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SPCC MEMBERS
The University of Montana is a public research institution on the cusp of celebrating the 125th anniversary of its founding. Our distinguished history of excellent teaching, research, and public service represents higher education at its best: we improve the lives of not only our students but also our fellow local and global citizens. We advance knowledge, promote artistic creation, provide opportunity, and enrich our region’s economic and cultural vitality. As Montana’s intellectual, creative, and economic engine, we promote an educated citizenry for a rapidly changing world. In short, the University of Montana’s value is in its steadfast commitment to our students and communities.

The mark of a successful higher learning institution is not merely that it has existed for 125 years, but that it capitalizes on its rich history to imagine an even better future. Our fellow Montanans enacted a bold vision to build an exceptional institution. Their intellectual, cultural, and financial investments obligate us to look forward in a visionary way.

The University of Montana sits at a critical juncture. We face disruptions specific to our local context and challenges endemic to higher education institutions nationwide. At this juncture, we must move forward in an innovative, aspirational, and strategic manner. At the same time, we must recognize our immediate financial and structural constraints. Our strategic vision represents both a preferred future and a basic compass that will guide decision making in the coming years. Resource and planning environments will determine the initiatives we can implement in the short term, those we will pursue along an extended timeframe, and those we can collectively recalibrate over time.

Montanans take pride in their resourcefulness under constantly changing conditions. We have a responsibility to cultivate resourcefulness in our students and in our administrative and fiscal culture. Through careful coordination with other Montana University System (MUS) institutions and in alignment with the MUS Strategic Plan, we will pursue more efficient administrative and fiscal structures that epitomize the resourcefulness of the state we serve. The quality of our impact over the next decades depends on our willingness to take a reflective stance on and proactive approach to refining—and in some cases fundamentally transforming—our organizational structures and fiscal models.

The Strategic Planning Coordinating Council (SPCC) has studied our comprehensive institution as a single body rather than as a collection of discrete sectors or programs. UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together therefore approaches the University of Montana as a complex ecosystem whose purpose is greater than that of any part. This strategic vision serves as a foundational guide for purposeful, mission-aligned decision making across the institution.

While UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together maps a path forward, its content reflects an assumption of existing excellence and an abiding commitment to continued quality. As a forward-looking platform, this strategic vision does not suggest that we should ignore what we already do well but rather intends that we cultivate our strengths in ways that align our aspirations and opportunities. Our last strategic plan, UM 2020, helped guide significant progress in a number of areas and created promising conditions for the next iteration of our strategic plan. UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together honors that progress while looking toward new opportunity.
This vision also reflects a new strategic thinking mindset. Strategic thinking does not end when campus adopts a new plan; rather, it persists through ongoing collaboration. The SPCC’s work therefore culminates in not just a plan but also a new way of working together on behalf of and with our stakeholders. For **UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together** to remain relevant and actionable, we must focus on our priorities yet flexibly respond to our evolving contexts through persistent self-reflection, attention to emerging conditions, honest assessments, and iterative adjustments. By design, this strategic platform requires continual action. The first expression of this ongoing collaboration will be the development of an operational plan.

During our many months of listening, the SPCC heard an emphatic call for a new way of working together. We understand this call as a desire—in our research, teaching, learning, and work—to partner across traditional internal and external boundaries. For this reason, **UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together** does not focus on particular units, programs, or departments. For these broad strategic directions to be tested, refined, realized and reaffirmed, we must develop new cooperative structures and a trusted data governance model that allow for integrated decision making and implementation.

The SPCC designed a collaborative process that would model this commitment to continual strategic thinking and adaptation to emergent ideas, conditions, and aspirations. While the SPCC faced time and capacity limitations, we rigorously upheld our commitment to be responsive to stakeholders, adaptive over time, and informed by listening.

We shaped our learning around a commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and data-informed inquiry. Although not exhaustive, we listened to well over a thousand people on campus, in Missoula, and across the state. We analyzed dozens of existing institutional documents to understand current initiatives. After six months of stakeholder engagement, we identified shared principles to guide our campus community’s behaviors and decisions, and we developed a set of strategic ideas for stakeholder consideration. This further engagement generated a prioritized set of focused strategic opportunities permeated by our principles. We listened carefully and broadly, and we are confident that what we heard helped to shape the strategic opportunities presented here. This deep engagement has been a cornerstone of our strategic thinking process and will be a necessary characteristic of our shared institutional culture moving forward.

