**UPdate Extended University:** Report on Outcomes

January 4, 2015

*Overview*

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Update EU project, which included the reorganization of EU (Extended University), modifications to the funding model of self-sustaining programs, and adjustments to administration and support for online students. A prior progress report to the campus was released in spring, 2015.

While the overarching goal of this UPdate project was to move established self-support programs to a state-supported business model to allow student enrollments to be reflected in appropriate institutional reports, the Updating EU Working Group envisioned an enhanced experience for students and faculty involved in distance-delivered education. This work builds on recommendations provided by a 2014 Montana State Online Education Task Force that studied MSU’s approach for offering and supporting online education. The following action items were identified by the Task Force and were used as a preliminary guide in developing the implementation strategies described in this report:

1. Move established programs from self-support to a state support business model to capture all graduate enrollments in MUS system data.
2. Create Banner coding so that fully online students can be identified.
3. Develop mechanisms so that student services can be offered online.
4. Expand support for online and blended course development for both faculty development and course development support.

*Outcomes*

1. **Move online programs from self-support to a state support business model.**

For spring, 2015, 8 graduate programs, 2 undergraduate programs and multiple for-credit online courses not associated with an online program were successfully transitioned from an EU self-support model (with its own registration and financial system) to the institutional model. The transition involved student-related transactional processes including registration and fee payment; and faculty-related processes including course requests, communication to students, and grade collection for distance and online students. The migration also allowed for all credit bearing on-line courses to fall under the registrar processes.

The administrative and instructional structure of each online program was assessed and a transition plan was developed with program administrators to maintain stability of programs during the transition and to evaluate expenses and cost considerations for establishing base-funded budgets. Base funding for the programs that were transitioned was provided to the appropriate dean.

This single system administered by the Registrar and managed by the college deans provides consistency and scalability for all academic offerings and will better position MSU for future growth of online courses and online and distance-delivered programs. The move also assures that all MSU students, whether on-campus or online, are included in the university’s enrollment data and full time equivalency calculations. Further positive impacts of this transition include reducing duplication, creating efficiency, providing a seamless experience for our students, and ensuring program quality and effective stewardship of resources.

1. **Create Banner coding to identify and process fully online students.**

The new architecture for managing online education in banner was modeled after the protocol that was developed for administering Gallatin College’s offerings. A database re-configuration, a new design to facilitate standard enrollment processes and reporting, and corresponding fee tables for fall and spring courses were successfully tested during the Fall Semester 2014. Outliers to the new coding standards and processes were identified and addressed. Graduate-level coding protocols and summer fee tables were tested in summer 2015. Migrating the database re-configuration and new computer coding into a system that was fully implementable in banner occurred during fall 2015. Students successfully enrolled for Spring Session 2016 courses under the new process.

1. **Develop mechanisms to enhance student support services for online students.**

It is the work group’s vision that online students will be provided a level of service comparable to that available to on-campus students. EU staff will work in close collaboration with existing support services and departments with online programs, and will serve as a campus resource for best practices in distance and online delivery practice and policy. EU will establish the tools and systems to facilitate the distance teaching and learning experience. In May 2015, a new online course fee was proposed and approved by the Regents and will be used, in part, to fund these services. Ultimately, distance students will have increased opportunities to succeed at MSU, thus increasing recruiting, retention and overall satisfaction.

1. **Expand faculty support, technology and course development for online and blended courses.**

As part of UPdating EU, EU has realigned its resources and narrowed its strategic focus to excel in three areas: 1) support the success of distance students; 2) develop and deliver non-credit courses, certificates and programs; and 3) collaborate to build excellence in academic outreach and engagement. EU will focus resources on developing and delivering high-quality non-credit workforce, professional development and lifelong learning programs that meet market demand, highlight MSU’s strengths and further the land- grant mission. EU will continue to collaborate with faculty, centers and campus units to explore and deliver successful academic outreach and engagement programs that integrate learning and discovery, build community partnerships and enhance the research enterprise. The Burns Technology Center will continue to support outreach facilities, explore emerging technologies and pilot their use in teaching, learning and outreach efforts. EU developed the online Bobcat, a website to coordinate the delivery of campus services to online students.

*Staffing reallocations*

**Instructional design in Center for Faculty Excellence:** With responsibilities for self-support academic programs moved outside of EU, some staff reallocations were realized. A vacant instructional design position was moved from EU to the Center for Faculty Excellence (candidates are currently being interviewed). This individual will assist faculty in incorporating best practices of educational technology and on-line pedagogy into their courses by delivering training/workshops, facilitating faculty learning communities, and providing one-on-one assistance. Located in the Center, the individual will provide assistance to faculty in best-practice pedagogy and use of technology across the continuum of course delivery approaches from online to traditional face-to-face courses. This individual will collaborate with the Director, Instructional Technology Services and the Learning Management Systems (currently D2L) personnel located in ITC.

The instructional technology services team will evaluate emerging instructional technologies and identify instructional technology training, and online pedagogically-related assistance that are needed as MSU increases online courses, programs, and uses of technology in the classroom.

Two new committees were created to facilitate support for both online instruction and instructional technology. These are theOnline Learning Advisory Group and the Instructional Technology Advisory Council. Both groups have been constituted and will have their kick-off meetings early in the Spring 2016 semester The advisory council will analyze, evaluate and recommend strategies for the use of informational and instructional technology, and for the role and future of distance education and online delivery of academic courses and programs at MSU.

