

**MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
**SEMI-ANNUAL CAMPUS DIVERSITY REPORT**

**Montana Tech of The University of Montana Tech**

**January 2001**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Montana Tech of The University of Montana continues to strive to reach the goals of our Diversity Plan and through this effort to meet the diversity goals of the Board of Regents. We include ADA issues in our diversity efforts and strive to foster positive attitudes towards diversity.

**Enrollment Management:** Montana Tech of The University of Montana's Upward Bound Program has had a significant impact on increasing diversity in programs where women and minorities have been traditionally underrepresented. Tech is not satisfied with the level of increase in the enrollment of American Indians and other minorities. However, the mathematics requirements of many of our programs present a special challenge in enrolling low-income, first-generation college students which includes a large percentage of the minority population in Montana.

**Completions:** Montana Tech of The University of Montana has learning centers on both the North Campus and the South Campus. These learning centers are prepared to provide learning assistance to minority students. The low frequency of completions of programs is disturbing, and more emphasis must be placed on completions. The reasons for the low rate of completions appear to be complex and highly variable from student to student. The STEP (Succeeding sTudents in Engineering Programs), a program designed to specifically aid with completion, was started three years ago using private funding.

**Funding:** Montana Tech of The University of Montana has used primarily governmental and private grants to fund minority recruitment, retention and completion. Funding directed specifically at recruitment and retention of minority students is handled through the Upward Bound and the STEP Programs that are funded by a federal grant and grants from several industrial concerns. Industrial concerns have been willing to fund this program because they see it as a way to increase the number of underrepresented individuals in the available pool for selection of future employees. Montana Tech funds are used in recruiting both graduate and undergraduate students who are minorities. Some of this effort is devoted to specifically visiting Tribal Colleges and other schools that have high enrollments of minority students.

**Faculty:** For a technical institution such as Montana Tech of The University of Montana, increasing the number of faculty from underrepresented minorities is a greater challenge than increasing the number of students from this group. We have done well in increasing the number of women faculty in engineering, which is clearly an underrepresented group. The challenge in increasing the number of technically trained faculty from minorities is that few, if any in some cases, individuals from these groups hold advanced degrees in engineering and related fields.

**Course Work and Programs:** A three-credit course entitled "History of Indians of the Northwest " is taught each year. Other courses have some emphasis on diversity issues.

**Future Directions:** The 1996 revision of the 1991 "Minority and Gender Equity Achievement Plan" lists five goals for increasing diversity. This plan will continue to be reviewed and emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of American Indians enrolling in both undergraduate and graduate engineering programs.

**II. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

Montana Tech of The University of Montana bases its plans, programs, and actions to meet this requirement on its policy statements. These policies are reviewed and endorsed by each constituent group in the governance of the institution. Policy statements are approved by the Chancellor and become binding on the

entire institution. Montana Tech has developed meaningful policy in the areas of personnel management, hiring practices, grievance procedures, ADA, EEO, and Affirmative Action. These policies are codified in the Faculty and Staff Handbook and associated documents. The most meaningful policy related to Regents Policy 1902 is the "Montana Tech Minority Achievement and Gender Equity Plan". The Chancellor, as the Appointing Authority, assisted directly by the EEO/Affirmative Action Officer, has delegated specific responsibility for the implementation of the "Minority Achievement Plan" to the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs and Administrative and Student Affairs.

Each Vice Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that constant attention is given to achieving diversity at all levels of the institution. Montana Tech adheres to its own policies and formally endorses the Regents Policy 1902. It should be noted that the institution includes gender equity along with minority achievement in its policies and diversity action plans. More recently ADA issues have also been included. Tech believes that EEO/AA, non-discriminatory practices, and fostering positive attitudes about diversity follow similar paths for all underrepresented groups.

### **III. CAMPUS REPORT**

#### **A. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

The goal is to enroll American Indians and other minorities who are Montana residents in proportion to their representation in the state population at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Montana Tech has established an Upward Bound Program that includes in its clientele representation of minorities. The Outreach Program coordinates this program during the summer and offers support for minority students who ultimately matriculate. The American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES), Tech's primary American Indian student organization, provides a good support group function and works closely with the Outreach Program. Staff and students visit Reservations and Tribal Colleges to encourage students to attend college. The STEP program provides mentoring, social activities and tutoring for students from underrepresented groups.

The Admissions Program and the Registrars Office work with Tribal Colleges, and other schools with a predominant minority enrollment, in its recruitment activities and in the development of articulation agreements. The Admissions Office places special attention on applicants who identify themselves as minority persons. An affirmative action approach is followed in making admission decisions, particularly as exceptions to admissions requirements may need to be made with some of these applicants. The Financial Aid Office and the Admissions Office actively assist and recruit students who are eligible for Indian Fee Waivers.

The recruitment of minority students to engineering and technical programs can be challenging due to the unfortunate lack of preparation on the part of low-income, first-generation college students which includes a large percentage of the minority population in Montana. The statistics for Montana Tech do not reflect a record of achievement that is satisfactory to us, but every effort is made within budget constraints to recruit and admit minority persons.

