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The northwest corner of the Fitness and Recreation Center gained 330 square feet of valuable weight room space this past year by utilizing $47,000 in capital funds to infill the open ceiling between the first and second floors. A new functional training area was installed in the south end of the second floor and this has proven to be very popular. We added 30 new pieces of cardio equipment. The Fitness and Recreation Center saw 338,800 users of the course of the fiscal year. The Grizzly Pool had a very successful year. They implemented a new program called Aqua Fit which proved to be immensely popular having 320 people take part in the spring alone. The pool maintained the current level of swim lessons with over 1,700 participants, 14,500 lap swim participants, and 650 kayak and triathlon training programs. The pool had over 29,000 total users during the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The University Golf course continues to move forward in the face of an uncertain future. During the 2012-2013 fiscal year the golf course had over 17,000 rounds of golf played.

The Outdoor Program continues to be an integral part of Campus Recreation and the University of Montana. While enrollment was down the Outdoor Program participation numbers were up approximately 13% from the previous year reaching almost 800 students. In addition to the outdoor programs a number of special events hosted by the Outdoor Program also had great
participation. The Banff Film Festival had 980 participants, the Reel Rock Film tour had 171 participants, and hundreds of students participated in the fall and spring used gear sales. The Intramural program continues to prosper with 553 teams and over 2000 unique individuals taking part. The fall and spring 5K runs counted almost 150 participants. An exciting addition to Campus Recreation programs are the new summer Youth Camps. These camps took place over 8 weeks and saw over 250 youth take part. The Fitness program continues to grow. The classes offered averaged 65 hours a week and saw over 10,000 users over the course of the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

This past March, Stephen Thompson became Director of Campus Recreation. Also in March, five members of the staff attended the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) conference in Las Vegas. Eight staff members attended the NIRSA state meeting in Bozeman in the summer. In April of 2013, Campus Recreation had an external assessment of its programs and services using the standards and guidelines for Recreational Sports Programs established by the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education. The external review was conducted by fellow professionals from Washington State University. The results of this review will help inform the department’s strategic plan.

**Career Services**

**Laurie Fisher**

During 2012-2013, Career Services (CS) experienced some staffing changes. Our lead counselor was promoted to Assistant Director in April 2012. The Director, who retired June 28, 2013, provided training/coaching for the Assistant Director, who moved into an Interim Director position on July 1, 2013. Career Services hired two new counselors, an office manager and a new testing services coordinator. We also gave up our computer technology position as part of division-wide budget cuts.

CS hosted four career/employment fairs from 2012 to 2013: the Student Employment Job Fair, Health Professions Fair, Big Sky Employment and Academic Enrichment Fair, and the
Educators’ Career Fair. We added an Academic Enrichment component to the Spring 2013 Big Sky Employment Fair. Our fairs were attended by a total of 195 employers and 1,463 students. An additional 68 employers conducted 574 formal interviews with students. Griz eRecruiting listed 6,568 career opportunities and 1,440 active student accounts. Because of the still struggling economy and job market, CS has continued our outreach efforts to prospective employers. An employer relations staff member continues to recruit locally and regionally, arranging in-person interviews with several employers weekly. In 2013, we also began exploring possibilities for creating a job shadowing program within Griz eRecruiting.

Our Student Employment services program helps students pay for their education and develop work skills through on-the-job training and volunteer opportunities. During 2012-13, the student employment jobs system listed 1,656 on and off-campus part-time jobs, and received 14,167 applications. In addition, we added a new academic partner (the Mansfield Library) to our Student Employee of the Year Reception.

Our Testing Services department continues to be a strong business enterprise. CS focuses on adding vendors who provide licensing and certifications that benefit the University’s students and academic programs. CS added two new testing vendors (Energy Service Company and Automotive Service Excellence), numerous test offerings, and Testing Services administered 3,409 individual tests. CS also recognizes that providing proctoring services for distance/online education is an important service for students. We are collaborating with UM departments and faculty, as well as other colleges, and the demand for proctoring distance/online exams continues to increase.

