

## REQUEST TO PLAN MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** September 18, 2023

**TO:** Chief Academic Officers, Montana University System

**FROM:** Joe Thiel, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, and Student Affairs

**RE:** September 2023 Request to Plan Proposals

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The campuses of the Montana University System have proposed new academic programs or changes under the Request to Plan process authorized by the Montana Board of Regents. The proposals are being sent to you for your review and approval. If you have concerns about a particular proposal, you should share those concerns with your colleagues at that institution and try to come to some understanding. If you cannot resolve your concerns, raise them at the Chief Academic Officer's conference call Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. Issues not resolved at that meeting should be submitted in writing to OCHE by noon on Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. If no concerns are received, OCHE will assume that the proposals have your approval.

### **Requests to Plan**

#### **Montana State University Billings:**

- Request for Authorization to create two options in the Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling: (1) Rehabilitation Counseling Option, and (2) Mental Health Counseling Option  
[Item #208-2701-R0923](#)

#### **The University of Montana Missoula:**

- Request for authorization to plan a M.S. in Natural Resources Law and Policy  
[Item #208-1001-R0923](#)
- Request for authorization to plan a Bachelors Degree in Sports, Hotel, Events, and Entertainment Management  
[Item #208-1002-R0923](#)
- Request for authorization to plan a Minor in Democracy Studies  
[Item #208-1003-R0923](#)

#### **Helena College University of Montana:**

- Request for authorization to plan an Associate of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant  
[Item #208-1901-R0923](#)

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN FORM****ITEM 2701 R0723****Meeting Date July 2023**

**Item Name:** Request for Authorization to create two options in the Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling: (1) Rehabilitation Counseling Option, and (2) Mental Health Counseling Option

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:

Campus, School/Department: **Rehabilitation and Human Services, Montana State University Billings**

Expected Final Submission Date: **September 2023**

Contact Name/Info: **Paula McMahon; 406-896-5834; paula.mcmahon@msubillings.edu**

This form is meant to increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the program/center/institute approval process, please visit

<http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp>.

**1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.**

The Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (MSCRMHC) degree program offers a rigorous curriculum of on-campus and online coursework and fieldwork experiences designed to prepare graduates for counselor state licensure eligibility and national certification as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and/or Mental Health Counselors. Many classes are offered in a flexible Hybrid/Hyflex format.

The program is fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for Rehabilitation Counseling. CACREP has established standards for the accreditation of graduate programs in the counseling fields.

These standards are carried out in a number of ways: through continued curriculum development and implementation; by fostering relationships between students and faculty; and ensuring the faculty in the program are exceptionally well qualified. Students benefit by participating in a program that is nationally recognized for its quality and high academic standards.

**2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).**

Our accrediting body, CACREP, has developed new regulations that will be officially released in 2024 (we have seen several draft versions already). They will no longer allow students to gain dual certifications as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor **and** a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Instead, CACREP now requires separate academic options for each certification, instead of the unified degree that MSU Billings currently offers.

In order to maintain accreditation, MSU Billings must provide options for students to choose either a vocational rehabilitation counseling career or a mental health counseling career. The department reached out to its CACREP representative to determine if it would need to create two separate Master's degrees to meet the new requirements;

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they said no, but that students would need to choose their specialty in the first year of the program, and that there would need to be clear curricular differences, in addition to separate practicum and internship classes for each specialty.

With that in mind, in the catalogue under the current Master of Science degree program, we would be maintaining the Rehabilitation Counseling option and adding a Mental Health Counseling option. Of the 60 credits, 39 credits (or 13 classes) would be stacked (students would be co-enrolled) as there is a significant amount of crossover in the required curriculum for both options. Students taking the Mental Health Counseling option would take “COU 516 - Drugs, Brain, and Behavior” and “COU 543 - Marriage and Family Therapy” in lieu of “REHA 502 - Individual and Family Response to Disability” and “REHA 515 - Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disability” and separate practicum and internship classes will be added, as student will need to identify sites specific to their specialty. A new COU rubric has been created and incorporated into the Fall 2023 catalogue to reflect the program changes (outlined below).

