



Board of Regents – May 2016 RevUp Montana Update

This document contains information about the RevUp Montana project (previously called SWAMMEI), to help provide background and context on project initiatives and outcomes. RTI, our federally-mandated, third-party project evaluator will provide a brief presentation of their evaluation-to-date and provide an opportunity to ask questions about the project and initial project impacts.

RevUp Montana Background

In October of 2013, Montana was awarded a \$25 million dollar workforce development grant. The grant was focused on two primary issues: (1) reducing the skills gap by creating more demand-driven training programs, and (2) increasing return-on-investment for students in targeted occupations. Great Falls College MSU, the project’s lead, and 12 other Montana two-year colleges, are utilizing grant funds to upgrade training programs in the manufacturing and energy industries while also adapting new models of training delivery.

Systemic Shifts Catalyzed by Project

- Breaking 1 & 2-year college programs into smaller, semester-length chunks. Students completing a semester in good standing can be awarded an education credential (Certificate of Technical Studies). *Not all campuses have adopted this model in all occupations.*
- Embedding of **Industry-recognized credential (IRC)** into college programs – Students earn IRCs as they matriculate through programs. Each IRC demonstrates a student has gained a specific competency, providing precise information about what a student can contribute to employers even if that student does not obtain an educational degree. *Most campuses have aligned their programs to one another based upon the learning outcomes associated with IRCs in RevUp’s target occupations.*
- Hiring **Workforce Navigators (WFN)**: WFN create a bridge between MT DLI Job Service (JS) and college programs. They work to recruit, retain and place students by utilizing a case-management approach to advising which has helped catalyze a multi-fold increase in successful JS referrals and increased student retention by 13%. Navigators place roughly 80% of RevUp students (still awaiting formal placement data) and 62% percent of Job Service enrollees working with Navigators have obtained jobs.
- Formalizing an **employer-focused approach** has included enhancing local outreach from colleges (typically through WFNs) and aligning those efforts with grant-funded launches of sector partnerships (regional – Butte, Bozeman, Kalispell, Lewistown) and Key Industry Network initiatives (KINs – Main Street Montana). Cross-agency formalization of industry outreach efforts reduces duplication of public sector outreach while increasing clarity of the aggregate needs of industry partners across the state.

Update on Project Specific “Scope of Work”

Initiative	Update
Energy Industry Training	This initiative was primarily aimed at preparing workers for entry-level positions in the Bakken. With the dramatic downturn in demand, this initiative has changed focus to offering short industrial safety training for industry partners across the state. An energy technician program at City College was also expanded.
Manufacturing Industry Training	Twelve welding programs have been enhanced and aligned through grant funding. Machining (6 programs), industrial electronics (2 programs) and industrial maintenance programs have been created/improved with grant funds.
Diesel Technicians	Programs in Havre and Helena have been improved by grant funds.





CDL Training	7 new training programs have been started and improvements have been made to 3 existing programs. Most college programs (except Helena) include at least 140+ hours of training. Bitterroot College has some capacity to offer these training in isolated areas of the state.
Coaching	Focused on increasing student retention, remote coaches help students identify and overcome barriers. The service has increased fall-to-fall student retention by 5-17% (differs by college) at 5 participating colleges.
Expand Apprenticeships	In addition to designing pathways into existing union apprenticeships, significant focus has been placed on designing new competency-based, degree bearing apprenticeship track programs. Many conversations underway with potential employer-sponsors. This initiative has also benefitted from significant partnership from MT DLI leadership and staff.
Math Initiatives	Several innovative approaches to developmental math have been implemented at Missoula College (emporium lab), MSUN (IBEST-style support) and Helena (contextualized tech math)

Lead Colleges of Occupational Initiatives

Great Falls College MSU is the institution leading the grant effort overall, but 6 colleges were pegged to lead the grant efforts in specific occupational arenas:

- **Great Falls College MSU:** Welding and Welding Fabrication stacked credential track; **City College:** Oil and Gas non-credit stacked credential tracks; **MSU Northern and Helena College:** Shared leadership of Diesel Technician programs; **Bitterroot College:** Commercial Driver's License programs; **Flathead Valley Community College:** Machining, Industrial Maintenance, and Industrial Electronics stacked credential tracks; **Missoula College:** Energy Technology stacked credential programs and Entrepreneurship Courses

Increased Capacity:

- **Course Sharing:** Intended to increase access for isolated students to broader programming options, CS would allow students at one college to take specific courses from other colleges while maintaining just one transcript. It has taken significantly longer than expected to put the necessary infrastructure in place, though progress in creating this infrastructure might have benefits well beyond the RevUp project.
- **Other Initiatives:** Creation of the Talent Pipeline Report, a joint initiative of MT DLI and OCHE, is an enhancement of U.S. DOL's mandated Scorecard. The report should help determine where the workforce pipeline is well aligned with demand and where insufficient training may be occurring.
- **Increased Service to Underserved Regions and Incumbent Workers:** New mobile training unit allows on-site training and assessment services to isolated businesses and incumbent workers. Bitterroot now has a mobile CDL training capacity. GFC MSU has a mobile welding training and assessment capacity and is exploring options to support maintenance training.

Sampling of College-Level Highlights:

Highlands College has already exceeded its participation estimates by over 744%; Bitterroot College has shared both its curriculum and faculty expertise in CDL with other colleges, helping launch 5 additional non-credit programs; FVCC's fall-to-fall retention rate for coached students was 17% higher than for non-coached students; Gallatin's new machining program has a 100% placement rate with job-seeking students; Great Falls College MSU welding students have a 95% job placement rate and cut the rate of unsuccessful student outcomes for its '14-'15 welding cohort in half. Great Falls College MSU, City College and MSUN have expanded non-credit programs that mirror chunks of for-credit programs and include obtainment of an industry-recognized credentials to better serve incumbent workers and businesses.