The number of individual career counseling appointments from 2012 to 2013 was 1,908. Counselors administered 111 formal career and personality assessments, in addition to delivering a total of 88 workshops and presentations attended by 2,744 individuals. CS made presentations at all new UM staff orientations to assist with student referrals and familiarize staff members with CS services. The unit also presented at new student orientations, UM Days events, C&I 160 Learning Strategies for Higher Education, Peer Advising, and Speech-Language Pathology classes. In addition, we hosted presentations for Frenchtown high school students, MedStart Camp participants, and the English Language Institute.
CS is transitioning our counseling activity tracking system from a stand-alone database to be integrated with our Griz eRecruiting system. Student demographic data will now be pulled directly from Banner and counselor notes in a more secure environment. CS website content includes over 50 career and internship videos, student success stories, and resource sections for prospective, current, and online/distance students, as well as faculty, alumni, and employers.

Curry Health Center

Rick Curtis

Overview of FY2013
Curry Health Center (CHC) began the year with an Interim Director when the former director stepped down to become a staff physician. The CHC Administrator became the interim CHC Director, Dr. Mary Kleschen became the interim Medical Director. There was also an opening for Counseling And Psychological Services (CAPS) Director and Student Advocacy Resource Center (SARC) Director. Mike Frost was assigned as the interim CAPS Director and Drew Colling as the interim SARC Director. The interim CHC Director restructured the senior management team by elevating the CHC IT Manager and SARC Coordinator to become members of the senior management team.

University enrollment decline was a significant issue for CHC and consequently CHC experienced a decrease in health fee revenue of $335K below projected budget. However, CHC did complete all program goals and maintain all services and ended the year with a fund balance of over $400K.

Major Program Improvements:
- Reorganization of the SARC program, moving away from undergraduate student volunteers to more experienced and better trained graduate interns to provide direct support to victims of sexual misconduct. The SARC Director is now a licensed professional counselor.
- Reorganized and streamlined the CAPS intake system that resulted in an additional 25 hours per week of counseling services while still providing an intake “triage” system.
- The medical clinic improved its campus outreach by providing occupational medical services to the Laboratory Animal Research program. This included medical surveillance as well as education regarding risk reduction.
• Updated and expanded the Travel Medicine clinic by training additional nurses to provide this service for students traveling abroad. In addition, CHC acquired a new software program to provide current, up to date travel medicine recommendations and education.

• The Active Minds student group which promotes positive mental health was recognized as an “Outstanding Affiliate” by the national organization.

• Expanded marketing efforts by forming a marketing team which increased CHC presence by expanding our Facebook page, which experienced a 800% increase in reach.

• Successfully conducted a student insurance bid process for plan year 2014.

Major challenges:
• Decreased revenue due to decreased enrollment. This lead to the decision to eliminate 24 hour medical services beginning fall semester 2013. CHC will offer medical services from 8am to 11:30pm, seven days per week during the fall and spring terms.

• The funding for the graduate interns in SARC is from a time-limited grand from the Department of Justice (DOJ). During the Fiscal Year 2016 budget cycle, CHC will need to address a more permanent funding model.

• Beginning renovation project while maintaining services.

Future Challenges:
• Continue to explore different funding options and prioritize service options if the university’s student enrollment continues to decline.

• Addressing issues concerning the overuse/abuse of ADD medications. CHC is establishing better guidelines and standards concerning the prescribing and monitoring of students who use these medications, including testing requirements, dosing limits, and follow up requirements.

• Retention and recruitment of qualified staff. CHC is anticipating a number of employee retirements in the next five years. However, there is a shortage of trained health care personnel. These results in higher wages for new employees in order to fill these
positions in a competitive market, which in turn puts greater pressure on the budget and funding issues.

