

DATE: August 22, 2002
TO: Montana Board of Regents
FROM: Joyce A. Scott, Deputy Commissioner for Academic & Student Affairs
RE: University System Collaboration in Financial Aid Services

The Board of Regents through the Restructuring Review and Strategic Plan indicated a desire for more collaboration among the campuses of the Montana University System. I brought this request to the Student Affairs Officers who have pursued efforts to increase collaboration and efficiency through effective planning, assessment, and resource sharing in administrative functions.

Based on parent input, the Student Affairs Officers met with campus Financial Aid Directors to outline concerns and discuss how higher education can make basic information about financial aid practices clearer and more accessible to low-income and first-generation students and their families. The initial plan was to invite these directors to identify features that the campus financial aid processes have in common and see how to align them more closely and explain them more simply.

Mrs. Arlene Hannawalt, Director of the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program convened the Financial Aid Task Force and quickly focused attention on policies and awards available at all MUS campuses. During the last six months, members worked to develop common forms and policies on three fee waivers:

- [Indian Student](#) Fee Waiver
- [Honorably Discharged Veteran's](#) Fee Waiver
- [Senior Citizen](#) Fee Waiver

In addition, the group developed a one-page checklist to guide students and families in the financial aid application process and to maintain awards. This checklist will be used to

- distribute as a flyer to incoming students and high school seniors at career days and financial aid presentations,
- mail to students who are applying for student loans, and
- distribute as a poster--[Skating Through The Financial Aid Maze](#)--to high schools throughout Montana.

Members of the Task Force included Arlene Williams, UM-Western; Brenda Sebastian,--MSU College of Technology-Great Falls, now at MSU Bozeman; Kris Dramstad, MSU-Northern; Melina Hawkins, MSU-Billings, Mick Hanson, UM, Missoula; Mike Richardson - MT Tech; Tom Stump, MSU Bozeman; and Victoria Glass, UM College of Technology-Helena.

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Pc: Commissioner Crofts
Director Hannawalt