Joint Subcommittee on Education
Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT

January 24, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Seth Buckman, and I am in my senior year studying Small Business Management working toward an Associate of Applied Science degree at Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC). I will finish my last semester this spring with plans to start my very first business in Kalispell, Montana.

I first heard of FVCC in 2010 when I was deployed and looking at colleges while in the army.
This perked my interest because of the Logger Sports team. After I honorably left the military, my journey took me across the United States to work in professional drag racing before bringing me back to Montana with a job at Proof Research in Columbia Falls. A coworker of mine, who was also a veteran and attended FVCC, convinced me to attend FVCC. After speaking with my family, I spoke with an advisor and made the jump. I thought I wasn't eligible but through financial support I made things possible. After evaluating my decision to attend, I fell in love with small business and it clarified the cloudiness that I felt around the business world.

I feel very fortunate to have received scholarships and financial aid that helped me on my path. I received approval for financial support through the VA program, which allowed me to cover tuition and fees. I stepped away from employment to focus fully on school, and it's helped me be a strong student. I also received multiple scholarships which helped me achieve my goals.

I was fortunate to lead our Logger Sports team as Team Captain last year, and we won second place against many large universities west of the Mississippi. I am motivated to lead, and leadership is something I want to continue learning about even after I leave FVCC, so I joined the FVCC Student Leadership Program. Even after moving on from team captain, I still help with other team duties and planning, and I love giving back to our team and continuing to learn strong leadership skills. In 2023, I went to the Brawl of the Wild football game to receive the Montana Athletes in Service award, and that was an amazing achievement.

Everywhere I go, I speak with people in our community about FVCC, and I receive nothing but positive feedback. From alumni who attended FVCC in the 1990s to current students, its reputation and brand is overwhelmingly strong. The practical knowledge that my instructors bring to the classroom is teaching me real world skills that I will bring into our community, and I love the way they share their wealth of knowledge. I've become more involved on campus through student organizations, and those experiences have made me a well-rounded student and member of our community.

I'm proud to be a student at FVCC, and I want to help continue the legacy it brings to our valley and our state. Thank you for hearing my message and for supporting students in the future.

Sincerely,

Seth Buckman