UM Dining
Mark LoParco

Major Accomplishments
In December, with the assistance of Mona Milius of Baker Group, the UM Dining Marketing Plan was completed. In August, we held our rebranding ceremony and made the transition from University Dining Services to UM Dining (UMD), renaming several of the outlets and strengthening and updating brand identity throughout the department. In April, UMD received delivery of our new food truck, the Galloping Griz. This mobile kitchen will be used to service the needs at Missoula College West Campus, cater special events, and provide late-night dining on the main campus. In May, the 2013 UM graduating class again selected a UMD project as their class gift to the University, which resulted in the construction of our passive solar four-season greenhouse. UMD continues to be recognized for our leadership in sustainable business practices. In 2013, Ian Finch was recognized for his campus leadership and accepted the Greening UM Award, and UMD was recognized by the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) with a gold medal in the category of food procurement for our UM Farm to College Program. In July of 2012, Mark LoParco was elected President-Elect of NACUFS.

New Services
Last fall semester, we renamed one of our Food Court kiosks the 406 Grill, refocusing its menu to feature local and sustainable food. At the request of a visually-impaired student, UMD purchased a machine that allows us to print the menus for our retail operations in Braille. For football season in 2012, UM Concessions created Majestic Plaza, a grouping of concession venues under the east side expansion, with TV monitors and high-top tables to create an
atmosphere similar to a sports bar. Also new this year, the Residential Dining Menu Committee developed a gluten-free service line that opened in the Food Zoo this fall semester.

New Initiatives/Programs

In our continuing effort to employ sustainable business practices, we worked with a group of student and community volunteers and now have an active aquaponics program that is being used to produce microgreens year-round. The UMD Associate Director for Professional Development began the process of creating Individual Training Plans for all classified employees.

Important Changes

In 2013, UMD restructured upper management and eliminated two assistant director positions for FY 2014 in response to the budget challenges brought on by the decline in enrollment. The contract for the Associate Director of Residential Dining was not renewed and former Assistant Director of Retail Operations, Kate Slack, is filling the vacant position. In addition, we made changes to the All-Campus (AC), Lommasson Plus, and Food Zoo Plus (FZP) Meal Plans. The AC and FZP Plans come with a Bear Bucks balance and students on the Food Zoo Plan can also purchase Bear Bucks. The Bear Bucks program is a discount declining balance dining plan that replaces the Premium Plus Dining Plan.

Service Measurements

UMD measured guest service as part of the development of the UMD Marketing Plan and used focus groups, intercept interviews, and written assessments to measure guest feedback and our success. UMD exceeded budget projections in FY 2013 and returned $1,321,512 to the University, including $500,000 to enrollment efforts, $20,000 to Inter-Collegiate Athletics, and $800,000 to capital, which included $448,785 in fund balance draw-down.
Disability Services for Students

Amy Capolupo

During the 2012-2013 academic year, Disability Service for Students (DSS) improved assistive technology training, increased the space available to provide testing modification, re-structured our website in order to make information more readily available to students, and increased the breadth of our interpreting services.

The following is a summary of each unit within Disability Services for Students and their accomplishments.

Access Coordinators:
Access Coordinators provided services to 1,314 students in the fall semester and 1,265 students in the spring semester. Additionally, 388 students registered with Disability Services graduated in the 2012-2013 academic year. Major improvements for coordinators included increased use of the Disability Services website as an instructional tool. When modifications are provided, each student receives an email that links to a set of instructions on how to request the modification. Additionally, Coordinators simplified the process for requesting housing modifications, note taking services, and companion animals.

Administrative Services and Technology Coordination:
Over 3,000 exams were proctored in the Disability Services Testing Center, 224 electronic textbooks were produced by DSS, and over 200 electronic texts were requested directly by the students through websites that grant students electronic audio access to printed materials. A total of 201 students received training on at least one of the following programs: speech to text recognition, screen reading software, and note taking devices and software. Additionally, all students who receive Assistive Technology training were provided with a DSS Moodle page which provided them with 24-hour access to a series of assistive technology training tutorials. The major improvement in assistive technology training was expanding the training to include the following on an as needed basis: computer literacy training, Moodle
demonstrations, and regular referrals to the Central Information Technology help desk and the Student Affairs Information Technology office.

