Date: August 5, 2015
To: Ron Muffick
    Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
From: Emily Williamson
    Director of Financial Aid
RE: College Access Challenge Grant 2015-16

Please accept this updated memo as our request to participate in the College Access Challenge Grant for 2015-16. Montana State University Billings has succeeded in creating and implementing a successful financial literacy education program. It is our intent to provide our students with financial education throughout their college experience – from new student orientation through graduation. We remain committed to our goals and look forward to expanding our program in year four.

Over the past three years, we have provided financial literacy education opportunities to every student who attended MSU Billings. We have created partnerships throughout our campus, trained and educated staff and students, and provided targeted outreach to at-risk students, including first-year students in ASC 111, academic recovery students, students on satisfactory academic progress (SAP) warning, students with need, and minority students. We hired a dedicated Financial Education Success Specialist to manage the program and conduct focused campus outreach and one-on-one financial coaching. We acquired a private office space for the Financial Education Success Specialist on the first floor of the Student Union Building, which is a prime location for student outreach and individual appointments. Our program was branded MSUB – Be Money Smart and a professional university logo was created for promotion of the program both on campus and in the community.

As we move into year four, we will continue to expand and enhance our financial literacy program services and activities. We will coordinate with our campus partners to distribute and promote Federal Student Aid and MUS resources (Dollars & Sense, www.mus.edu/prepare, Get Money Smarts, MUS videos, etc.). We will continue to work closely with Student Financial Services and assess and report our activities to OCHE. The following outlines our proposed initiatives and the budget for our 2015-16 grant cycle.

Goals for 2015-16 College Access Challenge Grant:

1. **Financial Education Success Specialist**
   a. Continue to employ a full-time/12-month Financial Education Success Specialist, dedicated to educating students on money management and default prevention. This position coordinates all financial education activities for Montana State University Billings on the university campus and the City College campus.
   b. Position responsibilities include, but are not limited to
      i. Continue to develop program; enhance entrance and exit counseling
      ii. Continue to work with Student Financial Services
      iii. Continue to utilize MUS resources (Dollars and Sense, Get Money Smarts, etc.)
iv. Track and assess students served; enhance student pre and post-tests (ensure information gathered reflects knowledge level, opinions and needs)

v. Teach different aspects of financial literacy, including, but not limited to: budgeting and debt management, saving for success, goal setting and financial plan development while in college, credit report/scores, repayment plans for student loans and personal debt, loan forgiveness programs, planning for financial management after college

vi. Collaborate and coordinate with financial education campus partners to promote and distribute MUS/SFS resources and integrate financial literacy into campus student success strategies. Financial education partners include, but not limited to: Student Affairs departmental staff in Financial Aid, New Student Services (College Success Specialists – First Year Seminar), Academic Support Center, Student Health Services, Career Services, Housing & Student Life, Diversity Center, Advising Center, Office of American Indian Outreach

2. Financial Literacy Advisory Committee
   a. Our Financial Literacy Advisory Committee is comprised of campus administrators, Student Affairs directors, and faculty and student representatives, to increase campus-wide engagement in the project and promote financial literacy education best practices.
      i. The Financial Literacy Advisory Committee will be chaired by the grant administrator (Director of Financial Aid) and the Financial Education Success Specialist will be a participating member
      ii. The committee will have representatives from key campus constituencies, such as: Admissions & Records, Academic Advising, New Student & Retention Services, Career Services, Housing & Student Life, Campus Store, SSS/TRiO, Academic Support Center, Alumni Relations, City College Student Services, Disability Support Services, Library, American Indian Outreach, Student Health Services, etc.; as well as representatives from student government (ASMSUB) and faculty
      iii. The Advisory Committee will conduct at least two meetings a semester and keep written minutes of all meetings

3. Continue to Educate Campus Community
   a. Implement EverFi Transit Online Financial Literacy Program
      i. Utilize Transit Program campus-wide for all new students
   b. Educate student leadership (ASMSUB)
      i. Provide all student leaders with Dollars & Sense and Get Money Smarts information
      ii. Schedule and teach financial literacy topics to student leadership, including, but not limited to: budgeting and debt management, saving for success, goal setting and financial plan development while in college, credit report/scores, repayment plans for student loans and personal debt, loan forgiveness programs, planning for financial management after college
   c. Conduct outreach activities (information/activity tables, participation in fairs, classroom visits, partnering with student and campus organizations at outreach events, etc.)
   d. Provide financial education Lunch & Learns and presentations
   e. Promote awareness of financial literacy and the Be Money Smart program via campus monitor screen slideshows and MSUB social media platforms
   f. Send electronic communications to all enrolled students (e.g., special announcements directing students to financial literacy resources: MUS website, online Dollars & Sense, etc.)
g. Meet with students one-on-one in the Financial Education office in the Student Union Building (SUB) and at City College. Present personalized information for individuals. Introduce students to Get Money Smarts, NSLDS, etc. Assist students in creating Get Money Smarts login

h. Present information in office staff meetings across campus and offer online resources and Get Money Smarts cards

i. Present information to Student Affairs team: Financial Aid, Advising Center, Admissions & Records, New Student Services, Jacket Student Central, etc. (Topics include, but are not limited to: budgeting and debt management, saving for success, goal setting and financial plan development while in college, credit report/scores, repayment plans for student loans and personal debt, loan forgiveness programs, planning for financial management after college)

j. Update and monitor MSUB financial literacy website pages

k. Track populations served and assess effectiveness of student and staff trainings via pre and post-test activities

