



**Montana Board of Regents
Virtual Meeting
September 16-17, 2020
MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 16th

Meeting convened at 8:07am.

Regents Present: Casey Lozar, Chair; Paul Tuss, Vice Chair; Bob Nystuen; Martha Sheehy; Brianne Rogers; Joyce Dombrowski; and Amy Sexton. Ex officio members included: Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian; Ex officio Governor Steve Bullock, and Ex officio Superintendent Elsie Arntzen.

Comments by Chair Lozar

Chair Lozar welcomed all attendees to the meeting. He noted how uplifting and positive it is to have students back on campus. He acknowledged and recognized the added responsibility placed on students, faculty, and staff during this abnormal time and extended his thanks and appreciation for their efforts, critical to our ability to keep others healthy and safe. He extended thanks and appreciation to Governor Steve Bullock and his administration for his ongoing support of our COVID response via the directed \$20 million last month to support our system-wide testing and contact tracing strategy. Also, he thanked Governor Bullock for the recent announcement of \$2.2 million in funding for workforce development projects and remote education delivery. Chair Lozar provided a brief overview of the agenda, noting the proposed approval of the operating budget, update on the Bitterroot Valley Community College District, updates related to the system's COVID-19 response, MUS Strategic Initiatives, as well as an update from MSU-Billings and their local community. He extended a special welcome and thank you to Dr. Rolf Groseth, who has come out of a well-deserved retirement to step into the Interim Chancellor role at MSUB after a more than 30-year career in higher education in Montana.

Welcome by Chancellor Groseth

Chancellor Groseth provided a virtual welcome from Billings and updates regarding recent events at the campus. He described the Back to Business action plan, based on the MUS Healthy Fall taskforce blueprint, to ensure a healthy return this fall semester. He described the "Jacket Safety" Kits, which were provided to all students and departments, and other efforts, including a Health & Safety Campus Awareness campaign and additional focus on "Welcome Week." He spoke to recent student achievements, including DJ McGhee, who was recently named a Goldwater Scholarship Nominee, Cyrine Boumediene, a recent Golden Merit Award Recipient. He reviewed recent campus events, including a virtual research conference that was held virtually and covered a number of research projects. Chancellor Groseth noted that resident assistants have excelled academically despite COVID-19 and shared notable student-athlete accomplishments.



He provided an updated related to reaccreditation, noting that that Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) conducted a virtual campus visit in the spring and gave a glowing review. Recommendations included developing meaningful strategic plan metrics, continually updating, and revising job description to accurately reflect the job duties of each employee, and to develop a plan to monitor our internal and external environments to inform and guide our strategic direction.

Chancellor Groseth spoke to the Faculty-engaged Strategic Program Alignment (SPA), which was launched in the fall of 2018 to ensure that MSUB continues to meet student and workforce demands in its academic program offerings moving forward. He noted the progress to date, including reducing the number of programs from 254 down to 134. He explained that institutional research data was used to guide the decision-making process, and that transparency and faculty engagement was also key. Chancellor Groseth discussed the intent to plan for the Institute for Neurodiversity, noting the need locally and across the state for applied behavior analysis services. He explained that the institute would serve a threefold purpose including serving children and their parents with needed therapeutic services, with an emphasis on Applied Behavior Analysis; affording graduate students the opportunity to research interventions, and complete their clinical internships and required supervision hours; and provide continuing professional development to clinical and non-clinical professionals (e.g., teachers, after school/daycare workers).

Chancellor Groseth provided an update on the launch of MSUB's 3+1 pathway program with Billings Public Schools. He also shared an updated related to the National Science Foundation Interdisciplinary STEM Education Research Grant, recently awarded to MSUB. This project ultimately seeks to improve the inclusion and retention of students in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. He discussed the five-year grant that City College received from the Department of Education's Student Support Services, TRIO program, with the purpose to provide academic and person-centered services to low-income, first-generation, or disabled college students to increase retention and graduation rates and foster an institutional climate supportive of these students' success. In closing, he provided an update related to the Yellowstone Science Building. Construction on this building began in the fall of 2019. He provided a progress update and noted that the building should be completed next summer. Discussion followed.

Approval of Minutes

- July 28, 2020 Special Board Meeting Minutes

A motion for approval of the July 28, 2020 Special Board Meeting Minutes was made by Regent Tuss; motion passed (7-0).

Commissioner's and System Report

Commissioner Christian welcomed all attendees and expressed thanks to the Chair Lozar and other members of the Board. He echoed Chair Lozar's comments about fall being an exciting and energizing time of year for our university system. He thanked the Board for their role in leading and supporting our campuses as they rise to the



pandemic's daily challenges. He noted that together with our campuses, we're steering our university system through an extraordinary chapter in history. I hope our students also feel their unique role in our history. Like past generations of young men and women who've seen our country through hard times, they will lead our recovery. We know that tomorrow's Montana will need the skills our students are developing today. He extended thanks to students for their resiliency and determination as they've returned to campus to continue their studies. Commissioner Christian thanked faculty and staff for the hard work and innovation that have made their return to campus possible. He extended thanks to Governor Steve Bullock for his administration's ongoing support of our COVID response. As the Chairman noted, our efforts have been extremely resource-intensive, and the Governor's allocation of federal CARES Act funding has made these efforts possible. He spoke to the importance of continuing to innovate and uphold routine operations and responsibilities amidst the pandemic.

- COVID-19 Update

Deputy Commissioner Brock Tessman provided an update regarding COVID-19 and efforts across the MUS. As we are several weeks into the fall semester with classes underway it is important to acknowledge the success to date amidst the hardships every campus has experienced. He noted that campuses are doing all they can to make things work with student success at the forefront of everyone's mind. He discussed equity related to the pandemic and the importance of being able to offer in-person educational experience and on-campus student life experiences to further promote success for all types of students, regardless of their background or resources they have available. He extended thanks to the Governor and his office for their support of assisting campuses to acquire the resources they need to mitigate risk and keep campuses open. He thanked faculty and students for their on-the-ground efforts and doing what it takes to keep campuses open each day. He provided a synopsis of the approach at the system level to work with campuses to promote a balanced, consistent and sustainable approach to testing, tracing, quarantine and isolation, and mitigation. He noted the goal behind this approach is to increase capacity and make progress in all of those areas to ensure the system is set up and working the way it should. He stressed the efforts campuses have made to ensuring student awareness related to monitoring symptoms, getting tested if symptomatic, and the importance of supporting campuses via working alongside local county health departments with contact tracing and test turnaround time to further prevention efforts. Dr. Tessman noted that this approach has been successful, in large part, by letting public health lead the way, drawing on their wisdom and guidance related to data reporting and testing strategies. He commended the strong and productive partnership with public health officials. He noted a takeaway of recognition and continued focus on the personal impact and responsibility that everyone, has, stressing the paramount role individuals have related to symptoms, testing, basic hygiene, and complying with social distancing. This aspect is at the center of all our efforts. While very proud of our campus's efforts to date, Dr. Tessman noted that the MUS will continue to work alongside local county and state health officials, the Governor and others on monitoring the situation and being willing to adjust as needed to help take proactive steps towards managing stress and mental health for students and employees. Discussion followed.



- MUS Strategic Initiatives 2020-2021 | Attachment #1

Deputy Commissioner Trevor reviewed the MUS strategic initiatives for 2020-2021, including resident student access, workforce development, and a healthy MUS. He reviewed each initiative related to the strategic plan goals of access & affordability, workforce & economic development, and efficiency & effectiveness. Mr. Scott Lemmon, Director of Director of Admissions and Enrollment Strategy, provided an update and review of the Central Application System (CAS) and Portal, ApplyMT. He reviewed the progress to date, noting the go-live dates for the application to start September 18th. Mr. Lemmon discussed the branding and logo efforts related to this tool. He described new initiatives for 2020, including a new landing page for a digital campaign, coordinated efforts with College Application Week for 2020, and a test campaign with Liaison. Director Lemmon reiterated the many benefits of the CAS, noted a few challenges associated with this endeavor, and reviewed the overall timeline of events in the future. He discussed the Resident Student Access Portal (RAS), noting the intent to establish this in two phases and that an RFP is in progress for this tool. Discussion followed.

- Campus Reports (Linked to agenda)
- Introductions & Acknowledgements

The University of Montana and the University of Montana-Western made introductions to new staff members on their respective campuses.

