

March 15-16, 2023

From: Interim Deputy Commissioner Joe Thiel

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 March 2023 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.

Great Falls College Montana State University

Request for authorization to Plan a Certificate Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Assistant

The proposed program is part of a stackable credential starting at the Certificate of Veterinary Assistant, leading to an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technician.

According to Montana's Department of Labor and Industry and other labor projection agencies, Veterinary Assistants have a strong projected growth rate of 11% over the next ten years. Wages for Veterinary Assistants are projected at \$14/hour or \$29,000/year.

Significant resources are needed to launch and maintain both the Veterinary Assistant program, and the Veterinary Technician program. These resources include staffing, instructing, curriculum, facility remodels and additional funding.

Currently the state of Montana does not offer a Certificate of Applied Science in the public or private sector. Plans for this program would be to articulate pathways with MSU Bozeman in the Animal Science programs of Equine Science and Livestock Management and Industry. Additionally, Great Falls College would promote programs of Pre-Veterinary Assistant where students could take pre-requisite coursework at any MUS institution, allowing students to remain in their home communities. Following the completion of pre-requisite coursework, students could then transfer to Great Falls College to complete the program.

Request for authorization to Plan an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technician

The proposed program is part of a stackable credential beginning with the Certificate of Veterinary Assistant, leading to an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technician.

According to Montana's Department of Labor and Industry and other labor projection agencies, Veterinary Technicians have a strong projected growth rate at 11% over the next ten years. Veterinary Technicians can expect to make \$17/hour or \$36,000/annually.

In 2021, signed and enacted Senate Bill 106, established Montana to license and qualify veterinary technicians. The bill states that an individual seeking to practice as a veterinary technician in Montana must be licensed by the board. Individuals can obtain a license in two ways 1) as a graduate of an

accredited program 2) through work-based learning by completing 4500 hours of direct related occupational experiences and passing an examination prescribed by the board.

Significant resources are needed to launch and maintain both the Veterinary Assistant program, and the Veterinary Technician program. These resources include staffing, instructing, curriculum, facility remodels and additional funding.

Currently the state of Montana does not offer an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technician in the public or private sector. Plans for this program would be to articulate pathways with MSU Bozeman in the Animal Science programs of Equine Science and Livestock Management and Industry. Additionally, Great Falls College would promote programs of Pre-Veterinary Assistant where students could take pre-requisite coursework at any MUS institution, allowing students to remain in their home communities. Following the completion of pre-requisite coursework, students could then transfer to Great Falls College to complete the program.

University of Montana Missoula

Request for authorization to Plan a joint Master of Public Administration (MPA) and a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree

The School of Public and Community Health Sciences (SPCHS) and the Department of Public Administration and Policy (DPAP) intend to submit paperwork towards an online 42 credit joint Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Public Health (MPH) degree (MPA/MPH). A joint graduate degree in public administration and public health leverages two existing, successful programs that offer dual modalities (online and in person).

The joint degree would allow students to complete core classes in their respective disciplines (public administration or public health) required for national accreditation competencies while specializing in public administration/nonprofit or health.

Currently, the closest MPA/MPH programs in our region are located at the University of Utah and University of Washington. Therefore, having such a program at UM addresses the increasing workforce and student demand for public sector careers in public/nonprofit administration and health.

Request for authorization to Plan a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree

There is a need for Physician Assistants across the United State, including Montana, particularly in primary and rural care. Employment of physician assistants is projected to grow 37 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. As demand for healthcare services grows, physician assistants are essential to provide care to patients.

The program will seek accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The MPAS is a full-time program that begins each summer semester (early May) and spans 27 months over seven continuous semesters. Part-time or interrupted attendance is not an option, and no online classes are offered.

There is no public option for the MPAS within the MUS. The only current PA program in Montana is private, at Rocky Mountain College, although a new private program at Carroll College is proposed. Through the MUS Institute for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice in Health and Medicine, the program expects to collaborate to the maximum extent feasible with partners in the MUS.

Request for authorization to Create a School of Emerging and Applied Technologies (SEAT)

The proposed request for a School of Emerging and Applied Technologies (SEAT) will reside outside and separate from existing UM colleges but will bring together faculty from across UM's colleges, some in joint appointments. The goal of this structure is to create space for collaboration and program development that are in-demand by students, industry, society, and research funding opportunities.

