



# Education and Local Government Interim Committee

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## 57th Montana Legislature

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June 26, 2002

TO: Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget  
FROM: Pamela Joehler, Senior Fiscal Analyst  
RE: Accountability Measures Survey Results

## Background

At the May 2002 meeting, the Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget (Subcommittee) adopted a motion to use accountability measures as an assessment tool for policymakers, the university system, and the public in evaluating the achievement of statewide public postsecondary education policy goals. The Subcommittee identified 37 accountability measures relating to the six postsecondary education policy goals. You asked staff to request additional feedback and input from the Montana University System on the potential accountability measures and forward both the Subcommittee list and the Montana University System feedback to Subcommittee members for the purpose of further review and developing a tentative "short list" for accountability measures. Staff sent a ballot to Subcommittee members on June 10 asking for input on which accountability measures you considered to be most meaningful for each policy goal.

## Survey Results

Seven of the nine (78 percent) Subcommittee members returned the ballots by the time this memo was written. Table 1 summarizes the survey results (Detailed results are in Appendix A). The three accountability measures for each policy goal with the most votes are included on the table. In the event of a tie, more than three accountability measures are listed.

<b>Table 1. Accountability Measures Survey Results Summary</b>		
<b>POLICY GOAL</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE</b>	<b># VOTES</b>
<b>Policy Goal #1 -- Prepare students for success through quality education</b>		
	1. Completion rates	6
	2. Retention rates	4
	3. Professional certification/licensure results	4
	4. Graduates' performance on national, standardized exams	4
<b>Policy Goal #2 -- Promote access and affordability</b>		
	1. Affordability compared to other states	6
	2. State support as a percent of personal income	4
	3. Student debt load and default rates	3
	4. State support per FTE as a percent of total cost of education	3
	5. Participation rates (traditional and non-traditional)	3
<b>Policy Goal #3 -- Deliver efficient, coordinated services</b>		
	1. Transferability among institutions	6
	2. Percent of expenditures in instruction, administration, athletics, etc.	5
	3. Growth in cross-campus coordinated services from 1995	4
	4. Expenditures per student FTE	4
<b>Policy Goal #4 -- Be responsive to market and employment needs and opportunities</b>		
	1. Job placement rates by field or program	6
	2. Average starting salaries of graduates by field or program	4
	3. New programs tied to market employment needs	4
	4. Growth in FTE enrollment, certificates, and degrees conferred in 2-yr education	4
<b>Policy Goal #5 -- Contribute to Montana's economic and social success</b>		
	1. Research and Development receipts and expenditures	6
	2. Technology transfers (licensing and commercialization)	5
	3. Number of businesses served by the university system	3
	4. Number of non-resident students enrolled/campus	3
<b>Policy Goal #6 -- Collaborate with the K-12 school system and other postsecondary education systems</b>		
	1. Collaborative programs with K-12	6
	2. Average SAT or ACT scores of first time full time MUS freshmen	5
	3. Collaborative agreements or programs with Tribal Colleges, Community Colleges	5

## **Subcommittee Action Required**

There are three items requiring Subcommittee attention at the July 9, 2002 meeting:

1. Identify or confirm preferred accountability measures
2. Discuss and decide on the number of accountability measures to recommend
3. Clarify reporting requirements to implement performance reporting

### **Item 1: Confirm Preferred Accountability Measures**

The accountability measures considered were derived from the Subcommittee members at its March and May 2002 meetings, staff research, and Montana University System input and feedback. Those accountability measures listed in Table 1 are those selected most frequently in the June 10 mail survey to the Subcommittee. The subcommittee needs to affirm that these accountability measures are, indeed, on the "short list" before proceeding to Item 2. If, for some unforeseen or unanticipated reason, the Subcommittee determines another accountability measure belongs on the list, it should be added here.

Option 1: Confirm the accountability measures on Table 1 are the preferred measures to be considered for recommendation to the Education and Local Government Committee and the 2003 Legislature.

Option 2: Change the "short list" as determined by the Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget.

### **Item 2: Decide on the Number of Accountability Measures**

Experience from some other states indicates the effectiveness of a performance reporting system improves when the reporting begins with a few accountability measures that are meaningful.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 includes 24 accountability measures covering six policy goals. Because this effort in Montana, if implemented, would be new and untested, staff recommends the Subcommittee consider limiting the number of accountability measures to one or two per policy goal. If the Subcommittee selected those accountability measures on Table 1 that received five or more votes (a majority of the Subcommittee), there would be ten accountability measures.

Option 1: Recommend the use of one or two accountability measures for each policy goal, for a maximum of 12.

Option 2: Recommend the use of up to three accountability measures for each policy goal as determined by the Subcommittee, for a maximum of 18.

Option 3: Recommend no maximum limit.

### **Item 3: Clarify Reporting Requirements to Implement Performance Reporting**

As noted at the beginning of this memo, the Subcommittee is recommending the development of periodic performance reports to be used by state policymakers, the university system, and Montana citizens as a tool to evaluate the achievement of statewide public policy goals for postsecondary education. There are a number of specific items relating to performance reporting that remain unclear at this point. These are itemized below. The Subcommittee could address some or all of these items at the July meeting. Those items not addressed or issues remaining unresolved could be delegated to staff to clarify in the final report or presented to the 2003 legislature for further discussion.

- A. At what level should the accountability measures be reported? Does the Subcommittee prefer to see accountability measure reports summarized at the system level, by campus or some other category?
- B. How often should the performance reports be issued? The intent of the Subcommittee is that the performance reports be used by state policymakers, the university system, and the public to evaluate the achievement of statewide public policy goals for postsecondary education. How often will these user groups need the information? Is a biennial report adequate, or is an annual report preferred?
- C. Does the Subcommittee want to provide general guidelines on the format or presentation of the report that would improve the users' understanding of the information being presented?
- D. What is the best way to provide public access to this information?

## ENDNOTES

1. Paul E. Lingenfelter, "Educational Accountability", *Network News*, Volume 20, No. 3, State Higher Education Executive Officers and the National Center for Education Statistics Communication Network, Denver, Colorado, November 2001, pp. 6-7.