Two Year and Community College Committee

INFORMATION

- a. Bitterroot Valley Community College District Vote Update *BVCC Development Criteria Report | Presentation*

Representatives of the Bitterroot Valley area, including Don Gardner, Janet Woodburn, Ran Pigman, and Rep. Dave Bedey, provided an informational update/presentation to the Board on the proposed establishment of a Bitterroot Valley Community College. They provided a summary of background information and reviewed the timeline and efforts to date. The panel reviewed the rationale behind this request noting their belief that Ravalli County is large enough in population to require a locally administered unit of higher education to meet the degree and workforce training demands of its residents and business. They discussed the benefits associated with having a local college noting the sufficient autonomy to plan, develop, deliver, and sustain college-credit career & technical degrees and certificates; suffices access to resources to help fulfill the Board's comprehensive two-year education mission/vision and recognition by the state as a statutorily established community college district. The panel reviewed the proposed operating budget based on projected enrollment, tuition & fees, revenue, expenditures, and staffing estimates based on state funding formulas and FTE estimates. They reviewed educational objectives related to the proposed vision and mission statements. They discussed proposed programs in business, computers, education, health care, industrial technology, natural resource/agriculture, tourism/recreation/retirement, and transfer degrees. The panel reviewed the proposed infrastructure, including their short-



term plan to transition the existing infrastructure of Bitterroot College -UM to function similarly for Bitterroot Valley Community College. They described plans for a capital campaign to be developed and implemented to raise funds for securing a permanent campus location and constructing and/or remodeling desired facilities. Discussion followed.

b. GEER Fund Distribution

Deputy Commissioner Tessman and Jacque Treaster, Director of Dual Enrollment and Career & Technical Education, provided an update on the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) related to workforce training remote delivery. They noted the intended use of the \$2.2 million, highlights related to the funding received, and how it's being used across campuses and the next steps.

c. Two-Year Education and Community College Committee Workplan

Deputy Commissioner Tessman reviewed the draft Two Year and Community College Committee workplan outlining committee priorities including COVID-19, 2-year mission fulfillment, workforce training, marketing & outreach, CTE/Perkins grant, dual enrollment, shared academic programming, rural workforce development and prior learning assessment.

What's Up Billings

A panel including Mayor Bill Cole, Melanie Schwarz of Big Sky Economic Development, and Kelly McCandless of the Billings Chamber provided an update related to the relationship of the Billings community with the MSU-Billings & City College campuses. They spoke of the successful partnerships with the campus, particularly given the COVID-19 pandemic. They discussed the synergy with the campus and local health providers. They spoke to the importance and need to attract and retain leadership for the campus. Melanie Schwarz spoke to the success of morale and attraction to the city overall in association with the College. She reiterated how the campus and community worked together to combat the health crisis and spoke to the direct impact that the campus has on the community and economy. The panel noted their hope for increased partnership with the campus related to research and the potential impact it could have on the community. Ms. Kelly McCandless, Billings Chamber, spoke to the campus serving as a catalyst for business growth, a convener for leaders, and influencer and champion for a stronger community. She noted how the campus helps with business advocacy, tourism, and member services. She spoke to a variety of programs that work to engage students and young leaders to grow into the next generation of community leaders. Discussion followed.

Remarks by Governor Bullock (or Designee)

Governor Bullock extended thanks and appreciation to the Board members and MUS for preparing communities and campuses for in-person classes in a safe manner. He noted the significant changes made to testing protocols to help with streamlining tests and result turnaround. He extended thanks for partnering with Montana State University



related to testing and noted efforts with the University of Montana along the same line. Governor Bullock discussed the \$20 million directed from the CARES Act and the ability it provides for rapidly detecting and isolating new cases, contact tracing, and testing close contacts of known cases to contain the spread and minimize disruptions to students' education.

Additionally, he discussed the prioritization transparency throughout our response to COVID-19. Keeping the public informed ensures they can trust our leadership and make educated decisions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Our public health folks have been working on putting together a dashboard to capture K-12 schools and universities cases. This information will be published on the DPHHS website weekly and will work to provide transparency while protecting staff and students' privacy. For colleges, the school's name will be listed, and if the case is a student or staff and if it is active or not.

Governor Bullock extended his thanks for the partnership using GEER funds. As we make progress toward economic recovery, we know Montana's two-year and community colleges have the ability to be flexible and quickly respond to workforce needs across the state. Thank you for your partnership in using \$2.2 million to address teacher shortages, create a remote information technology program, and a pilot respiratory therapy program, among other projects. These funds will enable more Montanans to pursue college and technical education training across the state.

While the pandemic continues to be one of the most challenging eras in our state and nation's history, we must prioritize students and give them the education they need to serve as our future leaders. Thank you for joining me in continuing to urge folks to adhere to the guidelines and continue to look out for one another so that we can get through this. He closed with extending his thanks to Montana students, faculty, and staff for their hard work and dedication. Discussion followed.

Remarks by Superintendent Arntzen

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen provided an update and overview of K-12 school reopening efforts across Montana. She spoke to the continued strong partnership between K-12 and postsecondary education. She noted the upcoming College Application Week, in partnership with OCHE this fall and discussed recent efforts associated with the ACT test. She spoke in support of local control related to the Bitterroot Valley Community College proposal and allow this to be a decision for that community. She discussed the impacts on everyone caused by the pandemic and expressed thanks to Governor Bullock for the flexibilities he and his office have provided to date for K-12 education. She noted efforts at the federal level, specifically the waiver Montana has received from the Department of Agriculture enabling OPI to help feed children of ages 0-18 breakfast and lunch across Montana. She spoke to efforts and flexibilities associated with teacher licensure and accreditation. She noted the \$900 million grant received to help focus on mental health and discussed the importance of mental health for students and teachers. Discussion followed.



CONSENT

Staff Items:

- a. Labor Agreement; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-101-R0920*
- b. Staff Item; UM-Western *ITEM 190-1600-R0920*
- c. Staff Item; MSU-Billings *ITEM 190-2700-R0920*
- d. Staff Item; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1000-R0920*
- e. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – Kunze; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2006-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- f. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – LaMeres; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2007-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- g. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – Wiedenheft; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2008-R0920 | Attachment #1*

Emeriti Faculty:

- h. LaBonty; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1009-R0920*
- i. Fisher; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2009-R0920*
- j. Smith; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2010-R0920*
- k. Wyckoff; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2011-R0920*
- l. Kramer; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2013-R0920*
- m. Kemmerer; MSU-Billings *ITEM 190-2701-R0920*

Facility Items:

- n. Request for Authorization to Remodel Liberal Arts (Eck Hall) North Classrooms & East Restrooms; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1010-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- o. Request for Authorization to Remodel the Research Storage Building at Flathead Lake Biological Station; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1011-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- p. Request for Authorization to Remodel Music 011-218 and Practice Rooms; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1012-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- q. Request for Authorization to Construct Combined Heat and Power Plant; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1013-R0920 | Attachment #1*

Other

- r. Request for Approval to Revise BOR Policy 940.2 - Application Fee; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-104-R0920 | Attachment #1*



- s. Request for Approval to Revised BOR Policy 1202.1 – Athletics; OCHE/MUS
ITEM 190-102-R0920 | Attachment #1

- t. Request for Authorization for Montana Technological University to Grant an Easement to the City-County of Butte Silver Bow, Montana; Montana Tech
ITEM 190-1502-R0920 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2 | Attachment #3

ACTION

- a. FY 2021 Operating Budgets; OCHE/MUS
ITEM 190-103-R0920 | Attachment #1

Deputy Commissioner Tyler Trevor presented this request for approval of an all funds operating budget for the institutions and agencies of the Montana University System for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020, as submitted by each of the units, recommended by the Commissioner of Higher Education, and summarized in the system and campus budget schedules. He noted that approval of these operating budget is required by §17-7-138(2), MCA, which states: “The expenditure of money appropriated in the general appropriations act to the Board of Regents, on behalf of the university system units, as defined in §17-7-102, MCA, is contingent upon approval of a comprehensive operating budget by October 1 of each fiscal year.” The approving authority for the university system is defined by §17-7-102(3)(f), MCA, to be the Board of Regents of Higher Education or its designated representative. This year’s operating budget also includes approval of the distribution of all CARES Act funding received by the MUS. Deputy Commissioner Trevor provided a review and summary of system level all funds which include auxiliary, plant funds, community college, loans & endowments, tribal college assistance, and OCHE for a total of \$1.5 million. Discussion followed.

Shauna Lyons, MUS Budget Analyst, provided an overview of the funding received through the CARES Act. She detailed the breakout of funds by campus noting that the majority of funds stemming from the Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Act. She noted that 50% of those funds were required to go to the students. She discussed the remaining funds received through the Governor’s office via the COVID Relief Fund (CRF). She explained that these funds are intended to reimburse expenditures related to COVID-19 mitigation. She provided an overview of CARES funding related to FY21 noting that campuses will draw down on the remainder of funds available to them. She explained additional funding received for FY21 through the Strengthening Institutions/Minority Serving, through the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER), and through the COVID Relief Fund (CRF). Discussion followed.

- b. Request for Authorization to Issue Facilities Revenue Bonds; MSU – Bozeman
ITEM 190-2012-R0920 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2

Deputy Commissioner Trevor presented this request, consistent with MCA-20-25-402, borrowing by the Regents, that the Board of Regents of the Montana University System authorizes the adoption of a Resolution to issue a new series of facilities improvement revenue bonds for Montana State University and authorizes Montana State University and the Commissioner of Higher Education to proceed with the issuance of these bonds



resulting in construction proceeds not to exceed \$22 million for the MSU Student Wellness Center project. Discussion followed.

- c. Request for Authorization to Adopt "Tilleman Field" as the Formal name of the New Football Field on MSU-Northern's Campus; MSU-Northern *ITEM 190-2801-R0920 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2*

Chancellor Kegel presented this request, in accordance with BOR policy 1004.1, MSU Northern requests authorization from the Montana Board of Regents to adopt the name Tilleman Field for the new football field built on MSU Northern's campus. He noted that in September of 2019, the Tilleman family, owners of the Tilleman Motor Company and GMC dealership in Havre, made a lead gift to kick off the public phase of the fundraising campaign for the new Northern Lights football field and stadium project. Mike Tilleman, a former NFL football player, was also instrumental in starting Northern's football program twenty years ago, as well as founding the Northern Lights Athletic Scholarship Foundation (NLASF), which has contributed significantly to MSU Northern Athletics over the last 20 years. Through the NLASF, Mike hosts a celebrity pheasant hunt called Legends for Lights, which brings former NFL players to Havre every fall. All money raised is donated by NLASF to the MSU Northern athletic program and provides vital funding for scholarships and staffing needs. The naming process has been collaborative and included input from both the campus community and the public. Multiple opportunities and methods to provide feedback and discuss the formal name have been provided.

