

Board of Regents Meeting -- Conference Call, January 8, 2019

Chair Albrecht: ... Board of Regents meeting. This is Fran Albrecht, and I am serving as the Chair of the Board. I would like to begin by reminding everyone who was on the call to go ahead and put it on mute, and I would also like to remind everyone that we will be recording this call this morning. I'd like to begin by asking Amy Unsworth to present us with roll call.

Amy Unsworth: Chair Albrecht.

Chair Albrecht: Present.

Amy Unsworth: Regent Lozar.

Regent Lozar: Present.

Amy Unsworth: Regent Sheehy

Regent Sheehy: Present.

Amy Unsworth: Regent Johnson

Regent Johnson: Present.

Amy Unsworth: Regent Rogers is excused from this meeting. Regent Nystuen.

Regent Nystuen: Yes, I'm here.

Amy Unsworth: Regent Tuss.

Regent Tuss: Here.

Amy Unsworth: Commissioner Christian.

Commissioner Christian: Here.

Amy Unsworth: We have Siri Smillie from the Governor's office.

Siri Smillie: Here.

Amy Unsworth: And is Superintendent Arntzen on the phone? She may be joining in-person a little later.

Chair Albrecht: Is Superintendent Arntzen on the phone?

Commissioner Christian: Maybe not yet. I know today ... I think she'll be joining us at some time, Madame Chair.

Chair Albrecht: Okay. Thank you. Good morning, everyone, and thank you all for joining us. Welcome to all of us who are here with us here today at the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and those who have dialed in. And I want to welcome back the students across the Montana University System with, and the best wishes for another successful semester ahead. I know that

several of us participated in the winter commencement ceremonies, and I'm always impressed by really the diligence and the effort that it takes, and knowing that they're walking across the stage alone. It took so many to help hold their hand to get them there, and we all need to be reminded that we are all in this to focus on ensuring their success and whatever we can do to help them get across that stage into their next chapter.

So we have a short meeting this morning, and a lot of information to cover. We have informational and action items today, so is there time for public comment just before we break at 11:30. The legislature, as you all know, is in full swing, and I want to thank our OCHE staff for working on our behalf, continuing to do their day jobs but making sure that our legislators, campuses, and our Board have all the information about bill hearings, offering data, and working to coordinate Montana University System efforts for our hearing days. We have an exciting legislature ahead, and I am very hopeful that our legislators, our lawmakers will understand the importance of higher education for the quality of life for our state, our students, and continuing to create the dynamic situation we have in the state of Montana through all of what our higher education provides for our students.

And I'm continually amazed by the things that our campuses are doing, and I want folks on the call, and here today, to remember that we have our daily MUSings, the MUS news clips, and if you're not signed up for that, please reach out to our OCHE team to get set up, or to get signed up. Unfortunately not all of the exciting things that are going on across our campuses are reported in the news. This can give you such a rich understanding of the efforts and the exciting celebratory moments that are happening across our campuses. [inaudible 00:04:07] reach out to the OCHE staff to get signed up for the MUS, the MUSings.

Chair Albrecht: There's a lot to be excited about in 2019, and at this time, I'd like to hand the floor over to Commissioner Christian.

Commissioner Christian: Thank you, Madame Chair. You want to approve the minutes?

Chair Albrecht: Yes. Back to me. Thank you. Before handing it back to you, Commissioner, I'd like to go ahead and entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16th and 17th, that should be 2018, meeting minutes.

Regent Tuss: So moved.

Chair Albrecht: Motion made by Regent Tuss. Any discussion or corrections from members of the Board? Campuses? Any public comment? Seeing no further comment, I will call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying "aye." [ayes 00:05:15] Opposed same sign. Motion passes. Thank you.

Chair Albrecht: And now I'd like to hand it back to the Commissioner.

Commissioner Christian: Thank you, Madame Chair. Welcome. Thank you all for being here. I'll keep my comments brief, too, being as we're on a call. Just want to touch on a few things, and Tyler will walk us through some of these things in a bit more detail. Keeping with what I believe has been a long-standing, firm, solid direction of this Board toward student success, student access, and affordability, we continue to work on common portal. We continue to work with ACT, and with partners at OPI to administer the ACT, that test. We now have an agreement, and will come off without a hitch in April, I believe, and as we've talked some about it in previous meetings. I believe we have really interesting opportunity there to marry that test as not only the statewide

K-12 test, but also a higher ed entrance test, maybe even at some point a placement test, all of those things together.

Also to communicate more broadly, as we've talked about in previous meetings. What opportunities are available for Montana students, and how we can get them into those opportunities starting with the effort that the Governor and I rolled out this fall, the 1-2-Free program, which allows students take two free dual-enrollment courses, and I think that continues to be an exciting opportunity. You know, we were at the eggs & issues breakfast this morning, and there was a lot of talk. Superintendent has joined us now. A lot of talk about CTE, and I think it's incumbent upon us to do a little better job in helping a broader public understand what truly is available there. There is a lot of opportunities now, and a lot of opportunities already being funded by Perkins grant, five plus million dollars out of that grant that go toward exactly what we were talking about, helping student find the right opportunities.

There's been a tremendous amount of work between Governor's office, OPI, our office to increase opportunities for internships, apprenticeships. Some great things happening there. I think we need to make sure that the general public, and more particularly the students of Montana, our high school students, know what those opportunities are, how they can take advantage of them, and now with 1-2-Free, how they can take advantage of them for free, ultimately earning life skills that they want, but some college credits that, whether they're ready to go to college now or sometime in the future, are there for them waiting when they want to pursue other opportunities. So we continue to work on that. Tyler will walk us through it in a few minutes, what the initial phases of this look like. We showed it to the Superintendent yesterday, and certainly receiving input from them. I think this can be a powerful step in not only how we administer the ACT, but how we work together to inform students what's available. So very excited about that.

We're also going to talk a little bit on this call about, obviously the legislative session has begun, again, want to extend our gratitude to the Governor, to Director Ivers for placing us at a prominent spot in the budget that has an opportunity to serve students for generations to come. The tuition freeze, the tuition buy-down, college affordability, by whatever name we want to refer to this, it's a strategy that we've used in Montana several sessions before that has served students, and will continue to serve students. We are a fairly low-cost provider, but we're also a fairly low-income state. I think we're in the right spot, and we need to continue those efforts. There are some that would say, "Well, we've done a lot for affordability, maybe it should cost more." I would say there's no evidence that that is helpful. We see more students being able to attend and complete college the more affordable we can keep it. This is a great step toward that end. Appreciate where the Governor has placed us in terms of authority. And also to that end, prioritizing financial aid access assistance to students through this grant process. We've had several conversations since it was rolled out at our last Board meeting, but the foundations are very supportive of the work ahead in terms of raising a match that could ultimately prove to be about \$10 million over the biennium for students. That's an incredible number, one that is much, much needed in Montana. We have a long history of supporting students, and we will continue to do that, we want to walk you through a little bit of that in more detail, and we'll talk a little bit about what legislative bills are out there that will affect us.

Now obviously, we're on day two, so we don't know a lot about where some of these efforts are going. I believe I heard the other day it's the most LCs ever requested, so I think we've got a fair amount of stuff to look through. Your staff is engaged and has been for a while looking through all of those as they come out to see what potentially could impact students, impact the

University System. We'll continue to prioritize that. We'll show you a few of what's out there, but obviously don't have a lot of texture behind those as of yet.

