

From: Deputy Commissioner John Cech  
To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Level II items that are being proposed for your review and action at the November 2016 meeting of the Board of Regents. These items have been submitted by the campuses and reviewed by the Chief Academic Officers of the Montana University System and community colleges. OCHE staff has reviewed the items and provided a short analysis below relying on information submitted by the campuses. For more information and specific details on each item, please see the supporting documentation included on the Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee agenda.

---

### **Flathead Valley Community College**

#### **A.A.S. in Medical Laboratory Technology**

The A.A.S. in Medical Laboratory Technology is being sought to prepare students for entry into technician-level positions in a number of professional health and laboratory settings. After completing all academic and clinical requirements of the program, students will be eligible to sit for the national certification exam and apply for state licensure. Due to the limitations of the program (equipment, space, clinical placements) it is anticipated that no more than 6 students will be admitted to the competitive, second year of the program. This program is in direct response to a request from Kalispell Regional Healthcare in 2015. Hospitals and clinics in the FVCC service region are unable to attract enough BS-MLS graduates to fill their laboratory positions.

The Program Director will initially provide for the laboratory and on-campus clinical needs of the program, but over time the program will need to acquire laboratory technician support for which the hospital is prepared to provide. Laboratory components of the program require highly specialized equipment, some of which is already available to the college and some of which will need to be purchased. It is the hope of the college that the hospital will assist in this area.

This program will be the first AAS Medical Laboratory Technology degree in the state of Montana. A Bachelor's of Science degree in Medical Laboratory Science is currently offered through a consortium by the University of Montana, Montana State Bozeman, and Montana State Billings. Students at Miles Community College have an opportunity to complete a program through Bismarck State College in North Dakota.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

#### **A.A.S. in Programming and Game Development**

The A.A.S. in Programming and Game Development is designed to prepare students for entry into the field of software programming and game development. The skills highlighted in the program are presently demanded by both students and the software development community. The program complements the existing programs at FVCC (AAS in Web Technology, AAS in Information Technology and the AS Computer Science) and will serve the community and four-year-bound university students. Courses in game design have been requested by students and parents, and local employers have requested students with skills in Windows programming and app development.

One additional fulltime faculty member will be needed by spring 2018 to offer the courses for the program. No need for additional resources is foreseen.

A.A.S. degrees in Computer Programming currently exist at Helena College, City College, and Great Falls College, however, the emphasis in game development is not currently offered at any other two-year college.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Montana State University Bozeman**

#### **Rename the Center for Bison and Wildlife Health to the Center for Wildlife Health and Disease Ecology**

MSU Bozeman is requesting to retitle the presently named Center for Bison and Wildlife Health to the Center for Wildlife Health and Disease Ecology. The center was originally approved as a BOR recognized center in 1994. By changing the name of the center, MSU seeks to broaden the focus of the center and catalyze interest in the growing field of disease ecology. The center will have an expanded focus on wildlife health and infectious disease ecology. No additional resources are anticipated. The widened focus of the center in disease ecology and wildlife is expected to attract interest from across the system and state including University of Montana, MT Fish Wildlife and Parks, Wildlife Conservation Society, USGS, and NIH Rocky Mountain Labs. No similar centers exist within the MUS.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Pollinator Health Center**

The Pollinator Health Center is being requested to create a Center aimed at improving pollinator health and mitigating pollinator losses through research, education, and outreach endeavors. The primary objectives of the Center as described are: (1) showcase current research efforts, (2) identify collaborative areas of research, (3) compete for a wider array of funding sources, (4) provide a forum for pollinator health scientists and MSU students to interact, (5) host seminar speakers and visiting scientists, and (6) host future pollinator health conferences.

The Center responds to the critical need to enhance research efforts aimed at mitigating pollinator losses and optimizing pollinator health. Pollinators, including bees, are essential for plant reproduction in agricultural, non-agricultural, and natural landscapes. Recent losses of managed and wild bee species have negative impacts on crop production and ecosystem diversity. While numerous MSU faculty members and affiliates are working independently or in small-group collaborations on important topics in pollinator health, bringing them together would better address the current research need.

The Center will also involve the Western Triangle Ag Research Center and USDA Forest Service—Rocky Mountain Research Station. No funds are required to initiate the establishment of the Pollinator Health Center. Funds are requested to host at least two nationally recognized scientists in Pollinator Health, who will give talks as part of the launch of the Center during the 2016-2017 academic year (\$4,000). The development of a website will be supported by the VPR's Office.

There are no similar Centers in the state or surrounding region.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **The Western Lands and Peoples Center (WLPC)**

MSU is proposing to create WLPC as a BOR recognized institutional center with the desire for the center to become an international hub for the study of critical issues involving the western US and Canada. The core mission of the center will be to foster the integrated study of the North American West with a focus on human/environmental interactions of the region. The center will help to provide a deeper understanding of the many social, political, and economic changes driven by this region, and will

serve as a forum for discussion between the university and public over issues facing the state and region.

Funding for the center stem from a Humanities and Social Science Phase II grant for \$350,000 from the Office of the Vice President of Research and Economic Development and the Office of the President at MSU, a grant from the National Humanities Alliance to fund a series of week-long public history events scheduled for fall 2016, and from the ongoing MSU capital campaign. Additional funding will be sought from regional and national foundations as well as federal agencies. The immediate resources for the center will be office space for an administrative assistant, a Director, and various activities.

The University of Montana Missoula's O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West has a similar, but not duplicative focus as the proposed center at MSU. The focus of the center at UM is on regional growth and development (economics, geography, demography, and regional sciences), regional journalism (online and radio), and regional history, while the WLPC at MSU focuses on the study of the North American West's geography and geology; ecological studies of wildlife, fisheries, and resources in the West; studies of Indigenous societies and issues facing Native American peoples across the region; human/environmental interactions; the Digital Humanities; museum studies; and the culture, film, literature, and history of the region. It is the desire of MSU to develop collaborative activities and programming of relevance to the future initiatives of both campuses.

*OCHS Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Biomedical Engineering Minor**

The minor in Biomedical Engineering is requested to provide primarily undergraduate students throughout the MSU College of Engineering who have an interest in biomedical applications of engineering with the interdisciplinary expertise required to thrive in biomedical industry, professional programs, and graduate programs. The minor will focus on engineering applications to medical challenges and human health. In 2011, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics listed biomedical engineering as the fastest growing occupation in the United States. Current MSU students have stated a desire for greater integration of biomedical engineering in the curriculum, and many prospective MSU students have expressed a clear demand for a Biomedical Engineering program.

All required and elective courses are already being offered at Montana State University. It is expected that 10 to 20 students will pursue the minor within the first year of its introduction, and it is expected that roughly 20 to 40 students total will be in the program after 4 years. No new/additional resources are needed.

A Biomedical Engineering major does not exist in the Montana University System and there are no highly similar programs in the Montana University System.

*OCHS Staff Recommendation: Approve*