

12/18/2017

President Stearns,

The Missoula College Faculty Association (MCFA) represents the specific interests of Missoula College faculty and the two-year college at the University of Montana. As an embedded two-year college, Missoula College is charged with the mission functions of workforce development, transfer education, developmental education, and community outreach.

- Workforce development is conducted in career-technical education (CTE) programs of study, which lead to credentials such as the AAS degree and certificates, and short-term training programs such as apprenticeships. Workforce development programs have also evolved in creating general education offerings for students of all majors.
- Transfer education takes place through general education offerings, awarding of the AA degree, and establishing transfer pathways for students to complete the baccalaureate degree.
- Developmental education is an important service provided by Missoula College. Missoula College serves all students at the University of Montana who need developmental education in mathematics and writing.
- Community outreach includes programs such as dual-enrollment with regional high schools. Dual-enrollment programs are one of the fastest growing education programs at Missoula College and across the country. Research has shown that students who complete one college course in high school are more likely to enroll in college, have higher rates of persistence, and are more likely to graduate with the baccalaureate than those students that do not.

MCFA has been critical of the APASP process as it fails to differentiate the role and mission of two-year education from baccalaureate and graduate education. As an example, APASP requested 39 individual academic reports for workforce development programs, just 1 report for transfer education, and 0 reports were requested for developmental education or community outreach.

In a September 22, 2017, open letter to UM Administration, MCFA described a number of labor inequities associated with the APASP reporting. In dissecting CTE certificates and degrees into individual units of analysis, 18 faculty members were tasked with completing 39 academic reports. Some Missoula College faculty members completed as many as four APASP reports, potentially impacting quality in favor of quantity.

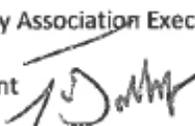
Career-technical education programs provided at Missoula College serve the workforce with ladder credentials consisting of certificates, certificates of applied science, and the associate of applied science degree. These certificates are essential for students who are unable or unwilling to persist in completing the associate degree giving them a recognized credential that confirms the individual has employable skills and gives them access to potential jobs. In the context of APASP, elimination of Missoula College certificates where degree programs exist does not provide fiscal savings nor improve efficiencies. In terms of institutional resources, CTE certificates consume similar resources as baccalaureate degree minors.

MCFA's position is that certificate programs are not individual units of analysis; instead they provide additional metrics of quality and performance in established CTE degree programs. We find the decision to treat the CTE programs as individual units of analysis to be a glaring error in the APASP process. The decision demonstrates a lack of recognition of the workforce development function of the two-year college mission. Furthermore, this error has not been addressed or adequately corrected in the recent President's report.

MCFA is supportive of meaningful assessment at Missoula College. APASP has provided a starting point at Missoula College but continues to suffer from a lack of authentic assessment of the two-year college mission functions. We request that these deficiencies are corrected as they are identified in the collective analysis of shared leadership teams at UM.

Missoula College Faculty Association Executive Board:

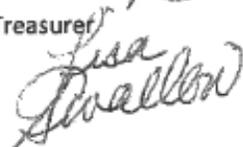
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