So, I think the place to start is maybe walk through the access portal, and Superintendent Arntzen, if you have some thoughts on this as we go through it, please feel free to join in. Tyler will walk us through the presentation.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner, Madame Chair, members of the Board. Good morning. Pleased to walk you through a very early preliminary, it's more than a prototype. We're working daily to sometime toward the end of the month go live with the portal. We have a lot of I's to dot and T's to cross before that happens. As Superintendent Arntzen knows, we're very interested in ensuring that OPI at the central level, all the way down to the local level of school counselors and so on, have input. I will say, though, we are laser focused on getting just the basics out.

And what are the basics? Well, the basics are communicating the opportunities associated with the ACT test. And giving students the knowledge and parents the knowledge of why is it important to take advantage of some of the opt-in crossings that you're going to meet when you're taking the test, and what those will do for you. So, that was the catalyst for the portal. And after thinking about, wow, we have an opportunity here to talk to 11,000 juniors and their parents. What else should we be telling them that is mission critical? And the next thing is dual enrollment, 1-2-Free, that's what we have to offer. And then combining that with removing barriers, opening access to our admissions process, and at the very core level, this year is merely just linking students to the campuses and the admissions process, the same with financial aid. So there's four components to the portal: ACT, dual enrollment, admissions, and financial aid. We have dreams, plans, phase two, three, and four, which might include a single application to the University System, a single place to enroll in dual enrollment, and financial aid that is broader and has more depth. Hopefully, we gain some of that in this legislative session.

So with that, I just want to give you a real quick view of the basics, clicks here, and as you can see, we have the ACT, dual enrollment, admissions, financial aid across the top. By scrolling down, all of this is very accessible by mobile devices. That is pretty much one of the key aspects to it. We're really focused on the ACT, as I mentioned. If you click into the ACT area, it's all about the opportunities, opt-in, and really we're still building this out, but it gets as specific to say, hey, there's going to be a box labeled "L". If you mark this box, this what we would have, this is where the opportunities that you'll open. And then there'll be another one called "M", and if you mark that box, you'll be asked which campuses you want to send your scores to, and each time you do that, you'll save \$13. Very basic information about the opportunities, and giving everyone, including the legislature, a heads-up on what's going on, and Superintendent Arntzen can certainly help me out here, but we have House Bill 61, which is critically important to this endeavor, that changes statute language, allowing the superintendent of instruction to share personal information on students as it relates to the ACT test, and we see that as a critical cog in enabling our partnership to continue, and that partnership best characterizes, the commissioner had mentioned, this is the ability for this state to provide an 11th grade assessment as mandated by the federal government, and at the same time, college entrance exam that has all of the opportunities that every other student taking the ACT test would in any other state. And that's exactly what we have queued up here, and on April 2nd, if everything goes as planned, that's what will happen.

So, I'm not going to step through all of this. As I say, we're still working on it. It may not look quite like this as it arrives to the public, but it's been a real crunch, and we continue to look for feedback, and we will continue reach out, not just to K12, but our campus leaders, as well.

Madame Chair, that's all I have for the tour.

Commissioner Christian: Any questions about that?

Regent Lozar: Yes, Madame Chair? So what is the connection exactly, between House Bill 61 and then the opt-in, knowing the session may not be over, will not be over, by the date of the ACT?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, Regent Lozar, it's our intention, and if everything goes as planned, with the low number on House Bill 61 very much orchestrated and designed that way, the Superintendent can comment on that, but I think we'll have a hearing here within the next week or so.

Superintendent Arntzen: Thank you. If I could, Madame Chair, just share that. I do believe, from our dinner conversation with the legislator last night, Commissioner Christian, we have worked and I know that I have an education caucus, I have a travel caucus, that is going to be occurring Thursday, and then Tuesday, we have our education caucus. And I think this is where we start educating legislators on the importance of the partnership. And it's not for my shot, or your shot, it's for our students. And then I think we need to have a conversation on how we're going to better market this opportunity. But I do believe the low number on it, the individual we've had, multiple conversations. Thank you for coming over to the office last week, where we had the representative that is carrying the bill, on the phone, asking questions, and our conversations that we have in that gives him confidence, gives him confidence to stand on the House floor, move it through the Senate, with great opportunity. But we have work to do.

Chair Albrecht: Regent Nystuen.

Regent Nystuen: Thank you, Madame Chair. Full steam ahead to Deputy Commissioner Trevor. This is great. Don't slow down for a minute. Let me just offer up this morning at eggs & issues, there was a lot of discussion about career and technical education. Is there some merit in having almost a fifth pod called Career Technical? To bring the prominence and the importance of this type of education to the forefront, to really showcase what our community colleges and two-year campuses have, right on the very front.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, Regent Nystuen, that's something we should consider. In my mind, and I'm a parent of a high schooler yeah, and I'm on my third one, so I've evaluated this from an angle of both working at the system office and not being able to answer some questions, which is kind of unbelievable, because it, it's ironic some of the time, they kind of believe that goes back to myself. This to me, when I think about career and technical education as a parent, I don't know if I understand what that means as much as I understand what dual enrollment is, and inside of dual enrollment, there's certainly opportunities we can highlight better related to career and technical education.

And so, that might be an avenue for us to get into parents and students, and let them know the opportunities associated with apprenticeships, dual credit, the career and technical education that we provide at our two-year campuses, the fact that every four-year campus has an integrated component of two-year within it. Some of those great programs that are already established by Carl Perkins through our Big Sky Pathways, and the fact that the first two courses,

at least right now, are free. So those are the things that really grab my attention as a parent, and I'm seeing it through the lens of dual enrollment. But that doesn't mean that we couldn't have another route for that.

Chair Albrecht: Superintendent Arntzen.

Superintendent Arntzen: Thank you. I do believe that, not that there's a barrier between career technical education and what this portal is doing. This, though, here puts an emphasis on what a test can do. It's not the final aspect of, you're going to take the test and then nothing. It's the test toward an opportunity. So to say that this portal is important in that aspect doesn't disregard career technical. I do believe our partnership in more of a P20 look within our state plan with the Perkins [inaudible] is something that we can put more emphasis on in the career technical. I also know that I am also putting together a group of legislators, would like to invite the Governor's office involved in work-based learning. We are having a document that we have proofed. We have given it to the Department of Labor, as well. So the legislators, bringing them together [inaudible] and having them share with us what their thoughts are, and then going forward with it. Rebranding what career technical education is to a parent to a student, is part of my mission, and I know within our partnership, we can do that. Thank you.

Chair Albrecht: Regent Sheehy?

Regent Sheehy: Background question. How do we get tied to the ACT as the statewide assessment test, how tight are we, into the future, and I'd just like a little history on our relationship with ACT versus SAT.

Regent Sheehy: [inaudible 00:22:34]

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Yep. Not sure, Regent Sheehy. Yeah, historically, Montana, even before our Gear Up grant, had paid for all students to take the test for free since 2012. We were an ACT state, and I don't know how you get labeled that, but you have more students taking the ACT than the SAT, I think, to begin with. ACT, the company itself helps the state form a oversight committee for the state, made up of superintendents, higher ed folks, to take advantage of the services [inaudible]. Being that we were one of those states, we leveraged a federal grant to pay for everyone to take the ACT. It doesn't mean that ... I think Colorado comes to mind as a state that does the same exact thing with SAT, so I think there are avenues there, as well, and so possibly, we could switch.