<u>Rehabilitation Counseling Option</u>	<u>Mental Health Counseling Option</u>
REHA 501 Principles of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	COU 501 Principles of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling
REHA 502 Individual and Family Response to Disability	COU 503 Psychiatric Rehabilitation
REHA 503 Psychiatric Rehabilitation	COU 505 Theories of Counseling
REHA 505 Theories of Counseling	COU 507 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice
REHA 507 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice	COU 508 Multicultural/Gender Issues in Counseling
REHA 508 Multicultural/Gender Issues in Counseling	COU 516 Drugs, Brain, and Behavior
REHA 515 Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disability	COU 517 Research and Program Evaluation
REHA 517 Research and Program Evaluation	COU 519 Human Growth and Development
REHA 519 Human Growth and Development	COU 520 Group and Individual Evaluation
REHA 520 Group and Individual Evaluation	COU 521 Advanced Individual Counseling
REHA 521 Advanced Individual Counseling	COU 523 Advanced Group Counseling
REHA 523 Advanced Group Counseling	COU 525 Career Development, Placement, and Support
REHA 525 Career Development, Placement, and Support	COU 543 Marriage and Family Therapy
REHA 560 DSM-5 for Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	COU 560 DSM-5 for Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling
<u>Required Clinical Work</u>	<u>Required Clinical Work</u>
REHA 590 Prepracticum for Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	COU 590 Prepracticum for Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling
REHA 594 Counseling Practicum	COU 594 Counseling Practicum
REHA 596 Cooperative Education/Internship	COU 596 Internship

**3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.**

MSU Billings will add four new classes to meet the accreditation requirements: “COU 516 - Drugs, Brain, and Behavior”, “COU 543 - Marriage and Family Therapy”, a separate practicum (COU 594 - Counseling Practicum), and a separate internship class (COU 596 - Internship). While there may be some need for additional adjunct faculty to teach undergraduate classes to free up faculty for graduate level classes, this will not present a significant staffing challenge as the program has access to community specialists with whom we have strong working relationships. New faculty are not required for these options.

**4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e. articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).**

Because of the CACREP accreditation requirements, and the fact that MSU Billings will be undergoing a self-study for accreditation purposes after two years of the Mental Health Counseling option, as well as a re-accreditation for the

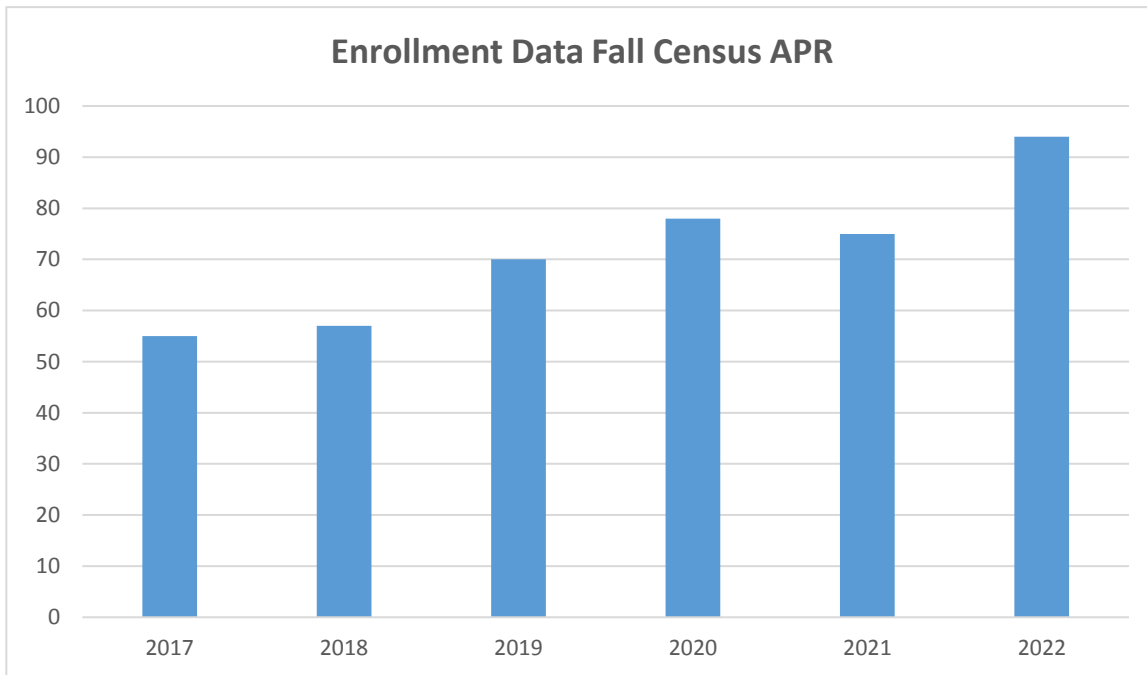
## Montana University System REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

