

Committee and Council AY26 Annual Summary

Academic Planning and Support

Sandra Bauman, Dean/CEO

Amy Kong, Director of eLearning & Faculty Development

The Academic Planning and Support Committee is comprised of the Dean/CEO, who serves as the Chief Academic Officer, and all of the directors who oversee academic departments and/or divisions. This group meets every other Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. This year a major priority for the committee was the evaluation of course evaluation tools. After reviewing four tools, we are transitioning to the Explorance Blue platform to replace our former system. This was necessary as the former homegrown system was not compliant with accessibility standards and was no longer supported. The Blue administrators, Kylie Carr and Amy Kong, in collaboration with our IT team, have been meeting weekly with Explorance throughout the spring semester to support implementation and training. Our timeline is to pilot the Blue platform during the summer term and move to full implementation in the fall. With Blue, course evaluations will be integrated directly into Canvas, allowing students to complete evaluations within the LMS. The platform also supports pop-up notifications, email reminders, and QR codes to help increase response rates. Both students and instructors will receive notifications when the evaluation period opens. Additionally, instructors will have the option to include customized questions in their course evaluations.

Other priorities for the Academic Planning and Support Committee included:

- Working with the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Committee to support the implementation of the Insights assessment tool in Canvas
- Standardize departmental workflow processes
- Update the syllabus template
- Review and plan professional development activities

Academic Equipment Fee Usage Committee

Sandra Bauman, Dean/CEO

This ad hoc committee meets when there is a request to utilize funds from the academic equipment fee pot. By Board of Regents policy, any spending from this fee pot must be authorized by a committee comprised of at least 50% students. At Helena College, we have formed this ad hoc committee of all students to consider requests that have been reviewed and approved by the Budget Council. Four students are serving on the committee this year, all nominated by faculty and representing a variety of academic programs.

This year, the committee approved all three requests presented to them. They funded, in whole or in part:

- A laser and plasma cutting machine and table for the Welding program
- A new autoclave for the Science department
- The HAAS VF-2 with COBOT machine for the CNC Machining program

ASHC

Katelynn Eberhardt, Director of Student Wellbeing & Engagement

ASHC started the year out with a president, but no other executive team members, and no senators. Amanda Moulton, our president, worked hard to fill the space left by our previous executive team, and we were able to make some great progress! We ended the fall semester with 8 clubs, including two at APC! The engagement on APC was higher than the year before, and we look forward to it growing even more next year. Our Trades Club at APC put on two events, a breakfast and a BBQ, both of which were a huge success! A massive thanks to Kathy Mortimore for her continued and tireless support of our students in the Trades Club!

ASHC put on multiple events, including the first-ever Trunk or Treat, as well as supported the Library Learning Hub Literacy Celebration and the Art Showcase. Engagement from students overall was lower this year, but we are hopeful that more events and more presence will yield higher engagement going forward.

Beyond engaging with students, our senators wanted to streamline the process of getting engaged to benefit students going forward. The bylaws were again edited, along with the constitution, and a new way for clubs to engage was created. Going forward, students will have the option to charter their club or simply apply for a community club. Chartered clubs will have to abide by the bylaws in order to request funding, but community clubs are just ways for students to engage with each other without the confusion and hassle of the bylaws. We are hopeful that this helps students be more involved without feeling overwhelmed.

ASCR

Phillip Sawatzki, Biology Sciences Instructor; Chair of the Committee

The Academic Standards and Curriculum Review (ASCR) Committee is established by the Faculty Senate (Senate) to make a continuing study of the academic standards and curriculum of the College, review and recommend action to the Senate for all proposed alterations of the academic program, and make recommendations to the Senate regarding academic standards.

Members include:

- Phillip Sawatzki – Chair
- Keri Jaynes – Vice Chair
- Kylie Carr - Recorder
- Wes Walker
- Laura Senn
- Tod Dumas
- Amy Kong
- Bryon Steinwand
- Sarah Dellwo (ex officio, non-voting)
- Stephanie Hunthausen (ex officio, non-voting)
- Robyn Kiesling (ex officio, non-voting)
- Sevda Raghieb (non-voting)
- Dawn Anderson (non-voting)
- Michaela Parker (non-voting)

Meeting Dates for the semester are 8/27/25, 9/12/25, 9/26/25, 10/3/25, 10/10/25, 11/14/25, 12/5/25, 12/15/25, 1/9/26, 1/14/26, 1/28/26, 2/25/26, 3/11/26, 4/1/26, and 4/22/26

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the ASCR Committee reviewed and approved significant curriculum clean-up projects led by the Trades and General Education divisions. Each division

collaborated with faculty to conduct a comprehensive review of their courses, with a focus on correcting errors, adding required core forms, refining course outcomes, and clarifying prerequisite and other requisite requirements.

