



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Progress Report

January 2015

**MONTANA'S COMPREHENSIVE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE  
MISSION EXPANSION PLAN  
FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Two-Year and Community College Education**

**The College!NOW Project**

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Montana’s Two-Year College Response to Local Industry and Community Needs</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>College Progress Reports .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Introduction

In 2011, the Montana University System, the Board of Regents and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education embarked on a comprehensive initiative to increase high-quality degree and educational certificate attainment for all Montanans. This effort was supported by a grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education called College!NOW. The Regents approved a comprehensive mission and vision statement for two-year higher education in the state and extended this mission to seven of the state's five colleges of technology and two-year programs. The Comprehensive Two-Year Mission was created through significant faculty, staff, student, and community input and included five key tenets: 1) University transfer; 2) Workforce development; 3) Developmental/remedial education; 4) Lifelong learning; and 5) Community development. A key goal of this project is to make two-year education in Montana better understood and ultimately better utilized.

In May 2012 the Board of Regents (BOR) approved an initiative to re-brand and rename Montana's two-year colleges and programs. This combined with the expansion of the comprehensive two-year mission to the seven colleges set the stage to ensure all regions of Montana had access to the comprehensive two-year college mission through the seven state public two-year colleges and the State's three public community college districts (Flathead Valley Community College, Miles Community College, and Dawson Community College).

The seven two-year colleges (City College at MSUB, Gallatin College MSU, Great Falls College MSU, Helena College UM, Highlands College at Montana Tech, Bitterroot College UM, and Missoula College UM) have spent the past three years on the implementation of their respective comprehensive two-year mission plans which promise to offer more services and programming for both the traditional age student and the adult learner. The plans emphasize workforce partnerships, flexible scheduling, open access admissions, core course programming, dual enrollment opportunities, and increased options and pathways for transfer to Montana's four-year colleges and universities.

## History

- In 2012, each of Montana's five Colleges of Technology and two-year programs (in Bozeman and Hamilton) developed ambitious plans for implementing the comprehensive two-year mission adopted by the Board of Regents including renaming the colleges. The plans established a road map for the redefinition and expansion of the seven two-year colleges' missions and goals so as to better serve the educational and economic needs of the citizens of their local communities and the state of Montana. At that time, the BOR requested the

seven colleges to provide them with updates on their efforts to engage and implement the comprehensive two-year college mission through the office of the Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year and Community College Education. These updates have been presented to the BOR each March beginning in 2013.

- Since the 2013 initial presentation of the comprehensive mission expansion plans to the BOR, the updates have provided the Regents with annual reports on the progress campuses have made on their mission expansion efforts. The first review in 2013 revealed that the colleges were making progress on most initiatives. The status reports also identified and discussed factors that impeded progress. Staffing and funding were identified as the major limiting factors.
- At the close of 2014, the seven two-year colleges undertook their second annual review of the progress they had made on their implementation plans. The colleges have assessed the elements of each “in progress” initiative and noted what remains to be completed.
- Additionally, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education requested that the colleges include a report on their plans in conjunction with two statewide educational initiatives; the developmental education program titled EdReady and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).
- Another added component to the 2014 review includes narrative descriptions of many key characteristics of the individual colleges. This narrative includes:
  - Mission and Vision Statements
  - Institutional Characteristics
    - College Profile
    - Role
    - Distinct Characteristics
    - System Commonalities
  - Academic Profile
    - Academic Programs
    - Technology and Instruction
    - Alternative Scheduling
  - System Collaboration
    - Collaboration with K-12
    - Program Partnerships
    - Participation in System Initiatives
    - Support for Collaboration with the Universities and Other Campuses

Pillar One of Governor Bullock's Main Street Montana Plan, "Training Tomorrow's Workforce Today," addresses goals include creating jobs, and improving education in Montana. Montana's seven two-year colleges and three community colleges have been actively involved with providing the Governor's office monthly updates on efforts and activities to address the strategies outlined in Pillar One. Each of the seven two-year colleges have initiated local partnerships (or sought to expand existing ones) with business, industry and governmental agencies to advance the Main Street Montana Project. Included in this report is a review of the seven two-year colleges' success in support of this Project as a part of their comprehensive two-year college mission expansion efforts.