INFORMATION

- a. Budget, Administration, & Audit Committee Workplan and Calendar

Deputy Commissioner Trevor presented the Budget, Administration & Audit Committee workplan noting the priority areas targeted for FY21 to include budget stabilization, MUS strategic initiatives, Legislative tracking, and 2023 biennial revenue.

- b. Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 940.1 – Residency Policy | *Attachment #1*

Acting Chief Legal Counsel Helen Thipgen presented the informational request for proposed revisions to BOR Policy 940.1 – Residency Policy. The proposed revisions clarify that a service member and the service member's spouse and dependent children may retain in-state status if the service member is transferred on military orders to another state. To retain in-state status under this revision, the service member, spouse, or dependent children must be enrolled prior to the service member's transfer and remain continuously enrolled on campus. In-state status is not residency but allows an individual who is classified as "in-state" under the exceptions in the residency policy to receive tuition rates available only to residents. The revisions do not limit an individual's ability to establish residency as provided in BOR 940.1. Further, the revisions would support active-duty service members and their families if the service member is transferred by the military out of Montana.



c. Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 203.5.2 – Appeals | *Attachment #1*

Acting Chief Legal Counsel Helen Thigpen presented the informational request for proposed revisions to BOR Policy 203.5.2 – Appeals Policy. The Board’s appeal policy is set forth in 203.5.2 and outlines the procedures by which a party may appeal a campus decision to the Commissioner and, subsequently, to the Board. The proposed revisions, as shown in the attached document, would revise the appeal policy to: 1. Provide that appeals may be made directly from an affiliate campus to the Commissioner; 2. Clarify that a final campus decision may be issued by the campus president/chancellor or their designee; 3. Provide that the Board’s standard of review is the “arbitrary and capricious” standard -- the same as the Commissioner’s standard of review; and 4. Clarify that the Board may accept an appeal without a full or partial hearing (paper appeal) if it accepts an appeal for review. The current appeal policy provides that “Decisions of a campus chancellor are appealable to the university president.” The remaining changes are for readability and organizational purposes and do not change the substance of the policy. Discussion followed.

Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee

ACTION

a. Request to Plan Proposals *Executive Summary* | *Supporting Documentation* | *New Program Tracking*

Provost Bob Mokwa of MSU presented the request to plan proposals for a Master’s Degree in Materials Science; Master of Arts Degree in Professional Studies; and a Physics Bachelor of Science Degree – Astronomy and Astrophysics Option.

Interim Provost Reed Humphrey of UM presented the request to plan proposals for a Ph.D. in Computer Science; C.A.S. and Certificate in Brewing Science; a Human Physiology Option in the Integrative Physiology B.S.; a Ph.D. in Integrative Physiology and Rehabilitation Sciences; request to establish Montana Repertory Theatre as a Center; request for Skaggs Center for Telehealth and Precision Medicine; and a Certificate in General Studies. Discussion followed.

Provost Steve Gammon of MT Tech presented the request to plan proposal for a M.S. in Geological Engineering.

Acting Dean Sandy Bauman of Helena College-UM presented the request to plan proposal for a C.A.S. in Fire & Emergency Services and A.S. in Fire & Emergency Services.

b. Level II Items *Executive Summary* | *Supporting Documentation*

Deputy Commissioner Tessman spoke to the process related to these submissions. Individual campuses spoke their requests individually, including MSU Bozeman’s request to establish the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which Provost Mokwa discussed.



INFORMATION

a. Annual eLearning Update | 2020 eLearning Report

Mr. Joe Thiel, Director of Academic Policy & Research, noted this report comes forward each September as an update on the number of online programs across Montana. Discussion followed. Alongside Mr. Thiel, Maricel Lawrence, Executive Director of UOnline and Sarah Kloewer, Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning at MCC provided a presentation regarding online learning in Montana, noting the components required to develop a high-quality online course/program. They discussed the instructional design, collaboration and need for dedicated staff as they relate to online course development. Discussion followed.

b. Annual College Access Update *GEAR UP Handout | METS Handout #1 | METS Handout #2*

Mr. Travis Anderson, Director of Gear Up and Jeannie Origbo, Director of Montana Education Talent Search, provided an update on college access. They discussed first-year service partnerships, online student learning and mentoring, online professional development and provided an ACT test update. They further discussed social media engagement, COVID-19 responsive programming and the College Access arc of events which includes Gear Up week, College Application Week, FAFSA completion month, First Generation Day, TRIO Day, and College Signing week.

c. AIMA Update

Angela McLean, Director of American Indian/Minority Achievement (AIMA) and K-12 Partnerships, provided an update on AIMA. She briefly recapped the AIMA recommendations adopted by the Board in 2017, specifically the common professional development for all faculty and staff. She noted that close to 40% of all MUS employees have completed the Indian Education for All for One MUS course. She summarized the MUS Tribal Relations Reports for 2020 noting an emphasis on partnerships with Tribal Colleges, Tribal Health, Montana Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and DOE-NSNTI (Native Serving Non-Tribal Institutions). She noted updated events including Native American Heritage Day scheduled on September 25, 2020 and corresponding campus-based activities that are planned. Director McLean indicated that a report with information regarding enrollment, retention, and completion updates would come forward at the November BOR meeting. She extended thanks and appreciation for the continued work of the AIMA council members. Discussion followed.

d. Proposed Changes to BOR Policy 221 – Authorization to Operate Postsecondary Institution in the State of Montana; OCHE/MUS *Proposed Policy Changes | Attachment #1*

Joe Thiel, Director of Academic Policy & Research, presented the informational request for proposed revisions to BOR Policy 221 – Authorization to Operate Postsecondary Institution in the State of Montana. He noted that the proposed changes to Policy 221 first clarify the route by which students can bring forward 'program integrity' complaints to the board for review, as required by the US Department of Education act. Previous



policy was unclear as to the route students at Montana's community colleges should follow. The second change to policy 221 creates an institutional appeals process for Montana institutions joining the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (or SARA). This agreement helps institutions offering distance education to meet state regulatory requirements and enroll students from SARA participating states. The institution appeals process is a new requirement under SARA rules.

- e. MUS Academic Priorities for AY 2020-2021 *Executive Summary | Campus Academic Planning and Priorities Statements*

Deputy Commissioner Tessman explained that this item is part of the new academic program approval process to help provide the board a tool to view campus academic program planning and specifically how new program proposals are identified, how they fit in with each institution's academic strategy, and how the institution establishes academic priorities.

- f. Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee Workplan

Deputy Commissioner Tessman presented the draft work plan for the ARSA Committee for AY 2020-2021 noting the priorities of COVID-19 strategy, resident student access, student success (retention, persistence, completion), research and innovation, academic program strategy, American Indian & Minority Achievement (AIMA) and "Horizon Initiatives".

- g. Level I Memorandum (April, May, June, July)

Deputy Commissioner Tessman spoke to the process related to these submissions.

Public Comment*

** This meeting is open to the public electronically. Anyone wishing to provide public comment is encouraged to do so either by dialing 1-346-248-7799 or 1-669-900-9128 and entering the Meeting ID. Upon dialing in, press "*9 to" "raise their hand". The host will lower hands in order and unmute the phone line to ask the individual their full name and allow them to give public comment. Public comment is also available at your local campus, please contact your local campus CEO Office for more details. Comments can also be submitted in writing, via email, to aunsworth@montana.edu. Comments sent will be shared with the Board Members and included as part of the official public record.*

Candy Lubansky, Advisory Council Chair at Bitterroot College, spoke in support of the development of BVCC district.

Sue Smith, Advisory Council Trustee Elect, spoke in support of the development of BVCC district.

John Davenport spoke in support of the development of BVCC district.

- Committee Reports & Action
- Budget, Administration and Audit Committee

CONSENT

Staff Items:

- a. Labor Agreement; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-101-R0920*



- b. Staff Item; UM-Western *ITEM 190-1600-R0920*
- c. Staff Item; MSU-Billings *ITEM 190-2700-R0920*
- d. Staff Item; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1000-R0920*
- e. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – Kunze; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2006-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- f. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – LaMeres; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2007-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- g. Request for Approval of University/System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – Wiedenheft; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2008-R0920 | Attachment #1*

Emeriti Faculty:

- h. LaBonty; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1009-R0920*
- i. Fisher; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2009-R0920*
- j. Smith; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2010-R0920*
- k. Wyckoff; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2011-R0920*
- l. Kramer; MSU-Bozeman *ITEM 190-2013-R0920*
- m. Kemmerer; MSU-Billings *ITEM 190-2701-R0920*

Facility Items:

- n. Request for Authorization to Remodel Liberal Arts (Eck Hall) North Classrooms & East Restrooms; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1010-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- o. Request for Authorization to Remodel the Research Storage Building at Flathead Lake Biological Station; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1011-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- p. Request for Authorization to Remodel Music 011-218 and Practice Rooms; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1012-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- q. Request for Authorization to Construct Combined Heat and Power Plant; UM-Missoula *ITEM 190-1013-R0920 | Attachment #1*

Other:

- r. Request for Approval to Revise BOR Policy 940.2 - Application Fee; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-104-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- s. Request for Approval to Revised BOR Policy 1202.1 – Athletics; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-102-R0920 | Attachment #1*
- t. Request for Authorization for Montana Technological University to Grant an Easement to the City-County of Butte Silver Bow, Montana; Montana Tech *ITEM 190-1502-R0920 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2 | Attachment #3*



A motion for approval of consent items a. – t. was made by Regent Dombrowski; motion passed (7-0).