Regent Sheehy: But it's been a relationship that's worked, and we got support both ways from ACT and-

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Just up until I think a few months ago, ACT had the majority of students in the nation who take college entrance exams taking the ACT, and SAT just moved ahead with signing a couple states.

Regent Sheehy: Do we feel we get the data necessary. You're talking about future actions of maybe looking at that as an entrance exam? Did I hear that correctly?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Well, Madame Chair, Regent Sheehy, those are some of the, I guess, I don't want to call them, they're more than dreams. They're plans, they're possibilities, and we have yet, here at the Commissioner's office, to see any of the data. I mean, I know what it's going to be. We know the data elements. It's probably not as extensive as most people would think initially. And that's sort of by design, this first year or two, as we evolve into what are we, how are handling the

data, what are we using it for, how are we accountable for it, and how are we making it know to everyone what the data are used for. So, I guess time will tell on that, on how we can evolve and utilize that information.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Idaho, for example, everyone who takes their ACT test is automatically admitted to their University System, and they use that data initially to make those admits. And then you choose the campus that you go to ... Those are some of the possibilities.

Regent Sheehy: Thanks for that background.

Chair Albrecht: Siri?

Siri Smillie: Regent Sheehy, just I was also going to add, and I think it was 2016 the Board of Public Ed did adopt the ACT as the 11th grade assessment, so there's nothing that says we can have, the assessment has to be the same as what the University System is using, but it's just another component of the relationship, and another reason why every 11th grade student is taking the test, which opens it up to those opportunities.

Chair Albrecht: Commissioner?

Commissioner Christian: Yeah, that's exactly right. And I just want to, not to belabor this, but I want to get to Regent Lozar's question, a little more technical, because it sort of relates to all of this, where we've been, where we're going. The Gear Up grant is what has funded this. It's been a good relationship. I think it's one that we can really enhance and take advantage of. The technical answer to your question is yes, the test will be given in April, and we have committed on all of our behalf to use Gear Up grants to give that test as the statewide assessment regardless of what happens. And that will happen without a hitch, because we needed to commit to ACT, and obviously the Superintendent needs to commit to all the high schools around the state that that test would be given.

Commissioner Christian: The data from that test, Regent Lozar, won't be out until probably June, which will be post-session. So the real question with HB61 is what can happen with that data, and that is critically important to us, it's critically important to the partnership. We have every belief that that will be successful. We'll work hard with the Superintendent to see it. But, to answer your question is if its not successful, the test will still be given as planned with Gear Up funds as the statewide assessment. We won't be entitled to the data. That would be a significant barrier for students, and we would have to reevaluate following that what our plan is for the next year, and that's been the conversations that the Superintendent and I have had, because I think we will have to figure out how our students are best served in terms of college entrance and placement, as well. So we believe we can get this thing done. If we can't, then we'll have to reevaluate, but the course is set between now and May when that data comes out, and hopefully this is a successful access.

Commissioner Christian: Okay. Any other questions on the portal, the plan? I think we can move to the legislative update. If there's specifics, we can walk through them. I would simply say this, and it's what we said in November. I think our vision for the University System is pretty narrow. It has been. We encouraged out campuses, we're encouraging students, every group we meet with, to stay narrowly focused. There is a lot of distractions over the course of a 90-day session, and my hope is that we can stay focused on really three, four themes. That is access and affordability. That's what the tuition freeze does for us. Those are found in the Governor's budget, Program 9, and we will be arguing our case as to why that is a meaningful investment for our students for

generations to come. Along with that, in Section E will be this access aid that the Governor's proposed for the match with the foundations. Not in Section E, but equally as important to us, is the pay plan that comes through House Bill 13, and we will monitor that closely. Obviously needing support there, and then the fourth one on our list is the long-range building projects. There's three in the Governor's budget. They're good projects. They need completed to serve students, and we'll work to see that done. And outside of that, I mean, that's where I hope we stay, and stay focused on that. We certainly will monitor hundreds of other bills on the Board's behalf, and make certain that we're providing input where necessary.

But in a brief sound bite, that's our agenda. That's what I believe is the direction that we've gotten from the Board, and we'll stay focused on those four things. We're going to walk through the tuition part of this later in the budget committee, or at least in that section of the action items, so we won't dig into that. Tyler, do you have other items on there that you want to highlight?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, Mr. Commissioner, I mean, I have a list of all of the bills that we're checking right now, and if anybody ... I mean, we can go through that, and I can pass it out. You can ask me later. I mean, I don't know how you want to handle it, but right now, I can tell you there's only a handful of the drafts that have actually made it into actual bill name and numbers, and it's just so early on any of these. Most of them we can't see the content. We only see the names, so there's roughly 100 that we have in the queue right now. That'll grow by 30 in the next week, and shrink by 20 in the next, and so it's just early, but I'd be glad to do any level that anybody is-

Commissioner Christian: It's probably not that helpful to go through LCs and even the ones that have now been assigned numbers without any context behind them, but I would tell you that we are looking at them, your staff, which includes a pretty broad array of individuals. We'll start meeting tomorrow every day at 11:00, and we will prioritize bills that we need to track, that we need to watch, and we'll follow them through the process, and as things come along, we'll update the Board as we have in past sessions with relevant items that are in front of us. But given day two, I don't think we have a lot to add to that. Regent Sheehy?

Regent Sheehy: Alright, a couple things. First of all, what's an LC?

Commissioner Christian: Legal counsel, legislative-

Helen Thigpen: LC stands for legislative counsel. It's the drafting number that's assigned to the bill before it's actually introduced in the House or the Senate.

Commissioner Christian: Yeah. It essentially serves as notice that there'll be a bill draft that comes out of that.

Regent Sheehy: Recollection is correct; I could be wrong. I remember during our last legislative session, you, Trevor, sent us a weekly update of the bills that we were following in the tracking system, is that the system we'd be using this year? I don't know about other board members, but I found that very helpful.

Commissioner Christian: Absolutely. I mean, that's not a problem at all. We have a daily, and it's just a little redundant, and isn't that often, so if weekly works, we would be glad to.

Regent Sheehy: And then my last comment is just really appreciate all the work that you do in the legislative session. I know how hard for you [inaudible 00:32:37] helpful or appropriate. You should feel

free to call us individual regents that [inaudible 00:32:42] networking or anything you need from us, because in addition to listening to the updates, we are vitally interested in the things that [crosstalk 00:32:52]

Commissioner Christian: Yeah, thank you.

Regent Lozar: Madame Chair, Mr. Commissioner, can you just remind us of what are the three LRBP projects, and then also where we're at with the maintenance on that portion of the [inaudible].

Commissioner Christian: Yes, so Romney Hall is our first priority, renovation of that. Second is an addition to the dental hygiene clinic in Great Falls. And the third is projects at the agricultural experiment stations. And I can't give you too much detail on those, but there's some at various campuses. Tracy's here if you want some detail on what those are.