## Executive Summary

Each of Montana's seven public MUS two-year colleges completed ambitious implementation plans to advance the comprehensive two-year college mission. Two of the colleges, Great Falls College MSU and Helena College UM were already providing most of the comprehensive two-year mission while others were at various stages in their evolution. The colleges initially generated 169 initiatives and submitted implementation plans to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in the last months of 2012. Since then, the colleges have been working to implement these initiatives as time, staffing and available funding allow. The first updates to these reports were completed in January of 2014, showing progress on many fronts. This report is the second annual update of these implementation plans.

This second progress report demonstrates that:

- Colleges are continuing to make excellent progress on most initiatives. During 2014, the percentage of completed projects has continued to grow with the number of completed projects increasing 30% over last year.
- A majority of initiatives are still in progress. However, many essential elements of initiatives in progress are being completed. Likewise, initiatives that set explicit numeric goals demonstrated measurable progress toward those goals.
- Four of the colleges have modified or developed additional initiatives during 2014 adding nine new initiatives to Montana's Comprehensive Mission Expansion Plan.
- During 2013 many initiatives were accomplished as a result of local college administrators identifying in-house, local resources, and/or federal grant funds to accomplish outcomes. As these resources become fully used, the colleges look forward to greater state resources to support their initiatives.
- A major infusion of federal dollars was received between 2013 and 2014 via two US DOL TAACCCT grants administered through Great Falls College MSU and

Missoula College UM. These funds (40 million) were used to create two statewide consortiums which include the states three community college districts and tribal college partners.

- Factors that may impede progress are identified in the respective college progress reports. Staffing and funding are identified as the major limiting factors.
- Some initiatives continue to be deferred or postponed due largely to a lack of identified funds and/or insufficient staffing.
- Continued commitment and positive effort is evident in the college progress reports. The colleges show clear evidence of becoming more comprehensive and self-guided. The development of strategic plans, responses to statewide projects such as the Main Street Montana Project, and development of local resources all attest to the development of a more comprehensive and expanded role for Montana's two-year colleges.
- There is a coordinated and effective, system-wide planning effort underway working toward the creation of statewide partnerships, consortia, and the implementation of the comprehensive two-year mission and vision established by the Board of Regents, the Office of the Commissioner for Higher Education, and the individual colleges.

## **Selected Highlights from 2014 Comprehensive Two-Year Mission Expansion Reports**

### **University Transfer:**

#### **Bitterroot College University of Montana**

- Bitterroot College has made future plans to create a guidance program for two-year to four-year transfer students including an information brochure, visits to the four-year campus, and opportunities to connect with other transfer students.

#### **City College at Montana State University Billings**

- Big Sky Economic Development contracted with RDA Global and DCI to conduct a regional Target Industry Analysis for Yellowstone County, Montana. The completion of this survey/analysis is targeted for completion in March 2015.
- In order to meet the goal of increasing dual enrollment by 50 students each year, partnerships were developed with K12 post-secondary schools in surrounding areas within these programs: Big Sky Pathways; Montana Digital Academy; Dual Enrollment; Concurrent Enrollment; Early College (University Connections).
- City College received approval and implemented a new AS transfer degree with a concentration in Criminal Justice.

#### **Gallatin College Montana State University**

- Fall enrollment showed an 11% increase. This is on track to reach the 2020 goal of 800 students.
- Belgrade HS concurrent enrollment courses increased to eight. Park HS now offering three dual enrollment (DE) courses. Manhattan HS added three DE courses and Three Forks is adding two courses in FY15. Frequent meetings with other area high schools with additional courses in the planning stage.
- Launched internal and external communication efforts to extol the value and credibility of AA and AS offerings at Gallatin College.

#### **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- A Transfer Advising Fair sponsored by the Great Falls College Advising and Career Center was held on January 29, 2015.

- Fourteen students enrolled in a 1+3 Engineering option to MSU in Bozeman during the Fall 2014 semester.
- Currently there are 18 transfer articulation agreements and five programs of study are in place with four-year campuses.
- Dual credit high school student enrollment has more than doubled and online dual credit courses have more than tripled in the last three academic years. In AY 2013-2014, there were 377 online dual enrollments students, 203 concurrently enrolled students, and 229 dual credit students taking courses on campus.

### **Helena College University of Montana**

- Recently three articulation agreements for transfer degrees were signed and there are five more in progress.
- A University of Montana transfer fair was hosted by Helena College in Fall 2014. A similar fair with Montana State University will be hosted this spring.
- A Helena College Transfer Guide was created and is being used to engage students to facilitate transfer.

