

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENTS

Academic Year 2023-24

University of Montana Western

Great Falls College MSU

Montana Technological University

Montana State University Northern

Montana State University

Helena College

Flathead Valley Community College

Dawson Community College

Montana State University Billings

University of Montana

Miles Community College

University of Montana Western

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 9th, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

In alignment with the University of Montana Western’s strategic plan, our academic priorities and planning for the 2023-2024 academic year focus on the first two objectives:

Objective One – Strengthening Experiential Learning

Objective Two – Enhancing the Whole Student Experience

Specifically, we are prioritizing programs that (1) advance the Experience One model in which students take one course at a time, engage with faculty in small classes, and become immersed in experiential learning; (2) serve populations of Montanans (and beyond) who are currently underserved by institutions of higher education; and/or (3) provide support for faculty to continually improve their experiential education craft. These priorities are well-aligned with UMW’s mission and vision:

Mission – As a leader and innovator in experiential education, the University of Montana Western educates undergraduate students through immersive practices in their field of study, strives for continuous improvement, and achieves evidence-supported student learning and achievement outcomes.

Vision – The University of Montana Western will be recognized as the leader in innovative experiential education.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used to determine these academic priorities.

The current administrative structure in Academic Affairs at UMW consists of four Division Chairs who lead the Divisions of Education; Humanities & Social Sciences; Mathematics & Sciences; and Professional Studies. The Office of the Provost worked directly with these Division Chairs to determine UMW’s 2023-2024 academic priorities.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

In support of UMW's academic priorities, we hope to pursue the following:

In the Division of Education, we hope to pursue a Music K-12 Certificate for online post-baccalaureate students, distance delivery for Elementary Education undergraduates and postbaccalaureate students, and a Master of Education. In the coming years, we also hope to pursue certificates in K-12 Reading, Teacher Librarian, and potentially Computer Science. We are currently collaborating with the Office of Public Instruction to develop a residency program and the Department of Labor to explore potential apprenticeship programs in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. We are interested in the possibility of creating a Sprint Degree for a stand-alone B.S. in Special Education K-12.

In the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, we are pursuing more interdisciplinary options, including an informal administrative structure to provide more focus for existing and potential interdisciplinary programs. We are considering moving the Music K12 Minor to distance and/or hybrid delivery.

In the Division of Professional Studies, we are interested in developing a Sprint Degree for our B.S. in Business Administration. We plan to build a B.S. degree in Farm & Ranch Business that will grow out of our current Farm & Ranch minor in our B.S. in Business Administration degree. We are in conversations with Helena College to develop 2+2 programs in Fire & Emergency Services, Business & Computer Applications. We will also begin pursuing several potential short-term certificates to address various workforce needs, such as Bookkeeping, Meat Processing, Business Software, Digital Marketing, Project Management, Management, various construction trades, Farm & Ranch, Outdoor Recreation, Range Management or Range Rider (which would be an interdisciplinary program with the Division of Mathematics and Sciences), and Medical Billing. Our Health & Human Performance Department hopes to build a Strength and Conditioning Minor.

In the Division of Mathematics and Sciences, we are considering the possibility of developing 2+2 programs with other MUS institutions to support our pre-professional health programs. We also plan to develop a Math minor in collaboration with the Division of Education that leads to a teaching endorsement. Finally, we plan to partner with the Division of Professional Studies to create an interdisciplinary certificate or minor/option area in Range Management or Range Rider program.

4. If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.

N/A

5. Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."

As we develop our requests to plan, we will collaborate with other MUS institutions and the OCHE staff as appropriate.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

We submitted an ad hoc report to NWCCU in Spring 2023 about continuous improvement and mission fulfillment. The “Year Six, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review” will be due in Spring 2024. Our 7-year accreditation review will occur in Spring 2025.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).

We do not plan to revise our strategic plan. We created an Academic Roadmap during Fall 2022 that describes how each division’s efforts align with the strategic plan, as well as how each department hopes to continually improve as we all advance the institution’s mission. The document focuses on improvements to curricula, pedagogy, and student support. It is a “living document” that we will continue to revise as we keep our eyes on a 5-year horizon.

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

Programming

Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Foster an environment that expands enrollment and celebrates student resiliency.

The results of an in-depth process to show the current state of programming at Great Falls College illustrated the capacity to add programs that complement the current programming mix, satisfy industry demands, and provide livable wages. With modifications to current facility space, there is also room to house the programs. In addition, Great Falls College has identified programs that could increase capacity of its offerings through use of OneMSU, dual enrollment academies, workforce partnerships, and on-site offerings that utilize additional cohorts or space modifications.

Persistence and Retention

Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Align human, physical, and/or financial resources to support strategic plan initiatives.

The purpose of the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee is to use a data-informed process to align fiscal, academic, student support and engagement, and enrollment resources to accomplish the college’s mission and strategic plan, ensuring the college’s long-term enrollment success and fiscal health.

Assessment of Student Learning

Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Seek and encourage efficiency and innovation in the work of the college.

Great Falls College spent the last couple of years developing qualitative course-level assessment practices. Over the next few years, the college will add quantitative success measures for assessment and create processes that provide opportunities to make decisions based on the information to “close the loop.”

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

In 2022, the Chief Academic Officer used program capacity data to summarize the current state of programming at Great Falls College MSU. The information gathered was shared with stakeholders across campus including department chairs, faculty, administrators, key individuals in the Montana State University

system, and development board members. Regular updates to the academic plan were made at committee meetings including Academic Affairs Leadership Team, College Council, and Faculty Senate.

Much of the work was organized around five discrete but interrelated components of the research effort:

Component 1: Current programming mix

Component 2: Educational trends

Component 3: Labor and Industry Trends/Academic Program Review

Component 4: Academic structures and resources

Component 5: Conclusions and recommendations

The first three components focused heavily on current academic programs and how they align with educational and labor and industry trends. The fourth component centered on data provided annually through the program review process and aligned the organizational structure to the strategic plan priorities and the current educational and labor and industry trends. The final component summarized the previous analyses to recommend ways to optimize programming efforts over the next five years.

Persistence and Retention

The re-alignment of duties and responsibilities occurred over an 8-month timeframe with the Executive Council and other committees. The new responsibilities ensure time is devoted to monitor course persistence and retention from semester to semester and year to year.

Assessment of Student Learning

To meet the NWCCU 2020 Standards 1.B.1. and 1.B.3., the college will need to continue to develop an ongoing and systematic evaluation and inclusive planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement. By implementing quantitative measurements into the assessment process at the course and program levels, the college will meet the standards.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Proposed new associate degree programs

Based on the current programming mix, industry trends, state and local industry demands, and enrollment opportunities, the following programs, expansions, and opportunities arose.

Five new CAS and/or AAS programs will be implemented over the next 5 years.

- Veterinary Technician (implement fall 2025)
- Veterinary Assistant (implement fall 2025)
- Public Safety Specialist (implement fall 2025)
- Police Science (implement fall 2025)
- EMT Pre-Paramedic (fall 2023, implement fall 2024?)

Program Directors overseeing 2 healthcare programs will embark on feasibility studies to potentially add an additional cohort within 5 years.

- Dental Hygienist – increase program capacity from 25 to 35 in fall 2023 and maintain that capacity in the odd years.
- LPN to RN Nursing – this will likely provide a cohort of working LPNs the opportunity to earn their AAS in Registered Nursing.

Program Directors overseeing 2 healthcare programs will partner with OneMSU colleges, MUS colleges, and industry partners to expand healthcare-related educational opportunities to Montanans.

- Dental Assistant - starting fall 2023 in partnership with Gallatin College and industry partner Hayes Dental.
- Physical Therapist Assistant - starting fall 2023, the PTA program is transitioning to a limited residency program based on the Hyflex model, where a student can choose to attend either face to face or asynchronous for the didactic portion of the program and is required to attend labs at Great Falls College just two days a week.