**Connections to the Montana University System Strategic Plan**

**UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together** reflects the broader MUS charge to “[maintain] the high quality of our institutions and the education provided to our students” as “the most important consideration of every goal and initiative.” Our strategic vision strongly supports the three core goals outlined in the 2016 version of the MUS Strategic Plan. In each section of this strategic vision, hyperlinks to the MUS Strategic Plan demonstrate vital connections to the primary goals that shape the MUS agenda:

- **MUS Goal #1: Access and Affordability**
  This MUS goal guides us to “increase the overall educational attainment of Montanans through increased participation, retention and completion rates in the Montana University System.” Our leading Strategic Opportunity—“Engage Students Where They Are”—addresses this goal most explicitly. Through enhanced advising, flexible scheduling, and expanded online delivery, our strategic vision prioritizes accessible and affordable education for all Montana students.
• **MUS Goal #1: Workforce and Economic Development**
  The second core MUS goal obligates us to “assist in the expansion and improvement of the state’s economy through the development of high value jobs and the diversification of the economic base.” Our strategic vision addresses this goal most directly in two of our Strategic Opportunities: “Partner with Place” and “Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation.” Our strategic vision enacts our state’s commitment to workforce and economic development by cultivating our strengths in two-year education, building local partnerships with Missoula and the region, and continuing to conduct research that contributes substantially to the Montana economy.

• **MUS Goal #3: Efficiency and Effectiveness**
  The third core MUS goal compels us to “improve institutional and system efficiency and effectiveness.” While this goal is reflected most clearly in two of our strategic opportunities—“Engage Students Where They Are” and “Invest in People”—our strategic vision as a whole advances a culture of efficiency and effectiveness. We enact this MUS goal through our stated commitment to resourcefulness: our future as an institution and the future of the MUS depend greatly on our ability to identify efficiencies and to promote administrative effectiveness on each of our campuses.

What follows is a roadmap that represents our collective aspirations. Our mission provides a framework for ongoing strategic thinking and decision making; our vision for the future sets an aspirational direction; our four principles provide a compass to guide our behaviors and choices; our five strategic opportunities set specific direction for continual prioritization and mission-aligned decision making. Honoring our strengths, these strategic opportunities represent promising areas for an exceptional, distinctive future.

Our new vision, principles, and strategic opportunities are actionable only if we—as individuals committed to a shared institutional vision—commit to strategic action. In both short term and long term planning, and in both budgetary and programmatic thinking, we must align our strategic processes, decisions, and outcomes with the initiatives outlined in this general platform for a sustainable future. To achieve this vision, we also must boldly reimagine how we operate fiscally and culturally.
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA—MISSOULA pursues academic excellence as demonstrated 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. The University also educates competent and humane professionals and informed, ethical, and engaged citizens of local and global communities; and provides basic and applied research, technology transfer, cultural outreach, and service benefiting the local community, region, State, nation and the world.

MISSION

Our mission statement provides a framework for ongoing strategic thinking. Our vision honors this mission, which grows out of the Montana University System’s mission to provide an effective system of higher education.
WE ARE MONTANA: Deeply rooted in place, committed to local community and global connection, open to new ways of thinking, learning, and engaging together, dedicated to work that matters for the people of Montana and beyond.
The following four principles grew out of the SPCC’s strategic thinking and will shape our campus-wide efforts to fulfill our vision. While our mission and vision provide a common direction, these principles serve as a compass that will orient our daily behaviors.

○ **INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY**
  - We create, assess, and adjust meaningfully
  - We address society’s changing needs
  - We look forward while honoring the past
  - We reward entrepreneurship and experimentation
  - We take pride in our resourcefulness

○ **OPENNESS**
  - We guarantee access to opportunities
  - We foster transparency
  - We value, seek, and rely on diversity in all its forms
  - We work across boundaries, internally and externally
  - We maintain an open-minded approach
  - We work and learn collaboratively

○ **IMPACT**
  - We transform lives and are transformed in return
  - We perform local, regional, and global work that matters
  - We represent a vibrant intellectual hub for knowledge creation and exchange

○ **PARTNERSHIP**
  - We respect people and place
  - We value teaching as a form of connection
  - We listen to and learn from others
  - We make wise decisions together
  - We partner across boundaries, internally and externally
  - We excel in place-based learning
We are uniquely positioned to fulfill our mission and vision through five areas of strategic focus. These interconnected opportunities represent potential points of distinction that will differentiate the University of Montana regionally and nationally.