### **Highlands College of Montana Tech**

- The Associate of Science Degree Program has the expressed purpose of encouraging and supporting students who are interested in transferring to a four-year degree program. The AS Program has been very successful in that it is now the largest program at Highlands with 250 students.
- Continually working to increase the number of general education courses at HCMT by 5% while partnering with Tech's North Campus for courses requiring specialized science labs.

### **Missoula College University of Montana**

- Transfer degree MOUs have been created in Business Administration, Communications, Elementary Education, Healthcare Informatics, Recreation, Sociology, and Psychology.
- New building is designed and groundwork has begun with projected completion in Fall 2017. There will be adequate facilities to deliver the AS coursework, as well as growing the AA coursework offering.



## **Workforce Development: Responsiveness to Local Community Needs**

### **Highlands College of Montana Tech**

- Montana Precision Products/SeaCast was starting to receive large orders from General Electric in the aerospace welding area and had a significant need for more welders. Highlands College immediately pivoted to help them.
- Result- HC created the Aerospace Welding Certificate Program – with major support from the SWAMMEI Grant and from Montana Precision Products/SeaCast.

### **Bitterroot College University of Montana**

- Bitterroot Job Service asked Bitterroot College to develop and deliver Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) training to satisfy the unmet demands of local nursing facilities.
- Of the 30 students who completed CNA at Bitterroot College, 80 percent (24) were immediately placed in local jobs.
- Ravalli County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA) asked Bitterroot College (BC) to work with them to develop and deliver small business/entrepreneurship training.
- RCEDA and BC established a five-part Building Bitterroot Business series which has been successfully run three times every year since spring 2010.

### **Helena College University of Montana**

- Through a distinctive partnership with State Departments of Revenue and Administration, Helena College developed focused entry and advanced academic programming in the areas of Business and Computer Technology.
- An increased presence of Aeronautical Manufacturing in the Helena Region has provided an opportunity for Helena College to develop targeted partnerships with national corporations, like Boeing, in the area of high tech numerically controlled (CNC) machining and fabrication.

### **City College at Montana State University Billings**

- City College has developed and implemented employer specific trainings year round. Recent examples include: Calumet Refining, Phillips 66, EBMS, ExxonMobil, Phillips 66, Cenex, and the Bureau of Land Management.
- CDL workforce training for non-credit offered in December and January to assist with high demand in area for CDL by region employers related to Bakken and Agricultural industry.

- Last year City College had a 100% job placement rate in the following programs: Computer Programming and Applications, Radiology Technology, ASN Nursing, AAS Nursing, and Process Plant.
- Overall, 86% of City College graduates are employed in Montana, and 66% of those are employed in Billings.

### **Gallatin College Montana State University**

- Medical Assistant and Medical Coding programs were started to meet critical workforce needs of local health care providers. The programs have experienced a high level of student interest and a strong record of job placements for graduates.
- The college started a Computer Numerical Coded Machining program this past fall to meet the needs of local manufacturing companies. Students in this program have already been employed by local industry while they continue to work through the second semester of their coursework.

### **Missoula College University of Montana**

- Missoula College is the lead for the \$15 million TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training) grant that was awarded by the US Department of Labor with the purpose of expanding opportunities for Montanans to gain skills and credentials for high-paying jobs in the healthcare industry.
- The project has a particular emphasis on rural adult learners and healthcare facilities and it is expected that all of Montana's critical access hospitals and community health centers will be involved. The goal is to create a two-year college system that can rapidly respond to industry needs.

### **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- Great Falls College MSU was a primary force in attracting ADF, International to expand their operations into the Western United States and locate in Great Falls. In early February Dan Rooney, the General Manager spoke to the Legislature citing 55% of his beginning welders are graduates of GFC MSU and 25% of the 150 employees are from other two-year programs in Montana.
- To meet the workforce demand, GFC MSU tripled output of its welding program by scheduling three cohort classes running from 6:30 in the morning to midnight, Monday through Friday.
- The local health care industry (Benefis Health Systems, Great Falls Clinic) contributed significantly in the creation of a complete simulated hospital at the college.

- GFC MSU leads the implementation of the \$25 million TAACCCT 3 grant which includes a 13 college consortium focused on energy and advanced manufacturing training.