ACTION

- a. FY 2021 Operating Budgets; OCHE/MUS *ITEM 190-103-R0920 | Attachment #1*

A motion for approval of action item a. ITEM 190-103-R0920 was made by Regent Dombrowski; motion passed (7-0).

- b. Request for Authorization to Issue Facilities Revenue Bonds; MSU – Bozeman
ITEM 190-2012-R0920 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2

A motion for approval of action item b. Item 190-2012-R020 was made by Regent Sheehy; Regent Nystuen chose to recuse himself from the vote; motion passed (6-0).

- c. Request for Authorization to Adopt “Tilleman Field” as the Formal name of the New Football Field on MSU-Northern’s Campus; MSU-Northern *ITEM 190-2801-R0920 | Attachment #1*

A motion for approval of action item c. Item 190-2801-R0920 was made by Regent Tuss, discussion followed, motion passed (7-0).

- Two-Year and Community College Committee

None.

- Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee

ACTION

- a. Request to Plan Proposals *Executive Summary | Supporting Documentation | New Program Tracking*

A motion for approval of action item a. Request to Plan Proposals was made by Regent Nystuen; motion passed (7-0).

Level II Items *Executive Summary | Supporting Documentation*

A motion for approval of action item b. Level II items was made by Regent Tuss; motion passed (7-0).

- Student Appeal #1

Chair Lozar explained the process related to the student appeal. The request to hear the appeal is denied and the Commissioner’s decision is upheld.

- Student Appeal #2

Chair Lozar explained the process related to the student appeal. Regent Sheehy made a motion to hear Student Appeal #2; motion failed (2-5) and the Commissioner’s decision is upheld.



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Chair Lozar convened an executive session. He determined that the matters of discussion relate to matters of individual privacy and that the demands of individual privacy outweigh the merits of public disclosure.

Executive Session

- UM Regents Professor Nomination
- Litigation Update

Meeting Adjourned at 6:00pm

Approved by the Board of Regents on

11/19/2020

Date

Handwritten signature of Clayton T. Christian in black ink.

Clayton T. Christian
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

11/19/2020

Date

Handwritten signature of Casey Lozar in black ink.

Casey Lozar
Chair, Board of Regents



APPENDIX A

From: [Rick and Candy Lubansky](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Written Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 9:15:59 AM
Attachments: [BVCC-LetOfSup-BCAC.pdf](#)

Amy,

Please find attached a copy of the letter of support from the Bitterroot College UM Advisory Council in support of the Bitterroot Valley Community College.

Candy Lubansky, BCAC Chair



September 16, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

Bitterroot College UM Advisory Council Leadership writes this letter in support of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College. After multiple years of budget reductions banked against expense increases, Bitterroot College UM is no longer fiscally viable. In order to continue operations in pursuit of the Board of Regents comprehensive two-year education mission/vision, Bitterroot College UM requires a new organizational structure which results in sufficient funding to accomplish its purpose.

Per Board of Regents directive, Bitterroot College UM is tasked with providing transfer education, workforce development, developmental & adult basic education, lifelong learning, and community development for Ravalli County. Unfortunately, the College is not adequately funded for this task. Bitterroot College UM, with a service region of over 43,000 residents, has just three fulltime employees and no permanent faculty lines. For FY2021, the College is leveraging \$40,000 in external one-time-only funding to maintain base operations; this funding will not be available for FY2022. Bitterroot College UM operates on the thinnest of margins, with just \$496,000 in direct General Fund base allocation support from the UM. In terms of state funding, when combining direct and indirect support (liberally estimated to equal direct support) from UM, Bitterroot College UM receives about \$29 per county resident for college-credit operations. For Helena College UM, state support equals approximately \$79/county resident; for Great Falls College MSU, state support equals approximately \$94/county resident. It is not surprising Bitterroot College UM struggles financially to meet the Board of Regents mission/vision in Ravalli County.

Bitterroot College is extended beyond its capacity. Bitterroot College does not have the resources and staffing to continue its current level of programming and services after FY2021 if there is not promise of transition to a community college governance and funding structure. The Bitterroot College UM Advisory Council strongly endorses the organization of Bitterroot Valley Community College to ensure that the residents of Ravalli County have local access to a campus able to pursue and achieve the Montana Board of Regents comprehensive two-year education mission/vision.

Sincerely,

Candy Lubansky, Chair, Advisory Council, Bitterroot College UM

From: [Gren, Eric](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Written comment for today's Board of Regents meeting
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:54:30 PM

My name is Eric and I currently teach the college biology courses at Bitterroot College. Since joining the team here at Bitterroot College, I have been blown away by the level of dedication I've seen in our students and the strong support of our local community for our campus. Many of my students are juggling child care, multiple jobs, and tight finances that would put college out of reach if they did not have access to the classes we offer here locally. Local employers I've spoken to have told me how helpful it has been to have a school that can be responsive to the specific needs of the local economy. I've taught at a number of other schools and I've never been so keenly aware of the critical service educators like myself are providing to a community as I do here at Bitterroot College. Our school is such an essential resource to our local students and to the larger Bitterroot community and it's critical that we are allowed the financial resources and academic authority ensure our continued viability going forward. I encourage the Board of Regents to support the organization of the BVCC.

Respectfully,

Eric Gren (BC Biology Instructor)

Eric Gren, PhD | Biology Instructor | Bitterroot College-University of Montana
103 South 9th Street, Hamilton, MT 59840
www.umt.edu/bc | eric.gren@umontana.edu

From: [Michelle McConnaha](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Yes
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 10:08:18 AM

Yes, Please establish Bitterroot College as an independent community college in the Bitterroot Valley.

Michelle McConnaha
Corvallis resident



RECEIVED

SEP 17 2020

Montana University System

September 8, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

The Corvallis School District Board of Trustees submits this letter to the Montana Board of Regents in support of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. While Corvallis School District enjoys a positive relationship with the existing Bitterroot College UM, the District's interactions with Bitterroot College, beyond Dual Credit, are nominal as the College does not have the staffing and programming needed to sustain meaningful collaboration. With the establishment of Bitterroot Valley Community College, the students, parents, and residents of Corvallis School District would expect to gain a committed and present partner in the development and delivery of locally available postsecondary pathways, especially with respect to career and technical education opportunities.

A locally controlled community college would focus on the needs of local residents and businesses, marshalling the resources and expertise needed to train local individuals for local jobs. Corvallis School District students could explore and experience local trades, technical, and career pathways in middle and high school via programming partnerships with the new community college, and then as high school graduates be ready to locally train for local jobs at Bitterroot Valley Community College. Workforce and transfer education would be affordable, accessible, responsive, reliable, and robust under a locally controlled community college.

The Corvallis School District Board of Trustees appreciates the possibilities and promise of Bitterroot Valley Community College. A true community college in Ravalli County would significantly enhance the opportunities available to Corvallis School District students and graduates, as well as to their parents and fellow community members. A community college in Ravalli County would change lives. The Corvallis School Board strongly recommends the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District to the Board of Regents.

Sincerely,

Becky Anderson, Board Chair
Corvallis School District

Tonia Bloom, Shawn Boelman, Jennifer Channer, Todd Wyche, Dan Wolsky, Mark Fournier

From: [John Schneeberger](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: September BOR Public Comment
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 5:46:16 PM

Dear Board of Regents,

I am commenting as a private citizen but I have worked with the Bitterroot College-UM for more than 10 years. I work for the Ravalli County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA) and started a program of continuing education business classes. The Bitterroot was a classic underserved community in regard to technical assistance for small business. For years Missoula-based EDOs would offer a course in the Bitterroot, such as NexLevel, and would frequently have to cancel the class for lack of signups. We at RCEDA decided that the problem was the time commitment. Many small businesses in Ravalli County were not willing to devote six weeks to a class in entrepreneurship. We started a program in 2010 offering one-day classes on such standard business planning topics as financial management, marketing, HR, etc. We also customized technology classes such as QuickBooks and Microsoft Suite applications into much shorter formats, specifically focused on the immediate needs of the small proprietor. To date this program has provided training for more than 2,000 business people. This success is the result of collaboration with the open-minded and innovative leadership at the Bitterroot College. This partnership created a reliable, recurring source of business training where none existed before. I am very concerned about the sustainability of Bitterroot College with its uncertain source of funding. I am also very concerned about losing access to what has become a local institution. The staff at Bitterroot College truly have an entrepreneurial spirit in their willingness to scrounge for resources and try to say "yes" when it will benefit the people of Ravalli County. Please support the creation of a community college district in the Bitterroot Valley.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Schneeberger
PO Box 893
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-370-3230

From: [Dixie Stark](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Last letter of support for Bitterroot Community College
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 9:59:07 AM
Attachments: [Hamilton Schools support letter.pdf](#)

Amy, Here is the letter of support from the Hamilton School District. This one makes 20 total.

