

REQUEST TO PLAN MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 2024

TO: Chief Academic Officers, Montana University System

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

RE: May 2024 Request to Plan Proposals

The campuses of the Montana University System have proposed new academic programs or changes under the Request to Plan process authorized by the Montana Board of Regents. The proposals are being sent to you for your review and approval. If you have concerns about a particular proposal, you should share those concerns with your colleagues at that institution and try to come to some understanding. If you cannot resolve your concerns, raise them at the Chief Academic Officer's conference call Wednesday, April 24th. Issues not resolved at that meeting should be submitted in writing to OCHE by noon on Friday, April 26, 2024. If no concerns are received, OCHE will assume that the proposals have your approval.

Requests to Plan

Montana State University Bozeman:

- Request to plan a Certificate of Applied Science in Hospitality
[Item #212-2010-R0524](#)

Montana State University Northern:

- Request to plan a BA in Community Arts Production
[Item #212-2802-R0524](#)
- Request to plan a Mathematics Teaching Minor
[Item #212-2803-R0524](#)
- Request to plan a Chemistry Minor for Biology/Life Sciences
[Item #212-2804-R0524](#)
- Request to plan a data Analytics minor in Business
[Item #212-2805-R0524](#)

The University of Montana Missoula:

- Request to plan a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology and Biomedical Sciences [Item #212-1001-R0524](#)
- Request to plan a Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Microbiology
[Item #212-1003-R0524](#)
- Request to plan a Masters of Fine Arts in Game Design and Interactive Media
[Item #212-1004-R0524](#)
- Request for authorization to plan to establish a School of Physician Associate Studies
[Item #212-1008-R0524](#)

Montana Technological University:

- Request to plan Seven Certificates in Extractive Technologies
[Item #212-1501-R0524](#)

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM**ITEM 2010-R0524****Meeting Date: May, 2024****Item Name Request to Plan a Certificate of Applied Science in Hospitality**Program/Center/Institute Title: **Montana State University**Planned 6-digit CIP code: **52.0901**Campus, School/Department: **Gallatin College – Small Business
Administration**Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2024**Contact Name/Info: **Anna Reardon, Director of Program Development, anna.reardon@montana.edu**

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

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

The Certificate of Applied Science (CAS) in Hospitality will provide students with relevant coursework and training in the Hospitality industry. This 30-35 credit program will strategically combine instruction from culinary, business and hospitality disciplines to prepare students for entry level roles in event planning, entertainment/recreation management, food service management, lodging management, and similar positions required in small to large scale hospitality facilities. Coursework will include traditional and experiential learning that aligns with Montana's culture and strong tourism industry.

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

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that 8.3 million jobs will be added to Montana's economy from 2021-2031, with 1.9 million, or 23.1 percent, expected in the leisure and hospitality industry, the largest projected increase across all employment sectors. At a regional level, Gallatin County has the fastest growing economy in the state (2023 Montana Economic Report) with the service industry as the largest industry in the region (2023 Prospera Economic Report) due to the draw of unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities and quick access to Yellowstone National Park. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry projects a total of 118 annual Event/Convention Planner, Food Service Manager, and Lodging Manager openings through 2031 just in Southwest Montana; this equates to 40% of the total 296 projected equivalent job openings statewide. With continued population and tourism growth, development and support of the hospitality industry is critical to the success of Gallatin County and Montana economies. Conversations with Gallatin College's Hospitality advisory council members support the need for trained hospitality employees with industry members hiring employees as quickly as possible. Program graduates will have the opportunity to join this burgeoning industry with an anticipated average annual salary of around \$55,000 after just a few years of experience. The ability for students to enter the workforce after two semesters has the potential to significantly alleviate employer hiring needs and contribute to the state's vitality.

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

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The CAS in Hospitality combines existing courses from Gallatin College's Business Administration and Culinary Arts programs with new courses to be developed in alignment with MSU's Hospitality Management bachelor's degree program. With existing courses in place, facility and instructor resources are already established for half of the program. The additional courses will either require minimal equipment or will take place in collaboration with local hospitality industry partners while instructors and curriculum development will be shared between the certificate program and MSU's bachelor's program. Funding for the program's first four years will be provided through a grant from the Arther M. Blank Family Foundation.

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

Faculty from MSU Education Health Human Development, MSU Jake Jabs College of Entrepreneurship and Business and Gallatin College MSU's Culinary Arts and Small Business Management programs will participate in development of the certificate in order to align the one-year certificate with bachelor's degree options in hospitality management. Consideration will also be given to potential curriculum collaboration on existing courses utilized by Missoula College's Associate of Applied Science in Food Service Entrepreneurship and Hospitality.

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

Through coursework and hands-on training, this certificate is directly in line with MSU's vision of "integrat[ing] education, creation of knowledge...and service to communities". This program will provide relevant education and training to Southwest Montana students which will prepare them to immediately enter the workforce. The technical skills obtained by these students will be valuable to the local community and state, especially with tourism continuing to be the top industry in our county and employers in critical need of trained workers to maintain their services.