Rehabilitation Counseling option, there are limited opportunities for collaboration in content. We have communicated the changes to our colleagues at the University of Montana who shared some insights about their own accreditation.

**5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.**

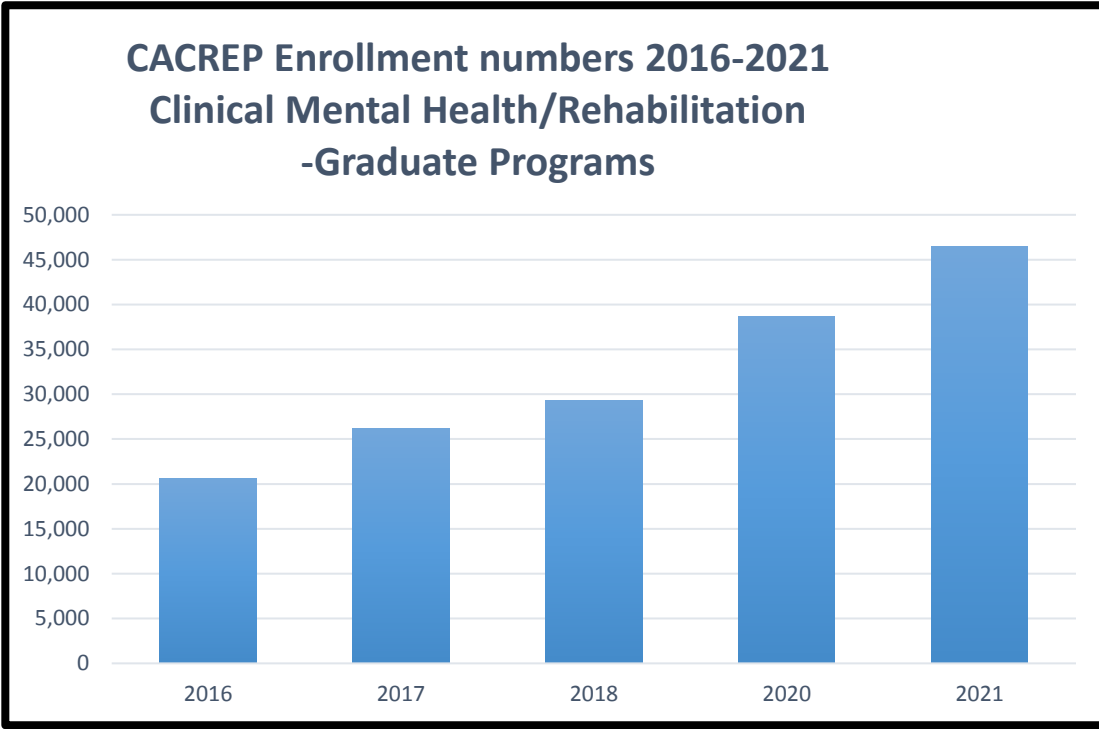
The Health Resources and Services Administrations Behavioral Workforce Projections, which provides data which helps policymakers and other stakeholders make decisions about behavioral health workforce education, estimates that by 2030 there will be 9% increase in demand for marriage & family therapists, a 15% increase in demand for addiction counselors, and a 13% increase in demand for mental health counselors.

