MISSION
The University Center enriches campus life by providing student-focused opportunities, programs, services, and space.

- The University Center is **student-focused**. We provide students from diverse backgrounds with the guidance and resources to define and participate in their own learning and development. Student learning, discovery, and engagement are at the core of our work.

- The University Center is committed to providing a broad range of **opportunities** that enrich the university experience. Through activities, governance, employment, and volunteerism students develop life-long leadership and professional skills.

- The University Center designs **programs** and activities that appeal to a wide variety of student interests. Our core values – learning, leadership, diversity, and fun – reflect our commitment to relevant and intentional programs that enhance students’ overall educational experiences.

- The University Center offers a myriad of convenient **services** including an art gallery, hi-tech study lounge, game room, theater, conferencing services, shipping and mail center, bank and ATM’s, copy center, full-service hair salon, bookstore, market, food court, and campus OneCard (i.e., Griz Card Center).

- The University Center provides an inclusive, clean, well-maintained, and environmentally-conscious **space** for the campus and greater community to meet, study, and interact.

VALUES
Learning is a personal and social phenomenon that happens everywhere, all the time. Learning opportunities allow us to develop new knowledge, skills, and abilities; and increase our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world around us.

Leadership is the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be developed as an individual or with others through experience and education. Authentic leadership requires commitment to a personal and professional code of ethics, self-awareness, and an ability to communicate across differences. Everyone has the potential to lead.

Diversity is both a process and an outcome. Civil dialogue about differences and similarities in cultural norms, characteristics, and shared beliefs leads to greater understanding, the elimination of prejudices and discriminatory behaviors, and a personal commitment to actions that improve equality and social justice.

Fun is the feeling of uninhibited happiness that enriches overall wellbeing. It is the type of joy that occurs when accompanied by both physical and emotional safety.

MONTANA CREED
As members of The University of Montana community, we aspire to:

- respect the dignity and rights of all persons;
- promote justice, learning, individual success, and service;
- act as good stewards of institutional resources; and
- respect the natural environment.
BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY CENTER

Construction of the $4.3 million University Center (UC) was completed and it opened to student use on January 6, 1969. The grand opening ceremonies took place on February 7 and included speeches from Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, Montana Governor Forrest Anderson, UM President Robert Pantzer and ASUM President Ed Leary. Neil Diamond was scheduled to appear in concert on February 9. Unfortunately, he canceled the show due to illness and the ceremonies were concluded with a concert by the Ramsey Lewis Trio.

Initially, planners conceived the UC as three separate buildings connected by a courtyard designed to tie them together. The canopy was added during the planning stages and the three buildings were enclosed as one. Planners were inspired by the newly developed mall concept, where several vendors were connected by a shared space, but maintained their individuality. Separating programming, activities and services into distinct areas accomplished the dual goals of avoiding long corridors and a maze-like interior while providing tenants the opportunity to spread out.

UC Director Ray Chapman’s decision to remove the bowling alley on the first floor in 1983 catalyzed major changes in the UC. Lagging revenues, lanes in desperate need of reconditioning at great expense, and the alley’s failure to make enough money to cover yearly operation costs of $30,000 heavily influenced the decision. The bowling alley space remained vacant for several years.

Although the first floor may have seemed abandoned, the Student Union Board had been working on long-term plans for its use since 1978. Additionally, the UC had considered the prospect of renting space to local businesses to generate more revenue since 1975. In 1985, as a result of the findings from market studies and a consultant hired to evaluate the best use of the space, Chapman introduced the concept of the mini-mall. The UC was one of the first student unions to implement this concept.

Concerns about asbestos also prompted major renovations in the UC. In 1992, the UC Board declared asbestos removal a “very pressing issue.” Because the UC is an auxiliary operation, and thus does not receive state funding, and because closing the entire building was not a viable option, removal had to be completed in stages. Over the course of two more renovations, in the mid-nineties and again in 2000, the UC painstakingly gutted areas of the building and removed the remaining asbestos.

The demolition required for the asbestos removal provided a perfect opportunity to address other renovations to the building. Five meeting rooms, a quiet study area and larger lounge were added to the second floor. The previous lounge space was renovated to become an organizational suite for student groups. The food court dining area was expanded, and the game room modernized. Changes to the third floor included the removal of a glass corridor that separated the foyer from the atrium, as well as the addition of a theater, inside stairs from the second floor, and new meeting rooms.
For much of the first thirty years the building was open, the nearly exclusive focus on the facility resulted in important and necessary revisions to the structure and paved the way for program improvements. In 1996, UC Director Gary Ratcliff took steps to make programming a priority. Within a year, the first adviser positions were created for leadership, diversity, and Greek Life programming. The UC continues to make a concentrated effort to recruit and retain a team of professionals committed to student learning and development, which in turn helps develop student leaders.

A combined commitment of financial and human resources to the student union program has contributed to the transformation of the University Center from a mere building to the thriving community center it is today. In 2010, there were roughly 1.5 million visitors and more than 7,000 events scheduled in the building. With a constantly changing student population, the UC will look forward to determine what students want from their student union on both a short-term and long-term basis and to redefine the role of the student center regarding the educational goals of the institution and student needs. Whatever it becomes, the University Center of tomorrow will continue to respond to evolving needs and enrich campus life by providing student-focused opportunities, programs, services, and space.

