

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM ACADEMIC PRIORITIES

and Analysis of AY 2020-21 Campus Academic Priority and Planning Statements

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENTS

Where do Academic Priorities and Planning Statements fit into the MUS program approval process?

The new academic program approval process approved by the BOR in November 2019 requires campuses submit an annual report to the Board on their academic priorities and planning. This statement is meant to give the Board a broad overview of campus' academic direction, provide useful context for the Board as it considers new academic proposals, and identify some of the specific program proposals that the Board may see from each campus in the coming year. The Priorities and Planning Statement also provides an opportunity for campuses to describe, in broad terms, the process they use to prioritize and review academic programming.

How might the BOR use these reports?

OCHE and the Board can use these reports to:

- Identify areas of overlap in forthcoming academic programming, so that OCHE and campuses can organize early coordination and state-level conversation
- Evaluate the alignment between a campus's academic priorities, mission parameters, and emerging local, state, and regional needs
- Understand campus-level procedures for reviewing and prioritizing academic programming

PLANNING THEMES AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE SYSTEM

- Innovation in educator-prep programming is highlighted by several campuses. **MSU Northern** for example, is working with rural superintendents in North Central Montana on a strategy to address a critical shortage of teachers and counselors in the region. Their work to date has included developing successful 2+2 educator prep programs with **Great Falls College** and nearby Tribal Colleges. In the coming year, Northern may bring forward a B.S. in Education (non-teaching), an Education Specialist program focused on school counseling, and a graduate certificate in training and instruction.
- **MSU Billings** undertook a substantial strategic program alignment effort over the past year and a half, which will result in many programs and options coming forward to the Board in Fall 2020 for restructuring or termination. In the coming year, MSU Billings also anticipates that two colleges will pursue restructuring. The College of Education will likely request to split into two departments, with one focused on special education, a traditional strength in Billings. The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences is also likely to restructure.
- **Helena College** and **Miles Community College** each highlight new transfer partnerships and efforts to improve transfer pathways. **Miles Community College** is working with **MSU Northern** to provide automotive and diesel technician programming in Miles City. **Helena College** will move forward a Certificate in General Studies, meant to help students reliably transfer general education coursework.

OVERLAP ANALYSIS

To help focus conversation on the 2020 forthcoming academic proposal template, OCHE has developed short list of proposals that merit early discussion.

1. Several Campuses propose expanded offerings in Cybersecurity

- MSU-Bozeman – Proposed M.S. in Cybersecurity (intent to plan approved 3/2019)
- Gallatin College and Miles Community College both propose to add certificates and/or associate degrees with a cybersecurity focus
- Montana Tech indicates in its priorities statement that Highlands College may pursue further cybersecurity-related programming in future

2. Both MSU Northern and Miles Community College propose certificate-level programs in Meat Processing.

3. Gallatin College and Miles Community College are each exploring programming to train auto mechanics/diesel technologists.

4. Several Campuses are exploring adding allied health programs.

- Gallatin College is exploring programs in dental assisting and respiratory therapy (possibly via a collaboration with Great Falls College and City College).
- Gallatin College is exploring programs for medical lab technicians and phlebotomists
- City College is developing an A.A.S. in General and Vascular Sonography
- Miles Community College and Helena College are planning certificates focused on paramedicine/emergency medicine
- Dawson Community College plans to offer an A.A.S. in Health Information Technology