Regent Lozar: We don't need additional details, or I don't need additional details. Just curious.

Commissioner Christian: There is some funding, although not enough by a long shot in House Bill 5, for deferred maintenance. And that's not a criticism of the process, it's just our needs are pretty significant. The one good thing about a project like Romney is it takes long list of deferred maintenance and removes all of that at one sweep. We've got some other buildings that sit in that same spot. But we'll continue to monitor that. You know this morning, at the eggs and issues breakfast, there was some talk about that topic, and I think other states do peel off, whether it's within the University System or even at a state level. Some revenue for [inaudible] across the state, for infrastructure across the state, as well, roads, bridges, all kinds of things.

I think Montana, we've mainly taken an approach of looking at that one session at a time, and I'm not critical of that. It's just how we've chose to do it, but it hasn't lended itself very well to a long range plan, and so whether the legislature will entertain a different view, obviously I was interested in that conversation this morning, and will continue to watch and see where it goes, and we'll be a part of it if that grows out of that committee where House Bill 5 is.

Regent Tuss: Commissioner, with regard to our long-range building plan priorities, the vehicle that is currently, they're housed in, that also includes all of the community infrastructure, the community's ... Right? It's not a separate vehicle, or-

Commissioner Christian: That's right.

Regent Tuss: ... vertical infrastructure. It is the horizontal, as well.

Commissioner Christian: That's right. There's actually two vehicles, the House Bill 5, which is mainly cash, deferred maintenance, and then the other side of that which is the list that the Governor's put forth that is to consider bonding on it, and that includes not only our three projects, but a significant amount of other vertical and horizontal projects.

Commissioner Christian: The last thing I'd say on that is also, very interested and supported in the students' perspective and the students' support on our legislative agenda. We met with them for several hours yesterday, met with them being their leadership. The students do have a good lobbying effort strategy that they're working toward, and can be very helpful for us as well in moving all of our agenda forward, and certainly the purpose of what we do every day is to serve students, and so we want to make sure we're getting proper amount of input in this process, and

honestly, the proper amount of support, so we'll work closely with the student organizations and students from around the state to see that they're part of that, as well.

Commissioner Christian: Anything else on that front? Okay, I think-

Chair Albrecht: I have a quick question.

Commissioner Christian: Yeah.

Chair Albrecht: Where do you think are the best opportunities to further educate legislators around some of these issues? Certainly, this morning, it seemed clear to me that there's sometimes a lack of understanding about the reality that we talked about with what is offered, and maybe that's because we're so involved in what is being offered. But whether it's students or Regents or members of the public who are engaged in higher education, where are the best places for them to make an impact to further educate legislators?

Commissioner Christian: Yeah, Madame Chair, that is a great question. And maybe at the heart of some of the efforts even that we've looked at over the last year, I still believe in representative government. The legislature represents the people, and if the legislature isn't fully informed of what we have out there, my guess is the people aren't either, and I think that goes back to a greater communication plan. I think some of my interest and certainly great guidance from the Board on a communications director and the need that we better tell our story, I think has really been highlighted over the last year, and we'll continue on that front. I think working closely with the Governor's office, who's certainly offered his voice and been part of making certain that the public is aware of opportunities like 1-2-Free and what is available, and then absolutely our most recent efforts around the partnership with Superintendent Arntzen towards getting every high school in the state aware of what is out there.

Commissioner Christian: I think that has been a failing of ours. The comments from the legislature resemble that, and I think that's an area that we can and must do a lot better job in. You know, we talked a lot about it at November, but we continue to be satisfied at some odd level with arguing over 35% of Montana high school students, and we need to broaden that conversation to 100% of high school students and see where we can meet them and how we can serve them, through our community colleges, through our tribal colleges, through our two-year education, and then ultimately through the rest of the system, including our four-year and our flagships. But we've got to embrace that communication challenge, I think, at a much higher level than we have in the past, and I honestly think in the age of all that's out there with social media and the internet and all things, that our message is getting even more lost than it was before, and that's an area that I think we need to continue to really focus on.

Commissioner Christian: Which I understand there's not a real definite plan in there, but I agree with you, and I think the efforts that we've really taken on in 2018 resemble that lack of understanding from the general public about what Montana University System has to offer. There was tremendous conversation about CTE. Their CTE at the K-12 level, their CTE at the two-year level, at the community college level, well-supported, has been well-supported with the TAACCCT grants, federal funds, unprecedented level over the last six years. We need to do a better job of making sure that every high school student in Montana is aware of that, and that's certainly where myself and your staff here is headed.

Superintendent Arntzen: Madame Chair, if I could just add to that. Boots on the ground is important. As a former legislator, education is where it's at. Whether it's a bill on work comp, , whether it's bill

specifically on striking a partnership, which I'm committed to. So, as I shared earlier, we have an education caucus that's every other Tuesday in the morning at 7:00. Coffee, and we offer hot apple fritters. The fun thing about that, and what's most important, even if we do not have quite the 150 that are there, we put an agenda on their desk or the mailbox on what is happening. I really want to highlight whether it's this coming Tuesday, or the following Tuesday, when that bill is being presented, that will strengthen and understand what that ACT, why that statewide assessment is important for parents, students, opportunities. That is part of it.

Superintendent Arntzen: We're also doing a Montana Ready Day, and that will happen April 4th. That is for ... It's not just about career technical, big yellow equipment outside the Capital, but it's a partnership, because college career is all blended together. So having the University System, having tribal leaders there, understanding that an education and a P-20 look is important. So we're doing our best to market.

Superintendent Arntzen: The other thing that we have done in our career technical division, I have hired an individual who is not an educator, but he is a marketer. So it is very important that we shout out, rebrand, what we are doing is secondary to lead the post-secondary, to lead to opportunities. And then if I could be so bold, to discuss what we did last Friday. Sharing of an employee, which is what I have done at our previous Board of Regents meeting. If we have an asset that is in both space to have a unified message to share what opportunities there are for our students, from middle school, possibly elementary on, we can do this, we can do better. So it's in its infancy, but I do believe we have boots on the ground to further market these opportunities. So I'm very excited about what 2019 is going to lead.

Commissioner Christian: Me too. Brock?

Deputy Commissioner Tessman: Madame Chair, members of the Board, if I could just share some of my thoughts on career technical education, and also the notion of getting the message out and marketing. I think we could look at the Montana Career Pathways as something to highlight, [inaudible] dual enrollment or otherwise, because there's a lot of good work going on through this program. I would agree with Superintendent Arntzen. I think that there is great value in messaging, and in particular to the K through 12 audience. I think that we have allies in the schools with our counselors and our teachers, but we can do an even better job in connecting with those folks, in letting them know that two-year options throughout the state, whether it's community college, whether it's one of the embedded two-years, or whether it's a stand-alone two-year, those two-year options could be or should be first choice for many more of our students than it is currently the case.

And whether you're just looking at earnings potential, whether you're looking at tuition affordability and the chance to transfer to a four-year degree, or a four-year institution later on, the two-year stop is a great first stop. Our team will be presenting in Billings at the High School Counselors' Association a little bit later in the spring. We're going to present at the MCAN conference and really try to make a persuasive case, even more persuasive case to our K through 12 stakeholders that that two-year option, be it two-year technical or otherwise, is a great first option for students.

