

STATEMENT OF ANNA VEE BRANDBORG 2/11/09

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am Anna Vee Brandborg, a trustee elect of the Bitterroot Valley Community College. I am a retired high school teacher who spent my own high school years in Glasgow and graduated from the University of Montana. I live in Hamilton.

In our effort to bring Bitterroot Valley Community College to life, we have heard that there is no need for a Community College in the Bitterroot because of our proximity to the University in Missoula; that the University, through its Higher Education Center in Hamilton can provide post-secondary courses for high school graduates and other adults.

We trustees believe that a Bitterroot Valley Community College would be the best solution for higher education in the Bitterroot.

As you know, the valley is going through unprecedented growth. Our community does not have the educational support it needs to respond to this growth.

We need courses, credit and non-credit, that will give our community's students—many of whom are non-traditional—job skills, as well as introductory courses leading to a degree or certification.

We need courses in the building trades—construction, plumbing, electrical technology, energy technology, electronics, auto repair and technology and other skills. There is a high local demand in the health care professions—nursing, physical therapy, radiology and dental, just to name a few.

That's what we **NEED**.

According to the local paper, courses available for enrollment this semester by the University at its Higher Education Center are

Anthropology I, Accounting II, Oral Communication, Business law, Psychology, Computer Modeling, and Education leadership. Some of these are graduate level.

These are fine courses, but they DO NOT provide job skills for our growing flood of out of job workers.

Just how is Anthropology I, interesting as it may be, going to help someone who needs specific skills required by the job market?

The University conducted a needs assessment, but they apparently missed the larger picture. Did someone say "I need an anthropologist"?

What would make sense is that the University's Higher Education Center meet with the Bitterroot Valley Community College trustees in a cooperative effort to develop higher education in the Bitterroot. That hasn't happened, and it's not for lack of effort on our part.

What we need is for these adult students to be able to live at home, be with and have the support of their families, to keep a job if they are lucky enough to have one, to have a schedule of classes that fit with their lives, to have tuition that is far less than that of the U, to have small classes with greater access and closer relationships with their professors, to have meaningful guidance and counseling in selection of careers, and to have courses designed to fill their needs. These are the advantages of a local Community College. We are prepared to provide these advantages.

We respectfully request that you authorize the Bitterroot Valley Community College. It can be a vital component of our valley community, particularly in this period of economic distress. And it would be a great help to our young people and adults in preparing for fulfilling employment.

Thank you. I appreciate this opportunity to talk with you and will be available to answer questions after this hearing.