

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

January 9, 2012

Dr. John Cech
Deputy Commissioner
OCHE
2500 Broadway
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Draft Report on the Potential Implementation Plans for Bringing the
Comprehensive Community College Mission to the Montana Tech COT

Dear Dr. Cech:

Attached hereto please find a copy of the Draft Report on the Potential Implementation Plans for Bringing the Comprehensive Community College Mission to the Montana Tech COT.

Montana Tech would like to express its thanks to and gratitude for your assistance, the College!Now Staff and the Lumina Foundation for making available the invaluable facilitation services of Dr. Alison Kadlec of Public Agenda. Montana Tech also wishes to publicly thank Dr. Kadlec for her patience and nonpartisan assistance through this entire process.

This draft plan clearly has both practical as well as aspirational aspects. The practical aspects can and are being implemented. The more aspirational aspects of this plan are dependent upon the allocation of new supportive resources.

Notwithstanding the ultimate outcome of the two-year reformation initiative, this sometimes painful and sometimes exciting process will ultimately benefit our students, for whom we have dedicated these efforts.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely,



Dr. John M. Garic, Dean

Montana Tech

College of Technology – Office of the Dean

January 9, 2012

A Draft of Potential Implementation Plans for Bringing the Comprehensive Community College Mission to Montana Tech's College of Technology

"Hold fast to the best of the past. Run fast with the best of the future."

– John F. Kennedy

I. Overview

- A. Deputy Commissioner John Cech has requested each COT submit a Comprehensive Mission Draft Plan for presentation to the Board of Regents' January agenda.
- B. This memo shall serve as Montana Tech COT's Comprehensive Mission Draft Plan. This Plan speaks to how our college, pending funding availability, will be planning to extend/expand the comprehensive mission (transfer, workforce, developmental education/adult friendly, lifelong learning, and community development).

II. The Potential Implementation Plans

A. Transfer Mission

1. Associate of Science Degree at the COT

- a. The "transfer friendly" Associate of Science (AS) degree at the COT is currently our most significant contribution toward achieving the comprehensive community college mission.
- b. The primary purpose of the program is to support those students who are interested in ultimately transferring to a four-year degree program but who are not yet fully prepared in the areas of math and/or writing.
- c. This degree could attract non-traditional students and veterans, especially if we add the concept of credit for experiential learning. This action will give the right kind of support to students who are less prepared helping position them for success.
- d. This degree could also significantly attract those traditional students who are unclear about their major. It gives them a chance to "dip their toes" into the general education core and have additional opportunities for both STEM and non-STEM oriented students, all in an effort to find their academic way.
- e. Until the Fall, 2011, Montana Tech offered the Associate of Science (AS) degree only on the North Campus and not at the College of Technology.
- f. Starting in the Fall, 2011, Montana Tech began offering the AS degree with its associated two-year cost at the COT.
- g. Montana Tech has supported the COT based AS degree, hiring a full-time person who is coordinating, teaching, advising and supporting students seeking 4-year degree.

2. Other Potential Transfer Initiatives for Serious Consideration

1. Additional Potential Transfer Degrees

- a. A possible initiative is the development of an Associate of Arts (AA) degree to offer additional opportunities for non-STEM oriented students to transfer successfully to a four-year degree program.

B. Workforce Mission

1. Tech's COT currently has been fulfilling a robust workforce academic mission. It is Tech's intention to continue that work, and to expand that work as needed by the community.

2. Additional Potential Workforce Programs

1. A possible new workforce initiative is the development of new degree programs. For example, a new program in Construction Management could be tailored specifically for the local tradespeople in construction, plumbing, electrical and HVAC. Such a degree could allow them to move from merely working in their respective trades to managing trades on larger scales.
2. Another possible initiative is the development of "just in time"/"as needed" and focused training modules for local and regional businesses. Examples of such modularized training are: Commercial Driver's License, Road Crew Flagging, Height-work Rigging, OSH Safety Training, Concrete Testing, etc.

C. Developmental Education/Adult Friendly Mission

1. Tech's COT currently has been fulfilling a robust developmental academic mission. It is Tech's intention to continue that work, and to expand that work as needed by the community.

2. Additional Potential Developmental Education Initiatives

- a. A possible initiative is the creation of a Department of Developmental Education which can focus on and address the unique needs of students who score into developmental math and writing, with the intended purpose of getting them up to speed and on track for degree completion.
- b. Another possible initiative is the refurbishment of the COT with a new fresh look (paint and signage) to make it have a more welcoming appeal, especially to adult students.

D. Lifelong Learning Mission

1. Significantly Greater Focus on Non-Traditional Students

- a. Given the demographics of Butte, Silver Bow County and surrounding regions along with the significantly low rate of educational attainment, it is possible that there is a major unmet need consisting of the existing non-traditional population.
- b. The COT's External Advisory Board (proposed herein) would be charged to conduct a systematic and rigorous review of the opportunities to meet the unmet needs of this population.

- c. Meeting these unmet needs could mean:
 - i. new degree programs;
 - ii. additional faculty and staff;
 - iii. professional development of all faculty and staff regarding the special needs of this population; and
 - iv. the expansion of services to more convenient times, such as evenings, weekends and online.
- d. It is understood as a given that these new initiatives should not come at the expense of existing programs which tend to attract more traditional students. Rather, these initiatives are intended to extend the comprehensive community college mission to the residents of the region.

