

INTRODUCTION

At its January 2002 meeting, the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) adopted the goals included in the Board of Regents' Strategic Plan as a starting point for further discussion of postsecondary education policy goals at the March 2002 meeting. The purpose of this document is to encourage continued discussion among the Subcommittee members of what it considers to be appropriate postsecondary education policy goals for Montana. In addition, before moving onto the next major topic of this interim project, Accountability, it is important for the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee to make a decision on its recommendations for statewide postsecondary education policy goals. To provide a skeleton for this discussion and decision, this report is organized into four sections:

1. Policy goal characteristics the subcommittee may want to consider when evaluating potential policy goals.
2. Statewide policy goal options for public postsecondary education in Montana – those adopted at the January 2002 meeting and policy goals in use in other states.
3. An analysis of two of the policy goal options in the context of the goal characteristics. (Appendix A includes a worksheet for subcommittee analysis of policy goal options.)
4. Preliminary recommendation by Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee of statewide policy goals.

SECTION I. POLICY GOAL CHARACTERISTICS

As the Subcommittee contemplates statewide policy goals options for public postsecondary education, staff suggests policy goal characteristics be used to evaluate the appropriateness of potential policy goals. These characteristics are listed below, along with a brief explanatory comment for each.

Statewide policy goals for public postsecondary education should:

🏠🏠 Address the needs of the students, of Montana’s citizens, and society as a whole.

Postsecondary education policy goals should address the needs or issues of the consumers of public postsecondary education, including students, parents, Montana citizens, employers, and society as a whole. Ideally, the identification of the most critical needs would follow a comprehensive assessment of economic, social, and demographic conditions in the state. For the Subcommittee to conduct this type of assessment, it would require more time and effort than what is available this interim. While other states have spent months conducting a needs assessment, the Subcommittee has a significantly shorter time horizon, and the needs identified by the Subcommittee will likely be of a more general nature. Therefore, it is important that the Subcommittee give thought to those needs that are of the highest priority.

🏠🏠 Express state policymakers’ desired or expected outcomes of allocating state resources for higher education.

The legislature appropriates state funds that support a significant portion of the operating budgets of the public postsecondary institutions without the power to specifically direct how the state funds should be spent. Identifying desired or expected outcomes, and holding the postsecondary institutions accountable for those outcomes, will help state policymakers evaluate the effectiveness of the state’s investment. Care should be taken to express the goal with the end in mind (policy), rather than the means (management).

🏠🏠 Be easy to understand.

Statewide policy goals should be written clearly and simply so the average person reading the policy goal can understand what the goal is and have some idea of how they might tell if the goal is being addressed. Jargon should be avoided when developing statewide policy goals.

The characteristics listed in this section are staff suggestions. The Subcommittee may choose to add, change, or delete any or all of the characteristics listed.

SECTION II. POLICY GOAL OPTIONS

Postsecondary education policy goals are presented in this section of the report in two subsections:

- ?? Policy goals contained in the Montana Board of Regents’ Strategic Plan.
- ?? Policy goals adopted by legislatures or governing boards in other states.

Montana Board of Regents' Policy Goals

The Subcommittee adopted the Board of Regents goals included in the Board's Strategic Plan as a starting point for Subcommittee consideration. These policy goals are reiterated below:

🏛️🏛️ Policy Goal #1: To provide a stimulating, responsive, and effective environment for student learning, student living, and academic achievement.

🏛️🏛️ Policy Goal #2: To make a high quality, affordable higher education experience available to all qualified citizens who wish to further their education and training.

🏛️🏛️ Policy Goal #3: To deliver higher education services in a manner that is efficient, coordinated, and highly accessible.

🏛️🏛️ Policy Goal #4: To be responsive to market, employment, and economic development needs of the State and the nation.

🏛️🏛️ Policy Goal #5: 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.

Policy Goals in Other States

State legislatures, governors, and governing boards around the country have recognized the need to articulate state policy goals for the states' public postsecondary education institutions or systems. The precise text of the goals varies by state and sponsoring entity to reflect the culture and needs of each state. While it is most appropriate for the Subcommittee to identify policy goals that address the needs of Montanans within the state's unique cultural, economic, and political context, becoming informed on what other states are doing in this area may prove enlightening or thought provoking.

Table 1 below lists some examples of higher education policy goals from other states. [Note: These examples are provided for the Subcommittee's information and should not be considered a staff recommendation.]

Table 1 – Examples of Postsecondary Education Policy Goals in Use in Other States