**Interpreting:**

During the fall semester, DSS served eight deaf students taking a total of 77 credits, which required 86 hours per week of classroom interpreting, and 10 hours of out of class interpreting for group projects, field trips, etc. Additionally, 12 hours of real-time on site captioning and five hours of remote captioning was provided in class.

During the spring semester 2013, DSS served nine deaf students, who were taking a total of 102 credits. DSS served 100 hours per week of classroom interpreting and four hours per week of remote interpreting. Additional interpreting amounted to 10 hours per week, and 12 hours per week of classroom Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning. Major improvements in interpreting consisted of successfully providing real-time remote access to the German course and professional development, which allowed one staff member to obtain her certification and another staff member to receive training on CART Captioning.

**Foreign Student and Scholar Services**

**Effie Koehn**

During the 2012-2013 academic year, Foreign Student and Scholar Services (FSSS) provided a comprehensive range of services and opportunities to enhance the experiences of international students and scholars in and outside the campus.

FSSS served over 550 students and scholars from 72 countries during the course of the year, and kept in contact with over 250 prospective students and scholars. Data compiled from accountability forms completed by individual FSSS staff members indicate that over 5,000 office contacts took place during the same period of time with students, scholars, faculty, staff and community volunteers. We worked with Enrollment Services and the Graduate School to formalize a structure for issuance of immigration form I-20, the Certificate of Eligibility for
Non-Immigrant F-1 Students. In addition, we created a consortium for the management of the exchange visitor program with UM’s affiliated campuses in Butte and Dillon.

Additionally, we collaborated with Enrollment Services and the Undergraduate Advising Center to develop an orientation session for incoming international students and assist them in class registration. With the help of a faculty member, an “exit” workshop was created for domestic students participating in the Global Partners Program.

FSSS conducted an international graduate student survey to identify specific needs of UM’s graduate students so our office and the Graduate School can more effectively advocate for these students. In addition, we analyzed data collected from an International Student Satisfaction Survey. SelectSurvey.Net was utilized to administer the survey to 452 foreign students. One hundred and thirteen students completed the questionnaire for a response rate of 25%.

Almost 4,000 individuals attended this year’s International Culture and Food Festival. For the festival, new alliances were forged with Missoula College’s Culinary Arts Department and Franz’s Bakery. FSSS also participated in two International UM Days for high school exchange students from Montana, organized by Enrollment Services. In October 2012, FSSS director Effie Koehn attended the 30th anniversary celebration of the sister state relationship between the Kumamoto Prefecture and the State of Montana in Kumamoto City, Japan. Koehn also met with prospective high school and college students in Tokyo and Kumamoto and participated in UM alumni gatherings in both cities.

The FSSS office launched a First Friday of the month social gathering in the office’s lounge area. The two-hour event is open to all students and scholars, as well as to service providers. The intent of this function is to encourage interaction on an informal basis.

Student Affairs Information Technology

Jesse Neidigh
Campus-wide IT involvement

Student Affairs Information Technology (SAIT) was instrumental in helping design and implement the current IT governance structure at the University of Montana (UM) in the last fiscal year. This includes both the assembly of the IT Senate and the reformation of the UM Tech Partners group. Two of the four Tech Partner board members are SAIT staff and one of these staff members is the chair.

Student Affairs Initiatives

- SAIT installed the hardware for two new XenServer virtualization hosts in Fiscal Year 2013, saving at least $40,000 in server hardware costs for Student Affairs over the lifespan of those devices (3-5 years).
- Student Affairs IT hired Dean Bartlett to fill the vacant System Administrator position.
- SAIT worked with Residence Life, Business Services, and multiple vendors during spring semester to help renew the Cable TV contract for university housing.
- SAIT staff worked with Residence Life, campus central IT, and Access Consulting to evaluate the on-campus housing facilities and begin installing a wireless network infrastructure throughout the residence halls.

