

**BUDGET COUNCIL MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026  
DON LECTURE HALL MEETING**

*Table 1: Budget Council Members*

- **Cari Schwen**, Exec. Director of Fiscal Services (CHAIR)
- **Sandra Bauman**, Dean/CEO
- **Jessie Pate**, Director of IR & Effectiveness
- **Jason Grimmis**, Director of Crisis & Emerg. Resp
- **Amy Kong**, Director of eLearning & Fac. Dev.
- **Mel Ewing**, CIO
- **Robyn Kiesling**, Exec. Dir. Gen Ed & Transfer
- **Tod Dumas**, Aviation Instructor
- **Larry Taylor**, Anatomy & Physiology Instructor
- **Patricia Pierson**, Librarian
- **Paige Payne**, Executive Assistant (recorder)

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**BC Mission:** *The Budget Council utilizes broad stakeholder representation to carry out responsible and realistic budget planning that aligns with the strategic goals of our campus and the Montana University System. We strive to foster a culture of financial integrity and collaborative governance, ultimately contributing to the sustained growth and success of our institution.*

**Helena College Mission:** *Helena College supports our diverse community by providing the paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.*

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## Mastermind Discussion

### Discuss and Approve Electronic Device Requests

- Cari has asked for more documentation on two of the applications.
- Tod Dumas moved to approve the applications that met the criteria. Jason Grimmis seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
- Cari will approve or adjust the two outstanding applications when the documentation is submitted.

### Prepare for the NWCCU Virtual Visit on April 17

- The Budget Council (BC) is scheduled to have ZOOM meeting from 2 to 2:30 p.m. on April 17, 2026, with the evaluators.
- **Recommendation 1: Implement an institutional-level assessment process that informs operational planning, allowing for effective resource allocation to enhance student learning and achievement (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1)**
  - Budget proposals, projections, three-year budget template.
  - Evaluating resources, allocations, and planning.
  - The Council is more representative than previously.
  - The BC members are reviewing the budget requests and asking questions.
  - The Budget Council approves fund requests for new equipment. The faculty has the data and recommendations from their advisory boards to justify the request. It is not BCs responsibility to measure the student success outcomes; it is the program's responsibility to see that the purchase enhances student success.
  - Cabinet is planning to evaluate the budget requests to find gaps and trends at the April 2026, Institutional Assessment and Planning Day.
- **Recommendation 3: Widely publish identified disaggregated indicators of student achievement and those of peer institutions and demonstrate the use of the data to inform planning, decision-making and allocation of resources. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.2;1. D.3)**

- Trivium will help identify the cost of the program and how much money each program brings in. This is just being implemented.

#### **Discuss Budget Homework**

- The Budget Council members were asked to review the budgets, ask questions, and add comments if a line item seemed inflated or lacking.
- IT: Phone costs are \$7900 annually. Is IT going to renew the contract with the existing vendor?
- Professional Development (PD) Discussion:
  - If the PD is an annual expense, the cost is reflected in a program's/department's budget.
    - Look closer at one PD line request.
- Fixed Cost estimate: It is difficult to estimate the institutional waivers because there are so many variables.
  - Native American waiver restrictions are lessened. May see a rise in applications.

#### **Funding Request from Welding: Plasma and Laser Table – Approved. See copy of email below.**

- The current tables are not industrial strength and have had to be repaired constantly. The Welding Advisory Board recommended the purchase.
  - Since the table can be used for plasma and laser instruction, it expands the programs' offerings. Only plasma instruction is currently taught in the program.
- The instructors would like to purchase the Shop Saber Model, which was recommended by an advisory board member.
  - The lower cost table has plasma and laser capabilities. A discount has been applied to by the vendor.
  - Ventilation will be done by the Welding budget.
  - Lifetime technical support with a one-year warranty.
  - Who services the machine in the area? This is an important aspect and could be an additional cost.
  - How stable is the equipment. Any problems with the vendor?
- Funding is from the Welding Program fee pot and the Academic Equipment fee pot.
  - There is enough in their program fee pot, while leaving the balance for welding equipment that needs to be replaced in the future.
  - It has to be decided by May 1 because the students who are on the Academic Equipment Fee committee are going to leave soon. Half of fees from Academic Equipment Fee pot.
  - Sandy Bauman will email the students to ask for their approval to move forward if the BC approves the purchase after more information is provided from the instructors.

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2026 4:39 PM

**To:** Bauman, Sandra <[Sandra.Bauman@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Sandra.Bauman@HelenaCollege.edu)>; Pate, Jessie <[Jessie.Pate@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Jessie.Pate@HelenaCollege.edu)>; Grimmis, Jason <[Jason.Grimmis@helenacollege.edu](mailto:Jason.Grimmis@helenacollege.edu)>; Kong, Amy <[Amy.Kong@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Amy.Kong@HelenaCollege.edu)>; Ewing, Mel <[Mel.Ewing@helenacollege.edu](mailto:Mel.Ewing@helenacollege.edu)>; Dumas, Tod <[Tod.Dumas@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Tod.Dumas@HelenaCollege.edu)>; Taylor, Larry <[Larry.Taylor@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Larry.Taylor@HelenaCollege.edu)>; Pierson, Patricia <[Patricia.Pierson@helenacollege.edu](mailto:Patricia.Pierson@helenacollege.edu)>; Kiesling, Robyn <[Robyn.Kiesling@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Robyn.Kiesling@HelenaCollege.edu)>

**Cc:** Payne, Paige <[Paige.Payne@HelenaCollege.edu](mailto:Paige.Payne@HelenaCollege.edu)>

**Subject:** Vote on Laser Plasma table

**Importance:** High

*I posted the additional information that was requested regarding the plasma and laser table purchase in Teams on Tuesday. We need to move to a vote if I am to get this procurement before it closes for the fiscal year. I have copied the information below.*

**Action Item: Please reply with a YES or NO vote by 5:00 pm tomorrow.**

*I reached out to Glen and Cody with BC's additional questions. Here is the response:*

*From Shop Sabre regarding techs: Regarding your question – all our ShopSabre employees work out of the same building here in Lakeville, MN. However, when the rare occurrences pop up that require a tech on site we can accommodate – we have a couple traveling techs available for such instances.*

*From Shop Sabre regarding testimonials: <https://www.shopsabre.com/education/educational-videos/?machines=380>  
<https://www.shopsabre.com/about-us/our-customers/>*

*From Glen in response to our questions: I have reached out to the sales representative to obtain additional information regarding the availability of service technicians. While the company may be considered newer to the fiber laser market, they have over 20 years of experience manufacturing plasma cutters and CNC router tables. Their fiber laser systems represent a newer expansion of their product line, but they are built upon an established manufacturing and support foundation. For reference, here is a link to their About Us page:*

*<https://www.shopsabre.com/about-us/>*

*At this time, I am not aware of any local facilities using this specific laser system. There are a few laser cutters currently operating in town; however, one is a Mazak manufactured in Japan and the other is a BesCut manufactured in China. I will continue to look for user testimonials and relevant feedback as part of the evaluation process.*

*It is also important to note that we do not currently have dedicated service technicians for the equipment we are already using. Historically, all repairs and troubleshooting have been handled internally by Cody and myself. This has required us to rely on manufacturer support, documentation, and remote assistance when available. As a result, long-term technical support, responsiveness, and training resources are especially important considerations when evaluating new equipment.*

*VOTE: Approved unanimously.*