



*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.*

Accounting and Business Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

April 29, 2026 12:00 p.m. Donaldson Campus Room 123

Attendees:

Helena College:

Rachel Shanz - Accounting instructor

Anna Spoja– Business instructor

Robyn Kiesling- Executive Director of General Education and Transfer

Melissa Mousel – Program Manger of Career Technical Education

Community Members:

Meghan Bennett – McGough construction

Jocelynn Norman - Wipfli

Mike Walker – State of Montana- Motor Vehicle Division

Katherine Anderson- Montana Assistance Connection

Program Updates:

- Summary of last year's meeting and how we have used the information
 - Looked to see if our curriculum classes aligned with industry

- Updates to the curriculum

Accounting changes

- Business and Accounting pathways take same classes first semester
- Bookkeeper certification is achieved during 2yr online
- Pathways flow into MT tech directly. Students can also look at UM and MSU
- Certified with NACEP
- Took out excel course and replaced with a data analytics course
- Students have the option of completing either a capstone OR internship

Business changes

- Helena College instructors insured that the Business pathway fed into other schools as well as be a stand alone program
- Removed legal service course , which was found to be redundant with the HR course. A capstone course was added as the replacement.

Topics for Discussion:

Student Performance:

- Where is the biggest disconnect between what schools teach and what the workplace requires?

Community members offered the following comments:

- Stress management can cause turnover. Some employers offer courses in stress management as people learn at different paces.
- Teach how to get hired on at the state-how to check the boxes for HR screenings including how to hit key words on resumes, etc.
- “It’s a job to find a full-time job” instruct students to follow up where they have applied
- Require adaptability-real world situations
- Helena College should vet businesses to make sure they are in line with what HC is trying to accomplish before students begin an internship---have a list of expectations that students need from a company that is offering the internships.
- paid vs non paid internships: Many of our students need to work as they are earning their degree.

Student Preparation:

- What skill sets are most valuable when looking for employees?
 - soft and hard skills,

- client facing team building
- talking on the phone
- goods and services-selling. Need to think like a buyer
- negotiation simulations
- implement work- based opportunities

Upcoming needs:

- What trends and topics that programs or employers aren't currently covering but you see being important in the immediate future?
- Have field trips to local accounting firms
- Class met once a month in person to connect
- Students need to know the variety of opportunities are available in accounting and business
- Have guests come in to talk about their career journeys
- Create a list of business that would be able to work with students

Wrap up and Summary of Takeaways

- What should we include in the meeting minutes as our key takeaways from the meeting?