

**HELENA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA  
CAMPUS DIVERSITY AND ACTION PLAN  
December 2000**

## **I. Executive Summary**

The 1991 Campus Diversity and Action Plan delineates the goals and activities that the Helena College of Technology uses to guide its efforts in improvement of the access that the American Indian has to one and two-year technical education at HCT. Considerable effort has been put forth to enhance the educational opportunities for Indian and all students at HCT. Although the population of Indian students at the College has not reached the level proportionate to the Indian population in Montana, it has held at approximately three percent over most of the past ten years. Recruiting programs will be analyzed for possible improvement in targeting the Indian population. Discretionary funding for recruitment of the American Indian people will be evaluated for effectiveness and possible reallocation to better use in the recruitment of minority students in Montana.

The rate of completion of programs for the American Indian at the Helena College of Technology remains a problem area. The completion rate of American Indian students widely fluctuates in spite of strong programs in retention. A greater effort will be required to learn more about the specific needs of the Indian student and to meet some or all of those needs.

Minorities at HCT are underrepresented with only one on staff. Although HCT abides by non-discriminatory policies, very few applications are received from minority populations. Future advertisements for staff and faculty positions will try to target the American Indian population more directly.

The number and quality of courses in cultural diversity seem appropriate to the population base of the Helena College of Technology and the mission of the college of career and technical education. The College is primarily dedicated to one and two-year technical education. The transfer program has recently been instituted to provide more opportunity for locally based individuals to pursue a four-year college education. Currently, there are 120 students enrolled in the transfer program.

HCT will renew its energy in working toward its goals in the Diversity and Action Plan. Several initiatives have been identified for future directions.

## **II. Goals and Action Plans of the HCT 1991 Diversity and Action Plan**

**GOAL I:**        **Increase recruitment efforts and enrollment of Native Americans and other minorities.**

**Activity:** *HCT has implemented several strategies to try to increase the campus American Indian population to the level proportional to the state of Montana.*

**GOAL II:**        **Using the 1991-92 graduation statistics as a base, increase the retention and graduation of Native Americans and other minorities.**

**Activity:** *HCT has worked to improve its retention services and its impact for the American Indian student.*

**GOAL III:**        **Help meet students' needs in securing financial aid.**

**Activity:** *To help Native American students with financial aid problems and questions, a handbook will be developed to give step-by-step procedures used at HCT, and to list names, addresses, and telephone numbers of tribal educational directors and other Native Americans with expertise in federal financial aid and the BIA financial assistance program.*

**GOAL IV:**        **Help Native American students with the major housing problem that exists in Helena.**

**Activity:** Housing has been identified as a major problem in Helena for all students, but even more so for Native Americans. HCT will attempt to coordinate, with the Helena Indian Alliance, a housing referral system to assist Native Americans in attaining suitable housing.

**GOAL V: Help faculty, administration, and staff become more sensitive to problems facing Native Americans and other minorities.**

**Activity:** With the assistance of personnel at the Commissioner of Higher Education's office, HCT will develop and hold training workshops for faculty and staff to help them become more aware of, sensitive to, and open-minded about the problems faced by ethnic minorities.

The goals and activities of the 1991 Diversity Plan remain in effect in year 2000. They are still relevant to our interests and efforts. HCT's progress toward those goals has been reported on in both 1993 and 1997. The Cultural Awareness Committee needs to review the campus Diversity Plan and update it as deemed appropriate.

### III. Enrollment Management

The Helena College of Technology is committed to provide all persons an equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in campus activities. Individuals seeking admission are not discriminated against because of race, creed, religion, sex, marital status, color, age physical handicap, or national origin or mental handicap. This holds true in the type of information gathered in admissions, in printed material, and campus policy. Students may follow the Student Due Process procedure if they believe the policy for nondiscrimination has not been followed.

By law the Helena College of Technology is an open access campus and all students who have a reasonable chance of success above the age of 15 are admitted. Student Services makes every effort to minimize the barriers to admission and registration.

The recruitment program at HCT has targeted the American Indian and minority population. Publications, posters, and videos have been more inclusive. Communications with high schools with high numbers of Indian students has increased. Around the state recruiting includes visits to schools in the following towns: Cut Bank, Browning, Kalispell, Charlo, Saint Ignatius, Brady, Simms, Lincoln, Harlem, Winnett, Glendive, and Miles City. HCT recruiters also participate in the Montana Tour, which offers information on higher education opportunities to high school students around the state. The annual tour pays special attention to planning events either on or very near all Montana reservations. Locally, the college communicates its activities with the Helena Indian Alliance. The college newsletter is distributed to the Alliance center and telephone contact is maintained with them.

The total recruitment program was improved and there has been an increase in both the total number of students and the number of minorities including American Indians. There were 51 minority students with 24 American Indians on campus in the Fall of 1999.

While the following enrollment chart shows a 35% increase in total students in the past ten years, it also shows that the American Indian population on-campus has consistently held around the 3.0% mark. The college's goal is to match the population level in Montana. The best percentage reached, thus far, was 3.8% in the Fall of 1997. The lowest level was 1.2% in the Fall of 1992 when the total enrollment took a surprising dip to 488 total students. The total minority student population at HCT rose in the past 8 years from 2.3% in 1992 to 6.7% in 1999.

### IV. Completions

Retention and successful completion of programs are a high priority at the Helena College of Technology. The overall retention rate is approximately 80% and student satisfaction with the quality of programs is high.

The Helena College of Technology retention programs are open for all students. Current programs include an academic probation program, tutoring services, assisted computer and tutorial lab, academic counseling and advising, transfer advising, and orientation.

