

Academic Strategic Planning Steering Committee (ASP) Newsletter

JAN 26, 2009 UPDATE



The University of
Montana

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ASP Steering Committee

CAROL BREWER, CHAIR
College of Arts and Sciences
Carol.Brewer@umontana.edu

BARRY BROWN
Mansfield Library

BLAKELY BROWN
Health and Human Performance

PERRY BROWN
College of Forestry and
Conservation

RAY CARLISLE
TRIO Student Support

SARAH CULLISON
Graduate Student

REED HUMPHREY
Physical Therapy

Stephen Kalm
Music

Peggy Kuhr
School of Journalism

Mark Medvetz
College of Technology

Jakki Mohr
Management

Sean Morrison
Undergraduate Student

Bill Muse
Planning, Budget and Analysis

Andrew Ware
Physics and Astronomy

VIEW FROM MAIN HALL

The Academic Strategic Planning Committee has been working diligently this past fall in two major areas. First, they have developed an “environmental scan” to define the situation in which planning will occur. The scan includes data regarding enrollment and resource trends, it includes an analysis of forces operating on higher education in the state and nation, and it includes a study of MUS system goals and President Dennison’s goals as defined in his State of the University address. Second, the Committee has been organizing around key strategic issues that we face as a University and our goals with respect to those issues. It is now time for the Academic Strategic Planning process to become highly public on campus, so as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, the Committee has structured a series of “town hall” style meetings to have campus-wide discussions. It is critical at this time for the Committee to hear ideas and opinions from across the campus regarding our major directions and strategies. A strategic plan is only effective if it is based upon the collective thinking of the organization. We have such a strong tradition of shared governance here at The University of Montana, so I hope each of you will take the time to bring your views to these discussions. Academic Strategic Planning is taking place in parallel to preparation for our 2010 Accreditation visit, and it is especially important that we enter the accreditation visit with a shared vision of our key directions. I hope to see you at the upcoming sessions!

-- Royce Engstrom, Provost --

STRATEGIC PLANNING ROAD MAP

The Academic Strategic Planning Committee was convened at the end of Spring 2008, and charged with developing, in collaboration with the campus community, an up-to-date and ambitious Academic Strategic Plan (ASP) to serve as a decision-making guide over the next five years. When completed, the plan should help us focus resources and energy on key issues, provide a solid foundation for our upcoming accreditation visit, and, most importantly, help us build an even more effective university. Since last spring, the committee has been hard at work. Over the summer, the committee collected data to answer a series of environmental scan questions. This included exploring system-wide published strategic plans, trends and expectations for higher education in Montana and beyond, and unit operating plans from 2007. The staff in the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Analysis provided extensive data related to student affairs (e.g., enrollment, retention, cost of education), the workforce, diversity, research and creative activity, demographic trends, and so on. Moreover, the Committee met with many individuals who had expertise in areas related to the environmental scan. Finally, targeted campus stakeholders were asked to respond to a short survey that asked about what makes UM unique, surprises over the last five years, what they would most like to change, and how they hope UM will be described five years from now. After extensive review of the data collected, the Committee has summarized the aspirations that emerged and the issues that will have to be addressed in the coming years to ensure we can meet these aspirations. In this newsletter, we are sharing our work to date, and we invite you to participate in the one or more town hall meetings that we will convene (see page 4 for times) to discuss the challenges and opportunities before us. We look forward to a lively campus conversation.

-- Carol Brewer, ASP Chair --

ALIGNING STRATEGIC PLANNING WITH THE UM MISSION AND CORE VALUES

The charge to the ASP committee is to develop, in collaboration with the campus community, an up-to-date and ambitious Academic Strategic Plan (ASP) to serve as a decision-making guide over the next five years. When the plan is completed, it will help us focus resources and energy on key issues, provide a solid foundation for our upcoming accreditation visit, and help us build an even more effective university. Implicit is that the strategic plan should align with the Mission and Core Values of The University of Montana.