Quite frankly, on the numbers, our two-year numbers in the state of Montana, as a proportion of our overall college-going population, they're a little on the low side in terms of national averages, and there are some good reasons for that. But there are also some reasons with respect that we can get that proportion up just a bit. So we'll have on February 4th the leadership of retreat here in Helena, the CEO's from all of our two-year institutions will be

attending, and our primary agenda item will be a communications strategy that highlights all the great programs that we have. [inaudible 00:45:36] Thank you.

Commissioner Christian: Alright. The campus reports are posted. I don't have an "other", other than to say we are anxious for the session to get underway. We'll try to keep you guys as informed as possible. Sometimes it moves really slow, and sometimes it moves really fast, and we'll try to keep pace with that as best we can, and absolutely any questions along the way, call anybody in this office and we'll try to get whatever information we can or we'll try to reach out to you as Board members so we can be helpful. I think, to your question, Madame Chair, the more we can talk about this in all of our home communities, and the need to support requests and the proposals that we have in this budget, are important to serve students, and that's what we're about, and to serve future generations of students. So we'll look forward to an effective session, and we'll keep you in the loop as best we can. Madame Chair, I think that's all I have.

Chair Albrecht: Okay, thank you. Great discussion. I appreciate all the input, and the efforts, and the excitement moving forward. These are a critical 90 days that can impact us in very positive and hopefully not negative ways. So here we go.

Chair Albrecht: I'd like to move on to the consent agenda. Are there any items on the consent agenda that members of the Board would like to move to action items? Seeing none, I would begin with entertaining a motion to approve items A, B, and C on the consent agenda.

Regent Sheehy: So moved.

Chair Albrecht: Motion made by Regent Sheehy. Any discussion from members of the Board? Campuses? Any public comment? No further comment. I'll call for the vote. All those in favor signify by saying "aye." [ayes 00:48:09] Opposed same sign. Motion passes.

Chair Albrecht: Moving to action item A, authorization to reduce room rates and offer additional meal plans and room rate options at MSU Billings.

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, I would ask if Chancellor Edelman is on the line and would like to speak to it. Otherwise, Deputy Commissioner Trevor can do that.

Chancellor Edelman: Good afternoon, Madame Chair, Commissioner, thank you very much. This is Chancellor Edelman at MSU Billings. We come before you today to request to reduce our residential hall rates by about 20%. Due to extensive research and studies, we've found ourselves out of line with market needs, and therefore we're putting this request forward. In order to break even, we'd have to have another 92 students living in residence hall, but I believe by reducing the rates, we'll exceed that number in the year to come. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

Chair Albrecht: Any questions from members of the Board? Regent Sheehy.

Regent Sheehy: Just a comment. I served on the Billings, MSU Billings task force, community task force, and this is an item that came up repeatedly. [inaudible] use of the dorm, how to make the dorms more usable. This, I think, while we didn't specifically opine on this, this was of great interest to the community task force, and certainly would have been supported by them.

Chair Albrecht: Thank you. Any other questions or comments from members of the Board?

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, I'd just like to commend Chancellor Edelman and his team in taking a bold step here. It's obviously easy to get in the habit of raising the rates and raising costs to students as we try to meet our revenue needs. I think this is looking through a different lens and a different window to say how can we best serve students, and taking a little risk in doing it, and I think to be transparent, sure, there's a little risk in doing it, but ultimately, I think it will serve students, and I think the bet will pay off if we can be competitive in the market and put students first, and I think Chancellor Edelman's done a good job for that, and I'd certainly support this motion.

Chair Albrecht: And Commissioner, I would agree with you on that. I would also ... Chancellor Edelman, could you clarify the timing of this? Because I think it's important that we note the reason why this has come to us at this meeting.

Chancellor Edelman: Regent Sheehy, the reason it's coming at this meeting is because it's a timing issue. We want to roll this out for the fall of this year. In order to do so, we have to report to the Department of Education and other agencies what housing rates are going to be so students can make an informed decision. So that's why the urgency is.

Chair Albrecht: Thank you, Chancellor Edelman, and that was Regent Albrecht asking the question. So thank you. That's okay.

Chancellor Edelman: I apologize.

Chair Albrecht: No, no worries. Any other questions? Oh, Regent Lozar.

Regent Lozar: Thank you, Madame Chair. Just I concur with Clay's statement. I think it's worth taking a risk, and they've done the analysis study. The community's been involved. I think that's great. From a revenue perspective, if I understand this correctly, there's vacancies right now. We reduce the rates, we get more folks in, it's going to be sort of net neutral on revenue, so it's not going to cost the campus resources.

Chancellor Edelman: That's what we believe, yeah.

Chair Albrecht: May even bring in more?

Commissioner Christian: Yeah, our hope is that as this kind of comes to maturity it'll provide new opportunities for students, it'll have increased utilization, and will ultimately be a source of revenue for them.

Chair Albrecht: Ok. Seeing no further comments, I'll go ahead and entertain a motion to approve this item.

Regent Johnson: So moved.

Chair Albrecht: Motion made by Regent Johnson. Any discussion from members of the Board? Campuses? Any public comment? No further comment, I'll call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying "aye." [ayes 00:52:36] Opposed same sign. Motion passes.

Chair Albrecht: Moving on to action item B, authorization to revise Board of Regents Policy 940.1, Residency. OCHE item.

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, I ask Legal Counsel Thigpen to comment.

Helen Thigpen: Madame Chair, members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to be here. For the record, my name is Helen Thigpen. I'm associate counsel in the Commissioner's office, and I'm here to discuss the Board item that you have in front of you, which is the revision to the residency policy, which is 940.1. There are three documents that were posted for you today. The first is the Board item description, which just gives you a brief summary of what the revisions to the policy would be doing. The second document is a red-lined version of the policy that will show you what would be changed and the actual language. And then the final document that you received is just a brief memo from me that describes some of the revisions that were made to the document following comments that were received at the November Board meeting.

Helen Thigpen: And if you recall, at that meeting, we came to you with an informational item with these revisions, and we discussed sort of why we were bringing the revision to you, and why we felt that there was a need to do this now. And so today, we're bringing this back to you, hopefully for some action and discussion on your part with these changes. So, what I'd like to do is just spend a brief minute walking you through some of the revisions that took place after the November meeting, just so everybody is aware of the changes.

Helen Thigpen: We received numerous comments from the campus staff following the November meeting, and I just wanted to take a minute to briefly thank everyone from the campuses, and the members of MACRO, which I believe is the Montana Association of Collegiate and University Registrars, or something like that. They're a wonderful group of individuals, very committed and dedicated to this issue, and they submitted very thoughtful comments, and I just want to thank them personally for being engaged in the process and for helping to strengthen the policy.

Helen Thigpen: So in light of the comments and after some additional discussion internally, we did make a few changes to the policy that you have before you today. We've returned it to be more closely aligned to the original policy but to more strongly clarify that that 12-month waiting period for residency that's required would not run during any period in which a person maintains legal ties to another state, such as a driver's license, voter registration, vehicle registration, or tax liability. So we believe that it strengthens that and makes that more clear to students. We've seen that issue pop up on numerous occasions over the past couple of years.

