

## Level II Action Items

March 2020

From: Deputy Commissioner Brock Tessman

To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Level II items that are being proposed for your review and action at the March 2020 meeting of the Board of Regents. These items have been submitted by the campuses and reviewed by the Chief Academic Officers of the Montana University System and community colleges. OCHE staff has reviewed the items and provided a short analysis below relying on information submitted by the campuses. For more information and specific details on each item, please see the supporting documentation included on the Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee agenda.

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### **Montana State University – Bozeman**

#### **Add an English Education option to the MA in English**

The Master of Arts in English: English Education Option is designed to serve practicing secondary English teachers. Particularly in Montana's rural schools, there are increasing demands for flexible graduate English education coursework to serve ongoing licensure requirements as well as to qualify teachers to offer dual enrollment coursework. English has been identified by the Office of Public Instruction as teacher shortage area and it is also one of the most popular disciplines for dual enrollment coursework. To offer dual enrollment, the instructor must have 9 or more graduate level credits in the discipline. The MAEEE will provide quality English and English Education curriculum fully online so that it is accessible and practical for serving teachers in rural and remote schools.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **University of Montana – Missoula**

#### **Add an acting option in the Theatre BFA**

The School of Theatre and Dance currently offers a single option in Musical Theatre Performance as a part of its B.F.A. An informal advising track has existed in acting for some time but has not been recognized as a formal option. Adding acting as an option to the B.F.A. will enable better tracking of acting-focused students and give those students the opportunity to have their acting focus listed on their transcript.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

#### **Add a design and technology option in the Theatre BFA**

The School of Theatre and Dance currently offers a single option in Musical Theatre Performance as a part of its B.F.A. Other informal advising tracks have existed for some time but have never been formally recognized as options. Adding these other options will provide greater clarity to students and help the School to better track and more effectively advise students in the program.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish an A.S. transfer degree**

Missoula College currently offers an Associate of Arts transfer degree (A.A.) but is the only Montana two-year institution to not offer the Associate of Science. This new program would provide a more appropriate credential for transfer students interested in pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Add an option in Game Design and Interactive Media to the B.F.A. in Media Arts**

Video-game design is an expanding industry that requires a mix of artistic creativity and technical skills. The Game Design and Interactive Media option would curate a track in the existing B.F.A. in Media Arts to provide students with career fundamentals of coding for games, apps and interactive art; the visual design of these environments and experiences; and the history and theory of gaming. Initiating this new option will require offering three new courses. A similar program at Boise State University has grown quickly to serve more than 200 majors. Currently, no such program is offered in Montana.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Move the option in Community and Environmental Planning from the Geography B.A. to the Geography B.S.**

The Community and Environmental Planning Option of the Geography B.A. has been one of the Department of Geography at UM's more popular undergraduate options. This proposal would consolidate the department's degree offerings by terminating the B.A. degree and moving this popular option to the B.S. degree. This restructure will simplify the department's curricula while adding science content that is increasingly required for civil service employment in this field to the Community and Environmental Planning option.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish a B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies**

The B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies is intended for students seeking to complete a bachelor's degree with coursework from departments across the University, providing each student an opportunity to reach beyond disciplinary boundaries and create a degree program tailored to their unique education and career goals. The multidisciplinary nature of the program is designed to develop students' ability to combine different fields into a structured format and is meant to encourage and support creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and integrative and experiential learning. Other Montana 4-year campuses offer similar degree programs, which are often structured to create coherent and focused pathways for transfer students and adult learners to leverage prior academic work towards a bachelor's degree. One ambition of UM's program is to have a framework of stackable credentials that enable working students to flexibly pursue a bachelor's degree as they work through high-demand certificates to gain skills necessary to advance in their job.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish a B.S. in Sustainability Science and Practice**

This new program would offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates existing courses in sustainability theory, environmental science, and sustainability planning, monitoring, and reporting. Students will have the opportunity for hands-on learning through supervised internships in community agriculture, native plants and ethnobotany, sustainable living, among others. This program is an outgrowth from the University of Montana's "Communities of Excellence", contributing to UM's growing strength in Environment and Sustainability curriculum and research. There are programs at other MUS institutions related to sustainable agriculture (MSU), environmental studies/sciences/engineering (MSU, UMW, Tech) and other environmental/sustainability related topics. However, no other bachelor's program has an explicit cross-disciplinary focus on sustainability.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish the American Indian Governance and Policy Institute**

