Date: February 22, 2007  
To: Student Affairs and ECOS  
From: Ray Ford  
Re: Overview of IT Staffing Proposal and Discussion

The Driving Force
- IT funding since 1999/2000 has stabilized for most hardware, software, and other capital expenses, but except for “burst” increases to meet critical problems in 1999/2000, staffing has generally not increased. In effect, IT is now well staffed to meet the challenges of 1999/2000.
- The challenges of 2007 are dramatically greater than those of 1999/2000 – even with the same systems (Banner, email) dramatically increased expectations (24 x 7 x 365) adds up to a large increase in personnel demand.
- We also have high expectations for new systems (Web, Portal, Blackboard), and new technologies (central directories), resulting in even more personnel demand.
- To quote from the Fall 2006 Review (K.Klingenstep, same reviewer as in 1999):

Review Title: “Better Run, More Resources, Falling Further Behind …”

"... The net result, unfortunately, of the competing trends of improved operations/investment and growing demand is a situation perhaps as dire as in 1999. The issues now are not a dysfunctional unit, but more of a under-resourced situation. In any case the exposure of the institution to systemic failures, privacy spills, service interruptions, inadequate technology for its instruction mission, lack of competitive cyber-infrastructure for research, and more all seems to be at a level that a major university such as the University of Montana would not risk."

What to Do, When to Do It?
- This comes at a time where there is no new money envisioned for FY08/09 and when we’ve just seen the need to address certain shortfalls in FY07 – i.e., arguably the worst possible time (but name a better time in the past 7 years or next 2 years).
- Note that our inability to pay for something doesn’t mean we don’t need it.
- The solution is clear (at least to me): we either raise staffing to meet expectations or lower expectations to meet staffing, or both – I don’t need 10-13 new FTE, I need expectations matched to staffing.

Needs and Proposal
- We need 10 FTE ASAP to minimally meet current expectations, plus 3 more to meet “extended off hours coverage” expectation. Details are on the longer handout: 4 for Central Directory, 4 for Web/Portal, 1 for Project Mgt, 1 for Banner/Directory
- To focus the cost and impact, consider funding via an increase in the network access charge – 1 FTE = $1.25/mon/increase, 10 FTE = $12.50/mon/increase
- Can we get by with less? Sure, lower the expectations (see quote above)
- Which (whose) expectations should we lower? (Obvious answer: yours, not mine)

Status
- A small group (3? 4?) will quickly study the matter and report ...

Bottom Line (Personal Opinion): They won’t discover anything I don’t already know. We will find consensus hard to achieve on what we can not do. Even if we achieve consensus we won’t be able to economize downward to meet available resources. We will have rocky times ahead (but we’ll muddle through).