Two programs will be considered for new workforce partnerships

- Future Build – received \$197,000 in grant funds to start the Future Build program, which began in April 2023
- Apprenticeship to Associates Pathways – implemented the Technical Studies degree that provides an opportunity for apprentice students to apply credit-for-prior-learning to an individualized degree path.

Continue developing Dual Enrollment Academies. For consideration are the following:

- Early Childhood Education - in partnership between Great Falls College and Great Falls Public Schools, for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Industrial Technician- in partnership between Great Falls College and Great Falls Public Schools, for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Carpentry/Building Trades - two classes were added to the course offerings at Great Falls College for the 2022/2023 academic year.

Special Initiatives: Second Chance Pell Program

- In spring 2023, Great Falls College began a cohort of students from Crossroads Correctional Center studying Office Support. Expected graduation is fall 2023.

Special Initiatives: SPRINT offering in Surgical Technology

- In summer 2023, Great Falls College in partnership with City College will offer to Billings area students the opportunity to earn a Surgical Technology degree through the SPRINT program. This program is funded by OCHE in partnership with healthcare organizations in the Billings area.

4. If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.

Great Falls College has a robust academic program review process in place. Due to a trend in low enrollments and the retirement of the program director and only full-time faculty member, the college is placing the Paramedic AAS in moratorium. Great Falls College will work with City College to ensure interested parties from the Great Falls area have access to paramedic programming through the OneMSU network.

5. Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”

Great Falls College has developed a comprehensive vetting process for bringing forward new programs, expanding current programs, and engaging in partnerships with business and industry to provide training and academic programming relevant to their needs. The process was incorporated

into an Academic Plan tied to strategic initiatives and setting the basis for comprehensive facilities plan and development board activities.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g., reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

Great Falls College completed a Year Seven Site Review April 20-22, 2022. On June 22, 2022, the CEO/Dean attended the NWCCU Commission Board meeting in Reno, NV to share strategies planned to address the recommendations and respond to any additional questions the assigned readers may have.

Great Falls College has a Year One report due August 1, 2023.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g., revision of your campus strategic plan).

Great Falls College completed its 2022-2027 strategic plan Forging Futures. The plan details can be found on the college's website. The college also completed a comprehensive facilities master plan based on the academic program plan and strategic enrollment management goals.

Montana Technological University

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

A goal of the strategic plan of Montana Tech is to have “Programs of Distinction.” This is aligned with our Special Focus STEM designation. The statement associated with this goal is that Montana Tech is: “Deliberately committed to excellence in all programs, we provide transformational experiences in learning, research, and service through experiential learning, mentoring, community and industry engagement. We empower collaborative problem solvers, determined doers who make an impact in their profession and our world.”

Montana Tech has had legacy programs that have served to define Montana Tech: programs of distinction. However, these programs, which include mining and petroleum engineering are under pressure from industry, society, and students to undergo significant change. A major driver of this change, is to perform their critical functions in a more environmentally sustainable and friendly manner. The curriculum and structure of our programs needs to reflect the changes that are occurring in these fields. For example, is there an opportunity for Montana Tech to broaden the focus of Petroleum Engineering to consider the topic of energy, which includes solar, wind, geothermal, etc. The recent announcement of an endowed chair in “energy” is designed to support these efforts. We anticipate that there will be many conversations to explore these opportunities, which includes collaborations, partnerships, and initiatives both on and off-campus. These efforts will embrace how these legacy programs will continue to make Montana Tech distinctive, with an eye toward the future.

The majority of the majors in School of Mines and Engineering at Montana Tech require more than 120 credits for a BS. ABET, the national accreditation body for engineering schools, does not require more than 120 credits. Although there may have been a time where having engineering majors that require more than 120 credits, this distinction is currently not serving Montana Tech well. Parents and students are choosing colleges and universities based upon time-to-degree and overall cost to degree. Montana Tech is at a competitive disadvantage in this domain in the state

and to other engineering schools in the country. In response to appropriate curricular changes that have been made by other universities, while continuing to meet the needs of industry, our dean of engineering has started the process of engineering departments performing curricular review. The goal of this is that by the end of the academic year we will be in alignment with other universities that have settled on or near the 120 credit BS engineering degree. These changes will be made while ensuring that the quality and reputation of the Montana Tech engineering degrees will be maintained.

On other fronts, we have submitted a Level II proposal to start offering the Construction Management BS degree. As noted in our Request to Plan for this program, we feel that this program will meet the needs of employers in Montana as well as present a great opportunity for enrollment growth in the School of Mines and Engineering. In the College of Letters Sciences and Professional Studies, we have started the process of better aligning the Data Science program with student and workforce needs. Highlands College continues to aggressively pursue collaboration and funding opportunities with its renewed focus on workforce development.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

All institutions must go through a continuous process of evaluating their program offerings to make sure that they are meeting the needs of students, industry, and the state. When there are programs at Montana Tech that are struggling to maintain or grow enrollment, we are faced with two choices: eliminate the program or reconfigure the program to have sustainable enrollments. We are fortunate that the majority of programs at Montana Tech have sustainable enrollments. We are optimistic that changes described as academic priorities (response to prompt #1 above) will result in enrollment growth in those programs that are currently experiencing enrollment declines.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Two programs are being developed to create new markets for Montana Tech's legacy programs in the extractive industries, with a focus on expanding markets to adult and remote learners.

Revision of the Masters Project Engineering & Management (MPEM)

Under new program leadership, the curriculum of MPEM will be updated to provide more appeal to adult and remote learners. The new structure will maintain overall credits, allowing for more electives and flexibility. This structure will be a primary route for students enrolled in stackable post-bac certificates to accumulate work towards a graduate degree. All MPEM classes are being update for on-line delivery, in collaboration with the Center for Academic Innovation.

Stackable Post-Baccalaureate Certificates in Extractive Engineering.

Develop up to 40 credit hours of advanced engineering and project management course content. Drawing from legacy programs in the extractive industries, thematic Tracks will lead students to

technical mastery of theory as well as the ability to apply this theory to problems in the following fields: (a) extractive metallurgy, (b) advanced mineral processing, (c) environmental management for mineral extraction, and (d) mineral project management and economics.

4. If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.

None at this time.

5. Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”

We do not anticipate the submission of Requests to Plan that require additional information for the BOR during this upcoming academic year. However, with the arrival of a new provost, this possibility cannot be ruled out.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

Two major accreditation activities were conducted this past year.

- All eligible engineering programs went through a comprehensive review by ABET. This review included a site visit during the fall semester. The official findings for this cycle of the accreditation will become available in mid-July, 2023.
- We submitted our Year Six, Standard Two, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR). This report pertains to elements in Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity.

In early 2024, Montana Tech will submit Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report. This report is a comprehensive self-evaluation on all Standards and Eligibility Requirements. These Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Reports include the institution’s assessments of core theme achievement, mission fulfillment and student success and achievement. In April, after submission of the report there will be on-site visit by a team of peer evaluators. These evaluators perform and analysis of the institution’s resources, including financial resources, stability and sustainability.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).

We have begun the process and will continue to focus on execution of initiatives included in our strategic plan goals, ensuring that our metrics are in alignment and understood campus wide; and measurable outcomes are articulated in our accreditation report.

Montana University System
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Montana State University Northern
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT
Academic Year 2023-24

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes (<https://mus.edu/borpol/bor300/303-1.pdf>). Toward that end, we ask that each year institutions submit a report, of no more than three pages, eight weeks prior to the July BOR Meeting. This report should include:

- A high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.
- A brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.
- A description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.
- If/where applicable, a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.
- Additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”

Separately, please fill-in the [Forthcoming Academic Proposals](#) spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

MSUN Mission Statement

MSU-Northern provides higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge.

Approved by the Board of Regents on May 2016.

MSUN Core Themes

1. Provide liberal arts, professional and technical programs that serve a diverse student population.
2. Promote student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success.
3. Partner with external entities to enhance and expand learning experiences.

