

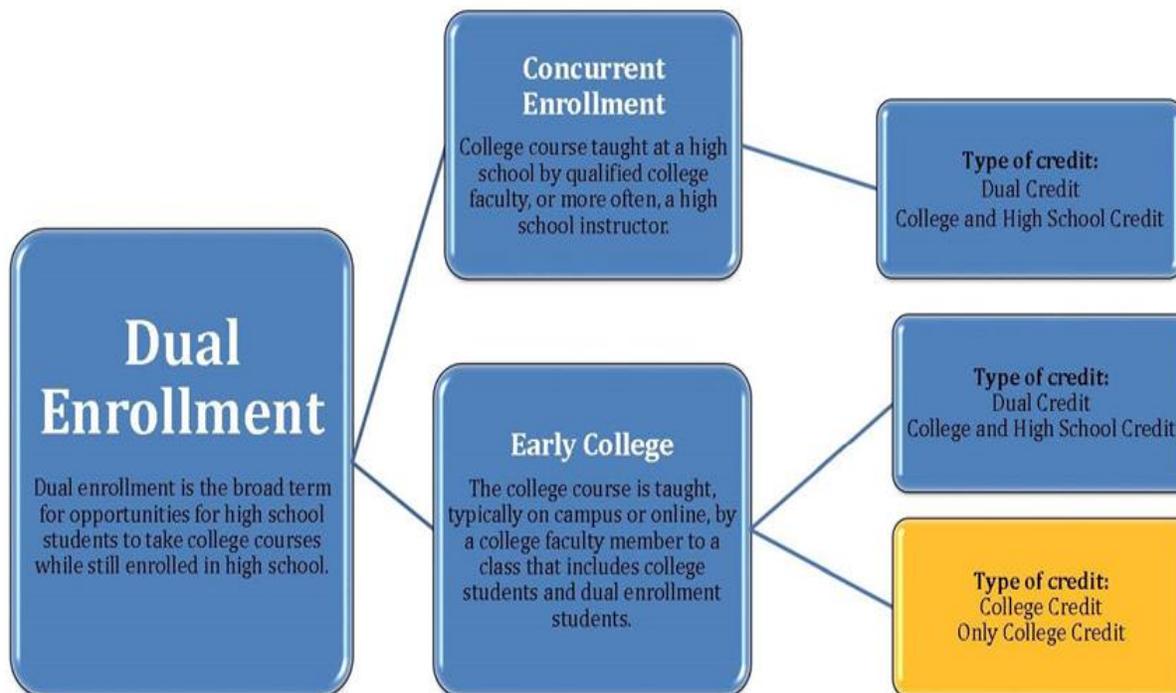
## FVCC Non-Instructional Department Review Form



Name of Department: Running Start

Name of Individual Completing the Review form: Beth Romain

Semester / Year Reviewed: Fall 2017



## Review Summary

**Please provide a summary of the major findings of your self-study. Include a discussion of the most significant issues facing your department.**

FVCC's Running Start Program is looked up to around the state. It isn't unusual to have other colleges or the Dual Enrollment Director with OCHE to call and ask how FVCC would handle different scenarios. After going through this self-study, it is clear that there are things that could be done better, but it is also clear that FVCC's Running Start Program is effective in not only enrolling high achieving students, but sparking an interest in first generation students, who may have been told their whole lives they aren't college material. So many high school students are unaware of career and technical degree options available to them. After meeting with a Running Start advisor, those students dream a little bigger.

Over the past ten and half years, the program has grown exponentially, not only by student numbers but by the number of concurrent enrollment courses offered across the state of Montana. This directly aligns with FVCC's goal of increasing access to education. The Running Start program attracts all levels of high school students with varying goals and interests.

One of the most significant issues facing the department is the need for additional personnel and retaining the Program Specialist, High School Relations position. Both Running Start positions have been classified entry level positions since created. However, the required duties and responsibilities are equivalent or greater than that of an academic advisor.