Helen Thigpen: The other clarification that we made on this policy was with respect to documentation of financial independence. The previous version didn't clarify that the financial independence has to be from a non-resident entity or individual, and so this new language clarifies that, and also provides a definition of what financial independence is. You'll see that there on page one.

Helen Thigpen: The rest of the changes or revisions are the ones that were presented to you at the November meeting, except for some new language in Subsection H on page three of the red-lined version of the policy. And this is the section where we're asking the Board to adopt new language that would provide that students who are admitted to professional graduate programs, and we've defined those as law, pharmacy, and physical therapy. And if they're initially classified as non-residents, they remain in that classification throughout the duration of their enrollment in the program.

Helen Thigpen: We've added a sentence in there that allows a student who is initially classified as a non-resident to bring additional information to the campus, or challenge that initial classification with evidence that they are, in fact, a resident of Montana, so we wanted to make sure they had that opportunity to do that. They have to do that and go through that process of petitioning for reclassification as a resident before they matriculate into the program. But once that they've

started the program and they've started the non-residence will remain as a non-resident throughout the duration of their enrollment in the program.

Helen Thigpen: Other than that, the policy is the same as the version that was presented to you in November, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Chair Albrecht: Any questions? Regent Nystuen.

Regent Nystuen: Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you. My question I guess probably goes more toward President Bodnar and maybe Tracy from the campuses. Have you had a chance to weigh in on this, because you're the ones that hear first from the students that said, "Time out. I'm a resident of Montana, and here's the reason why." Have you done your due diligence on this and feel comfortable that these changes are in accordance with what will make it easier for the ultimate determination whether residency for your students?

President Bodnar: Yes, Regent Nystuen, I would say we have had, as someone mentioned the campuses, and I know ours have weighed in, our legal counsel as well as our provost and our various academic leaders. I mean, there are some nuances in the various types of programs, but we feel comfortable that our [back has been... inaudible].

Regent Nystuen: And I know it's just not your campus.

President Bodnar: Right.

Regent Nystuen: [inaudible]

Regent Nystuen: Any additional color on that?

Helen Thigpen: Yes, Regent Nystuen, Madame Chair. We have been in touch with campus counsel. We've worked with the registrars from the campuses, taking their feedback, and we think this is a good version that encompasses a lot of feedback from a lot of different individuals.

Regent Nystuen: Thank you.

Chair Albrecht: Regent Sheehy?

Regent Sheehy: I contacted Helen about 20 minutes [inaudible] between this meeting and last meeting, and chatted little bit about Subsection H, and this is the one about the law programs, pharmacy programs, the professional programs. And I just wanted to clarify that I've asked Helen if she thinks this meets constitutional muster, and she [inaudible] correct.

Helen Thigpen: Yes, Regent Sheehy, Madame Chair, we've reviewed this extensively. We've reviewed, there's a very important Supreme Court case that talks about residency, and we believe it complies with that. And I will also mention that several other schools have taken this approach for certain professional programs. One that comes to mind, and that I had a discussion with the folks that work down there, is the University of Utah and their process, and they do this for their law school, medical school, and dental school, and I believe there are other programs across the country that do this as well.

Helen Thigpen: So this is not a new approach, but it is something that we think will greatly benefit sort of the [inaudible] residency decision-making process, and I will say that also that addition of that language in new Subsection H that makes it clear that a student can challenge or bring to the attention of the admissions officer that they were perhaps misclassified as a non-resident when they should have been classified as a resident. We believe that language addresses some of those concerns regarding the residency issues.

Helen Thigpen: So we're comfortable with it. We've looked at it. Of course, someone can always challenge something, but we feel like it is entirely defensible.

Regent Sheehy: And having to rely on counsel's opinion on that matter [inaudible] as members of the Board we all know that this is a frequently litigated area. So it's good to know that we've looked at it, there's an opinion on it, but prepared that we will probably continue to get appeals on [inaudible] until it's accepted generally across the student population. I do think that H in particular gives incoming students [inaudible] notice of how it works in reality, so I agree that we should do something, and I'm happy that you found a way to do this [inaudible].

Helen Thigpen: And Madame Chair, and Regent Sheehy, just to add a little bit, just one more statement, is that we'd like, one of the reasons that we're bringing this it you now is we'd like to give students as much notice as possible. Currently, it's very difficult for students in these programs to obtain residency, for those that were admitted as non-residents from the beginning. That's the case now, but we would like to give the incoming class a well-advanced notice of this change, and that it's being clarified in the policy before they matriculate into those programs.

Chair Albrecht: Thank you. Regent Tuss?

Regent Tuss: Quick question, just based on this Board's prior dialogue and conversation, questions about this policy, do you indeed believe that these changes will reduce the number of student appeals that this Board sees?

Helen Thigpen: Regent Tuss, members of the Board, I don't know the answer to that question. I hope that it does. I hope that the intent of the policy is to really add some clarification in those areas where we are receiving a number of appeals, and I will tell you that Subsection H, we hope addresses some of that, we do get numerous appeals from law students especially, and for obvious reasons, those programs are expensive, and there's a different rate for residents and non-residents. So we do hope it does reduce the appeals, and we think that these changes ... that's certainly the intent of these changes. I will tell you that.

Commissioner Christian: Regent Tuss, I would also add, I hope that it adds clarity to all of those working across our system. And I think that in fairness, some of it is generated from that, where we have various interpretations of what it is meant, and a fair amount of the appeals is, "Well, but I talked to so-and-so, and they thought I could do this," I just, I think that.. and my sincere hope is that yes will be the answer. Who knows?

Commissioner Christian: But I think if we can start with a more clear picture for those incoming students, there'll be less confusion as they move through the process, and many of them seeking a path that they probably weren't on in the beginning. And so, I hope it adds a lot of clarity, both on our end and for the students.

Regent Tuss: Thank you.

Chair Albrecht: Any else ... Oh, Regent Lozar.

Regent Lozar: Thank you, Madame Chair. Just in terms of the petition and the appeal process, as relates to the professional programs and that the determination on residency has to be, or an appeal has to be done before matriculation. Are we confident that in a way, a student applies to law school, gets in, starts appealing whether or not they're a resident or not, and we're working with them full time to be able to have that dealt with, come through us in time for matriculation. Are we putting them at a disadvantage, process-wise?

Helen Thigpen: Regent Lozar, Madame Chair, I think the language that's provided in this section allows that flexibility for someone to file a petition for reclassification because they think there was an error that was made in their initial classification. I don't think there will be a lot of those individuals because I think in most cases, it's very clear, and there hasn't been an error, and the classification is established. But for those individuals that do maintain there has been an error in that initial classification, they would follow the process in here, and I think it would just ... I think, based on the language in the policy, that it would work out and the student would be fine in terms of the timeline. We certainly wouldn't... I don't think anybody would ever hold that against a student if they were in that process over the summer and working through it.

Regent Lozar: Thank you.

Chair Albrecht: Any further questions or comments on this particular item?

Terry Leist: Madame Chair, this is Terry Leist as MSU. One question on Subsection H. Is the intent that it would ... and it very specifically states three programs there, law, pharmacy, and physical therapy. If there were additional professional programs later, is it the intent that this policy would need to be updated each time?

