
Absent: Mindi Askelson, Mike Simon, Jane Karas, Greg Kegel, Karl Ulrich, Katie Spalinger, Matt Springer, Amy Williams, Amy Verlanic

Introductions and Announcements: John introduced and welcomed Jane Baker who has been appointed as Interim Dean of Missoula College UM.

It was noted that Matt Springer could not update the group on the SWAMMEI grant for this meeting as he was attending a manufacturing meeting in Billings.

John attended a National Governor’s Association conference on workforce development. He noted that Governor Bullock and his staff are very pleased with the work occurring via Montana’s two-year and community colleges. We have established a good cross-state effort that includes Montana Dept. of Labor & Industry, Main Street Montana, and state workforce systems.

TAACCCT – SWAMMEI and Montana HealthCARE: TAACCCT grant efforts – to date, Montana has received a total of $45 million for TAACCCT grants since 2011. When comparing amounts awarded for TAACCCT IV, the state of Montana was awarded the same amount ($15 million) as the state of California.

TAACCCT IV grant – now called Montana HealthCARE. John introduced Kaye Norris who will lead this grant initiative. It was noted that the lessons learned during the SWAMMEI experience thus far will help with the Montana HealthCARE grant.

Kaye said that we had initially applied for $20 million, but Montana didn’t receive $5 million of the request. The extra $5 million was applied for separately via a separate project narrative and a separate budget.

Primary focus of Montana HealthCARE is on nursing curriculum (LPN to BSN; separate PN credential with an option to re-enter later to pursue RN or BSN) especially designed for adult learners. Faculty-led curriculum review and redesign, increased distance learning options and accelerated curriculum will be at the forefront. Major effort will be made to avoid redundancy in the curriculum and there will be consortia sharing of curriculum. Finally, high priority will be on connecting industry and academia.

A statewide clinical placement database will be created with a goal to fill slots more effectively. There also will be efforts to increase the number of slots available.
Smart Thinking is a tutoring opportunity that will include 24/7 tutoring available with contextualized modules. Ed Ready will also be utilized.

New positions created as a component of the grant include Health Care Professional Coaches, Health Care Apprenticeships (this is new in MT), Health Care Transformation Specialist (on site at each campus), a Statewide Registrar, etc.

Montana Career Information Systems (MCIS) will be utilized.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) will be a pathway component. Adults with healthcare experience may have an opportunity to demonstrate learning and potentially earn credit where applicable. (e.g. a military Veteran who has been trained in healthcare while in service)

The Montana HealthCARE kickoff meeting will be held on either December 4 or 5 in Missoula.

Main Street Montana: John mentioned that the Governor’s Office is very pleased with the work done thus far for Pillar I. He noted that Neil Moisey and Cindi Orser are also doing pillar work for Main Street Montana regarding research.

PLA Update: Sue updated the group on the PLA Summit (approx. 80 attendees) on September 29 and the last taskforce meeting, held September 30. Taskforce will meet again on October 21, 22 in Helena at OCHE. Four workgroups have been reviewing, vetting and debating potential policy, recommendations and guidelines to be considered by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents. Three documents to be produced for consideration: Policy Manual, Faculty and Staff Handbook and Student Handbook.

Sue presented an overview of the PLA work to the MACRAO group on October 9. This was followed by a discussion on items for which this group has primary oversight such as transcripting PLA, how to treat credits, transfer, opportunities for broader awareness, etc. Dena Wagner Fossen is preparing a survey to build baseline information on PLA.

Dual Enrollment: It was announced that a significant increase from last spring to this fall has occurred in the number of dual enrollment students. John thanked the colleges for their efforts.