In closing, FVCC should be proud of the Running Start reputation. However, with a continual increase of Running Start students and concurrent enrollment courses across the state, it's imperative to increase efficiencies and streamline processes. For example, in spring 2013 there were 239 Running Start students and five concurrent enrollment courses with four positions, slightly under 4.0 FTE. In spring 2017, FVCC experienced a record number of students enrolled (510) along with a record number of concurrent enrollment sections (33) offered at 12 high schools, with two positions equaling 1.5 FTE. There has been a 113.4% increase from spring 2013 to spring 2017.

Running Start has changed many lives throughout Montana, here are a couple student testimonies:

***Online student**-Running Start was such a great program for me! I loved it. As you may know, I earned 19 credits from FVCC. I have now transferred to Portland State University and...as a freshman going into PSU I already have over 28 credits because every class/credit transferred with no problem!...*

*I am going to school for biology and also studying pre-dentistry, then I will continue with dentistry and become an orthodontist. At this rate I will easily have my BA of Science done by the end of next year*

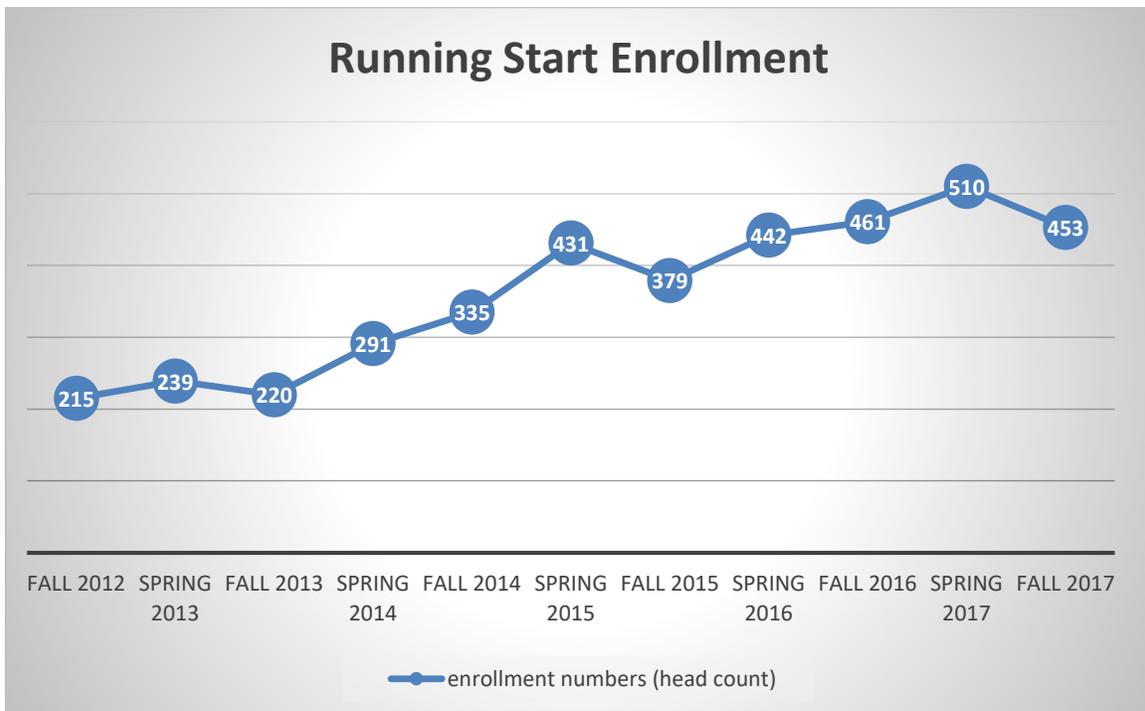
(sophomore year). I was also accepted into PSU's Urban Honors! So some of my classes are a little more difficult but also a lot smaller than the regular courses. The Honors system will help me out a lot though when I get closer to graduating and applying to grad school.

...without FVCC and its amazing faculty, I would be going into college blind about how classes work, I'd be behind most of the other biology and pre-dentistry students, and I most likely wouldn't be overall prepared like I am now.

