

2017 AIMA Council Mission Statement & Recommendations
Submitted for Approval to the Montana Board of Regents

Montana University System Proposed American Indian and Minority Achievement Council
Mission Statement

The Montana University System strives to be a premier public higher education system in the country for American Indian students, administrators, faculty and staff.

Every Montana University System institution will do everything it can to remove barriers, obstacles and challenges that hinder student success.

The Montana University System is committed to working with Montana Tribal Colleges to ensure mutually beneficial relationships and student success.

Recommendations

- 1) **Campus Coordinator for Native American Student Services** – Every campus in MUS has unique strengths and different support mechanisms in order to promote the success of their Native American students on campus. For example, on certain campuses there is a designated student support staff member housed in the Native American Studies program the runs student support services. On other campuses, there are dedicated staff members in Student Affairs/Success offices, or imbedded within other existing administrative structures.

Regardless of how each campus structures their support services for Native American students, there needs to be one “official” campus coordinator on each campus to help ensure internal and external communication. Who the campus coordinator will be depends on the unique culture that exist on each specific campus.

For example, the Coordinator could be an existing faculty member who receives a teaching course “buy-out” for assuming these responsibilities. The Coordinator could be a student affairs practitioner who agrees to assume these job responsibilities and has a portion of their position responsibilities reallocated to another position on campus. It could be a senior level academic administrator who has the capacity to delegate a portion of their workload to another staff member.

Regardless of who serves the campus in this role, the Coordinator for Native American Student Services needs to have the ability to dedicate 10-20 hours a week for these responsibilities.

Other important responsibilities for the Coordinator may include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinate monthly roundtable or lunchtime meetings with all campus programs and service providers who focus on American Indian student success;
- Maintain a centralized campus website on American Indian student support services to ensure accurate and up to date information is available for current students, prospective students, and their families.
- Meet at least twice a year with the campus President/Chancellor and Provost to ensure resource needs are understood at the senior level.
- Be available to work with other MUS Campus Coordinators for American Indian Student Services, as well as with OCHE.
- Coordinate data requests between existing campus offices regarding new, returning and graduating American Indian students.
- Provide support and coordination for an annual celebration and/or dinner for graduating American Indian students.

- 2) **Departmental Primary Point of Contact** – Many existing student services can be overwhelming for our Native American students and their parent/family members. Many of these student services are critical in supporting American Indian students and their decision to enroll and to continue on a college or university campus.

In order to provide the highest level of personal service, it is important to designate a staff “point person” to work with American Indian students and their families in specific student support service departments. These staff liaisons can be listed on the centralized campus website for Native American students.

Examples of departments that could benefit from a designated staff member for American Indian students and families include, but are not limited to:

- a. Financial aid
- b. Residence Life & Housing
- c. Admissions
- d. Student health & counseling
- e. Registrar
- f. Human resources

- 3) **Collect and share data across campus and within the MUS system-**

Each campus within the MUS will collect basic data on American Indian students relative to their enrollment in college/university: major and minor (if declared); year in school; transfer from TCU; and tribal affiliation, descendancy, or home community (e.g., urban Indian communities), and use of the tuition waiver. In addition, representatives from institutions from across the state will work together to develop a survey tool for determining a more detailed demographic for American Indian students: age; number of people in their households; whether they work at a job in addition to going to school; whether they support dependents; whether they own a computer, etc. The profile developed will assist student support and academic units in seeking support funding as well as in identifying ways in which American Indian students can be more effectively served. The end result should be that each campus will begin to understand their Native student populations in ways keeping with their demographic profile versus a generically applied idea about Native student populations.

- 4) **Provide a common professional development for all faculty and staff** - Professional development is determined by each campus and there is no professional development that exists for all campuses. In order to see the words in the Mission Statement effectively put into action it will be key for ALL faculty and staff across the MUS to participate at some point during their academic year in the same professional development. Whenever feasible American Indian studies specialists should be used to promote a deeper understanding of American Indian histories and cultures. For the duration of the AIMA Council, they will choose the professional development necessary to establish the

framework for understanding and for impacting student success as we introduce and as we implement the professional development.

- System-wide professional development within the MUS will be key to growing essential understandings around ensuring our American Indian students have access to individuals on each campus by design.
- System-wide professional development will grow understanding of the unique cultural heritage of Montana's American Indian population.
- System-wide professional development will ensure all campuses have the same understandings to achieve success in American Indian student enrollment, retention and completion.

- 5) Every effort should be made to include American Indian student understandings in interviews, contracts and performance evaluations of all faculty and staff-** By setting expectations in formal Montana University System documents the system will ensure American Indian culture and efforts at American Indian student success happen more by design rather than by chance. Additionally, faculty and staff will come to understand that responsibility to support efforts around American Indian student success belongs to everyone on campus and in the system rather than just a select few who teach American Indian Studies courses or those who head American Indian student success centers. Through the inclusion of language pertaining to implementation of American Indian culture in contracts and performance evaluations increases the assurance that it will become more a part of system-wide efforts rather than campus by campus or department by department. The AIMA Council recognizes that performance evaluations must be collectively bargained.

2017-2018 AIMA Council Members

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Mandy Smoker Broaddus, Indian Education Director- Office of Public Instruction

Brandi Payne, Financial Aid Director-Montana State University

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