Student Affairs Web

- Student Affairs’ web and database environment was converted from Microsoft servers to Linux, enabling us to expand capability and speed up development time while saving thousands of dollars in operating system licensing.
- Student Affairs web and database environments are now managed using a configuration management tool which offers self-documentation, reducing the amount of time programmers need to spend documenting their work, and simplifying the standardization of managing multiple configurations. This will also make disaster recovery considerably faster and more reliable.
There have been many new custom application developments, including the UC Game Room Table Timer, UM Dining/Residence Life Office (RLO) hall snacks reservation system, SAIT Timecard, and SAIT Support Tickets rewrite.

Student Affairs IT partnered with the Assistant Vice President of Marketing to redesign the UM Homepage. This took considerable time, expertise and human resource away from Student Affairs projects and resulted in some delayed timelines for the SAIT web team.

SAIT established programming standards that were adopted by central IT for the University regarding web plugin development, which enabled collaboration of multiple development teams on campus.

SAIT converted web project management to use the Agile methodology to be more intentional and structured about how we manage programming projects. Using this methodology has led to a 10x decrease in bug reports (anecdotally) for software developed this way, as well as faster project completion.

SAIT worked with Administration and Finance and central IT staff to build an extensive database for managing veteran student Veterans Affairs (VA) financial assistance. This project took priority over many other Student Affairs projects.

Residence Life

Sandy Schoonover

Residence Life began the 2012-2013 academic year under capacity in the residence halls, University Villages, and Lewis & Clark Villages. The residence halls were 200 students below capacity. Although University Villages and Lewis & Clark Villages had more students in the apartments, the waitlists for these areas were small compared to previous years. As a result of being under capacity, the budget for Residence Life was predicted to be impacted by $800,000 at the beginning of fall semester 2012. Through astute management, the budget impact was $500,000 at the end of fiscal year 2013.
During the 2012-2013 academic year, Residence Life worked on many capital projects for the system. Residence Life is responsible for the upkeep of over 1.1 million square feet of buildings and over 47 acres of land. During the summer of 2012, Residence Life replaced equipment and painted areas in the residence halls, University Villages, and Lewis & Clark Villages; we replaced roofing at Lewis & Clark Villages, replaced piping at Lewis & Clark Villages, and re-roofed Aber and Jesse Halls. Residence Life spent over $600,000 on capital projects during fiscal year 2013.

Students living in the residence halls have been asking for the installation of wireless internet in the residence halls for the past three years. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, Residence Life was able to provide funding to make Aber wireless for the 2013 – 2014 academic year. Additional funding is being provided in FY 2014 through Residence Life and by funds given to Residence Life through Campus IT. By the end of FY 2014, all of the residence halls should have wireless internet.

Residence Life has partnered with Chemistry, Foreign Student Scholars, Global Learning Initiative (GLI), and the Honors College on living learning communities in the residence halls. Students live together in these communities and have one class in common. The Chemistry and GLI communities have been the most proactive in assessing the outcomes. In the Chemistry Living Learning Community, students who lived together went to small group classes together. Students who studied together did better in the introductory Chemistry class than students who were not in the living learning community.

During the 2012 – 2013 academic year, Residence Life established quality circles in the department. Quality Circles are a concept taken from Japanese companies where management and employees work together to solve issues or concerns and to improve processes for great efficiency and productivity. One of the quality circles was the Academic Initiatives Quality Circle. Student staff worked with Residence Life staff and staff from the Office of Student Success and Career Services to offer seven programs throughout the year for students in the residence halls. These programs helped students prepare for registration and adapt to the
University of Montana, and proved to be a successful collaboration between the three departments. The Quality Circle programs will continue during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Residence Life shares the responsibility for compiling Clery statistics for the University. We adjudicated over 1,035 student conduct cases during the course of the year with the intent of making each case a positive and educational experience for our residents. The department actively participated as a member of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) with the Director of Residence Life co-chairing CIRT. Additionally, departmental staff participated in the Admissions Review Committee.