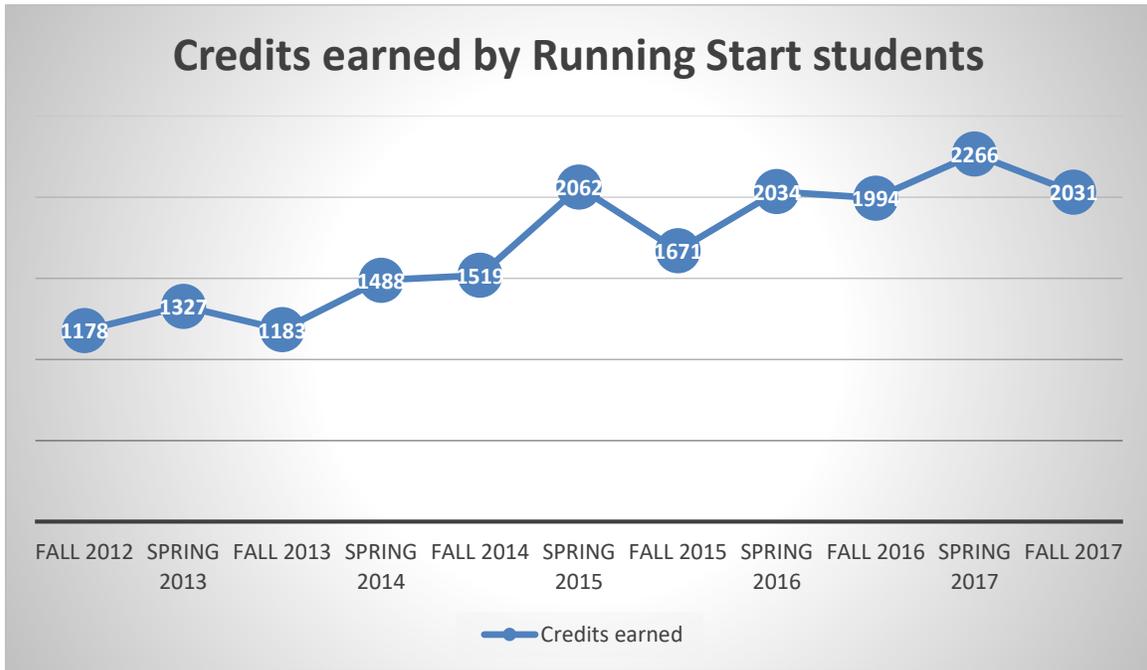
**-Local FHS student who took a combination of early college and concurrent enrollment courses:**

I will graduate Flathead High School with 13 college credits. I took intro to public speaking and psychology my first semester and in my second semester I took writing 101 and linear probability which is a dual credit. I absolutely have loved my experience... They are so friendly and the classes are small and fit my learning style much better. I feel like I'm getting a taste of college before all my other colleagues, which just gets me that much further ahead and really ready for what to expect when I actually get to college next year. I consider this one of the best scholastic choices I made in high school and I only wish I had started earlier!

