Details:  Blake Bjornson, Sydney Pearce, Joe Thiel and Matt Caires, all members of the Strategic Planning Council, attended a variety of student groups and organizations throughout the past month. During these visits, they asked questions to the students regarding their thoughts on MSU Values, Programs of Distinction, and Strategic Investment of New Resources.  Student groups attended included:

- ASMSU student senate (50 students)
- ASMSU exponent staff (40 students)
- Engineers Without Borders (40 students)
- Panhellenic Council (35 students)
- Interfraternity Council (30 students)

What follows are the common themes that emerged from these interactive sessions.

**MSU Values**

**Opportunity** – This was a key theme that the students discussed over and over again.  This included their thoughts about the flexibility in trying new majors, learning new skills both inside and outside the classroom, opportunities to pursue outdoor recreation, opportunity to receive practical education (math and science) along with “liberal art” classes (music, dance, humanities etc).  Students made clear to us in every session that they value research opportunities for undergraduates as a key MSU value.

**Campus Involvement and Service** – There seemed to be an incredible desire for these students who were already involved to get other students involved in some capacity outside of the classroom.  There appears to be a “pipeline” that leads to student involvement on campus.  Once the students are in the “pipeline,” the involvement opportunities abound.  The challenge is getting the non-involved student into the pipeline.

**Personalized Attention and Student-Centered Environment** – A key distinction that separates MSU from other institutions is the personalized attention students feel they receive from faculty and staff.  And these students want even more.  The students emphasized the need for opportunities to connect with faculty and staff as a key factor in making academic progress, staying in school, and for their personal growth as young adults.  Opportunities to connect with faculty/staff include research projects, as mentors, and as academic or club advisors.

**Pride in MSU/Montana and a Strong Sense of Place** - The school pride and loyalty these students expressed in these sessions was very real and palpable.  These are students who will be committed life-long alumni.  They expressed a deep sense of campus loyalty along with this very real sense that pursuing their education in Montana is unique and satisfying.

**Programs of Distinction** – A variety of programs were mentioned over and over again as important to the students.  These included:
• Office of Community Involvement and Service Programs
• Access to “Liberal Arts” classes like dance, music, and the humanities
• Career Services and Career Fairs
• Study Abroad
• Fraternity and Sorority Life
• Student clubs and organizations
• Math and writing centers
• Champ Change
• Undergraduate Scholars Program
• Club sports and athletic opportunities
• Campus sustainability programs

**Strategic Investment of New Resources** –

We asked students, “if you were President Cruzado for a day and had $1M to allocate to anything you’d like, how would you spend the money?” A few common responses included:

• Improve campus technology, especially in the classroom
• More beds on campus, and renovate the existing residence halls
• Create healthy, local, and organic food options on campus
• More scholarships for students, especially underclass and transfer students
• Ensure a low faculty/student ratio
• Increase salaries for faculty and staff
• Paid sabbaticals for students to allow them to focus on service opportunities (EWB, ASMSU lobbying, political campaign staff, etc.)
• Renovate the SUB and create office space for student clubs
• More money to support student clubs and their travel to off campus events
• More Parking!
• Pay for green projects on campus that will help generate savings in energy
• More classes in the arts and humanities
• More opportunities to develop hands-on, applied leadership skills that will help them develop skills needs as adults
• More advisors and peer advisors
• Programs that offer financial education
• Activity classes for credit
  * Blake wants boulders around campus for students to “hang out” between classes
  * Matt wants better bike parking, bike/skateboard safety, and a bike share program

* Asterisks connote individual thoughts, not necessary thoughts expressed from the student groups.