## **Developmental and Adult Basic Education:**

### **Bitterroot College University of Montana**

- With the goal of increasing persistence and retention, an assessment of current tutoring services was performed and improvement recommendations are being implemented.
- A Learning & Testing Center Coordinator has been hired to manage all tutoring, testing, and library services.

### **City College at Montana State University Billings**

- City College Advising and Retention Committee & Department Chairs along with Student Services have been invited to jointly visit one or two local comprehensive community colleges to observe and identify sources, processes, and successful practices in recruiting, retention, and advising.
- Faculty members are using the Early Alert System at City College. The Director of Student Success and Retention makes contact with identified students and offers assistance.
- A formal communication flow plan for first year students has been created. The Student Services Department has also created an Advising and Retention Committee that is charged with improving advising services by professional and faculty advisors.
- City College also created an Advising and Retention Committee that is charged with improving advising and retention practices.

### **Gallatin College Montana State University**

- Extended meeting times for two developmental math courses are being piloted with extended meeting times to allow more time for the same course material, reserved for conditionally accepted students who entered with low placement test scores or low prerequisite grades.
- Based on curriculum through Complete College America, Gallatin College created a developmental non-STEM track math course. Gallatin College will analyze data to assess whether students who completed the mastery-based

courses complete the subsequent college-level course at higher rates.

- Gallatin College is partnering with Adult Basic Education for workforce pathways and math assessment refreshers.
- Gallatin College began using EdReady with students at levels 1 or 2 math entering Fall 2014 in preparation for the math placement exam (MPLEX).

### **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- Piloting changes in developmental education has yielded positive results. The average pass rate for developmental math and English courses in 2013-2014 was 65% and 69% respectively.
- From Fall 2013 to Fall 2014, 66 Adult Education contacts have matriculated to Great Falls College.

### **Helena College University of Montana**

- An Adult Learner Inventory survey was completed with the goal of gauging student participation and satisfaction.
- New developmental math programs are being implemented. Starting in Spring of 2014, MyMathTutor was deployed in lieu of M065.
- Implemented new Advising Planning sheets to permit student to more accurately track degree progress and to promote academic planning.

### **Highlands College of Montana Tech**

- The Learning Center has been reorganized and renamed to the Academic Center of Excellence – South. Activities in this center have been expanded to meet the goal of a 5% increase of students who receive tutoring.
- Highlands College has adopted EdReady for all of the developmental math courses.

### **Missoula College University of Montana**

- Have established initial collaboration with ABE/GED services at Lifelong Learning Center in Missoula. Sharing coursework, faculty, classrooms, and testing services are being developed Spring 2015.
- Emporium Model for developmental math, housed in the Mansfield Library on the UM Mountain Campus, and Missoula College is providing oversight and staffing with assistance from the TAACCCT 3 grant award. TRIO for precollege support is housed prominently on campus. College is currently investigating a TRIO grant to expand services to current students.

## Lifelong Learning:

### **Bitterroot College University of Montana**

- A local College Access Network (CAN) was developed as prescribed via the national College Access Network program; incorporated dual enrollment opportunities and Big Sky Pathways into outreach effort.
- Ravalli County Dual Enrollment has increased from 13 students in Fall 2012 to 60 students in Fall 2014 (362% increase). The Dual Enrollment Coordinator position is being funded by the Legislature's Dual Enrollment incentive.

### **City College at Montana State University Billings**

- Targeting adult learners in the *What's Your Plan?* advertising campaign. City College is the pilot institution in this two-year education advertising campaign. The pilot began in June 2013 and ended Fall 2014. The efforts continue under MSU Billings City College resources.
- A new web design coming in AY 2014/15 will designate new pages to hold adult learner information on applying, adult learner services and resources, CAEL/PLA processes to better create marketing efforts to attract adult learners.

### **Gallatin College Montana State University**

- Data was collected and analyzed regarding student age. Results are as follows: 2012=34% non-traditional aged students, 2013=42.5% non-traditional aged students, 2014=38.3% non-traditional aged students. Average age remains at 25.
- In Fall 2013, 25 veterans were enrolled and seeking a degree.

### **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- Continued success in dual enrollment has positively impacted local high schools. In academic year 2013-2014 there were 296 dual enrollment students and the success rate for these students was 93% and 94% respectively for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014.
- The dropout rate in Great Falls decreased from 3.7 percent in 2013 to 3.0 percent in 2014, according to the latest data released by the Montana Office of Public Instruction.
- In the process of increasing awareness of how to obtain credit for prior learning. A landing page for prior learning will be created with the launch of our new website.