Each strategic opportunity includes a set of initiatives, with each initiative supported by a set of tangible actions. Collaborative development, assessment, and iterative adjustment will characterize implementation of these initiatives.
ENGAGE STUDENTS Where They Are

We firmly believe that quality education requires students-first, engaged, supportive relationships and structures. All undergraduate, graduate, and professional students should have access to first-rate programs, robust academic support services, and relevant professional development opportunities. We will flexibly respond to students’ needs, aspirations, and potentials at all stages of their educational journeys because we understand that excellent student performance and increased participation, retention, and graduation rates are byproducts of high quality student experiences.

Integral to our promise for the future is a series of commitments to improve student access, support, and overall wellness. We will provide high-quality advising and faculty-student mentorship, flexible course delivery (MUS 1.6.1 and 1.6.2), accessible pipelines into two- and four-year education (MUS 1.4.1, 1.5.1, and 2.1.3), cross-disciplinary student support structures, and user-friendly student service pathways. We will commit to providing our students—full-time, part-time, residential, distance, transfer, undergraduate, graduate, professional, underrepresented, domestic, and international—accessible learning pathways that meet their needs and improve retention and graduation rates (MUS 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3).

Enhance Professional Advising and Support Faculty-Student Mentoring

- Ensure students receive first-rate, timely, and consistent advising by investing further in a holistic professional advising model. This model will provide more uniform coverage of professional advisors across academic units.
- Provide training opportunities and career ladder pathways for staff to become professional advisors.
- Move toward a professional advising model in the long term while continuing to improve current advising practices in the short term. Use the advising certificate opportunity to train staff and faculty as excellent advisors.
- Encourage faculty to more frequently integrate student mentoring with teaching and research as advising responsibilities shift to professional advisors.
- Develop clear incentives to promote high-quality professional advising and faculty-student mentoring.
- Invest in people who can implement new technologies that support student learning and retention (1.1.2).
Ensure Access through Flexibility: Reimagine When and Where Students Learn

- Increase our number of dual bachelors/masters degree programs (MUS 2.3.2).
- Invest in two-year education:
  - Promote two-year education as an affordable and accessible route to a college certificate or degree (MUS 1.5.1 and 2.1.3).
  - Develop flexible “return-to-learn” pathways that foster workforce development (MUS 2.1.1).
  - Define coordinated pathways from two-year campus programs to Mountain Campus four-year programs (MUS 3.3.1).
- Expand online and hybrid offerings, through faculty consultation, emphasizing areas of high student demand and enhancing educational access (MUS 1.5.1 and 2.1.3).
- Design a curriculum, through faculty consultation, that allows students to complete General Education Requirements online (MUS 1.6.1).
- Increase the number of fully online degree programs (MUS 1.6.2). Use a revenue sharing model to incentivize departments to develop online degree programs.
- Explore alternatives to our traditional academic sessions to provide scheduling flexibility and timely degree completion. Develop a residential-based, block system summer session to promote focused learning.

Strengthen Student Support that Sets Us Apart

- Perform a comprehensive student services assessment to understand students’ admissions-to-graduation experience and to identify potential obstacles. This comprehensive assessment will include a team of staff who shadow students as they navigate institutional systems. Use this assessment to recommend efficiencies and technologies that support self service (MUS 3.2).
- Implement programming that empowers students to achieve health around all aspects of wellness. Recognize the promotion of wellness as a campus-wide responsibility.
- Expand cross-disciplinary academic support systems that meet undergraduate student learning needs across students’ academic tenures. Tailor these support systems to our students’ differentiated needs (e.g., co-requisite learning models and individualized tutoring) (MUS 1.1.2).
- Support informed career decision making through career- and major-related experiences. For example, promote experiential learning, internship opportunities, career-related assessments, and four-year career development.
- Integrate library instruction across the curriculum to address undergraduate and graduate students’ changing needs and to develop an educated citizenry.
- Build a more robust support network for graduate and professional students to ensure a quality graduate experience (MUS 2.3.2).
  - Foster supportive faculty-student mentorship and research guidance.
  - Expand career support and professional development opportunities through Professional Preparation Workshops. Be responsive to varied career goals, recognizing that not all doctoral students pursue work in academic fields. Connect graduate students to career-related services, and provide opportunities for travel funding.
  - Expand opportunities for graduate and professional students to become better teachers, writers, researchers, innovators, and citizens.
- Establish a President’s Teaching Fellows program to recognize graduate students who commit to effective teaching. Award a Graduate Instructor Certificate as one indication of these students’ commitment to and proficiency in undergraduate teaching.
INVEST in PEOPLE