Dixie Stark

Hamilton PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 2, 2020

Hamilton School District #3 • 217 Daly Avenue • Hamilton, Montana 59840-2827

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

The Hamilton School District Board of Trustees writes this letter in support of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. The Hamilton School District is aware of the challenges the current Bitterroot College University of Montana faces under its present governance and funding structure. Having a local college that Hamilton Schools can rely on as a vibrant and dynamic partner in the education of our community's children, parents, and residents is an exciting prospect. Transitioning Bitterroot College UM to a locally controlled, permanent community college allows this prospect to become a reality.

The Hamilton School District has enjoyed a strong relationship with Bitterroot College UM since its inception as Bitterroot College Program in 2009. Over the years Hamilton School District has partnered with Bitterroot College on a Welding CAS, Dual Credit courses, and Certified Nurse Aide student placement. Since 2015, Hamilton School District has housed Bitterroot College in the District's old middle school. Since 2018, Hamilton School District has contracted with Bitterroot College to deliver its adult education programming and provide the HiSET. Hamilton School District understands that these present partnerships are in danger and that future partnerships are in question if Bitterroot College is not able to secure adequate and reliable funding to continue present operations and to plan for future programming.

Establishing Bitterroot Valley Community College would provide our local college with access to the resources and authority its needs to become a permanent and reliable actor in our community. And, critically for Hamilton School District, the new locally controlled college would become a dependable partner in building locally available postsecondary education pathways, particularly career and technical pathways, for the district's students, parents, employees, and residents.

The Hamilton School District Board of Trustees strongly endorses the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District.

Sincerely,



Patrick Hanley, Board Chair

Hamilton School District

Heidi Apedaile, Drew Blankenbaker, Tim Campbell, Jeni Seifert, Rebekah Stamp, Seth Gale Wyrick

**OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT**
217 DALY AVENUE
P: 406.363.2280
F: 406.363.1843

**HAMILTON
HIGH SCHOOL**
327 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
P: 406.375.6060
F: 406.375.6076

**HAMILTON
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
209 SOUTH 5TH STREET
P: 406.363.2121
F: 406.363.7032

**DALY ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**
208 DALY AVENUE
P: 406.363.2122
F: 406.363.6494

**WASHINGTON PRIMARY
SCHOOL**
225 NORTH 5TH STREET
P: 406.363.2144
F: 406.363.7420

From: [Dixie Stark](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Letters of Support from RCWA
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:36:03 AM
Attachments: [BVCC-LetOfSup-BCFaculty.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-CorSD.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-BBIA.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-BCStaff.pdf](#)

Dear Amy Unsworth,

Attached please find 19 letters of support from the Ravalli County Workforce Alliance (RCWA) in support of organizing a community college district in Ravalli County. I will have to send them separately because they are too big to come all together. Here are the first 4.

Dixie Stark
406 381 2434



Dear Chair Lozar:

As current faculty of Bitterroot College, we write to express our enthusiastic support for the Bitterroot Valley Community College Initiative.

A locally controlled, fully-funded community college can provide opportunities for Ravalli County residents to affordably achieve their academic and workforce development goals. The current educational model for Bitterroot College is not sustainable or able to grow. We believe the best way to serve the needs of our community is to establish a community college district.

Best regards,

Bitterroot College
Faculty

Robert D. Walsh, Ph.D.

James F Striebel

James F Striebel

Matthew Kaler

Matthew Kaler

Jamie Ogden

Eric Gren, Ph.D.

Jennifer Johnson

Jaime Middleton

Lee R. Oly

Lee R. Oly

Daniele Vickers

Valerie Aerni

Valerie Aerni

Doug McConnaha

Doug McConnaha

Susan Penfield

Bruce Bradford

Bruce Bradford

George Furniss

George Furniss



September 8, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

The Corvallis School District Board of Trustees submits this letter to the Montana Board of Regents in support of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. While Corvallis School District enjoys a positive relationship with the existing Bitterroot College UM, the District's interactions with Bitterroot College, beyond Dual Credit, are nominal as the College does not have the staffing and programming needed to sustain meaningful collaboration. With the establishment of Bitterroot Valley Community College, the students, parents, and residents of Corvallis School District would expect to gain a committed and present partner in the development and delivery of locally available postsecondary pathways, especially with respect to career and technical education opportunities.

A locally controlled community college would focus on the needs of local residents and businesses, marshalling the resources and expertise needed to train local individuals for local jobs. Corvallis School District students could explore and experience local trades, technical, and career pathways in middle and high school via programming partnerships with the new community college, and then as high school graduates be ready to locally train for local jobs at Bitterroot Valley Community College. Workforce and transfer education would be affordable, accessible, responsive, reliable, and robust under a locally controlled community college.

The Corvallis School District Board of Trustees appreciates the possibilities and promise of Bitterroot Valley Community College. A true community college in Ravalli County would significantly enhance the opportunities available to Corvallis School District students and graduates, as well as to their parents and fellow community members. A community college in Ravalli County would change lives. The Corvallis School Board strongly recommends the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District to the Board of Regents.

Sincerely,

Becky Anderson, Board Chair
Corvallis School District

Tonia Bloom, Shawn Boelman, Jennifer Channer, Todd Wyche, Dan Woisky, Mark Fournier



Bitterroot Building Industry Association
215 Marcus, STE 104
Hamilton, MT 59840

9/11/2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

I am submitting this letter to communicate the Bitterroot Building Industry Association's support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Our business/organization has 97 businesses as members, the majority of whom are residents of the Bitterroot Valley. A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses and industry, helping to grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful.

We would use a local community college to encourage youth to seek out the trades and stay in our community.

We at Bitterroot Building Industry Association wholeheartedly support the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,

Ed Brenneman
President of the Bitterroot Building Industry Association

September 15, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents



Dear Chair Lozar,

Bitterroot College UM staff, as represented by the signees below, writes this letter in support of the organization of Bitterroot Valley Community College. Bitterroot College UM staff understands that governance by a locally controlled community college district will result in the necessary authority, resources, and recognition needed to operate an effective and efficient two-year college in Ravalli County.

In the past, the Montana Board of Regents has understood the implicit limitations of having a unit's immediate governance and funding structure reside outside the unit's home community. When restructuring the Montana University System in 1994, the Board of Regents allowed the vocational technical centers in Helena and Great Falls to remain "free-standing" as neither community had a local four-year campus in which to embed the centers.¹ In 2010, the Board of Regents authorized the transition of operations of the MSU-Great Falls College of Technology in the Gallatin Valley to MSU-Bozeman. Reasons provided by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for operations of Great Falls' Gallatin unit to be moved under MSU-Bozeman were the following:

- Administrative inefficiencies that affect both the breadth and quality of services students offered.
- Strain on the human and fiscal resources required to provide programming in a remote location.
- Inability to expand programs and services in the Gallatin Valley, in spite of the needs of the community and region and the goals of College!Now²

In the Gallatin decision, the Board of Regents agreed there were significant challenges when a unit was managed and controlled by a remote entity; the Board approved the Gallatin unit's move from remote rule to local rule in a 6 to 1 vote.³

As the Regents understood in 1994 and 2010, the challenges of remote management and control are not limited to responsive program and services expansion. The challenges also include the provision of efficient, sufficient, and quality student and administrative services. These same challenges of remote management also impact Bitterroot College UM operations. Bitterroot College UM staff annually spend tens if not hundreds of hours negotiating and renegotiating processes, untangling miscommunications, and recovering from forgotten communications with respect to UM oversight. The hours consumed by these inefficiencies are considerable; time for program development, outreach/recruitment, and collaborative initiatives is lost to a remote central office. Student enrollment and student success is impacted by these inefficiencies; students delay entry, withdraw from classes, and even forgo an education altogether as services may be late, convoluted, or lack sufficient scope or quality. UM resources are focused on serving students in Missoula and promoting a Missoula student experience. Funding, staffing, and systems to recruit and support Bitterroot College students for a Bitterroot student experience are not forthcoming. Fundamentally, UM priorities and processes are not designed to effectively and efficiently include a second operation 50 miles distant.

Bitterroot College UM staff looks forward to providing services and programming with greater efficiency and effectiveness when under the local and independent governance of Bitterroot Valley Community College. As Bitterroot College UM staff we witness every day the struggles and successes of our students. We follow our students from start to finish, standing by as students navigate college for the first time and standing proud as students complete courses and degrees they never thought possible. We live the power of the two-year mission and vision. We want our college to be the best it can be for our students and our community; we want our college to be a place of hope, support, success, and safety for our community during good times and bad. We want our college to have what is needed to serve our community now and long into the future.

Sincerely,

Lea Guthrie *Dirk E. ...* *Meri Telin*
Hamilton
Jon ...
Jamie Z. Handao *Victoria Clark*

¹ Cech, J. E. (2014). Montana. In J. N. Friedel, J. Killackey, E. Miller, & S. Katsinas (Eds.), *Fifty state systems of community colleges: Mission, governance, funding, and accountability* (4th ed., pp. 189–197). Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press.

² May 2010, Board of Regents Meeting, [ITEM 147-2901-R0510](#).

³ May 2010, Board of Regents Meeting, [Minutes](#).

