HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA | IDEA Council

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, EFFECTIVENESS, AND ACCREDITATION MEETING ON January 20, 2026, at 1:00 P.M., DON 132
Minutes

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.

IDEA Council Mission: The Institutional Development, Effectiveness, and Accreditation Council is a representative body whose mission is to advance the strategic direction of Helena College through assessment and planning. The committee also has oversight for activities related to maintaining institutional compliance with regional accreditation policies and standards.

Attendees

- **Jessie Pate (Chair)**, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness
- **Marika Adamek**, Assistant Registrar
- **Katelynn Eberhardt**, Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- **Nathan Munn**, Social Sciences Instructor
- **Abby Rausch**, Director of Marketing, Communications, and Alumni Relations
- **Bryon Steinwand**, IT & Programming Instructor, Assessment Database Developer
- **Cody Torres**, Welding Instructor
- **Paige Payne (Recorder)**, Executive Assistant

Priorities for AY2526

1. Carry out the institutional assessment plan.
2. Coordinate the collection of data in support of strategic goal IM-1 (community engagement).
3. Recommend leading indicators and real-time metrics aligned with each KPI under the new metrics tree model.
4. Prepare two ad hoc reports and coordinate one virtual visit in response to NWCCU recommendations.

Pre-Reads/Supplemental Materials

- IDEA Council Minutes 20251209
- SP 2022-27 Strategic Goal Tracking – SG IM-2 (begins page 13)

Agenda

Approve December 9, 2025, Minutes:
- Marika Adamek motioned to approve the minutes. Katelynn Eberhardt seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Institutional Assessment Plan: Strategic Goal IM-2: Utilize academic pathways to increase enrollment potential and position.
Target Discussion:

1. Establish a method for tracking student pathways.

a. HC does not have a consistent method for tracking the pathways. They change so frequently; it would be difficult to manage.

    i. Enrollment has prioritized coding the programs in Banner, though some challenges persist. These challenges primarily impact Clearinghouse reporting, as Jessie uses degrees, major and concentration.

        1. An example is pre-nursing students. When they start, they are in the Gen Ed CIP code. When they get accepted into nursing, it changes to the nursing CIP.

        2. Another example is Business and Accounting. Students come in as an AS. When the degree sheet app is submitted, it gets changed to an AAS with a different CIP code.

b. There is indirect evidence from advisors' observations and course substitution forms to indicate that students are on specific pathways.

c. Correct coding/pathway identification could help anticipate scheduling needs and plan for how many sections should be offered the next semester of the year.

d. Pathways coding would require the Registrar to develop a convention for the codes, and a system for students and advisors, and the Registrar to make the changes, to know when and how to make the changes, and to know why you want to make the changes.

e. Follow up with Registrar's office about how the new catalog may or may not impact ability to track student pathways – if the pathways are going to be in the catalog, will they be in Banner?

2. Target: 80% of degree students seeing an advisor will choose an academic pathway or meta major before the end of their second semester. The data is from advisors and indirect sources.

    a. In 2425, HC began requiring students to choose a meta major on their application. Out of 885 students who declared a meta major, 365 were dual enrollment.

        i. 417 degree seeking students chose general education pathway, (58%) and 73 (74%) non-degree students picked a meta major.

        ii. Note: Students may be duplicated from fall to spring.

        iii. May be able to create custom CCSSE question(s). Proposal to reconsider this as a target.

3. Enrollment, Retention and Degrees awarded.

    a. Enrollment

        i. The goal is to increase our annual average full-time equivalent by 3% each year.

        ii. To calculate how many credits enrolled full-time students completed over the whole year and divide by 30. (fall + summer + spring)

        iii. Year 2324, HC met the 3% goal. Year 2425 is down 2.2% from the target. HC had a slight increase in general enrollment, then a slight decrease countered by an increase in DE students taking more credits.

        iv. Calculating the data is complicated because fiscal calculates the academic year starting with the summer semester and ending with the spring semester for allocation and other reasons, but for financial aid, aid year starts in the fall. Programs with summer semesters, such as aviation, cosmetology, and the future OTA program, typically consider summer to be at the end of the academic year.

b. Retention
   i. The goal is to increase the retention of all entering students by 1% each year.
      1. It is measured from fall to fall. Students who earn a certificate or degree and leave before the next fall are included in the data.
   ii. The data fluctuates and it is difficult to see any trends. Last year it dropped but in year 2425 the increase was 6.8%. It is expected to be higher in 2526.
      1. Impacts from COVID and students transferring to UM or MSU are not easily captured.
c. Degrees Awarded
   i. The goal is to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded annually by 2% each year, and HC is doing well. It is likely due to the increase in general education certificates.
   ii. Degree Works may help track student progress and help students understand where they are. Currently the degrees are entered manually and at times, the degrees are "found" and awarded through the degree auditing process
d. Look at the dashboards and identify what stands out to you.
   i. Assignments:
      1. Enrollment: Marika & Cody
      2. Retention: Katelynn & Nathan
      3. Degrees & Certificates Awarded: Bryon & Abby
      4. Jessie will share data sources available for homework.

If Time: AI Review of Annual Plans – Tabled

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 3