In addition, the committee worked collaboratively to review and update the ASCR process and procedural manual. This effort involved all committee members and focused on ensuring that information and processes throughout the manual were accurate, current, and clearly documented.

Lastly, the ASCR Committee approved new pathways and courses, such as the Occupational Therapy Assistant program and the Cosmetology Instructor program; both are projected to start in the 2026-2027 academic year at Helena College.

Three major goals that the committee has set for the 2026-2027 academic year are to strengthen alignment between course outcomes, program outcomes, and assessment processes, to evaluate and improve the ASCR process for efficiency and transparency, and to enhance communication and collaboration with stakeholders.

Budget Council

Cari Schwen, Executive Director of Fiscal Services

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.*

Budget Council met from 2:30 – 3:15 pm on the following dates:

9/22/25, 10/13/25, 10/27/25, 11/10/25, 12/8/25, 12/22/25, 1/26/26, 2/9/26, 2/23/26, 3/9/26, 3/23/26, 4/13/26

Highlights from FY26

1. Built a transparent, consistent process for position requests

Working from late 2025 through early 2026, the Council developed and formalized a new set of position request documents which includes: a request procedure, a request form, and an evaluation rubric. Council members shared the drafting work, refined the materials based on member feedback, and submitted the finalized package to Cabinet in January 2026. The result is a clearer, more transparent process for departments asking to add or substantially change positions.

2. Improved the budget template to support better decisions

The Council overhauled the budget template to make requests more useful and easier to evaluate. Key changes included replacing vague priority/risk designators with a dedicated "risk if not funded" column, requiring narratives for additional funding asks, and adding an executive summary from each Cabinet-level budget manager identifying big-ticket items, items that could be deferred, and high-risk areas. Departments with significant requests can now be invited to present directly to the Council.

3. Approved the AY 2026–27 cost of attendance

After a thorough presentation by Valerie Curtin, Executive Director of Financial Aid — drawing on both the MIT Living Wage Calculator for Lewis & Clark County and College Board data — the Council approved cost-of-attendance figures across all residency categories: in-state, in-state living with parents, out-of-state, and WUE. These figures support student financial aid packages for the coming academic year.

4. Invested in academic equipment that supports student learning

The Council approved several significant equipment purchases that directly support hands-on instruction, including a HAAS VF-2 with Cobot and a new autoclave for the science labs (October 2025), and a combination plasma/laser cutting table for the welding program (April 2026). The welding request was singled out as a model of thoughtful proposal-writing and responsible planning of program fees.

5. Began tying budget decisions more closely to data and student success

In preparation for an ad hoc committee meeting with NWCCU, the Council started formalizing how budget decisions are connected to data and student outcomes — a step that strengthens both accreditation readiness and the College's broader strategic alignment.

6. Tackled a complex FY27 budget environment head-on

Council members took an active role in reviewing assigned department budget requests, preparing thoughtful questions for budget authors, and identifying opportunities to shift expenses to fees or delay spending. This work was especially important in light of an FY27 personnel budget that is roughly \$500,000 higher than the current year, driven by the pay plan, group insurance employer-share increases, and a mix of merit, promotion, career ladder, and position-fill factors.

Goals for FY27

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

Campus Advisory Board

Stephanie Hunthausen, Executive Director of Career Technical Education & Dual Enrollment

The Community Advisory Board met in November of 2025. Cheryl Ravenscroft, Director of K-12 Partnerships, presented dual enrollment data from a national lens. Chase Stahl, from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, presented state-level data. Together they presented Helena College

dual enrollment data. Board discussion centered around the ways that Helena College supports our dual enrollment population to make mindful class selections through advising and collaboration with K-12 schools. The board discussed local employment gaps and the role that dual enrollment plays in meeting those needs. This spring, the board will be emailed a copy of the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment along with a survey.

Campus Coordinating Committee

Valerie Curtin, Executive Director of Financial Aid

The Campus Coordinating Committee's (CCC), mission is to foster a connected campus through leadership development, professional growth, collaborative problem-solving, and shared successes—promoting a culture of innovation, transparency, and unity.

