



# COLLEGE!NOW OUR STORY

Montana's journey expanding opportunities for higher learning to communities in every corner of the state.

“ We view our efforts with College!NOW as a ‘game changer’ for two-year education in Montana. ”

## CHANGE IS FAST-APPROACHING FOR MONTANA'S TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

—By Clayton Christian, Chair of the Board of Regents



Montana's two-year colleges and two-year programs have many success stories to share.

Let me introduce you to Alex Jardon who is now applying for a PhD program at the University of Montana in Missoula. Alex, a home-school student graduate, began his education at the UM Helena College

of Technology (UMH) in 2006 with no idea as to what major or degree he would pursue. Alex discovered his love of psychology at UMH and completed his Associate of Science transfer degree in 2009. He then enrolled in Carroll College where he completed his bachelor's degree in psychology and is now beginning his pursuit of a doctorate.

Dawn Moltzan from the MSU-Great Falls College of Technology is another success story. Dawn was working full time at the Great Falls Rescue Mission when she had a child born with a heart condition. Attempting to better provide for herself and her family, Dawn moved to Maryland where she continued her work with a rescue mission and resumed her studies at the University of Maryland. Dawn eventually moved back to Great Falls where she completed her associate degree from MSU-Great Falls. She is now furthering her dream by pursuing a bachelor's degree in human resources and is providing training for Rescue Missions nationwide.

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## COLLEGE!NOW FIVE STRATEGIES

- 1 Extending the comprehensive two-year mission to all of Montana's two-year colleges, and rebranding and renaming Montana's five Colleges of Technology to help clarify that mission.
- 2 Utilizing each of Montana's two-year colleges to serve as regional clearinghouse hubs for workforce development, dual enrollment, “just in time” business training and assistance, and adult friendly postsecondary credential opportunities.
- 3 Increasing two-year education engagement through coordination of curricula and integration of technology.
- 4 Rewarding institutions for increased student success and productivity through development of performance-based approaches and funding models.
- 5 Improving understanding and appreciation of Montana's two-year colleges through improved communications, marketing, and public engagement strategies.

Montana's public two-year colleges include three comprehensive community colleges (Flathead Valley Community College, Dawson Community College, & Miles Community College), five Colleges of Technology (Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Missoula, and Helena), and two-year programs in Bozeman, Havre, Lewistown, Dillon, and Hamilton.

Stories like Alex's and Dawn's underscore why, in September 2009, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education submitted a major proposal to the Lumina Foundation for Education to increase the visibility, accessibility and level of participation in the State's two-year colleges. Montana's proposal was selected by the Lumina Foundation as one of seven in the nation to be funded. Governor Brian Schweitzer, a strong advocate of two-year education and workforce development, has been an enthusiastic supporter of this initiative, since its inception.

This proposal highlighted some of Montana's serious needs and opportunities. These include: low two-year college participation rates, lack of identity and community awareness of many of Montana's two-year colleges, projected declines in numbers of high school graduates, and the need to develop flexible educational opportunities for working adults.

The proposal resulted in the creation of the College!NOW initiative. We view our efforts with College!NOW as a "game changer" for two-year education in Montana. Montana's two-year participation rates in 2002 put us at 49th in the nation (17% of all undergraduate students were enrolled in our public two-year colleges versus the national average of 46%).

The Montana Board of Regents believes our two-year colleges have the capacity for significant growth that will increase affordable and accessible educational opportunities for a greater number of students like Alex and Dawn.

A fundamental assumption of the College!NOW initiative is that we can create a well-recognized and responsive two-year college system for the state of Montana without changing the institutional governance models. Students who need the services provided by a comprehensive two-year college (including transfer degrees) don't care about organizational structure. They care about recognizing, finding, and accessing helpful programs and services. In some cases, students are intimidated by and unprepared for the environment and cost of a large college or university. The hope of the Regents is that this initiative will help Montanans see that starting college at a two-year campus is an accessible and affordable way to prepare for a career or for transfer to a four-year campus.

The Regents, with the support of Governor Brian Schweitzer, are committed to supporting the College!NOW Initiative and believe it will serve as a catalyst for transforming Montana's two-year colleges into a high performing nationally recognized model. It is the intent of the Initiative to develop a model to serve more of Montana's citizens who wish to enter the workforce, change careers, build their skill and knowledge base, or begin initial access to a higher degree. This initiative is about increased opportunity and potential for all Montanans.