We recognize our employees as our greatest strength. We will work to address financial, technological, and organizational challenges by supporting and expecting excellence in our employees and by building an organizational culture that reflects our core principles. To this end, we will invest in our employees’ leadership abilities, professional development, and relationship building opportunities, aiming to become a “recognized institution” by the Chronicle’s “Great Colleges to Work For Program.” By investing in our people, we will promote an organizational culture that best supports students.

First, empowering people to do their best work requires that we support their leadership potential. Leaders operate in the best interest of those they serve and with clarity about the institution’s larger mission, vision and principles. Every employee can and should exercise leadership behavior.

Second, empowering people to do their best work requires a commitment to continual professional development. Rather than viewing people as holders of jobs, we will care about the career path and development of every individual we hire. We will hire people who want to learn, we will expect them to pursue excellence through professional development opportunities, and we will support their growth.

Third, empowering people to do their best work requires that they collaborate with others who bolster their strengths, mitigate their weaknesses, and keep them accountable to the institution and the people they serve. Building an innovative and adaptive organization requires that we connect people to identify creative and efficient solutions, regardless of hierarchical reporting structures or funding sources (MUS 3.2).

Invest in Leadership

• Develop opportunities for employees and students to develop leadership abilities. Emphasize that effective leadership promotes an organizational culture that is creative, adaptive, learning-oriented, highly collaborative, and student-focused.
• Provide educational opportunities for all employees to learn how to manage projects, programs, and people.
• Expect employees in current leadership roles to participate in these educational opportunities, and encourage the development of future leaders.
Invest in Professional Development

- Expand and improve professional development programming:
  - Provide more integrated professional development opportunities, allowing for micro-credentialing of abilities.
  - Support faculty members to develop national and international standing in their fields and excellence in teaching.
  - Offer career planning for employees and succession planning guidance for units.
  - Facilitate mentor-mentee relationships.
- Improve employee orientation, and familiarize new employees with our mission, vision, principles, and expectations for collegial work across organizational boundaries.
- Pay all UM employees a living wage at a minimum. Work toward offering competitive wages and incentives for professional development as a way to recruit and retain talented employees.
- Offer flexible scheduling options to promote job satisfaction, support gender equity, increase productivity, reduce turnover, and attract employees without costing more money. This includes options for alternative work scheduling, remote work, compressed work schedules, job sharing, and reduced schedules.

Invest in Relationships

- Support internal connection and communication through interdisciplinary and cross-functional activities that elevate employees’ understanding of our shared vision and that promote shared knowledge and effort (MUS 3.2).
- Support the successful Staff Ambassadors program to effectively expose employees to our vision, while connecting them to colleagues across the institution.
- Offer job-shadowing opportunities to employees who work in complementary or overlapping areas to increase understanding, appreciation, and networks of support across organizational boundaries.
- Encourage all employees to see themselves as educators and mentors in support of our students.
Our historic relationships with our natural and human settings differentiate our institution and foster globally relevant education and knowledge. We not only respect our spectacular natural setting and celebrate our expertise in environmental and ecological studies, but also stress the importance of collaborative partnerships that enact sustainable solutions for social and ecological challenges. These partnerships have led to our regional preeminence in the arts, business, health, law, medicine, and sustainability studies as well as to robust workforce development pathways (MUS 2.1.1).

