

November 20-21, 2008

INFORMATIONAL ITEM **Partnering for Student Success: A Retention Plan for The University of Montana; The University of Montana**

THAT: The University of Montana has developed a retention plan, “Partnering for Student Success,” to improve undergraduate retention and graduation, as well as address the challenges posed by a decrease in the projected number of high school graduates in the State of Montana, and the necessity of increasing the proportion of Montanans who have a college degree in order to remain competitive and ensure that Montanans have a good standard of living and contribute to the reputation and viability of the state as a place to live and work.

EXPLANATION: The University of Montana recognizes in this plan that student success is multifaceted and begins well before a student arrives at college. Therefore, the plan for Student Success is organized around six issues associated with student success, along with a statement defining the nature of the resources needed for implementation, the key benchmarks against which progress will be assessed, and a timeline for completion.

The overall goal of the Retention Plan is to improve student success at The University of Montana. Specifically, implementation of the strategies will occur across 3 years. The plan is designed to place UM consistently in the top quartile of public research-intensive institutions with respect to the following metrics: 1) the first-to-second year retention rate and the six-year graduation rate for the Mountain Campus, using data from the Center for Institutional Data Exchange and Analysis; and 2) the three-year retention rate and completion rates for A.A., A.A.S. and Certificates for the College of Technology (COT) . The target first-to-second year retention rate for the Mountain Campus by AY 2012-2013 is 80% and the six-year graduation rate by 2014-2015 is 57%. The target retention and completion rates at the COT are 60% and 45%.

Though national retention statistics focus on first-time, full-time students, we will direct our efforts to all students, including students who have been enrolled previously and students who are enrolled part-time. UM will collect additional data on these cohorts in order to measure retention across the broader student population.

This plan for Student Success has been a collaborative effort between faculty, staff, and administrators from across The University of Montana Mountain campus and The University of Montana--COT. Many retention initiatives have been put into place over the past decade and these efforts have helped The University of Montana maintain its reputation as an excellent, student-oriented institution. The present plan builds on those endeavors and proposes new programs and initiatives. Student success stems from a host of factors, including academic preparedness, motivation, response to challenges, development of social and intellectual skills, interpersonal interactions, and financial resources. Therefore, a plan to improve students' success requires collaboration across sectors, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administration and Finance. These sectors participated fully in the development of the present plan. Each school or college will supplement the retention plan with program-specific actions that promote student development.

ATTACHMENTS:

None