The Hospitality certificate directly aligns with the MSU Strategic Plan as it serves to advance Goals 1.1 and 3.2. The intent of GOAL 1.1 is to "broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education." This program will be one year in length with a total cost of around \$3,785 for Montana residents. It will thus be affordable for those who are not able to shoulder financial debt and/or who would like to begin working in a high-demand position as soon as possible. Similarly, it will also be accessible to adult learners who may already be working seasonal or evening positions but have a desire to increase their skill set and wage opportunities without a significant time investment (1.1.1). Additionally, Hospitality Certificate earners will contribute to the metric of "increasing 1-year and 2-year degrees and certificates awarded by 50% by 2024" (1.1.4).

Strategic Plan GOAL 3.2 is to "grow mutually beneficial partnerships across Montana; Montana State University and its partners attain collaboratively defined outcomes that improve the lives and livelihoods of Montanans." As mentioned earlier, this program is answering a specific need that Gallatin County is currently experiencing (3.2.4). After two semesters, students will be equipped to directly serve employers, community members, and visitors of Southwest Montana and the state thus sustaining and enhancing our economy and communities.

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Signature/Date

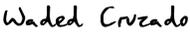
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Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

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Flagship President:**  DocuSigned by:
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*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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ITEM XXX-XXX-XXXXX

Meeting Date May 2024

Item Name: Request for authorization to plan a BA in Community Arts Production**Bachelor of Arts Community Arts Production**Program/Center/Institute Title: **with concentrations in (1) Theatre and (2)
Visual Arts**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: 50.0599

Campus, School/Department: **MSU Northern**

Expected Final Submission Date:

Contact Name/Info: **Dr. Grant Olson/406-265-4171**

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

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

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

The College of Arts, Sciences, and Education at MSU-Northern seeks to create a BA Degree in Community Arts Production with concentrations in Community Theatre and Visual Arts. This degree would consist of 120 credits in Community Leadership, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Graphic Design, Liberal Arts, and Business Management. These courses would be administered by the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education as well as the College of Technical Sciences.

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

According to the American Association of Community Theatre, "Community theatres involve more participants, present more performances of more productions, and play to more people than any other performing art in the country" (AACT Website *Community Theatre's Impact*) However, within the United States there is no specific university program developed with the education of these practitioners in mind. The needs of the community theatre are distinct from the regional and commercial theatres that most university Theatre degree and training programs are aimed to service. Within the industry of community theatre and community visual arts production, the workforce demands a skillset that includes expertise in multiple fields including community development, grants management, business management, and graphic design and marketing, in addition to developed expertise in the artistic field.

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

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This degree would initially require four Adjunct Instructors to be hired each academic year and several courses added to the theatre production curricula. While the process of developing the curricula is ongoing, a tentative list includes but is not limited to: Acting II, Directing II, Community Theatre Production, and Theatre Design.

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

This degree would collaborate with several established Degree Programs at MSU-Northern, Including the Business Management, Community Leadership, Liberal Studies, and Graphic Design programs. In addition, this degree would collaborate extensively with the Montana Actors' Theatre at MSU-Northern. The Montana Actors' Theatre (MAT) is a non-profit semi-professional community theatre company that serves as the Resident Theatre Company of MSU-Northern. MAT produces multiple theatrical productions during term on the MSU-Northern campus. This collaboration offers opportunities for co-op credit and visiting professional tutelage for students enrolled in theatre courses at MSU-Northern.

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

As previously stated, this degree would require collaboration with several established programs, fulfilling goal 3.2 in the current strategic plan: **Cultivate integrated learning and development**. In addition, this degree would strengthen MSU-Northern's already strong ties with MAT and the area community, Goal 3.1: **Strengthen Connections**. The ties with MAT would also fulfill Goal 4.1 **Enhance external partnerships** and Goal 4.2 **Expand alumni and community engagement**. This fulfillment of multiple strategic goals through the development of a BA Degree in Community Arts Production with concentrations in Community Theatre and Visual Arts fits the institutional mission of supporting a unique mix of academic programs that are responsive to local, regional, and state workforce needs.

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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

Janet Brown 3/8/24

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

X August D. Kegel 3.8.24

Flagship Provost**:

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Flagship President**:

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*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
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ITEM XXX-XXX-XXXX**Meeting Date May 2024****Item Name: Request for authorization to plan a Mathematics Teaching Minor**Program/Center/Institute Title: **Mathematics Teaching Minor**Planned 6-digit CIP code: **13.1311**Campus, School/Department: **Montana State University Northern
College of Arts, Sciences, and Education**Expected Final Submission Date: **January 2025**Contact Name/Info: **Dr. Beth Durodoye (Dean of CASE) 406-265-3768; Dr. Casey Donovan (Math faculty)
406-265-4135**

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

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

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

Mathematics Teaching Minor: This program will prepare students to teach mathematics at the 5-12 grade levels. It is designed as a new teaching minor to provide a path to mathematics licensure with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). The new minor will be offered within the existing Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education degree options or Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education at MSU-Northern.

A Mathematics Teaching minor would consist of lower division math classes such as college algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and statistics, which students might be expected to teach at the high school and middle school level. It would also include upper division math courses to expose students to mathematical rigor and to explore the foundations of mathematics as a discipline. Finally, several teacher education methods courses that focus on math pedagogy would round out the minor by preparing students for building curricula, teaching mathematics, and meeting state and federal standards.