E. Community Development Mission

1. External Advisory Board

- a. Part of implementing the comprehensive community college mission to the Montana Tech COT will be the creation of an external advisory board.
- b. An external advisory board can serve significant functions of offering good advice and counsel to the Dean of the College of Technology and the leadership of Montana Tech. Such advice and counsel could include:
 - i. An identification of the skills they want and need in COT graduates;
 - ii. Help in building relationships across the community with Tech's COT.
- c. Tech's COT worked with UM Missoula COT to achieve alignment and consistency between their respective Boards.
- d. Montana Tech intends that the Board should include business leaders, K-12 leaders and local governmental leaders.
- e. Montana Tech will request the support of College!Now to provide funding for a consultant to assist with the identification of community needs as part of the initial work of the advisory board.

F. Related Additional Initiatives

1. Name Change

- a. As a result of the December, 2011 College!Now Summit in Bozeman, the Faculty and Staff of the COT understands the OCHE mandate of incorporating affiliation, mission and location into its new name.
- b. What is not yet known is the order of the items. There are at least two possible orderings:
 - i. Montana Tech's _____ College; or
 - ii. _____ College of Montana Tech
- c. After discussions and preference indications, the following names have been considered (listed in alphabetical order):
 - i. Butte College
 - ii. Continental Divide College
 - iii. East Ridge College

- iv. Highlands College
 - v. Mile High College
 - vi. Mining City College
 - vii. Pintlar College
 - viii. Silver Bow College
- d. There was a consensus for the name Montana Tech College of Associate and Applied Sciences. That name was eliminated by OCHE during the December College!Now Retreat. Regarding the above names, no consensus has been reached by the Tech COT Faculty and Staff.

2. Full Service Front Office at the COT

- a. In order to provide the comprehensive portfolio of student services necessary to move toward the comprehensive community college mission, a fully functioning front office will be very valuable.
- b. Such an office would include the following functions: Business, Recruiting, Admission, Financial Aid and Registration.
- c. Considering that approximately 90% of the its students come from southwest Montana, the COT should have the services of an Enrollment Services recruiter who is focused solely on COT student recruitment and other front-office functions at the college.

3. The Utilization of Processes to Award Credit for Experiential Learning

- a. The assessment of prior learning and the awarding of credit for that prior learning is becoming an effective tool in helping students, especially non-traditional students, prove their acquisition of learning outcomes and the resultant recognition thereof through the awarding of academic credit.
- b. Arguably, Montana Tech already does a form of experiential learning, that is challenge course testing. Montana Tech’s catalog states: “Industrial work experience, military work experience, employer-sponsored courses or training, or self-study may provide justification for a student’s request to challenge a course. By challenging a course, a student seeks to earn course credit by passing appropriate examinations rather than by attending class and meeting usual course requirements.”
- c. Currently the COT has a memorandum of understanding with the Montana Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Program which allows students earning an AAS in Construction Technology to have a significant amount of “experience time” to be logged toward their union apprenticeship leading to their journeyman status. It should be possible for a person who has achieved the status of a Journeyman Carpenter to earn credits toward his/her AAS degree in Construction Technology.
- d. Montana Tech could, with careful consideration and quality assurances, embrace the concept of prior learning assessment and the subsequent granting of academic credit for experiential learning.
- e. As a first step in this regard, Tech should participate fully in the ongoing MUS statewide Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI) Assessment Process.

4. The Encouragement and Support for ABE/GED Initiatives at the COT

- a. The College of Technology has the capacity to welcome all or part of the respective regional school districts' ABE and GED programs to its campus.
- b. The idea here is to serve the best interests of the students in need of the ABE and/or GED services.
- c. It is not the intent of this possible initiative to undermine the authority of the regional school districts' control over the ABE/GED programs.
- d. The COT's proposed External Advisory Board could significantly assist in moving this initiative forward.
- e. The COT leadership has made some headway for the Spring, 2012 semester with discussions about scheduling some Adult Community Education Courses at the COT. While the details are in process, it is very positive that the lines of communication and discussion are open and active.

5. Dual Enrollment Considerations

- a. Montana Tech coordinates its dual enrollment offerings through its Outreach Office. Whether the current reporting structure of the coordination of dual enrollment should change is an item which could be considered and discussed.
- b. The COT is currently participating in the Big Sky Pathways initiative, which is a state-wide initiative between the two-year institutions and the K-12 system. The purpose of this program is to put the high school and college curricula in alignment in various academic disciplines to create a more seamless and clear pathway for high school students who want to pursue those post-secondary disciplines. Tech's COT has established 7 such pathways with 49 high school programs. This area could be a perfect opportunity for additional dual enrollment possibilities.

6. Resources

- a. All of the initiatives which form the College!Now effort will require courage, resolve, careful planning, transparency and significant communication. Possible/probable additional resources also may need to be seriously considered if the true spirit of the College!Now initiative is to succeed. Such possible additional resources could include:
 - i. **Four new faculty members**
 - a) Many of the existing faculty members at the COT are currently teaching overload courses because of the difficulty of finding qualified adjunct instructors.
 - b) It is estimated that two additional faculty members would be needed to eliminate the existing faculty overload demands and bring the entire faculty to a "mere" full teaching load status.
 - c) An additional two faculty members would be needed to address the new academic programs envisioned hereinabove.

ii. Two new staff persons

- a) In order to appropriately develop a full service front office, at least one additional staff person is needed. The concept envisioned here is to have a minimal, three-person front office. One person serving the business office function. One person serving the recruitment and financial aid functions. And one person serving the admission and registration functions.
- b) In order to have an effective evening and weekend presence at the COT, at least one additional staff person is needed to serve in an administrative capacity overseeing operations during that time.

iii. Professional Development

- a) With new programs, new emphases on non-traditional students, and the provision of more student services at the COT, professional development of the faculty and staff will be very important, especially regarding the unique needs of the non-traditional students.

iv. Transportation

- a) Given the distance of the COT from Tech's residential services, and given the commuter nature of the COT student body, consideration must be given to requesting the City of Butte-Silver Bow to extend the hours of the bus service later than the current 6:00 pm time.