The Office of Commissioner of Higher Education engaged Strategies 360 to lead the brand market research, including:

- Prospective Student Focus Groups
- Current Student Surveys
- Community Input Surveys
This research achieved broad market and community input:

- Prospective student focus group study: 55 people
- Current student survey: 354 people
- Community input survey: 951 people

Total Reach: 1,360 people
Defining the brand promise

Brand names:

• Set forth expectations defining a brand’s promise

• Indicate *the nature* of the story that will be told

• Indicate shared values to the target audience
Prospective Student Focus Group Research

55 participants
6 cities
(Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, & Missoula)
Focus Group Cities
Sample Focus Group Participant List

- Veteran of Iraq war suffering from PTSD
- 30-year-old single mother in voc-rehab
- 58-year-old teacher and artist
- 54-year-old educator, living in a smaller community outside of town, unemployed
- 42-year-old graduate of the Vo-Tech (in ’89,) living outside of town, unemployed
- 22-year-old Native American who wants to study cosmetology
- 33-year-old mother of a new baby, B.A. degree holder, waiting tables
- High school student whose parents don’t believe she will graduate from high school
- Laid off construction worker and part-time service member with the National Guard
- 24-year-old B.A. degree holder working with the Conservation Corp part-time
Current Student Survey Research

354 participants
Community Input
Survey Research
951 participants
Survey Participants by Community

- 142 participants from Billings
- 120 participants from Butte
- 296 participants from Great Falls
- 259 participants from Helena
- 120 participants from Missoula
We need your input on renaming Montana's Colleges of Technology.

Click here to participate in a brief online survey to help rename your local College of Technology!

Helena musher competing in Race to Sky

By ARDELIA BRAIHAT Independent Record

The old saying goes — if you are not the lead dog, the view never changes. Musher Mark Ibsen counters that he'd rather be on the sled so he doesn't have to run 12 mph.
Prospective Student Focus Group Findings
Key Focus Group Findings

 Identifier emphasized first

- Told the **mission** of the fictional college
- Shaped people’s **perceptions** of its affordability, accessibility, size, and degree offerings.
Perceptions of Fictional College Name Frameworks

Place Mission – Affiliation
(Centerville College – UNC)

• This name framework was most consistently perceived as affordable, offering associates degrees, offering flexible scheduling, close to home, and community-centered.
Perceptions of Fictional College Name Frameworks

Affiliation Place Mission
(UNC - Centerville College)

• This name framework was most consistently perceived as having large classes, greater financial commitment, bachelor degree offerings, and collegiate sports teams.
Perceptions of Fictional College Name Frameworks

**Mission Place of Affiliation**

*(College of Centerville - UNC)*

- This framework was most consistently perceived as a highly specialized school (e.g., a business school or a design school), or as an exclusive liberal-arts-college.
Preferred Place Identifiers

• Signify beautiful, calm and inviting places, such as valleys, rivers, and mountains.
• Include the surrounding communities of a town or region
• Represent people’s sense of local identity
Value in University Affiliation

Focus group participants perceived *Affiliation at the end* of the local test names as representing:

- Transferability
- Accreditation
- Prestige
- A University system
Student Surveys
Key Factors for higher education engagement

• Affordability
• Place or staying close to home

In other words, prospective two-year education students are looking for a quality education that is accessible and close to home.
Key Findings

• A majority of these current students would not prefer to be attending a university

• They preferred small class size and other key attributes of a comprehensive two-year college
Community Input Surveys
Which of the following fictional names sound like a two-year college serving the needs of its community? Check one:

- Billings
- Butte
- Great Falls
- Helena
- Missoula

Number of responses:

- Centerville College of UNC: 48 (Billings), 49 (Butte), 103 (Great Falls), 92 (Helena), 52 (Missoula)
- UNC Centerville College: 19 (Billings), 21 (Butte), 77 (Great Falls), 82 (Helena), 24 (Missoula)
- College of Centerville - UNC: 37 (Billings), 18 (Butte), 73 (Great Falls), 48 (Helena), 23 (Missoula)
- Unsure: 38 (Billings), 32 (Butte), 46 (Great Falls), 37 (Helena), 21 (Missoula)
Which one of the following fictional names sounds like a four-year university? Check one:

- Billings
- Butte
- Great Falls
- Helena
- Missoula

The bar chart shows the number of responses for each option:

- Lincoln College of UNC: 15, 16, 31, 31, 12
- UNC Lincoln College: 120, 153
- College of Lincoln - UNC: 18, 14, 58, 32, 15
- Unsure: 44, 43, 57, 76, 41
Name framework identifiers listed first in college names suggested by community survey participants

- Affiliation first: 33% (N=310)
- Place first: 61% (N=572)
- Mission first: 6% (N=55)

Legend:
- Affiliation first
- Place first
- Mission first
Conclusion
Recommendation:

Place Mission – Affiliation
(Centerville College – UNC)

The findings have indicated three strategic reasons for making the recommendation:

1. *Place communicates a strong community identity*

2. *The combination of Place and Mission, as communicated by the word college, demonstrates the comprehensive two-year mission*

3. *Affiliation placed first in the framework represents four-year universities*
The name framework

*Place Mission - Affiliation:*

- Puts the needs of the student at the beginning of the brand story
- *Affiliation* at the end signifies a system-wide approach with quality, transferability, and credibility
- Maintains a clear level of connectivity to the parent university
- Lays the foundation for brand buy-in from community members
- Creates meaning by attaching to prospective student’s identification with place and local pride
- Defines Montana’s comprehensive two-year college mission
Representing a University System

This framework shows the college is anchored in a community and demonstrates a strong Montana University System.
Increasing Degree Attainment

If the goal of this rebranding initiative is to increase enrollment and improve degree completion rates, then the MUS must communicate with these prospective students and meet them where they are.
Examples of Place Mission – Affiliation
Honolulu Community College – University of Hawaii
Kenai Peninsula College – University of Alaska Anchorage
Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas
Mock-up logos for a fictional college
Mock-up logos for a fictional college
PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE BILLINGS COLLEGE:
• Billings City
• Yellowstone River
• Yellowstone Valley

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE GREAT FALLS COLLEGE:
• Central Montana
• The Falls
• Great Falls
• North Central Montana

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE MISSOULA COLLEGE:
• Clark Fork
• Five Valleys
• Missoula
• Missoula Valley
• Three Rivers

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE BUTTE COLLEGE:
• Butte
• Highlands
• Silver Bow
• Summit Valley

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE HELENA COLLEGE:
• Capital City
• Helena
• Helena Valley
• Mount Helena
• Treasure State
Sample College Names Using Framework

Unranked

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE BILLINGS COLLEGE:
• Billings City College - MSUB
• Yellowstone River College - MSUB
• Yellowstone Valley College - MSUB

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE GREAT FALLS COLLEGE:
• Central Montana College - MSU
• The Falls College - MSU
• Great Falls College - MSU
• North Central Montana College - MSU

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE MISSOULA COLLEGE:
• Clark Fork College - UM
• Five Valleys College - UM
• Missoula College - UM
• Missoula Valley College - UM
• Three Rivers College - UM

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE BUTTE COLLEGE:
• Butte College of MT Tech - UM
• Highlands College of MT Tech - UM
• Silver Bow College of MT Tech - UM
• Summit Valley College of MT Tech - UM

PLACE IDENTIFIER OPTIONS FOR THE HELENA COLLEGE:
• Capital City College - UM
• Helena College - UM
• Helena Valley College - UM
• Mount Helena College – UM
• Treasure State College – UM