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

MSU Northern has historically served north-central Montana by producing high quality teachers who are employed in schools across the region. Due to a shortage of math teachers in the region (and the state in general), MSUN frequently receives requests from current and potential students who want to become licensed to teach math, and from school districts that are in desperate need of math teachers. Because we do not currently offer a path to licensure in mathematics within our Teacher Education program, we have to turn those students away. For example, the Havre Public School District alone currently has four teachers from other disciplines who are being retrained to teach math to help fill vacant math teacher positions at the high school. However, these teachers are earning math coursework and degrees from outside the MUS system (e.g., from Western Governors University, etc.). The number of math teacher vacancies listed on the OPI website indicates that these shortages are prevalent throughout the state.

(<https://apps.opi.mt.gov/MTJobsForTeachers/frmJobListingPublic.aspx>)

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According to the MSU Northern graduate survey, more than 80% of MSUN graduates stay in Montana, and nearly 100% of students who major in Education stay in Montana (<http://www.msun.edu/career/gradsurvey.aspx>). It is often difficult for school administrators to recruit new teachers to rural areas, and our students are more likely to remain in north-central Montana and fill these vacancies. Anecdotally, many of our students from Montana express their desire to teach in or near their hometowns, especially our American Indian students. This program would give them an opportunity to do so.

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

The majority of the framework needed to offer a minor for obtaining a math teaching endorsement from the OPI is already in place. No new facilities or physical materials are necessary. Many of the Math and Education courses are already offered. Teaching a small number (3-4) of additional Math and Education courses may require one or two additional adjunct instructors. However, several teachers at Havre High School hold Masters degrees and have expressed interest in teaching courses on an adjunct basis, especially if it helps build and sustain a successful Math program at MSU Northern. Finally, all of the extra courses needed for a Math Teaching minor were already offered at MSU Northern in years past and remain in the academic catalog, so the administrative burden is also minimal.

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

One important factor in designing this program has been to ensure transferability of students throughout the MUS system. Students with Associate-level degrees consistently transfer to MSU Northern from tribal, community, and 2-year colleges. Currently, MSUN has articulation agreements with Great Falls College and Fort Peck Community College for students transferring into the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education major. There are plans to explore articulation agreements for the Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (including the Math Teaching minor, if approved) with these institutions and others.

MSU-Northern also often has students who transfer to and from larger universities such as MSU Bozeman, MSU Billings, and the University of Montana. MSU-Northern's Math Teaching minor will anticipate students' needs to transfer and ensure a common curriculum across Math Teaching minors and Math Education degrees throughout the system.

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

MSU-Northern's mission is to provide "higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge." Our vision statement specifically states that we strive to be "responsive to local, regional, and state workforce needs." Our Strategic Goal 2 articulates our intent to "provide practical, high-quality educational experiences that provide students an efficient path to achieving their educational, career, and life goals."

In order to assess local and regional workforce needs, nearly every academic program on campus has an advisory board consisting of partners who represent the industries or fields that students in the program are likely to enter upon graduation. Teacher Education faculty interface regularly with local education administrators and other

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stakeholders at the Hi-Line MASS Regional Meeting. The most frequent theme explored at these monthly convenings is the critical shortage of teachers in the north-central Montana region. As a result of this input, MSU Northern has addressed this issue in its most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.

<https://mus.edu/board/meetings/2021/september/arsa/Academic-Priorities-OCHE-Analysis-2021.pdf>

One important aspect of the MSU-Northern Teacher Education program's efforts to respond to teacher shortages in the area is the addition of a Mathematics Teaching minor.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

Jennifer Brown 3/8/24

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer: X

August D. Keyel 3.8.24

Flagship Provost**:

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Flagship President**:

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*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM**ITEM 212-2804-R0524****Meeting Date July 2024****Item Name Request for authorization to plan Chemistry Minor for Biology/Life Sciences**Program/Center/Institute Title: **Chemistry Minor for Biology/Life Sciences**Planned 6-digit CIP code: **40.0501**Campus, School/Department: **MSU-Northern, CASE**Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2025**Contact Name/Info: **Gary L. Succaw/gary.succaw@msun.info**

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

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

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

This is a new chemistry minor that will complement majors in Biology, General Science Education, or the Pre-Allied Health track of Integrated Health Sciences. Students in these majors currently take College Chemistry 1–2 and Organic Chemistry 1–2. A minor in chemistry would include these courses as well as Biochemistry and one additional chemistry course, such as Advanced Inorganic Chemistry or Cell Biology.

Establishing this minor will allow students to graduate with a credential that represents much of the work they are already doing in chemistry and will provide a clear path denoting any additional courses needed to prepare for graduate-level study and/or teaching.

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

Demands in the Montana workforce for individuals with a background in health-related fields is well-documented. Additionally, the need for K-12 teachers in General Science continues to climb. Many students at Northern pursue education in Biology, Integrated Health Sciences, Nursing, and General Science Education and readily find jobs across the healthcare industry and in the classroom to meet these needs. The addition of this Chemistry minor provides students with a path to develop specific scientific skills that will serve them well within these roles.