The enrollment tables indicate a consistent pattern of attendance by minority students, most especially American Indian students. In fact, the numbers have been increasing slightly, which is a good trend. Indian fee waivers have been rising commensurately. It needs to be stated that Montana Tech is not satisfied with these enrollment trends; it is the goal of the institution to make significant gains. Nevertheless, there is evidence of intentional inclusiveness.

#### **B. COMPLETIONS**

The goal is to graduate American Indians and other minorities who are Montana residents at the same rate as the general college population and ultimately in proportion to their representation in the state population.

Campus support programs are especially important in achieving this goal. Upward Bound, STEP, AISES, the Student Life Office, and Residence Hall Programs are all expected to demonstrate a sensitivity and support for minority students toward their successful completion. The Tech Learning Center and the College

of Technology (Perkins) Learning Center are important resources for minority students. The MT101 College Success course is available to all students and is required of those experiencing academic difficulty. Throughout the year, beginning with orientation, a number of self-help courses (such as study skills) are offered.

Montana Tech staff and its faculty have a demonstrated commitment to working with minority students on a number of college success issues. It is a combination of in-class and out-of-class efforts and social and academic measures that contribute toward the effort of helping minority persons achieve success. A number of support structures are in place for all students and the faculty and staff take a special interest in encouraging minority students to take full advantage of these resources. What is most disturbing is the very low frequency of completions. While recruitment will remain a very active endeavor, it is in the area of retention that Montana Tech needs to place more emphasis.

### **C. FUNDING**

Montana Tech of The University of Montana uses whatever dollars are available in its regular programs to accomplish these diversity objectives. Candidly, Montana Tech does not have discretionary dollars to commit and has to rely on federal and private funding to establish special programs committed to diversity goals. Our regular recruitment program involves the use of institutional funds to work directly with the Tribal Colleges and other schools where minorities are a significant part of the enrollment. The Dean of Students and the Vice Chancellor for Student and Administrative Affairs often play an ombudsmen/advocate role in assisting Indian students by marshalling whatever support does exist or intervening in bureaucratic decisions, which, though properly made, may not be sufficiently sensitive to giving a struggling student that "affirmative action second chance."

### **D. FACULTY**

The goal is to increase the employment of American Indians and other underrepresented minorities in administrative, faculty, and staff positions to achieve representation equal to the work force and to employ American Indians and other minorities in positions of senior leadership.

Montana Tech of The University of Montana has adopted and complies with EE0/AA policies and procedures in its hiring practices. Montana Tech has one of the best ratios of women to men in engineering of any engineering institution in the nation. The ratio is 5 women to 32 men. Many engineering institutions are happy to have one or two women faculty members that hold doctoral degrees. The recruitment of minority faculty in technical disciplines is extremely difficult because the available pool is very small. Montana Tech has been reasonably successful in recruiting faculty who are of foreign origin. We have not been successful in recruiting faculty who are American Indians, African Americans or Hispanics. Virtually no trend data exists for Montana Tech faculty and staff employees. The Chancellor and the Director of Personnel have recently initiated a process that will collect minority status data on a systematic basis.

### **E. COURSEWORK AND PROGRAMS**

The goal is to enhance the overall curriculum by infusion of content that enhances multicultural awareness and understanding.

A three credit, elective history course, entitled "History of Indians of the Northwest," is taught each year. Issues of diversity, equity, justice, and multicultural appreciation are embedded in other general studies courses. Faculty and staff have also collaborated to establish the Campus Diversity Issues Round Table, which is open to the entire campus for specific topical discussions of diversity and inclusiveness. Periodically, "special topics" courses that deal with issues of diversity are taught. For example, during the spring of 2000, Dr. Henry Gonshak taught "Gay and Lesbian Literature" which was reasonably well received on campus and at least tolerated by the community. A program named "Diversity Roundtable" has been a popular program that occurred once a month last year. The goal of this program is to sensitize the campus to issues of diversity.

## **IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Over the next five years Montana Tech of The University of Montana will continue to review, update and implement its diversity plan. As courses on diversity from other campuses of the University become available electronically, we will recommend these courses as part of the general education requirements of our students.

Budget constraints will continue to be the enemy of program and support resource development related to minority achievement and diversity goals. The institution will naturally use all existing programs and resources to improve upon the efforts and outcomes of the past. The Chancellor has directed an extra effort in securing grants to support these purposes. For example, Montana Tech of The University of Montana is Title III eligible, which means we can submit a Strengthening Institutions Program grant application. Based on one goal of our recently completed strategic plan, we will submit an application for a grant to support our enhanced marketing plan that contains a component devoted to marketing Montana Tech to minority groups.

A position recommended in the institution's action plan has not been funded but would be extremely helpful. It has been recommended that we hire a 1.0FTE professional staff member (along with at least a .5FTE support staff person) dedicated to the recruitment of American Indian students. The position would work in concert with Admissions and the Dean of Students Office. This would be a position that would work to establish effective relations with Tribal Colleges and other schools with high proportions of Indian Students. It has been suggested that one-half to two-thirds of the time, this staff member would be engaged in these activities. At least a third of the time, this position would be dedicated to establishing more effective on-campus support systems for minority students. Collaboration with other offices in academic and student support services will be expected. An adequate operations and travel budget would need to be established as well as a programming budget for activities, events, and special topics discussions.

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