

Information Item

August 9, 2010

Building the Future of the Equine and Natural Horsemanship programs at Montana Western

Goal: to develop a working arrangement for use of an equine facility near Dillon.

Brief history. Montana Western, in partnership with LaCense Montana, developed an associate degree in equine studies, an associate and bachelor's degree in natural horsemanship, and an equine option in the business degree, which have proved very successful over the last five years. The enrollments in the associate and bachelor's programs have grown since academic year 2004-05. Local, state and national (even international) interest is spreading.

The students enrolled in the natural horsemanship associate and bachelor's degree programs are required to provide their own horse in order to take the classes and earn the degree. Equine associate degree students and students in equine business options are not required to bring a horse to Dillon, although many of them do. Additionally, Montana Western has large and highly successful rodeo and equestrian teams that compete on a national level with many students bringing expensive, highly-trained horses to Dillon when they enroll here.

The current situation. With success of the programs, the most basic need now to ensure the quality and continued growth of the programs is a specific equine facility to both conduct classes, events and practice and provide working pens, arenas, parking and stalls. The facility must be fashioned after the equine centers on campuses that we compete with for students. It should also be close to campus and easily accessible for students and faculty and the community.

A group of Montana Western and southwest Montana supporters, which includes LaCense Montana, the Gilhousen Family Foundation, and local community members, have developed an architectural plan for a facility tentatively called *The Southwestern Montana Horsemanship Center*. The plan is available for examination. This group believes an equine center is fundamental to secure the future of Montana Western's equine and natural horsemanship programs and will be a benefit to all of Beaverhead County and southwest Montana.

The group is in the process of creating a non-profit organization to build, own and operate this facility on property 1.5 miles from campus that will be donated by William Kriegel to the new organization. The non-profit group would start on phase I of the facility expediently. This is a very exciting, positive development for the continued great success of Montana Western. This center will be available for Montana Western classes, conferences and events, rodeo and equestrian team practice and events, and horse boarding, as well as open to the general public for boarding and special events such as 4-H, FFA, etc. The group wishes to make Dillon a national center for natural horsemanship.

The proposal. Montana Western would enter a long-term Use Agreement with the non-profit group to provide a home for our growing equine and natural horsemanship programs. In order to complete a business plan for the IRS procedure to secure non-profit status, the group forming the non-profit organization has requested a letter of commitment from Montana Western.

The external plan. Develop a letter of commitment now based on the following bullets that will be subject to Regents' review/information.

- Develop a Use Agreement with the Southwestern Montana Horsemanship Center --the state limits use agreements to seven-year terms.
- Guarantee that natural horsemanship students--who are required by the major to bring a horse to campus --are required to board their horse at the center. (UMW will guarantee 56 stalls @

\$225/month rent for 10 mos. = \$126,000/year.) This will help with a safety concern of transporting horses daily on rough roads to class at La Cense, which is approximately 10 miles from campus. The new facility is 1.5 miles from campus on paved road.

- Market and collect rent on additional stalls up to a total of 100 stalls (44 more stalls) for other students who choose to board at the center. (\$1,125/semester for other students on an as rented basis—not guaranteed basis—could be up to \$99,000.) A month-to-month boarding option may be implemented at a higher rate.
- Collect user fees from students who use the center without boarding their horse (amount and process to be determined).
- Board includes feeding horses and routine maintenance of stalls.
- Initially pay an annual fee for each athletic team or university club that uses the facility—currently rodeo and equestrian.
- Require per agreement that all enrolled Montana Western students and Montana Western athletic /club teams must go through the university for Center boarding—there can be no direct rental or deals between Montana Western staff or enrolled students with the Center.
- Montana Western will charge students \$230/month for boarding each horse, which includes a \$5 processing/collecting fee to help with bad debt and administrative costs.
- The *Southwestern Montana Horsemanship Center* will charge other (non-student) horse boarders at a rate equal to \$230/month or higher.
- Appropriate insurance and liability issues will be described in the Use Agreement.

The internal plan.

- Subject to approval of the Board of Regents (May 2011 is the next normal fee approval time), Montana Western will create a program fee (which we already had planned for labs and training equipment) for natural horsemanship of \$1,500/semester. The horse boarding portion of the fee would be \$1,125/semester. The rest is to cover labs and required training equipment for the program. Since a horse is a requirement for the program, this fee helps the students and UMW in calculating cost of attendance for financial aid purposes. The fee will go into an appropriate general fund or designated account and a portion will be transferred to the auxiliary account discussed below.
- Montana Western will create an auxiliary service center internally that will manage the Use Agreement and collect the required fees from the students or teams. This account will be managed directly by the Vice Chancellor similar to the successful Montana Youth Challenge auxiliary administration account now in place.
- These types of fees are routine at campuses with equine studies programs, rodeo teams, and equestrian teams.

Explanation. The facility may be available as early as fall 2011. The estimated numbers are current placeholders but based on current market analysis. There is much more to discuss and many details to refine but we would like to be able to move forward with the concept and prepare a letter of commitment for a future Use Agreement so the non-profit group can formally organize to obtain tax numbers and additional funding, and move the project forward. The seven-year use agreement will provide both a set commitment and an opportunity to adjust prices to the market.

Montana Western is very excited about this opportunity and grateful to the non-profit group who recognizes a real need for a competitive, accessible, modern facility and wishes to support further success of our equine programs.