From: [Dixie Stark](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: More letters from RCWA for Bitterroot College
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:40:25 AM
Attachments: [BVCC-LetOfSup-HRC.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-HamCty.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-DarbySD.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-LitBit.pdf](#)

Amy, these letters are written public comment. Here are the next 4.

Dixie Stark

September 10, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
P. O. Box 203201
Helena, Montana 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar:

I am writing this letter to communicate my support of Ravalli County residents who are working to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. The Human Resource Council (HRC) provides job training and workforce development services to Ravalli County residents through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and through the Pathways Program of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program. The underlying goal of our Workforce Development Services is to provide opportunities for lower income individuals to gain skills and education that will enable them to obtain employment that will meet the economic needs of them and their families. Our staff depend on the partnership we have with the Bitterroot College to provide opportunities for education and training, both for those seeking a degree or those seeking an industry recognized credential.

A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our residents who are seeking to advance their careers in our local businesses. Additionally, a local community college will keep our workforce trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful.

We at HRC wholeheartedly support the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We at HRC will continue to work collaboratively and be supportive of a local community college.

Sincerely,


Jim Morton
Executive Director

Incapacity
Assessment
Services

Low Income
Advocacy

Workforce
Development

Energy
Assistance

Owner
Occupied
Home
Rehabilitation
Loan Program

Affordable
Housing
Development

First Time
Homebuyer
Assistance

2-1-1
Information
& Referral

Residential
Energy
Conservation

Rental
Assistance

Summer
Food
Service

A LEADER IN COMMUNITY ACTION SINCE 1965

1801 South Higgins Avenue, Missoula, Montana 59801 (406) 728-3710 FAX (406) 728-7680

Offices in Missoula, Mineral and Ravalli Counties  Equal Opportunity in Service and Employment





City of Hamilton
223 South Second Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

September 14, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the City of Hamilton in support of the Montana Board of Regents recommendation for the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. The City of Hamilton supports the will of our voters to organize the new community college district.

The Bitterroot Valley Community College District includes Hamilton schools and will provide our residents the opportunity to obtain affordable secondary education, adult basic education, as well as community development opportunities close to home. A local Community College will meet the needs of Hamilton's citizens, which can differ than the needs in other areas.

The City of Hamilton is excited to have the Bitterroot Valley Community College in our city and fully supports the recommendation of the Montana Board of Regents.

Sincerely,

Dominic Farrenkopf
Mayor



DARBY SCHOOL DISTRICT

209 School Drive
Darby, MT 59829

(406) 821-3841 (ph)
(406) 821-4977 (fax)

info@darby.k12.mt.us
www.darby.k12.mt.us

September 8, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair

Montana Board of Regents

PO Box 203201

Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

Darby School District writes this letter in support of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. Darby School District looks forward to having a local postsecondary education partner that it can count on to provide relevant programming opportunities for its students, parents, staff, and residents.

Darby School District is particularly interested in dual credit courses and career & technical programming for its high school students. Having a local community college which is focused on local needs and has the resources and authority to develop and deliver programs connected to local jobs and local career pathways would provide direction to many of our students. A local community college would understand the challenges Darby students face when transitioning from high school to the workforce and could be responsive to those particular challenges – providing the types of transfer and workforce education that make for a successful transition to adulthood.

Finally, over one half of the land mass of Ravalli County lies within the Darby School District. Darby School District serves an area that is not within commuting distance to Missoula. Having a dynamic community college that is accessible to the residents of Darby School District would be socioeconomically transformative to Darby and its greater community.

Darby School District strongly endorses the establishment of the Bitterroot Valley Community College.

Sincerely,

Chris Toynbee, Superintendent

Darby School District

LITERACY

Bitterroot

August 3, 2020

Casey Lozar, Board of Regents

Dear Regent Lozar:

Literacy Bitterroot is submitting this letter to communicate our support for the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college district in the Bitterroot Valley. I have served as the director of Literacy Bitterroot for the past thirty years. We provide adult basic and literacy education services including high school equivalency (HSE) completion. I can assure you that having post-secondary education services from the University system in Hamilton has totally transformed the opportunities available locally for those who complete their HSE Diploma. The formation of a community college district in the Bitterroot Valley would further enhance opportunities for post-secondary education and training for both traditional and non-traditional graduates in Ravalli County.

Our county, the seventh most populous in the state, deserves an institution that can deliver a fully-developed comprehensive two-year mission. (AA degrees, workforce training, and adult education including both adult basic education and personal enrichment courses.) Under the current structure, workforce programming is practically non-existent, and funding is available for only one of these four components. The Montana Code Annotated includes provisions for Community Colleges to have some autonomy from the Montana University System (MUS) and thus have greater freedom and flexibility to meet the immediate education and training needs of the residents and businesses in their communities.

In Missoula, Adult Education programs are delivered by the K-12 school districts, which can levy permissive mills to fund these activities. Locally elected school boards have the power to levy these mills without a vote of the people, as they can be replaced if they are not fiscally prudent. Locally elected community college boards also have the power to levy mills for adult education programming. The Adult Education programs at the community colleges in Kalispell, Miles City, and Glendive use stable local funds to serve their districts. However, the Colleges of the MUS are not empowered to levy mills, and they do not have locally elected boards that can be replaced if they are not sufficiently fiscally prudent. Being under the MUS leaves the Bitterroot College stuck in a structure that limits student access to services.

Board Members

Chris King
President

Joan Padmos
Vice-President

Jim Simeroth
Treasurer

Christina Dunbar
Secretary

Dixie Stark
Executive Director

Literacy Bitterroot
316 North Third Street
Suite 156
Hamilton, MT 59840
406 | 363.2900
abc123@montana.com

NEW ADDRESS!!!

303 N Third ST
STE A

LITERACY

Bitterroot

Literacy Bitterroot has a long history of successful collaboration in the community. There are seven school districts in Ravalli County, and we have collaborated with them and with the Bitterroot College since its inception. It is unlikely that schools here will consolidate; a community college would provide the necessary structure to deliver cohesive adult education and workforce training throughout the Bitterroot Valley.

We at Literacy Bitterroot wholeheartedly support this effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We will work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,



Dixie Stark
Executive Director

Board Members

Chris King
President

Joan Padmos
Vice-President

Jim Simeroth
Treasurer

Christina Dunbar
Secretary

Dixie Stark
Executive Director

Literacy Bitterroot
316 North Third Street
Suite 156
Hamilton, MT 59840
406 | 363.2900
abc123@montana.com

NEW ADDRESS!!!

**303 N Third ST
STE A**

From: [Dixie Stark](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: More letters from RCWA
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:44:31 AM
Attachments: [BVCC-LetOfSup-LoneRockSD.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-RavHeadStart.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-MDMH.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-PaperClip.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-RavCtyComm.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-RCEDA.pdf](#)

Dear Amy,

I am so sorry this is turning into so many emails. There are 19 letters all together. Here are another six.

Dixie Stark

Lone Rock Elementary District #13

1112 Three Mile Creek Road
Stevensville, MT 59870

406-777-3314, Office
406-777-2770, Fax



September 14, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
P.O. Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

The Lone Rock School District fully supports the creation of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. Our district serves students in grades K-8 and we all know the value in creating pathways for students to stay near their home town/county for schooling beyond that of high school. The idea of being able to partner with a willing able staff in Hamilton for our students in middle school really will get them excited about the experiences that they will have at the High School in Stevensville and eventually could transition to Hamilton and the Community College. The Stevensville community has always supported the Bitterroot College of UM and will continue to support the creation of the community college district. The more we partner on items of continuing education the better off our county and individual towns will do collectively. The employees and Board of Trustees all support the efforts of the Community College and will endorse its inception.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert DoBell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert DoBell
Superintendent/Principal



Ravalli Head Start, Inc.

September 04, 2020

Casey Lozar
Board of Regents
560 N Park
Helena MT 59620

Dear Regent Lozar ,

I am submitting this letter in strong support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Ravalli Head Start, Inc. has 108 employees, 85 of whom are residents of the Bitterroot Valley. In addition, we serve 251 children and their families who are conically disadvantaged; 169 of whom live in Ravalli County. A locally controlled two-year college will provide critical accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses and industries, including Head Start. An accessible Community College will help grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful.

Ravalli Head Start, Inc. would use a local community college to provide entry level professional development for our employees and a wide range of poste secondary opportunities for the families we serve.

Ravalli Head Start, Inc. enthusiastically supports the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,

John J. Filz

Executive Director
Ravalli Head Start, Inc.

Ravalli Head Start, Inc.
81 Kurtz Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840
406.363.1217

Ravalli Early Head Start
81 Kurtz Lane
Hamilton, Montana 59840
406.363.7412

Missoula Early Head Start
2121 39th Street
Missoula, MT 59803
406.251.9410

August 1, 2020

Casey Lozar
Board of Regents

Dear Regent Lozar:

I am submitting this letter to communicate my support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Our business/organization has six hundred and fifty employees, the majority of whom are residents of the Bitterroot Valley. A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses and industry, helping to grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful.

As the largest employer in the Bitterroot Valley, we would greatly benefit from the opportunity to partner with a local community college to help ensure that our workforce needs are met and that Ravalli County residents have ample opportunity to find quality work near their homes. Potential partnership opportunities include training and education offerings customized to meet MDMH's strategic needs, clinical site rotations for students on the MDMH campus, and opportunities to offer college credit to local high school aged children who show an interest in healthcare as a career.