As illustrated in the graph below, the MSU Billing's current program has been growing steadily since the program received its CACREP accreditation.

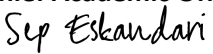


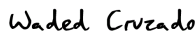


This reflects a growing trend nationally:

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Given the increased labor market demands in addition to student interest and enrollment, the program would like to ensure that we are able to meet students’ licensure needs as well as meet the increased community demand for services. MSU Billings’ mission is to “deliver a transformative education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed.” We as a program need to adapt to the new accreditation requirements so that we can meet these expectations and support our stakeholders.

Signature/Date	
<b>Chief Academic Officer:</b>  151D5B91B28F4B0...	4/27/2023
<b>Chief Research Officer*:</b>	
<b>Chief Executive Officer:</b>  BF3C54894E8F4C6...	4/27/2023
<b>Flagship Provost**:</b> DocuSigned by:  212A28411AC04BD...	5/23/2023   1:06 PM MDT
<b>Flagship President**:</b> DocuSigned by:  7D6A4CE96C3F415...	5/23/2023   1:06 PM MDT

\*Center/Institute Proposal only

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\*\*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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**ITEM 208-1001-R0923**

**September 2023**

**Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a M.S. in Natural Resources Law and Policy**

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Master of Science in Natural Resources Law and Policy**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:  
**22.0207**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana, Alexander Blewett III School of Law and W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Michelle Bryan ([michelle.bryan@umontana.edu](mailto:michelle.bryan@umontana.edu)), Martin Nie ([martin.nie@umontana.edu](mailto:martin.nie@umontana.edu))**

This form is meant to increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the program/center/institute approval process, please visit <http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp>.

**1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.**

The W.A. Franke School of Forestry & Conservation and the Alexander Blewett III School of Law propose a new M.S. Degree in Natural Resources Law & Policy. This degree is not currently available within the Montana University System, and caters to a unique demographic of government and tribal leaders and private sector professionals whose careers require a background in natural resources law and policy. The College of Forestry & Conservation has a strong program in natural resource policy, and the School of Law in turn has a recognized Natural Resource & Environmental Law Program (NREP) and Summer Indian Law Program that offers natural resources courses. By allowing masters students to take advantage of these distinct yet complimentary program offerings, we can provide a unique degree opportunity that showcases two signature university programs.

**2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).**

Natural resources are an "area of excellence" at UM that draws students to our institution. An understanding of the laws and policies that shape natural resources decision making in the West is important for public and private sector professionals working in land management, energy development, water supply, wildlife protection, recreational industries, and the like. An increasing number of post-baccalaureate students want a substantive foundation in natural resources law and policy without needing to become practicing lawyers. (The steady enrollment of UM graduate students in law cross-listed courses is one indicator of this need and interest). This proposed master's program is also specifically designed to meet a surge of national and regional demand in this area. (See, e.g., EAB: "Understanding the Changing Market for Professional Master's Programs"; USDA "Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources, and the Environment"). Many schools with outstanding programs in law and/or science have begun developing similar options in other regions of the country (see e.g., Yale, Lewis & Clark, University of Arizona, University of New Mexico, University of Denver, University of Vermont). No other schools have combined the offerings of both law and forestry-conservation.

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**3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.**

The proposal relies primarily on two existing faculty (tenure track) and current course offerings within their academic units, thus it does not necessitate significant new resources. The budget for the proposal envisions one adjunct for one semester introductory class, some additional administrative support, and a proposed teaching assistantship to promote DEI objectives for students lacking economic resources. Some of this expense will be shared with a companion proposal for Masters of Indian Law and Policy.

**4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e., articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).**

This program supports and complements the University's efforts to elevate its areas of excellence and to foster collaboration among institutional units. There is no other comparable program in the MUS. In developing the program, we will incorporate existing, relevant coursework from other programs such as the MPA program and the Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Certificate.

