In attendance:
- Chad Hickox, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (Chair)
- Jane Baker, Interim Dean/CEO
- Russ Fillner, Assistant Dean of Fiscal & Plant
- Elizabeth Stearns Sims, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
- Mike Brown, Institutional Researcher
- Robyn Kiesling, Division Chair of Gen Ed & Transfer
- Tammy Burke, Division Chair of Trades & Technology
- Mary Lannert, Director of Continuing Education
- Nathan Munn, Faculty Senate President
- Brenda Johnson, Staff Senate President
- Quinn Kurokawa, Student Senate President
- Bryon Steinwand, Faculty representative
- Betsy Hussey, Faculty representative

Recorder:
Summer Marston, Assistant to the Dean/CEO

Old Business

- Chad will divide SPA into four groups of three members; all groups will review #1 and compare notes, and overlaps and priorities will be addressed at a later SPA meeting.

Most of today will be looking at the work groups results from SP notes. Original SP was compiled after a large process, took several months. Comments on the former plan – document fatigue; very long and hard to follow; needs to be a living document; repetitive; to simplify for easy reference; can’t achieve if can’t remember and comprehend. Some things are tied together, so it makes sense to collapse them. Planning and assessment do not really need their own goal; rather incorporate them into the other goals.

Three core areas needed embodied – student success, excellence, community. One group changed “partner” for Student Success to “promote” Student Success, and two groups removed “partner” and left only Student Success. One group stated they did not do that on purpose, but felt like were getting so caught up on the verbiage. Partner with who? Community, each other, etc. Community usually referenced externally, but there are three demographics – student, faculty, staff. Needs mutually beneficial relationship, not a one-way thing.

Need to get the Strategic Plan at the right conceptual level; not focused on details and tactics as the current SP tends to do. Also must consider how it aligns with the Core Themes. Discussed aligning them one-to-one. Tying them together like that may simplify and alleviate confusion, but may artificially restrain us. Must have some flexibility as long as they don’t conflict. CT tell us how well we do at achieving the goals; SP states what we want to be as institution in the future. NWCCU states “The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.” The College has chosen aspirational CT, unlike other campuses. Most other 2yr CTs are more mission oriented – Gen Ed/Transfer, workforce development, etc. SP and CT were each created in self-contained exercises; ended up with two massive frameworks and had to make them work together. We now have the opportunity to reset for the next 7 years; determine how the SP and CT work together. SP supports CT? What comes first? CT higher? CT also tie into institutional philosophy – Who are we? How do we identify ourselves? How do we want the community to
identify us? SP supports that, but doesn’t define it. Might clarify mission if organize CT around what we do. We have talked about SP and goals focusing on ideas of what we want to be, but also need to take a look at how we are going to use it. That is where we got into trouble. Data collection became difficult because we were tracking too many metrics. Then the SP has 40+ indicators. A Venn diagram to look for overlap found that maybe 10 actually matched. Must keep in mind how it will be used and if daily activity will be tied in. Make sure it is a document we can work with, written and put together in a way that is usable, simplified, and cleaner.

It is difficult to project into the future from a present that is not stable. We want to become a cultural and intellectual hub for the Helena community, bringing people together to learn and create. An overlay of the SP is Learn – Think – Create; lifelong learning and community outreach. SP is the framework, overlays are more like work plans, broad because they will be implemented differently in different areas. Each area has a work plan inspired by SP.

Currently organized with goals, objectives, strategies, indicators. Simplify and remove outdated language. Discussed making measurable, difficult without making really specific. Objectives could either be an ongoing endeavor or something to check off. Strategies come from various areas in the institution.

SPA members reviewed the results from their work groups. Key points were as follows:

- Tried to stick with what people said during the SP review
- Tried to focus on outcomes – where we are now and where we want to be; recognizing who students are; what we do; who we serve and how we can serve them. Output based.
- Diversity manifests in different ways; primarily socioeconomic diversity at HC.
- No acknowledgement of the internal community; rectify. Building community is valuable in helping student reach their goals.
- “...educational, workforce, and lifelong learning needs.”
- Educational experience helps both students and employers. Building relationships with students, employers, and community; build appreciation for what we do here.
- Very little we can do to get money. Does fiscal need own goal? State support is limited. Foundation is building. Is a business and needs to be run as a business. SPA determined it should.
- Build up cultural competency. Want Helena College to be at the forefront; educating the whole student. SPA discussed and felt it needs to be emphasized with its own goal to ensure we are moving towards that. It helps students success, but needs to be bigger and more proactive; more than race, age, gender, etc. Help students be comfortable. Huge for community perspective, as well, so it would have to be split between the two. Important with both college choice and who they are going to work for. It’s absence would speak volumes about who we are.
- Baccalaureate was status symbol more than necessity; a 2-yr is almost necessary. Four-year degrees oversaturating. Nontraditional students have been working for decades; may need to quickly obtain relative skills for gainful and satisfying employment. Some 4yr going students are returning for associate degrees; bring tremendous value to the classroom.
- Need to support in ANY educational goals. Ensure students have ways to ensure their time here is well-spent.
- Employee growth came out of retreat – scholarly activity. Need to be assessing at every level.
- Excellence 3 could almost be under 4; would address an issue from our eval. Not enough students do instructor evals for various reasons – student many complete many for the same instructor; students may be concerned about retaliation. Response rate went way down when started going electronic. Ensure students know they are completely anonymous.
• Community needs to be internal and external community.
• Include educational institutions in partnerships.

- SPA will review the gap analysis, goals, and suggested modifications gathered at the SP review, sift through them, and bring recommendations to College Council. SPA decided one person from each group will meet and continue SP revision conversation. SPA will determine a structure and create a work plan template for the experts in areas to focus on.

**NWCCU Year One and Ad Hoc Reports**
NWCCU reaffirmation letter specified Year One and Ad Hoc report due date as March 1. Changes to CT will have to be made before the Year One report; very difficult to make changes after. Year One sets foundation for next seven years; Ad Hoc addresses how we are addressing findings after assessment. NWCCU reports will be on agenda for the next meeting.

**Deliverables**
- One person from each group to serve in one comprehensive group to meet and continue SP revision conversation. SPA will determine a structure and create a work plan template for the experts in areas to focus on.
- Summer will be looking for a better meeting time, scheduling SPA for two 1-hour meetings a month.