For example, Northern graduates a number of Biology students pursuing entry into medical, dental, and veterinary schools. These students have often inquired about a chemistry minor to complement their graduate school applications and overall preparedness. Biochemistry, in particular, is a requirement for entrance into these programs. (See: <http://dvm.vetmed.wsu.edu/admissions/prerequisites>) However, despite high demand among students for this course every semester, it is only currently offered at Northern as an elective, making it difficult to gauge the number of students that will want to take the course well-enough in advance to offer it on a predictable schedule. Offering a minor in chemistry would allow faculty to offer biochemistry, along with other critical courses, on a more predictable rotation and would serve Northern students as they prepare to compete for acceptance into, and success in, these graduate and professional programs.

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

Because the Biochemistry and Advanced Inorganic Chemistry classes do not have labs associated with them, no new resources are necessary. Northern's current chemistry faculty have experience in teaching these courses so that no other faculty are necessary at the current time.

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

No course sharing or collaboration is necessary in the offering of this minor.

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

MSU- Northern's mission is to provide "higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge". Northern offers a wide array of programs to achieve this mission including programs in the biological and health sciences as well as in education. The addition of this minor will assist these programs in preparing students for success in their professional careers after graduation. It will provide students majoring in Pre-Allied Health, Biology, or General Science Education a breadth of knowledge and skills in chemistry to improve graduate school readiness as well as readiness to teach science to Montana K-12 students in the classroom.

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REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

Signature/Date	
Chief Academic Officer:	<i>Jennifer A. Brown</i> 4/08/24
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	<i>Gregory D. Keyel</i> 4-9-2024
Flagship Provost**:	DocuSigned by: <i>Robert Mokwa</i> 4/17/2024 10:46 AM MDT 212A28411AC04BD...
Flagship President**:	DocuSigned by: <i>Waded Cruzado</i> 4/17/2024 10:46 AM MDT 7D6A4CE96C3F415...
*Center/Institute Proposal only	
**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.	

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM**ITEM 212-2805-R0524****Meeting Date July 2024****Item Name: Request for authorization to plan a Data Analytics minor in Business program**Program/Center/Institute
Title: **Data Analytics minor for Business program**Planned 6-digit CIP code: **30.7101**Campus, School/Department: **MSU Northern, COTS Business Dept.**Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2025**Contact Name/Info: **Jennifer Brown/ 406-265-3726**

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

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

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

MSU-Northern is requesting to plan a Data Analytics minor in its Business program. This program will complement existing offerings by providing students with the computer-based, analytical skills needed to be successful in the current labor market.

This minor will mostly use existing courses, but they will be combined in such a way so as to provide students with a clear path for building significant data analytics skills. Students from any major across campus (e.g., Business, Civil Engineering Technology, Diesel Technology, Automotive Technology, Agriculture, Biology, Integrated Health Sciences) would be able to enroll in the Data Analytics minor to complement their own field of study. Data analytics skills are useful for research, career preparation, and graduate school readiness.

Key topic areas of the minor include: data sources and structures, data cleaning and analysis, introductory coding, statistics, data visualization

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

According to the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3), "The ability to analyze data is a highly-valued qualification for almost any career path. Many employers say it ranks among the most critical workforce skillsets."

<https://www.nc3.net/2021/02/22/nc3-announces-data-analytics/>

"Data Skills" is also listed as "The 10 most in demand skills in 2024" in Forbes' November 27, 2023 publication online.

[The 10 Most In-Demand Skills In 2024 \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com/2023/11/27/10-most-in-demand-skills-2024/)

Regardless of the industry, the ability to understand and interpret data is a vital component in the decision-making process. Students pairing these skills with their chosen occupation will, then, be more prepared to enter the workforce and will provide additional analytical capacity for Montana employers.

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

This minor will primarily use existing courses that are already taught regularly by full-time faculty. However, in this course of study, the courses will be combined and sequenced to provide students with a clear path for building significant data analytics skills. Approximately four new courses will need to be developed and offered to support this minor.

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

This minor will require courses from multiple areas on campus, including Business Information Systems, Computer Applications, Math (Statistics), Agriculture (GPS). The capstone requirement will include an applied analytics project relating to the student's major area. Students can take this course separately but will be encouraged to use their major's capstone course to fulfill the requirement, provided that it includes an applied analytics project.

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

MSU-Northern's 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."*

Every career area is inundated with data. The issue is now: "What do we do with the data?" This minor will provide students in professional and technical programs the appropriate tools to effectively mine and use applicable data in their chosen career fields.

MSU-Northern's Vision Statement: *"Montana State University-Northern will be known for its supportive, student-centered environment in which a unique mix of academic programs are **responsive to local, regional, and state workforce needs**, offered in an atmosphere that promotes student success."*

The Data Analytics minor will meet Northern's vision as it is responsive to local, regional, and state workforce needs, as evidenced by comments from Business Advisory Board members and data from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

[Handwritten Signature] 04/08/24

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

[Handwritten Signature] 4.9.2024

Flagship Provost**:

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Robert Mokwa
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Flagship President**:

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Waded Cruzado
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*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 212-1001-R0524

Meeting Date: May 2024

Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology and Biomedical Sciences

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **26.0102**

Campus, School/Department: **Division of Biological Sciences**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Scott Miller (scott.miller@umontana.edu)**

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

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

We propose a new BS degree/major in Human Biology & Biomedical Sciences that would be created as a result of terminating the existing Biology BS concentrations in Human Biology and Cellular & Molecular Biology and merging them into this new major. Essentially, we are proposing to take two closely related concentrations in the “biomedical sciences” and merge them into a new, stand-alone degree/major.

