

**Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long Range Planning
Tuesday, February 15, 2005, 8:00am**

Testimony by
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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Bruce Whittenberg. I live in Billings and am associated with Montana State University-Billings in Outreach and Community Development, and Executive Director of Leadership Montana.

I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 540.

You have heard from many others about importance that the 2-year institutions – Colleges of Technology and community colleges- play in the lives of students to advance economically. And that two year programs such as health occupations, computer technology and automotive technology are preparing students for jobs that are critical to our economy, and available.

I would like to share with you a little different focus, one that supports the core mission of the institution, but also extends the value of the University and the COTs well beyond that mission of preparing our students for the workplace.

I'm talking about the public/private partnerships that exist to support the schools, and the services the University can provide to support local business.

Let me give you a few examples.

In partnership with Wells Fargo Bank, the MSU-Billings COT and the College of Professional Studies and Lifelong Learning developed, "For Tellers, By Tellers," a training program conducted across the state to improve retention and productivity in the teller ranks of Wells Fargo.

In partnership with ConocoPhillips Billings refinery, developed a web-based delivery of operational maintenance training that included a hands-on component and assessment.

In partnership with 180 Communications, developed and delivered team effectiveness training to the key operations team.

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In partnership with St. Vincent Healthcare, provided training on team effectiveness and collaboration in the workplace.

And with Billings Head Start, we developed a program called L.I.F.E., Learn to Improve Future Employment. This program helped parents of Head Start children to improve their employability with topics like, "What it Takes to Succeed", "Speaking with Confidence", and "Managing Life Outside Work".

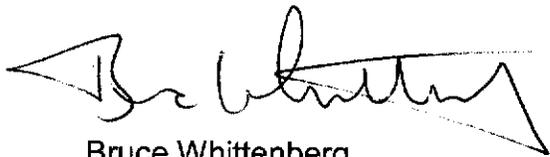
There are many more examples.

In addition, important partnerships are formed through Advisory Committees that exist in virtually every COT program. Local business leaders participate in the design of the programs, curriculum evaluation and the student experience, providing their support, mentoring and internships for students.

I share this with you today because it is not typically what is talked about when discussing the value of the COT. But it is a vitally important role that this institution plays in the business community. The MSU-Billings College of Technology provides leadership, creativity and vitality to our business community.

An investment in the College of Technology is more than an investment in higher education, it is truly an investment in economic development, helping our business partners achieve their objectives. An expanded campus at the MSU-Billings COT will significantly expand the opportunities for these relationships with our business partners, and create more and richer opportunities for students as well.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my support for this legislation, and thank you for your service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Whittenberg". The signature is stylized with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke.

Bruce Whittenberg
Billings, Montana