS to meet with students, faculty, student affairs officers, staff and senior campus administration about the recommendations and their implementation plans. Campuses were asked to submit their implementation plans to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education by February 15, 2018. These plans identify a single point of contact for each of our American Indian students as well as a single point of contact in several areas of student services. Additionally, campuses were asked to identify a single person for additional data collection as well as individuals responsible for acquiring and disseminating appropriate professional development for current faculty and staff as well as any new staff.

As part of ongoing efforts to increase American Indian student success the implementation plans will be submitted to and reviewed by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents in March 2018. The Commissioner and Board will receive progress updates on an annual basis.

These recommendations will be reviewed and revisited by the AIMA director as well as the AIMA Council over the next year to determine best practices and to assist campuses in most effective employment of the effort.

The AIMA Council will continue to meet to guide data and professional development needs of the Montana University System campuses. Additionally, the Council will examine campus needs and continue to advise the Commissioner of Higher Education on practices focused on American Indian student success.

Campus implementation plans are attached as an action item on the agenda and will be effective immediately upon passage.

Montana University System American Indian and Minority Achievement Council Mission Statement

The Montana University System strives to be a premier public higher education system in the country for American Indian students, administrators, faculty and staff.

Every Montana University system institution will do everything it can to remove barriers, obstacles and challenges that hinder student success.

The Montana University System is committed to working with Montana Tribal Colleges to ensure mutually beneficial relationships and student success.

The AIMA Council recommends all campuses present a proposal to the Board of Regents by March 2018 that indicates how they will:

- 1) Identify an individual at each campus who is at a more senior level who will serve point of contact for American Indian students. This person will work with college/university leadership to advise retention and completion strategies for American Indian students. The individual will also be available as a first point of contact to guide American Indian students to the appropriate college personnel as needed to address problems or specific needs.
- 2) Assign departmental points of contact who have the unique "cultural perspective" to serve American Indian students most effectively in the areas of (these efforts will be coordinated by the individual identified in recommendation #1):
 - a. Financial Aid
 - b. Residence Life and Housing
 - c. Admissions
 - d. Students Health and Counseling
 - e. Registrar
 - f. Human Resources
 - g. Advising
- 3) Collect and share basic data on American Indian students relative to improving the use of data and information to investigate American Indian enrollment and student success.
- 4) Provide a common American Indian cultural and sensitivity professional development for all faculty and staff.
- 5) Request campuses to incorporate American Indian professional development referenced in recommendation #4 in all new employee orientation including faculty.