

**MSU- Great Falls COT and University of Great Falls Taskforce
Report
To
Montana Board of Regents
June 19, 2012**

Facilitated by: Julie Benson-Rosston, Carroll College and Collaboration Institute

Recorded by: Bob Hietala

Participants:

1. Will Weaver-Retired CEO MSU GF COT and COT Advisory Council Member
2. Bill Himmelberg-University of Great Falls Basketball Coach and University supporter
3. Stacey Eve-CFO University of Great Falls
4. Emily Busby-Student at University of Great Falls
5. Charlie Brown-Student MSU GF COT
6. Judy Hay-Assistant Dean MSU GF COT
7. Bob Hietala-Dean Gallatin College Montana State University

June 12, 2012

Topics of Discussion

1. A history of the College!Now initiative was provided by Judy and Bob. This included comments regarding the rebranding and renaming process.
2. A history of the University of Great Falls was provided by Stacey, Bill and Emily. Stacie and Bill shared thoughts from UGF's perspective around the proposed MSU GF COT name change convention.
3. The discussion moved to ways the two institutions have worked together previously.
4. The group also discussed the history and feelings associated with the MSU GF COT naming proposal process.
5. The group wrapped up with a discussion of the need to respond to any questions about the Taskforce's process with consistent messages.

June 13, 2012

Topics of Discussion

1. The concerns of UGF were discussed. These included the perception on the UGF campus that they were not adequately considered in the name selection process.
2. The proximity of the campuses was recognized as a primary factor in confusion about the two institutions.

3. MSU GF COT representatives stressed that they felt it was important to utilize the naming research that was conducted by College!Now in the local community. Everyone recognized that both institutions have a long-standing history of using the name Great Falls, and that many of the issues surrounding naming actually apply to both institutions.
4. The Taskforce discussed a number of potential areas of collaboration and coordination between the two institutions that could help mitigate local confusion about the institutions. While none of the strategies would totally alleviate the potential naming and proximity issues between the institutions, they were viewed as helpful strategies worth pursuing.
5. Some of these collaborations include:
 - a. Campus directional-signage (internal, external and possible joint) could be improved to direct new students and visitors to each campus. Signage along 10th Ave S., as well as on the interstate, had particular potential. Design and placement of the each institution's signage is important for differentiation. The Taskforce recognized that further work needs to occur on signage, Web presence (URL designations, etc.), public relations and brand development for both institutions to help articulate the different missions of the institutions.
 - b. Recruiting students-Discussion took place around the challenges that new students and visitors have in recognizing the different campuses and possible ways to help better inform potential students.
 - c. Donors-Discussion took place around challenges that some donors may have in distinguishing between the University and the College due to the similar historical and present names. This was presented as a potential issue for older donors that have historical name associations with the University of Great Falls.
 - d. Website and Internet Searches-The committee agreed that this was an important issue for both campuses and that it is an issue we can work through productively.
 - e. Communication – ongoing collaboration could be achieved through establishing groups to work on individual elements that will help differentiate the campuses, and also to provide an avenue for addressing issues that arise on an ongoing basis.
 - f. Other Opportunities - The Taskforce, with much input from the student representatives, discussed potential collaborations in intramural athletics, student governments, and student activities. Coordination of student and community safety and emergency procedures were also mentioned as important areas of collaboration.
6. Naming-The Taskforce spent time discussing the College!Now research and process for the renaming of the two-year colleges. The group discussed options for naming the Great Falls campus and the importance of providing further distinction between the two institutions. The taskforce recognized that both schools have history and heritage with the name Great Falls and that the image of the falls is iconic in the College's current brand. The group did not agree on any suggested revisions to the proposed name that would adequately distinguish between public/private and two-year/four-year institutions.
7. One other area of discussion was the need for the campuses to work together to alleviate perception of conflict (between the two institutions) that the MT University System's rebranding of the colleges of technology has created in Great Falls. Participants recognized that both

institutions have a responsibility to clarify information for the community and assist in positively managing community perceptions.

Recommendations to the Board of Regents:

The Taskforce thanks the Board and Commissioner's office for the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues. The campuses shared mutual concerns, clarified some misunderstandings and identified many opportunities for collaboration. Students on the Taskforce had numerous ideas about how student leaders from both institutions could work together. All participants agreed this was a positive experience.

1. The Taskforce also agreed that it supports the Board of Regents' intent to finalize the name change for MSU GF COT at the June 28, 2012 Board of Regents meeting. The Taskforce felt that it would be helpful to have the naming decision resolved quickly so the campuses can move forward with implementation efforts.
2. The Taskforce also recommends that consideration be given to provide some targeted rebranding funding from the College!Now Initiative to assist with the unique challenges in Great Falls of differentiation between the two institutions.