As a premier partnership university, we will enhance our connection to place, bring cultural and economic value to our region, and develop in our students the ability to lead in an interconnected, global world. Partnering with place includes a promise to diversify our campus and integrate global perspectives that benefit students and the citizens of Montana. We will continue to support education and research abroad, and we will vigorously promote new efforts to internationalize our campus by attracting students, faculty, visiting scholars, and international events to Missoula from around the globe. By recognizing our setting as a magnet for international partners, we will enhance global perspectives on campus thereby maximizing the efficiency and impact of our efforts.

First, pursuing an unparalleled partnership with place offers students experiential learning opportunities that emphasize our exceptional urban, rural, and natural settings. Second, our commitment to place compels us to promote community and civic engagement, generate and make visible research and creative scholarship that benefit our region, and advance strong public-private partnerships (MUS 2.2.1). Third, we recognize that diversity, equity, and increased access enrich our communities and campus. We aim to be the first choice among all Montanans including underrepresented, marginalized, and historically vulnerable populations (MUS 1.1.1 and 1.4.1), and we commit to diversifying our student body, faculty, and staff by attracting people from across the globe. Finally, we will nurture a symbiotic relationship with the City of Missoula and Missoula County through collaborative and strategic long-range planning that fosters a mutually beneficial future for citizens (MUS 1.4.1, 1.5.1, 2.1.1, and 2.2.1).

Design Student Experiences that Engage and Promote Our Setting

- Develop curricula, internships, certifications, and micro-certifications that study the nature and sustainability of western Montana as a place.
- Support place-based collaborations with statewide land-management organizations, cultivating these relationships to situate research in Montana’s human and ecological systems.
- Provide incentives for faculty who seek to connect students and Montana’s environment.
- Publicize our place-based research and student engagement as points of distinction.
- Develop experiential learning opportunities that turn our communities into classrooms and that prepare our students to be engaged citizens committed to improving their future homes.
Organize a Campus Hub for Community Partnerships and Sustainable Solutions

- Become a dedicated community partner by establishing a coordinated system that brings the community, private sector, state, and two- and four-year campuses together through cross-disciplinary research and creative scholarship that directly address issues facing Missoulians and Montanans (MUS 2.2.1).
- Convene an advisory board to explore ways to better coordinate and make visible our existing place-based, interdisciplinary inquiry. Participants will include but not be limited to local community representatives, area Native American tribes, campus students, and faculty and staff.
- Develop partnerships that support Missoula County, the City of Missoula Mayor’s Office, and the State of Montana. Integrate undergraduate and graduate students into this hub as an opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary, applied research (MUS 2.2.1).

Value Diversity through Place-based Partnerships and Internationalization

- Build a culture of inclusive excellence by actively seeking and valuing diversity in all forms, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, ideological, sexual orientation, gender identity and, gender expression, ability, and other group-identity differences.
- Value diversity by partnering with and learning from and developing knowledge and best practices with tribal communities, colleges, and people, and by becoming a premier institution for Native American education, scholarship, and engagement (MUS 1.4.1 and 3.3.1).
  - Design place-based faculty, staff, and student semester abroad opportunities with our state’s tribes.
- Continue to internationalize campus as a way to prepare our students to serve their local and global communities.
  - Invest in international recruitment efforts to bring fulltime international students to campus.
  - Promote intercultural interactions and competency among students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
  - Expand access to study and research abroad opportunities.
  - Promote scholarly work of global importance.
  - Expand the diversity recruitment funding pool to attract diverse faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Implement curricular development awards to recognize academic programs that adopt inclusive pedagogical approaches.
- Establish a position under the Office of the President to oversee coordinated cross-campus efforts to create an inclusive environment and to promote intercultural and intercommunity outreach. Ensure this person is afforded the power and resources to affect systemic change in support of a diverse and inclusive campus.
Foster a Neighborhood Alliance: Building a Bright Future for Missoula-UM