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, that has been our discussion. In fact, we'll probably need to talk about that with the OT program in Billings and Missoula as it moves forward, whether it should be [inaudible] but. Yeah, I think rather than cast a net of what may be, I think we would consider one at a time in the future if any program or degree needs to be added to that H section.

Commissioner Christian: As a professional school. I mean, that's essentially what we have carved out there.

Helen Thigpen: Madame Chair, and Terry, this is Helen again. And to be clear, these are the programs where the students are required to be full-time, where there isn't an option to go into a part-time status, which is where we saw the issues with it conflicting with other provisions in the residency policy, so presumably, if there is a program down the road that requires full-time attendance and doesn't provide that half-time option, then it's something the Board could consider adding at a later date.

Terry Leist: Thank you very much.

Chair Albrecht: Thanks for the question. Further questions? Comments? Okay, seeing none, I would entertain a motion to approve item B, authorization to revise the Board of Regents policy 940.1, Residency.

Regent Johnson: So moved.

Chair Albrecht: Motion made by Regent Johnson. Any discussion from members of the Board? Campuses? Any public comments? Seeing no further comment, I'll call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by

saying "aye." [ayes 01:07:33] Opposed, same sign. Motion passes. Thank you. And thank you again for all your work on this. I appreciate the clarity.

Chair Albrecht: Next part of the agenda is moving on to information items, and item A is the tuition freeze update. Deputy Commissioner Trevor?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, members of the Board, I guess this is a good opportunity to make sure everyone has the same amount of information in front of them, and understands the details associated with the tuition freeze as proposed in the Governor's budget. And I'd like to start by ... I have a document here that attempts to marry, or couch at least, and unite our resident student access initiative with items of the Governor's budget to produce kind of a cohesive package of how we intend to describe the goal of the initiative, the problem associated with the demographics, and then the strategies that we have to reach the goal, increase participation of resident students.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: And so, I don't know if we have enough time for me to go through this in detail like I would in front of the subcommittee in a week from today, so I will not do that, but rather, if we just turn to each page, I'll just tell you the intent of each page. And the page one, as we turn the page there, this is really the bold statement, you're familiar with it. At every Board meeting since September, we've talked about this, to create a unified approach to resident student recruitment, admissions, and financial aid. You'll see some stats there related to the enrollment of resident students, making an emphasis on the fact that resident students are the heart of the Montana University System.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Page two-

Regent Sheehy: I just want to let you know that as someone who deals with this once a month or once every two months or whatever, whenever I see that term resident, I quite often think you're talking about residents on campus. And so, I just let you know that, because that means two different things to people, and you may not be hearing that because you're immersed in it. So on page ... I'm not saying change the thing. I'm just saying make sure you define the term resident as Montanans, because they may not hear that, especially if they have kids in college. They'll think you're talking about [inaudible].

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, Regent Sheehy, excellent feedback, and a lot of this is to facilitate a conversation, and so there's a lot of words that need to be incorporated, and I'll be sure to do that in the future. Page two sets up the problem. We talked about the projections, the actual, that happened between 2008 and now with 1,000 students from our graduating class. We are on the cusp of regaining those students, 1,000 students headed our way in the next five years, resident students. So, the problem is actually an opportunity, and combine that with, I guess, a little bit more color around it, our capture rates, as we talked about at the last Board meeting, have suffered. Three primary reasons there, a) the economy. Nobody's going to complain about that. People are going to work. A lot of non-traditional students in particular, but also some of those coming directly out of high school choose not to head to higher ed. Number two, we've been de-funded in financial aid. \$5.3 million reduction in our state-funded aid per year since 2015. Number three, we talked about earlier, we had a little hiccup there with the ACT test, and the data we used was not being used for us to help recruit students. All of these can be found sort of in the solution pages that follow.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Page three is the beginning of that. And this is where the tuition freeze fits into our initiative, ensure long-term affordability. You heard the Commissioner talk about it. This state is

a state which its hallmark has been low tuition. And coupling tuition freezes and the compounding effect that that has upon generations of Montanans, residents, to ensure that tuition is low, and we remain among those low states, not just in the West, but in the nation. And that lowness is relative to our median income. And so, we provide the data there, the \$12 million. What that equates to is a tuition increase if there was no funding. And then also, what is the increase to our overall current unrestricted operating budget, what does \$24 million represent over biennium? Well, it's a 2.6% increase. We're not asking for the world here, but it is a significant number. It back-fills the amount of money that we would have realized from undergraduate resident student tuition increases.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Moving on to page four. Couple the long-term affordability short-term access dollars. This is what we've been missing. Here's the \$5.3 million that is no longer in our operating budget for financial aid. The Governor has offered up the \$2.5 million per year, with the stipulation that we have that matched by our foundations. That'd produce \$10 million over the biennium, and here we go. That's the seed money we need to get that snowball going again and pick up more funds to ensure access to low and middle income students as well as returning adults.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: So, two-legged stool now. The final leg of the stool, we already talked about it. As a communication and the information campaign to students, the juniors in high school, eventually they'll be the sophomores in high school too taking the pre-SAT with the package deal. The ACT is free, dual enrollment is free, easy access to admissions to the University System, and we have financial aid for you, and we're communicating it to you early on in your high school career. Please come to the Montana University System, because we have a place for you.

Regent Tuss: I don't know where to sign up.

Regent Sheehy: I wanted to get some of the legislature on what to-

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Don't have that time.

Regent Sheehy: Really?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: No, I'm just kidding. Well, Madame Chair, Regent Sheehy, this starts next week. On Monday, the joint education committee on appropriations meets, and we are the first agency to have our budget presented in front of them on Monday of next week. It starts with the legislative fiscal analysis of each component of our budget. You hear us talk about program two, that's our student assistance portion. Program nine, that's the lump sum funding that comes to the campuses. That's where our tuition freeze is. And program ten, our agencies, all of that will be reviewed through the lens of the legislature's analysis of the Governor's budget.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Day two, we come back and that's where we marshal the forces, the presidents of the campuses and the Commissioner, and present the argument for the tuition freeze, and the connectivity to that freeze to the past freezes, and the access dollars that are in there in program two. Day three of that committee, on Wednesday, we come back with a little bit more on financial aid, our WICHE-WWAMI programs also coupled with that, the agency budgets. And day four is dedicated to the community colleges, and day five, our tribal college funding. And that rounds out our ... that's sort of the first initial wave of really intense attention paid to the topic.

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, Regent Sheehy, I would add that we have Chair Albrecht there on the first day to help kick us off, then Regent Nystuen will be there as well on the third day, to wrap up our part, Thursday, right?

Regent Nystuen: Yeah.

Commissioner Christian: To wrap up our part and start into the community college part, program four. I think to answer your question, though, honestly is whatever time we need. I think the legislature has said, and certainly with the guidance of Nancy Balance, the chair, that belaboring the point, reiterating the point, has very little value in it. In fact, she's went so far as to say that the length of your presentation is inversely related to the amount of money you receive, and so we're cognizant of that. That's been a conversation that Tyler's had over the course of the last few weeks with the staff. We think we've got the time we need. They've been willing in the past to add time if needed. This is actually a shorter window than maybe my predecessor utilized.

