

PROPOSED STATE PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY GOALS

A Summary of the Subcommittee Worksession on Public
Postsecondary Education Policy Goals

A Report Prepared for the

Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget

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INTRODUCTION

At the March 2002 meeting, the Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget (Subcommittee) focused on developing state public postsecondary education policy goals to recommend to the 2003 legislature for adoption. The Subcommittee used the recently adopted Board of Regents (BOR) policy goals as a starting point for discussion. The subcommittee addressed each policy goal, identified the needs they thought the goal was addressing, the relative priority of the goal, how they would know if the goal was being addressed or had been met, and whether the Subcommittee would recommend the goal as a state goal. At the conclusion of the work session, the Subcommittee adopted four of the five BOR goals, substantively amended the fifth BOR goal, and recommended a new, sixth goal.

The Subcommittee directed staff to simplify the wording of the policy goals as adopted by the BOR for the purpose of making the policy goals easier to read and understand for the average Montana citizen and reader.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present the rewritten policy goals and accompanying brief needs statements to the Subcommittee for its consideration, review, and adoption. This report also asks the Subcommittee to revisit the priorities assigned to each policy goal for the purpose of refining the priorities. The Subcommittee identified five of the six policy goals as “high” priority. The usefulness of the priority criteria would markedly increase if the policy goals were ranked in priority one through six. Appendix A includes a worksheet summarizing Subcommittee action on public postsecondary education policy goal recommendations on March 13, 2002 and is included for the Subcommittee reference.

This report does not address accountability measures. This topic is discussed in detail in another staff report prepared for presentation at the May 17, 2002 meeting, titled, “Public Postsecondary Education Accountability Measures”.

POLICY GOALS

POLICY GOAL #1 – STUDENT SUCCESS

As stated by the Board of Regents:

To provide a stimulating, responsive, and effective environment for student learning, student living, and academic achievement.

Revised for Subcommittee consideration:

Foster student success through quality education.

The Subcommittee indicated this goal addressed several needs, ranging from attracting more students to postsecondary education to ensuring students successfully complete their education programs once enrolled. The need to maintain high quality educational services was also an important need expressed by the Subcommittee.

POLICY GOAL #2 – ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

As stated by the Board of Regents:

To make a high quality, affordable higher education experience available to all qualified citizens who wish to further their education and training.

Revised for Subcommittee consideration:

Promote access and affordability.

One need addressed by this goal is for broader participation in postsecondary education by Native American, low-income, and high academic achieving students. A second need expressed by the Subcommittee is to make students' cost of attending a unit of the MUS affordable and possible without requiring ever-increasing debt loads.

POLICY GOAL #3 – EFFICIENCY

As stated by the Board of Regents:

To deliver higher education services in a manner that is efficient, coordinated, and highly accessible.

Revised for Subcommittee consideration:

Deliver efficient, coordinated services.

The major need addressed by this goal is for the MUS to deliver educational services with optimum efficiency given state and customer resource constraints. Closely aligned with efficiency is the need for educational programs and services to be well coordinated among the units (see also goal #6).

POLICY GOAL #4 – RESPONSIVE TO MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

As stated by the Board of Regents:

To be responsive to market, employment, and economic development needs of the State and the nation.

Revised for Subcommittee consideration:

Respond to market and employment needs of the state.

The Subcommittee identified several state needs addressed by this policy goal, including having an educated workforce, having a sufficient workforce available, and responding to employers' workforce training and development needs.

POLICY GOAL #5 – CONTRIBUTE TO STATE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

As stated by the Board of Regents:

To improve the support for and understanding of the Montana University System as a leading contributor to the State's economic success and social and political well-being.

Revised for Subcommittee consideration:

Contribute to Montana's economic and social success.

As the goal implies, the collective need identified by the Subcommittee is for continued or additional activities that help create an environment conducive for economic development. Topping the list as a high priority need in Montana is the need for more jobs and higher income. A specific state need identified by the Subcommittee is for increased opportunities in knowledge-based and technology-based industries. The Subcommittee also noted the need for increased technology transfer, research and development, and agricultural productivity. And finally, the Subcommittee noted the need for increased business recruitment in Montana.

POLICY GOAL #6 – COLLABORATE WITH K-12 AND OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION ENTITIES IN THE STATE

Recommended by Subcommittee:

(New) Encourage closer collaboration with K-12 school system and, to the extent allowed by law, with non-Montana University System higher education units in the state of Montana.

Two important statewide needs drove the development of this policy goal: To improve students' academic preparation for postsecondary education, and to improve the communication and interaction with K-12 and non-university system postsecondary education institutions.

FINAL STATE POLICY GOAL RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY GOAL STATEMENTS

The Subcommittee's tentative recommendations for statewide public postsecondary education policy goals are listed below. The Subcommittee needs to review the policy goals and make a final recommendation.

- ?? Foster student success through quality education.
- ?? Promote access and affordability.
- ?? Deliver efficient, coordinated services.
- ?? Respond to market and employment needs of the state.
- ?? Contribute to Montana's economic and social success.
- ?? Encourage closer collaboration with K-12 school system and, to the extent allowed by law, with non-Montana University System higher education units in the state of Montana.

Option 1

Adopt statewide public postsecondary education policy goals as presented above, without further revision.

Option 2

Adopt statewide public postsecondary education policy goals as presented above, with revision as directed by the Subcommittee.

POLICY GOAL PRIORITIES

The table summarizes each policy goal statement and its accompanying priority recommended by the Subcommittee at the March 2002 meeting. If the Subcommittee is successful in prioritizing the policy goals in real “rank order”, at least two outcomes will result:

1. It will further clarify what the State values most from its public postsecondary education system, and
2. It will provide evidence (perhaps even to the skeptics) that the legislature, Board of Regents, and Executive Branch can successfully collaborate on important issues for the benefit of Montana citizens.

#	Policy Goal	Current Priority	Revised Priority
1	Foster student success through quality education	HIGH	
2	Promote access and affordability	HIGH	
3	Deliver efficient, coordinated services	HIGH	
4	Respond to market and employment needs of the State	HIGH	
5	Contribute to Montana’s economic and social success	HIGH	
6	Encourage closer collaboration with K-12 school system and, to the extent allowed by law, with non-Montana University System higher education units in the state of Montana.	MEDIUM	