State	Example
Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ Higher education will help Illinois business and industry sustain strong economic growth. ☛☛ Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels. ☛☛ No Illinois citizen will be denied an opportunity for a college education because of a financial need.
Kentucky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ A seamless, integrated system of postsecondary education strategically planned and adequately funded to enhance economic development and quality of life. ☛☛ An efficient, responsive, and coordinated system of providers that delivers educational services to all adult citizens in quantities and of a quality that is comparable to the national average or above and significantly elevates the level of education of the adults of the Commonwealth.
South Dakota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ Access for all qualified South Dakotans ☛☛ Enrollment in economic growth programs ☛☛ Improvement in academic performance ☛☛ Attraction and retention of qualified professionals ☛☛ Collaboration among the universities
Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ Make student learning the yardstick by which we measure accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness. ☛☛ Link K-12 achievement to higher education opportunity. ☛☛ Empower citizens to make the best use of the available range of learning pathways.
Minnesota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ To foster student success – to enable and encourage students to choose institutions and programs that are best suited for their talents and abilities, and to provide an educational climate that supports students in pursuing their goals and aspirations. ☛☛ To promote democratic values – to enhance Minnesota’s quality of life by developing understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society. ☛☛ To maintain access – to provide an opportunity for all Minnesotans, regardless of personal circumstances, to participate in higher education. ☛☛ To enhance the economy – to assist the state in being competitive in the world market, and to prepare a highly skilled and adaptable workforce that meets Minnesota’s opportunities and needs.
Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ Increased access to a diverse array of high-quality, affordable, and accessible vocational academic, and professional certificate, diploma, and degree programs through an integrated, balanced, and efficient system of public independent, and proprietary postsecondary education designed to prepare graduates for the diverse workforce demands of Missouri employers. ☛☛ Quality teaching and learning occurs at all Missouri education institutions. ☛☛ Reduce unnecessary duplication and increase the resource sharing through a coordinated, balanced, and cost-effective system of higher

	education that demonstrates performance and accountability.
2001 Higher Education Issues Survey ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛☛ Strengthen and diversify the economy. ☛☛ Prepare and train a high-skill, high-wage workforce. ☛☛ Raise the level of educational attainment of the state's population.

SECTION III. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

So far in this report we've examined policy goal characteristics and we've reviewed an array of policy goals adopted by the Montana Board of Regents and by other states. This section of the report evaluates two of the Board of Regents policy goals in the context of the policy goal characteristics. *Please note* that the analyses presented are from staff perspective only and *may or may not* represent the collective view of the Subcommittee. Staff recommends the Subcommittee complete an analysis of all policy goals it considers for adoption so it fully understands what needs are addressed by the policy goals and what the Subcommittee determines to be desired or expected outcomes of the policy goals. Appendix A of the report includes a worksheet for Subcommittee use to analyze policy goal options at the March 2002 meeting.

☛☛ Analysis of Policy Goal #1: To provide a stimulating, responsive, and effective environment for student learning, student living, and academic achievement.

Two needs or priorities addressed by this policy goal are the attraction and retention of students and student learning. An expected outcome of this policy goal could be to maintain or increase the number of high school graduates that pursue a postsecondary education program, whether it's a certificate, 2-year, 4-year, or advanced degree. Another expected outcome could be to maintain or increase the number of students staying in school to complete their education. A "student learning" outcome could be the establishment and use of an objective assessment tool that evaluates if the student has learned what he/she was supposed to learn in the education program.

Will the average citizen not involved in higher education or state public policy understand what the policy goal is? What priority would the Subcommittee assign the needs addressed by this policy goal?

¹ "Where We Go From Here: State Legislative Views on Higher Education in The New Millennium, Results of the 2001 Higher Education Issues Survey", Sandra S. Ruppert, Educational Systems Research, Littleton, Colorado, National Education Association of the United States, 2001, pg i.

🏠🏢 Analysis of Policy Goal #4: To be responsive to market, employment, and economic development needs of the State and the nation.

Economic development and workforce development are two needs addressed by this policy goal. These needs are high priority to most state policymakers. Legislators from all states in a recent survey cited economic development and workforce development as two key roles for higher education.² One desired outcome of this policy goal may be to have an adequate number of prepared employees available to meet the employment needs of expanding or emerging jobs in the state. Another desired outcome might be measurable economic growth attributable to research and knowledge transfer activity at the postsecondary education institutions.

This policy goal is written clearly and simply. The measure of success or failure in achieving this policy goal will likely take several years.

SECTION IV. SUBCOMMITTEE PRELIMINARY DECISION

In order to move onto the next major topic of this interim project, Accountability, it is important for the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee to make a decision on its recommendations for statewide postsecondary education policy goals. Accountability measures are what will be used to determine if the policy goals are being addressed and achieved over time.

With the analysis completed by the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee in Section III (and Appendix A) of this report, there should be several policy goals that emerged from the analysis as being most appropriate for Montana.

Table 2 – Statewide Public Postsecondary Education Policy Goals Tentative Recommendations	
No.	Policy Goal Statement

² Ibid., pg. i.

APPENDIX A

POLICY GOAL WORKSHEET

Policy Goal Analysis Worksheet							
#	Policy Goal	What need is being addressed by this policy goal?	What is the Subcommittee's priority of this need?	What is the desired or expected outcome of this policy goal?	Is the policy goal clearly stated?	How would you know when the goal is met?	Subcommittee Recommendation
1	To provide a stimulating, responsive, and effective environment for student learning, student living, and academic achievement.		HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT
2	To make a high quality, affordable higher education experience available to all qualified citizens who wish to further their education and training.		HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT
3	To deliver higher education services in a manner that is efficient, coordinated, and highly accessible.		HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT

4	To be responsive to market, employment, and economic development needs of the State and the nation.		HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT
5	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.		HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT
6			HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT
7			HIGH MEDIUM LOW				ADOPT REJECT

8			HIGH				ADOPT
9			MEDIUM				REJECT
10			HIGH				ADOPT
			MEDIUM				REJECT
			LOW				