MSUN’s strategic plan builds on our Mission and includes a priority goal of increasing enrolled students to ensure institutional stability and sustainability. To build our capacity and serve the largest geographic region in the state, MSUN has and continues to provide relevant, quality academic programs that address the needs of the region and the state. Our history of providing education, technical, and regionally relevant high-quality programming drives our academic priorities and planning. “Northern provides an Education that Works.”

MSUN’s academic priorities are driven by the four goals in MSUN’s strategic Plan: 1. Stability; 2. Quality and Efficiency; 3. Engagement; and 4. Collaboration. The academic priorities are developed through the campus strategic planning process that outlines opportunities for existing programmatic expansion and growth and

identifies potential programmatic opportunities through our collaborative efforts with employers and industry partners. Strategically, we are moving toward Advisory Boards for 100% of our academic programs. Advisory Boards meet at least twice a year and include input on employer needs.

Academic program proposals are developed by academic program faculty with input from our Advisory Boards, student surveys and employer surveys. These new proposals are then vetted through the College faculty, Academic Senate and other relevant committees on campus (e.g., Graduate Committee, Curriculum Committee, etc.) prior to going before administration for approval.

MSUN has identified three particular areas of academic priority for the next academic year based on the goals and strategies of our strategic plan. These programmatic areas are clustered around rebuilding our education and related programs, workforce development, and expanding program areas that meet local and state level industry needs.

Education and related programs have historically been a strength at MSUN and are evidenced by the number of and scope of teachers and counselors within our region that have received their training from MSUN. The Education program suffered decline over the past 10 years due to a variety of factors including national trends. After forming an Education Advisory Board and working with the regional representatives of the Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS), MSUN set a priority to expand our Education program to address a critical shortage of teachers and counselors. These efforts have been successful through collaboratively working with Great Falls College MSU to initiate a 2+2 cohort in Great Falls, collaborating with two tribal colleges to initiate a 2+2 grant funded program, and collaborating with regional school districts. There are several Education related program priorities that we are proposing for this academic year that address the specific needs of the region and in which we have faculty expertise to develop. It is the goal to offer creative degree programs that allow the advancement of current teachers while providing opportunities for degreed individuals to start another career path. One new area that MSUN is developing is in media studies to address the need for digital literacy.

MSUN has strong academic programming in the agricultural sciences, agricultural mechanics and diesel technology that connect closely with our agriculture industry, construction and mining in the region. In this area strategic opportunities are being developed in power generation, precision agriculture, meat processing, surveying, industrial technology and data analytics. These academic priorities have been strongly supported by our local and state industries and economic development partners.

The health sciences are pursuing additional possible pathways for nurses in the field to obtain their baccalaureate degree. MSUN is also looking to develop programs that provide a background in community health and health science that prepares students to work in a variety of health-related fields.

FOR OCHE USE

[OCHE COMMENT]

Montana State University

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

Montana State University, the land-grant research university for the state of Montana, integrates education, creation of knowledge and art and service to communities. MSU has a vision to transform lives and communities in the people’s interest while guided by the values of excellence, integrity, inclusion, collaboration, curiosity and stewardship. Academic priorities align with this mission and guide the institution’s planning for new academic programs and the enhancement of existing curricula.

MSU prioritizes access to higher education beyond admissions. By providing a wide variety of supports to students to enhance both persistence and reduce time to degree, MSU is addressing both affordability and appropriate workforce skill development to ensure greater success for our students and the communities in which they reside. Through research, MSU significantly contributes to the economy by creating jobs and working with businesses in the state to apply research findings to solve issues faced by our Montana communities.

As an institution, MSU is continuing to prioritize our Strategic Plan Goal 1.1: Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education. Areas of special attention include increasing enrollment of students from historically underrepresented groups, increasing our ability to meet student financial need, improving completion rates in foundational math and writing courses and increasing our retention of students to degree completion.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

Montana State’s strategic plan Choosing Promise has guided academic planning since its adoption in 2019. Planning Council is responsible for aligning our strategic plan and defining the institutional criteria and procedures necessary to prioritize existing and proposed programs. All new program proposals are reviewed in our shared governance system with input gathered from students, faculty, staff and administration at multiple stages.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Gallatin College continues to develop and propose credential and degree programs designed to meet the workforce needs of the region and state. During Ay 23-24, MSU will submit a request to offer a Certificate in Applied Science in Public Safety Officer Training to increase the capacity of Montana to train law enforcement officers for service in their communities. In two other areas we plan to propose additional options in established programs. MSU will propose a Master of Engineering degree focused on Manufacturing Engineering to meet the needs of our industry partners. A new track in our Doctor of Nursing Practice is also being planned to add advanced training and education in Adult Gerontology-Acute Care delivery.

4. If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.

One moratorium is being planned for the Graduate Certificate for Dual Enrollment Mathematics Teachers. Demand has not been at a level necessary to continue and resources will instead be focused on areas of growth in math and data science curriculum delivery. No other academic units or departments are under consideration for reductions in degree offerings or staffing. As the coordination of efforts to improve student persistence and time to degree continue to develop and produce measurable results, new opportunities for efficiencies could be identified and lead to academic program submissions or revisions.

5. Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."

MSU assesses and evaluates career and job outcomes for recent graduates in our 7-year program review. Designing degree curricula with clear pathways to 4-year graduation is a priority linked to both persistence and improved time to degree. All academic proposals submitted by MSU will include updated, verifiable data and information addressing future employment opportunities for graduates of the proposed degree.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

Montana State is currently finalizing the university's Year-six NWCCU accreditation report on Policies, Regulations and Financial Review. The report will be submitted in August 2023. In AY 23-24, work on the Year-seven report for the NWCCU accreditation review will be completed and submitted in August 2024.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).

Montana State's current five-year Strategic Plan, *Choosing Promise*, was enacted in 2019. During AY 23-24, we will continue focused efforts to implement action items, assess outcomes and reach the goals established in the university's strategic plan. Due to necessary pandemic-related adjustments, MSU's Strategic Plan will remain in place for two years beyond the timeline developed in 2018.

Helena College

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

Helena College is prioritizing new academic programs that lead to in-demand careers and that require a certificate or degree and licensure, in addition to academic programs that aren’t already offered at another Montana college or university. An emphasis on programs that align with courses offered at Helena College and available resources, including space, will ensure that the College continues to fulfill its mission in assisting learners in achieving their educational and career goals while aligning with the guiding principles outlined in the [strategic plan](#).

Additional academic priorities include continued collaboration with affiliate partners to create seamless transfer opportunities (and possibly shared academic programs) for Montana students; a continued exploration of micro credentials and how they can be used to benefit Montana students and some Helena College programs; and continued partnerships and collaboration with K12 partners to better serve our students and our community.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

Academic priorities are determined in collaboration with the Helena College community and with our community and industry partners. Priorities are also determined based on labor and wage data, ensuring that credentials lead to in-demand and/or high-wage careers. A few of the processes used to determine academic priorities are highlighted below.

- The OTA program discussion began when an Occupational Therapist in the Helena community approached the College to highlight the need for Certified OTA’s in all areas of Montana. Continued program research, consultation with occupational therapists in Helena, and discussion with academic leadership and Dean’s Cabinet have resulted in the decision to continue to move forward with this program.
- The Cosmetology program expansion has been part of the larger plan for Cosmetology from the beginning. The three new program additions were determined based on advice

from the Cosmetology Advisory Committee, program space capacities, and feedback and needs from the community.

- The changes in the IT & Programming program are a direct result of feedback and advice from the program's advisory committee and the changing needs of our industry partners. This program is in a cycle of continuous improvement designed to meet the needs of our industry partners and Montana students.
- Massage Therapy began as a non-credit program in the Community Education department and will transition to a credit program over the next two years. The decision to move the program was based upon the initial success of the non-credit option and the broad career path leading to licensure. Moving Massage Therapy to a credit program makes the program more affordable for students and makes it eligible for financial aid.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA): The College spent the last year working with an Occupational Therapist and researching the need for an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program. There are currently no OTA programs in the state of Montana and all students interested in this career move out of state. The two-year program requires an associate degree and leads to national board licensure through the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and will need to be accredited through the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). OTA's assist occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures, working in medical offices, nursing care facilities, hospitals, home health care services, and elementary and secondary schools. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) lists \$66,280 as the mean average wage for OTA's, making it a valuable CTE healthcare option for Montana students. The addition of this program allows for collaboration with affiliate partners on the creation of transfer pathways that allow OTA students to continue their education after completing the OTA degree at Helena College. The College is also exploring the possibility of offering the coursework in rural locations like the LPN partnership with Bitterroot College. A RTP will be submitted in summer 2023 for consideration at the September BOR meeting. A new course prefix (OTA) will be requested for courses in this program.

Cosmetology: The College will submit the following academic proposals over the next year to continue to build upon the existing Cosmetology program:

- a. Instructor/Teacher-Training: A 9-credit CTS designed to provide the coursework required by the Montana Board of Barbers and Cosmetologist for licensed barbers, cosmetologists, estheticians, and manicurists to become licensed instructors. The Board requirements include 90 hours/6 credits of teaching methods and 45 hours/3 credits of educational psychology for a total of 135 hours. This CTS will be submitted for approval in late summer or early fall 2023 so it can be offered in 2024.
- b. Manicurist: A 10-15 credit CTS designed to provide the coursework required by the Montana Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists leading to manicurist licensure will be created. The Board requirements include 400 hours of training, of which at least 40 hours is in theory and 360 hours in practical training. This CTS will be submitted for approval in

2023 so it can be added to the program and offered in 2024. A new course prefix (NAIL) will be requested for courses in this program.

- c. Barbering: A 30-36 credit CAS designed to provide the coursework required by the Montana Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists leading to barbering (nonchemical) licensure will be created. The Board requirements include 900 hours of training, of which at least 100 hours is in theory and 800 hours is in practical training. A RTP for a Barbering Nonchemical CAS will be submitted in 2023. A new course prefix (BARB) will be requested for courses in this program.

IT & Programming: The IT & Programming program is continuing to add new certificate options to meet the needs of students and industry partners. A new CTS in ServiceNow Administration will lead to ServiceNow certification and prepare students for entry-level jobs in the IT sector that meet workforce needs. A new CTS in Web Design will provide the coursework necessary to gain skills needed to build websites and configure web hosting for small businesses. The Web Design CTS will prepare students for jobs and meet workforce needs and the College is working with the Department of Corrections to determine if it can be offered to incarcerated students. Academic proposals for both new CTS options will be submitted in summer 2023.

Program Exploration and Collaboration with UM, UMW, and Mt Tech: The Better Together UM affiliation partnership is fostering academic collaboration. Academic leadership within the UM affiliation are meeting on a regular basis to identify areas where program collaboration can occur. Academic collaboration could include articulation agreements for transfer pathways or shared academic programs. Some of the current academic collaborations are highlighted below:

- d. Fire and Emergency Services AS into a BAS in Business, Collaboration with UMW: Helena College and UM Western are working on a draft articulation agreement allowing students that complete the HC AS in Fire & Emergency Services to transfer to UMW as juniors and earn a BAS in Business. Additional transfer opportunities for the Fire & Emergency Services students will be explored within the MUS.
- e. Business & Computer Applications Education BS, Collaboration with UMW: Helena College and UM Western are working on a draft articulation agreement allowing HC Education students to transfer to UMW as Juniors and earn a BS in Business & Computer Applications Education. This new option will be the fifth articulated transfer pathway in Education in partnership with UMW.
- f. OTA Transfer Pathway Exploration with UM and UMW: Helena College will explore and discuss all transfer options while creating the OTA program. Identifying transfer options while the program is being created allows the College to provide prospective students with a better understanding of the educational and career opportunities available in the field of occupational therapy. Transfer pathways leading to the new UM Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) will be explored, in addition to pathways in the areas of health and human performance.

Massage Therapy: Massage Therapy was added as a non-credit program in the Community Education department in AY 22-23. The first cohort of students will complete the program in 2023, making them eligible to take the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEX) for

state licensure. The College will work with Community Education to move the program to a credit certificate (credential TBD based on required hours for the program) over the next year, with appropriate academic proposals submitted for approval based on the requested credential. A new course prefix (new prefix TBD) will be requested for courses in this program.

Avionics: A certificate in avionics was approved in spring of 2022 as a stackable option for our existing aviation maintenance degree. Due to staff turnover and changes in the FAA requirements, we will spend the next year evaluating the aviation maintenance degree program (including course sequencing) and determining the equipment and resource needs so that we can begin offering the C.A.S. in avionics beginning fall 2024.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

There are currently no areas or programs identified as being less prioritized or considered for disinvestment, moratorium, or termination in the next year.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

Helena College is in year 6 of the 7-year cycle. Our Policies, Regulations, and Finance Review (PRFR) report addressing compliance with Standard 2 was submitted in February 2023, and we currently await feedback from the Commission.

We are currently preparing for self-study and site visit for year 7. During the spring 2023 semester, we held workshops with faculty to discuss Standard 1, and how we are meeting these requirements as an institution. Similar workshops will be held over summer 2023 with staff to set up all-campus conversations over the fall semester to complete our self-study which will be submitted in February 2024. Our site visit is scheduled for April 10-12, 2024.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

The IDEA Committee hopes to finalize the remaining strategic goal targets and key performance indicators of the new strategic plan that was launched last summer. These are metrics that have historically been challenging to define and track, such as community engagement, student learning outcomes, meeting workforce needs, and efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at Helena College.

All strategic goals were evaluated by the Dean's Cabinet in May 2023, with responsible parties updated, progress recorded, and next steps for the coming academic year articulated. All departments, programs, and committees will continue to align their annual goals to the guiding

principles and defining characteristics of the plan, guided by priorities to be set by the Dean's Cabinet in July 2023.

Flathead Valley Community College

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

The mission of Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC), as approved by the Board of Trustees, is to “promote excellence in lifelong learning, focused on student success and community needs.”

FVCC’s academic priorities are workforce and transfer education/programs. These priorities meet the needs of business and industry, enable students to seamlessly transfer to a four-year institution and ensure student success. FVCC’s academic priorities are directly related to and support our mission and institutional strategic plan.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

Academic priorities are identified through a collaborative process. FVCC collaborates with business, industry, faculty, and transfer institutions to ensure academic priorities meet stakeholder needs. Data analysis of proposed priorities includes required resources. Academic priorities are reviewed by faculty, administrative and leadership committees and then by the Board of Trustees.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

FVCC has received repeated requests, from employers and organizations in our region, to develop programs in dental hygiene, airframe and power programming, veterinarian technician, ultrasound tech and respiratory therapy. The college is exploring job opportunities, requirements, needed resources and possible opportunities to collaborate with other two-year colleges for each of these programs.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

As part of the program review process, FVCC continually reviews programs to determine the continued need. These reviews may result in a recommendation for program moratorium or termination. At this time, no programs are being considered for moratorium or termination.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”**

The FVCC Board of Trustees reviews and approves all academic programs. The Trustees require that programs meet employer and student needs, jobs are in demand, resources are available, and all academic requirements are met.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g., reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

FVCC had our Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Mid-Cycle Accreditation visit (year three) on April 17 – 18, 2023.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g., revision of your campus strategic plan).**

FVCC is in the process of building a comprehensive five-year strategic workforce development plan that aligns with the college mission and campus strategic plan.



ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

Dawson Community College's mission is strengthen our community by offering quality education and empowering diverse learners to achieve their educational goals. Our four strategic priorities are to (1) provide quality education, (2) strengthen our community, (3) enhance our effectiveness, and (4) advance access and equity.