### **Helena College University of Montana**

- Financial Aid staff have always partnered with the local area high schools (Helena High, Capital High, Lincoln, Boulder, Townsend, White Sulphur) in order to educate students and parents on financial aid opportunities.
- A “Speakers Bureau” of faculty and professionals has been developed to provide programs for area schools, community, organizations, business and industry, and the general public.
- The new Metals Fabrication apprenticeship program was launched in Fall 2014 as direct result of input from industry. This program serves mostly students who are already employed in the fabrication industry.

### **Highlands College of Montana Tech**

- An expanded schedule will increase the number of courses offered in the evenings and weekends to better serve learners with non-traditional schedules.
- A survey conducted with Helena College to research the perceptions and needs of veterans has been completed and analyzed. A Veterans Lounge has been created on the campus to better accommodate veteran needs.

### **Missoula College University of Montana**

- Increased awareness and high school participation has resulted in Big Sky Pathway success. There are currently 90 pathways with 59 high schools.
- Missoula College offers dual enrollment/dual credit in 13 courses to eight schools with a total of 453 high school students participating.
- Two professional development trainings were offered at MC for regional high school instructors in Hospitality and Tourism and MATH 111.

## Community Development:

### **Bitterroot College University of Montana**

- An increase in FY2015 General Fund was awarded to hire a Bitterroot College Advising and Enrollment Services Assistant (full-time, fiscal year position). This position also serves as the BC receptionist.

### **City College at Montana State University Billings**

- Continued development of diversity awareness on campus through workshops, professional development, and seminars; a workshop in conjunction with AIO was offered to build awareness of American Indian culture.
- City College hosts community events such as: 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony; City College Rebranding Anniversary; various department outreach or philanthropic events (i.e. auto dept. free auto winterization), EDC/EDA Billings Works meetings/events; Montana H.S. BPA competitions, Lewis and Clark Days, Billings Library Children's summer workshops, etc.
- Goal of holding at least two outreach meetings per year with tribal colleges to discuss topics such as RevUp Montana and PLA.

### **Gallatin College Montana State University**

- Renovated and leased space on Bozeman Frontage Road (GC East) to meet additional classroom needs. Set up agreement to utilize classroom at Airport for Aviation course.

### **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- A community survey was conducted in Spring 2013. Community and campus focus group sessions were held in Fall 2013. The analysis of these two action items will be incorporated into the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the updated Strategic Plan, and to develop a Facilities Master Plan.
- Programs are being developed, revised, or eliminated to match community interest. Programs with an every other year intake will include interior design, sustainable energy, industrial maintenance, and radiologic technology.

### **Helena College University of Montana**

- There has been a focus on increasing foundation or alumni sponsored events and programs that meet community needs such as volunteering and service collaborations.
- Helena College hosted several events that have targeted young students, including females interested in typically male dominated fields. Events such as Women in Gear and Girls STEM have been well attended.

- A new College Advisory Council was formed Spring 2014 made up of community leaders across our service region.

### **Highlands College of Montana Tech**

- Butte School District Adult Community Education continues at Highlands College.
- An External Advisory Board has been formed and has met twice to conduct a systematic and rigorous review of the opportunities to meet the unmet needs of non-traditional students

### **Missoula College University of Montana**

- Strategic plan specifically addresses the communications plan as a priority for Missoula College. The plan is in draft form and will include internal and external entities. The elements of the plan maintain our goal of an “adult-friendly” campus, with implications for recruitment and marketing.
- Missoula College has well established student services and support available for adults and veterans on campus. In addition, all UM student organizations, child care, service groups, recreation, and health care are readily available to MC students.



## College Progress Reports

Following are the seven college plans. Each plan contains two parts:

1. A narrative section that addresses specific topics requested by OCHE
2. A matrix that includes updates on specific initiatives being implemented at the college

### **Progress Reports**

- Appendix A: [Bitterroot College UM](#)
- Appendix B: [City College at MSUB](#)
- Appendix C: [Gallatin College MSU](#)
- Appendix D: [Great Falls College MSU](#)
- Appendix E: [Helena College UM](#)
- Appendix F: [Highlands College at MT Tech](#)
- Appendix G: [Missoula College UM](#)