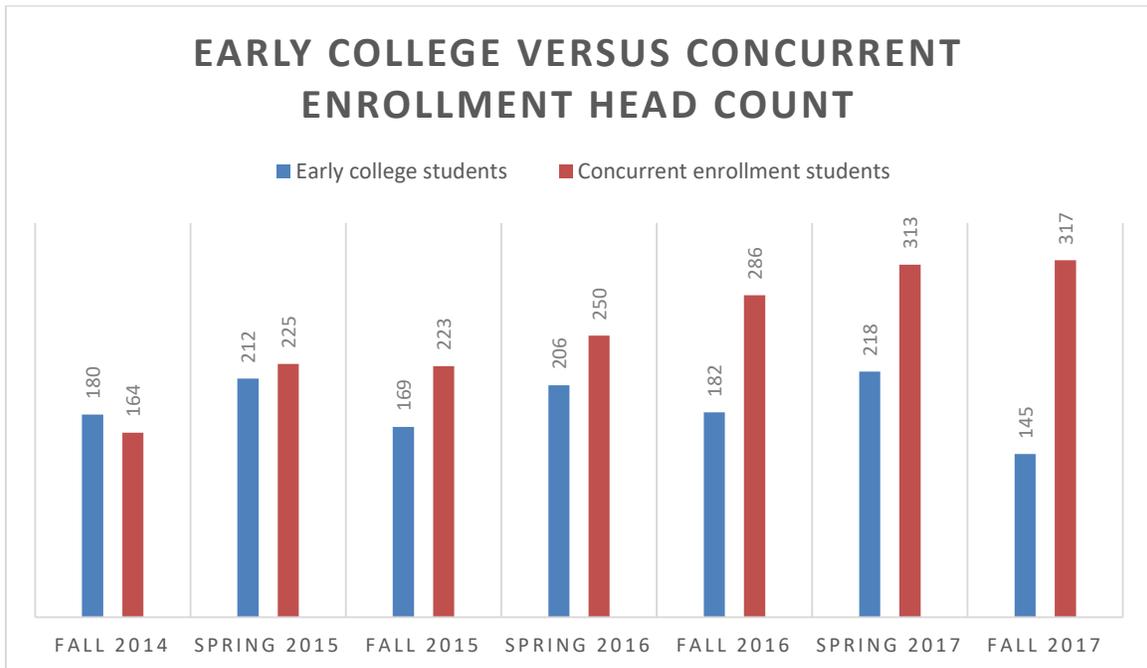
**This chart demonstrates a 110.7 percentage growth in headcount from fall 2012 to fall 2017 and a 113.4 percentage growth from spring 2013 to spring 2017.**



This chart demonstrates a 72.4 percentage growth in registered credits from fall 2012 to fall 2017 and a 53.1 percentage growth in credits enrolled from spring 2013 to spring 2017.



This chart demonstrates the importance of the concurrent enrollment program and the necessity to continue FVCC's concurrent enrollment presence in high schools throughout the college's service region.



## Department Overview

### 1. List the main services that your department provides. Who are the primary customers for those services?

The main services provided by the Running Start Department span across many departments around campus, i.e. Admissions/Registration, Business Services, Student Support Center, Financial Aid (specifically scholarships), Marketing Department, Human Resources and Academic Affairs.

However, the primary customers consist of:

- High school students across Montana;
- Career and Technical teachers across Montana in regards to the Montana Career Pathway's work;
- Current and future concurrent enrollment teachers;
- High school counselors and administrators across the state of Montana; and
- FVCC faculty and FVCC faculty liaisons assigned to oversee the concurrent enrollment instruction.

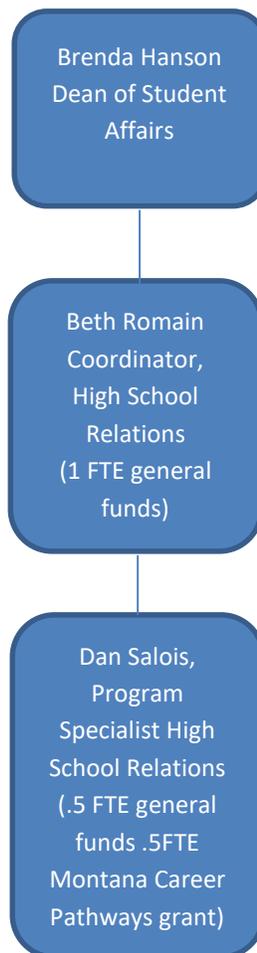
*Main services include:*

- Recruiting high school sophomore, junior and senior students to participate in the Running Start Program;
- Assisting new students navigating the admissions, placement testing and registration processes, ensuring students are registering for courses they qualify for based on their placement tests;
- Providing academic plans for students who might not meet the placement requirements;
- Providing both academic and career advising to all local high school students regardless of what college they plan to attend;
- Recruiting high school teachers who possess the required credentials to teach college level courses per the Board of Regents Policy 740 hiring credentials to teach FVCC courses at their respective high schools;
- Facilitating the invoicing process with school districts for concurrent enrollment courses;
- Assisting prospective concurrent enrollment teachers with the adjunct hiring process, overseeing the initial hiring process of concurrent enrollment teachers by evaluating their transcripts before forwarding the hiring approval to the Director,

Academic Affairs who finalizes the hire with assistance from the Division Chair of the respective department; and

- Facilitating the Summer Experience Program, including course selection, recruiting, placement testing, advising and enrolling students.