Phase One of this plan, designed as an incubator model, is to begin with the creation of an Emerging and Applied Technologies (EAT) initiative that creates space for the development of programs and ultimately the combination of programs into a School. The unit will likely report to the Provost's Office with faculty evaluation occurring in home departments and colleges.

Members of the UM community have reflected on these organizational challenges. Discussions have been taking place since Spring of 2022 where UM faculty and staff have participated in multiple gatherings on alignment, innovation, planning, etc.

Some resources will be needed to support the EAT initiative and later the SEAT. Initial investments will come from a reallocation within the Academic Affairs budget and from funds set aside for strategic investment.

This design concept has been a result of a collaborative, consultative, and interactive process. UM launched what is now known as Academic Renewal in late August. During the fall, the Provost's Office participated in a series of sessions with faculty, staff, and students across the UM Mountain and Missoula College campuses. There were multiple town hall events with presentations of various organizational models and discussions of their costs and benefits. In addition to the public meetings, members of the UM community had several opportunities to share their thoughts and questions using survey instruments. Broad engagement has continued into the spring semester with college-wide meetings in every academic college, three campus-wide meetings, and continued discussions with the Deans and Faculty Senate.

Request for authorization to revise the scope and structure of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation

The W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, FCFC, is currently made up of several different academic areas including Forestry, Wildlife Biology, Environmental Social Science, Applied Ecology and Recreation Management, Conservation Science and more. Part of the proposed college would bring the Department of Geosciences into a revised structure that combines strengths in Earth System Science at UM. Future shifts may include placement of Ecology and Evolution, Economics, Chemistry, Computer Science. The proposed structure change would be reviewed and assessed after a two-year period.

The Franke College of Forestry and Conservation has a tradition of interdisciplinary program delivery. The incorporation of Geosciences into the College would grow the College's offerings and create clearer curricular pathways for students.

As these programs currently exist at UM, no significant resources are necessary for the revised scope and structure.

The proposed changes to the FCFC have been part of the Academic Renewal process at the University of Montana. During the Fall 22 semester, the UM Provost's Office participated in a series of sessions with

faculty, staff and students across UM and Missoula College. In addition to public meetings, members of the UM community had multiple opportunities to express thoughts and concerns.

Montana Technological University

Request for authorization to Plan a B.S. in Construction Management

Construction Management is designed as a professional service that uses specialized project management techniques to oversee the planning, design, and construction of a project, from beginning to end. Construction Management is one of the fastest growing and most needed positions in Montana. O*Net indicates an 18% growth rate in the field. Additionally, Construction Management offers high wages, approximately \$92,000 annually in Montana.

The proposed program would be a 120 credit Bachelor of Science program held with the Civil Engineering Department and would also provide an attractive opportunity for students pursuing two-year degrees at Highlands College and Montana's other two-year campuses.

Additionally, this degree provides an off-ramp for students who have come to Montana Tech expecting to pursue a degree in engineering but may be struggling in the calculus sequencing and/or for students who may want to remain at Tech but looking for an alternative career path from engineering.

As this program is made of up current faculty across different disciplines, it requires no need faculty or facilities.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-2901-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request for Authorization to plan a Certificate of Applied Science in Veterinary Assistant

| OCHE ANALYSIS | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---------------|---|
| Labor market outlook | Both Montana’s Department of Labor and Industry and O*Net suggest this is a high-need field for Montana with growth projected at 11%. In Montana, Veterinary Assistants can expect to make \$14/hr or \$29,000/annually. | | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | Currently there are no degree pathways for veterinary assistants in the MUS. Great Falls College does plan to collaborate on future articulations with MSU Bozeman in the Animal Science programs of Equine Science and Livestock Management and Industry. | | | | |
| Budget Impact | | LOW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only incidental costs | | MEDIUM | HIGH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| | Significant new resources will be necessary to launch and sustain the new programs in Veterinary Assistant Veterinary Technician including staffing, instruction and curriculum, facility remodel and funding. | | | | |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | | | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-2902-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request for Authorization to plan an Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technician**OCHE ANALYSIS**

