



**Date:** November 17, 2016

**To:** Board of Regents

**From:** Daniel J. Bingham, Ph.D.  
Dean/CEO, Helena College University of Montana

**Subject:** Campus Report for November 17-18, 2016, Board of Regents Meeting

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- Sandy Sacry, Helena College Nursing Director, was appointed by Governor Bullock to the Montana Board of Nursing as the Education representative. She attended her first meeting as a member on October 19.
- The August 31, 2016, issue of *Community College Week* listed Helena College University of Montana twice in their Top 100 Associate Degree Producers of 2016, listed at number 22 in Associate Degrees: Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing, and Nursing Assistants and at number 26 in the Top 50 Associate Degrees: Precision Production.
- Helena College Foundation, Inc., is prepared to award the first round of Helena College Foundation Scholarships. The Foundation is focusing on encouraging completion by offering scholarships for students who have successfully finished at least one semester of any program in good standing and are low income, but not Pell-eligible. In addition, the Foundation received a sizeable donation to put towards additional Information Technology scholarships, again zeroing in on returning students who are low income, but not Pell-eligible.
- A group of eighty Helena College faculty, staff, and students came together as Helena College Hope to participate in the NAMI Walk on Sunday, September 25. Over 3000 total participants from around Montana walked roughly 5 kilometers. Teams raised money to help the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) assist those seeking guidance for themselves or family members around mental health issues and in its advocacy work. Out of 66 teams, Helena College Hope was 9<sup>th</sup> in team fundraising and 1<sup>st</sup> in team participation.
- The number of FAFSA filers completing the new 2017-2018 FAFSA is almost double as compared to the 2016-2017 FAFSA for the same amount of days of which it's been available. FAFSA and parent nights are in full swing and will hopefully finish-up prior to inclement weather.
- Helena College's cohort default rate has decreased by 3 percentage points down to 12.3%. There are more borrowers in repayment status; however, there are fewer students in a default status than the prior year. It is felt that our efforts of loan entrance and exit counseling strategies, as well as financial literacy, are finally being expressed in the numbers. The percentage of loan borrowers has decreased by nearly 7%, and the average amount of loans per borrower has decreased by \$242 for the 2015-2016 AY as compared to 2014-2015. The overall amount of student loans disbursed decreased by 17% for 2015-2016 as compared to 2014-2015.

- Helena College Veteran Resources is working on wellness in the form of suicide prevention. Guest speaker Juliana Hallows, NCC, LPMHC, is the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Montana Veterans through VA Montana. In this capacity, she teaches prevention techniques within the VA and in Montana communities. She will present at Helena College on October 27 from 11:00 a.m. to Noon in the Lecture Hall.
- Helena College was up 13% in applications and new students for the fall 2016 semester compared to fall 2015.
- The Completion Committee has utilized the Helena College Starfish Retention System to create a checkpoint for students and advisors. They are now notified when their overall credit total is getting close to the requirement needed for graduation and are asked to apply for graduation or work with their advisor to make a plan to complete. The new notification was utilized last year, and 59% of the students notified applied for graduation.
- Helena College will kick-off its Lecture Series on November 3. Renowned author and Montana historian Ellen Baumler will present “Haunted Helena.”
- The Helena College Office of Disability Resources has added a work study student to its staff this semester. This student has a significant visual impairment and utilizes a service dog. John has been a wonderful addition to the office as he has, beyond his office skills, a tremendous capacity for compassion and empathy for students with disabilities. The addition of John to the disability program has not only increased the availability of staff to assist students, it has also provided the opportunity to see that individuals with disabilities are as capable in most capacities as able-bodied individuals and to find ways to make our campus and office more universally designed. In addition, he educates students, faculty, and staff about service animals, the work they perform, and the appropriate and inappropriate times to engage with a service animal. We are pleased with the work John is doing in the office and for the opportunity to show the capacity of individuals of varying abilities.