



Strategic Investments to Advance Montana Energy - \$4.5M

Highlights

- The Governor’s Energy Task Force is identifying generation, transmission, and demand solutions for growing Montana energy needs—this initiative would leverage MUS strengths to help develop novel answers.
- Strategic investments in the strength of MUS energy research enhances our competitiveness for historic federal investments in nuclear, geothermal, and critical minerals. State seed funding makes MUS faculty competitive for federal awards many times larger.

Proposed Structure

Competitive Research Fund - \$3M	Institutional Capacity Investments - \$1.5M
<p>A competitive grant pool with priorities set in coordination with the Governor’s Energy Task Force and the Energy & Technology Interim Committee.</p> <p>Potential Priority Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear energy readiness and advanced reactor research • Geothermal resource characterization • Critical minerals extraction, processing, and supply chains • Energy-water nexus • Grid modernization, reliability, and generation planning <p>Guardrails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address a documented Montana energy need • Advisory board includes industry and state agency representatives • Awards designed to position MUS for larger federal funding 	<p>Targeted investments to build capacity in areas of demonstrated institutional strength, federal research priorities, and state need.</p> <p>Montana Tech — Nuclear energy / critical minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab infrastructure and faculty startup for new academic programming in nuclear energy • Lab infrastructure to expand critical minerals research and services <p>MSU — Energy storage and materials research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund hub for characterization of materials for application in batteries, catalysis, and biomaterials. <p>UM — Energy-Water Monitoring / Geothermal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and apply Mesonet infrastructure to inform the energy-water interface.

MUS Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan Objective 2.2.1 – Increase research& development receipts and expenditures
- Strategic Plan Objective 2.2.2 – Increase technology licenses with Montana business



Coordinating and Updating Campus Safety Infrastructure - \$3M

Description

The safety and well-being of students, faculty, staff, and visitors across Montana University System campuses is a foundational responsibility. While each campus presents unique challenges based on its size, location, and mission, all share a common obligation to provide safe and secure learning and working environments.

This initiative takes a coordinated, system-wide approach to strengthening campus safety by addressing gaps and inconsistencies in existing safety infrastructure, proactively identifying and mitigating hazards in public spaces and campus facilities, and ensuring that every campus has the tools, plans, and capabilities needed to mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Implementation

- **Assess and update campus safety standards across the MUS - \$500,000**
 - Standardized Emergency Notifications
 - All-Hazards Threat Assessment Framework
 - Campus Emergency Operations Plans
 - Appropriately Scaled Planning, Systems, and Exercises for all campuses
- **Review and update facility security – \$1.5M**
 - Building and Roof Access Controls
 - Public Assembly Planning and Protocol
 - Unmanned Aerial Systems Policy and Countermeasures
- **Campus Environmental Hazard Mitigation - \$1M**
 - Laboratory Safety Systems
 - Hazardous Materials Management
 - Biological, Chemical, and Radioactive Material Safety

Goals

- **Consistent, System-Wide Safety Standards**
All MUS campuses, regardless of size or location, have a set of appropriately scaled safety standards and protocols to equip a safe environment.
- **Strengthened Emergency Preparedness and Response Capability**
Campus communities are equipped with the plans, systems, and trained personnel needed to effectively mitigate, respond to, and recover from a broad range of emergencies and threats.
- **Reduced Risk in High-Exposure Environments**
Hazards associated with public gatherings, campus facilities, and research or laboratory environments are systematically identified, assessed, and mitigated before incidents occur.

MUS Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan Objective 8 – Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)



Improved Dual Enrollment access and Enhancements to the Apply Montana Portal - \$1.3 million