We at Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital wholeheartedly support the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,



John Bishop
CEO

The Paper Clip

228 Main Street - Box 978 | Hamilton, Montana 59840 | 406.363.5480

August 3, 2020

Casey Lozar
Board of Regents
560 N Park
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Regent Lozar:

This letter is written in support of the effort by Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Over the past several years the Paper Clip has employed four individuals who all attended the local Bitterroot College with varying degrees of success and satisfaction.

The advantage of a locally controlled two-year community college is that it allows the ability to provide affordable coursework tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses. The addition of new trades should help attract new businesses to the area. The end result is that a local community college can keep our workforce trained in order to meet present and future demands in the valley.

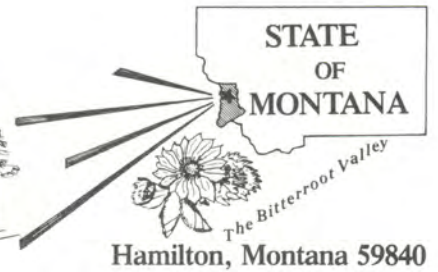
As a longtime employer, we support the efforts to create a community college in Ravalli County. We request that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. Thank you for your service and for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Albert Mitchell, *President*
The Paper Clip, Inc.

COUNTY OF RAVALLI



August 31, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

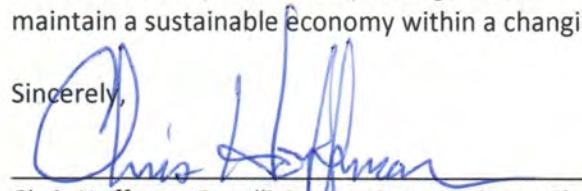
The Ravalli County Board of Commissioners submits this letter enthusiastically supporting a positive recommendation from the Montana Board of Regents to the Montana Legislature for the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. The Ravalli County Commissioners affirm the will of local voters to organize the new community college district.

Ravalli County is the seventh most populous county in Montana. It is the only county with significant population that does not have a locally administered unit of the Montana University System. The six most populated counties all have units of the MUS, and a handful of less populous counties have units of the MUS, as well. The labor force of Ravalli County is 20,278 people in July of 2020 (imi.mt.gov) However, the Bitterroot Job Service was closed several years ago by the state, despite the location of Job Service offices in nine counties with less population than Ravalli County. The location of Ravalli County next to Missoula County does not negate the need for local services.

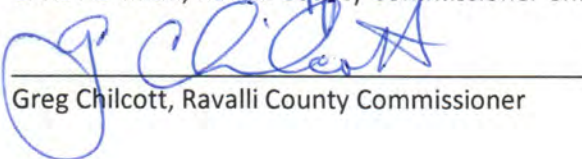
The Bitterroot Valley Community College District, comprised of the Ravalli County School Districts of Corvallis, Darby, Hamilton, Lone Rock, Stevensville, and Victor, will provide area residents with accessible, affordable, and responsive workforce training, transfer education, adult basic education, lifelong learning, and community development opportunities. The new community college district will have the authority, resources, and legitimacy required to effectively meet the varied programming needs and interests of the businesses, communities, and residents of Ravalli County.

The Ravalli County Commissioners look forward to working together with a robust, permanent, and locally controlled and committed Bitterroot Valley Community College to address local workforce and postsecondary education training. The Ravalli County Commissioners strongly advocate in favor of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. We believe the new district is necessary as the County looks to maintain a sustainable economy within a changing workforce and population landscape.

Sincerely,


Chris Hoffman, Ravalli County Commissioner Chairman


Jeff Burrows, Ravalli County Commissioner


Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County Commissioner



Ravalli County Economic Development Authority

September 14, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

Ravalli County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA) strongly supports the establishment of the Bitterroot Valley Community College. There is no question that the citizens of Ravalli County, have now, for the second time, voted for a community college in the Bitterroot. Of note is the fact that the citizens of Ravalli County voted to establish a community college in the Bitterroot ten years ago and the citizens voted choice was not allowed to proceed due to political wrangling. Concern for the wellbeing of Ravalli County citizens was not considered on the day their vote was subjugated.

Through our strong partnership the Bitterroot College Program and the RCEDA has built a curriculum to provide business training that is among the best in the state. Our training is affordable and responsive to the needs of small businesses. Our training provides opportunity for local workforce to advance in their career. Ravalli County's businesses are 65% small (2-9 jobs), 21% sole proprietors, and 12% small to medium (10 to 99 jobs). In 2019 there were about 2,500 business establishments and a few large corporations employing from 100 to 499. Ravalli County's employed labor force in 2019 was 19,411. Ravalli County is the state's 7th most populated county and 8th largest state income tax contributor at \$46 million. Many give lip service to delivering support to rural communities; the Bitterroot College Program actually delivers.

The ability to obtain loans, win grants, the ability for businesses to compete, the ability for business to grow and become more profitable, the opportunity for Ravalli County citizens to earn livable wages – all rely on the inclusion of information provided in our program. The training has been provided to several thousand individuals over the years. The Bitterroot College Program should have been the Bitterroot Valley Community College. Our college has already proven its success, its positive impacts, and its ability to prosper with next to zero funding despite UM mismanagement, underfunding, and outright refusal to allow needed programming to occur. This is a decade long track record – irrefutable proof that a community college will be a success. The partnerships between RCEDA and the college program have resulted in millions of dollars of loans, grants, and increased workforce. These successes translate to greater taxes paid into state and local coffers. Our college is an asset that provides taxpayers a return on investment. Unfortunately proof of this college's value has been hidden in the black hole of UM finance.

The Bitterroot College Program of which I speak is the expected label; however, the true label is Victoria Clark, a few key staff, and trusted advisors. These individuals and our community are what made this education effort a success.

I am hoping that those making the decision today will be the leaders that we did not have ten years ago, that you will have open minds and will embark on righting this long standing taking from Ravalli County.

Sincerely,


Julie Foster,
RCEDA Executive Director

From: [Dixie Stark](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Letters of Support from RCWA
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:53:13 AM
Attachments: [BVCC-LetOfSup-VictorSD.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-SteviSD.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-WestMTMentalHlth.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-ThomasFred.pdf](#)
[BVCC-LetOfSup-SAFE.pdf](#)

Amy,

Here is the last batch of five letters. There is one more letter coming when I get to the office. Thank you so much. I think that for public comment you might need to know I live at Darby and I serve as the Executive Director of Literacy Bitterroot, a non profit organization that serves the Bitterroot Valley.

Dixie Stark

VICTOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

RAVALLI COUNTY
DISTRICT NO. 7

425 4TH AVENUE
VICTOR, MONTANA 59875

TELEPHONE 406-642-3221
FAX NUMBER 406-642-3446

Lance Pearson
Superintendent/AD

Diane Woodard
K-12 Principal

Shelley O'Leary
District Clerk

Board of Trustees:

Paul Rosen
Chairman

Marci Smith
Vice Chairman

Mary Allred
Trustee

Tom Dobberstein
Trustee

Steve Wilson
Trustee

August 7, 2020

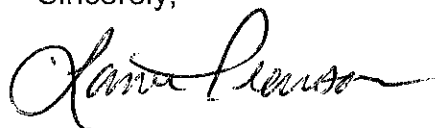
Casey Lozar, Chairperson
Montana University System Board of Regents

Dear Regent Lozar:

I am submitting this letter to communicate my support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Victor Schools has 50 employees, the majority of whom are residents of the Bitterroot Valley. A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses and industry, helping to grow new trades and attract new Businesses, as well as being a positive benefit to our students, graduates, parents, and school district. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful. We would use a local community college to partner with our school district to further promote higher learning for staff, students, and parents.

Victor Schools wholeheartedly supports the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,



Lance Pearson
Superintendent
Victor Public Schools



Dr. Robert Moore
Superintendent
Ext 136

Stevensville Public Schools

300 Park Avenue
Stevensville, MT 59870
Phone: 406-777-5481
Fax: 406-258-1246



Bill Schiele
Clerk/Business Manager
Ext 139

September 10, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

On behalf of the Stevensville School District Board of Trustees, please accept this letter in support of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. The Stevensville School District viewed a presentation of the current challenges facing the Bitterroot College University of Montana under the present structure. Under the present structure of Bitterroot College – UM, the Stevensville Public Schools have worked to provide a variety of opportunities for our students through dual credit offerings. However, the process has been cumbersome moving through local channels for approval with the University of Montana. Our hope is that the formation of Bitterroot Valley Community College will provide an entity dedicated to the needs of Ravalli County residents, communities, and businesses. Having a local college that all Ravalli County schools can rely on as a transitioning college option is a strong choice for many students in this valley for several reasons; for example, providing opportunities for the majority who are unable to commute to Missoula. Therefore, Stevensville School District strongly supports transferring the Bitterroot College-UM to a locally controlled, permanent community college.

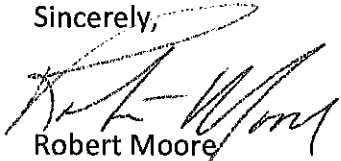
Stevensville School District understands that these present partnerships are in danger and that future partnerships are in question if Bitterroot College is not able to secure adequate and reliable funding to continue present operations and to plan for future programming. We feel that this local option is vital to our community to provide transitions to post-secondary options for all communities in the Bitterroot Valley.

