

**THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
*An Investment in Montana's Future*

*Draft of May 7, 2002*

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# THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

## *An Investment in Montana's Future*

### **Introduction**

This document presents the funding requests for the Montana University System for the 2004-2005 biennium. To enable policy makers to better understand the nature of the requests and the economic impact of the MUS, we have divided our presentation into two sections.

In the section entitled *Present Law and Compensation-Related Adjustments*, we identify the resources that will be required from the State general fund simply to maintain current programs and services. Most of these funding changes will occur as a result of State budget law. Moreover, they will require continued tuition and fee increases from students who are already being impacted by affordability.

In the section entitled *Investment Initiatives for 2004-05*, we present the new funding proposals for the Montana University System for the next biennium. We have directed our new proposals toward initiatives by which the MUS can play an expanded role in strengthening Montana's economy. The amounts requested to fund the new proposals reflect increases of around five percent per annum beyond existing funding levels and the amounts needed to maintain existing services. We believe these requests are respectful of State resource constraints, while at the same time allowing Montana's public colleges and universities to expand activities that will lead to improved job and income opportunities for Montanans.

We recognize that there are a number of other critical issues that require attention from State policy makers, ranging from health and human services, to corrections, to infrastructure, to K-12 education. By moving forward with our investment initiatives, the Montana University System will help to strengthen our State's economy and tax base, thereby making it easier to address these deserving needs in the future.

There is no question that in today's world, postsecondary education plays a critical role in economic success. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, eight out of ten jobs created during the next ten years will require some level of postsecondary education. States that have recognized this link and made the appropriate investments in higher education have moved forward in relative income and economic standings.

The Montana University System is both willing and anxious to play a more active role in improving job and income levels for our citizens. Consequently, with input from Montana businesses and others, we have put forth four investment initiatives that seek to leverage the resources of the Montana University System to strengthen and diversify Montana's economy. For each initiative, we identify the specific underlying elements of the proposal. We also describe the initial investment requested, the return on investment that should be expected, and the accountability measures that should be used to assess how successful we have been. We hope that lawmakers will seriously consider these initiatives as investments that will generate long-term returns for our State and our citizens. We stand prepared to engage in a constructive dialogue on these and other possible investment initiatives, as well as alternative funding mechanisms to make them happen. In short, we want to work together with policy makers, businesses, and citizens to develop solutions for the

challenges and opportunities that are before us.

## **How is the Montana University System Doing its Part?**

Let us be clear from the start. We recognize that the Montana University System has a real responsibility to effectively deliver high quality, accessible postsecondary education opportunities in Montana. We and our stakeholders – students, employees, customers, and supporters – have an obligation to make the best use of both State and non-State resources to creatively and efficiently achieve our objectives. We believe we are doing our part, as evidenced by the following:

- State funding for Montana's public educational institutions accounts for 50% of the campus instruction and general operating budgets and only 22% of the total campuses budgets. The balance comes from tuition, fees, auxiliary services such as room and board, charges, research grants and contracts, and other resources.
- From 1991 to 2001, tuition increased by more than 117%, while State appropriations to the MUS increased by only 7%.
- The Montana University System provides a strong positive economic impact on the state of Montana through:
  - \* Operation of an enterprise with a \$775 million annual all funds budget.
  - \* Substantial leverage of the State's \$145 million annual investment.
  - \* Enormous indirect economic impact on the state of Montana, through the multiplier effects of MUS expenditures and activities, as well as the services provided to Montana businesses and agricultural operations.
- Due largely to the commitment of our faculty and staff (who are paid less than 75% of comparably situated employees nationally), the MUS continues to produce quality educational results. Examples of our students' academic success include:
  - \* Excellent pass rates on national licensure examinations. University of Montana accounting students achieved the highest pass rate in the nation on the May 2000 Uniform CPA examination.
  - \* Excellent job placement rates for graduates. Montana Tech placed 97% of its May 2000 bachelor's degree graduates and 89% of its AAS and certificate graduates right after graduation.
  - \* Since the Family Nurse Practitioner program began at Montana State University – Bozeman in 1994, 100% of graduates have passed the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) certification exam.
  - \* During the period October 1, 2000 through September 30, 2001, MSU-Bozeman BS in Nursing graduates had an annual pass rate of 95.3% (121 students) on the national NCLEX RN licensure exam.
  - \* Over the last 8 years, MSU-Bozeman engineering graduates have achieved a pass rate of 91% on the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam (professional licensure exam) as compared to the national average of approximately 70%.
- According to a 2000 report of the Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, the MUS spends less per student than any of the seven other states in the region chosen by the 1999 Legislature for comparison.<sup>1</sup> We have implemented a variety of measures to improve efficiency and