2. **Provide a current organizational chart and describe the structure of your department, including an overview of the roles and responsibilities of your staff.**



### **Brenda Hanson-Dean of Student Affairs**

- Brenda has many duties above and beyond Running Start. In regards to Running Start, she supervises the Coordinator, High School Relations who is responsible for all aspects of FVCC's Running Start Program. Brenda approves any changes to policy or procedure, approves any written communication along with marketing material. She schedules bi-weekly meetings with the Coordinator, High School Relations to receive updates, so she is always looped in on the world of Running Start.

### **Beth Romain-Coordinator, High School Relations**

- Serves as FVCC's point of contact for
  - Summer Experience;
  - Montana Digital Academy;
  - Prospective Running Start students and their parents;
  - High school counselors;
  - High School administrators;
  - School district business offices;
  - Current and prospective concurrent enrollment teachers;
  - FVCC faculty members and concurrent enrollment faculty liaisons; and
  - Homeschool students and parents.
- Works with high school administration to recruit additional concurrent enrollment teachers as well as assist in scheduling ideas to allow high school teachers to fit concurrent enrollment courses into their teaching schedule;
- Assists prospective concurrent enrollment teachers with the adjunct hiring process and is responsible for initial evaluation of transcripts;
- Sends Running Start students' grades to their perspective high schools;
- Works with Academic Affairs to request adding courses to accommodate current students' needs/demands;
- Assists potential Running Start students with admissions, placement and registration process;
- Evaluates ACT scores to determine placement for FVCC's courses;
- Provides academic and career counseling, along with major exploration;
- Assists students with putting together degree plans for both in-state and out-of-state colleges;
- Ensure that FVCC has a presence on Montana Digital Academy;
- Assists in the coordination of teacher workshops, such as FVCC's long-standing summer welding workshop;
- Assists in the marketing materials and advertisements promoting Running Start

- Coordinates FVCC's Summer Experience Program;
- Administers FVCC's math placement test at high schools within the college's service region;
- Coordinates and hosts on-campus Running Start informational sessions held in the evenings for students and parents;
- Initiates the invoicing process with partnering school districts offering FVCC concurrent enrollment courses;
- Assists the Program Specialist, High School Relations with Running Start informational sessions offered in each of our local high schools;
- Responsible for providing OCHE with concurrent enrollment data;
- Advises and enrolls out of district online students; and
- Advises and enrolls concurrent enrollment students.

#### **Dan Salois-Program Specialist, High School Relations**

- Assists potential Running Start students with admissions, placement and registration process;
- Serves as grant manager for Montana Career Pathways
  - Point of contact for all pathways inquiries;
  - Coordinates high school teacher workshops as specified in the grant;
  - Works to ensure FVCC utilizes the entire grant budget;
  - Writes and provides quarterly and final reports for OCHE;
  - Complete all grant activities, along with providing time and effort reporting to FVCC's grant accountant;
  - Attends related trainings and workshops; and
  - Initiates and develops new programs of study and pathway agreements with Montana High Schools.
- Provides academic and career counseling along with major exploration;
- Works with FVCC faculty and area high school teachers and counselors to facilitate, develop, increase participation and enhance career pathways for students;
- Assists with FVCC's Summer Experience and other educational opportunities for high school students;
- Administers FVCC's math placement test at high schools within the service region;
- Evaluates ACT scores to determine placement for FVCC's courses;

- Provides weekly outreach to Glacier, Flathead, Bigfork, Columbia Falls, Whitefish, Linderman high schools; and
- Advises and enrolls concurrent enrollment students.