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| Labor market outlook | Montana's Department of Labor and Industry data and O*Net suggest a strong growth rate in the Veterinary Technician field. O*Net suggests an 11% growth rate from 2020.2030, with graduates earning an average of \$17.72/hr or \$36,000 annually. | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | Currently there are no other degree pathways for Veterinary Technicians in the MUS. There was a private, for-profit option to receive a degree as a Vet Technicians located in the Dillon area. However, this institute is no longer accepting students. | | | |
| Budget Impact | LOW • Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | HIGH • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget | X |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | Significant new resources will be necessary to launch and sustain the new programs in Veterinary Assistant Veterinary Technician including staffing, instruction and curriculum, facility remodel and funding. | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-1001-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request for Authorization to plan a joint Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Public Health (MPH) degree

OCHE ANALYSIS

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| Labor market outlook | <p>This joint degree will allow students to complete core classes in their respective disciplines (public administration or public health).</p> <p>Health care is considered one of the fastest-growing employment sectors in the U.S., with an estimated 2.6 million new positions (a 16% increase) projected between 2020 and 2030, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).</p> <p>The BLS expects job opportunities for health education specialists and community health workers to grow by 17% between 2020 and 2030, which is significantly higher than the 8% projected job growth for all occupations.</p> <p>Career outlooks for MPA grads remain strong. According to BLS, MPA grads can expect to earn significantly more than with just a bachelor's degree with average salaries hovering around \$70,000 annually.</p> | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | None in the MUS. | | | |
| Budget Impact | x | <p>LOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | <p>HIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | <p>As this program combines faculty from two existing departments, no additional or new resources are needed for the full implementation of the joint MPA/MHA degree.</p> | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-1002-R0323**ITEM NAME:** Request for Authorization to plan a joint Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree**OCHE ANALYSIS**

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|---|---|---------------|----------|---|
| Labor market outlook | There is a need for Physician Assistants across the United States, including Montana, particularly in the area of primary and rural care. Employment of physician assistants is projected to grow 37 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. As demand for healthcare services grows, physician assistants will be needed to provide care to patients. | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | Currently Montana has a current PA program at Rocky Mountain College and a second program proposed at Carroll College. There is no public option for MPAS for Montana residents. | | | |
| Budget Impact | LOW • Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | X | HIGH • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | While no additional facilities are anticipated, the proposed program does require the hiring of new faculty, administrative staff, and the development of a new curriculum. | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | UM to provide enrollment projections for MPAS degree. | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-1016-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request to Create a School of Emerging and Applied Technologies (SEAT)**OCHE ANALYSIS**

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| Labor market outlook | The goal of the proposed SEAT is to create a structure that allows for collaboration and program development that are in-demand by students, industry, society and research funding opportunities. With that goal in mind, projecting labor market outcomes is challenging, other than to say that the structure should allow for academic intentionality and flexibility that should promote high quality partnership and a design that prepares students for specific and in-demand labor needs. | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | N/A | | | |
| Budget Impact | x | LOW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | HIGH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | Resources needed to build infrastructure to support the EAT initiative and later SEAT. Funding will be reallocated from within UM Academic Affairs and funds designated for strategic investment. | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-1017-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request to revise the scope and structure of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation**OCHE ANALYSIS**

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| Labor market outlook | This restructure plans to include Forestry, Wildlife Biology, Environmental Social Science, Applied Ecology and Recreation Management, Conservation Science and potentially more. National demand for these areas remains high. Labor outlook is challenging to pinpoint to a single area. | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | While other institutions may have degree programs in sustainability, environmental sciences, etc. there are no Colleges in Montana closely aligned with the proposal. | | | |
| Budget Impact | x | LOW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | HIGH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| No significant resources are necessary. | | | | |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | |

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS

ITEM 205-1501-R0323

ITEM NAME: Request for Authorization to plan a BS in Construction Management**OCHE ANALYSIS**

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| Labor market outlook | According to O*Net, Construction Managers have an 18% projected growth between 2020-2030, with 140 annual job openings. Additionally, O*Net indicates a \$95,000 annual salary for Construction Managers in Montana. | | | |
| Related programs / centers / institutes | No other institutions in Montana offer an accredited construction management degree. | | | |
| Budget Impact | x | LOW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only incidental costs | MEDIUM | HIGH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget |
| CAO discussion and follow-up | Faculty and classroom space is already in place. Almost all of the curriculum is already being delivered through current departments at Mt Tech. | | | |
| ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal | | | | |