MSU INVESTMENT PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Title	Funding for Office of Student Success	**Request Date**	December 15, 2011
Department	Office of Student Success	**Email**	cbeck@montana.edu
Requestor	Carina Beck	**Phone**	5483

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Core Themes and Objectives (check all that apply)</td>
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Educate Students

☒ Our graduates will have achieved mastery in their major disciplines

☒ Our graduates will become active citizens and leaders

☒ Our graduates will have a multicultural and global perspective

☒ Our graduates will understand the ways that knowledge & art are created and applied in a variety of disciplines

☒ Our graduates are prepared for careers in their field

☒ We will provide increased access to our educational programs

☒ Communities and external stake holders benefit from broadly defined education partnerships with MSU

Create Knowledge and Art

☒ Students, faculty, and staff will create knowledge and art that is communicated widely

Serve Communities

☒ We help meet a fundamental need of the citizens of Montana by providing degree programs for our students

☒ We help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Montana by providing a wide range of educational opportunities to a variety of students

☒ Our students, faculty, staff, and administrators reach out to engage and serve communities

☒ Our students, faculty, staff, and administrator reach in to build the university community

Integrate Learning, Discovery, and Engagement

☒ Each graduate will have had experiences that integrate learning, discovery and engagement

☒ Outreach activities will educate students and address the needs of the communities we serve

☒ Students, faculty, and staff will create knowledge and art that addresses societal needs

☒ MSU is a community that will be characterized by synergy within and across disciplines, roles and functions.

Stewardship

☒ The public trusts the institution to operate openly and use resources wisely

☒ The faculty and staff are well-qualified and supported

☒ MSU will support Native American students, programs, and communities

☒ MSU will be an inclusive community, supporting and encouraging diversity

☒ Our publicly provided resources are used efficiently and effectively

☐ Natural resources are used efficiently and sustainably

☐ MSU nurtures a culture of resource conservation and ecological literacy among students, faculty and staff

☐ Our physical infrastructure (e.g., building, equipment, open spaces) will be well-maintained and useful

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INSITUTIONAL BENEFIT							
Campuses	☒ Bozeman ☐ Billings ☐ Havre ☐ Great Falls ☐ FSTS ☐ Extension ☐ MAES						
Cross Depts	Academic Affairs						

TIMEFRAME	
Proposed Dates	Start: End:

COST AND REQUIREMENTS

Funding Type	One-Time ($)	Multi-Year ($)			Base ($)	FTE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Personnel (*w/benefits*)					389,670	4.0
Materials & Supplies						
Travel						
Contracted Services						
Capital						
Other Operations					50,330	
TOTAL					440,000	

Please comment, if necessary, regarding cost and requirements.

Budget Request Explanation:
Over the past two years funding for the Office of Student Success has been provided primarily by the Division of Student Success (through reserve and vacant position savings). The "start up" funding was intended to serve as investment to improve student retention at MSU. To date the Division of Student Success has invested $323,000 (through FYE 12).

After TRiO-Student Support Services lost Department of Education funding ($400,000 per year) the institution committed $100,000 to ensure key student services from the grant would not end, while these funds are helpful, they only account for 25% of the total TRiO-SSS budget. In the "transition year" this funding is adequate, since the scale of services has roughly doubled what TRiO- SSS provided. However, in future years and with the Division of Student Success reserves and salary savings depleted, another funding source must be identified to ensure continuation of services.

Full-time Employees   **$203,800**

	Salary	Benefits
• Program Manager	$34,000	$15,000
• ChampChange Coordinator/Communication Specialist	$34,000	$15,000
• Statistician/Analyst	$40,000	$16,400
• Office Manager (50% split with Career Center)	$15,600	$11,200
• Front Desk Reception (50% split with Career Center)	$12,000	$10,600

Part-time Employees – No Health Benefits   **$70,870**
- Six Student Success Advisors (12 hours per week – 45 weeks per year) - $51,870
- Learning Strategies Instructors (8 sections per year plus workshops) - $19,000

Student Employees   **$35,000**
- Graphic Design - $10,000 per year (2 employees)
- Videography - $ 5,000 per year (1 employee)
- Work Study - $10,000 per year (8 employees)
- Web Developer $10,000 per year (1 employee)

Tutors   **$80,000**
- Individual Tutoring (100+ employees)
- Group (Residence Hall, Library/SUB drop-in hours, etc.).
- Just-in-time tutoring (before critical exams)

Other Operations   **$50,330**
 Include BCSSE, The Guide, printing, Legend of the Bobcat, travel, training, etc.

The goal to improve student retention is complicated and challenging and must be supported with "real resources" if we expect "real results." A successful student retention program must include the following elements: 1) the ability to identify students at risk (through predictive modeling and descriptive statistical analysis and early alert mechanisms); 2) meaningful interventions with trained Student Success Advisors and Learning Strategists; 3) readily accessible, supportive and timely resources including tutoring, learning strategies support, financial literacy, etc.; 4) regular, timely, relevant and interesting communication for students (and faculty and staff); 5) engagement incentivizing and 6) assessment of outcomes.

The Office of Student Success emerged from the culmination of the following: 1) loss of the TRiO – Student Support Services program; 2) evolution of the FYI (First Year Initiative) program formerly housed in the Dean of Students Office; 3) transfer of ASMSU tutoring; 4) development of the ChampChange program; 5) development of MSU 101 and Learning Strategies workshops/classes; and 6) an extensive data mining program to determine "the state of student persistence at MSU." These efforts/circumstances lead to the development of Office of Student Success. The evolution of the program is important to promote student persistence at MSU for all students since the former TRiO office was mandated to serve no more than 300 students each academic year. In contrast for **fall semester 2011, during the first semester of operation,** the Office of Student Success has exceeded the TRiO benchmarks by:

- Conducting 394 individual student intervention appointments
- Providing 2039 hours of free tutoring for 386 students
- Hiring 93 tutors to provide tutoring in 140 courses for 386 students
- Hosting 167 students for MSU 101 workshops (including the January 9 & 10th session)
- Hosting 1,500+ students for Legend of the Bobcat
- Coordinating communication of 1,215 early alert student submissions from faculty
- Recording 900+ unique views of the Office of Student Success webpage per week
- Distributing 2000 copies of The Guide to freshman students and parents
- Conducting 37 "leaning strategies" workshops for students
- Recording over 3,500 students participating in a ChampChange event (other than rec center usage)

The Office of Student Success <u>currently</u> provides the following services to <u>all</u> MSU students:

1) Free Individual and Small Group Tutoring (including meetings in the Residence Halls, SUB, and other "student centered locations").
2) Individual appointments with Student Success Advisors aiding students with a variety of issues affecting student persistence.
3) Learning Strategies Workshops/Classes (US 191)
4) Hosting student communication plan to coordinate and share vital information from various departments and offices promoting understanding of expectations, deadlines, services, etc. to aid their persistence.
5) Return to Learn – identification, outreach and "fast track" system to re-register students who have left MSU.

In addition, Office of Student Success <u>currently</u> provides the following services to <u>all freshman and/or sophomore</u> MSU students:

1) Administration of the BCSSE (Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement). Data is used to inform students of potential areas of concern and to conduct student interventions with those most at-risk based upon their responses.
2) ChampChange program and incentives (freshman and sophomore students).
3) MSU 101 (an "academic boot camp" for students with a cumulative GPA between .99 and 1.99).

4) FYI and 2YI (First and Second Year Initiative) programs designed to promote student persistence focusing on the unique needs of the two population groups.
5) Legend of the Bobcat – a rite of passage welcoming event for freshman students.
6) US 210 - Education the World of Work and You – a seminar class designed to promote student retention

The Office of Student Success currently provides the following services to faculty/academic departments:

1) Coordination of the Early Alert System (formerly known as D&F&W list)
2) Interventions for at-risk students with trained professional Student Success Advisors.
3) Data analysis documenting student persistence by department, course type, HS GPA, etc.
4) ChampChange class participation point tracking (for attendance at co-curricular events).
5) Tutors to provide class study sessions prior to key exam periods or any other time requested by faculty members.

Other anticipated services/events include:

1) Connecting with students via social media applications (and other technology interfaces) to support student engagement and understanding of institutional expectations/deadlines.
2) Working in conjunction with Academic Affairs to develop other targeted strategies for retention.
3) Better evaluation and targeting of at-risk students through predictive modeling and descriptive analysis.
4) Better feedback to departments and colleges to create a "holistic approach to retention"
5) Better outreach and communication to students based upon identification through statistical analysis and early alert referrals.

This proposal represents a culmination of two efforts and one goal: 1) maintain services formerly provided by TRiO – SSS – (first generation, low income and students with disabilities); 2) continue to build on the investment by the Division of Student Success to support the effort to retain and graduate students; and 3) triangulate efforts to support students by working in conjunction with Academic Affairs to provide meaningful, holistic institutional decisions benefitting the student within all degrees of risk.

Using the tactics outlined in the previous section, the goal of the proposal is to improve MSU's overall retention and graduation rates by identifying students who are "at-risk" for departure and providing appropriate and customized interventions. A second theme advanced in the proposal is based upon inviting students to return to MSU to finish their degree (Return to Learn Program) in order to improve graduation rates without "waiting" four or six years before the effects of first interventions with the freshman class are realized.