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<sup>1</sup> Source: January 2000 Report of the Montana Legislative Fiscal Division to the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Committee.

productivity, such as:

- \* The MUS conducted program reviews in 1995 and 2000. Since 1995 the MUS has reviewed 566 programs, options, and minors for both productivity and quality. Of those 566, 149 were eliminated or consolidated and another 25 were modified to improve efficiency.
  - \* MUS campuses have developed five collaborative degrees and many collaborative agreements with community and tribal colleges to facilitate student transfer and joint research projects. Today there are 56 two-year to four-year transfer articulation agreements and dozens more joint projects and research agreements.
  - \* The investing function for State and Designated funds has been centralized at both MSU and UM gaining efficiency and maximizing investment income; combined audits at UM and MSU have resulted in greater efficiency through shared resources and decreased costs.
  - \* UM has centralized payroll operations which reduces the time individual campuses must spend with various auditors, reduces time spent in testing and maintenance, allows consolidation of vendor payments, and allows for consolidation of tax reporting.
  - \* UM and MSU have established joint and collaborative library systems and operations. This allows for quantity discounts, sharing of expertise, and more diverse holdings for campuses. A system-wide task force is now developing a similar approach for the entire system.
  - \* The MUS has developed a system-wide implementation strategy for GASB 34/35 resulting in consistent and uniform implementation. This allows sharing of resources and eliminates potential duplication and inconsistencies.
  - \* MUS campuses have invested millions in energy conservation projects, developed interruptible gas contracts, and installed electric co-generation turbines to increase efficiency and decrease long-term costs.
- The MUS attracts more than \$120 million annually in outside research funding from federal and corporate contracts and grants.
  - During the past five years, MUS campuses have initiated new construction, major renovations, and building updates totaling \$182 million. Of this total, 54% has been funded from non-state funds, including private funds, auxiliary funds, student fees, and federal sources.
  - Non-resident students spend more than \$100 million per year in Montana for their educational expenses and even more is spent by students and their families during their time in the State.
  - Significant progress has been made toward a unified college and university system, in areas such as academic collaboration, resource sharing, and credit transfer.
  - During 2000-2001, MUS Colleges of Technology provided customized training and workshops to over 9,000 individuals at more than 80 Montana businesses, state agencies and non-profit organizations.
  - The MUS has established more than a dozen business and technical outreach efforts, including MONTEC, TechLink, Tech Ranch, the Billings Business Incubator, the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Montana Business Connections and others. The preponderance of the funding of these activities has come from federal and private sources and other non-State university dollars.

- In response to market needs, the MUS has added programs in areas such as health care informatics, CISCO networking, dental hygiene, family financial planning, computer network architecture, industrial technology, surgical technology, small business management and entrepreneurship, metals fabrication technology, farm/ranch business management, nurse practitioner certificate, and a master's degree in social work.
- Electronic delivery of classes to rural communities around the state has increased from 29 courses with 831 enrollees in Fall 1997 to 129 classes with 1733 enrollees in Fall 2000. Partial data for Fall 2001 shows on average another 20 percent increase in courses and enrollees.
- Working in partnership with two separate non-State, non-profit entities, the Montana University System has provided additional financial assistance to students and graduates. The Montana Higher Education Student Assistance Corporation has provided almost \$14 million of rebates on student loans to over 25,000 students. The Student Assistance Foundation of Montana is awarding \$350,000 of grants each year to students in the university system.

