I. Summary/Abstract

AISS partnered with staff and faculty from several UM departments and programs and visited each Montana Tribal College along with high schools and middle schools on the seven reservations. The purpose was to continue to strengthen relationships between schools and the university. It also provided opportunity for UM to present the various services and opportunities provided to our Native American students to help with the transition from the tribal college or high school to the University. There was also time for the tribal colleges to present their programs and desires for collaboration with UM. It is planned to continue these visits at least once every year.

II. Background Information and Relationship to Strategic Issues (new)

AISS support’s the Universities recruitment and retaining efforts of Native American students through relationship building with prospective students and their families, high school counselors, tribal college advisors, and other professionals within the educational system.

III. Indicators and Assessment/Assessment Procedure

One improvement which was significantly identified on the visit to the Tribal Colleges, high schools and middle schools was the need for students to receive more help, support, and guidance prior to the start of the semester.

IV. Results

AISS is currently working to develop a process to encourage more Native American students to attend summer orientation and has partnered with the State of Montana Gear UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The initiative was pursued because students were confused about paperwork and felt overwhelmed within the process of what was being asked of them to do. As a result, many students did not receive their classes or financial aid. AISS may offer a Native American Orientation to assist students in completing the required paperwork for admissions so they can receive their classes and financial aid. One barrier which was also identified was many students could not afford the $125 required fee. AISS collaborated with Gear Up who agreed to pay the fee for all Gear Up Senior graduates. Of the identified 52 Gear Up students, 17 students attended.

V. Recommendations

Gear Up has agreed to collaborate with AISS and UM Admissions to pay the orientation fee in the upcoming year. Assessment of the program goals and initiatives will be better implemented to assess the program initiatives, goals and outcomes. It is planned to continue visiting each Montana Tribal college along with high schools on the seven reservations at least once a year. AISS will continue to collaborate
with UM admissions by being a part of the orientation schedule to meet new students and ensure financial aid and required paperwork is complete.