Highlights

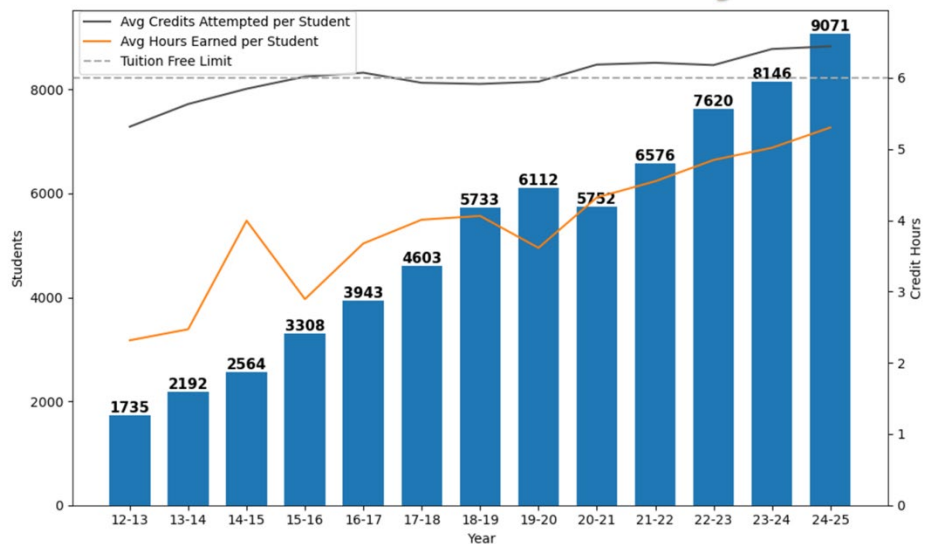
- Dual enrollment in Montana has increased 300% in the past decade, now serving 1 in 3 Montana high school Juniors and seniors (9,071 students in academic year 24/25).
- Montana families saved an estimated \$11m in college tuition costs through dual enrollment last year.
- Despite this growth, there has been minimal investment in systems to help students and schools discover, enroll in, and manage dual credit opportunities. Currently, colleges and districts typically manage dual enrollment through paper applications and spreadsheets. Modern systems are increasingly needed with the advent of the Future Ready payment under the STARS act.
- This creates an opportunity to expand and better leverage Apply Montana, the MUS college and career access portal and single application, which processed 16,233 free applications for college last year.

Dual Enrollment Data

**INCREASE OF 6500 STUDENTS
OVER THE PAST DECADE**

\$11m
Estimated MT family savings in 2024-25 relative to college tuition

37%
Of enrolled juniors and seniors receiving college credit in the '24-25 school year



15.2% enrollment growth per year
11.4% enrollment growth from 2023-24 (7% US Avg - NSC)

Goals

- **Modern Dual Enrollment Support** – Ensure every MUS institution has access to modern tools to support dual enrollment registration and student communications, not paper applications and manual systems.
- **Integration with Apply Montana & Statewide College and Career Communications** – Enhance Apply Montana as a resource for dual enrollment students and as a direct communications tool to participating students regarding college and career opportunities and pathways.
- **Enhance Data Reporting to Support Future Ready** – Improved dual credit systems will enhance our ability to report accurate and timely data

MUS Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan Objective 1.4.3 – Increase early access to higher education through dual enrollment.



Legislative Referendum Ballot Measure

Highlights

- **Authority:** The Statewide 6 Mill Levy is provided for in Section 15-10-109, MCA, which terminates December 31, 2028.
- **Purpose:** It serves as a core funding source for all campuses in the Montana University System.
- **Approval Process:** It is not a new tax, but a renewal voted on every ten years to maintain existing funding.
- **Most Recent Vote:** The levy was last approved by voters in November 2018 (LR-128), extending the levy until January 1, 2029.
- **Duration:** The levy has been consistently renewed for over 70 years.

Why it matters

- The levy helps provide **educational support** for approximately 40,00 students.
- Helps ensure everyone who wants to go to college can.
- The levy helps keep higher education **accessible**.
- Funding from the levy **supports economic growth** across Montana communities.
- These funds reduce pressure on the state general fund and **help keep tuition more affordable**. The 6 Mill revenues represent **\$36M dollars of support** each year in the current biennium.

Process

- The current levy sunsets on December 31, 2028.
- Legislation is required to place the levy on the ballot.
- The 2027 Legislature would need to pass a Legislative Referendum for the 6 Mill Levy to appear on the November 2028 general election ballot.

MUS Strategic Plan

- Funding to implement the Strategic Plan

History of the 6 Mill Levy

Originally established in 1920 but modified to its current form in 1948.

Voted on every 10 years – Last vote 2018, Legislative Referendum 128 - passed with 62% of the vote.

Levy has demonstrated **70 years of Montana's commitment to Higher Education** and been renewed every 10 years since 1948.

Highest level of voter approval: 1978 – 67%

Lowest level of voter approval 1958 – 52%