3. **List any recent professional development opportunities and describe how your unit approaches professional development.**

Professional development is primarily covered through the Montana Career Pathways grant, which FVCC has received for the past several years. Through this partnership, the Running Start team attends professional training that covers both dual enrollment and Montana Career Pathways, along with grant updates. The department recognizes the importance of continuous learning opportunities which are imperative to the increased success of the program. However, the department weighs the benefits to ensure the benefits outweigh the fact that the Running Start team will be out of the office and high schools. The department finds the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) to be extremely valuable and well worth the investment to attend and would like to continue to attend annually, if possible.

**Professional Development over the past three years include:**

**2015**-Beth Romain attended the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) in Denver, CO

Deanne Brown and Beth Romain attended the spring and fall Big Sky Pathways workshops (covered by grant funds).

**2016**-Beth Romain and Phil Moore attended the spring Big Sky Pathways workshop and Beth Romain and Julie Nissi attended the fall Big Sky Pathways workshop.

Phil Moore attended the National Career Pathways Network conference in New Orleans, LA (covered by grant funds).

Beth Romain participated in the Supervisor Training hosted by FVCC's Continuing Education Program.

**2017**-Beth Romain and Julie Nissi attended the Western Regional Conference.

- Beth Romain and Dr. Francom co-presented "Big or Small, Dual Enrollment for all".

Beth Romain and Dan Salois attended the NACEP conference in Washington DC (covered by grant funds)

## Needs

**Is your area currently in need of resources (i.e., space, equipment, budget, personnel)? If so, please describe.**

The Running Start Program's biggest need is additional personnel. When the Program Specialist, High School Relations position was initially implemented, there were three employees with office hours in the six local high schools in addition to the Coordinator, High School Relations position on campus. At that time, there were significantly less students and only five concurrent enrollment courses. The college has experienced a 113.4% increase from spring 2013 to spring 2017. Currently 1.5 FTE is dedicated to the Running Start Program and .5 FTE dedicated to Montana Career Pathways. With the decrease in personnel, it has become extremely difficult to give the local high schools the same amount of resources as in the past. The Program Specialist, High School Relations position is currently spread among six local high schools. Last spring, the Running Start team enrolled 510 students (nearly 1/5 of the overall spring enrollment headcount), which was the most Running Start students in the college's history. With additional personnel, the Running Start team could reach more students and educate them in the importance of transcribed credits through dual enrollment offered through Running Start. Flathead Valley high school students are faced with many different options to earn college credit while in high school, i.e. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Montana Digital Academy.

As the college continues to increase the number of concurrent enrollment courses offered across the state, it becomes increasingly difficult to travel to all of the schools to provide paperwork assistance, placement testing and academic advising prior to the census date (third week). The past few semesters, the Running Start team was unable to register all of the concurrent enrollment students prior to the third week report. As a result, the enrollment figures released to the media is lower than it should be.

## Department Goals and Objectives

**1. List the broad goals that your department is working towards. For each of your goals, describe at least one specific objective that you are working to achieve. Please indicate how you will know the objectives have been accomplished.**

**Goal #1- Increase the number of Montana high school students earning FVCC college credit through the Running Start Program.**

- Objective 1: Continue to meet students where they are by working closely with Academic Affairs and high school administrators. By continuing to add concurrent enrollment courses within the service region, the college is providing overloaded students (i.e. student athletes) an opportunity to take a college course offered at their high school. Additionally, there is a large population of students from the out-of-district high schools that learn better in a face-to-face environment, so online courses aren't conducive for them. Lastly, there is a large population of local students who are unable to fit an early college course into their schedule due to travel restraints (i.e. traveling from Whitefish, Columbia Falls, or Bigfork). Therefore, it is imperative that FVCC offers a mixture of online general education courses and appropriate courses taught at 8am or after 2pm each semester. This objective will be measured by the number of concurrent enrollment courses offered each semester, the number of high schools offering concurrent enrollment courses, and the number of Running Start students enrolled each semester.
- Objective 2: Provide education, education, education! The Running Start team needs to continue educating students, parents and counselors on the benefits of transcribed credits. At the same time, the Running Start staff needs to continue to walk a fine line as to not diminish the benefits of credit by test. However, it is important for families to understand the difference when deciding on the best educational route to take. Sometimes it can be a combination of methods to earn credits, but families need to be educated. There are still families who have never heard of Running Start, but are very well versed on AP or IB. Each year a new set of sophomores matriculate through the high schools which means another opportunity to educate students and parents. Although currently not formally measured, this objective could be measured by logging the number of student visits that occur each year at each high school as well as the number outreach events that occur (including mailings, parent nights, lunch sessions, etc.).