The Griz Card Center provides the campus community an identification and access management system that increases efficiency, and provides convenience, statistical data, and security using one card. In the fiscal year of 2012-2013, the Griz Card Center issued 6,854 Griz Cards. The Griz Card System processed 1,728,785 door swipes during the year. There were over 65 event reader checkout requests from University departments, and the Griz Card System processed 63,344 validation swipes. 13,742 deposits were made to UMoney accounts, totaling $689,617.28, and 167,031 UMoney sales transactions were processed, totaling $383,961.23. The Griz Card Center completed a comprehensive external review process during FY 2012-2013. An experienced professional with over twelve years of Campus Card Program experience in higher education institutions completed the external review, including analyzing the Griz Card Program with the assessment tool endorsed by the National Association of Campus Card Users (NACCU). The Griz Card Center was committed to becoming a well-established, recognized, and respected department at the University of Montana.

University Center Annual Report

Liz Roosa Millar

The University Center (UC) entered the construction phase of a 1.7 million dollar energy conservation project which included improving light fixtures and plumbing fixtures, weather-stripping doors, sealing the roof to walls joint, improving the insulation on the mechanical
systems, improving the kitchen exhaust and makeup air systems, upgrading the building cooling system, upgrading the mechanical control systems, and re-commissioning all mechanical systems. The construction is expected to be completed in Fall 2013 and will result in guaranteed energy savings, i.e. a reduction in utility expense of approximately $75,000 per year. We also led the campus in compliance with the UM Green Cleaning Chemicals Policy. Seventy-five percent of the UC’s cleaning products are certified green. More significantly, 99.5% of the dollars spent for cleaning products in the UC are on certified green products.

The UC developed an online staff training program in Moodle. This allowed us to restructure the face-to-face time in our annual staff orientation to focus more on team building and University priorities. Utilizing Moodle offers a level of accountability that was previously lacking, and the quizzes assess learning. We improved departmental information communication with the use of UC4me, an “intranet” on SharePoint. UC4me provides centralized information for University Center employees and offers an electronic platform to discuss pertinent topics and to better engage one another. Additionally, we concluded Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 in the black and successfully developed our FY 2014-2015 budgets. We maintained quality customer service in the area of invoicing for catered events. Additionally, we added a new federally required service for our customers in ShipEx, in which we complete customs forms online for them.

We provided space, equipment, and consulting to both campus and off-campus clients: 42,465 hours of event space and 7,657 bookings. Along with the “typical” student group meetings and events, we supported larger student group initiatives such as the Youth Organizing Policy Institute, Up Till Dawn, NOH8 Campaign, and the Public Land Law Conference. We also supported larger departmental and off-campus initiatives that built community relations or offered recruitment impressions such as The Future of Health Care in America Symposium, College Board Native American Student Advocacy Institute (NASAI) Conference, International Food & Cultural Festival, Math Counts and Academic World Quest Competitions, Main Street Montana Conversation, and the International Choral Festival. Multiple outside clients returned to the UC for annual events and we added new annual events such as the Missoula Businesswomen’s Symposium, Missoula Building Industry Association Charity Auction, the International School fundraiser, and the Missoula Art Museum Auction. Our technology offerings to clients increased with the addition of a mounted digital projectors and large monitors
in rooms 326 and 327. We also added a pedal-powered public address (PA) system to our inventory for a sustainable, educational, and affordable PA option. UC Audio & Lighting increased revenue and decreased expenses for net revenue of $4,235.

Fraternity and Sorority Involvement (FSI) created a 3-year strategic plan using the University of Montana (UM) and UC strategic plans, and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) created a plan for fraternity and sorority programs. We changed the chapter award process to serve as an annual assessment on student learning in the areas of our four core values: Leadership, Active Citizenship, Life-Long Friendship, and Intellectual Development. We also drafted a new alcohol policy for fraternities that aligned with the national Fraternal Information & Programming Group (FIPG) Policies, and created the Greek Task Force Advisory Board, which allows dedicated fraternity and sorority alumni to stay involved in the activities of FSI. FSI advises the Greek Task Force, which has the sole responsibility of fundraising for the fraternity and sorority community.