This committee meets the first Monday of every month of the year, and consists of the Dean/CEO, Executive Directors and Directors of every area, along with the CIO, President of Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and ASCH or their designees. The Executive Assistant to the Dean/CEO serves as the recorder.

During the past academic year, the CCC addressed topics including the new onboarding process, hazing policy, ACUE professional development courses, website accessibility, community engagement report, CARE data, quarterly updates from budget council, IT, and operations, and LLH updates on trends and usage. The council had professional development on leadership philosophy, and also hosted Karen Wood from OCHE, to discuss the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) utilization and leadership support opportunities. An impactful outcome from this past year was the development of a master calendar that includes campus wide academic, internal operational, and external community dates. The CCC remains committed to cross-campus collaboration and equipping members with the tools to lead effectively.

CARE

Katelynn Eberhardt, Director of Student Wellbeing & Engagement

In 2025-26, our CARE team worked hard to support our students. This year, we began using a new streamlined form and reporting process, with one form for all matters of concern (CARE, conduct, and Title IX). It is too soon to know the direct impact of this change, but we did receive more CARE cases this academic year than the year before. We also started meeting weekly rather than biweekly to ensure we were regularly checking in with each other. Changes were also made to the backend reporting process to increase our ability to pull data. Again, it is too soon to see a direct impact, but we are hopeful these new processes will make reporting easier!

At the time of writing, we have had a total of 71 cases over the two semesters. The spring semester cases are still being actively worked on, and therefore, there is no data to share. We had a total of 40 cases submitted in the fall semester. Of those, four students completed full withdrawals, 8 students never engaged with attempts at outreach, and four were provided community resources. All others were handled with general case management either through student wellbeing and engagement or by working closely with faculty and advisors. General case management can differ depending on the student and their needs, but often includes multiple check-ins with the student (frequently weekly or bi-weekly) and continuous and sustained support from student wellbeing and engagement, advisors, and faculty. Of our fall 2025 cases, 26 students completed the semester successfully.

This summer, our team will be attending the MUS Behavioral Intervention Team Training in Billings. I am grateful to all our team members for their continued efforts in supporting our students as well as our staff and faculty.

Dean's Cabinet

Sandra Bauman, Dean/CEO

The Dean's Cabinet meets weekly at the Airport Campus, Mondays from 3:30-5pm. For this group, there are always ongoing operational issues to address, as well as analysis and planning. The annual goals for the Cabinet this year were:

1. Implement the Institutional Assessment Plan developed in FY25 with a calendar that distributes data review over the year to distribute workload and ensure important data is reviewed prior to a culminating assessment activity which will lead to development of priorities for the following year.
2. In FY 25 the committee structure at Helena College was revised to ensure broad participation in shared governance. This year those changes needs to be reviewed, assessed for effectiveness, and revised as necessary. Part of this assessment will come from an NWCCU review of the ad hoc report the College submitted to report on the changes implemented.

I am pleased to report both of these goals were achieved.

The intentional distribution of data review over the year as part of the IAP was a very effective way to maintain focus on the key performance indicators and strategic goals of Helena College. The Cabinet met on April 20 to review and set priorities for the 2026-2027 academic year. Detailed information will be shared at the Spring 2026 State of the College.

The changes to our shared governance structure were captured in an ad hoc report which was delivered to NWCCU in the fall and was reviewed by the Commission during their January 2026 meeting. These changes were accepted and Recommendation 5 from our most recent Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness, or Year 7 visit, was satisfied with no further action required.

Employee Wellness & Engagement

Sandra Bauman, Dean/CEO

This committee was formed in Fall 2025 by combining the efforts of the former Quality of Work Life Committee and the Wellness Champions. The newly created Employee Wellbeing & Engagement Committee (EWE) is comprised of two standing working groups – Engagement and Wellness – with the mission and purpose of:

The Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Committee is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where every employee feels valued, recognized, and invited to participate fully in the life of our organization. Our mission is to celebrate the contributions of our workforce, promote opportunities for social connection and community building, and provide intentional support for new employees.

We are committed to creating a workplace that encourages work-life balance through initiatives such as celebrations, volunteer opportunities, family-friendly activities, and the promotion of

restorative breaks and physical movement. We prioritize the mental and physical wellbeing of our employees by offering access to wellness resources, professional development, and staff events through the Montana University system.