MONTANA'S ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING OVER TIME

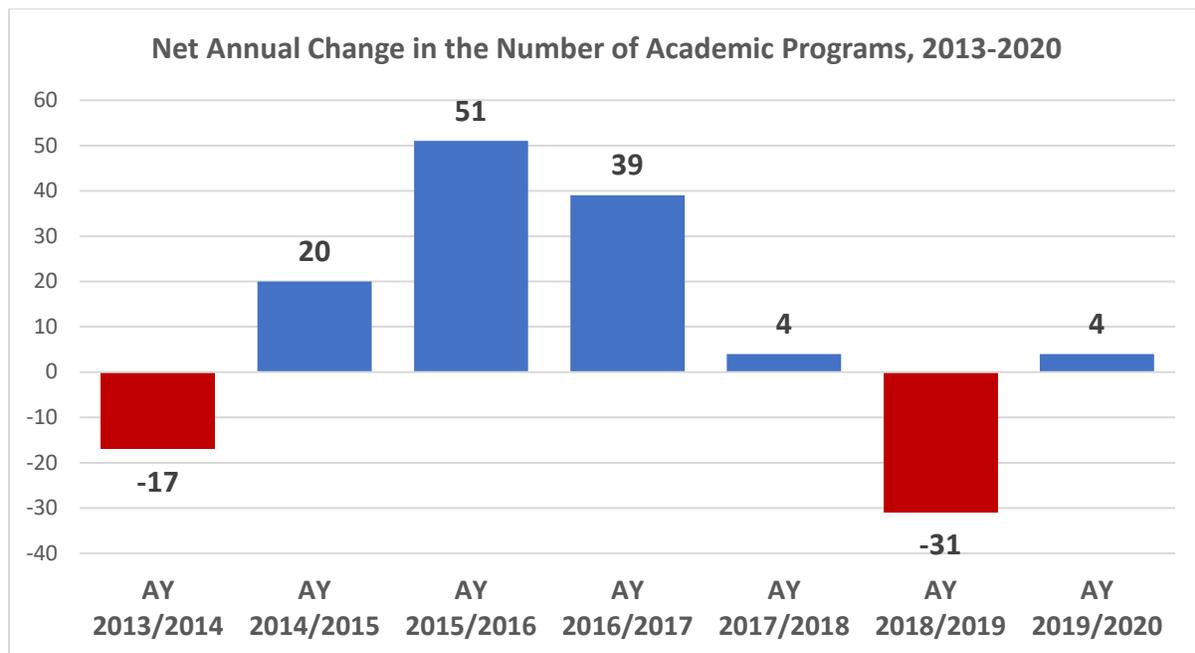


Table 1 - Source: OCHE program approval tracking. Excludes minors and options within a major from counts of new programs / moratoria. Data includes MUS institutions and community colleges.

AY 2020-21 SYSTEM ACADEMIC PRIORITIES

OCHE anticipates focusing on three priorities in the coming academic year to ensure that the system's academic offerings are responsive to the needs of Montana students and the state economy.

1. Develop Tools to Support Multi-Campus Academic Collaborations

Registering students across multiple campuses presents an array of technical, logistical, financial, and accreditation-related challenges. To provide the needed academic programming, particularly in Montana's rural communities, MUS institutions must be able to share courses and academic programs. Through the work of the Seamless One MSU initiative, the state learned what is needed to make such models successful and is now moving forward with several efforts to expand our toolkit for academic collaborations. Some example efforts in the pipeline include:

- **A pilot course-sharing platform**, tentatively planned for a Spring 2021 launch, which will allow UM-affiliate campuses to share their online coursework.
- **Launch of a One MSU Workforce Consortium.** This consortium, a collaboration between Great Falls College, City College, and Gallatin College, will open new avenues for students in Billings, Bozeman, and Great Falls to enroll in high-demand health programs (surgical technology, respiratory therapy, and dental hygiene).
- Collaborative programming is being given priority as a part of the **Governor's Emergency Educational Relief (GEER)** fund. Around 1/3 of the \$6.5 M allocated by Governor Bullock to the MUS is being granted to campuses to support new workforce-focused programming that has a remote learning component.

2. Create New Partnerships to Address Workforce Needs and Serve Unemployed Adults

OCHE and the MUS 2-Year Leaders are proactively working with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and key industry associations (e.g. the Montana Chamber of Commerce, High Tech Business Alliance, Montana Hospital Association, and Montana Contractors Association, among others) to develop strategies for meeting workforce needs in areas where, prior to COVID-19, there were both high-paying jobs and acute labor shortages.

3. Support Campuses in Ongoing Prioritization of Academic Programs

OCHE will work to provide campuses with necessary data and support as they transition their program prioritization efforts from one-off exercises into ongoing, data-informed scrutiny and evaluation of academic offerings. Recent revisions to the program approval and follow-up processes are one part of this effort.