Both efforts require highly individualized and skilled intervention. Students contemplate departure for a variety of deeply personal reasons. This program is based upon best practices from other institutions that have significantly improved their overall retention rate through active strategies meeting the student expressed and latent needs (needs they don't yet know they have but manifest after key points in the semester occur – i.e. tutoring assistance after midterm exams). The proposal is also based upon an extensive research conducted at MSU including (but not limited to) the following examples:

1) a six year persistence cohort analysis (by gender, residency, ACT, HS GPA, academic status, etc).
2) predictive modeling analysis
3) analysis of barrier/difficult to pass courses
4) persister and withdrawer between group comparison
5) focus groups

The outcomes of these combined efforts demonstrate a need to support the student academically and psychosocially. An effort is also required to teach the student to "learn how to be a student" while making the transition to a new and perceived "complicated" environment. These objectives require unique efforts during the following phases of the student experience:

1) Pre-entry – after the student is admitted but before the first day of classes
2) Entry – first six months of school
3) Metamorphosis – 6 months to two years – after this time the student is likely to persist.
4) Tenured – two years to graduation – a time to engage students in peer related activities to support students at the pre-entry through metamorphosis stages (i.e. tutoring, mentoring, etc.).
5) Disengagement – the goal is to prevent pre-mature disengagement and celebrate the ritual of graduation.

Using these phases as a guide, the efforts of the office will be centered on interventions, communication, success advising, learning strategies, and other mechanisms to anticipate and support student needs.

Using the strategies reviewed in the proposal, a return on investment was calculated using 2009 figures. We learned if the university improved it's overall retention rate by "saving" 131 students (60/40% mix between out-of-state and in-state) over a 6 year period the institution would net (after marginal expenses) $2 million dollars, which would be realized on an cumulative basis. In addition to the broader social, political and ethical considerations of improving retention and graduation rates, the university could improve it's financial situation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Implementation Plan *(Please describe with timelines)*

Because of the initial investment, much of the "heavy lifting" has occurred in terms of developing a strategy and implementing a plan to support student persistence to improve MSU's overall retention and graduation rates. To date the following performance metrics have been accomplished for Fall semester 2011:

- 1215 at-risk students have been referred for interventions from 73 faculty (many of the faculty teach multiple or large sections).
- 394 student "success advising" intervention appointments have been scheduled with professional advisors
- 386 students received free individual or group tutoring services
  2039 tutoring hours were offered in 140 courses by 93 student tutors
- 200+ campus events have been offered for ChampChange credit (ChampChange is an engagement rewards program for freshman and sophomore students).
- 3503 students have participated in a ChampChange event other than working out at the gym.
- 150+ students visit the Office of Student Success each week for services/support.
- 167 students registered for one of three offerings of MSU 101. The majority of registrations come from success advising interventions.

The goal will be to maintain and grow these programs to improve MSU's freshman to sophomore retention rate by 6% over the course of three years (to 80%). If we achieve this goal, we fully expect to improve MSU's overall graduation rate through increased number of students progressing through the pipeline due to improved student persistence and the development of the Return to Learn Program.

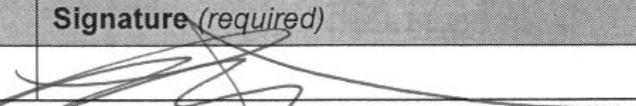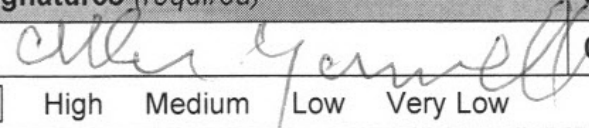**Assessment Plan** *(Please describe with indicators)*

Assessment will be based upon the following factors:
- Improvement in first-time full-time freshman to sophomore retention rate
- Improvement in first-time full-time sophomore to junior retention rate
- Overall increase in student registrations with the "Return to Learn Program"
- Overall improved GPA and retention rate of students using Office of Student Success Services (including MSU 101)
  - Improved participation in tutoring
  - Improved participation in success advising
- Improved course registration in US 210
- Improved participation in co-curricular activities (as measured by ChampChange)
- Improved pass rates in difficult to pass courses (due to tutoring support)
- Increased Office of Student Success web page activity

If assessed objectives are not met in the timeframe outlined, what is the plan to sunset this proposal?

If objectives are not met within a three-year period, the office should either be closed, or mission retooled.

SIGNATURES

Department Head (please print)	Signature (required)	Date

Dept Head Priority (please circle one): Very High   High   Medium   Low   Very Low

Dean/Director (please print)	Signature (required)	Date
Carina Beck		12/16/11

Dean/Director Priority (please circle one): ~~Very High~~   High   Medium   Low   Very Low

Executive/VP (please print)	Signatures (required)	Date
Allen Yarnell		01/19/12

Executive/VP Priority (please circle one): ~~Very High~~   High   Medium   Low   Very Low