

November 19-20, 2009

INFORMATION ITEM **Progress Report: Bitterroot College Program; The University of Montana-Missoula**

With an interim director on board since late August, the Bitterroot College Program (BCP) is making progress and continuing to gain momentum as it forges ahead with long-term planning and the intervening provision of local workplace development and higher education services. In terms of planning, BCP milestones for this fall included finalizing Steering Committee membership, establishing a framework for educational planning, and initiating educational planning. In terms of intervening services, recent BCP highlights comprised the enrollment of 29 individuals in local higher education programming, the local delivery of fully-enrolled computer skills and Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) training courses, and the establishment of a permanent home for the BCP.

The BCP Steering Committee, which is fundamentally charged with providing local insight, professional expertise, and general oversight in the development of a model for the provision of sustainable and responsive local adult and higher education opportunity in Ravalli County, is now comprised of 14 members, including nine local representatives, three University of Montana (UM) representatives, one Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) representative, and one Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) representative. The committee is settling into a routine of meeting face-to-face once a month in Ravalli County. Electronic information updates and smaller subcommittee meetings are occurring between the group's monthly meetings as a means of keeping the committee dynamic vibrant and on task.

BCP SC Member	Representing	Affiliation
Sharon Alexander	Continuing Education	Dean of Continuing Education, UM
Katelyn Andersen ¹	Continuing Education	Local Agent, MSU/Ravalli County Extension
Tim Bronk	Ravalli County School Districts	Superintendent, Darby Public Schools
Anita Driscoll ²	Nontraditional Student	Student, UM-COT
Royce Engstrom	4-year+ Education	Provost, UM
Carlotta Grandstaff	Ravalli County Commissioners	Commissioner, District 5 (South Valley)
Chuck Jensen	2-year Education	VP of Administration and Finance, FVCC
Patricia Meakin	BVCC Steering Committee	Bitterroot Valley Community College Effort

Kimberley Mills ²	Nontraditional Student	Student, UM-COT
Mary Moe	Montana University System	Deputy Commissioner for 2-year Education, OCHE
Deb Morris	Workforce Development	Director of Human Resources, Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital
Rick O'Brien	Economic Development	Director, Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce
John Robinson	BVCC Trustees-elect	Bitterroot Valley Community College Trustee-elect
Bobbie Roos ¹	Continuing Education	Local Agent, MSU/Ravalli County Extension
Dixie Stark	Developmental Education	Director, Literacy Bitterroot
Lynn Stocking	2-year Education	Associate Dean, UM-COT
¹ Committee membership shared between Andersen and Roos		
² Committee membership shared between Driscoll and Mills		

Table 1: Bitterroot College Program Steering Committee Membership, Fall 2009

The BCP educational planning framework, which was developed following discussions with 2-year educational planning colleagues in California (Dan Rosenberg, Educational Planning, Maas Companies, Inc.), FVCC senior personnel, and UM and OCHE professionals, contains five primary components:

- 1) a baseline demographic analysis of Ravalli County
- 2) an internal environmental scan of current Ravalli County residents enrolled in the Montana University System
- 3) an external environmental scan quantifying Ravalli County socioeconomic issues and trends
- 4) several sample surveys of relevant Ravalli County subpopulations (e.g., high school students)
- 5) a series of community conversations directly soliciting public input.

With this planning template in place, data collection and analysis has begun in earnest with respect to the baseline profile and the internal environmental scan. Moreover, the organizing, scheduling, and promotion of the community conversations is in full swing with the first conversation to be held shortly after the Thanksgiving holiday. It is noted that following the conclusion of the educational planning phase, the BCP Steering Committee, armed with an understanding of the depth and breadth of the services wanting in Ravalli County, will then be set to tackle questions of organizational, administrative, and funding planning for the delivery of local adult and higher education opportunity in the Bitterroot Valley.

Bitterroot College Program intervening services during the entity’s planning year are under the authority of The University of Montana, with UM-Missoula COT and UM Extended Learning Services being the primary partnering units in programming and support, and with the BCP Steering Committee providing guidance and direction. BCP students are admitted and pay tuition rates following UM-Missoula COT policy. BCP enrollments for the Fall 2009 semester totaled 45 students spread out over 6 courses, with FTE at 9.2 and non-duplicated headcount at 29. The BCP is planning for greater enrollments for the Spring 2010 semester, with ten courses being offered to date. Following BCP Steering Committee recommendations, course offerings both this past fall and this upcoming spring have been foundational in nature, with developmental and general education courses predominant. Notably, the initial aggregate profile of the current BCP student shows a partiality to healthcare-related majors. Consequently, the majority of BCP courses are currently aligned with also meeting healthcare-related major requirements.

Dept	Course	Credits	Course Title	Student Count	FTE
AASC	101	2	Study & Learn Strategies	4	0.5333
M	90	3	Introductory Algebra	10	2
PSYX	100S	4	Intro to Psychology	7	1.8667
SCN	100N	3	Issues in Biology	9	1.8
WRIT	95	3	Developmental Writing	11	2.2
WRIT	101	3	College Writing I	4	0.8
			Totals	45	9.2

Table 2: Bitterroot College Program Course and Enrollment Summary, Fall 2009

With respect to non-credit workforce development BCP services, UM-Missoula COT took the lead over the past summer in planning and delivering local computer skills and CNA training courses. Two sets of QuickBooks courses and two series of CNA training courses were fully enrolled over the summer (with a total of * local students participating). Planning for further non-credit workforce development courses is currently underway for this spring, with the UM-Missoula COT already scheduling a third CNA training course for this upcoming January.

Turning to a home for the BCP, the program will be moving to new quarters the last week of November. Along with the Bitterroot Job Service and the Ravalli County Economic Development Authority, the BCP will be an anchor tenant at the newly constructed Ravalli Entrepreneurship Center (REC) in Hamilton. Co-locating with employment services and economic development should enhance the success of both BCP planning and programming. The new BCP space includes two offices and two classrooms as well as multiple shared meeting spaces. Of the two classrooms, one will

be equipped with interactive television capabilities while the other will be set-up as a computer laboratory for both instruction and studying. Connectivity with UM Informational Technology services will be on a dedicated system, allowing for direct, secure electronic communication between the BCP and UM personnel and data management systems. The BCP move to the REC promises to be advantageous on many fronts.

In summary, despite a somewhat uneasy beginning last spring, BCP planning and interim services now are progressing with due speed, commitment, and earnestness. With the needed voices now at the table and speaking with purpose and intent, the future for the delivery of sustainable and responsive adult and higher education opportunities in the Bitterroot Valley is very bright.