**5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.**

The proposed degree embodies the strategic vision of the University of Montana. It is focused on the professional needs of students, providing them a focused but flexible curriculum that can be individually tailored in collaboration with their faculty advisor(s) (engaging students where they are). Graduates will leave the program knowing the law, but also the policies, management context, planning processes, and politics that shape its implementation on the ground—where it matters (reinventing the heart of the curriculum). Thus, it promotes the APPS goals to "develop the necessary institutional capabilities and flexible offerings to serve a much broader range of learners across their careers and lifetimes." The proposed degree also fulfills the APPS goal of enhancing synergy between academic units in related disciplines.

What will further set the program apart from the competition is the place. Montana's remarkable natural and cultural environment offers unparalleled opportunities for students to apply their coursework to real world environmental challenges. The program will prioritize "partnering with place" and developing collaborative relationships that foster "sustainable solutions for social and ecological challenges." Here, too, the APPS is promoted by "preparing students to address grand challenges" via interdisciplinarity and training for real world needs.

Few states offer an educational setting such as Montana, from its prized public lands and water resources to the array of tribal governments and rural communities that enrich the state. The Program will take advantage of this setting, and the access it provides, to "reinvent the heart of the curriculum" and "rebrand [this] Model of education."



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**Signature/Date**

**Chief Academic Officer:**

**Chief Research Officer\*:**

**Chief Executive Officer:**

**Flagship Provost\*\*:**



**Flagship President\*\*:**



\*Center/Institute Proposal only

\*\*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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**ITEM 208-1002-R0923**

**September 2023**

**Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a Bachelors Degree in Sports, Hotel, Events, and Entertainment Management**

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Bachelors Degree in Sports, Hotel, Events, and Entertainment Management** Planned 6-digit CIP code: **52.9999**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana, College of Business, Management and Marketing** Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Theresa Floyd ([theresa.floyd@umontana.edu](mailto:theresa.floyd@umontana.edu))**

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**1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.**

We are proposing a new business major with multiple career tracks: sports management, hotel and events management, and entertainment management (SHEEM). This major is an extension of the College of Business' current Entertainment Management certificate, and represents an attempt to leverage the strengths of an existing, and popular program, equipping students with promising new career opportunities. The current certificate has a focus on the music/recording industry. We are expanding "entertainment" to conceptually include sports management (inclusive of sponsorships and ticket sales), events management (inclusive of hospitality/hotels, events, convention centers, etc.), and a wider entertainment focus to encompass the growing film and television industry in Montana. Based on feedback from our industry partners and observed trends in Montana and the wider U.S., we believe this major will be a success. It expands on an already successful program, and leverages existing industry contacts to build upon Entertainment Management's excellence in experiential learning and job placement. The proposed major will include the College of Business lower core and 25 upper-division business credit hours.

**2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).**

The new SHEEM program addresses current interest among existing and potential students. Entertainment Management is among the most popular certificates in the business school (32 students graduated with the certificate in 2022) and draws students from a variety of majors across campus. Students in the College of Business, Missoula College, and other majors have expressed interest in hospitality and sports management, with many beginning their careers in these fields. In addition to student demand, the new major would meet state workforce needs. Hospitality and sports have emerged as major economic drivers in Montana with many companies struggling to meet staffing needs. By providing a steady stream of trained professionals, University of Montana could meet workforce demands while satisfying preexisting student interests. The pre-existing Entertainment Management certificate program already has a dedicated group of industry partners who are

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committed to the program's success and will help it grow. Finally, we look to exploit a new industry that has recently gained traction in Montana: film and television production.

**3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.**

While the plan for the new major incorporates many existing course offerings, both in the College of Business and across campus, new resources will be required to fund this major. In addition to the current faculty line for the director of UMEM, we project there will be a need for two new faculty. One new faculty member will teach new courses specific to the major (estimated 15 credit hours), and the other will teach new sections of existing COB core curriculum courses to cover increased enrollment due to the new major (estimated 13 credit hours). The new faculty will also require a travel budget for program-related and personal development. A thorough fiscal analysis will be conducted if the proposal is granted permission to plan.