Our goal is to build a cohesive campus community by providing opportunities for team building through social activities and offering a robust support network for all employees. Through these efforts, we aim to cultivate a thriving and engaged workforce committed to the success and wellbeing of each individual and the organization as a whole.

The full committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month.

Reports from each of the working groups:

The **Wellness Workgroup** of the Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Committee consists of the following members: Keri Jaynes, Amy Kong, Courtney Radke, Cari Schwen, Christy Stergar and Joyce Walborn. Meeting dates: July 18, September 3, October 1, December 3 and February 6.

We encouraged employee wellness in the following ways:

- Utilized MUS grant opportunity to deliver care packages to all Helena College employees
- Provided informational video promoting the MUS Wellness Incentive Program
- Promoted Capital City Health Club employee discount
- Offered Tai chi class fall semester and Yoga class spring semester
- Promoted the Sun Run event & training opportunity
- Promoted HC Walking Club
- Informed benefits members of change from Personify to Blue Cross Blue Shield incentive program

Our goals for the upcoming year include:

- Enhance Mental Health and Wellbeing Support
 - Promote awareness and utilization of EAPs, "Well on Target", and other wellness resources provided by MUS Wellness
 - Organize activities like Yoga, Guided Meditation, etc.
- Align Wellness Initiatives with Institutional Goals
 - Ensure wellness efforts support broader institutional priorities such as employee retention, engagement, and workplace satisfaction.
- Utilize Data to Inform Continuous Improvement
 - Conduct an annual employee wellness survey to assess needs, interests, and satisfaction.
 - Use data to refine and prioritize future wellness initiatives.

The **Engagement Workgroup** of the Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Committee is comprised of the following members: Abigail Rausch, Anna Thennis, Rick Henry, Kim Caldwell, Jody Coombs, Kathy Mortimore. We met biweekly throughout the school year.

Throughout the year we have encouraged and facilitated employee engagement through a variety of initiatives and events:

- Launching a New Employee Spotlight section in the weekly MMM newsletter
- Coordinating a Symphony rehearsal visit (September 12, 2025)

- Promoting and supporting attendance at First Thursday events
- Creating and distributing a campus-wide events and activities list, with participation incentives and prize opportunities
- Hosting March Madness brackets
- Organizing the Dip Off
- Facilitating attendance at the Grandstreet show and Holter Happy Hour
- Recognizing employees through the Melanie Heinitz Excellence Award
- Celebrating service milestones with Longevity Awards

Our goals for next year include:

- Increase participation in First Thursday events, including exploring adjustments in partnership with the Foundation to enhance fundraising potential
- Identify and implement employee Volunteer Day opportunities (considering a fall Food Share volunteer day)
- Reevaluate the gift basket raffle after a one-year pause, with potential modifications for improved engagement
- Review and refine the Melanie Heinitz Excellence Award scoring system and rubric

Faculty Senate

Seth Roby, Faculty Senate President

Mission:

The Faculty Senate shall:

- Debate, discuss, and make recommendations to the Dean of the College.
- Review and recommend the general requirements for admission to certificate and degree programs; recommend, in accordance with regulations of the Board of Regents of Higher Education, the general requirements for graduation, including total credits required, credits required in work outside the program, and such other provisions as shall affect the general education of graduates of the institution; and approve recommendations for curricular changes submitted by faculty in the various programs or departments through the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC) or other appropriate committee.
- Approve and forward to the Dean the nature of the degree to be conferred upon completion of any given course of study; upon nomination by Executive Committee of the Senate (ECOS) and the Dean; and establish rules and standards for candidates for student degrees. To ensure that requirements and qualifications are met by candidates, several procedures may be followed in the process of awarding degrees. Nominations of candidates, including candidates for honorary degrees, are the exclusive prerogative of the faculty.
 - In the case of honorary degrees, initial instigation of study of qualifications of candidates is made by the appropriate division or department of the faculty or by the Dean acting in his or her capacity of faculty membership. Names of candidates thus initially screened by the appropriate division of the faculty may be presented to ECOS for its consideration and possible presentation to the Senate.

- Make all regulations for its own proceedings, consistent with the acts of the Board of Regents of Higher Education.