## **An Appeal for Help**

The Montana University System will continue to do its part to sustain and improve postsecondary education and workforce development in Montana. And we hope that policy makers will consider objectively whether the State of Montana is doing its part as well. Unfortunately, comparative data compiled by various third-party entities suggest that we could be doing more. Consider the following:

- During the past ten years, general fund appropriations for higher education in Montana have increased by just 7% (49<sup>th</sup> in the nation), which compares to an average increase for all other states of 59%.<sup>2</sup> If we even kept pace with the national average, our annual appropriations would be \$70 million higher than they are presently.
- A 2000 report by the Montana Legislative Fiscal Division found that Montana's appropriations per student were the lowest of eight states in the region. On average, the appropriations per student in the other seven peer states were 78% higher than in Montana.<sup>3</sup>
- When examining state support as it relates to citizens and taxpayers (not students) a similar result is shown. In the states around us, higher education appropriations per capita are, on average, 60% higher than in Montana.<sup>4</sup> Even when compared to personal income (where Montana should rank relatively high because of our low income levels), we find that the other states in the region are committing a higher percentage of their personal income – 45% more on average – to support higher education.<sup>5</sup> It is notable (and in our view, not coincidental) that the states around us are also achieving greater success in expanding their income and economic standings.

Clearly, it is difficult for any enterprise – whether in business, agriculture, or education – to remain competitive when your peers are substantially better funded to provide the same services.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: 2001 Grapevine Report.

<sup>3</sup> Source: January 2000 Report of the Montana Legislative Fiscal Division.

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2001 Grapevine Report. Figures based upon a comparison with the states of Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

<sup>5</sup> Source: 2001 Grapevine Report. Figures based upon a comparison with the states of Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

We do not raise the comparative funding statistics to blame or complain. Rather, we hope to establish that greater support for postsecondary education in Montana is reasonable, achievable, and necessary. We wish to demonstrate that the opportunities to achieve economic returns by investing in education are real, and are happening all around us.

In late 2001, the Board of Regents adopted a long-term strategic plan, a copy of which is included as Exhibit 1. The plan identifies various strategies and objectives which we will pursue and seeks to address the multiple roles and constituencies served by the MUS. It also acknowledges that the Montana University System must continue to evolve and improve if we are to serve fully our students and the people of Montana. Thus, in a spirit of partnership, we commit to you the following:

- We will seek to build stronger working relationships with policy makers and the businesses and communities we serve;
- We will strive to deliver high quality postsecondary education opportunities while remaining attentive to affordability and access;
- We will continue to find opportunities for efficiency, campus collaboration, and external partnerships;
- We will continue to leverage State dollars through private and federal funds, while demonstrating accountability for the public funds provided us; and
- We will do all we can to strengthen Montana's economy and the income levels of our citizens.

In the same spirit of partnership, we ask that you provide us the resources that will enable the Montana University System to serve more fully the people of Montana. Together we can, and together we must, move Montana forward.

# THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

## *AN INVESTMENT IN MONTANA'S FUTURE*

### FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2004-2005

#### **Base Budget and Present Law Base Adjustments**

The FY04-05 budget is developed in three increments. The first increment is the Base Budget. The Base Budget is defined as the actual expenditures for the first year of the prior biennium. For fiscal years FY04-05, the Base Budget will be established from FY02 expenditures. Because FY02 is the base budget year, many increases authorized by the legislature for FY03 are not included. For the Montana University System, examples of authorized expenditures in FY03 that are not included in the base budget year (FY02) are:

1. The FY03 authorized pay increase of 4% and insurance contribution increases for all units of the MUS and community colleges.
2. The dental hygiene program at Great Falls COT that was authorized by the legislature to begin in FY03.
3. The \$100 per resident FTE funding increase authorized by the legislature for FY03.
4. Funding for additional resident students that have enrolled since FY02.
5. Restoration of vacancy savings.
6. Increases in FY03 for rates and charges from other state agencies including the department of administration, legislative audit services, insurance, and workers' compensation.

State statute defines "present law base adjustments" as the level of funding needed under present law to maintain operations and services at the level authorized by the previous legislature. The types of increases identified above are considered "present law base adjustments" and are generally calculated by the Office of Budget and Program Planning for all state agencies and built into each agency budget as part of the budget development process. Some of the adjustments are made as part of a state-wide adjustment (FY03 pay increases and vacancy savings) while some are agency specific (\$100 per resident FTE funding increase in FY03).

Further, there are additional "present law base adjustments" that are needed to maintain operations and services at the level authorized by the previous legislature that were not included in the FY02 Base Budget and are also not included in FY03 expenditures. For the Montana University System, examples include:

1. Enrollment growth. The FY02 funding provided by the legislature was predicated upon educating 25,004 resident FTE students. The FY03 funding established by the legislature was predicated upon educating 25,207 resident FTE students. The enrollments for FY04 and FY05 are expected to continue to grow. As a result, additional funding is needed to continue

providing education services to additional resident students who enroll in the Montana University System.

