Montana CollegeNOW Progress Report
March, 2010

1. State and team personnel changes

OCHE hired J. Anne Clark as the state evaluator. As noted last month, Anne will serve as the “eyes and ears” of the project around that state, and the advisory and implementation teams will use feedback from ongoing evaluation activities to ensure they are remaining on course and addressing valid concerns of stakeholders.

2. Progress on common evaluation milestones

a. Identify and hire an evaluator, in consultation with SPEC

The leadership team made a big push to get the evaluator on board in time to attend the March 3 evaluation orientation with SPEC:
February 24—deadline for proposals responding to RFP
February 25—conference call to screen and score proposals
February 26—Mary, David and Judy conducted interviews, and Mary offered contract to Anne later that day

b. Participate in an evaluation orientation (in-state)

Completed March 3 in Bozeman with the advisory and implementation teams, as well as Lana and Judy. Mary provided an update on project activities; Melanie and Claudia reviewed the national evaluation role and the state’s roadmap; small groups discussed the roadmap and offered refinements; and Melanie reviewed the state’s policy change model diagram and led the discussion about how Montana’s activities fit in. This was a great introduction to the project for Anne Clarke.

Many of the two-year CEOs who participated in the orientation met the following day as part of gatherings related to the Board of Regents meeting. The college leaders provided very positive feedback about the direction of the initiative and their enthusiasm for moving forward.

c. Submit baseline data (including year and source, if not IPEDS) for the seven core Delta metrics, to SPEC, and
d. Submit additional metrics and baseline data (including definition, year, source) to SPEC

Tyler Trevor, Rick Voorhees and Judy met by phone on March 12 to discuss the core measures and Montana’s state-specific measures.

3. Upcoming activities and events relevant to the initiative

March 24-25 National Governors Association Forum on Adult Credentialing in DC
March 30-31 National evaluation meeting in Detroit
April 1-2  Meet with university system registrars & admissions officers (see d.i.)
April 8 and 22  Biweekly implementation team teleconference (even-numbered Thu.)

4. Activities and progress this month, as they relate to the following (taken from the scope of work)

a. The goals for overall project coordination
   - On target. Implementation and advisory teams continue to meet regularly to oversee progress. State activity on KC is picking up.

b. The goals for communications and engagement
   - **College!Now** messaging materials were presented to Regents on March 4-5.
   - Additional presentations this month include:
     - Board of Education (chaired by Governor, includes Board of Public Education and Regents)
     - Helena Rotary Club

c. The goals for bringing the community college mission to all two-year campuses, including activities of the four work groups:
   i. Developmental
      - Work group launch on 2/24; next steps are for campuses to bring back indicators of demographics served and student success.
      - Nate Johnson provided contacts from Tennessee’s successful developmental education efforts.
   ii. Adult-friendly
      - Montana was awarded one of the NGA grants for a Governor’s Forum on Postsecondary Credential Attainment. Implementation will be in close coordination between **College!Now** and executive workforce offices.
      - Project Director David Hall, along with Pat Wise from Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity, will attend NGA Institute for state policymakers on adult credentialing, March 24-25 in Washington, DC.
      - Demi Michelau at WICHE and Iris Oliver at HCM provided helpful ideas for consultants in this area.
   iii. Adult basic literacy education (ABLE)
      - Good kick-off meeting 2/22, with discussion of ABLE models in use.
   iv. Workforce responsiveness
      - Pat Wise has contacted business and industry representatives in preparation for launch.
      - See notes under adult-friendly work group.
d. The goals for making two-year colleges regional hubs, including activities of the two work groups

i. High School/College transitions
   - Regents received report on dual enrollment landscape March 4.
   - Work group launch is March 19. MEA/MFT representative, as well as tribal college representatives, are part of work group.
   - On March 22 Sheila Stearns and SPI P-20 Policy Adviser Joyce Silverthorne will meet with national consultants Roger Sampson and Bruce Vandall from ECS.
   - University system registrars and admissions officers will meet April 1-2 to work out transcripting issues with high school to college transitions.
   - Demi Michelau provided helpful background and contacts for this area.

ii. Curriculum coordination and alignment
   - 7 CTE / AP courses were identified for initial alignment.
   - Related instruction requirements for all AAS and CAS programs have been disseminated to chief academic officers for review. Their revisions have been received and master matrix revised accordingly. On agenda for next implementation team meeting.

e. The goals for technology infrastructure, including activities of the two work groups

i. Technology for efficiency
   - MSU campuses met to begin project to integrate Banner systems of all four campuses. Miles and Dawson Community Colleges are in the process of converting their systems to Banner. MSU and Sungard reported on their respective progress to regents on March 4 and received enthusiastic response.
   - Regents discussed online programs at March meeting and directed Commissioner’s Office to establish guidelines on program duplication in general, including online program duplication.

ii. Virtual community college
   - Under design for interim implementation of several dual enrollment and college-only core courses this fall, using consortium approach.

f. The goals for outcomes-based funding
- Dennis Jones met with group including budget officers and 2-year liaison on performance-based funding March 11. There was a clear understanding among participants that fundamental change will require new funding strategies and different incentives. Dennis and Mick Robinson, deputy commissioner, will explore a funding strategy based on a model from SHEEO that rewards credit hour completion weighted by program cost.

- Each College!Now work group is looking at performance metrics—how success should be defined and measured in each area—to feed into the funding work group.