

From: Deputy Commissioner Brock Tessman

To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Request to Plan items that are being proposed for your review and action at the May 2022 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.

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**Montana State University - Billings**

**A.A.S. in Medical Coding and Insurance Billing**

City College currently offers a Certificate of Applied Science in Medical Coding and Insurance Billing. The proposed Associate of Applied Science program would further that coursework and prepare students for entry-level positions in professional medical office settings, hospitals, etc. Additionally, this stackable credential creates a clear pathway for students to continue towards a Bachelors of Science.

Feedback from employers varies when determining whether an associate degree is required. However, having an associate degree, and being certified in medical coding/billing is favored. The proposed degree uses curriculum support from American Academy of Professional Coders, AAPC. This curriculum benefits both students and instructors by providing updated curriculum that is often changing and expanding. Additionally, the AAPCs curriculum has the flexibility to be used in multiple classroom modalities.

Currently Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College-MSU and Salish Kootenai College offer similar programs.

**Montana Technological University**

**C.A.S. & A.A.S. in Mining Technology**

The proposed certificate and associates of applied science would prepare students with the technological skills and knowledge required of the mining industry. Like other programs at Highlands College, the Mining Technology program will provide students the ability to exit at multiple points through the completion of a two-semester Certificate of Applied Science or a two-year Associate of Applied Science. Currently no such programs exist in the Montana University System.

Demand for skilled mine operators continues to grow in Montana and nationwide. Highlands College and Montana Tech will continue to advance industry partnerships with Sandfire America-Black Butte Copper and Sibanye Stillwater for training and advisory needs.

**University of Montana - Western**

Center for Experiential Education (CEE)

The University of Montana, Western proposes to establish a Center for Experiential Education to support faculty development and to advance experiential approaches to teaching and learning. The Center will be led by a faculty member who would receive a one-course release per semester to oversee the Center.

Centers for Experiential Education are becoming increasingly common to support faculty development, pedagogical innovation, assessment efforts and instructional design on college campuses. MSU-Bozeman, UM-Missoula, MSU-Billings, and Montana Tech have similar centers.

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 200-2701-R0522

**ITEM NAME:** Request to plan an AAS in Medical Coding and Insurance Billing**OCHE ANALYSIS**

<b>Labor market outlook</b>	<p>According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, medical coding and billing specialists fall into the category of Medical Records and Health Information. Specialists have an expected growth of 9% in 2020-2030.</p> <p>Feedback from employers varies when determining whether an associate degree is required. However, having an associate degree, and being certified in medical coding/billing is favored. An Associate of Applied Science degree in addition to a professional certification, increases an employee's salary offerings and opens doors to incremental salary gains.</p> <p>Additionally creating a continuing education pathway, allows students opportunities to enroll in more specific coursework in billing that is not available in the certificate program.</p>			
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	<p>AAS in Medical Coding – Great Falls College, MSU          Medical Billings Insurance Program – Salish Kootenai College          AAS in Medical Coding – Flathead Valley Community College</p> <p>FVCC has expressed interest in partnering with MSUB City College to allow FVCC students the opportunity to gain specific AAPC CPC medical coding education through online coursework.</p>			
<b>Budget Impact</b>	X	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only incidental costs</li> </ul>	MEDIUM	<p><b>HIGH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget</li> </ul>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	<p>No new hires or instructional spaces will needed. Current instructor coursework will be realigned to support the addition of the program. Students in the AAS will also be utilizing a curriculum license from the American Academy of Professional Coders. This benefits both students and instructors with providing updated curriculum that is often changing and expanding. Additionally, the AAPCs curriculum has the flexibility to be used in multiple classroom modalities.</p>			
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>				
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>				

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 200-1501-R0522

**ITEM NAME:** Request to plan an A.A.S. in Mining Engineering**OCHE ANALYSIS**

<b>Labor market outlook</b>	<p>Nationwide there are few mining technology programs, none in Montana. Montana Tech has identified local mining companies Sandfire American-Black Butte Copper and Sibanye Stillwater that have indicated a demand for skilled mine operators and miners. This program would provide the necessary upskilling that is needed for workers to fill employment demands.</p> <p>While limited data is available specific to Montana, nationally mining operators on average make \$52,000/year with a 10% growth anticipation, approximately 2,000 openings each year. This figure varies based on type of mining operation.</p>			
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	An AAS in mining engineering would be the first of its kind for the MUS.			
<b>Budget Impact</b>	<b>LOW</b> • Only incidental costs	<b>X</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>	Majority of program will be supported by current structures and faculty; however, an additional faculty member will be needed to support mining coursework that is not related to engineering.			
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>				

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 200-1601-R0522

**ITEM NAME:** Request to plan a Center for Experiential Education (CEE)**OCHE ANALYSIS**

<b>Labor market outlook</b>	N/A				
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	Centers for teaching and learning are becoming more common nationwide as a hub to coordinate instructor professional development and teams that support curriculum design and assessment. Montana State University, the University of Montana, Montana Tech and Montana State University Billings all have similar centers.				
<b>Budget Impact</b>	x	<b>LOW</b> • Only incidental costs	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget	
	Outside of a small, on-going budget to support professional development, the center will be established and managed through existing faculty and classroom space.				
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>					
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>					