To that end, DCC has identified several academic priorities that help us achieve our mission and make progress in our strategic priorities. We will continue to make a priority of strengthening our AA/AS transfer programs by strategically adding part-time and adjunct faculty, by identifying gaps and needs in our course offerings, and by seeking to update existing or forge new articulation agreements with our four-year college partners. Regarding CTE, we will first identify options for growth or expansion within our current career-technical programs, move a couple of underperforming programs into moratorium to evaluate their future value and potential, and continue conducting research and laying the groundwork to develop new one-year and two-year CTE programs. Prioritizing these instruction-related activities will ensure the College remains focused on providing a quality education and employable skills to our students.

In addition to the aforementioned campus-driven priorities, recommendations from the NWCCU will also continue to be a driver of our institution's academic priorities. Specifically, our academic department at DCC will once again be focused on implementing an effective, meaningful, faculty-led process for assessment of student learning at the program and institutional level. We made great strides in this area in the 2022-2023 academic year, and this sharpened focus on assessment will ensure that the college is able to articulate the ways it is fulfilling its mission to offer quality education that empowers our diverse learners to achieve their educational goals.

Another academic priority for DCC in 23-24 is to review our staffing needs in the department. While the institution is accustomed to doing more with less, we have consistent faculty and student feedback regarding our need to improve our academic support services (tutoring, advising, early interventions, etc.). So we will be exploring ways to fund these services, hire additional staff, and provide improved services to both our on-campus and online students. Addressing this need will help us to enhance our effectiveness by developing and maintaining consistent, sustainable, processes and systems to ensure continuous improvement

Finally, through the Department of Education's Second Chance Pell program, DCC has partnered with the Montana Department of Corrections to deliver instruction to incarcerated students at Montana Women's Prison. In January 2023 we welcomed our first cohort of MWP students in the Chemical Addiction Studies program, and we anticipate adding a second cohort beginning in January 2024. As the Second Chance Pell Experiment ends, we have notified the Department of Education about our intention to transition into the Prison Education Program. We are excited to continue serving this underserved population, and are eager to explore opportunities to provide coursework to incarcerated individuals housed at the Dawson County Correctional Facility in our own community of Glendive. This endeavor continues to help us address our strategic priorities of providing quality education, strengthening our community, and advancing access and equity.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

At Dawson Community College, new academic programs are primarily planned and developed based upon local and regional employment needs. College leaders engage with local and regional stakeholders, the local economic development board, and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Additionally, feedback from faculty meetings, program advisory committees, DCC alumnus, and contacts with employers are all considered when determining more specific academic priorities.

In addition to the importance of monitoring the academic and workforce needs of our primary operating environments, the College has also used valuable feedback gathered from our new strategic plan and the recommendations that stemmed from our recent accreditation visit to determine our immediate academic priorities. In short, our new strategic plan, changes to the community college funding formula, and recent accreditation recommendations have all dramatically elevated the importance of developing sustainable, in-demand, CTE programs and implementing effecting assessment practices to the top of our list of academic priorities.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

The College recognizes that our strong transfer curriculum must remain a critical and foundational part of our academic offerings, and in the coming year we will seek to add additional part-time and adjunct faculty and new course offerings in our growing transfer areas to ensure they remain healthy and sustainable. By strategically adding new coursework, we hope to increase the number of transfer pathways available to our DCC students, especially in the STEM disciplines. We will also work diligently to add or update articulation agreements with 4-year colleges and universities to help students successfully transfer after earning their degree from DCC.

Like many other colleges, we are also seeing an increased need for remedial courses in math and writing, so we will continue our discussions about the placement process, our particular students' needs, and the most effective ways for our college to offer co-requisite and prerequisite courses.

At the forefront of our academic programming priorities this year and over the next several years will be efforts to add a diverse and relevant slate of Career and Technical Education program offerings. To that end, because the faculty and foundational coursework are already in place, we will identify low-cost/high-impact options for improvement or growth within our current CTE programs (Agriculture, Business Management, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Welding Technology). This year we will also work with industry and workforce leaders in our service area to identify areas in need of additional workers. We anticipate giving attention and resources toward exploring new programs in allied health, engineering technology and design, plumbing technology, and electrical technology. This focus on improving existing programs and exploring options to add new programs supports our CTE related academic priorities.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

This year, we plan to place two underperforming programs into moratorium to give us time to re-evaluate them and consider whether or not we should continue offering them.

The Rural Organization Employee Management (ROEM) program was an online certificate and degree program designed for current owners, managers, supervisors or team leaders in rural organizations. Its goal was to provide rural organizations the knowledge, skill and applications opportunities to better manage people and lead their organizations. Interest and enrollment in the program was never high, despite efforts to recruit the target audience. There are no new students enrolled in this program, and now is a good time to evaluate its viability moving forward, with consideration currently being given to terminating the program or restructuring as an option under our Business Management degree.

The Corrosion Technology program prepares students for entry-level employment as a corrosion technician in the fields of manufacturing, oil and gas, government, pipeline maintenance, and general corrosion management. DCC is one of only a handful of higher education institutions in the nation offering this CTE program. Despite DCC's location in the heart of oil and gas activity, interest in the Corrosion Tech program has been low for several years now. By putting this program into moratorium, we can properly review and (if needed) revise the curriculum and program outcomes to ensure it is meeting the needs of the industries whose needs it seeks to meet. We recently graduated our last cohort of students and are not accepting new students into the Corrosion Technology program at this time, making it the right time to conduct this comprehensive evaluation.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

DCC remains committed to increasing our impact on Eastern Montana's workforce through the development of relevant, skills-based, career and technical programs. During the 23-24 academic year we will be intentional about identifying regional and statewide workforce needs that the College can meaningfully and effectively address. As noted above, we anticipate giving attention and resources toward exploring new programs in allied health, engineering technology and design, plumbing technology, and electrical technology.

While laying the foundation necessary to build viable CTE programs, we will also be considering strategic ways to add general education coursework that increases the number of transfer pathways available to our students. Our participation in the Quottly course-sharing platform has opened up more of these opportunities to our students, but we are still interested in adding more on-campus offerings, especially in STEM-related disciplines.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

In Spring 2022 DCC virtually hosted NWCCU evaluators for our year-seven visit. In preparation for that visit, the College completed and submitted all the required reports. At that time, the Commission had several commendations for our college, including a recognition of DCC faculty investment in the development of a new comprehensive plan for assessment of student learning.

Academically-focused recommendations from NWCCU addressed DCC's assessment practices, specifically the need for an effective assessment process that incorporates course, program and institutional learning outcomes, is consistently applied by faculty to measure student learning in all programs, and leads to the continuous improvement of instructional programs and achievement of student outcomes (Standards 1.C.1, 1.C.5, 1.C.7). It was also recommended that the College establish a meaningful set of institutional learning outcomes that apply to all certificate and degree programs, and implement an assessment process to consistently measure student achievement of institutional learning outcomes that leads to continuous improvement in student learning across the college (Standard 1.C.6, Eligibility Requirement 5).

In response to those recommendations, DCC spent the 2022-2023 academic year Accreditation-related activities this year will include reviewing and clarifying our institutional learning outcomes, implementing of our new plan for assessment of student learning, and gathering data in preparation for our follow up report, which will be due in Spring 2024.

Also related to accreditation, DCC's Data and Assessment Committee is actively meeting to discuss our data and disaggregation needs. Additionally, we will be working on completing our key performance indicators and a mission fulfillment workbook in order to track our progress and continuously improve in our efforts to achieve our mission and address all our strategic priorities.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).

Dawson Community College just completed an institution-wide strategic planning effort last summer, which led to a number of academically-focused priorities and key performance indicators. Chief among those priorities is a recognition that DCC must work diligently to develop new CTE programs while simultaneously strengthening our current CTE programs, exploring workforce development opportunities and strengthening business and industry partnerships.

Now that the institution's mission and strategic priorities have been identified, this year our administration will focus attention on the college's vision and values. We believe this is a critical step in developing a campus-wide culture that will actively support our mission pursuit. Finally, as noted above, DCC's Data and Assessment Committee is actively meeting to discuss our data and disaggregation needs related to our institutional strategic plan. Additionally, we will be working on completing our key performance indicators and a mission fulfillment workbook in order to track our progress and continuously improve in our efforts to achieve our mission and address all our strategic priorities.