“ Thanks to the **fantastic planning and strategy** efforts, the College!NOW initiative is now poised to move into its implementation phase. ”

## College!NOW PROGRESS REPORT

—By John E. Cech, PhD  
Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year and Community College Education



This is the first of regular quarterly progress reports I plan to provide on the Montana University System College!NOW initiative. I first would like to recognize the incredible leadership and efforts from my predecessor Dr. Mary Sheehy Moe who served as the first Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year Education and College!NOW Director for Montana. Dr. Moe directed the College!NOW initiative from the beginning of the grant in September 2009 through Fall 2010. I began my new role as deputy commissioner on January 1, 2011 succeeding Dr. Moe.

Thanks to the fantastic planning and strategy efforts of the first 20 months of College!NOW, the initiative is now poised to move into its implementation phase which will run through the remainder of the grant in December 2013. The College!NOW grant implementation will be guided by a 19 member Implementation Team.

Accomplishments over the first phase of the grant include:

- Board of Regents (BOR) approval of Montana's first Comprehensive Two-Year Mission
- BOR approval of Dual Enrollment State Guidelines
- BOR approval of phase one of a Common Approach to Dual Enrollment Tuition and Enrollment Forms
- BOR Approval of a 25-month Implementation Plan for Extending the Comprehensive Two-Year Mission to Montana's five colleges of technology including rebranding and renaming them
- Creation of a Comprehensive Mission Task Force to guide the process of extending the comprehensive two-year mission to the five COTs including rebranding and renaming them
- Finalization of a current report summarizing the current status in relation to each of the five Colleges of Technology and the BOR approved comprehensive two-year mission

John Cech, continued from page 2

- Engaged the services of Strategies360, a Montana based communications and engagement firm to assist with the rebranding and renaming of Montana's five Colleges of Technology and with developing statewide awareness and brand for Montana's two-year colleges and two-year programs
- Leveraged support with the Montana's Carl Perkins Initiative, Department of Labor, State Workforce Investment Board, and the Office of Public Instruction to develop and advance K-12 to college educational and career pathways
- Initiated a statewide 100 person two-year education discussion centered on the topic of "Student Success" facilitated by internationally recognized author, Dr. Terry O'Banion, president emeritus, League for Innovation of the Community College.

Beginning in October, five listening sessions will be held in communities where Colleges of Technology reside. These listening sessions will provide faculty, staff, students, and community members with the opportunity to engage in dialogue regarding the College!NOW strategy of extending the comprehensive mission to each of the Colleges of Technology including rebranding and renaming them. In addition, the Comprehensive Mission Task Force will work with the five College of Technology campuses to develop a plan and timeline for expanding programming and services to better reflect the BOR approved comprehensive two-year mission.

Finally, Montana's two-year colleges and two-year programs will work with the Montana Digital Academy during the fall to expand the breadth of offering of on-line dual enrollment courses to Montana's high school students.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact John E. Cech, Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year and Community College Education, [jcech@montana.edu](mailto:jcech@montana.edu) or 406-444-0316.

## College!NOW IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Dr. John E. Cech, Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year and Community College Education

Dr. Daniel Bingham, Dean/CEO, UM Helena COT

Dr. Jim Cargill, President, Dawson Community College

Dr. Anne Clark, College!Now Evaluator, Collaborative Research Associates

Ms. Victoria Clark, Interim Director, UM Bitterroot College Programs

Dr. John Garic, Dean, Montana Tech COT

Dr. Thomas H. Gibson, Director of Academic Processes & eLearning Business, OCHE

Ms. Annie Glover, Director of Public Affairs, Strategies 360

Dr. Barry Good, Dean, UM Missoula COT

Dr. David Hall, College!NOW Coordinator, OCHE

Ms. Judy Heiman, Montana Advisor for College!Now, Lumina Foundation

Dr. Stefani Hicswa, President, Miles Community College

Mr. Bob Hietala, Dean, MSU Gallatin College Programs

Ms. Sue Jones, College!NOW Senior Program Specialist, OCHE

Dr. Jane Karas, President, Flathead Valley Community College

Mr. Greg Kegel, Dean, College of Technical Sciences, MSU Northern

Dr. Marsha Riley, Dean, MSU Billings COT

Ms. Anneliese Ripley, Dean of Outreach, University of Montana Western

Dr. Joe Schaffer, Dean/CEO, MSU Great Falls College of Technology

Dr. Karl Ulrich, Provost, UM Western



“Really, it’s the best decision I’ve made in a long time. I know that I have some tough classes ahead, but I’m getting back into the student mentality, and I am excited about the challenges ahead.”

