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## **University System Announces COT Mission Expansion and Rebranding Listening Tour**

### **UM Helena to Host Listening Sessions on Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

(Helena, MT) -- The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education will hold community listening sessions at each of Montana's five Colleges of Technology to discuss the Board of Regents' goal of extending the comprehensive two-year mission to each of Montana's COT campus. The sessions will also seek input on the Regent's goal to rebrand and rename the Colleges of Technology. The effort is part of the College!NOW initiative.

In Helena, the UM-Helena College of Technology will host two "Listening Sessions" on **Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4:00-5:15pm and from 5:30-6:45pm**. Both will be held on the UM Helena Donaldson Campus at 1115 N. Roberts in Lecture Hall 125. Refreshments will be served.

The College!NOW initiative is part of a grant from the Lumina Foundation, in which Montana was selected as one of only seven states nationwide for funding to strengthen its two-year colleges and increase access to affordable higher education options for all Montanans.

"It's a tremendous opportunity to strengthen our higher education system and provide even more opportunities for those who are looking to further their education," said Sheila Stearns, Montana Commissioner for Higher Education. "Whether it's a high school graduate looking for an economical option for college or a professional looking to get another degree, our two-year institutions are well suited to help out. That's what College!NOW is all about."

At their August meeting, the Montana Board of Regents approved a 25-month timeline for extending the comprehensive two-year college mission to each of Montana's five Colleges of Technology including rebranding and renaming them to better reflect their broad mission. The listening sessions will be held in each community where a College of Technology resides (Missoula, Helena, Great Falls, Butte, and Billings) and are open to the public. A full schedule is attached.

"Our proposal highlighted the challenges and opportunities in Montana for two-year education," said John Cech, Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year and Community College Education. "As

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY ~ Campuses at Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Havre

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ~ Campuses at Butte, Dillon, Helena, and Missoula

Dawson Community College (Glendive) ~ Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell) ~ Miles Community College (Miles City)

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we all know, Montana is a wonderfully unique state with our own set of challenges and opportunities when it comes to higher education. Through College!NOW, we're looking at those challenges and finding creative ways to address them."

Cech continued, "One challenge is the simple misperception of two-year education. It's not only a tech degree or a certificate. Those are available, but so are transfer degrees and continuing education. Two-year education is exciting, and we're preparing to tell that story, these listening sessions are the first step in that process."

Clayton Christian, Chairman of the Montana Board of Regents, stated a major goal of the College!NOW initiative is to bring the comprehensive two-year college mission to each of the State's Colleges of Technology so each look, act, feel, and respond similarly to a comprehensive community college. "This is a game changer for Montana's two-year education," he said.

Cech stated the listening sessions are focused on seeking input and guidance from faculty, staff, students, and community on the COT mission expansion and rebranding process. "Seeking input from all constituents associated with the Colleges of Technology is very important and will help ensure the success of this initiative," said Cech.

*A full list of listening sessions is attached.*

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## College!NOW LISTENING SESSIONS SCHEDULE

Date	Campus Name	Time	Location	Address	Room
<b>Mon. Oct 3</b>	<b>UM Helena COT</b>	4:00–5:15 pm	Donaldson Campus	1115 N. Roberts St	Lecture Hall 125
		5:30–6:45 pm	Donaldson Campus	1115 N. Roberts St	Lecture Hall 125
<b>Wed. Oct 5</b>	<b>MSU Billings COT</b>	7:30–8:45 am	COT Campus	3803 Central	Health Sciences Bldg Rms 117/119
		1:15–2:30 pm	Senior Campus	1500 University Dr	Library 148 Lecture Hall
		3:00–4:15 pm	COT Campus	3803 Central	Health Sciences Bldg, Rm 105
<b>Thur. Oct 13</b>	<b>UM Missoula COT</b>	7:15–8:30 am	Doubletree	100 Madison	“University of Montana” Room
		9:00–10:15 am	UM Main Campus	32 Campus Dr	University Ctr. Theatre, 3rd Floor
		5:00–6:15 pm	COT Campus	909 S. Ave. West	HB 11
<b>Mon. Oct 17</b>	<b>Montana Tech of UM</b>	2:15–3:30 pm	COT South Campus	25 Basin Creek Rd	The Commons
		4:00–5:15 pm	North Campus	1300 W Park St	The Copper Lounge
		5:30–6:45 pm	North Campus	1300 W Park St	The Copper Lounge
<b>Wed. Oct 19</b>	<b>MSU Great Falls COT</b>	11:30am–12:45 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	SIM Hospital
		1:00–2:15 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	Heritage Hall
		2:30–3:45 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	Heritage Hall

*Participants will consist of faculty, staff, students and community members*