

SEMI-ANNUAL CAMPUS DIVERSITY REPORT

Montana State University—Great Falls College of Technology

January 2001

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MSU—Great Falls College of Technology

Enrollment Management: MSU—Great Falls College of Technology is approaching and in some cases exceeding the standard for enrollment established by the Board of Regents. Its American Indian enrollment level (6.1% in Fall 1998) was lower than the American Indian proportion of Montana's general population (6.5%), but significantly higher than that representation in Cascade County (4.5%), from which the College, as a two-year commuter institution, draws 80% - 85% of its enrollment. In addition, the College continues its trend of enrolling other minority populations at rates that exceed their representation in the general Montana population. Its non-minority enrollment in 1998 (83.7%) was significantly lower than the non-minority (majority) proportion of the general population (92.5%).

Completions: In the last data year (1996-97), MSU—Great Falls College of Technology produced mixed results with respect to minority populations' completion rates. The completion rate of American Indians declined from the previous year's rate in associate degree programs, but improved in certificate programs. For other minorities, the completion rate in both certificate and associate degree programs improved. The completion rate of all minorities in certificate programs (4.92%) was below the average for the decade (5.65), while the completion rate of all minorities in associate degree programs (6.58%) was higher than the decade average (5.57%).

Funding: With the exception of one "spike" year, the number of American Indian students receiving fee waivers has averaged 27.53 FTE since 1996-97. Given its size, the College's average compares well with other two-year colleges and four-year colleges in the Montana University System. The College continues to assist system-wide diversity efforts by providing office space to the Educational Talent Search and the Education Opportunity Center.

Faculty/Staff: MSU—Great Falls College of Technology makes visible efforts to recruit employees identified as racial minorities. Nonetheless, only 2.25% of its part-time and full-time employees during the period 1995-1999 were so identified.

The College takes proactive steps to address this imbalance by ensuring that all faculty and staff receive training and continuing education on diversity issues.

Coursework and Programs: The College has initiated and/or sustained a variety of initiatives to infuse multicultural awareness and understanding into its curriculum and climate. In addition to 14 courses specifically identified for their multicultural content, including one course focusing exclusively on Montana's American Indians, the College continues to provide diversity programs for the Great Falls Community.

Future Directions: MSU—Great Falls College of Technology has established three broad goals, each with several objectives aligned with the goals established by the Board of Regents and by Montana State University. Its strategic plan includes the quality, access, and productivity of its diversity-related activities as a sustaining effort.

II. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

In its initial Diversity Action Plan, Montana State University—Great Falls College of Technology established six major objectives to promote multicultural diversity to be, at a minimum, equal to the minority group's representation in Montana's general population. Since then, these objectives have been reviewed and revised to improve the College's effectiveness in its diversity activities. The objectives for 1999-2000 are:

1. To sustain a culturally sensitive environment at MSU--Great Falls College of Technology.

Areas of focus:

- The development and implementation of policies and procedures that ensure affirmative action and address intolerance and discrimination
- Course work and programs heightening awareness of multicultural issues and developing an appreciation for diversity

- Inservice, training, and continuing education devoted to diversity issues
 - Efforts to make cultural sensitivity and appreciation for diversity visible
2. To provide a supportive learning environment as a means of recruiting and retaining a diverse student population.

Areas of focus:

- Recruitment activities focusing on recruitment of minority students, faculty, and employees
 - Emphasis on retention with specific attention to diversity issues
3. To partner with other educational entities to improve access to, quality of, and success in the higher education for minority populations, especially American Indians.

Areas of focus:

- Partnerships with K-12 educators, TRIO, Educational Talent Search
 - Articulations with tribal colleges
 - Partnerships to increase understanding of cultural issues in the Great Falls community
4. To study and respond to data on the success of the College's efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate minority populations in proportion to their representation in the general population.

Areas of focus:

- Institutional assessment practices attending to diversity issues
- Standing committee charged with studying student success, including the success of minority populations

III. CAMPUS REPORT

A. Enrollment Management

In Fall 1998, MSU—Great Falls College of Technology succeeded in enrolling a population of American Indians (6.1%) that approaches the goal of a rate representative of the proportion of American Indians in the general Montana population (6.5%). The College's enrollment of American Indians improved significantly over the previous year (5.0%) and approached the highest enrollment rate for the decade of the 1990's (6.2%). When the percentage of enrolled students who did not disclose their race is subtracted from the total, the College's American Indian enrollment (6.58%) exceeds the representation of American Indians in Montana's general population. In addition, the College's American Indian enrollment significantly exceeded the general population of American Indians in Cascade County (4.5%). Because the College has no residential life and draws 80%-85% of its total enrollment from Cascade County, this context is meaningful.