ECOS Members:

Seth Roby (Chair)
 Kim Feig (VP)
 Keri Jaynes
 Jamie Garcia
 Nolan Eggen

Larry Taylor
 Tony Wilson
 Phil Sawatzki
 Derrick Hauer

The Faculty Senate meets twice a year always at the beginning of the Fall and Spring. This year we met 8/22/25 and 1/9/26

Summary of Accomplishments

- Continue setting up two gatherings for campus staff, admin, and faculty to get together.
- Launch new structure for PAC meetings. New faculty will receive a 1st year training course, and all other faculty will use PAC as a professional development time.
- Clean up pathways
- Map course outcomes, program outcomes
- Update information for faculty committees on website

Goals for the upcoming year 2026/2027

- Prepare for new dual enrollment initiatives.

IDEA Council

Jessie Pate, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, Accreditation Liaison Officer

IDEA Council’s focus this year was supporting the new Institutional Assessment Plan. We reviewed key components of institutional effectiveness (annual plans, key performance indicators, and strategic goals) and shared observations and suggestions on to Cabinet. IDEA also reviewed both Ad Hoc reports that were submitted to NWCCU this year, which covered our first steps in responding to four of the five recommendations received at our Year 7 accreditation visit.

There’s been a lot of discussion about annual plans since our Year 7 accreditation visit. As we reviewed the AY2425 final plans and the initial plans and mid-year updates for AY2526, we’ve been talking about how we can ensure we are capturing the right information and using it for improvement. IDEA is considering a shift to align annual plan goals to strategic goals, key performance indicators, and/or the annual priorities identified by Cabinet in the recent Institutional Planning and Assessment Day.

IDEA reviewed progress on almost all strategic goals, and looked at three of our six key performance indicators (KPIs): enrollment, degrees and certificates awarded, and 150% graduation rates. We have also been working to identify potential leading metrics for each KPI. Leading metrics change and can be viewed more frequently than KPIs, helping us identify how best to reach our targets for the KPIs.

In the next year, IDEA hopes to make some of those potential changes to annual plans discussed in the second paragraph, provide additional support for supervisors in reviewing the annual plans, and explore ways that AI can help with annual plan review. IDEA also plans to spend more time evaluating all six key

performance indicators and finalize some leading metrics for each. We also need to begin developing a new strategic plan, as our current one is set to wind down in 2027.

Professional Development Committee

Jessie Pate, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, Accreditation Liaison Officer

The Professional Development Committee had another busy year! We made updates to the process of applying for funding, offered three very different PD opportunities, and awarded funding for 11 individuals to grow in their positions.

We updated the application to eliminate repetition and reduce the number of questions asked. We have also begun developing resources to support supervisors when they are asked to approve applications for funding from the committee. We have step-by-step instructions to help supervisors navigate the Vector platform, and hope to soon have some guidelines to consider when approving a request.

In October, the Committee registered for the NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Fall Virtual Conference. Nineteen employees signed up to gain new knowledge and skills about community college education – from teaching to AI and student services. In January, we welcomed four individuals affiliated with Grandstreet Theater to lead some theater-inspired team building activities for the entire campus. We closed out the year with a conversation about student well-being, led by our very own Katelynn Eberhardt, Veronica Mohrmann, and Kathy Mortimore. Twenty employees attended this valuable session.

Funding was awarded to the following individuals. If you're interested to learn more about their experiences, be sure to reach out to them!

- **Kris Goss** is participating in the ACUE Effective Teaching Practices year-long course.
- **Virginia Reeves** participated in a residency at the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts & Sciences, where she made significant progress on her current novel and acquired new tips and techniques to share with her creative writing students. She also made connections with other writers, one of whom joined her non-fiction course as a guest writer.
- **Kim Feig** presented her original research, titled, "Mapping DEI Retrenchment" at the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association annual conference.
- **Dawn Anderson** attended the National Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology annual conference.
- **Robyn Kiesling** and **Stephanie Hunthausen** attended a Gardner Institution symposium on leading academic units, and are currently participating in a community of practice on the same topic.
- **Jason Grimmis** and **Valerie Curtin** attended the National Association of Clery Compliance Officers and Professionals virtual mid-year conference, where they learned about new regulatory changes to Title IX, Title IV, and the Clery Act and how institutions can effectively maintain compliance.
- **Nicollete Frank** attended presented at the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs meeting about innovative initiatives to strengthen community bonds in Helena College's education program. She was able to make valuable connections with schools of similar size and demographics that have "Grow Your Own" teacher preparation programs.
- **Emily Gage** attended the Simulation User Network Conference to learn from experts in the field of healthcare simulation.