The American Indian Governance and Policy Institute (AIGPI) will be a Native-led research entity and think tank built to provide policy research, legal expertise, and consulting to tribal governments. A collaboration between UM's Native American Studies Department, the Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic, and the Master of Public Administration program, the aim of the AIGPI is to provide the type of analysis and expertise to tribal governments that is often provided to state lawmakers through legislative services divisions. In doing so, the hope is to build a broadly useful toolkit of analyses and practices focused on the tribal context while also providing hands-on, impactful policy experiences for UM students. Currently, the activities of the AIGPI are not supported through external grants, though the institute will seek outside grant support to expand the activities of the Institute as it grows. Initially, the AIGPI will draw on the expertise and time of four affiliated faculty – Dr. Heather Cahoon (who will serve as Director), Dr. David Beck, Dr. Monte Mills, and Dr. Sara Rinfret. A letter of support from Jason Smith, Director of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, is included in the application materials for the institute.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Terminate the School of Extended and Lifelong Learning (SELL)**

All units within SELL will continue, but are being reassigned to other areas (as follows): The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UM (MOLLI) will report to the Davidson Honors College; Conference Planning Services and the Todd Building will be under the umbrella of the University Center, and will work closely with Montana Event Services; and UMLearn and continuing education courses will report to the Office of the Provost. Even though all of the programs formerly offered through SELL will continue, the additional overhead cost of a separate school will no longer be required.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Retitle the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences to the College of Health**

The newly proposed name is more inclusive of the array of programs and clinics in the College and identified with the UM Health & Medicine initiative and the Health and Human Development Community of Excellence. The new title – the College of Health – provides a clean, definitive, and inclusive identity for a college that is providing oversight to new undergraduate and post-graduate programs not in direct alignment with traditional health professions.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish a Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) degree**

In 2017, the Board of Regents granted UM and MSU-Billings authority to grant masters' degrees in occupational therapy as a step towards launching a collaborative program. Since that time, the national accrediting body for occupational therapy, ACOTE, has moved to the doctorate as the preferred professional degree for occupational therapy professionals. This proposal, if approved, would grant the University of Montana authority to grant a Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree in preparation for accepting a first cohort of students in 2021. Currently there is no public option for Montana residents to pursue an OT degree amid expanding need for OT professionals.

The proposed OT program would require significant early institutional or private investment to procure new equipment and pursue accreditation. Over time, if the program grows as anticipated, two new tenure-track faculty lines, two non-tenure lines, and a program director would be added to support program curriculum. The campuses budget and enrollment projections, which appear reasonable given the demand for OT programming and the growth of similar programs, project budget neutrality by year three of operation.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

## **Montana Technological University**

### **Establish a PhD in Earth Sciences and Engineering**

As a component of its special focus mission designation by the Board of Regents, Montana Tech identified offering a *limited* number of new PhD programs that closely align with Tech's strengths and demands from Montana industries for applied research as a strategic priority.

Tech faculty, during the lengthy processes surrounding identifying Tech's special focus identity, prioritized Earth Science and Engineering as a key strength and area of state need. The proposed PhD in Earth Science and Engineering (ESE) was noticed to OCHE and other campuses through an intent to plan item in November 2018 and has undergone considerable discussion and revision since that time.

An Earth Science and Engineering PhD at Montana Tech would leverage Tech's long expertise, unique location, and collaboration with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology to offer applied research opportunities for doctoral candidates in areas that are economically important to Montana, including extractive industries and natural hazard reduction. Collaboration with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology in particular would offer candidates impactful PhD-level research opportunities while extending the Bureau's capabilities to investigate and document water and mineral resources in Montana. Introducing doctoral programming in Earth Sciences and Engineering will also increase the competitiveness of Montana Tech's strong contingent of Environmental, Geological, Mining, Petroleum, Geophysics, and Geochemistry focused faculty for federal grant funding.

Related PhD programs exist at MSU (Earth Sciences; Environmental Engineering) and UM (Geoscience). The three campuses have been in discussion to explore collaborative opportunities, whether through coordination on grant opportunities or sharing of lowly-enrolled graduate-level coursework.

At full enrollment, the program is projected to enroll 14 PhD candidates (similar enrollment to the 3-campus collaborative Materials Science PhD). Initially, no new coursework will be required. Key startup costs include support for a faculty director. The Graduate School has committed to support two students per year for the first four years with graduate stipends and tuition support. Other candidates will have assistantship opportunities as faculty procurement of research grants allows. Over time, it is expected that this program will increase the competitiveness of Tech's faculty for federal research opportunities, helping the institution to attract significantly more grant dollars to support faculty research and graduate assistantships.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Establish a M.S. in Ecological Restoration**

The proposed Master of Science in Ecological Restoration is designed to provide advanced training and practical skills to on-campus and distance education students seeking to learn and apply advanced ecological and engineering principles to restore environments damaged due to natural resource extraction, industrial activities, and natural disasters. Graduates would be qualified to design, plan, monitor, and adjust innovative interventions aimed to restore healthy ecosystems. Currently Montana Tech offers a popular (5-10 graduates per year) certificate in Ecological Restoration that will provide the curricular basis for this new program.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*