In recent years MSU—Great Falls College of Technology continues its trend of enrolling other minority populations at rates that exceed their representation in the general Montana population. In the case of African-Americans and Asian-Americans, enrollment rates have doubled and even tripled the proportion of each minority in Montana's population. With the relatively high representation of minorities in the College's enrollment, as well as the relatively high percentage of enrollees not disclosing their race (7.6%), it is not surprising that the majority population at the College (83.7%) falls significantly below the majority representation in Montana's general population (92.5%).

The College credits its success in these areas to the following factors:

1. The emphasis on and incentives for improving academic credentials among personnel at Malmstrom Air Force Base, a significant percentage of whom represent minority cultures.
2. The effectiveness of the Great Falls Public Schools in raising aspirations of its American Indian population with respect to higher education.
3. The College's recruitment activities on Montana's reservations, including visits to Browning High School, Blackfeet Community College, Stone Child College, Polson High School, and Wolf Point High Schools, and to schools with substantial American Indian enrollments, including Flathead Valley Community College, MSU-Northern, Kalispell High School, and Havre High School.

4. The College's active efforts at including in its high school-College networking activities Montana high schools with significant minority populations, especially American Indian populations. For instance, as of today, 48 high schools collaborate with the College to articulate tech prep course work; 4 of these high schools, or 8.3%, have substantial American Indian enrollments. Current activities with Cisco academies involve an even higher percentage of high schools with substantial American Indian populations.
5. The high visibility of the College's partnerships with the Educational Talent Search and the Educational Opportunity Center.

B. Graduation/Completions

Trend data indicate that the College has produced mixed results with respect to completion rates, varying from year to year, from minority to minority, and from certificate to associate degree program. The completion rate for minorities in associate degree programs in 1996-97, for instance (6.58%), declined from the previous year, but was above the average for the 1990s (5.57%). The completion rate for minorities in certificate programs (4.92%) was lower than the rate of the previous year and lower than the average for the decade (5.65%). Neither the yearly rate nor the decade average meets the completion goal of representativeness, since the proportion of minority populations in Montana of the general population is 7.5%.

The completion rates of non-American Indian minorities in certificate and associate degree programs improved upon the rates of the previous year. However, in certificate programs, this rate fell below the decade average (1.87%), while in associate degree programs it exceeded the decade average (6.37%). Completion rates of non-American Indian minorities (1.64% in certificate programs, 2.63% in associate degree programs) are also lower than the representation of these minorities in the general population (2.8%), although locally compiled data indicate that completion rates of African-Americans and Asian-Americans far exceed their representation in the general population.

MSU—Great Falls College of Technology has also produced inconsistent results with respect to completion rates of American Indian populations. In certificate programs, the completion rate for American Indians (3.28%) improved upon the rate of the previous year, but was still below the 1990's average (3.78%). In associate degree programs, the completion rate for American Indians declined from the rate of the previous year, but exceeded the decade average (2.9%). Whether in associate degree or certificate programs, the completion rates of American Indians has yet to represent their proportion of the general population (6.5%). In an effort to improve its performance in this area, the College has undertaken the following activities:

1. The College has established a Student Success Committee, comprised of faculty from each department, professional staff from the Student Services Department, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Services to research and make recommendations to improve retention, including retention of American Indian students.
2. The College has included data-gathering and analysis on the satisfaction, performance, and completion rates of minority populations in its institutional assessment activities.
3. The College has revitalized its Learning Center, centralizing tutoring and academic advising, providing brown bag workshops on issues ranging from time management and problem-solving to substance abuse and writing essay exams, adding to the tutoring staff, and tracking areas of use and need. In AY 2001, a summer bridge program will be implemented as well.
4. The College has systematically provided in-service and continuing education on diversity issues for its faculty and staff, most recently in Fall 2000.

C. Funding

During the four years reported by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, MSU--Great Falls College of Technology averaged 32 FTE each year using Montana Indian Fee Waivers. One of these years, AY 1998-99, was a distinct "outlier," during which Fee Waiver FTE spiked to 45.60. Even with this year excluded, however, Montana Indian Fee Waivers were applied to an average of 27.53 FTE during the reporting period.

Although the College has no discretionary funding for diversity incentives, it does dedicate funding to support the courses and programs described elsewhere in this report. In addition, MSU—Great Falls College of Technology provides office space to the Educational Talent Search and to TRIO's Educational Opportunity Center, both of which programs emphasize enrolling and retaining American Indian students in higher education.