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

Currently, our BS in Biology consists of five different concentrations that range from Cellular & Molecular Biology to Field Ecology. This wide range of subject matter is so large that it can prove confusing to students who are looking to pursue more specific fields of study. Removing the Human Biology and Cellular & Molecular Biology concentrations from this collection and creating a new major will position our program to better inform and independently serve two large cadres of students: those interested in the “biomedical sciences” and those interested in “ecological and organismal biology”. Indeed, students in the Human Biology and Cellular & Molecular Biology concentrations represent ≈ 60% of the current Biology major enrollment. It also highlights the strength and depth of our faculty expertise and curriculum in the biomedical sciences, which is often overshadowed by our programs in ecology and organismal biology, owing to our location in Montana.

The decision to create a new major from two existing concentrations will also benefit students by providing greater flexibility in pursuing their interests as well as a more efficient path to earning their degree. Thus, the requirement to complete the new major in Human Biology & Biomedical Sciences will be broader and less prescriptive than in a more narrowly focused concentration (see UM catalog). This not only allows students more options in completing the degree and becoming more competitive for specific career paths, it also alleviates delays and bottlenecks, such as when a required course is not offered every semester or year.

Lastly, the demand for students appropriately prepared to enter the biotech, biomedical and healthcare fields continues to increase at both a local, state and national levels (Hanover Research, Academic Portfolio Optimization) . The new major will increase the visibility of these pathways and better support students to meet this demand. Indeed, this need (and strategy) is exemplified by the fact that other regional universities, including CSU, UI, ISU, and WSU, all now offer majors/concentrations with “Biomedical” in their titles.

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

As this proposal encompasses terminating two existing concentrations and creating a single new major, it will not result in a need for significant new resources.

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

The creation of the new major will facilitate collaborative efforts with the pre-professional programs in the College of Health, especially the pre-medical sciences program. In other words, having a major specifically focused on Human Biology & Biomedical Sciences (and distinct from the major general Biology, will make it easier to respond and adapt to curricular and skills training to changing needs in the health fields. Similarly, it will make collaborative efforts with UM's other "biomedical" majors, such as Neuroscience and Biochemistry more straightforward.

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

It is well recognized that students are drawn to and connect with universities primarily through their majors. The driving force behind our proposal is to create a major that will attract and support students specifically interested in the biomedical sciences, rather than lump them all together in a general Biology major. This refined focus will allow us to be more responsive to students, build and/or update curricula with greater relevance and flexibility, and more effectively connect with career paths, including the professional healthcare programs on campus. This aligns with multiple "Priorities for Action" including: Place student success at the center of all we do, and Embody the principle of Mission First, People Always.

UM's Bio-STEM programs have been particularly successful in providing exceptional experiential training opportunities for undergraduates that are both knowledge- and skills-based. Indeed, that fact that the majority of research on campus is student-driven, rather than postdoc-driven, affords students the opportunity to genuinely participate in the discovery process, as well as increase their competitiveness for postgraduate study or employment. The new major and the faculty it will bring together will facilitate student access to the opportunities, as well as allow the curriculum to be modified to include more career skills. Clearly these aspects of the major align well with the Priority to Drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.

Having a vibrant program/major in Human Biology & Biomedical Sciences also aligns with and supports UM's strength and future growth in preparing students for the health professions (such as those available in UM's College of Health) by providing the necessary curricular foundation. Indeed, when the strong basic biomedical sciences (DBS/CHS) and clinical sciences (COH) available through an R1 research intensive university are combined with Missoula's large medical community, it creates an overall training environment not found elsewhere in Montana. In this respect the new major aligns the Priority to Partner with Place.

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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer: Approved by dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**



3/22/2024

Flagship President:**



3/26/2024

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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ITEM 212-1003-R0524

Meeting Date: May 2024

Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Microbiology

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **26.0502**

Campus, School/Department: **Division of Biological Sciences**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Scott Miller (scott.miller@umontana.edu)**

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

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

We propose a new BA degree in Integrative Microbiology within DBS.

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

A new BA in "Integrative Microbiology" enables: (1) enhanced student choice of emphasis in a microbiology degree (health microbiology; brewing/oenology; analytics/programming; water microbiology; soil microbiology) for a variety of career options that do not require a BS; (2) a streamlined degree with fewer required courses outside the major vs. the BS degree; and (3) better modularity in course selection to suit a student's ultimate career goal.

This request is accompanied by an upcoming change of title of the BS in Microbiology to "Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Disease" that will be proposed in Fall 2024 via a different mechanism. Together, these BA and BS options will better reflect the breadth of workplace opportunities and demands in industrial, biotech, biomedical, healthcare and other applied fields, which continue to increase at local, state and national levels (Hanover Research, Academic Portfolio Optimization).

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

Because this proposal may be realized with existing courses, it will not result in a need for significant new resources.

