

MSU Billings Community Taskforce Recommendations

Presentation to the
Montana Board of Regents
March 8, 2018

Background

In the spring of 2017, Commissioner Clayton Christian created the MSU Billings (MSUB) Community Taskforce.

Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education John Cech facilitated the taskforce, which included Regent Martha Sheehy, MSUB Interim Chancellor Ron Larsen, broad representation from the community as well as faculty, staff, and administration from the university.

Community leaders from

- Anner-Hughes Law Firm
- Billings Chamber of Commerce
- Billings Clinic
- *Billings Gazette*
- Billings Public Schools
- Big Sky Economic Development
- Chief Dull Knife College
- City College
- City of Billings, City Council
- ExxonMobil
- First Interstate Bank
- McDonald Land Development
- Montana House of Representatives
- Montana State University
- MSU Billings
- Montana University System
- Northern Hotel
- NorthWestern Energy
- Rimrock Foundation
- Sanderson Stewart
- Sibayne-Stillwater
- St. John's Lutheran Ministries
- St. Vincent Healthcare
- Underriner Motors





Goals

This taskforce sought to engage the broader community/region in MSUB's visioning effort. Goals included:

- Strengthening the university's connection and responsiveness with the community/region.
- Providing a community sounding board to the internal visioning efforts occurring on campus.
- Developing strategies, partnership ideas, and suggesting strategies for growing enrollment.

Process

The taskforce met monthly from April 2017 through February 2018 to gather input from members on the university. The recommendations are grouped into five pillars:

- 1) Leadership
- 2) Student Success
- 3) Program Offerings
- 4) Marketing and Identity Branding
- 5) Facilities/Infrastructure

Pillar 1 - Leadership

Stable leadership at MSUB will engage community to strategically move the university forward. Recommendations include:

- Recruit and retain stable leadership
- Quickly fill interim positions
- Nurture crucial community partnerships
- Work alongside community to plan, conduct philanthropy, and advocate for the university

Pillar 2 - Student Success

MSUB will place the success of its diverse student population as its highest priority.

- Develop best-practice pathways for students from admissions outreach to graduation.
- Improve academic and advisory support for both traditional and non-traditional students.
- Expand links to career and professional opportunities and employment.

Pillar 3 - Program Offerings

MSUB will differentiate itself by building professional pathways in healthcare, business, education and applied technologies.

- Conduct an industry-led assessment to bridge industry needs and academic offerings.
- Enhance professional pathways through applied and experiential learning and dual credit.
- Regularly review programs to focus energy on in-demand areas.
- Recognize the unique role of faculty in curriculum development.

Pillar 4 - Marketing & Identity Branding

MSUB will deploy focused marketing and communication that establishes a respected and unique identity, grows enrollment, and fosters community pride.

- Implement a new, comprehensive marketing plan, informed via regular analysis.
- Develop systematic and continuous communications with all campus constituencies, community, and media.

Pillar 5 - Facilities/Infrastructure

MSUB will develop its physical plan to provide attractive hubs for education, community, and business for the region.

- Complete fundraising and break ground on the Yellowstone Science and Allied Health Building.
- Effective communication about the university as an event venue.
- Develop City College as a western “gateway” for career pathways and capitalize on Shiloh Corridor development momentum.
- Take down the former Academic Support Center.
- Begin long-term plans to renovate student residence facilities.

Words from the taskforce members

- Starting-point
- Impactful
- Enlightening
- Behemoth
- Eye-opening
- Refreshing
- Challenging
- Hopeful
- Educational
- Community
- Energizing
- Connections
- Grounding
- Jumping-off-point
- Evolution
- Fragile

What's next?

- Form a Chancellor's Community Advisory Board with representation from key industries in our region
- Develop an action plan from recommendations, identifying new items vs. initiatives already underway in the university
- Incorporate the recommendations into our next strategic planning process
- Communicate regularly to the community about progress
- Seek additional funding for key recommendations

Thank you

Questions and comments are welcome!