



Montana State University – Great Falls
College of Technology

Progress Report on Recommendation 1

October 2006

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PROGRESS REPORT
Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology
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Introduction

In its Comprehensive Evaluation Report of Spring 2005, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities concluded that Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology does not meet the criteria for accreditation with respect to the identification and publication of learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The Commission requested, in the first of its recommendations, that the College take appropriate action to ensure that this criterion is met and resolved within the prescribed two-year period. The Commission further requested a written progress report on this recommendation by Fall 2006. This document constitutes that report.

Summary of Progress

Recommendation 1 of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in its Comprehensive Evaluation Report of Spring 2005 states:

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology identify and publish the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs (Standard2.B.2; Eligibility Requirement 12 – Student Achievement).

Upon receiving the recommendation, Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology immediately implemented a plan for responding. The chronology of our efforts to date is provided in Attachment A. The process to date has involved engaging program directors and faculty in a focus on learning outcomes, drafting learning outcomes for each degree and certificate program, reviewing them at the Department Chair level, revising them as needed, and publishing them in the catalog and on the web site.

As a result, Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology can now report that the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs have been identified and published. They may be found under each program description in the 2006 – 2007 Catalog. Copies of the catalog are enclosed and an online version is also available at
http://www.msugf.edu/MSUGF%20Catalog%2006_07.pdf.

The status of outcomes for two of the College's programs requires explanation:

- Associate of Applied Science – Bioscience Technology

The program is in the process of being reconfigured as a program of study within the

College's approved Associate of Science degree. That process requires Regental approval, which in turn requires the completion of a program termination checklist. The process should be complete by November 2006; therefore, no program outcomes were developed or published for the Associate of Applied Science in Bioscience Technology.

- Certificate - Computer Assistant.

As a result of the improved awareness of outcomes assessment generated by the Outcomes Assessment Team, the published outcomes for this Certificate of Applied Science program were revised in September 2006 to be more comprehensive and specific. They were formally presented to the Academic Senate/Curriculum Committee on October 2, 2006. The Curriculum Committee made suggestions for improvements and returned them to the program director for revisions. It is anticipated that the revised outcomes will be approved in time for publication in the 2007 catalog.

Concluding Statement

Although Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology has responded to the literal requirements of Recommendation 1, we recognize that the spirit of that requirement suggests an ongoing dialogue about learning outcomes and outcomes assessment. As a result of participating in the Alverno Conference on Outcomes Assessment in July 2006 and the work of the Outcomes Assessment Team, which began in August 2006, the faculty are engaging now in a dialogue on learning outcomes and assessment that transcends programs and reflects an institutional approach. That dialogue will undoubtedly be enriched as faculty assess these new outcomes in their program areas and evaluate the results. In our view, that is a residual benefit of the effort we have made to respond to Recommendation 1.

Attachment A Chronology of Progress toward Meeting Recommendation 1

- August 2005 Leadership Team is informed of the expectations and timelines for responding to Recommendation 1. Dr. Christine Kowalski, the Director of Accreditation and Assessment, is charged with oversight of recommendation follow-up.
- September 2005 Dr. Kowalski meets with all program directors to explain potential formats for program outcomes; timeline for outcome completion.
- October – November 2005 Program directors and program faculty draft program outcomes.
- February 2006 First draft of program outcomes submitted to department chairs.
- April 2006 Suggestions for program outcome revisions returned to program directors.
- May 2006 Program outcomes finalized and submitted for publication in catalog and on web site.
- June 2006 Three faculty attend Outcomes Assessment Conference at Alverno College to learn how to design a process ensuring that program outcomes are meaningfully assessed.
- July 2006 “Alverno” faculty make presentation and recommendations to Dean on development of assessment practices for program outcomes.
- August 2006 Outcomes Assessment Team, headed by the three “Alverno” faculty and assisted by faculty from Flathead Valley Community College, provides workshop on outcomes assessment for all faculty.

Program outcomes for all active degree and certificate programs are published on the College’s web site
(http://www.msugf.edu/MSUGF%20Catalog%2006_07.pdf).
- September 2006 Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology catalog for 2006-2007 includes program outcomes for all active degree and certificate programs.

Outcomes Assessment Team begins meetings on assessment emphasizing reflective practice approach.

Curriculum Committee includes program outcomes as part of proposals for new degrees, revised degrees.

As part of the process for converting the College's existing Certificate programs to Certificate of Applied Science programs, additional revisions are made to the program outcomes for the Certificate of Applied Science – Computer Assistant.

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| October 2006 | Curriculum Committee makes recommendations for revisions to the learning outcomes for the Certificate of Applied Science – Computer Assistant and returns to the program director.

Program revisions for the Certificate of Applied Science – Computer Assistant will be re-submitted to Curriculum Committee in Fall 2007. When approved, the revised outcomes will be posted on the College's web site. The 2007 – 2008 catalog will publish the revised outcomes as well. |
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