1) Affordability Task Force recommendations accepted by Board of Regents and prioritized as one of the top MUS Legislative Initiatives

In an effort to slow escalating student loan debt the following recommendations of the Affordability Taskforce comprise the MUS Legislative Initiative on Student Aid and Services:

- Increase tuition assistance for Montana residents in order to improve affordability for low and moderate income students and families
- Develop a coordinated and collaborative approach to financial literacy that enhances and connects existing campus and system efforts and promotes best practices
- Increase centralized default prevention efforts for students receiving direct federal loans (students under FFELP program are currently served by GSL)

2) College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) aimed at bolstering Affordability Taskforce recommendations to make immediate progress

CACG is a $1.5 million federal grant to improve college access for low-income and under-represented students; funded areas include:

- Tuition Assistance (need-based aid) - $750,000
- Financial Literacy - $400,000 (Financial Literacy Sub-grant)
- Outreach & Communication (MT Career Info System) - $350,000

3) Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) resources help fuel Student Financial Services (SFS) effort in Commissioner’s Office to work more closely with campuses

SFS Roles and Responsibilities:

- Administer and support CACG/Affordability Taskforce Strategies
- Provide central default prevention services (including plan for sustainable services for direct loan students) – (Default Prevention Update, Sept 2012)
- Provide financial aid administration, policy analysis and development, and coordination for state aid programs: MTAP, MHEG, Work Study, Gov’s Post-secondary, MUS Honors
- New organizational structure for SFS and GSL

Other Related Topics: Veterans’ Advisory Group – Development of System Initiative