The Coordinator of the Learning Center instituted a new program for students on academic probation. She works with each probationary student to identify the causes of academic probation and develops an individualized plan for success in the current semester. Anecdotally, it seems to have benefited several of the at-risk students. All of the services in the Learning Center are individualized to meet each student's needs as he or she requests help.

The Learning Center in the Donaldson Building is a vital component of the HCT retention program. The Learning Center Coordinator sends a referral letter to all instructors at mid-semester to encourage referrals. She also meets with the adjunct faculty to explain the Learning Center resources and encourages those instructors to use the Learning Center for their students. The Learning Center is open to all students and is not perceived as a center for any one type of student.

Some non-completions by students are due more to personal issues than academic reasons. The Helena College of Technology recently hired a Retention and Placement counselor who is working on building support systems for students. For the American Indian, the counselor will be looking at student mentoring programs, a stronger connection with the Helena Indian Alliance Center, and a student self-support group on campus.

The following chart indicates fluctuations in the graduation rate of the American Indian from the Helena College of Technology. The high, for instance, for Associate degrees was 4.69% in 1989-90 with 3 Indian students completing out of 64 total students. The low was 0.00% in 1991-92 and 1995-96 when there were not any Indians completing. Three successfully completed their program in 1996-97 out of 74 total students graduating.

## V. Funding

Since HCT started offering the Montana University System American Indian Fee Waiver in full amounts in 1996, there have been an average of 18.05 waivers granted each year. Those fee waivers are granted upon request and are not contingent on need or scholarship. A maximum number of MUS fee waivers is not set. The cost of the American Indian Fee Waivers to HCT has risen from \$4,695 in 1995-1996 to \$25,000 in 1900-2000. HCT's practice with the American Indian Fee Waivers is in concert with the intent of the campus Diversity Plan to fully support working with minorities.

The campus also welcomes those students receiving Bureau of Indian Affairs scholarships. There is currently one student on campus receiving the BIA scholarship and two received it last year. Five students received the BIA scholarship in 1998-1999.

HCT uses discretionary funds from the Student Services budget to support targeted recruitment including schools with high proportional enrollment of American Indians. Discretionary funds also finance retention and academic support programs and supplement Perkins Grant funds for administration and counseling activities.

Students often have the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants in HCT courses. The positions, however, are usually internships for credit and are not paid. These students have benefited the quality of education both for the students in class and themselves.

## VI. Faculty

HCT openly advertises all employment positions with the Job Service and local newspapers. Faculty and administrative positions are advertised statewide. HCT posts positions on the Job Service website and also on The University of Montana website, giving them national exposure. As an equal opportunity employer, HCT does not discriminate against the American Indian or other minorities.

The campus asks that hiring committees grant interview priority to women, minorities, disabled veterans, and persons with disabilities who are present in the finalist pool. The hiring committee establishes the interview pool in conjunction with Regent policy. There are no requirements as to the number of candidates who must be interviewed. The hiring committee is instructed to make its decision about whom to interview on such factors as the comparative strengths and weaknesses of each finalist, the needs of the program, and the campus interview priority policy.

Only when the pool of finalists consists of a homogeneous pool does the hiring committee choose to interview only the top ranked candidate. If that candidate is acceptable, the hiring committee may make the hire without interviewing other candidates. If the candidate is not acceptable or does not accept the position, the hiring committee may then invite the second ranked finalist for an interview.

The following charts show that of the 57 total employees at the Helena College of Technology there is only one minority person on staff. Although the college openly advertises its positions and carefully abides by its non-discrimination policies, very little success has been achieved in hiring minority people. The management team will review the hiring policies and practices for possible improvement.

## VII. Coursework and Programs

The Helena College of Technology's General Education requirements for cultural diversity include a course on "Native American Culture" and "Introduction to Anthropology." They are a part of the Transfer Core of courses for articulation of the General Education requirements to other MUS campuses. There is not a sufficient population base at HCT to offer a total program or degree in cultural diversity.

The course statements for the cultural diversity courses are as follows:

SS110 Introduction to Anthropology      3 credits

This is a survey of the various sub fields of anthropology, including archeology, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. One of the course goals is to:

- Introduce the student to anthropological understanding of human diversity, biological universals, and cultural interaction using useful generalizations about people and culture.

SS225 Native American Culture      3 credits

This is a study of the cultural makeup of Native Americans in Montana and subsequently in the United States. Education, historical, legal, and social aspects are analyzed for their influence on the modern Indian culture. One of the course goals is to:

- Analyze the influence of traditional Indian religious beliefs and European religions and education on Indian people of today.

### HELENA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED

#### INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY COURSE

Spring 2000	24
Spring 1999	12
Spring 1998	21

#### NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE COURSE

Fall 2000	19
Fall 1999	26
Fall 1998	27
Fall 1997	Not Offered
Fall 1996	19

## VIII. Future Directions

HCT will pursue the following initiatives to improve American Indian enrollments, success rates, and employment of the American Indian and other minorities:

- Meet at least once a year with the American Indian students to discuss ways that the campus and students can work together to improve student success. This information will drive initiatives that target the students' needs as best that available resources will allow.
  - Promote collaboration with tribal colleges. HCT and the Blackfeet Tribal College are currently discussing collaboration on the Correctional Officer Program. HCT would like to support the Tribal College's need for curriculum development and ask for collaboration on curriculum improvement.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment practices toward more targeting of the American Indian in recruiting efforts
  - Reinitiate advertisement of faculty and staff positions at the tribal colleges in Montana.
  - Charge the Cultural Awareness Committee with the review of the 1991 Diversity and Action Plan for possible updating of the goals and activities.
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