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Montana University System

REQUEST TO PLAN FORM – ACADEMIC PROGRAM

ITEM XXX-2901-L11126 **Meeting Date November 19-20, 2026**

Item Name

Program Title:

Associate of Applied Science in Hospitality Studies

Planned 6-digit CIP code:
52.0901

Campus, School/Department:

Great Falls College MSU, Division of General Studies

Expected Final Submission Date:
11/20/2026

Contact Name/Info:

Dr. Greg Johnson, General Studies Division Director, (406) 771-4304, Email: gregory.johnson13@gfcmsu.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 exceed 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 brief description of the new program.

Great Falls College MSU requests approval to plan an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Hospitality Studies, a 60-credit workforce-aligned degree preparing students for supervisory and management roles in North Central Montana's hospitality and tourism industry. The program is built on a stackable model: students progress through two embedded certificates, Hospitality Foundations and Hospitality Supervision (15 credits each), which combine into the full AAS. The program leverages existing institutional coursework in Business, Communication, Accounting, Psychology, Computer Applications, and General Education, supplemented by four to five newly developed hospitality-specific courses (Introduction to Hospitality, Lodging & Tourism Operations, Hospitality Supervision, Internship/Practicum, and Capstone). Experiential learning such as employer partnerships, site visits, internships, and applied projects is woven throughout, positioning graduates for supervisory and management-track entry into hotels, restaurants, and tourism-sector roles in the Great Falls region.

1.a. How many total credits will be required for the degree? How many credits in the major/minor?

Total credits required: 60.

Major/program credits: 48 (hospitality Core +Business & Professional Support + Electives)

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

Accommodation and Food Services is Cascade County's third-largest private employment sector, supporting approximately 4,200 payroll jobs across roughly 250 establishments. Montana Department of Labor & Industry projections show continued demand for hospitality workers, including substantial demand in North Central Montana. **From 2024–2034, the region is projected to have approximately 141 annual openings for restaurant cooks and 142 for waiters and waitresses, in addition to openings in other food service, lodging, and hospitality occupations.** Great Falls serves as a regional center for tourism, lodging, restaurants, conventions, healthcare-related travel, and military travel associated with Malmstrom Air Force Base. The proposed program is designed not only to prepare students to enter this workforce, but to provide a pathway for workers to develop the operational, supervisory, and management skills needed to advance within the industry. *(Source: Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Occupational Employment Projections, 2024–2034.)*

In addition to the DLI data, the college has been approached by community businesses and organizations in the hospitality field asking for such a program, especially one created with the stackable credentials so that students could "earn while they learn" by entering the industry after an initial certification and then continuing to add to the knowledge and skills.

3) Describe how the program fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and the existing MUS and institutional portfolios (refer to the most recent institutional Academic Priorities and Planning Statement. https://www.mus.edu/che/arsa/AcademicPlanningAndPriorities/academic-priorities.html).

This program directly supports Great Falls College MSU's mission to provide accessible, workforce-aligned education that responds to regional needs. The proposed program advances the college's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan, Forging Futures, by addressing documented workforce demand and expanding access to education that can help students move into supervisory and management positions in the hospitality industry.

While the program will be available online, it is being designed with Great Falls and North Central Montana employers in mind. Local employer partnerships, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities will be built into the program. Its regional and work-based focus, along with a stackable pathway leading to a 60-credit AAS, provides a distinct model within the existing MUS hospitality offerings. Online delivery also makes the program accessible to students across Montana who may not have a hospitality program nearby or who cannot relocate to attend one.

The program builds largely on coursework GFC already offers in General Studies, Business, Communication, and related areas. This allows the college to respond to regional workforce needs, expand access across the state, and develop the program without a significant investment in new faculty or facilities.

4) Review the MUS academic degree program inventory for similar, adjacent, and/or preparatory programs (https://www.mus.edu/findaprogram/).

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a. Describe any opportunities for collaboration you have identified or initiated either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e. articulation, course-sharing academic programs and creating pathways between degrees). Include potential contacts and their institutional affiliation.

A review of the MUS Academic Degree Program Inventory and individual campus catalogs identified the following existing public hospitality programs: Missoula College's Associate of Applied Science in Food Service Entrepreneurship and Hospitality, Gallatin College's Certificate of Applied Science in Hospitality, and Montana State University's Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management. No comparable associate degree program currently serves North Central Montana.

The proposed AAS at Great Falls College is designed to complement, rather than duplicate, existing MUS offerings. Great Falls College has had an initial conversation with Brenda Truman, Assistant Dean, Jabs College of Business & Entrepreneurship, to pursue a formal articulation agreement to provide graduates with a transfer pathway into MSU's bachelor's degree program in Hospitality Management, using the existing Gallatin College/MSU model as a guide, if this request to plan is approved.

b. What are current enrollment numbers in similar programs for the last three academic years?

Eric Meredith at OCHE provided the following information:

- MSU's bachelor's-level Hospitality Administration/Management program enrolled 68, 72, and 117 students over the three most recent academic years.
- Gallatin College's associate-level Culinary Arts and Related Services program enrolled 29, 35, and 38 students.
- Missoula College's Culinary Arts and Related Services program enrolled 26, 21, and 33 students.

The data show continued enrollment in hospitality-related programs within the MUS, including substantial recent growth in MSU Bozeman's bachelor's program. They also distinguish the proposed Great Falls College AAS from the active two-year programs at Gallatin and Missoula, which are classified as Culinary Arts and Related Services (CIP 12.05) rather than Hospitality Administration/Management (CIP 52.09). These data show an opportunity for Great Falls College to meet ongoing hospitality workforce needs in the region and across Montana, while creating a potential pathway to MSU's bachelor's program.

c. Describe any significant new financial resources (faculty, staff, facilities, and/or curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program.

The program can be launched largely with existing college resources. We anticipate developing approximately five new hospitality courses, which would be taught primarily by adjunct instructors from industry partners. At the current adjunct rate of $845 per credit, the estimated cost to offer 15 credits of new coursework once each year is approximately $12,675. Other costs may include course development, culinary supplies, industry certifications such as ServSafe, internship coordination, and initial marketing and recruitment. Existing courses, classrooms, computer labs, and other campus resources can support the remainder of the program. We have had initial conversations with Great Falls Public Schools to share Great Falls High School's commercial kitchen. We do not anticipate needing an additional full-time faculty position or new facilities to launch the program.

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Chief Executive Officer:	DocuSigned by: Dr Leanne Frost
Flagship Provost*:	Signed by: 9C0295AD426247D... Elizabeth Burroughs 212A28411AC04BD...
Flagship President*:	Signed by: Brock Tessman 3B91DBF4C8B1461...

*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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