

BUDGET COUNCIL MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 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)

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.*

Mastermind Discussion

Budget Moves or Reductions:

- Suggestions:
 - Keep the Leadership Helena line because it is valuable for networking and professional development.
 - Move the phone costs tied to elevators, data bases, alarms and fire suppression to fee pots.
 - Move the data line costs to IT or Operations fee pot. (Mel and Cari will review the charges. The reason for the charges was not identified clearly)
 - Operations Budget:
 - Reduce line 106 to \$40K per recommendation of the BC.
 - Remove Marston partial salary to CUR from facility rental to CUR. Move some custodial supply costs to facility rental line instead.
 - Keep line 107 at \$70K.
 - Ask Safety to apply for the ERM grant: to fund the 2007 Polaris Ranger. Application due on Friday. If the ERM request is denied, move the ask to capital projects list or facility reserve.
 - Fiscal Budget:
 - Meadow pre-collect has brought in cash from delinquent accounts. Eventually HC will join Nelnet which will eliminate the need for Meadow.
 - Add the item to the reserve list.
 - Inquire what happens if HC terminates Meadow and a student has more time to pay off their debt. Does the collection stop or is it transferred to Nelnet?
 - Move the BIT team training to the Wellness fee pot after the parameters are re-written during the next request fee pot cycle, for more flexibility.
 - Move Maxient, Handshake and supplies to Computer fees. Split handshake with ASHC index.
 - Marketing:
 - \$20K is carrying forward from reserve for Marketing to complete a project that was not started in AY26.

- Marketing will focus on the priority programs identified by Cabinet so advertising funds are directed to the priority programs each year.
- Professional development is difficult to approve and evaluate the need for each ask.
- One of the biggest increases in the budget is personnel. New or replacement hires have increased in number and salary. Currently some of the personnel are paid out a fee pot and a department line. The college would like to increase its funding from MUS by moving all fee pot funded employees to CUR lines, but may not be able to if the deficit cannot be reduced.
- Next Steps:
 - Cari will provide different budget projections by redistributing line items between the current unrestricted (CUR) lines and the fee pots.
 - Give budget managers a choice to reduce budget by 10% or move something to a fee pot.

Goals for FY27

- Assess the effectiveness of the new 3-year budget model
- Work with departments on a 10-year renewal & replacement schedule for capital assets. Work with marketing on a 3-year advertising plan for programs.
- Prepare financial dashboards to be used in data-based budgeting.
- Fully implement the new position request forms. FY28, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the process.
- Evaluate professional development funding. Assess the need for metrics in allocating funding directly to departmental budgets vs. applications through the PD committee.

Future goal AY28

- Evaluate the Position request process and forms.

Member Rotation:

- Out: Amy Kong, Mel Ewing, Larry Taylor, and Robyn Kiesling
- The Budget Council will not meet in July.
- Staying: Jason, Tod, Patricia Pierson, Sandy B, Cari Schwen, Jessie Pate, Paige Payne
- Need: one academic, one Cabinet member, and one non-academic cabinet member.
- Consider changing membership to a 2-year bare minimum.