**4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e. articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).**

We have identified several opportunities for collaboration both within University of Montana as well as between MUS institutions. We met with Jenn Thomsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management and with Grace Gardner and Michelle Boller at Missoula College regarding the AAS in Culinary Arts. Both sets of colleagues are supportive of the new major and agree that it complements rather than competing with existing programs. Our colleagues at Missoula College were especially excited about the proposed SHEEM major, and believe a significant number of their students would want to advance to UM to continue their studies in this area.

There will also be potential for research collaboration with the Montana State faculty regarding their Hospitality Management degree. Although we have yet to discuss with the faculty at MSU, we have reviewed their degree program (which has a strong emphasis in culinary arts) and believe there is a substantial differentiation between their program and the proposed SHEEM degree, which makes SHEEM a unique value proposition.

**5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.**

Below is how we meet the following the guiding principles of the Academic Priorities and Planning Statement:

Provide an education that prepares our students as both career-ready and tomorrow-proof - Through capitalizing on the booming population growth, and preeminent tourism destination, of Montana, we can provide students majoring in SHEEM a tomorrow-proof and career-ready degree. This is not wishful thinking: we have the industry contacts to develop an employment pipeline to career success.

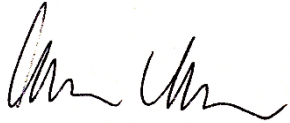

Expand our conception of education to include learners at all stages of life and career - The SHEEM major will be particularly valuable to individuals coming back to college and who have already worked in some areas of sports,

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hospitality and entertainment. This program will be the perfect opportunity for someone to become qualified to transition into management within their organization. Additionally, Missoula College students can build upon their skills and earn careers in vibrant, growing industries.

Expand the reaches of knowledge through research and graduate programs of national excellence and impact - By adding two research faculty for the SHEEM degree, we will continue the College of Business's momentum of publishing high-impact research.

Create programs that are interdisciplinary and inclusive - The SHEEM program is highly interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from multiple programs (e.g., hospitality, PTRM, management). SHEEM also provides career opportunities that appeal to students outside of the College of Business (for example, the College of Arts and Media and Missoula College). Finally, by providing a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree and career success for individuals who already work in sports, hospitality, and entertainment, we exemplify the University of Montana's goal of inclusive prosperity.

<u>Signature/Date</u>	
<b>Chief Academic Officer:</b>	
<b>Chief Research Officer*:</b>	
<b>Chief Executive Officer:</b>	
<b>Flagship Provost**:</b>	
<b>Flagship President**:</b>	
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>	

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**ITEM 208-1003-R0923**

**September 2023**

**Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a Minor in Democracy Studies**

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Minor in Democracy Studies**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **45.0101**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana, College of Humanities  
and Sciences**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Kyle Volk ([kyle.volk@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.volk@umontana.edu))**

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**1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.**

What is democracy's past, present, and future? A minor in Democracy Studies equips students with the knowledge, methodological tools, and critical perspectives to tackle this pressing question as intellectuals and as engaged citizens of their community, region, nation, and world. An interdisciplinary minor, this program harnesses the teaching expertise of the University of Montana faculty in several departments to focus student learning on the human experience with democratic governments and societies. Faculty and courses in core disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (e.g. History, Political Science, Philosophy) will anchor the program. Additional course offerings from affiliated schools and programs will further enhance and diversify the curriculum.

Students completing the Democracy Studies minor learn that democracy has been and remains a capacious, contested concept that encompasses essential yet varied sectors of human experience. They gain an understanding of such classic political topics as voting and elections, political parties and lobbying, and constitutional adjudication and the structure of government. They also have the opportunity to engage with an array of other subjects and problems that have defined and animated democratic polities (e.g. civil society and education, media and public opinion, corruption and scandal, dissent and disobedience, justice and equality, political economy and the distribution of wealth, leadership and organization, civil rights and civil liberties).

Students will select from a series of foundational courses that ground them in the history, politics, and ethics of democracy. They then choose from a range of courses across disciplines that allow them to both broaden and deepen their understanding of the democratic experience and its challenges. As a capstone to the minor, students will have the opportunity either to conduct a substantial research project or to complete an internship or substantial civic engagement project.

