



TRACE Fact Sheet

Brief Program Description:

TRACE, or Transforming Regional Artisans into Creative Entrepreneurs, is a Montana State University-Great Falls certificate program designed to help artisans develop a broader knowledge of business, while enhancing their skills in their craft. This innovative workforce development program is a pilot project designed to launch Montana's promising artisans in sustainable arts careers without having to leave the state. It targets students wanting a flexible, short-term educational experience that nurtures the discipline of their art while providing them with the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in creative enterprise.

TRACE Students at a Glance

- The 20 students in the pilot program are from Chester, Fort Benton, Ulm, Cascade, Highwood, Butte, Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, Belt, Arlee, Cut Bank, Conrad, and Stanford, with only 6 of that number from Great Falls.
- The cohort includes those who weave, quilt, bead, work metal, work wood, paint with watercolors and oils, illustrate, carve wood, do inlay, make dolls, and photograph.
- Of the 20 students, 18 want to learn entrepreneurial skills to launch and sustain a successful business; and 17 express interest in the lifelong learning offered by the one-year TRACE certification.
- Of the 20 students, 13 requested some type of financial assistance. Over 70 contacts were made initially, and approximately half of those expressed a need for financial assistance.

Promoting Accessibility

Accessibility to the program is insured through:

- Scheduling. Class times accommodate working adults from across the state and especially in rural areas, with much of the learning occurring in the studio, at home, and on-line. Using online and classroom settings, networks, mentors, and resources within the community, the program nurtures student creativity and workmanship. Fall semester classes started September 10 and run on alternate weekends until

December 4. Students meet their instructors and fellow classmates on Fridays from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In a similar schedule to fall, spring semester classes will begin in February and end by mid-June, with the capstone project occurring in mid-July.

- Flexibility. Nontraditional, adult learners schedule their own studio time, the time they spend with mentors, and the time that they work online.
- Self-direction and experiential learning. Nontraditional students tend to respond more enthusiastically to situations in which they can learn experientially and are allowed self-direction. TRACE is grounded in the idea that creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit are best developed by learning through doing. Mentorships and self-guided, studio-based work insure that students develop in their discipline.

Providing Opportunity

In keeping with Montana's pioneer "can do" heritage, TRACE is based on the idea that sustainable, economic solutions for the state will develop through nurturing and developing its creative and entrepreneurial spirit. The program provides opportunities both to the first-time college student and the adult returning to the classroom to develop additional skills or a new career. In short, the program opens the doors for students to become part of the "rise of the creative class."

Specifically, the program helps students to: 1) establish themselves in a sustainable career doing what they love; 2) develop their skills through practice and peer input; 3) learn to price, package, and promote their work; 4) develop a business plan for success; 5) learn the language and logistics of selling; 6) connect with mentors and experts in the creative sector; 7) increase their knowledge of the Internet's role in creative enterprise; and 8) expand their markets. With 18 credits required for completion, this certificate program requires 2 semesters of work, with courses such as "Internet Essentials," "Making It I and II," "Montana Ways," "Arts Marketing," "Creative Entrepreneurship," and the "Capstone Experience."

Promoting Affordability

TRACE is an affordable program in that it requires only a year for a student to complete. During that year, the program taps into the area museums and galleries, utilizing those programs and resources to enrich the students' educational experiences without adding the costs of program duplication. Furthermore, because of its compressed, one-year format, the program must relate itself specifically to the creative enterprise sector and the demands of the market, thereby cutting costs to the student.

Further Information

Additional information about the TRACE program is available by visiting the College's website www.msugf.edu, calling the College at 771-4300, or by contacting Dr. Kittredge at 268-3713 or ckittredge@msugf.edu.