



# Education and Local Government Interim Committee

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## 57th Montana Legislature

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February 28, 2002

TO: Joint Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget  
FROM: Pamela Joehler, Senior Fiscal Analyst  
RE: Project Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this memo is to ask for Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee (Subcommittee) confirmation of the project purpose and a decision on project scope so the time remaining in the interim can be used effectively.

### PROJECT PURPOSE

As originally conceived and proposed, the purpose of the project was to accomplish either item 1 below only, or both items 1 and 2:

1. For the Legislature, Board of Regents, and Executive Branch to collaborate and develop statewide policy goals for public postsecondary education in Montana, and
2. Identify meaningful accountability criteria for the Montana University System that measure the attainment of statewide policy goals.

The Subcommittee agreed to undertake both items 1 and 2 with the understanding that it would use the Board of Regents' policy goals contained in its Strategic Plan as a starting point for policy goal discussions. Statewide policy goals will be discussed at the March 2002 meeting.

Accountability measures will be introduced at the March 2002 meeting and discussed in more detail at the May 2002 meeting.

### Question 1: Does the Subcommittee agree that the purpose of the interim project is

**accurately described in items 1 and 2 in the above section?**

## **PROJECT SCOPE**

As noted in the body of the text in items 1 and 2 in the first section, the original scope of the proposed project was to develop statewide policy goals and accountability criteria for public postsecondary education entities in Montana. Specifically, this was intended to cover public postsecondary education entities that receive state funding and are under the control or supervision of the Montana Board of Regents (the Montana University System and the Community Colleges). The primary reason for defining the scope of the project as these entities is because these are the postsecondary education entities in the state over which the legislature and the Board of Regents legally have most influence or control.<sup>1</sup>

The Subcommittee accepted the project as proposed **and** added the question of whether the project should encompass postsecondary education entities in the state that are not under "state" control. At the January 2002 meeting, the Subcommittee discussed this question but did not resolve it.

### **Decision Needed**

To prepare the Subcommittee to resolve this question at the March 2002 meeting, the Subcommittee directed staff to draft a "Prologue" statement to statewide policy goals that acknowledges the existence and efforts of all postsecondary education entities in the state and encourages cooperation among all parties for the benefit of Montana citizens. The bill draft attached to the staff memo titled "Draft Legislation" includes this statement.

The Subcommittee has three options for the project scope:

**Option 1:** Apply only the policy statements and accountability measures that may be developed by this Subcommittee to those education entities under the control or supervision of the Board of Regents. This option includes the Montana University System and the Community Colleges. This option would not include a higher education Prologue statement.

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<sup>1</sup>Limited influence over tribal colleges has only recently developed and results from a 1997 state law enacted to address the disbursement of state funds to tribal colleges for enrolled resident nonbeneficiary students. State law provides "Subject to a line item appropriation....., the regents shall provide financial assistance to tribally controlled community colleges for enrolled resident nonbeneficiary students" (Section 20-25-428, MCA). This law requires certain action be taken or conditions be met before funds are distributed to the tribal colleges, such as requiring the tribal colleges to be accredited and to enter into an agreement with the regents to provide certain information. The biennial appropriation authorized by the legislature for this purpose in the last four biennia has ranged from \$0 to \$1.4 million.

**Option 2:** Same as Option 1 and adopt the "Prologue" statement concept that acknowledges the importance of, and encourages cooperation among, all postsecondary education entities in Montana. Statewide policies and accountability measures would apply only to institutions under "state" control.

**Option 3:** Same as Option 2 and encourage participation in statewide policy goals and accountability measures reporting by non-state entities.

These options are summarized in the table below.

<b>Project Scope Options Summary</b>			
	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>
<b>Include Prologue Statement?</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Policy Goals &amp; Accountability Measures apply to....</b>	MUS Community Colleges	MUS Community Colleges	MUS Community Colleges Tribal Colleges <sup>2</sup> Private Proprietary

When evaluating the option of expanding the scope of the project to include non-state entities, the subcommittee may want to address the following questions:

1. What is the intent of expanding the project scope to include non-state entities?
2. Does the concept of a "Prologue" statement address and satisfy the intent?
3. Does the proposed "Prologue" statement (see staff memo titled "Draft Legislation") sufficiently convey Subcommittee intent?

In addition to debating the above questions, the Subcommittee may want to consider any feedback from the non-state entities regarding their inclusion in the subcommittee's project scope. The chairman of the Subcommittee sent a copy of the bill draft to tribal colleges and private colleges inviting them to provide written feedback to the Subcommittee regarding the concept of including non-state entities in either statewide policy goals or accountability measures, or both. Any feedback received from these entities will be

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<sup>2</sup>Statewide policy goals and accountability measures can only be implemented for those entities which the state has provided funding for or has governing authority. The governing boards of "non-state" entities could adopt the same or similar policy goals and accountability measures on a voluntary basis.

shared with the Subcommittee at the March 2002 meeting.

**Question 2: What postsecondary education institutions does the Subcommittee want to include in the project scope? Does the Subcommittee want to recommend the adoption of a Prologue statement as described in this section?**