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

The creation of the new BA offers collaborative opportunities with other units on campus. For example, the emphasis in brewing/oenology will foster cross pollination between DBS and Chemistry, which currently offers a

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brewing certificate. Other BA emphases, including soil microbiology and water microbiology, could also involve faculty in different programs, including Forestry, Chemistry, etc.

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

The motivation behind our proposal is to create modern degree opportunities that will attract and support students specifically interested in careers involving microbiological applications, including medical and graduate school, pre-professional schools, and careers in clinical microbiology, industry, biotech etc. We predict that it will also enhance recruitment of undergraduate majors for its multidisciplinary approach, flexibility and applicability to several career choices. This aligns with multiple “Priorities for Action” including: Place student success at the center of all we do, and Embody the principle of Mission First, People Always.

Providing learning and research opportunities for our undergraduate students is a priority for DBS faculty involved in the microbiology curriculum. We have been particularly successful in providing exceptional experiential training opportunities for undergraduates that are both knowledge- and skills-based, which affords students the opportunity to genuinely participate in the discovery process, as well as increase their competitiveness for postgraduate study or employment. The new BA will foster continued student access to these opportunities, as well as allow the curriculum to be modified in the future to dynamically respond to changing workforce opportunities. These aspects align well with the Priority to Drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.

Finally, our proposal aligns with the Priority to Partner with Place by providing the necessary curricular foundation to prepare students for diverse career opportunities with microbiological applications growing throughout Montana, ranging from public health, to industry and biotechnology, and environmental quality.

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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer: Approved by the dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences 3/22/2024

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**



3/22/2024

Flagship President:**



3/26/2024

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 212-1004-R0524

Meeting Date: May 2024

Item Name – Request for authorization to plan a Master of Fine Arts in Game Design and Interactive Media

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **50.0411**

Campus, School/Department: **School of Visual and Media Arts**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2025**

Contact Name/Info: **Michael Cassens (michael.cassens@umontana.edu)**

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

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

This request to plan is a proposal for a new Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Game Design and Interactive Media in the School of Visual and Media Arts (SVMA) within the College of Arts and Media (CAM). This new degree offering will benefit existing and potential students in Montana, the region, nationally, and internationally. The intent is to create an MFA with two distinct modalities: online and in-person. The importance of these two pathways cannot be understated.

As the University of Montana continues to explore different academic programs for current and potential students, the SVMA is looking for ways to lead in creativity and innovation. Additionally, by focusing on access, inclusion, and community, the MFA GDIM degree path reduces barriers for diverse students, appeals to a broader learner audience, and meets them where they are.

SVMA's undergraduate concentration originated in 2019 and became a fully recognized BFA in 2022. Several MFA candidates are interested in Game Design and Interactive Media, but SVMA does not offer an MFA in this area. This program would alleviate this discrepancy and create clarity in this area.

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

There are few nationally recognized MFA programs in Game Design and Interactive Media. They are primarily on the East Coast and one on the West Coast. Of those, few are online.

Offering two different modalities increases the ability to serve more students. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has been more generally accepted and will continue to grow because it allows students to learn in place.

This program aims to meet the needs of our students in Montana and even more broadly. The data shows that familiar needs, financial considerations, and accessibility have resulted in a growing student population requiring online learning options. As SVMA's undergraduate GDIM program grows, offering a graduate program in this area creates additional student options.

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Research in online learning environments: Priorities and methodologies

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131511000054>

The Necessity of Considering Cultural Influences in Online Collaborative Learning.

<https://www.learntechlib.org/p/8270/>

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

There are no new facilities, staff, or faculty required. The intention is to create a degree path that ensures clarity for students about how to proceed using the current resources and faculty in place while altering, enhancing, and clarifying the curriculum.

The base infrastructure exists in SVMA, and many undergraduate courses have a graduate increment. The graduate classes may need renaming for clarity and a precise degree map that iterates from the general MFA in SVMA.

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

This program intends to create multiple pathways for students who may start in other institutions, especially in our tribal communities (Blackfoot Community College, Stone Child College, Salish Kootenai College, etc.), other 2-year colleges, and other universities. With articulation agreements, students have options to apply, enroll, and earn a bachelor's degree and then possibly continue to a master's degree in a much more accessible way.

SVMA has an articulation agreement with Flathead Valley Community College to invite students into the undergraduate and graduate programs.

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

Priority for Action 1: Place student success at the center of all we do.

One key objective is to "Retain and support a diverse student population through strategic planning and assessment." This program aims to facilitate a degree path that will help game designers tell their stories and ensure that those traditionally underrepresented or marginalized are given a high level of visibility and opportunity through these experiences.

Priority for Action 2: Drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.

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Another key objective in this priority for action is to "Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion in teaching practices, classroom management, and University citizenship." One of the fundamental tenets of the School of Visual and Media Arts is to embody and centralize a place of acceptance and inclusion throughout the curriculum and within our teaching practice. There is a culture of respect ensuring the elevation of all voices.

In addition, another objective states, "Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion through research and creative scholarship." As creative technologists, game designers have a unique opportunity to create experiences that foster the culture of community with games built by diverse voices and perspectives. As a graduate program, students will have more opportunities to explore the intersection between game theory research and the creation of games.