Montana State University Billings
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT
Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.

Aligned with the strategic themes and objectives of MSU Billings [university strategic plan \(2019 – 2026\)](#), and following the framework described below under #2, the following academic priorities have been established. At the core of all these priorities are our goals to (1) meet the workforce needs of Billings, Montana, and the broader region we serve; (2) meet student demand for programs; (3) increase student access to courses needed to make timely progress toward degree completion; (4) improve the quality of our educational programs; and (5) enhance support and opportunities for faculty to expand faculty research, scholarly, and creative activities, with the goal of increasing extramural research dollars attracted to MSU Billings in support of faculty and students.

Sprint Degrees. Aligned with our commitment to meet the workforce needs of the communities we serve, MSU Billings is the first Montana University System (MUS) institution to participate in the Spring Degree initiative. Through a series of intentional, collaborative, and iterative discussions and planning sessions, we identified two programs as initial candidate programs for accelerated student progress toward degree completion. We intentionally put forth one program at the associate degree level and one at the baccalaureate level. While colleges and departments considered and proposed potential candidate programs in a variety of disciplines, in collaboration with the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), we elected to focus on allied health programs in this initial phase of this initiative. At the two-year level, we created a 1-year degree pathway (start to finish) for the Paramedic Associate of Applied Science (AAS) program. At the four-year level, we created a 2.5-year degree pathway (7 semesters, start to finish) for the Human Services Bachelor of Science (BS) program. We will welcome the first cohort for each of these accelerated pathway programs in academic year 2023-24.

Expansion of Nursing and other Allied Health Programs. Motivated and prompted by student and industry demands, and in collaboration with partners in Billings and beyond, we are intentionally working on short-term and long-term plans to expand the enrollment and output capacity of our nursing and other allied health programs. For nursing in particular, our planning includes the Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) programs at City College, as well as the RN to BSN program offered by the College of Health Professions and Science. Our planning is always conducted within the framework of program quality and continued assurance of student learning. Currently, we are working on a comprehensive assessment of resource needs to increase enrollment in all these programs. Resources needed include additional qualified faculty, additional clinical sites and preceptor partnerships, appropriate space allocation, equipment, etc. We will incrementally implement elements of these plans to increase capacity in our programs. Toward this goal, City College at MSU Billings was recently awarded a five-year, \$1.9 million grant (U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Nursing Expansion Program) to expand and diversify the existing RN and LPN workforce in rural eastern and south-central Montana. Through this funding, City College will be able to accept up to 25% more students into both nursing programs and will be able to respond to shortages in the rural health care workforce through recruiting, training, and graduating rural eastern Montana students who are likely to return to their hometowns to work. Collectively, the expansion of our nursing and other health programs will continue to be a focus for MSU Billings for the coming years, as part of an intentional effort to meet the workforce needs of Billings and Montana.

Course Sharing within the MUS. MSU Billings is currently participating in the NASH Curricular Flexibility Project, with the intentional goal of joining other MUS campuses to offer online courses on the Quottly platform to students enrolled at other MUS campuses. Fundamentally, we see this as a student success initiative to give more options to MUS students to make timely progress toward degree completion by taking degree-appropriate courses offered by any MUS campus. MSU Billings has long been a leader in online education with a significant number of fully online programs, as well as a significant number of classes that are fully online. Making some of our fully online classes available to students enrolled at other MUS campuses will serve dual purposes of (i) ensuring there is strong demand for our courses and that our course fill rates stay at appropriate levels, and (ii) providing a variety of course options to students at other MUS campuses.

Currently, we are working closely and collaboratively with academic colleges and departments to formulate the appropriate internal structure and process for identifying courses to be offered on the Quottly platform, carefully considering all the factors that will lead to successful and sustainable implementation of this initiative. A core team is working closely with OCHE as well as internal campus constituents to ensure all input is appropriately captured as we formulate the details of this process.

Second Chance Pell. Starting in Spring 2023, MSU Billings participated in the Second Chance Pell Experiment, an initiative launched by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides incarcerated individuals access to post-secondary education opportunities and federal need-based Pell Grants. These programs have been shown to reduce recidivism, support economic development, contribute to workforce development, and enhance community safety. Providing

incarcerated individuals opportunities to participate in higher education is aligned with MSU Billings' mission to deliver a transformative education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed. It is also aligned with our workforce development goals. Through a partnership between MSU Billings, the Montana Women's Prison, and Montana State Prison, MSU Billings enrolled students in two online programs: Associate of Applied Sciences in Business program and Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts program (both online programs). All students enrolled in these programs successfully completed their first semester (Spring 2023). We are committed to ensuring that these students will be successful in their pursuit of academic endeavors and will continue to ensure academic support structures are in place to successfully guide these students toward degree completion. We are currently working to accept a new cohort of students for Spring 2024. As the experimental Second Chance Pell program transitions to become the ongoing Prison Education Program, we will ensure that we have all the curricular, academic support (e.g., advising, tutoring, etc.), and other support (financial aid, etc.) elements in place to ensure a successful and sustainable program. As Pell funds do not cover the full cost of this program, we are also working to develop a sustainable annual budget to support the ongoing success of this program.

Expansion of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities. Through a comprehensive faculty success program, MSU Billings is working to expand opportunities for faculty and students to engage in research, scholarly, and creative activities. We are strengthening existing elements, or adding new support structures, to ensure faculty are supported in all their research and creative endeavors. Examples of support elements include: internal seed grants (for all faculty, and specifically for pre-tenure faculty), professional development funds to ensure faculty can continue to engage with their discipline, small startup packages to ensure new faculty have the necessary starting point for developing an independent research agenda, experienced faculty with independent research agendas mentoring new faculty, etc. These efforts are beginning to show promise in the number of new extramural grants submitted and awarded, and will incrementally lead to additional extramural dollars attracted to MSU Billings in support of faculty and student research and creative activities.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.

At MSU Billings, we follow a collaborative, inclusive, consultative, and transparent process for establishing academic and institutional priorities, ensuring that all constituents are engaged in the decision-making process. Forthcoming program proposals follow a transparent process. Faculty bring initial ideas and plans to the Academic Senate, where the merits and justification for forthcoming program proposals are thoroughly discussed. To further improve and codify this process, during the 2022-2023 academic year, MSU Billings followed a consultative and collaborative engagement to develop a comprehensive process that faculty and academic departments could use to propose new programs. The Provost, Deans, Associate Deans, Academic Senate Chair, and Senators representing their college constituents were involved in developing this framework. The ultimate goal of this process is to front-load much of the conversations, background research, determination of student and employer demand for the program, and

examination of resources required in order to determine whether or not a program is a good candidate to be proposed as a new program. This process has significantly improved and elevated the quality of planning needed to bring new program proposals forward for consideration. Moving forward, this framework will be used at MSU Billings as we consider new programs.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Through close engagements with students, faculty, advisory boards, employers, and the community, MSU Billings remains responsive to existing and emerging student and workforce development needs. Several potential academic programs are now in the initial stages of campus ideation, exploration, discussion, consultation, and consideration. These conversations will follow the process described above under #2. A few are highlighted here. Our Criminal Justice Bachelor of Science program has been growing steadily for a number of years. Program faculty have been very responsive to student needs as well as developments in the field, ensuring that the program curriculum is current and relevant. In response to student requests and employer recommendations, we are considering a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. Concurrent with these conversations, we are also exploring developing a Criminal Justice Bachelor to Master 3 + 2 program. Also responding to student needs and demands, two potential programs are in the very early stages of ideation and campus exploration. These include: Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies; and Minor in Economics.