D. Faculty/Staff

MSU—Great Falls College of Technology has adopted an Affirmative Action Policy and complies with state and federal guidelines for Equal Employment Opportunity. Nonetheless, the College has failed to recruit and retain faculty and staff in minority populations proportionate to their representation in the general population. During this reporting period, the College employed one African-American and one Hispanic American as full-time staff. Of the 135 applicants for positions at the College who disclosed minority status in 1999 and 2000, 127 were white; 4, American Indian; 3, Asian-American; and 1, Hispanic. No positions were filled with minority applicants during this time period.

Factors contributing to the College's lack of progress in recruiting and employing employees from minority populations may include:

- Relatively high educational attainment requirements for faculty (master's required, doctorate preferred), but relatively low salaries (current base salary: \$26,400/year)
- Relatively low salaries for administrative positions (starting salary for associate dean, \$60,500; for assistant dean, \$59,500)
- Relatively specialized areas of instruction, limiting applicant pools (e.g., network support, medical assisting)

The College attempts to compensate for the lack of diversity of its staff through two measures:

1. Ongoing, systematic diversity training for all faculty and staff. The most recent training was offered by the Ellen Swaney of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in Fall 2000.
2. Visible support for cultural diversity in the College's environment. For instance, Heritage Hall includes available flags from the state's seven Indian reservations, as well as the flag for the non-reservation assigned American Indians living in the Great Falls area. Major artwork on display at the College features American Indian themes. Offices for Educational Talent Search and Educational Opportunity Center are integrated into the offices in the Student Services Department.

E. Coursework and Programs

Appendix A lists all multicultural courses offered at the College in the last three years and the enrollment in each offering.

Montana State University—Great Falls College of Technology has made ongoing, concerted efforts to infuse its curriculum and programming with content leading to multicultural awareness and appreciation of diversity. As part of its General Education Core, the College offers a total of 14 courses identified as multicultural in focus, distributed in the following categories:

Fine Arts:	5 multicultural courses
Humanities:	4 multicultural courses
Social Sciences:	5 multicultural courses

One of the multicultural courses in the Social Sciences, Montana's American Indians, is offered at least twice a year and is taught by an adjunct faculty who is American Indian. That course has been required for all students in the Elementary Education program of study in the College's Associate of Science degree.

The College has also made multicultural awareness and appreciation an ongoing facet of its specialized programming. An example of that effort is the program offered primarily at the College in October 1999, "One America: A Community Celebration of Diversity." The program was the culmination of a collaborative effort of the College's with the Cascade County Extension Office, MSU—Northern, Coca-Cola, Insty-Prints, and the University of Great Falls—Americore Volunteers. The program featured a week of lectures and events emphasizing issues related to tolerance and diversity.

The College continues efforts reported in previous years as successful. For instance, career advisement and educational planning for minority, first-generation college, and economically disadvantaged prospective students is provided cooperatively on campus with MSU—Northern (EOC) and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (Talent Search). Also, the College offers a six-week residential Summer Institute through a Veteran's Upward Bound Grant for American Indian Veterans.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Increasing the enrollment, retention, and completion of minority populations, particularly Montana's American Indians, and deepening awareness and appreciation of diversity throughout the College community have been and will continue to be major emphases at MSU—Great Falls College of Technology. Specific directions the College is pursuing to achieve these goals include:

1. Improving retention and completion rates by:

- Systematically collecting and analyzing data on American Indian performance, satisfaction, and progress toward educational goals at the College.
- Establishing a summer bridge program to assist at-risk students in their orientation to College life.
- Extending the faculty/staff continuing education program to ensure best practices in teaching and serving minority populations, especially American Indians.

2. Facilitating a seamless progression of educational experience for Montana's American Indians by:

- Establishing partnerships and ongoing communication with departments, organizations, and institutions at K-12 and higher education levels in order to evaluate, improve, and expand the College's curricula and services.
- Expanding tech prep articulations with reservation schools and schools with significant minority populations.
- Developing partnerships and articulations with Blackfeet Community College and Stone Child Colleges and articulating Salish-Kootenai College's dental assisting program with the dental hygiene program currently under exploration at the College.
- Partnering with Browning High School to pilot effective writing and mathematics programs focused on preparing students for college-level proficiency expectations.

3. Making more visible the College's commitment to the success of minority populations and the desirability of a appreciation for diversity by:

- Developing, implementing, and actively promoting programs of study in Multicultural Studies and American Indian Culture for the Associate of Science degree.
- Providing recognition and incentives for administration, faculty, and staff involved in advocacy and awareness activities related to diversity issues.
- Partnering with MSU-Northern to provide a speaker series featuring minority speakers and/or issues in Great Falls.

APPENDIX A