## MEET CHRISTIANA SCHWEITZER

Passionate about politics, community service and the environment, Christiana has put her first degree in psychology to use as a political and nonprofit fundraiser for the last 15 years. She has worked as a ski instructor and a rafting guide, and while these positions can be impermanent and seasonal, she has loved all that Montana has to offer.

Two years ago, Christiana’s mom was diagnosed with a rare form of pancreatic cancer. The trials and tribulations of two years of surgeries, new therapies, and hospital stays have been hard on her and her family. But through this, Christiana discovered a new passion—healing and medicine.

“Early mornings and late nights in the ER have exposed me to medical science, and I’ve met so many wonderful nurses and medical professionals who have taken such good care of my mom,” she said. “I found myself keeping detailed medical journals, and learning quite a bit from her caregivers and doctors.”

A few months ago, Christiana decided to make a dramatic career change and pursue a degree in nursing. The mixture of science and healing drew her to this profession, and she knew that as a nurse, she would be able to live and work anywhere in Montana. The prospect of relocating, however, for school was daunting.

After visiting with the advisors at UM-Helena COT, Christiana found that she could count some credits from her BA toward her new degree, catch up on some math, and pursue a quality program of study. She began classes just a couple weeks ago, and already has taken advantage of the tutoring center. She’s found a supportive environment, and she’s really enjoying anatomy and physiology—a class she was looking forward to especially. She has also been able to enroll in a first responder ski patrol course, and is thrilled to be able to combine her new love of medicine with her old love of skiing.

“Really, it’s the best decision I’ve made in a long time. I know that I have some tough classes ahead, but I’m getting back into the student mentality, and I am excited about the challenges ahead.”

## College!NOW LISTENING SESSIONS

Montana's two-year colleges play a critical role in providing all Montanans with accessible, affordable, and diverse opportunities to either prepare for a career or as a beginning access points for Associate, Baccalaureate, and Graduate degrees.

Listening sessions will be held in Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula to engage faculty, staff, students, and community members about becoming part of the transformational process as Montana's College of Technology evolves to provide the full array of programming and services found in a comprehensive community college by the fall of 2013. These discussions will include opportunities to talk about topics ranging from mission expansion to rebranding and the renaming of the Colleges of Technology.



*Flathead Valley Community College Culinary Arts Program*

## College!NOW LISTENING SESSIONS SCHEDULE

Date	Campus Name	Time	Location	Address	Room
<b>Mon. Oct 3</b>	<b>UM Helena COT</b>	4:00–5:15 pm	Donaldson Campus	1115 N. Roberts St	Lecture Hall 125
		5:30–6:45 pm	Donaldson Campus	1115 N. Roberts St	Lecture Hall 125
<b>Wed. Oct 5</b>	<b>MSU Billings COT</b>	7:30–8:45 am	COT Campus	3803 Central	Health Sciences Bldg Rms 117/119
		1:15–2:30 pm	Senior Campus	1500 University Dr	Library 148 Lecture Hall
		3:00–4:15 pm	COT Campus	3803 Central	Health Sciences Bldg, Rm 105
<b>Thur. Oct 13</b>	<b>UM Missoula COT</b>	7:15–8:30 am	Doubletree	100 Madison	“University of Montana” Room
		9:00–10:15 am	UM Main Campus	32 Campus Dr	University Ctr. Theatre, 3rd Floor
		5:00–6:15 pm	COT Campus	909 S. Ave. West	HB 11
<b>Mon. Oct 17</b>	<b>Montana Tech of UM</b>	2:15–3:30 pm	COT South Campus	25 Basin Creek Rd	The Commons
		4:00–5:15 pm	North Campus	1300 W Park St	The Copper Lounge
		5:30–6:45 pm	North Campus	1300 W Park St	The Copper Lounge
<b>Wed. Oct 19</b>	<b>MSU Great Falls COT</b>	11:30am–12:45 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	SIM Hospital
		1:00–2:15 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	Heritage Hall
		2:30–3:45 pm	Campus	2100 16th Ave So	Heritage Hall

*Participants will consist of faculty, staff, students and community members*