Priority for Action 4: Partner with place

Finally, two key objectives are "Increase access to programs and activities for historically underserved populations in the region" and "Deepen, strengthen, and elevate preexisting partnerships with regional Indigenous communities," which this graduate program will facilitate. As an institution, students from all backgrounds and with different needs must be considered within the programmatic offerings.

As student populations change, the University of Montana must adapt to students' needs to thrive. Today's students are different from those from years past. The demographics have shifted, and the University of Montana has an opportunity to provide a high-quality education for students at a distance.

Achieving this goal requires creating a highly interactive and experiential online experience for students, focusing on community and connectedness so students remain engaged and supported. To be fully invested in the online experience, students must feel a sense of belonging and inclusion, which the University of Montana is uniquely positioned to do, given its successful online BA within the School of Visual and Media Arts.

Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer: Approved by the dean of the College of Arts and Media 3/15/2024

Approved by the dean of the Graduate School 3/12/2024

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**  3/22/2024

Flagship President:**  3/26/2024

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
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ITEM 202-1501-R0524

Meeting Date May 2024

Request to plan Seven Micro-Credentials in Extractive Technologies

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Seven Micro-Credentials in Extractive Technologies**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:
**14.3901, 14.2011,
15.0611**

Campus, School/Department: **Montana Tech, Graduate School**

Expected Final Submission Date: **January 2025**

Contact Name/Info: **Angela D. Lueking, Ph.D.; alueking@mtech.edu ; 406-496-4106**

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

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

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

Seventy credit hours of advanced engineering and management course content will be developed through creation of 7 'Tracks' of a 10-credit hour course sequence that allows for specialization and technical mastery in: (IA) Extractive Metallurgy; (IB) Mineral Processing; (IIA) Mineral Deposit Exploration; (IIB) Hydrogeology of Mines; (IIIA) Mining Engineering; (IIIB) Mineral Project Management & Evaluation, and (IV) Environmental Management for Mining Operations. Each Track includes 9-credit hours of technical theory delivered to remote learners via asynchronous delivery with regular substantive interactions (RSIs). Each track will also include a one-credit hour hands-on 'practicum' delivered in a concentrated format on Montana Tech's campus, leveraging laboratory and pilot-scale facilities.

The professional certification tracks are designed for a student with a science or engineering core in a traditional engineering discipline and are thus designed to 'upskill' an engineer in a more traditional field, providing specialization and hands-on application of the theory to real world problems. Thus, the tracks are designed to either complement traditional academic degrees (at the BS or MS level) or serve as a stand-alone post-baccalaureate professional certification.

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

A domestic supply chain of critical minerals is essential to national security, particularly with the advent of a new energy economy that will rely heavily on copper, lithium, and other critical minerals. A domestic supply chain of rare earth elements is critical to national security, as REEs go into production of lasers, photonics, communications, and other devices. Substitutes tend to lack performance. Today, the U.S. is fully reliant on China for its supply of these materials. Emerging geopolitics, the COVID pandemic, and the war in Ukraine have exposed critical supply chain gaps. The need for domestic engineers to support critical mineral supply chains—including exploration, processing, recovery, and environmental management—has never been greater. Leveraging Montana Tech's legacy programs, the GeoE, MinE, and MetE programs have the highest potential to attract new students from national markets¹ to support the national need

¹ At Tech, undergraduate capacity is currently limited by the ability to recruit, and unfortunately, small PUIs are facing sharper enrollment declines post-COVID relative to large flagship Universities. Reference: Kelchen, Robert, 'The Haves and Have Nots of Higher Education,' *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 14, 2023.

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for a domestic CM/REE supply chain. As this is a national need, and there are a limited number (<20) of comparable programs, the proposed programs have great potential to attract non-Resident and international students, elevating the national reputation of Montana Tech and substantially impacting the University budget.

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

An invited Round 2, \$6.56 M proposal, to the Defense Production Agency (DPA) was submitted on January 25, 2024 to fund the proposed action. In brief, the external proposal includes funds for management/oversight, instructional designers to implement national best practices in remote asynchronous delivery, supplemental salary for faculty leads, instructional faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and additional graduate school staffing to support marketing and dissemination. Notably, this proposed budget is 100% external, but subject to confirmation of award. If the pending proposal is not funded, the Graduate School will proceed on a less ambitious roll out, leveraging the IDC account "Graduate Program Development Funds".

The pending proposal includes a long-term plan for financial sustainability. In short, the developed certificates will be designed for remote, asynchronous adult learners. Tech's top-enrolled graduate program (see next section) has a recent peak faculty to student ratio of 17. With modernizations and upgrades, we estimate this can be increased to approximately 20-30, while maintaining quality regular student interactions². One will note that this is a 6 to 9 fold increase in capacity relative to current faculty:student levels within Tech's graduate programs (data available upon request). Thus, the proposed action is a leveraged investment of faculty resources to maximize enrollment and justify continued University-wide investment in the program.

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

The pending \$6.56 M Round 2 proposal to the Defense Production Agency represents a national collaboration and pending cooperative agreement. The proposal was preceded with extended conversations with U.S. Navy-Keyport (via a CRADA), other Universities, and 11 confirmed national experts that have agreed to served on an external advisory board.