The Student Involvement Network (SIN), Game Room, and Fraternity and Sorority Involvement provided co-curricular experiences for over 35,000 students. This year we incorporated our core values of Learning, Leadership, Diversity, and Fun into our planning processes for our student involvement programs, and stressed the importance of establishing and assessing these values and other outcomes. Examples of fun and diverse events included Zombie Tag and the International Women’s Day Celebration. Other outcomes achieved included student engagement, problem solving, community-building, and intercultural proficiency. Two-hundred and twenty students registered online and 160 actively played at any given time during the weeklong Zombie Tag event. It attracted students from varying demographics: nationality and ethnicity, class status, on- and off-campus, traditional and non-traditional. The International Women’s Day Celebration provided opportunities for both self-directed activity and cooperation by the international students and the Student Involvement Network during the planning process. Additionally, it provided 120 participants the opportunity to learn about an international celebration that crosses gender and cultural boundaries. Lastly, we took students to the Associated College Union International (ACUI) Regional Recreational Tournament in Seattle. UM students participated and placed in first, second, and third in billiards and table tennis. As a
result, UM students were able to travel to Arizona State to compete in the National ACUI Recreational Tournament.

**Veterans Education and Transition Services Annual Report**

**Leonard Leibinger**

The Veterans Education and Transition Services Office (VETS Office) began the fiscal year with a poor reputation and was the recipient of numerous complaints about a less than adequate assistance in handling of issues related to GI Bill payments. The office received a failing evaluation during the compliance review which resulted in the scheduling of an extended compliance review and that review was failed. The office was under a great deal of pressure to insure that any further reviews were met with satisfactory results. The compliance review that was conducted during August 2013 was completed with excellent results. The office staff has been increased from 1.75 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to 3.0 FTE. This places us in good posture for the increase in the veteran population, which is a result of the drawdowns from the two combat theaters. The staff is continually reviewing Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations for changes to insure compliance with their procedures. We are also improving how problems that veteran students bring to us are processed and solved, and ensuring that we monitor the problems until they are resolved.

There has been a major change in the work flow for meeting the challenges that veteran students face when they enter school. The delay before the VA submits payment to the school has made it difficult for the students to finalize their classes because they don’t have the money at the time of registering. The institution has therefore initiated a “confirmation of aid” to allow students to finalize their bill and confirm their classes while waiting for the VA to send their money to the institution. Business Services is a major collaborator in this process since they are the staff that submits the tuition and fees to the VA for payment. The shared responsibility of the department will use our resources to a greater advantage.
The VETS Office had previously maintained an isolationist policy on campus and failed to involve any other departments in a collaborative effort to support the veteran population. We have reached out to other departments so that we can use all of the appropriate resources for the student veterans that are available. We have reached out to the Advising Department to institute an advisor for veteran-specific needs, and we have provided funding for training their selected individual in issues related to veteran degree plans. The VETS Office is also collaborating with the Physical Therapy Department to research the connection between traumatic brain injury that veterans have suffered in their combat exposure and the cognitive effects that it has on their success in school. Additionally, we have teamed up with the Curry Health Center and will be providing funding for the “Optimal Bear” program which will be proactive in maintaining the student veteran’s mental and physical health during the school year. Disability Services for Students has introduced an IT program to VETS that will allow close coordination and referral capabilities for our students and a way for our departments to share information to facilitate treatment. We are building relationships with other Student Affairs services so that we can better serve our population and provide the tools to enhance opportunities for student success.

The budget was in a deficit status during the fiscal year due to an error by US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in which they sent a double payment for the processing fees. The payment received from VA was $13,428 but should have been $8,184 which resulted in an overpayment of $5,244. The payment for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 should have been $9,696 but was reduced to $4,452 due to the overpayment. We kept our operating expenses to pay salaries and minimal expenses in order to keep the department operational until we received general fund money for FY 2014.

The legislature provided funding in the amount of $300,000 to support programs that will contribute to the principles of excellence. This has provided an opportunity to collaborate with the departments that can improve the chances for student success. We will be developing mechanisms to follow the career paths of alumni living in Montana to enhance our state talent pool after their graduation. We believe that these enhancements will increase the national statistic of a 50% success rate for the veteran population.