4. **Focus Financial Education Program for All Incoming Freshman and Transfer Students**
   a. Present information about financial literacy and the MSUB financial education program at parent/student orientations (sessions capture new students, transfer students, adult students, and parents). Topics include but are not limited to: budgeting and debt management, saving for success, value of building and monitoring credit, student loan repayment and loan forgiveness options, and goal setting and financial plan development both in college and beyond

   b. Work with MSUB Parent & Family Programs to provide information, MUS/SFS resources, and the opportunity to meet with the Financial Education Success Specialist or a Financial Aid staff member.

   c. Offer *Dollars and Sense* Workbook and Get Money Smarts cards at transfer advising sessions and invite students to schedule individual appointments with the Financial Education Success Specialist

   d. Present financial literacy information at College Prep 101 nights

   e. Provide financial literacy education for students in the First Year Seminar (ASC 101/111) and academic recovery sessions. Topics include, but are not limited to: budgeting and debt management, saving for success, goal setting and financial plan development while in college, credit report/scores, repayment plans for student loans and personal debt, loan forgiveness programs, planning for financial management after college

      i. 100% of students receive *Dollars & Sense* workbook and Get Money Smarts information

      ii. Enhance financial literacy portion of First Year Seminar with EverFi Transit Program

      iii. Provide financial literacy information and resources during one-on-one appointment sessions and refer students to the Financial Education Success Specialist

   f. Track number of students served and assess participants receiving financial literacy education
5. **Target High-Risk Students**
   a. Students placed on financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress *Warning* 
      i. Financial Aid Office will send SAP warning letter directing students to Financial Education Success Specialist and include information for online *Dollars and Sense* and Get Money Smarts 
      ii. Financial Education Success Specialist will invite students to come to individual appointments 
   b. Other at-risk Financial Aid recipients 
      i. Provide targeted outreach to students with high-debt including specific debt information, directing students to Financial Education Success Specialist and include information for online *Dollars and Sense* and Get Money Smarts 
      ii. Provide targeted outreach to withdrawn students 
   c. Students placed on Academic Probation 
      i. Present financial education to students participating in Academic Recovery sessions between semesters. Topics include budgeting and debt management, saving for success, building and monitoring credit, student loan repayment and loan forgiveness, and goal setting and financial plan development both in college and beyond 
      ii. Follow up with one-on-one meetings 
   d. Transfer students 
      i. Present information at Transfer orientations 
      ii. Provide information during advising sessions 
      iii. Work directly with Chief Dull Knife & Little Big Horn Colleges to build relationships and opportunities. Present financial literacy education -associate with Financial Aid night presentation 
   e. Veterans 
      i. Provide financial education and coaching to veterans at City College & Main Campus 
      ii. Mail targeted communications about financial literacy at MSUB as it impacts veterans and their families 
   f. Minority students 
      i. Provide focused outreach to students associated with Diversity Center and American Indian Outreach Office 
      ii. Offer individual appointments as well as group education sessions 
   g. Provide students with MUS/SFS online resources and invite them to meet individually to discuss their budget, indebtedness, etc. 
   h. Continue to work to identify students showing early indicators of retention/completion and financial issues and target these populations with financial literacy resources and individual counseling 

6. **Engage in training activities**
   a. Promote professional training to campus representatives. Encourage attendance at SFS financial literacy training in Helena. 
   b. Promote and have campus representatives attend SFS sponsored financial literacy training on campus. 

7. **Identify ways to track and assess training**
   a. Track number of students served through outreach activities and events or one-on-one meetings 
   b. Utilize survey instruments to assess participants receiving financial literacy education
c. Monitor, assess and report efforts to Student Financial Services/OCHE

d. Utilize EverFi Transit program to track and assess training

e. Continue to monitor trends or changes in financial aid recipient data

Montana State University Billings will continue to educate students and the MSUB community on sound money management practices. Our program would not exist without the generous funding and support from OCHE. Without continued support, we will be unable to retain our designated project coordinator and build upon the services and activities we have developed and implemented thus far. As we embed our program in our institution, the real benefit is to our students.

We believe that individual attention enriches the experience for college students and fosters healthy attitudes and habits that can help students achieve success, both in school and after they graduate. We expect behaviors to change slowly over the first few years, but more significant changes will be shown in years 5-7. We will continue to strengthen existing partnerships and reach out to new partners. We will continue to work closely with our partners at OCHE and our colleagues across the state. Financial Literacy is a coordinated effort in Montana and is important for all of our students. We remain committed and excited about this project.

cc: Dr. Mark Nook, Chancellor
    Dr. Joseph Oravec, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
    Dr. Cheri Johannes, Registrar and Director of Admissions & Records