- Institute a joint Missoula-UM team to build on our long-standing symbiotic partnership. This team will develop a long-range plan for a shared and mutually beneficial City of Missoula, Missoula County, and UM future.
- Plan for and respond to city-university growth, housing, transportation, K-12 education, and sustainability needs (MUS 1.4.1).
- Boost city-focused innovation, economic development, and social mobility (MUS 2.2.1).
- Turn our city and county into a classroom for students and the campus into a community hub for cultural and educational experiences.
- Recommend and help to develop two- and four-year workforce education programs that address the needs of our community (MUS 1.5.1 and 2.1.1).
- Work with community partners to promote cradle-to-career support, to close persistent opportunity and achievement gaps for Missoula city-county’s next generation, and to ensure college and career readiness. With these community partners, further an evidence-based, collective-impact approach to help the next generation of Missoulians thrive (MUS 1.4.1).
- Increase the number of employees who serve on Missoula boards and the number of employees and students who engage regularly in volunteer opportunities.
At the University of Montana, we have long provided the state’s preeminent undergraduate academic experience rooted in the integrative tradition of a liberal education. Our position as the flagship liberal arts institution in Montana, our strengths in STEM fields, and our premier professional programs empower students to flourish professionally, intellectually, and civically in a free society. In every major in every School and College, we expose students to broad content knowledge while nurturing vital intellectual capacities: skillful communication, analytical and creative problem solving, critical thinking, and effective collaboration.

At this confluence of our existing strengths in undergraduate education, we will reimagine our model of general education to better use new strategies, new technologies, and new interdisciplinary emphases. A new, more integrated approach to delivering general education at UM will emphasize innovation, design, and interdisciplinary, cohort-based learning. This approach, designed and led by faculty, will distinguish the University of Montana as a national model of excellence in student-centered undergraduate education (MUS 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3).

**Reassert and Rebrand our Model of Education**

- Reassert and rebrand our educational model—through clear, consistent assertions—as one that cuts across all disciplines, colleges, and schools to prepare every graduate to excel in the areas of problem-solving, adaptability, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and ethical reasoning. Tout this model of education as the one that best prepares all students, regardless of major, to be flexible leaders in a rapidly changing world.
- Ensure our rebranding effort moves beyond existing labels and debates surrounding institutional identity. This rebranding will emphasize our educational model as distinctive in our state and grounded in our commitments to place, diversity, professional programs, and research excellence.
- Make clear the value proposition of a University of Montana education in student recruitment, branding, legislative outreach, and donor cultivation. Emphasize the connections among career success, the core skills we develop in our students, and the academic strength of our programs in the humanities, social sciences, arts, STEM, and professional areas.
Reimagine our Delivery of General Education

- Develop a more streamlined, integrated approach to general education to initially exist as an alternative to our current general education model. Design this new approach through faculty direction and in partnership with shared governance bodies. Delivery of this new approach to general education will include the following:

The Shared Academic Experience: The PAC4E Curriculum

- Design a sequence of interdisciplinary, team-taught courses that emphasize transferable skills and a set of core competencies: problem solving, adaptability, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and ethical reasoning (PAC4E).
- Create the PAC4E curriculum as a cohort-based experience, with each cohort following a structured course sequence.
- Ensure broad exposure to multiple disciplines through interdisciplinary, team-taught courses.
- Integrate global perspectives into the PAC4E curriculum.
- Design the PAC4E curriculum to ensure students in all majors are able to complete the sequence without a burdensome increase in first-year credit hours.
- Incorporate the PAC4E curriculum into two-year campus programs, recognizing the need for greater connection between our four- and two-year curricula (MUS 3.3.1).
- Engage in faculty-led assessment of the PAC4E curriculum to determine its impact, effectiveness, need for adjustment, and potential for widespread adoption as a shared academic experience for all students.

The Online Academic Portfolio

- Provide students with the opportunity to develop an online academic portfolio. Students will collaborate with faculty from departments across campus to curate this portfolio that—in a distinctive way—demonstrates broad content knowledge, core competencies, and the importance of these competencies to their fields and professional goals.

The Integrated Capstone Academic Experience: The VIP

- Design a Vertical Integrated Project (VIP) model to connect advanced undergraduate students from majors across campus with graduate students and PAC4E faculty. The VIP students will complete signature projects defined by their applied nature, experiential learning characteristics, and collaborative inquiry.
- Ensure that faculty participating in the PAC4E curriculum, the online portfolio mentorship, and the VIP model receive appropriate recognition through the merit, tenure, and promotion process, recognizing that excellence in teaching and mentoring is a distinctive quality of a UM education.
- Recognize that teacher-scholars embody the symbiotic nature of teaching and research.
- Treat this approach as an experimental effort based on integration of existing academic units. If successful, this approach will attract campus faculty who embody the teacher-scholar ideal, who pursue cross-disciplinary scholarship and engage in collaborative instruction, and who place innovation at the heart of their teaching. As the approach gains traction, faculty and students will engage the wider campus to explore the appropriate structural manifestation of the approach, be it an institute, center, degree program, or even a standalone college.
Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation

Research and artistic creation at the University of Montana embody our commitment to knowledge creation, creative activity, and innovation that matters: engaged research and creative scholarship are responsive, agile, innovative, and far-reaching. They improve our human and environmental systems, attract world-class scholars and artists to Montana, provide undergraduate students with experiential learning opportunities, and promote a mutually beneficial relationship between research and teaching. The broader impacts of this inquiry, creation, and ongoing discovery act as drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship, and public service both locally and globally. We are an epicenter for knowledge and art that stimulate our region’s economic and cultural health. We will grow our research and creative enterprise, respond to identified needs, communicate widely the benefits of that research and creative activity, and engage faculty and programs to encourage innovation (MUS 2.2.1, 2.3.1, and 2.3.2).

Sustain and Expand Research and Creative Scholarship in Support of Academic Excellence

- Continue our commitment to achieving the Carnegie R1: Doctoral University – Highest Research Activity classification through the following actions:
  - Expand research activity and creative scholarship by adding academic programs in fields that have both significant external funding potential and high student demand (MUS 2.3.2).
  - Develop the number and quality of doctoral completers across the curriculum through internal and external funding of graduate students as well as through more robust academic support at the dissertation writing stage (MUS 2.3.1). Recognize that research excellence is not solely defined by success in securing external funding but also by thriving graduate programs.
  - Provide research mentoring, proposal development support, and other internal support mechanisms across disciplines.
  - Support library instruction and collections to meet undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty research needs.
- Establish a clear and relational resource allocation system to ensure that as the research enterprise grows in externally-funded areas there are mechanisms that trigger a corresponding increase in the pool of internal grant money.
- Communicate the broader impact of UM research, and inspire Montana K-12 learners about the bright futures that await them in higher education and the workforce.

Catalyze Innovation and Sustainable Economic Development through Entrepreneurship

- Become a dynamic hub where research and development support entrepreneurship and drive a resilient regional economic ecosystem (MUS 2.2.1).
- Facilitate regular meetings with state and industry leaders to articulate our successes and initiatives; to identify local, statewide, and regional needs; and to promote sustainable economic development through research (MUS 2.2.1).
- Continue to develop an innovation pipeline that translates research and original ideas into start-up businesses and non-profits (MUS 2.2.1). Expand our ability to support existing local organizations and businesses as they work to become sustainable.
- Create a mechanism for businesses and organizations to give back in support of our on-campus entrepreneurial efforts.
UM Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together provides high-level direction by setting an ambitious vision expressed through five major areas of opportunity. For this vision and these strategic opportunities to become lived realities, we must translate them into actionable systems while recognizing that our budget environment will dictate timelines. This means that every sector, unit, and program must live a culture of strategic thinking, planning, and assessment while actively refining and amending the initiatives presented here.

In the near term, this strategic vision will orient our decisions. However, this strategic vision is not designed to address a single moment in time nor is it meant to be static. As a plan for the University of Montana’s ongoing evolution, its initiatives will be achieved only through long-range thinking, adjustment, and operational planning. Over the next year, in connection with campus-wide restructuring and reorientation efforts, we will develop a flexible operational plan, try different approaches, assess what works and what does not work, and refine our overall path forward.

The operational plan will outline:
- A mechanism for long-term oversight of each strategic opportunity.
- A set of progress indicators that reflect a mixed methods approach to assessment.
- A procedure for unit-level planning and alignment to ensure our strategic vision informs planning and decision making.
- A reimagined system for mission- and vision-aligned budget allocation.
- A comprehensive assessment of current operational and fiscal structures to identify problems and potential solutions.
- A plan to align our fundraising efforts with our strategic initiatives.

We have the capacity to realize this ambitious vision. Just as this plan represents an integrated perspective on the institution, our effort to bring about its vision will require cooperative structures, collaborative thinking, integrated decision making, and action.

The University of Montana is an exceptional institution whose promising future is one of agility and distinction. This strategic vision calls upon us to share the responsibility for creating change together.
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