- **Melinda Martin** attended the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference to gain knowledge, skills, and contacts to build the fieldwork component of our new Occupational Therapy Assistant program.

We are already hard at work planning some PD offerings for the fall semester. We are working with OCHE's Employee Wellbeing department to bring you trainings about growth mindset, mental health, and change.

Safety Committee

Tommi Haikka, Director of Maintenance & Facilities

Mission:

The mission of the Safety Committee of Helena College is to promote a safe working environment for employees, students, and the general public by fostering and maintaining an active interest in safety. The committee supports efforts to minimize the frequency of accidents and to identify corrective measures needed to eliminate or control recognized safety hazards.

Members:

Tommi Haikka, Director of Facilities (Chair)
 Jason Grimmis, Crisis & Em. Mngmt
 Melissa Mousel, AP Program Manager
 Sandra Bauman, Dean/CEO
 Kelley Turner, Exec. Dir. of Operations
 Christy Stergar, CE Program Manager
 Valerie Curtin, Exec. Dir. FA/Compliance
 Nina Hansen, Administrative Associate

Mary Twardos, Human Resource Generalist
 Courtney Radke, Nursing Instructor
 Cole Wagner, Computer Support Specialist
 Nolan Eggen, Fire & Emergency Services
 Kylie Carr, Gen Ed Division Manager
 Abigail Rausch, Director of Marketing
 Katelynn Eberhardt, Student Wellbeing

Meeting Dates:

8/14/25, 9/25/25, 10/30/25, 1/29/26, 2/26/26, 3/17/26, 4/21/26

Summary of Accomplishments:

Infrastructure & Equipment:

- Installed a new security camera in the east-side parking lot at the Don campus; an additional camera will be installed in the downstairs area.
- Replaced batteries in four AED units.
- Installed four sharps' containers.

Training & Preparedness:

- Conducted four fire drills, two AED/CPR trainings, one earthquake drill, de-escalation training, fire extinguisher training, and situational awareness training.
- Tested the functionality of lockdown buttons.
- Tested Regroup system functions.

Policy & Compliance:

- Created bylaws for the Safety Committee.
- Converted past years' meeting minutes to ADA-compliant format.

Goals for FY27:

- Add 1–3 additional security cameras.

- Conduct 1–3 safety-related trainings.



Space Allocation and Optimization Committee

Kelley Turner, Executive Director of Operations

Mission Statement

The campus learning environment is a critical- and finite college-owned resource. The Space Allocation and Optimization Committee (SAOC) is responsible for supporting optimal and sustainable use of campus space to advance Helena College’s strategic priorities and operational needs. Through evaluation, data-informed decision-making, and continuous improvement, the committee seeks to ensure that campus spaces are used efficiently and adaptively to support student success, employee productivity, and long-term institutional viability.

Purpose of This Report

This report summarizes the work completed by SAOC during the year, documents key observations and emerging themes, and identifies tasks that are complete, in progress, or requiring further discussion, research, or leadership input. The intent is to provide a shared record for committee members and to support continuity of work moving forward.

Committee Formation, Organization, and Meeting Dates

During this reporting period, SAOC was formally established and organized to support efficient division of work. Committee members were assigned to subcommittees based on experience and interest. The following functional areas were identified:

Facility Use Policy Review

Data Analysis, Usage, and Occupancy Rates

Shared Spaces, Improvements, and Community Use

Institutional Scheduling

The committee met twice during this period, on September 15 and December 15.

Facility Use Policy Review

The committee reviewed and revised Facility Use Policy 600.7, which had last been updated in 2017 and no longer reflected current operational realities or campus needs.

Key outcomes of this work include:

- Reorganization of the policy into clearer sections
- Development of a Statement of Priority of Use
- Creation of supporting appendices to improve usability and compliance

The revised structure includes:

- Appendix A: Internal Events
- Includes an internal event/entertainment form
- Appendix B: External Events

- Appendix C: Alcohol on Campus
- Includes an alcohol use form for external groups
- Appendix D: Public Health or Safety Emergencies
- The committee also identified the need to standardize fees and requirements, including a \$50 cleanup charge for external groups bringing food, to ensure consistency and cost recovery.