**INTRODUCTION**

The results of a comprehensive program review from 2008-2010 based on the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) College Union Standards (6th Edition, 2003) informed the University Center’s original 2020 Strategic Plan. The CAS standards provided professional benchmarks for judging the performance of the University Center. The following action items under each original strategic initiative represent the updated 2020 plan and contain any unmet, revised, and new strategic initiatives and objectives that will guide the work of the UC for the next four fiscal years.

1. Cultivate an evidence-based assessment culture where decisions made utilizing data are expected, encouraged, and supported. Ask why aren’t you assessing what you’re doing to see if it’s effective?
   - Explore implementing a performance-based budgeting model for the UC
   - Complete a Student Union Satisfaction benchmark survey in FY17; include Missoula College students
   - Carry out our next comprehensive program review in FY18
   - More strongly encourage staff to use the assessment resources and services offered by CampusLabs and other professional organizations e.g., free trainings (webinars, etc.) in FY17; discuss at orientation and staff meetings
   - Establish a UC Assessment Plan by unit; UC Leadership Team will create beginning in FY17

2. Produce a comprehensive program and essential services guided by student learning and development.
   - Identify student learning outcomes for every unit in the department in FY17; leadership will discuss at unit orientations and include a discussion of the UC’s broader mission and value of customer service; how the work we all do contributes to student learning; help areas see the bigger picture and be able to articulate it
• Establish The Branch Center
• Assess the student learning outcomes of our programs
• Create The ReSource; build on our relationship with Admissions to build a collaborative program where the Source is reengineered to be more than an information desk; integrate Ursas’s, Advocates, and potentially ASUM senators with Source student employees to help students connect with campus resources; senators, academic advisors, etc. could hold office hours from the Source
• Continue campus conversations about securing software to provide cocurricular transcripts e.g., CollegiateLink/OrgSync, other which will require a financial investment and strong campus partnerships
• Establish standardized exit interview where we ask students who are leaving before graduating if we can keep in touch and hopefully help them to come back; train staff, develop a system to track (CRM); keep engaged

3. Promote full and equal participation in all facilities, services, programs, and events.
• Actively publicize UM’s accessibility features through Montana Event Services
• Create vision, mission, and strategic plan for the Branch Center in FY17 utilizing extensive student input
• Improve UC’s use of technology to ensure broader reach and delivery of programs e.g., streaming and webinars
• Purchase new ALDs for the UC Theater in FY17
• Practice affirmative action more broadly at the department level when recruiting and hiring student and permanent staff; include standardized question in the process about value of diversity
• Assess interest from distance learners in electronic access to programs such as DiverseU, UM Allies, and LeadershipU; FY17 begin exploration; potential launch of one program e.g. UM Allies in FY18
• Actively participate in UM’s UxM customer/student experience initiative (live chat, assessment, training, etc.)

4. Fulfill legal and ethical responsibilities
• Review and possibly adopt ACUI’s statement of ethical principles in FY17
• Add art assets recovery section in Emergency Action Plan under business continuity
• Offer trainings on insurance requirements for events
• Provide risk management trainings on specific narrow topics as a part of staff development and orientations
• Create matrices to assess and document mitigation of risk

5. Achieve fiscal responsibility and ensure adequate financial resources.
• Develop funding plan for UC Renovation(s) outlined in the Master Space Plan; include private and corporate sponsorships (work with the Foundation), student fee campaign for bond, capital reserves, etc.
• Continue to seek funding from grants e.g., arts and humanities
• Explore opportunities for selling advertising space or partnerships to save on the cost of advertising
6. Provide adequate, accessible, and sustainable facilities, technology, and equipment.

- Tell our story of how and why we are a campus leader in sustainability and accessibility (diversity & inclusion)
- Complete creation of art-themed room in UC 224 (sell name?) in FY17
- Create space showcasing UM/UC diversity and inclusivity e.g., the Branch Center, which includes UC 207 (rename)
- After refurnishing done in the UC Commons in summer of FY17, look at other ways to freshen the space; do the same for the 3rd floor foyer(s), Atrium, Campus Court, Game Room, etc.
- Reupholster the Integra lounge furniture, as needed
- Rehab 3rd floor restrooms
- Purchase new furniture for the Branch Center and UC Marketing

7. Advance programs, services, and facilities through improved marketing, campus and external relations, and communication.

- Complete the Student Affairs video project
- Strengthen the UC’s brand in the community, in particular for fundraising for UC renovation – FY17
- Publicize and promote our staff who facilitate and present on various areas of expertise and potentially monetize e.g., create a UC Speakers Bureau
- Continue outreach efforts with Missoula College, especially when relocate to new location
- Work with academic units to create internship opportunities in the UC, for mountain and Missoula College
- Ensure the UC Board exists, regains relevancy, and is sustained; may need to work with ASUM to rethink

8. Optimize the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of organizational systems, leadership, and human resources.

- Implement TM1, UM’s new budging software, which we helped purchase
- Evaluate all current and potential third-party software solutions; consolidate and optimize where possible
- Purchase licenses for Podio
- Upgrade EMS and move to virtual EMS
- Create a new UC key database; determine what campus is going to do in the future and collaborate

9. Guarantee the mission is relevant, consistent, and recognizable.