2. Inflationary increases in utilities, library holdings, maintenance costs and general operations. In these cases additional funding is needed because the cost to provide current level services has increased.
3. Increased cost of state mandated retirement payouts (vacation pay, sick leave payout, and retirement matching) as the age of the MUS workforce increases along with the frequency of retirements.
4. WICHE, WWAMI, and Work Study funding increases resulting from increased contract rates charged by professional schools to educate Montana residents and work study increases resulting from increased enrollments and hours of work.
5. Increased cost of mandatory and permissive fee waivers resulting from increases in tuition and enrollment growth. As tuition rates and enrollment levels increase from the Base Budget year of FY02, the cost of providing the current level of fee waivers increases.

### **FY04-05 State Pay Plan**

The state-wide pay plan authorized by the legislature has consistently covered state government employees, the Montana University System, legislative employees, and employees of elected officials. The funding for the state-wide pay plan is not included in HB002 but is included in a separate appropriations bill (generally HB013). The cost to implement these pay increases in the Montana University System varies according to the level of pay increases. For each 1% increase in FY04 and FY05, the cost to the Montana University System is approximately \$7.6 million. If the legislature authorized a state-wide pay plan with a 3% increase in FY04 and a 3% increase in FY05, the cost to implement the pay increase for the MUS would be \$22.8 million.

The state-wide pay plan also includes increases in the state contribution for employee health insurance. For example, a \$25/month increase each year (FY04 and FY05) in the state contribution for health insurance would cost the MUS an additional \$3.6 million.

Last biennium these increases were funded by the legislature with approximately 50% coming from the state general fund and 50% being raised by the MUS through tuition increases to students. The percent of funding provided by the state has varied from a high of 100% to a low of 50% over the last 10 years. The MUS would propose a percentage of state funding higher than 50% so that resident students do not see a tuition increase simply to fund the new pay plan. If the state were to cover the portion of the pay plan associated with resident students (non-resident students would still see a tuition increase) the percentage of state funding would have to increase to 78%. This change would require an additional \$1.8M in state funding for each 1% pay increase provided each year of the FY04-05 biennium.



# **THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

## *An Investment in Montana's Future*

### **INVESTMENT INITIATIVES FOR 2004-05**

#### **INITIATIVE 1. Add and Expand Programs and Services Tied to Demonstrated Market and Employment Needs.**

➤ Specific elements of initiative:

- Enhance and expand academic programs and services in response to the needs of employers, business clusters, and growth market segments.
- Expand services to businesses and communities through small business centers, incubator centers, extension and AES staff, and related MUS outreach entities (i.e. TechLink, TechRanch, MONTEC, Montana Development Center, etc).
- Create business and community development outreach position in the Montana University System.
- Expand workforce training efforts, both credit and non-credit (customized training) at two-year institutions.
- Enhance and expand activities and facilities to support Montana-based research, development, and technology transfer in areas important to growth sectors of the national economy.

➤ Investment : \$12,655,885

➤ Return on investment:

- Improved productivity and income levels for Montana workers, leading to a stronger State tax base.
- Increased enrollment in areas of employment need, leading to better business retention and more graduates remaining in-State.
- Increase in number of patents, licenses, and new companies based on Montana University System research, development, and technology transfer.
- Stronger programs and capabilities in growth sectors of the economy, leading to more successful business recruitment, incubation, and growth in those sectors within Montana.
- Improved capabilities and responsiveness of our two-year colleges, leading to a deeper skilled labor pool and better tools for the use of local employers.

➤ Examples:

- Eight out of ten new jobs created during the next ten years will require some level of postsecondary education (US Bureau of Labor Statistics).

- An analysis completed by the Employment Policy Foundation using earnings and education data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2001 "Current Population Survey: shows average annual earnings as follows:

* No high school diploma	\$21,314
* High school diploma	\$30,560
* Two-year college degree	\$38,118
* Bachelor's degree	\$49,344
* Master's degree	\$57,676
- According to a 2001 Deloitte and Touche survey of growth technology companies, the two most important business location factors are; (1) access to an educated, skilled workforce, and (2) access to quality research institutions.
- 84% of Montana's health care providers are experiencing mild to severe shortages of Licensed Practical Nurses (90% in rural areas). Last year 28 graduates responded to an employment survey and 26 were employed in Montana at an average wage of \$11.91 per hour.
- Last year the Billings and Great Falls Colleges of Technology alone provided training to over 2,000 individuals upgrading workplace skills.
- LigoCyte is a Bozeman-based pharmaceutical company with 31 employees, more than half of whom are MUS graduates. The average annual salary at LigoCyte is \$55,000. LigoCyte has licensed five technologies from MSU and works collaboratively with MSU on numerous research projects.
- One of the greatest needs in the state is for teachers, MSU-Billings graduated 205 new teachers in May 2002.
- Eight photonics companies reside in the Gallatin Valley; all work closely with MSU on research projects. These companies employ approximately 328 full-time employees at average salaries ranging from \$16,000 to \$67,000 a year, many are MUS graduates.
- Graduates of the MSU-Northern diesel program earn an average of \$30,000 in state.

➤ Accountability measures:

- Immediate – Number of academic programs, research efforts, and training activities tied to employment and market needs
- Initial – Enrollment in new programs, level of graduate and research activities, and numbers of businesses and individuals participating in training
- Intermediate – Graduation/certificate rates by program, student placement upon completing programs, and number of business partnerships created
- Long term—Increased jobs and company relocations or start-ups in targeted areas, improved income levels for Montanans participating in the programs and training activities, improved retention of Montana graduates
- Ongoing—Yearly program reviews of all new programs, regular three-year assessment

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INITIATIVE 2.           **Promote Rural Development.**

➤ Specific elements of initiative:

- Improve the resources and capabilities of the agricultural experiment stations, agricultural extension service, and College of Agriculture to enhance the capabilities of Montana's farmers and ranchers.
  - Expand and promote distance learning opportunities, with special focus on education and training in rural markets and communities.
  - Meet needs for healthcare and education professionals in rural areas.
  - Create higher education outreach sites at AES, extension offices, tribal colleges, and community colleges to improve access to academic programs and workforce training services for rural Montanans.
- Investment : \$4,561,850
- Return on investment:
- Improved productivity for agricultural producers through expanded research and training, value-added development strategies, and expanded markets and marketing techniques
  - Improved ability to meet workforce demands in areas of rural market need (i.e. nursing, teaching, welding, etc.).
  - Expanded workforce development and training capabilities in smaller towns, leading to improved prospects for business recruitment.
  - Stem the decline of jobs and income levels in rural communities.
- Examples:
- McNeal spring wheat, developed at MSU and now grown on almost half of the state's spring wheat acreage, has increased production by at least a bushel per acre in an average moisture year, resulting in increased revenues to farmers of approximately \$4.5 million.
  - The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology has work in Montana to preserve the water supply has accounted for \$4.4 million in research since 1995, much of it in rural Montana or in areas impacted by rapid development.
  - MSU-Billings has provided access to education for rural Montanans through online courses. Enrollments have grown to 3,300 in 2001-2002.
  - The Great Falls College of Technology now offers on-line programs in Medical Transcription and Health Information Technology so that students can complete degrees and work from their homes providing an increased annual income of at least \$21,400 for place bound families in Montana.
  - The Montana Beef Network developed by MSU-Bozeman and the Montana Stockgrower's Association has resulted in 1,400 Montana ranchers completing a beef-quality assurance and food safety course. Fifty thousand calves in Montana have been certified for being up-to-date on vaccination and other health protocols. Research has shown that by following these protocols, ranchers can cut calf illness by half.
  - Valier barley, developed at MSU, provides increased feed efficiency in cattle by increasing average daily gains by 10 percent over the most commonly used feed barleys. Incorporation of Valier and other new barley lines could be worth approximately \$6 million per year to Montana barley producers.

➤ Accountability measures:

- New programs offered in rural communities by distance learning, cooperative efforts, or satellite programs.
  - Increased number of small businesses served in rural market
  - Expanded participation in postsecondary education and training in rural areas
  - New business start-up and development activities in rural locations
  - Improved productivity of Montana farms and ranchers through programs, research, and recommendations of the Montana University System and its agencies.
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**INITIATIVE 3. Make Postsecondary Education and Training More Accessible for Montanans.**

➤ Specific elements of initiative:

- Increase State financial aid
    - \* Increase dollars available for Baker Grants and Montana Higher Education Grants.
    - \* Increase dollars available for Montana Work Study Program.
  - Fund tuition differential for two-year colleges, and smaller four-year campuses.
  - Fast Forward Education Program - - A cooperative effort among educational providers to establish a seamless educational structure that focuses on students' success. Area elementary, secondary, and higher education providers cooperatively construct a program that begins with student career development activities in the seventh grade and works with students to move them forward based upon their abilities, talents, and interests. The program will build on successes and what we have learned from our Educational Talent Search program and our GEAR-UP program.
- Tribal college support for non-beneficiary students? an initiative to return tribal college support for non-beneficiary students to the FY00-01 level of approximately \$1,500 per student.
- Indian Education for All (MCA 20-1-501ff) - An initiative to improve campus services for and sensitivity toward Native American students statewide. Faculty and staff will participate in separate programs. Intensive training in job-alike cohorts will target front-line student services and operations personnel and their supervisors and assist them to develop effective modes of interaction with Native American students and families. For faculty, training will focus on those working in similar fields and be designed to help them learn what cultural issues affect student learning and interactions in the classroom and in various disciplines.
  - Expand resources and capabilities to deliver higher education services to rural and place-bound Montanans through distance learning and other means.
- Investment: \$4,558,400

Return on investment:

- Improved ability for low- and middle-income students to access postsecondary education and complete a degree or certificate.

- Better retention of Native American students in higher education and greater numbers of students completing programs of study.
- Improved opportunities for Montanans to retrain or improve work skills.
- Increase job opportunities for Montanans, improve family and per-capita income, and thereby increase the State's tax revenues.
- Increased enrollment of economically disadvantaged Montanans, leading to better postsecondary education participation rates, better employment opportunities and higher income levels.
- Improved financial ability of students to remain in college, leading to higher retention/graduation rates and better efficiency for the MUS.

➤ Examples:

- Establishment of the MTAP program has resulted in 3,337 resident Montana students in the MUS, private colleges, tribal colleges, and the community colleges receiving grants.
- The state work study program serves 893 resident students making college more affordable and accessible.
- The non-beneficiary student tribal college assistance program has provided support for 322 non-beneficiary students attending Montana tribal colleges.
- Non-resident students and their families spend over \$15,000 per year in Montana. Therefore, over \$1.5 million in economic activity is generated for every 100 additional non-resident students attending the MUS.
- By implementing the enhanced access investment, we hope to encourage an addition 200 students per year to attend the MUS to improve their skills and competitiveness through postsecondary education. Based upon increased earnings power of approximately \$15,000 per year, this would generate an additional \$3 million in personal income will would compound over time.

➤ Accountability measures:

- Equitable distribution of financial aid increases to achieve return on investment.
- More favorable showing of these students on data analyses as compared to overall averages for (1) student loan debt accumulated; (2) semester to semester retention; (3) time to degree; (4) credits to degree.
- Improved postsecondary participation rates for Montanans as they graduate from high school and for the population aged 25-44.
- Increase in percentage of MUS students enrolled in COTs and smaller four-year campuses.
- Increased participation in higher education for students from low-income and Native American families.

#### INITIATIVE 4. **Invest in Technology**

➤ Specific elements of initiative:

- Expand classroom applications of through "Smart Podiums" and implementation of other novel and emerging learning applications.
- Equip and upgrade classrooms to enhance the learning experience.
- Add software and systems to better facilitate distance learning and cross-campus resource sharing.

- Expand the use of information systems to ensure effective management of resources.
- Investment: \$3,655,784
- Return on investment:
- The ability of our campuses to continue to meet growing enrollment demands, leading to a more productive workforce and a stronger business environment.
  - Improved student recruitment and retention due to an enhanced learning environment characterized by multiple asynchronous learning strategies, 24/7 access to instruction and necessary support, and multiple electronic classrooms and laboratories across the State.
  - Improved use of technology to deliver services, share resources, and efficiently manage operations.
  - Improved efficiency and productivity of faculty and staff, and an improved learning environment.
- Examples:
- Investments in technology have allowed the MUS libraries to share resources providing both greater access and improved service to students while maintaining efficiency.
  - System-wide implementation of banner has provided better system-wide access to information regarding students, finance, and HR.
  - The investment in electronic Library resources has included business databases. Not only do business students benefit from the access to information but so do community members.
- Accountability measures:
- Technology application, evolution, and support will include library and administrative software systems, on-line course support and distance education systems, web applications, and campus interfaces.
  - Accountability in meeting approved information technology plans.
  - Number of classroom and lab renovations.