Data Analysis, Usage, and Occupancy Rates

The committee began identifying existing data sources related to room usage and scheduling. Early analysis highlighted several systemic challenges, including:

- Inconsistent room inventory information
- Lack of standardized room size, capacity, and functional labeling
- Informal assumptions that certain spaces are “owned” by specific programs or groups
- An example discussed was DON 122, which is commonly perceived as an IT-only classroom, limiting its availability for broader campus use. The committee identified the need to challenge these assumptions and move toward a shared, campus-wide understanding of space as a collective resource.
- Standardizing space inventory and room attributes was identified as a foundational requirement for improving scheduling efficiency and decision-making.

Shared Spaces, Improvements, and Community Use

The committee discussed the importance of understanding how spaces are currently used and how they could better support students, faculty, and staff. To that end, the committee identified the need for:

- A student survey focused on how students use campus spaces and what improvements they would value
- A faculty and staff survey to identify opportunities to improve space functionality and utilization
- Preliminary discussion surfaced several themes and potential improvement areas, including:
- Student Center and Collaborative Spaces
- Possible reconfiguration or remodeling of the DON Student Center
- Increased availability of collaborative workspaces
- Improved technology to support online and hybrid students
- Exploration of:
- Shared display or smartboard technology in ASHC areas
- Dedicated spaces for students to record and practice presentations
- Study and Classroom Use
- Positive feedback on LLH quiet study spaces and use of a moveable smartboard
- Consideration of taller dividers to support group study
- Increased clarity around classroom availability:
- Classroom schedules are posted, and students may use rooms when not scheduled
- Instances occur where students are asked to leave due to meetings
- Need for clearer communication to students and staff about appropriate use
- Technology-Enhanced Rooms
- Interest in expanding “smarter” rooms like the Fishbowl
- Discussion of upgrading DON 130 to improve flexibility and functionality

These ideas are exploratory and intended to inform future prioritization rather than represent final recommendations.

Institutional Scheduling

The committee identified several challenges related to institutional scheduling processes:

- EMS and Banner are currently used in parallel, creating redundancy
- Scheduling responsibilities are concentrated among a small number of staff
- Significant manual effort is required to input courses and events
- The committee discussed CourseLeaf as a potential long-term solution:
- Phase 1 (online catalog) has been implemented
- Phase 2 (curriculum management) is dependent on funding
- Phase 3 (smart scheduling) is also funding-dependent
- Additional needs identified include:
- Documented scheduling processes and manuals
- Cross-training and backup coverage
- Clear prioritization rules for scheduling
- Improved alignment between scheduling decisions and staffing needs

Tasks and Action Item Summary

Across all areas, the committee identified 17 tasks and action items:

- 5 tasks completed
- 12 tasks requiring further discussion, research, or Cabinet-level approval
- This represents an approximate 29.4% completion rate at this stage of committee development. Many remaining items are foundational and expected to extend into future quarters.

Next Steps

- Continue refining data standards and space inventory
- Define off-semester/low volume use period to facilitate maintenance work, reduce energy consumption, & reduce custodial cleaning to focus on deep cleaning
- Develop and deploy surveys to gather user feedback
- When, How What do we seek to accomplish with this data?
- Further evaluate scheduling workflows and system dependencies
- Collaborative work among Registrar, CEC, IT, & annual events
- Prepare clearer options and recommendations for items requiring leadership input

Name	Role	Department	Subcommittee
Kelley Turner	Exec. Dir. of Operations	Chair	Oversee all
Mel Ewing	CIO	Member-Administration	Review Institutional Scheduling and Facilities
Cari Schwen	Exec. Dir. Fiscal Svcs.	Member-Administration	Data Analysis, Usage & Occupancy Rates
Robyn Kiesling	Exec. Dir. Exec. Director of Gen Ed & Transfer	Member-Administration	Review Institutional Scheduling and Facilities
Stephanie Hunthausen	Exec. Dir. of CTE & DE	Member-Administration	Draft, Edit Facility Use Policy
Jesse Pate	Dir. of IR & Effectiveness	Member-Administration	Data Analysis, Usage & Occupancy Rates
Katelynn Eberhardt	Dir. of Student Wellbeing	Member-Administration	Shared Spaces, Improvements, Community Use
Tommi Haikka	Dir. of Facilities Maintenance	Member-Administration	Draft, Edit Facility Use Policy
*Rachel Schanz	Inst. Accounting	Member-Faculty	Shared Spaces, Improvements, Community Use
Paige Payne	Exec. Asst. to the Dean/CEO	Member-Administration	Draft, Edit Facility Use Policy
Christy Stergar	CEC Prog. Mgr.	Member-Staff	Data Analysis, Usage & Occupancy Rates/ Draft, Edit Facility Use Policy
Marika Adamek	Asst. Registrar	Member-Staff	Review Institutional Scheduling and Facilities

