

Budget Council Minutes
February 23, 2021
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
WebEx

Members:

Terry Leist	Robert Mokwa	Chris Kearns	Michael Trotter
Kim Obbink	Mark Ranalli	Bradford Watson	Jason Carter
Chris Fastnow	Craig Woolard	Tia Brown	Matt Bissett
Conner McCollum			

Guests:

Megan Lasso – Budget Office, Mackenzie Seeley – Budget Office, Brianna Bos – Budget Office, Carina Beck – Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success

Absentees: Michael Trotter

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Leist.

II. Approval of Minutes

The January 26, 2021 meeting minutes were unanimously approved, on the condition that the header be corrected to say “Members” instead of “Attendees”.

III. University Information/Announcements

- a. Significant water damage in Montana Hall due to frozen pipes
- b. Bobcat volleyball beat the Griz!

IV. Assessment Presentations

Hilleman Scholars, 1893 Scholars, Return to Learn (R2L) – Dr. Carina Beck, Vice Provost, Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success (AYCSS)

5-6 years of reflection data from three pilot programs developed to mindfully create transformational access opportunities for students; Deaths of Despair by Case & Deaton – Suicide, alcohol and drug-related deaths in Montana began spiking in 2000. Large increase for non-college non-Hispanic whites (men primarily) aged 45-54. This is the call to action for the AYCSS and the driver behind the Hilleman, 1893, and R2L scholars’ programs.

- Montana ranked 5th in nation for grandparents raising grandchildren
 - Montana ranked 2nd in nation for children in foster care
 - Montana ranked at the top for successful suicide attempts
- a. **Hilleman Scholars for \$350,000 OTO plus \$356,043 base**
 1. History
 - Hilleman Scholars selected based on Pell eligibility and low academic prep scores; typically have toxic stress associated with learning because of childhood environment (on average, scholars have 2+ adverse childhood experiences)
 - Scholars have lower high school GPA, lower test scores, and less ability to pay compared to average Montana resident student – goal of Hilleman Scholars program is to close these gaps
 2. Current Status
 - Scholars chosen based on Pell eligibility, very low academic preparation
 - 2016 cohort retention outperforms Montana resident students – margins are small but significant

- 2017 cohort retention about the same as for Montana resident students – this is success
 - 2018 cohort retention dropped during pandemic, but overperformed prior to pandemic
 - 2019 cohort currently underperformed compared with Montana residents, though prior to pandemic this cohort had been successful for the previous two semesters, much adversity/potential
 - Departed scholars studying elsewhere (due to variety of reasons) and drop-out students – AYCSS remains in touch with these students in hopes that they will return in the future (R2L program)
 - Hilleman scholars receive: \$1,000 stipend to attend Summer Success Academy, an additional \$1,000 when they complete summer program, \$500 bonus for 3.0 GPA, and \$4,000/year (\$500/month over eight months), \$3k study abroad experience (junior year), in addition to success, career, and leadership coaching/support
 - Success contract – class attendance, grades
3. Assessment Measures
 - Retention rates (compared to MT residents and other student groups)
 - 4-yr and 6-yr graduation rates (compared to MT residents and other student groups)
 4. Discussion
 - What about students with low academic preparation who are not Pell-eligible? Tough to evaluate financial need, but certainly some students who are not Pell-eligible still have critical need. Foundation partners sometimes contribute toward these students and AYCSS will match.

b. 1893 Scholars for \$50,000

1. History
 - Developed to help students at risk of dropping out but very close to finishing their degree
 - Modeled after similar programs at University of Kentucky and Georgia State
 - Goal is to identify students who need a little extra support to catalyze the finish to graduation
 - \$1,893 for one semester
 - \$50,000 supports 26 students per year (success advisors identify 800 potential scholars and over time this is narrowed down to 26)
 - Students must be a Montana resident in good academic standing, with high financial need and 90-137 completed credits
2. Current Status – based on three years of cohort outcomes
 - 73 scholarships awarded in first three years
 - 74% graduated within the award timeframe
 - 9 more scholarships awarded in spring 2021
3. Assessment measures
 - Retention rates
 - Graduation rates
4. Discussion
 - Students chosen for 1893 are existing students (currently enrolled) – how are the most at-risk students identified? 14 coefficients of risk – students with multiple coefficients of risk are interviewed by success advisors. Success advisors decide which students are the best investment opportunity.

c. Return2Learn for \$100,000

1. History
 - Aimed at MSU students who leave before graduation – who are they and where do they go?
 - Work closely with Planning & Analysis to track both in-state and out-of-state residents – in Montana 130,000 college students who left without a degree, in addition to 150,000 workforce-age adults (age 24-65) with only high school education – these all qualify for R2L