Locally, the action draws from legacy programs in the extractive industries created over the 120-year lifetime of Montana Technological University. Notably, there are only 21 ABET-accredited programs in the selected disciplines, which are selected to align with Section 27 of the [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024](#), and signed into law 12/22/2023. Tech's programs are the only ABET-accredited programs in the state of Montana. Thus, the pending proposal included curriculum plans and outlines from four departments and numerous faculty in Geological Engineering, Geology, Mining Engineering, Project Management, Environmental Engineering, and Metallurgical Engineering. Senior investigators on the pending proposal are: Chris Roos, Scott Rosenthal, Robin Bullock, Jerry Downey, Glenn Shaw, and Chris Gammons. The web-based Masters in [Project, Engineering and Management](#), is planning to utilize the certificates as electives, per discussions with Program chair Todd Hoffman.

The structure of the proposed curriculum is modeled after Tech's highly-enrolled **MIHP** program, which constitutes ~50% of today's Tech graduate students. The MIHP program draws a national, professional audience. It differentiates itself

² Regular Substantive Interactions (RSI) in on-line learning has become an industry-wide standard for on-line asynchronous offerings, as outlined in Federal Policy [34 CFR 600.2. RSI differentiates curriculum from "correspondence courses," and is becoming necessary to maintain national accreditation and/or NC-SARA compliance.](#)

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through ABET-accreditation, a student focus, and an on-campus concentrated summer practicum, which preserves critical educational values of experiential learning at Tech. Department Head Julie Hart has advised on the proposed initiative

Director of Tech's [Center for Academic Innovation](#) (CAI), Kat Fitzgerald-McCormick, is also a named investigator on the pending proposal, after significant advising on the structure and objectives of the pending proposal. Continued involvement of the CAI will ensure on-line asynchronous course development will be in accordance with national best practices. Departmental faculty will be partnered with a dedicated instructional designer, pending grant funding.

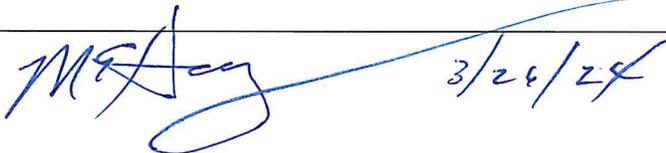
If the external award is made, the project proposal describes development of a national collaboration network, including but not limited to: (1) external advisory board members (eleven are currently confirmed) that draw from industry, defense, and academia; and (2) development of a network of University partners that will work towards articulation agreements such that the courses may be considered a technical elective sequence at the partner University.

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

The proposed action will be housed in four existing departments, and include short (10-credit) course sequences offered in concert with existing graduate degrees. The certificates will be stackable toward Masters degrees, serve as technical electives in undergraduate programs, or a 'minor' in existing graduate degrees. The initiative is aligned with "Programs of Distinction" goal, and corresponding metrics, of Tech's [Strategic Plan](#).

Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

 3/26/24

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:



Flagship Provost**:

Flagship President**:

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

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ITEM 212-1008-R0524

Meeting Date: May 2024

Item Name -Request for authorization to plan to establish a School of Physician Associate Studies

Program/Center/Institute Title: **School of Physician Associate Studies**

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

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana – Missoula/College of Health**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Reed Humphrey (reed.humphrey@mso.umt.edu)**

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

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

The College of Health at the University of Montana-Missoula respectfully requests to plan to establish a School of Physician Associate Studies, to align with the six other professional schools in the College of Health.

UM has NWCCU and BOR prior approval to offer a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree. This RTP is to establish the School to house the program, as required by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The MPAS is a full-time program that begins each Fall and spans 24 months over 6 semesters with continuous blocks of instruction with predetermined, mandatory curricula topics, also reviewed and approved by the graduate council at UM. This program will be part of the College's portfolio of health education programs, which includes five post-baccalaureate health professions programs and includes the Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana. The program will require an ARC-PA site visit accreditation prior to the matriculation of the first cohort of students.

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

There is a need for Physician Assistants across the United States, including Montana, particularly in the area of primary and rural care. Employment of physician assistants is projected to grow 28-31 percent from 2021 to 2031--faster than the average for all occupations. As demand for healthcare services grows and policies change, physician assistants will be needed to provide care to patients in broadening capacities. At present, there are no public options for Montana residents to pursue this degree, markedly decreasing affordability and access. (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm>).

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

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New faculty, staff, infrastructure and curricula are required. The program director was hired April 1, 2024. The fiscal analysis has been previously submitted and approved by the University and BOR. Once established, the program becomes fiscally sustainable within two years, and covers the first two-year start-up costs by year four.

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

There are no similar programs within the MUS but as a post-baccalaureate degree, will be actively seeking qualified applicant from students at other MUS institutions. Within UM the MPAS program will be collaborating with several academic units within the College of Health (physical therapy anatomy, family medicine residency, among others).

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

The mission of the College of Health is focused on serving the needs in rural and underserved areas of Montana and the region where most of the state is severely short on healthcare providers. This proposal aligns with the University's mission to provide high-quality and accessible education, and furthers the portfolio of interprofessional education programs in the health professions.

<u>Signature/Date</u>
Chief Academic Officer: approved by Reed Humphrey 4/16/2024
Chief Research Officer*:
Chief Executive Officer:
Flagship Provost**:  4/22/2024
Flagship President**:  4/22/2024
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>