4. If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.

Through two phases of a comprehensive Strategic Program Alignment (SPA) process, MSU Billings placed over eighty (80) academic programs on moratorium and eventually eliminated these programs. Most of the programs eliminated had zero or unsustainable student enrollment levels. Since the completion of the SPA process, we annually monitor a variety of metrics for all academic programs to ensure that programs are not only viable and sustainable, but that they demonstrate effective student outcomes, including retention rates, graduation rates, and achievement of program learning outcomes. This ongoing, data-informed monitoring process has established a clear and objective mechanism by which additional academic programs may be designated as candidates to be phased out.

5. Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."

At MSU Billings, we engage in several activities to ensure our academic programs remain relevant and viable.

(i) As described under #1 above, MSU Billings has been very intentional about offering new academic programs that are responsive to the needs of students, employers, community, and emerging workforce trends.

(ii) As described under #2 above, we follow a systematic and rigorous process to ensure that newly proposed academic programs are researched thoroughly, that student demands as well as employer needs for program graduates are well understood, and that program resource needs are properly anticipated and available. This rigorous process not only ensures that newly proposed programs have a strong chance of being relevant to students, employers, and broader workforce needs, but also that these new programs will be viable.

(iii) MSU Billings annually monitors key academic program metrics to ensure the viability of its existing academic programs.

(iv) Programs monitor assessment of learning in order to ensure students achieve the stated program learning outcomes.

(v) Each academic program undergoes a comprehensive Academic Program Review (APR) process every seven years. We continually improve our APR process to ensure that it leads to a reflective and productive assessment and examination of the status of the academic program under review, and that the review endeavor leads to action items that ensure that the program not only continues to meet the needs of students and employers, but also that curricular elements ensure student learning outcomes are achieved in measurable ways.

6. Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.

Institutional Accreditation: In academic year 2022-23, MSU Billings began preparing for the Year Six: Policies, Regulation and Financial Review (PRFR) with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), scheduled for fall 2024. Writing the report and organizing the supporting materials for the PRFR will be the accreditation priority for MSU Billings in the upcoming 2023-24 year. The executive leadership at MSU Billings continued to work on fulfilling the only outstanding recommendation from the NWCCU, Recommendation 1: Fall 2021 Mid-Cycle Review to ensure MSU Billings will continue its commitment to stabilize its administrative team: https://www.msubillings.edu/assessment/pdf/Commission_Letter-Montana%20State%20University%20-%20Billings-1_18_2022.pdf. We made progress in further stabilizing the administrative team. After a thorough national search, Dr. Ann Beste-Guldborg was appointed as the permanent Dean of the College of Education. She will begin her position on July 1, 2023. The progress made towards fulfilling the outstanding recommendation will be included in the NWCCU annual report, due every August.

Program Accreditation: During academic year 2022-23, MSU Billings hosted three program-level accreditation visits. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) reviewed the RN to BSN degree completion program, the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) reviewed the Radiologic Technology (AAS) program, and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) reviewed the Fire Science (AS) program. Early feedback indicates these visits were all successful, however, the official reports are forthcoming. Several program accreditation visits will take place in the upcoming academic year, including review of MSU Billings Applied Behavioral Analysis (MS) program by the Association for Behavior Analysis International.

7. Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).

Guided by Chancellor Hicswa and the executive leadership team, we continue to advance the initiatives outlined in the current strategic plan (2019–2026): <https://www.msubillings.edu/chancellor/pdf/MSUB-Strategic-Plan.pdf>. Nearly four years into the implementation of the current strategic plan, many subobjective teams have successfully operationalized the work. These accomplishments are the results of strong and steady leadership, countless consultative engagements and conversations with all constituents, strong cross-divisional collaborations, and carefully implemented processes. One noteworthy accomplishment is the establishment of a comprehensive 2022–2027 Retention and Graduation Plan related to subobjective 2.2: Improve student retention and graduation rates. The retention and graduation plan was established during academic year 2021-22, and full implementation began this past year. While still early in the implementation of our 5-year retention and graduation plan, institutional data show an upward trend in student retention. We are proud of this work and remain committed to ensuring these efforts will continue to persist and become a part of the long-term culture and work of MSU Billings. This, among other strategic plan initiatives, will continue to be a focus for MSU Billings in the coming academic year.

University of Montana, Missoula

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023-2024

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

Mission

The University of Montana transforms lives by providing a high-quality and accessible education and by generating world-class research and creative scholarship in an exceptional place. We integrate the liberal arts and sciences into undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies to shape global citizens who are creative and agile learners committed to expanding the boundaries of knowledge and to building and sustaining diverse communities.

Vision

Our vision is that the University of Montana will be a flagship for the future, fostering inclusive prosperity and democracy, and creating new knowledge and ways of learning.

Design Principles

The University’s six [Design Principles](#)—impact, interdisciplinarity, inclusivity, inquiry, innovation, and internationalization—frame UM’s overarching strategy and shape our institutional priorities.

Priorities for Action

Our institutional priorities are expressed and regularly updated through UM’s five [Priorities for Action \(PFA\)](#):

- Priority for Action 1: Place Student Success at the Center of All We Do
- Priority for Action 2: Drive Excellence in Innovation, Teaching, Learning, and Research
- Priority for Action 3: Embody the Principle of Mission First, People Always
- Priority for Action 4: Partner with Place
- Priority for Action 5: Proudly Tell the UM Story

UM’s PFAs guide our decisions and actions. We advance them by defining focused institutional objectives and an annually refreshed set of institutional projects that help us succeed in meeting those objectives. These projects outline the stepwise actions we will take to ensure incremental progress in areas such as

curriculum design, research emphases, student experience, operations, marketing, and community engagement.

The University of Montana’s Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI) facilitates an annual Strategic Operating Rhythm to ensure sustained focus on our objectives, to measure progress, and to annually update the projects we employ to meet our objectives. This iterative process allows UM to remain agile and responsive to opportunities and challenges as we maintain momentum. Public doubts about the value of higher education, demographic shifts, and changing student expectations require that we examine the value proposition of higher education, bridging what higher education has been historically and what it needs to be in the world today and into the future.

UM’s annual planning process fosters responsiveness to the twin demands that: 1) higher education serve a broader range of learners, and 2) address changing societal needs. Our current academic priorities reflect our commitment to:

- developing interdisciplinary capacity,
- providing experiential learning opportunities for learners that embody the value of a UM education as it is applied,
- designing and facilitating learning through multiple modalities, and
- ensuring that our students learn 21st century skills and habits of mind for a lifetime of impact in their communities.

Through our annual planning process, our intention is to cultivate an adaptive, innovative, and entrepreneurial mindset that can equip Montana to succeed in times of disruption. These elements drive our instruction and research priorities.

2. Provide a brief description of the process used to determine these academic priorities.

UM Strategic Operating Rhythm provides the basis for our annual academic planning process, allowing the campus to interweave academic programs and research as well as strategically identify needs and opportunities.

Two years ago, in the summer of 2021, UM launched its Strategic Operating Rhythm, using a data-informed process that develops, implements, evaluates, and modifies a strategy that aligns: 1) the institution’s mission, goals, and capabilities; 2) how the University serves students currently and into the future; and, 3) a rapidly changing landscape for higher education. During the 2021–2022 academic year, UM focused its Strategic Operating Rhythm on enrollment growth, inviting faculty, campus governance groups, and academic leaders to create and present opportunities for investment using key performance indicators. Working groups fine-tuned the proposals, including detailed descriptions, implementation timelines, evaluation and assessment plans, thorough budgets, and enrollment projections. A steering committee then prioritized the proposals and submitted recommendations to UM leadership. The proposals that were selected for funding were the basis for last year’s Academic Planning and Priorities document.

Over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year, UM continued its Strategic Operating Rhythm, focusing on academic renewal. Following consultation with the Executive Committee of the Senate, Faculty Senate, academic deans, and President Bodnar in the fall of 2022 and the spring of 2023, UM submitted two requests to plan: one considering the amplification of environment and sustainability through the potential move of Geosciences to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, and the other

considering the creation of an initiative or school on emerging and applied technologies. In addition, the academic strategy process, which is a part of the Strategic Operating Rhythm, invited another round of proposals to bolster enrollments, further the academic enterprise, and thicken learning and social connections across campus. Like the 21–22 academic year, the proposals that were selected provided detailed descriptions, implementation timelines, evaluation and assessment plans, thorough budgets, and enrollment projections. Many of these plans focused on strengthening existing academic programs and building out increasingly vital components the campus community.

3. Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programming that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.

Following the Strategic Operating Rhythm and its processes, UM plans to develop academic and research programming that prepares our students to understand and contribute to a dynamic world. The priorities outlined below build on UM strengths and reflect our twin commitments to interdisciplinarity and impact.

Environment and Sustainability

UM has several successful academic programs focused on the environment, conservation, resource management, earth sciences, and sustainability, many of which contribute to UM’s recognition as a national leader in these areas. As noted above, UM submitted a request to plan in the spring of 2023 to develop a plan to potentially recombine academic units associated with the environment and sustainability based on consultation with shared governance, faculty, and academic leaders. UM will continue to develop this plan in the 2023–2024 academic year, aiming to amplify our strengths in these areas while adapting to meet the needs of students, Montana, and the world even more aggressively.

Emerging and Applied Technologies

The academic renewal work that members of UM’s campus community engaged in during the 2022–2023 academic year identified emerging and applied technologies as an opportunity area. Such technologies include but are not limited to immersive media, such as virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, machine learning, learning sciences as they intersect with different technologies, game design, sonic arts, data science, and others. Because these technologies integrate a range of fields, such as STEM, the humanities, arts and media, education, and health, we anticipate that the initiative or school we will design will be interdisciplinary with faculty holding joint appointments with other academic units. UM will continue to develop this plan in the 2023–2024 academic year.

Online Modalities

Noted in the 2022 Academic Planning and Priorities document, UM will continue to develop responsive and robust online modalities for existing and new academic programs. We will leverage these modalities to serve not just our degree seeking students but also a broader range of learners who are seeking to access education on different timelines and at later stages in their lives.

Health

In the College of Health, two BOR-approved programs are in development: the Master of Physician Assistant Studies and the professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD). Both programs are in a two-year accreditation-mandated development phase and are progressing on schedule. We will double down on our broad strengths in the health sciences as well as on our ability to help address the urgent mental health needs of Montana.

Changes to Accounting Programs

The College of Business requests to plan and explore a B.S. in Accounting, which would replace the B.S. in Business Administration majoring in Accounting. The B.S. in Accounting would eliminate some of the business core curriculum to include all CPA course requirements in a four-year degree. Students would still need to earn an additional 30 credits to earn the requisite 150 credits to sit for the CPA, but the specifically designated courses could be obtained in a four-year degree. The College of Business requests to plan and explore moving the existing hybrid modality Master of Accountancy to a fully online delivery.

Creation of a new major in Entertainment, Experiential, and Sports Management

The College of Business requests to plan and explore a new major that builds from the successful Entertainment Management certificate.

With these programmatic areas and approaches, UM had identified five areas of research focus primed for growth:

The Montana Center for Work Physiology and Exercise Metabolism (WPEM), under the direction of Dr. Brent Ruby, is dedicated to the unique study of arduous work physiology and the metabolic demands placed on skeletal muscle as it interacts with changing, and often volatile, environments. Studies that began with wildland firefighters have expanded to include warfighters. Funding has come from the US Forest Service and the Department of Defense (DoD); and, WPEM has been building a strong collaboration with the US Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine.

The mission of the Montana Biotechnology Center (BIOTECH), under the direction of Dr. Monica Serban, is to foster local and regional biotechnology-focused workforce development through educational activities and research on the development of biomedical products—particularly therapeutics and medical devices—in resource-limited settings, such as in rural areas, or even in military combat. BIOTECH has a number of DoD partners and has recently received a grant from the Murdock Trust to purchase a biomolecular 3-D printer.

The Montana Climate Office (MCO), under the direction of Dr. Kelsey Jencso, provides high-quality, timely, relevant, and scientifically based climate information and services to Montanans by sectors of interest, geography, or industry. This information can assist stakeholders in adapting climate products to their needs. MCO has received a large grant to run the Mesonet, a network of hundreds of weather and soil moisture monitoring stations across the Upper Missouri River Basin.

CyberMontana, under the direction of Diane Burke and Dr. Tom Gallagher, has a cyber research, training, and education program with significant funding from the state and from the DoD. CyberMontana is currently planning for a new center, the Cybersecurity Education, Innovation, and Policy Center, focused on workforce education and outreach, the Montana Cyber Range, the Rural Cybersecurity Policy Institute, a Security Operations Center, and a Hackerspace.

The Center for Integrated Research in the Environment (CIRE) offers expert, task-based execution and research in natural resource management, wildland fire operations, cultural resource management, and climate change impacts. Through cooperative agreements with federal, state, tribal, and private partners, CIRE has secured extramural grants. CIRE is now in the final stages of developing an Inter-Government Service Agreement (IGSA) with the Army and potentially other DoD agencies to provide UM expertise to military bases west of the Mississippi River.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**
5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”**

N/A

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

We are preparing for our NWCCU Year 7 report in 2024.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

As noted above, UM follows an annual Strategic Operating Rhythm facilitated and refined by the Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI). The [FY24 Strategy Playbook](#) represents our most recent refinements. As with the last two years, OSPI will continue to generate, support, and prioritize mission-aligned ideas that can be translated into action. OSPI will also monitor and evaluate such initiatives and support leaders who are responsible for their implementation.

These OSPI functions are meaningfully integrated with UM’s planning, budget, and accreditation processes as demonstrated by the development of a new university strategic operating rhythm that intentionally aligns all these elements. This iterative, annual process aims to ensure we remain agile and responsive enough to seize opportunities, address challenges, and maintain momentum. Annual academic program planning will nest annually under this broader Strategic Operating Rhythm.

Montana University System
ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Miles Community College

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2023/24

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding “Requests to Plan” for new academic programs and research centers/institutes (<https://mus.edu/borpol/bor300/303-1.pdf>). Toward that end, we ask that each year institutions submit a report, of no more than three pages, eight weeks prior to the July BOR Meeting. This report should include:

- A high-level overview of your institution’s current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.
- A brief description of the process used to determine these academic priorities.
- A description highlighting new academic or research programming that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.
- If/where applicable, a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.
- Additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about “Requests to Plan.”

Separately, please fill-in the [Forthcoming Academic Proposals](#) spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the “Request to Plan” portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the “Request to Plan” stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

Miles Community College

The academic 2023/24 year at Miles Community College (MCC) is focused on academic priorities that align with our community college mission to prepare students for success and provides opportunities for lifelong learning through quality programs, community outreach, workforce training and partnerships.

The process MCC utilizes to determine academic programs includes input from faculty, staff, advisory boards, local community and regional industry feedback. This is most recently illustrated with MCC’s actions to respond to local, regional and statewide demand for meat processing program and trainings. These efforts were brought forth from local meat processors, local residents and statewide organizations such as Montana Meat Processing Association, Farmers’ Bureau, Farmers’ Union to mention only a few. MCC is currently seeking with the support of many organizations, like those mentioned above, for grant funds to assist with offering a professional certificate program in Meat Processing that utilizes online and apprenticeship model from the

Department of Agriculture, Perkins and National Science Foundation. Other examples of MCC’s process to offer academic programs includes: Student Learning Outcomes at the Program level in 2023/2024.

Currently, for the 2023/24 academic year MCC is working with faculty, advisory boards and industry partners to explore areas to research regarding new academic certificates, programs and workforce training.

MCC is focusing on expanding our “start here go anywhere” ideology to partner with industry and other higher education institutions to provide a full array of curriculum, programs and pathways to pursue education and training for the citizens of Miles City, eastern Montana to start and achieve their educational and career aspirations!

FOR OCHE USE
[OCHE COMMENT]