Commissioner Christian: We think that there's a lot of value in being succinct, and we think there's a lot of value in staying to that core kind of four theme message that we started with. And we've got a track record, I guess, over these freezes that would suggest that's the right approach, so we will take what time we need. We'll adjust on the fly as we go through next week, and it's sort of a work in progress. Lot of times, we get questions throughout the day, and we'll take a few minutes the next day to answer those, and whatever it turns into is what we'll have, and the committee's been very generous in affording us what time we need. So I feel comfortable that we're getting our message organized and we'll have plenty of time to tell the story that we need to tell.

Chair Albrecht: Regent Tuss.

Regent Tuss: This state-sponsored financial aid, need-based aid package, this is African-American really big deal. But I want to make sure I get these numbers right. So if we're talking about a total package of \$10 million, but if I look at what we've lost in four fiscal years between fiscal year 15 and fiscal year 19, the truth is, in many ways, in terms of the state commitment, we're just making up lost ground. I mean, I know that there's an added component with the foundation, what we're providing, but do I read this correctly?

Commissioner Christian: Yeah. I mean, you have to pay the dues, but you have to-

Regent Tuss: We've slipped backwards, but you have to get us back to where we were four years ago, right?

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Yep.

Regent Tuss: I mean, this is just a really big deal, and I think for the students of Montana, particularly those that need this financial assistance, this should, and I know it will be a high priority for all of us.

Commissioner Christian: Yeah, you're absolutely right.

Chair Albrecht: Well, and thank you, Regent Tuss, especially for us to remain competitive. When we look at other states and what they're doing within higher education, as those costs are just continuing to increase on the backs of students. So. Any other questions or comments? And I would just encourage everyone that if you need this articulated in any way, to reach out to Tyler and the folks atOCHE, especially if you need help in messaging this so that it is consumable, understandable, for the lay public. Important that we can message it.

Regent Tuss: And likewise, reiterating what Regent Sheehy said, if there's an opportunity for us to assist with the larger effort in our communities, and with the constituencies that we're most familiar with, and the business community of where we live, please reach out to us to let us know how we can move this ball forward.

Chair Albrecht: Great.

Commissioner Christian: Madame Chair, Regent Tuss, I can say right now, there's a huge need for that, and whatever efforts you can do across the state, whether it's at a Kiwanis meeting or you name it, I think there's tremendous value, and we'll be glad to help with slides or whatever you need to help kind of consistent voice, so legislators are hearing this on the hill from us, and their constituents are telling them the same story from all of you. Yeah, whatever time you all have to call this to a broader audience, [inaudible] incredibly helpful.

Chair Albrecht: Okay. Unless there's further questions or comments on this item, I'd like to move on to the next information item, item B, which are the audit reports for Montana Tech Foundation, and Montana State University Foundation. Both were unmodified with clean opinions.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor: Madame Chair, this is just pickups from the November Board meeting. They weren't quite ready at that time, and so we're [inaudible] for information.

Chair Albrecht: Okay. Thank you. Comments or questions on this item? Okay. We will move on now to the student appeal number one. Okay. So student appeal number one, you have each reached the Commissioner's decision, and the written appeal with supporting documents submitted by the student. The issue for the Board in each of these is solely to determine whether to hear the appeal at a later meeting. Board of Regents policy does not require the Board to entertain these appeals if we are satisfied with the Commissioner's review and decision. I want to remind you that this is still confidential, so we will not be addressing the student by name, or even identifying the campus involved, nor will we address the facts or the specific issues today.

Chair Albrecht: The sole issue today is whether any regent believes the issues addressed in the Commissioner's decision needs further review at the Board level. If you do not wish to hear the appeal at the Board of Regents level, it is not necessary to make a motion. A lack of action on our part will signify our decision not to hear the case. Are there any general questions as to this procedure before we go to the appeal?

Chair Albrecht: Okay, student appeal number one. I will entertain a motion to hear this appeal. Regent Sheehy.

Regent Sheehy: I move that we hear student appeal number one.

Chair Albrecht: There is a motion made by Regent Sheehy to hear the appeal by student appeal number one.

Chair Albrecht: Any further discussion? Though we can't really discuss. Any public comments? Seeing no further comment, I will call for the vote. All those in favor of the motion to hear, signify by saying "aye."

Regent Sheehy: Aye.

Chair Albrecht: Any opposed, same sign.

Regent Tuss: Aye.

Chair Albrecht: I'll go ahead and call out. Regent Tuss in opposition.

Regent Lozar: Opposition.

Chair Albrecht: Opposition by Regent Lozar.

Regent Nystuen: Opposition.

Chair Albrecht: Opposition by Regent Nystuen.

Regent Johnson: Opposition.

Chair Albrecht: Opposition by Regent Johnson. Opposition by Regent Albrecht. Motion fails. Next, student appeal number two. I will entertain a motion to hear this appeal.

Commissioner Christian: I think we should read that as to appeal one, so there was a motion to [inaudible]

Chair Albrecht: Okay. There is no motion to hear the second appeal. The request that we entertain this appeal is denied, and the Commissioner's decision is upheld. And to clarify, given that the motion to hear student appeal number one failed, the request that we entertain this appeal is also denied for student appeal number one, and the Commissioner's decision is upheld.

Chair Albrecht: At this moment, I would like to move into public comments.

Adam: I have a public comment from the conference call line.

Chair Albrecht: Yes. Can you please state your name?

Adam: Yes, I'd like to state my name, and then go ahead and read my statement. Okay?

Chair Albrecht: Go ahead.

Adam Thuen: My name is Adam Thuen and I'm a graduate student at Montana State University. A recent conflict over the future of the department of cell biology and neuroscience, and both the faculty and the university administration has cast a cloud of uncertainty and confusion. This is due to the different narratives from each side. This issue has entered the public space through mass email distribution of students and local news stories that have amplified this dispute on strategic direction. This has left students, staff, and faculty concerned about their job security and the future of neuroscience research.

I'm a graduate student, but I'm also a field-grade Army officer specializing in civil and military government, a two-time Afghan War veteran, and an active member in municipal government serving on city boards in the city of Belgrade, Montana. This issue is causing instability at Montana State, and harming the credibility of the institution. This process has been anything but transparent. Lies by omission, counter-narratives, and he-said and she-said arguments are not the proper way to handle this matter. It is time to bring this dispute and conversation out of the shadows and the secrecy of board rooms, out of the news media editorial rooms, and put it where it belongs for resolution.

So I'm calling for this Board to set an agenda item for the next meeting to address this matter, and start an inquiry to obtain relevant facts, and speak to all of the stakeholders, administration, students, faculty, and staff. This issue needs to be addressed for the good of current and future Montana State students, and our great state. The growing mental health crisis across the nation, to include Montana, needs education, training, and research to build capacity to address these growing concerns. This objective cannot be compromised by internal power struggles between administration and faculty. This issue is bigger than them, it's bigger than me, and it's bigger than Montana State itself. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chair Albrecht: Thank you, and I want to encourage you that you can send a written statement if you so wish to the Commissioner's office so we can enter that in. You have the email?

Adam Thuen: Yes ma'am.

Chair Albrecht: Thank you. Any further public comment?

Chair Albrecht: Any further public comment?

Chair Albrecht: Hearing none, I would like to adjourn today's meeting, and the next item on the agenda requires the Board to go into executive session. The meeting will be closed, because the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy, and I've determined that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. Thank you all for joining us today, and we are out.