**2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).**

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The Democracy Studies Minor aims to prepare students for lives of purposeful, constructive, and informed citizenship, and will help establish the University of Montana as an intellectual destination for students eager to confront the challenges democratic societies face in the twenty-first century. In addition to gaining a robust civic education, students minoring in Democracy Studies will be prepared to think critically across multiple disciplines, communicate effectively with diverse audiences, pursue problem solving energetically and creatively, and make decisions effectively and equitably. These qualities and skill sets are those deemed among the most essential, according to twenty-first-century employers across private, public, and non-profit sectors. (1) More specifically, the knowledge, skills, and experiences provided by Democracy Studies will benefit graduates in such diverse careers as politics and public service, law and public policy, lobbying and public advocacy, corporate governance and business management, social work and nonprofit administration, media and education.

- (1) See, for example, Burning Glass Technologies, Inc., "Baseline Skills in Demand by Occupational Family," in *The Human Factor: The Hard Time Employers Have Finding Soft Skills*, online at [https://www.burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/Human\\_Factor\\_Baseline\\_Skills\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/Human_Factor_Baseline_Skills_FINAL.pdf); National Association of Colleges and Employers, "Career Readiness Defined," online at <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>; and Hart Research Associates, "It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success," online at [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013\\_EmployerSurvey.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf).

- 3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.**

The Democracy Studies Minor will require no significant new resources. It will be built upon an existing strength of the current faculty and course offerings at the University of Montana.

- 4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e. articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).**

We have begun conversations about the curriculum for the Democracy Studies Minor with several department chairs and faculty members within the College of Humanities and Sciences (e.g. History, Political Science, Philosophy, Economics). We have also solicited interest from other departments on campus (e.g. Sociology, Journalism) and look forward to exploring other opportunities for collaboration (e.g. English, Native American Studies, Nonprofit Management).

- 5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.**

The Democracy Studies Minor aligns with the University's mission, strategic plan, and priorities in several important ways:

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First, the minor will play a vital role in ensuring that the University shapes "global citizens who are creative and agile learners committed to expanding the boundaries of knowledge and to building and sustaining diverse communities."

Second, the minor aligns with the University's mission to be "a flagship for the future" that fosters democracy and creates new knowledge.

Third, as a decidedly interdisciplinary program, the minor fulfills the University's priority to "develop interdisciplinary capabilities."

Fourth, the minor aims to spur civic engagement and meets the University's priority to "provide experiential learning opportunities that demonstrate the applied value of a UM education."

Finally, the minor implements the University's priority to develop a range of "21st-century skills" -the skills of citizenship as well as the skills of thinking, communicating, problem- solving, etc.-that will prepare students for "a life of impact in their communities."

**Signature/Date**

**Chief Academic Officer:**

**Chief Research Officer\*:**

**Chief Executive Officer:**

**Flagship Provost\*\*:**



**Flagship President\*\*:**



\*Center/Institute Proposal only

\*\*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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**ITEM 208-1901-R 0823**

**Meeting Date: September 2023**

**Item Name: Request for authorization to plan an Associate of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant**

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Helena College University of Montana**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:  
51.0803

Campus, School/Department: **Helena College General Education & Transfer**

Expected Final Submission Date:

Contact Name/Info: **Robyn Kiesling, Executive Director General Education & Transfer**

This form is meant to increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the program/center/institute approval process, please visit <http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp>.

**1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.**

Helena College is seeking authorization for the creation of a new named Associate of Science degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA). The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Helena College will enable graduates to work in healthcare settings such as hospitals, rehabilitation clinics, skilled nursing facilities, school systems, mental health centers, home health agencies, etc. Graduates from the program will be prepared to take the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) examination which will allow them to gain licensure in any state for practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. To support this preparation, Helena College will seek accreditation through the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and will offer curriculum and fieldwork education that meets the ACOTE standards and policies. Acceptance into the program will be outlined by specific criteria determined by the program director. This will include, but will not be limited to, a high school diploma, 2.5 GPA, completion of specific coursework, etc. This will be the only Occupational Therapy Assistant program in the state of Montana and a new CTE healthcare option for Montana students.