- Last year over 9,000 students being tracked; 500 more left this year – these students have not enrolled anywhere else since fall 2018; about 2/3 in-state students and 1/3 out-of-state
 - AYCSS reaches out to this group and asks them to return to campus through email communications – if students respond, then further targeted communication occurs
 - Recruitment scholarship, not a retention scholarship
 - Scholarships aren't large (\$250-\$750); meant to send the message “we want you back at MSU”
 - Two options: merit-based and circumstance-based
2. Current Status
- Out of 555 scholars to date (393 Montana residents), 32% persisted, 34% graduated, 32% left MSU
 - Onboarded 60 new scholars this spring
 - Aggregate GPA is increasing
3. Discussion
- Is there a way to subtract the baseline of students who might return anyway? Planning & Analysis has this data.
 - Important to invite students back so that they can graduate in the 6-year timeframe
 - Audit potential students using DegreeWorks
 - Did the market effort bring students back or would they have returned anyway? This has been evaluated – more students who were touched by R2L returned than those that weren't. Would love to test this at scale.
 - What impact do academic calendars have on these issues? For example, a week-long break at Thanksgiving gives students a chance to go back to their families and recharge. Does AYCSS provide input on MSU's academic calendar in order to end up with more data-driven decisions? Traditional age college students attenuate well to a traditional academic calendar. Pilot program underway called Spring Forward – 10-week learning experience nestled with the 15-week semester – may be an opportunity to engage with adult learners. Snowmester was great for adult learners; able to onboard more students during snowmester.

d. Lessons Learned from all three programs

- Probabilities don't measure potential
- Rethink the importance of student engagement at all levels – football game, working out, talking to faculty
- Over long run, scholarship is important, but the unique advantages of support, belonging, new habits, and confidence are the gamechangers for students
- All three programs are ready to scale – pipeline in place, alignment with Strategic Plan “Choosing Promise”
- Metrics are available for all these programs, but access to Hilleman Scholars data is limited for confidentiality reasons

V. Public Comment / Member Feedback

None

VI. Action Items

a. Vote – Outreach & Engagement Seed Grants for \$20,000 base funding

1. Discussion
- In the past, base funding portion and one-time-only (OTO) funding portion
 - Awarded to faculty and projects related to outreach in our communities (mutually beneficial projects)
 - Seed grants are \$5k each, so \$20k base funding would support 4 grants per year
 - Program supports strategic plan and Carnegie classification

- Case studies are very favorable – outstanding program
2. Approved - 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention

b. Vote – First Year Research Experience for \$28,000 base funding

1. Discussion
 - Introduces students to research in their first year
 - Funds used for student stipends and faculty support (supplies)
 - In the past, base and OTO funding components
2. Approved - 12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

VII. Public Comment/Member Feedback

a. Spring Enrollment Update – Megan Lasso, Chris Fastnow

- Due to uncertainty of COVID financial impact, MSU undertook money-saving measures (hiring moratorium, travel restrictions, money swept back, recovered vacancy savings); because of these actions MSU is in good financial standing for FY21 and into FY22
- Strong admission pool for this fall; that is the case around the country
- Drop in fall to spring enrollment (larger than usual) – \$750k net revenue loss over the past FY; some of this is offset by savings from FY20; given the pandemic this is great news
- Would an admissions deposit help with predicting enrollment? Research doctoral institutions in the west do not typically charge an admissions deposit. \$300 housing deposit helps MSU determine freshman enrollment. Based on current data, it looks like enrollment for both freshmen and upper classmen will increase.
- DecisionIQ is a new product P&A is using to predict enrollment. Housing deposit has been a great indicator of freshman enrollment, but it doesn't tell anything about returning students.
- Student headcounts: down 3% last fall (same as in past years but the mix of students changed – down in the traditional undergraduate market and up in graduate students and dual-enrollment students, full-time equivalent (FTE) down slightly (smaller credit load than the previous spring, but still healthy), declining number of in-state resident students (but this is not COVID-related, it has been declining for the past few years)
- Typically, 88-90% of first-time MSU students return in the spring – this year it dropped to 85%. Also saw a drop in retention of students who started in spring 2019. Want to make sure this is a stop out and not a drop out, so these have already been identified for the R2L group (instead of waiting another year).
- Perfect storm of uncertainty: 1. need to continue recruiting our current students because their pandemic experience may not be what they had hoped for, 2. current applicant pool is stronger than any in recent history – pent up demand to come combined with lower costs to apply may result in increased enrollment, 3. next year's pipeline is much smaller
- 15,000 students enrolled at MSU for next fall, 9,500 enrolled at U of M

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Next Meeting: March 23, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. via WebEx