**Goal #2-Continue to increase the number of concurrent enrollment courses available through our high schools in our service area**

- Objective 1: Contact high school administrators at least once a year to discuss potential concurrent enrollment courses, teacher credentials, and student needs. This (and the next) objective will be met by measuring the number concurrent enrollment courses offered at each school at the end of the academic year. It should be noted that one high school contacts Beth regularly when their high school is hiring, so the principal can discuss the required hiring credentials to ensure his new teachers can teach concurrent enrollment courses.

- Objective 2: Work with high schools to explore ways to reduce barriers associated with adding additional concurrent enrollment courses.
  - For example, suggest adjusting a concurrent enrollment teacher’s schedule to allow them to teach a concurrent enrollment course (i.e. FVCC requires 100 percent college enrollment in the concurrent enrollment courses). Although FVCC can run a course with five students, many of the high schools need higher enrollment to justify having a full time teacher teach the course. Fortunately, the majority of the college’s concurrent enrollment teachers are the sought after teachers at the high schools, but that makes scheduling more difficult. Or, share creative solutions other high schools have implemented—an online concurrent course or creating a study hall for online students.
  - Promote opportunities for high school teachers to meet the teaching requirements for two year colleges per Board of Regents Policy 740 such as teacher camps/workshops and/or remind administrators that teachers can potentially teach a course if they earn a minimum of nine specific credits within the respective discipline. Unfortunately, many teachers possess a master’s degree in Education, but lack the required nine graduate content specific credits.

**Goal #3-Put in place a system that will allow for electronic signatures for the Running Start registration form**

- Objective 1: Collaborate with MIS, Admissions & Registration, and the Marketing departments during the upcoming year to determine ways and means to streamline the admissions and registration process for RS students. This objective would assist RS students in lowering one of the barriers they face when they enroll at FVCC. At this time, there is a lot of back and forth with paperwork due to students needing to obtain their parent’s and counselor’s signatures. After attending NACEP, it was discovered there are a lot of programs available to assist with this, but the price tag is too big for FVCC. The college needs to continue to explore more cost effective programs or ways that would allow for a smooth online registration process and placement testing.

2. Describe the alignment between your goals / objectives and FVCC’s strategic plan and / or Core Theme objectives.

**Goal #1- Increase the number of Montana high school students earning FVCC college credit through the Running Start Program.**

- This goal clearly aligns with Goal 1: Increase Access to Education, Objective 1b: Increase access to FVCC's educational programs. This goal also aligns with Goal 2: Increase Student Academic Success, Objective 2a: Studies show that students who earn college credit while still in high school are more successful when entering post-secondary education as a full time student. This goal also aligns with Objective 4: Indicators 1 and by getting Running Start students through the door (virtual or brick and mortar) and giving them a good experience, the College has a better chance of retaining them as full time students in the future.

**Goal #2-Continue to increase the number of concurrent enrollment courses available through high schools in our service area**

- This goal also aligns with Goal 1: Increase Access to Education, Objective 1b: Increase access to FVCC's educational programs. By offering concurrent enrollment courses, the College is reaching a population that may not be able to start their college education while still in high school, due to their high school schedule.
- There has been success story after success story regarding the college's concurrent enrollment welding courses. Those courses are offered and promoted to a population of students that never thought college was attainable for them. By bringing these courses to them and having them be successful, it has opened doors for students by increasing their confidence level. For example, a former Columbia Falls High School student stated that, "I would be the first person in my family to get a college degree. I never thought I would be the first, I had no idea I could get a degree doing something I love!"

