

**Notes - Montana University System Staff Association (MUSSA)  
05/20 & 21/2014 Meeting Havre, MT**

**Present:**

X	Christy Aamold, MSU Billings	A	Fred Sullivan, Montana Tech UM (Butte)
X	Julie Nicolaas, MSU Billings	A	Faye Wilson, Montana Tech UM (Butte)
A	Sheri Steiner, MSU Billings	A	Cory Creighton, UM Western (Dillon)
X	Debra Bradley, MSU Northern (Havre)	A	Becky Harrington, UM Western (Dillon)
X	Samantha Clawson, MSU Northern (Havre)	A	Brooke Erb, UM Western (Dillon)
X	Carol Berg, Great Falls College MSU	X	Mary Ann George, Helena College UM
A	Ali Winberry, Great Falls College MSU	A	Hannah Singleton, UM Missoula
A	John Frisbee, Great Falls College MSU	A	Natalie Hiller-Claridge, UM Missoula
X	Shana Wold, MSU Bozeman	X	Maria Mangold, UM Missoula
X	Dave Court, MSU Bozeman		

Attendance Code Key: X = Attended A = Absent

Staff present: Judy Wellert and Joan Ford

MUSSA representatives meet Wednesday evening May 20<sup>th</sup>. University of Montana developed and requested their staff to complete a short survey providing feedback as it relates to student success. The Regents had asked MUSSA to present some “best practices” that result in student success from a classified staff perspective. The survey asked staff to consider the variety of areas and issues that affects student success including, but not limited to, the physical campus and accessibility, website usability, information technology and other support services, advising practices, college readiness, and safety. The UM survey was then distributed to each campus to have its staff participate and give their feedback to be added to the state-wide MUSSA voice.

MUSSA members present at the Wednesday evening meeting came prepared with their top five positive impacts, obstacles, and things the colleges and universities could focus on to impact student success. The surveys were reviewed and a compiled summary was prepared for presentation to the Regents at a breakfast meeting Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>.

MUSSA members, the Board of Regents, and representatives from OCHE met at a 7:00 a.m. breakfast meeting. Christy kicked off the meeting by talking about staffs involvement in student success, the survey UM developed, and handed out copies of the 2014 MUSSA Survey on Student Success summary.

Maria, UM Missoula, defined student success, Carol, Great Falls College MSU, discussed positive impacts, Debra, MSU Northern, outlined obstacles faced by students, and Mary Ann, Helena College UM concluded the survey presentation with items that could be focused on by the colleges and universities.

**2014 MUSSA Survey on Student Success summary:**

- 1) How would you define Student Success?
  - a) From a staff prospective there is an array of perceptions across the campuses, including:
  - b) degree or certificate completion
  - c) an enriching and rewarding experience
  - d) meeting or exceeding personal learning goals
  - e) greater depth of knowledge in regards to their curriculum
  - f) marketable skills to obtain a job in their field or the next step in their career
- 2) Please tell us about the things you do at your University/College that positively impacts student success.
  - a) Advise and provide degree and career guidance
  - b) Provide excellent customer service by treating each student as a person, not a number
  - c) Mentor and encourage students to achieve their academic & career goals
  - d) Provide challenge and support
  - e) Provide infrastructure and student services necessary to support a student’s academic career

- 3) From a staff perspective, what are some of the obstacles to success faced by students attending Montana higher educational institutions?
  - a) Poor advising
  - b) Financial impacts; cost of higher education and financial literacy issues
  - c) Ineffective, overwhelmed or disengaged faculty/staff; high staff turnover frustrations creates lack of continuity
  - d) Decentralized student services allows for misinformation, confusion and disconnection between offices and information students receive
  - e) Space issues (not enough classrooms/dorm space/parking, etc.)
  - f) Students often academically, emotionally and socially unprepared for college
- 4) From a staff perspective, what things should Montana higher education is focusing on to impact student success?
  - a) Continue to permeate a culture of “putting the students first”; they are our purpose for being there
  - b) Educate frontline staff and faculty who are often the best resource at directing struggling students to helpful resources, including:
    - c) Advising
    - d) Mentoring
    - e) Tutoring
    - f) Financial Assistance and Education
    - g) Mental Health Support Services
    - h) Career Services
    - i) College/Life Management
    - j) Campus and Community Engagement
    - k) Provide additional frontline staff
    - l) Provide strong certificate and two-year degrees that are very marketable in our community, continued development of articulation agreements with four year schools, improved relationship and assistance to local high school teachers and counselors
    - m) Provide coordinated student services

Regents asked many questions about the findings and focused discussion on Advising. Shana wrapped up the discussion with Regents.

MUSSA members requested a follow up video conference sometime in July to 1) discuss conclusions from our meeting with the Regents, 2) evaluate what direction we take from here, 3) hold elections of officers for MUSSA, plus any other items that did not get covered at the May 20 MUSSA meeting.