The new ASOTA will be both a terminal associate degree that leads to licensure and a transfer degree that leads to baccalaureate degree options. The degree will meet all Helena College and MUS general education core requirements and meet all ACOTE accreditation standards for curriculum requirements. Due to the unique nature of this degree, the College is seeking authorization for a named A.S. degree.

**2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).**

Occupational therapy plays an essential role in our healthcare system. Occupational therapy practitioners enable people of all ages to live life to its fullest by promoting health, and preventing injury, illness, or disability. Current trends indicate there is evidence that a workforce shortage exists in occupational therapy ([Lin et al., 2015](#)). The demand for occupational therapy services will outpace the supply of occupational therapists within the United States. Workforce shortages are expected to increase for all 50 states through 2030. Given this, Occupational Therapy Assistants are in high demand. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of Occupational Therapy Assistants is projected to grow nationwide 34 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all



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occupations ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)). The increased demand is in response to the health needs of the aging baby-boom generations and a growing elderly population, as well as increased needs in pediatric and adult settings.

In terms of future employment opportunities for students, recent statistics show there are over 9,300 jobs openings projected each year for occupational therapy assistants. Many will go unfilled as the supply has not met the demand over the past decade ([www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)). Potential income and earnings are advantageous for students interested in this field. The median annual wage for occupational therapy assistants was \$61,730 in May 2021. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$46,810, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$80,210 ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)).

Specific to Montana, the median annual wage in May 2022 for an occupational therapy assistant was listed as \$66,470 (50<sup>th</sup> percentile for nation). However, the employment per 1,000 people was 0.09, giving it a location quotient of 0.29 ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)). This is much lower than the national trend. At this time, there are 40 Occupational Therapy Assistants employed in the state, although the need for OTA's is much higher. This could be due to Montana currently not offering an OT assistant program to produce needed clinicians.

There are currently no OTA programs in the state of Montana. Students interested in this occupation must leave the state to continue their education and obtain their degree. The ACOTE science and math course requirements overlap with the pre-nursing requirements which will provide Helena College students with another career option requiring the same pre-requisites in the healthcare field.

- 3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.

Helena College has hired an Occupational Therapy consultant to help plan the new program. The program will eventually require a Program Director, a Fieldwork Coordinator, and qualified faculty (Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants) to teach in the program. The College plans to utilize grant funding beginning in FY25 to fund the Program Director position and will use FY24 to plan for the additional resources needed for personnel. Facility resources for the program are minimal, with dedicated classroom space (1-2 classrooms) needed for the program and some minor equipment that can be purchased with grant funding and/or academic equipment funding. Costs for the new program will eventually be covered by the increased enrollment expected from the new program.



- 4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e., articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).

Discussions have already begun with both UM and UM Western to determine possible transfer options for students who complete their A.S. in OTA and want to continue their education and work towards a baccalaureate degree. It is the College's intention to have transfer pathways established and articulated prior to the start of the program so students can plan their educational pathways. The College is also exploring the possibility of structuring the OTA program like the Helena College/Bitterroot LPN program, where the college offers the didactic coursework remotely and students complete their field work/clinical in their community. This would allow the College to serve rural students and rural communities.

- 5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.

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Helena College is focused on serving our diverse community by providing the paths necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals and believes that the OTA program will offer Montana students an opportunity to enter this valuable healthcare career field without leaving the state. Focusing on new CTE programs that require a degree and lead to licensure is an academic priority for the College and this new program is included in the College's Academic Priorities and Planning Statement for AY 23-24. Prioritizing new and needed CTE programs for the state benefits Montana students and meets a workforce need for Montana communities.

<u>Signature/Date</u>	
Chief Academic Officer:	 8/1/2023
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	 8/1/2023
Flagship Provost**:	
Flagship President**:	

\*Center/Institute Proposal only  
\*\*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.