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee

Jessie Pate, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, Accreditation Liaison Officer

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Committee welcomed a couple of new members this year, so we spent a good chunk of time making sure everyone had a baseline understanding of the purpose and goals of the committee, as well as continuing conversations about reasonable expectations for faculty assessment of course and program learning outcomes. The group stayed up-to-date with the pilot of the college's new assessment platform, *eLumen Insights* for Canvas Outcomes. *Insights* integrates with Canvas to enable faculty to carry out their assessment directly in Canvas, while they are already grading assignments that have been aligned to course outcomes. Faculty are then able to follow a link from Canvas to an Insights dashboard, where they can view results over time, reflect on results, and document any changes they want to make. Fourteen faculty piloted the tool this year, giving us valuable perspectives on how we can best use the tool to collect and use assessment data to improve student learning.

The SLOA and Dean's Cabinet established a taskforce to update our institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). Known previously as institutional competencies, these outcomes identify the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities that every graduate of Helena College should possess, regardless of their program of study. The taskforce contained representatives from faculty, staff, and directors, and got right to work discussing what our new ILOs should look like and soliciting input from campus. After only two drafts, the taskforce sent out [new institutional learning outcomes](#) for approval by the Dean's Cabinet and the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee.

In fall 2026, the SLOA will oversee the rollout of Insights to all full-time faculty and work with pilot faculty to establish and process and expectations for course and program learning outcomes assessment. We also hope to have a process for assessing institutional learning outcomes by the end of the academic year.

Staff Senate

Stephanie Ratchford, Staff Senate President

Our Mission: Support all staff members and to enhance visibility and influence on campus and within the community.

Membership is comprised of all Classified Staff with Staff Senate Officers:

- Stephanie Ratchford, President
- Mark Mousel, President Elect
- Melissa Mousel, Past President
- Anna Thennis, Treasurer
- Kim Caldwell, Secretary

Meetings are held every-other-month on the 1st Wednesday, 10:00-11:00 am via Teams and/or In-Person

In Summary:

Beginning in the 2026/27 academic year, the meeting schedule was adjusted to an every-other-month format to improve attendance. Despite this change, overall attendance remained low.

During the fall semester, Staff Senate participated in the annual Intermountain Festival of Trees by donating a tabletop tree as part of a community fundraising event. Reflecting the theme, "Together

Across Cultures,” decorations and items for the tree were donated by staff members, with a small portion funded through our remaining petty cash. During the spring semester, the February meeting fostered shared input and open discussion with Dean Sandra Bauman, along with a breakfast potluck. Efforts are under way to update our Bylaws. We will have our Officer Elections in May to vote in a new President–Elect and Secretary/Treasurer for the upcoming AY 26/27. Stephanie Ratchford will step down as President, and Mark Mousel will take on the role as Staff Senate President. Anna Thennis will step down as our Treasurer and Beau Howard will continue as our MUSSA representative.



Figure 1: Staff Senate "Together Across Cultures" Tree

Technology Steering Committee

Mel Ewing, CIO

The Technology Steering Committee (TSC) coordinates information technology planning and acquisition on campus. The TSC guides decisions on changes for the ongoing academic year. Any proposed changes or purchases that affect technology on campus must be coordinated through the TSC.

Membership:

Chief Information Office (Chair)
One or two other IT staff members
One faculty senate member
One student representative designated by the student senate
One classified staff member designated by the staff senate
Business services representative designated by the CFO
Chief Academic Officer or representative
Librarian
Director of eLearning or an eLearning representative

Meeting Dates

23 Feb 2026 – First meeting

Summary of Accomplishments

The major accomplishment this year was to get the committee formed and the first meeting off the ground. We discussed the purpose of the committee, its charge, and its role on campus. The committee set the meeting cadence and the first goals for the academic year which consisted of reviewing the technology policies on campus.

Goals for the Upcoming Year

The goal will be to get the committee up and functioning on a regular basis with the new Director of IT.