UM Mission (from <http://www.umt.edu/president/umms.htm>):

The University of Montana-Missoula pursues academic excellence as indicated by the quality of curriculum and instruction, student performance, and faculty professional accomplishments. The University accomplishes this mission, in part, by providing unique educational experiences through the integration of the liberal arts, graduate study, and professional training with international and interdisciplinary emphases. Through its graduates, the University also seeks to educate competent and humane professionals and informed, ethical, and engaged citizens of local and global communities. Through its programs and the activities of faculty, staff, and students, The University of Montana-Missoula provides basic and applied research, technology transfer, cultural outreach, and service benefiting the local community, region, state, nation and the world.

UM Core Values (from http://www.umt.edu/home/administration/Strategic_Directions_2008.pdf)

- Learning experiences of high quality designed to allow students to realize their full potential with student success as the primary objective;
- Basic and applied research that contributes to knowledge and meets the needs of the State, region, nation, and world;
- Diversity and community among students, faculty, and staff;
- Affordable access to higher education for Montanans;
- Effective and efficient use of resources, providing full accountability for all funds; and
- Service to the citizens, communities, regions, business, industry, State, and world.

ASPIRATIONS FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AT UM

The following aspirations emerged for academic affairs from the interviews, surveys, and discussions conducted during the environmental scan phase of the ASP Committee's work.

In five years ...

- UM will be well along the path to becoming a major research university with an entrepreneurial spirit and a major force in the evolution of Montana's economy and culture.
- UM will achieve/maintain an optimum intellectual and real world blend of the arts, sciences and cultural experiences for a truly interdisciplinary and collaborative campus.
- UM will be recognized as a leader and innovator in key disciplinary areas, capitalizing on our unique environment and location.
- UM will be known for having an exciting and stimulating intellectual atmosphere for undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff, including...
 - UM will be renowned for an intellectually exciting and distinctive undergraduate experience that is integrated across the curriculum and prepares students for addressing the big questions that we face as a global society.
 - UM will provide a world-class experience for graduate students.
 - UM will be a leader in two- and four-year education, offering academic, professional/technical, transfer, and workforce programs that address the needs of diverse student populations and regional employers.
 - UM will be a recognized regional leader in online and distance education.
 - UM will have faculty and students globally connected and engaged.
- UM will be the leader in Montana in diversity, and will be a major force in the diversification of both the workforce and student body.
- UM will have an all-encompassing, seamless information technology environment for all aspects of teaching, learning, and research.

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AT UM

The environmental scan questions addressed by the ASP Committee focused on both internal and external influences on Academic Affairs at UM. Questions for the internal scan related to the broad categories of the UM student body, access and affordability, the UM work force related to Academic Affairs, academic programs offered, technological capabilities, and funding trends. Questions for the external scan focused on demographic trends, technology, trends in K-12 that reach into higher education, the economic environment, political and regulatory environments, defining our competitors, natural resource issues, and international factors. Over the summer, the committee collected information to address the environmental scan questions. After extensive review of the information collected, the Committee identified a suite of issues that we believe require attention in the coming years. At this point in the planning process, we need the campus community to deliberate and weigh in on the list that follows. Some of the issues listed are fairly straight forward, while others are more complex and, therefore, more challenging to capture in few phrases. Accordingly, the purpose of this list is to stimulate deliberation and conversation, and to provide students, staff, faculty, and administrators with opportunities to weigh in with comments and recommendations about which issues deserve further discussion and should be prioritized for action.