Establishing Bitterroot Valley Community College would provide our local college with access to the resources and authority it needs to become a permanent and reliable actor in our community. Providing our students with the more affordable option of local community college and technical training is a part of Stevensville School District's long-range plan and we hope to build stronger partnerships to post-secondary training through Bitterroot Community College.

The Stevensville School District Board of Trustees strongly endorses the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. Our support is based on the key points as follows:

- Local unit needs to be legitimate; recognized by the State – results in access to Federal dollars, adequate State funding, permanence, ability to recruit on par with State’s other units
- Entity dedicated to needs of Ravalli County residents, communities, and businesses
- A robust unit that the community can rely on

Sincerely,



Robert Moore
Superintendent
Stevensville Public Schools

On behalf of Trustees: Cathi Cook, Sean Lenahan, Michele Fauth, Billy Donaldson, Sarah Armijo,
and Ben Meyer



Casey Lozar
Board of Regents

July 29, 2020

Dear Regent Lozar:

I am submitting this letter to communicate my support of the efforts by Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. Western Montana Mental Health Center operates a comprehensive continuum of behavioral health services in Ravalli County and has more than 50 employees who, with their families, are residents of the Bitterroot Valley.

A locally controlled, two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our current businesses and industry as well as help to grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college will contribute to the success of my company by training and educating our local workforce to meet both present and future staffing demands. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college knowing that our agency and our community stand to benefit greatly.

Western Montana Mental Health Center wholeheartedly supports the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. We ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County.

Sincerely,

Levi Anderson, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer
Western Montana Mental Health Center

Montana State Senate



The Treasure State

**SENATOR FRED THOMAS
MAJORITY LEADER**

HELENA ADDRESS:
PO BOX 200500
HELENA MT 59620-0500
PHONE: (406) 444-4800

September 10, 2020

HOME ADDRESS:
1004 S BURNT FORK RD
STEVENSVILLE MT 59870-6658
PHONE: (406) 370-4001
EMAIL: ftthomas@paynewest.com

Casey Lozar; Board of Regents

Dear Regent Lozar:

I am submitting this letter to communicate my support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. I have represented half the residents in the Bitterroot Valley for 24 years. A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our local businesses and industry, helping to grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands needed to remain successful.

We would use a local community college to work alongside local businesses educating local citizens in the trades thus filling the needs of the current Montana job market.

Some will say the mill levy to support this did not pass. Well, this should have been one vote to create and fund the local college. Obviously voters were given the option to have a college but not raise taxes to do so. Why would they not vote no on taxes? That's like going to the store and having the option to get your groceries but not pay!

I do wholeheartedly support the effort to create a community college in Ravalli County. I ask that you recommend to the Montana legislature that they create a new community college district for Ravalli County. We would work collaboratively and continuously to support the efforts and success of a local community college.

Sincerely,

Fred Thomas

St Senate Majority Leader



*Supporters of
Abuse
Free
Environments, Inc.*

Twenty-Four Hour Crisis
Hotline
406/363.4600

PO BOX 534
Hamilton, MT 59840
TEL 406/363.2793
FAX 406/363.0382
safe@safeinthebitterroot.org

August 27, 2020

Casey Lozar
Board of Regents

Dear Regent Lozar:

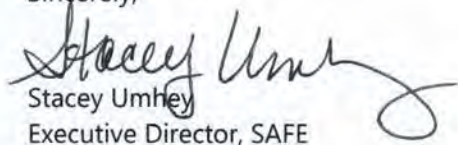
I am submitting this letter to communicate my hearty support of the efforts of Ravalli County residents to create a new community college in the Bitterroot Valley. SAFE (Supporters of Abuse Free Environments), Inc. is a community-based, non-profit organization providing housing and services to those affected by domestic and sexual violence. Each year SAFE serves, on average, 400 residents of the Bitterroot Valley, many of whom have been rendered homeless due to intimate partner violence. SAFE provides emergency shelter, transitional and community-based housing assistance as well as case management and other services designed to assist survivors in rebuilding their lives. Of key importance for those we serve is the ability to secure, grow and develop vocational plans that lead to economic self-sufficiency and economic stability. A local community college is vital to those plans for many of the families we serve.

The responsive, accessible programming offered by the Bitterroot College is crucially important to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, many of whom are attempting to begin or continue working toward educational and vocation goals while parenting and earning incomes to support their families. Many of those we serve do not have the needed resources, such as reliable transportation, secure internet service or quality child care, to be able to access education or vocational training that is not located in our community. Since the inception of the Bitterroot College, many people served by SAFE have been able to improve their educations, their incomes and their lives after completing education or vocational training at the College.

In addition to serving those affected by domestic and sexual violence, SAFE is also a local employer, with 19 employees. A locally controlled two-year college will provide accessible and affordable courses tailored to meet the specific needs of our business, along with others in our community, helping to grow new trades and attract new businesses. A local community college can keep our work force and industry trained and educated to meet present and future demands and create a thriving community.

The Bitterroot College has already substantially contributed to the vitality of the local community. I urge help us continue this work and to support a positive recommendation from the Montana Board of Regents to the Montana Legislature for the organization of the Bitterroot Valley College District.

Sincerely,


Stacey Umhey
Executive Director, SAFE

From: [Valerie Aerni](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: 9/16/2020 Comments for Board of Regents Meeting
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 12:47:41 PM

Dear Board of Regents,

I am part of the faculty at the Bitterroot College for the fall semester of 2020.

I am in support of recommending the Bitterroot College to be recognized as a Community College by the Montana Legislature. The transition to a CC would allow the college more flexibility in their offerings, including but limited to four year bachelor's programs.

Thank you for the consideration.

Valerie Aerni
ACT 150 Instructor
Bitterroot College

--

Valerie Aerni
Aspen Leaf Yoga and Wellness LLC
Hamilton, MT
406-880-3771
aspenleafyoga.org

You are everything you need to be.

From: [Regent Amy Sexton](#)
To: [Unsworth, Amy](#)
Subject: Fw: Concerns - BOR meeting 9/16/2020
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:23:18 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Hi Amy,

This was sent to me by a student at Billings, requesting that this be shared with the other regents and the commissioner via email.

Best,
Amy

From: Sexton, Amy E <Amy.Sexton@msubillings.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:20 PM
To: Regent Amy Sexton <RegentSexton@montana.edu>
Subject: FW: Concerns - BOR meeting 9/16/2020

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Cunningham, Robin M](#)
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 11:41 AM
To: [Sexton, Amy E](#)
Subject: Concerns - BOR meeting 9/16/2020

Hello Regent Sexton,
I was wondering if you could share this with the other regents.

I would like to say thank you to all faculty, staff and administration across the state as well as to the regents and everyone else that has helped with the adjustments that have taken place to adapt to our current circumstances that have developed due to Covid-19.

As a student and representative of students of the MSUB community I would like to bring forth multiple issues that have occurred this semester.

I am bringing up these concerns to you as these issues could also have taken place on other campuses in some form or are specifically regarding guidance provided by the BOR to the schools. An overall issue that has been noticed is the lack of communication that has occurred so far during the 2020 fall semester.

- The Jacket [safety kits](#) that were provided to students created much confusion and did not lead to any consistent safety measures being implemented by students. Further precautions only exist on individual basis. Students have reported some faculty going to large efforts to take precautions, specifically cleaning classrooms, whereas other instructors take no measures and

have articulated their own confusion to students as well.

- The self-reporting measures that have been described as crucial part of preventative measure to stop the spread of Covid-19. There has been little communication about the importance of this as well and most students are not aware of any procedures. Information on this has been included in documents such as the Back-to Business plan, though only few students have read this extensively. There should be a protocol made available to students and stressed that lays out basic procedures. This protocol, should be made easily accessible and visible to students.
- The Cares Act communication of requirements, and prerequisites has been very confusing to students. The fact that a student must have previously applied to Financial aid creates an additional barrier that can be overcome by applying for this but nonetheless creates an obstacle as it takes several hours to do so before even filling out the application for the cares act. There is little transparency how the money is being distributed. Is this data being reported and published somewhere for every university?
- Lastly, communication of the format of classes have been taught have lacked transparency in many cases. We have seen issues with this on an individual basis by Faculty. The issue that occurred was that classes were listed as “in Person” and students would receive emails the day before classes that classes would be held online and in many other cases the students were informed that they would be in a hybrid form. Again I would like to stress that this has not been an issue with all faculty, but has occurred enough to affect a large percentage of the student population. Generally speaking it is reasonable that instructors would like to, or are forced to change the way the class is taught because of covid-19, however what occurred in these cases is a communication failure that has damaged the reputation of MSUB. There should be transparency for students so they know what kind of classes they are signing up to enroll in and ultimately pay for. This issue even resulted in students moving out of the MSUB residence Halls after realizing after they had moved in and started school that all of their classes are actually online. Personally this semester has resulted in me not trusting our University anymore because I am not sure if they will disclose information to me that may alter my decision of attending school here.

This being said I would like to say that not all is bad here. I did want to address these issues because I believe it is important that they should be addressed in order to serve the students well.

I hope you are all staying healthy and have a successful meeting today.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Robin Cunningham,
Vice President
Associated Students Montana State University Billings
asmsub_vpres@msubillings.edu
406.657.2365