**Goal #3-Put in place a system that will allow for electronic signatures for the Running Start registration form**

- This goal aligns with Goal 1: Increase Access to Education. By simplifying the enrollment process for Running Start students, the College is allowing more students the opportunity to enroll in college courses while still in high school. Eliminating barriers also aligns with Goal 1: Objective 1a and 1b as the Running Start team continues to work towards increasing the number of students enrolling in college courses while still in high school.

## **Closing the Loop**

### **1. Please discuss any recent changes in your department, and whether the changes have led to improved outcomes.**

Dan Salois was hired on June 19, 2017 as Program Specialist, High School Relations, after Julie Nissi resigned in April 2017. Unfortunately, this position has seen a high turnover which has had a negative impact on the local high schools. After a long term vacancy, it is challenging to get students, teachers and counselors back onboard to sending students to visit with this position. High turnover is one of our biggest hurdles with this position. Both the Coordinator, High School Relations, who acts as the Director of Running Start and Program Specialist, High School Relations, who serves as an academic/career advisor and grant manager are classified below academic advisors in the Student Support Center, yet the scope of knowledge and skills required to advise students are virtually equivalent. Both positions carry a great deal of responsibility above and beyond academic and career advising.

Although there are many advantages to the new placement testing, it has caused a negative impact on the timeliness of getting scores back for the Running Start students. As much as the Running Start team promotes getting an early start on the Running Start enrollment process, a fairly large amount of students wait to enroll in fall courses once they return to high school. In some cases, that is actually after fall semester begins at FVCC. In the past, placement score results were instantaneous, but now the wait time has created an additional barrier to the last minute students. It should be noted that the high school counseling offices are closed from mid-June to late August which creates another barrier for students. However, on a positive note, the earlier registration dates implemented by the Enrollment Management Committee this past year has been helpful for the RS team and high school counselors with registering students sooner and during less busy times at the high schools.

### **2. Discuss changes that you plan to make going forward. These may be projects that you plan to accomplish over a short (1-year) or longer (3-year) time frame. Include any obstacles that could impede necessary changes (i.e. policy or resource constraints) and any plans to address these obstacles.**

- Develop a subsequent course to ID 105 for returning Summer Experience students to implement in summer 2018.
- Request reclassifications for both positions including moving the Program Specialist, High School relations to a salaried position.
- Investigate offering additional teacher camps for high school teachers.

- The College's long standing summer welding training has allowed FVCC to set up multiple partnerships throughout the state. FVCC is currently offering WLDG 111 and WLDG 185 as concurrent enrollment courses at 12 different high schools.
- The Running Start/MT Career Pathways team, along with Eliza Thomas are offering a workshop for high school teachers to explore the opportunity of offering EDU 101 as a concurrent enrollment course in the future (potentially as early as spring or fall 2018).

Success in achieving this goal will be contingent upon availability of funding (through grants or general funds).

- Maintain and/or increase enrollment with the FVCC's early college and concurrent enrollment students. Limitations for achieving this goal include availability of concurrent enrollment courses (and teacher credentials), online general education courses, and traditional face-to-face courses offered at times conducive for local RS students (i.e. 8 a.m. or after 2 p.m.).
- Investigate the option of electronic signatures for the Running Start enrollment paperwork.
  - Develop fillable forms while investigating a system to manage electronic signatures.
- Develop an annual high school counselor/high school administrator breakfast.
  - Discuss the benefits of transcribed credits.
  - Share success rates of the college's Running Start students and high school capture (matriculation) rates.
  - Provide relationship building with our partnering high schools.

If the budget does not allow for an annual breakfast, the RS team will work with the Marketing department to develop a "RS report card" for each partnering high school.

## **Strategic Planning Council Feedback**

Commendations for the department:

Recommendations for the department, including follow-up dates:

SPC synopsis of the review for the Executive Staff.