

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS

Policy 1902 – Minority Achievement

Effective: November 18, 1999; Issued: December 10, 1999

I. Board Policy

A. The board of regents (BOR) recognizes the desirability for campus environments to promote multicultural diversity and for the participation and achievement of American Indian and other minority students to be, at a minimum, equal to their representation in the state's population. To that end, the board pledges its cooperation with the board of public education, the office of public instruction, American Indian tribal colleges, and other American Indian and minority entities within the state and adopts the following goals for higher education in Montana:

1. To enroll and graduate American Indians and other minorities in proportion to their representation in the state's population. In measuring the outcome of this goal it is expected that the students would originate from the state of Montana and that the proportional representation would apply both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Further, it is expected that the minority students would have comparable levels of achievement with non-minority students.
2. To increase the employment of American Indians and other underrepresented minorities in administrative, faculty and staff positions to achieve representation equal to that of the relevant labor force.
3. To enhance the overall curriculum by infusion of content which enhances multicultural awareness and understanding.

B. The following guidelines based upon recommendations from the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance should be considered:

1. **State Priorities Publicly.** Colleges and universities that publicly announce goals to eliminate race/ethnicity-related differences in achievement via press releases and other public statements in a wide range of arenas indicate their commitment to educational opportunity.
2. **Commit Discretionary Dollars.** Discretionary institutional dollars spent to recruit, retain and graduate American Indian and other minority students communicates commitment better than federal or state categorical grant programs. Conversely, limiting participation in programs to eligible students according to state or federal guidelines, or terminating programs when external funds are withdrawn, advertises that commitment to equal educational opportunity is optional. Campus presidents and chancellors are encouraged to plan for use of various strategies to enable their campus to use a portion of their available discretionary funds each year to support the board policy.
3. **Employ American Indian and other Minority Leaders.** Employing American Indian and other minorities in positions of senior leadership sends a clear message about the importance and value of cultural diversity among professional institutional staff.
4. **Collect Relevant Data.** Institutions that routinely collect information about the achievement patterns of American Indian and other minority undergraduates, differentiated by admission status and department, are well positioned to address popular perception and to design focused strategies that build on success and contain failure.
5. **Meet Student Needs Systematically.** Institutions intent on equity will provide comprehensive and integrated support services to remove barriers to academic achievement and social integration. Institutions will take a proactive role in helping American Indian and other minority students secure financial aid based on their participation in support programs and their potential for earning supplemental income.
6. **Emphasize Quality.** In the past it has been common to define quality as a function of those excluded. Institutions with the smallest acceptance ratios excluded minorities disproportionately. Today any workable definition of quality

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must include diversity, but not at the expense of rigor and excellence. American Indian and other minority students need high quality education.

7. **Collaborate With Public Schools, Private and Parochial Colleges, Community Businesses, Tribal Agencies, Tribal Colleges and other Agencies.** A team approach will enable communities of organizations to raise the aspirations of American Indian and other minority students and to strengthen their academic preparation. Elementary and high school students need demystifying campus contacts and role models and should be given adequate financial aid information.

Articulation arrangements should be developed between community colleges, tribal colleges and four-year programs to eliminate unnecessary loss of transfer credit. Organizations and businesses influential in the American Indian and other minority communities should motivate and provide economic support for the college bound.

8. **Provide a Supportive Learning Environment.** Bridge programs, extended classes covering required material, tutoring, learning laboratories, collaborative study groups and intrusive advising should be provided to help under-prepared students who are the most vulnerable to academic failure.
9. **Support the Development of Culturally Sensitive and Multicultural Faculty.** Effective institutions expand the pool of American Indian and other minority professors by mentoring graduate students or junior faculty members and providing them with support for additional graduate training. Such institutions also give rewards, tenure and promotion based on evidence of good teaching--characterized by direct student contact, caring, mentoring, sensitivity to cultural differences, and high expectations for all students.

Institutions also provide campus wide sensitization activities that address racism, cultural differences and awareness, learning styles and environments on an ongoing basis.

10. **Develop and Maintain a Comfortable Social Environment on Campus and in the Greater Community.** Academically well-prepared American Indian and other minority students have been distracted from their studies by incidents of racism. Institutions concerned about eliminating discrimination, harassment and low expectations for minorities, provide special programs, services, and facilities to help minority groups retain their sense of cultural identity and adjust to isolation. The most effective strategy is proportional representation.

II. Procedures:

In consultation with the office of the commissioner of higher education, each campus president or chancellor will develop an action plan to accomplish the System goals for multicultural diversity. The plans are to be submitted to the BOR. Action results will periodically be submitted to the commissioner who will make available such results to interested parties and to the general public.

History:

Item 67-001-R0690, Minority Achievement; Montana University System, September 13, 1990; as revised November 18, 1999 (Item 104-103-R0999).