**D2L Technology Support in the MSU Information Technology Center:** MSU’s Learning Management System is currently Desire2Learn (D2L), a cloud based system from Brightspace. With over 15,000 registered users on the Bozeman campus, D2L is an MSU enterprise system used in both exclusively online courses and as an environment to augment classroom teaching. Given its four campus reach, management of D2L technology and support outgrew the capabilities and mission of EU. Additionally, when problems arise with the D2L environment they usually require troubleshooting and support from the Information Technology Center.

As an outcome of UPdating EU, the Information Technology Center (ITC) created a new unit focused on supporting the instructional technology needs of the Bozeman campus and the larger four-campus enterprise. Functional units in the current team include classroom instructional technologies, student labs, Scantron grading and faculty evaluations. The learning management system technical support team in EU has transitioned from working for EU to becoming the centerpiece of this new ITC unit. The integration allows the University to: a) develop a more comprehensive instructional technology strategy, b) integrate and fully leverage campus information technology resources and personnel to resolve D2L issues, and c) promote the continued development of a common system approach to learning management for the MSU system.

**Transactional and Banner support under the Registrar:** Because many of these transactional functions for distance students were previously facilitated by the staff of EU, two positions from EU were transitioned into the Office of the Registrar. These positions have been merged into one, partially realizing the scalability benefits of the restructure.

*Tuition and Fee Structure for Online Courses*

MUS Board Policy 940.20 establishes a minimum nonresident tuition rate of 125% of the resident tuition rate for courses that are taken in fulfillment of the degree (or credential) requirements for nonresident students enrolled in an online program.

Undergraduate nonresident students in online programs will pay 200% of resident tuition and nonresident students in graduate online programs will pay 135% of resident tuition in FY 2016.. The nonresident tuition rates addressed in Board Policy 940.20 applies to students enrolled in online programs only. Students enrolled in a combination of online and on-campus courses, or students taking online courses that are not associated with an online program, will pay the full nonresident tuition rate.

Students enrolled in any course delivered online or in a distributed learning environment will be charged a Distributed Learning and Online Learning Course Fee (online course fee). The online course fee will be applied to all online courses, not just courses in online programs. Fee revenue will be used to defray the costs of specialized support services for online and distance students. A partial list of additional enhancements necessary to meet the educational requirements of online students include areas of transactional processes, campus information, counseling and advising services, business services, online ADA accommodations, and instructional technology. This online course fee of $45 per student credit hour was approved at the May 2015 Regents meeting and became effective Fall Semester 2015.

In considering the funding model for online and distance course, the UPdating Working Group proposed and subsequently implemented a new model for summer sessions aimed to grow the scope and extent of summer school offerings. For Summer 2015, Colleges received budget transfers calculated at $141/SCH for Summer Session 2015 undergraduate and graduate courses; excluding internships, independent studies, courses focused on professional paper or thesis development and courses with particular budget arrangements. These budget transfers are intended to cover the cost of instruction, to incentivize growth in the summer offerings, and to support the general priorities of the colleges. This financial model will return to the colleges approximately $0.5M more than was provided in summer 2014 to cover instructor costs. The model will be evaluated after its second cycle.

*Timeline for completion*

By Spring 2016, all credit-granting online and face-to-face courses (including EU courses) will be managed by the college deans and administered through the Registrar. Base budgets for applicable colleges will be augmented for EU online programs associated with this transition, as appropriate, during the migration of online EU programs to a registrar-administered system.

By Fall 2016, the restructuring of EU and the transition of credit-granting EU courses and online programs into a generally funded, state-supported system will be complete. A two-component funding model (AY and summer) will be operational and the outcome of this transition will be monitored. Modifications to the funding model may occur, as appropriate, based on assessment of outcome data, feedback from stakeholders and any potential re-prioritization of academic initiatives.

*Ongoing unresolved issues*

* Students cannot currently drop and add courses on line.
* There are no graduate students represented on the two new governance committees.
* Use of the online fee for FY 2016 needs to be determined at a January 2016 meeting.
* Nursing and Curriculum and Instruction graduate programs not yet transitioned.
* Examine and employ best practices for recruiting and retaining more nontraditional and online students early in their career.
* Need to create a full “Online Bobcat” that allows students at a distance to access all appropriate transactional and support resources available at MSU.
* Need to debrief on first round of summer return model.
* An appropriate base budget needs to be established for EU along with a financial model for non-credit courses.
* The Burns Technology Center needs some infrastructure updates to be a resource for the campus.

*UPdate MSU Online Education/Extended University Working Group*

**UPdate MSU** is an institutional project composed of 12 Working Group members addressing the following goals:

* Free up resources currently tied to administrative duties and reallocate them to the Learning, Discovery and Engagement goals of the strategic plan.
* Better coordinate functions across departmental lines and diminish the duplication of efforts.
* Examine economies of scale to enhance administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

The UPdate MSU Online Education and Extended University working group was established by MSU’s President and Provost in May 2014. The working group was comprised of the following eleven members:

Martha Potvin, lead VP & Provost, Academic Affairs

Bob Mokwa, lead Professor, Civil Engineering

Karlene Hoo Dean, Graduate School

Kim Obbink Executive Director, Extended University

Tony Campeau Registrar

Marilyn Lockhart Director, Center for Faculty Excellence

Megan Bergstedt Budget Fiscal Manager, MSU Budget Office

Ron Larsen Associate Provost

David Singel Associate Provost

Chris Kearns VP, Student Success

Jerry Sheehan VP Information Technology, Chief Information Officer