- a. **The Undergraduate Experience** (creating a world class curriculum; mindfully connecting teaching and learning to best deliver this curriculum) – who are we preparing, what are we preparing them to do, and how best to retain them and prepare them to be successful?
- b. **Development of COT/Community Colleges in Montana** – better articulation and synergy.
- c. **Articulation Between K-12 and Higher Education in Montana**– including dual enrollment, teacher certification and in-service professional development, addressing deficiencies in preparation, and consistent outreach from UM to K-12 schools in Montana.
- d. **Enabling Technology for Teaching and Scholarship** – how technology is funded and managed, looking toward the future of devices and web 2.0; paying attention to training, nimbleness.
- e. **Perceptions and Reality of the Cost of Education versus the Value of Education at UM** – who has access, addressing affordability; better branding and communication with stakeholders (in MT and beyond) of our scholarship and community service.
- f. **A Coherent Vision for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship** – where and how do we want to cultivate distinction for discovery, innovation and leadership; a climate for interdisciplinarity; connection to the Montana economy.
- g. **Strengthening Communication and Transparency** - in line with our value and tradition of shared governance; better communication with stakeholders.
- h. **The Workplace Conditions** - allow staff and faculty to meet their potentials, and that allow them to collaborate more effectively in service of teaching, scholarship and service.
- i. **Cultivate Graduate Programs** - attract excellent students and prepare them to make scholarly and creative contributions in their field – Curriculum and research opportunities matched to our current reputation, student demand, capitalizing on our location; stipends and in-state status.
- j. **Diversity** – cultivating a climate and curriculum to values diversity and recognizes the value of a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.
- k. **The Changing World Around Us** – international programs and exchanges, research, key languages sustainability, interdisciplinarity, demographics, globalization, economies, and so on.
- l. **Achieving Optimal Enrollment** – what is optimal for UM and for the educational experience we value.

ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLANNING MILESTONES

Early on, the committee focused on defining the process for developing the plan and establishing milestones to track our progress. The specific goal is to have the completed ASP published during June, 2009. The main milestones for this work are listed below.

Organization - Spring 2008

- Define process (*completed*)
- Plan for coordination with Accreditation Committee work (*ongoing*)

Environmental Scan - Summer and Early Fall 2008

- Develop background information (data, reports, etc.) and context for the ASP (*completed*)
- Prepare report from Scan - Ready for Circulation Spring 2009 (*underway now*)

Identify Aspirations and Strategic Issues Emerging from Environmental Scan - Fall 2008

- Develop list of aspirations and issues based on environmental scan (*completed*)
- Circulate list to campus community (*underway now*)

Finalize List of Strategic Issues: Feb 2009

- Campus-wide town hall meetings, visits to departments, and discussions (*See meeting schedule below*)
- Surveys as needed

Subcommittee Work to Make Action Plans to Address the Strategic Issues: March - April 2009

- Appoint subcommittees for each strategic issue
- Define goals and indicators for each strategic issue
- Identify a practical set of clear actions to achieve strategic goals
- Articulate resources needed for achieve goals

Develop Annual Plan to Review progress - late Spring 2009

- Timeline and process for campus input and discussion of plan annually
- Metrics for annual reviews

Publication of the Academic Strategic Plan - June 2009

Town Hall Meetings For Campus Discussions

In the coming weeks, the ASP Committee will be hosting campus-wide town hall meetings to discuss the strategic issues we have identified, and to seek your guidance on how to prioritize them for action. There will be one general session, followed by several sessions that will focus on a particular aspect of the mission of Academic Affairs at UM. We hope you will participate in as many as possible. If you cannot attend, or would like to schedule a special session with your department/unit, please contact Carol Brewer to schedule a time (carol.brewer@umontana.edu).

TOPIC	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Prioritizing Strategic Issues	Fri Feb 6	1:10-2:30 PM	UC 3rd floor/RM 330
Undergraduate Education	Tues Feb 10	3:30-5:00 PM	UC 3rd floor/RM 330
Graduate Education	Wed Feb 18	12:00-1:30 PM	UC 3rd floor/RM 326
Research, Creativity and Scholarship	Fri Feb 20	2:00-3:30 PM	UC 3rd floor/Theater
Technology	TO BE ARRANGED – LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION SOON		
International Connections/Engagement	TO BE ARRANGED – LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION SOON		