

November 13, 2024

From: Deputy Commissioner Joe Thiel

To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Request to Plan items that are being proposed for your review and action at the November 2024 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 Billings**

#### **Request to plan a Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

This proposal would help to create a full educational pathway for students interested in criminal justice. Currently MSU Billings currently offers an Associate of Science (AS) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees in Criminal Justice. All coursework will be offered in HyFlex format so that students may choose to complete the program fully in-person, fully online, or via some combination of the two modalities. Each semester, four graduate-level courses will be offered, and full-time students (those who take two courses during each 8-week session) can expect to complete the program in just one academic year (one fall, one spring, and one summer semester).

Nationwide, opportunities for employment in criminal justice occupations are expected to increase over the next decade. By 2033, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts 3% growth for occupations related to police and detective work, 3% growth for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists, 3% growth for emergency management specialists, 6% growth for private detectives and investigators, and 13% growth for forensic science technicians (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Criminal justice faculty at MSU Billings consulted with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at MSU Bozeman, and with the Department of Sociology at the University of Montana Missoula regarding plans for developing the MS in criminal justice. Neither program identified concerns regarding the proposed addition of the graduate program at MSU Billings.

### **The University of Montana Western**

#### **Request to plan a Minor in Professional Communications**

The proposed minor brings together courses from several different areas of study, including business management, marketing, traditional art, graphic design, and English, offering students a broad foundation in written and visual design while also ensuring the flexibility to pursue personal or professional areas of interest at the upper division. The program is designed to be open to students of any major or field of study. The University of Southern California noted, "Nearly every job posting contains the words 'strong communication skills' or 'effective communication skills.'"

Because the program comprises courses already taught by UMW faculty and currently either in rotation or planned to be introduced into regular rotation, the Professional Communications minor requires no additional resources.

The Professional Communications minor is also designed to provide a balanced foundation in professional writing, visual design, digital media, and business communication, whereas other programs in the MUS tend to favor one of those areas, with limited or no exposure to the others. Finally, the

proposed minor also allows students to customize their path by selecting a particular focus at the middle tier of courses and the upper-division capstone options, making for a tailored experience that more easily aligns with student goals.

#### **Request to plan a Minor in Environmental Writing**

The proposed minor brings together courses from several different areas of study, including biology, geology, natural resource management, environmental science and sustainability, and English, with the goal of providing students a broad foundation in science and communication while also ensuring enough flexibility to pursue any personal areas of interest at the upper division. The program is designed to be open to students of any major or field of study.

Because the program comprises courses already taught by UMW faculty and currently either in rotation or planned to be introduced into regular rotation, the Environmental Writing minor requires no additional resources.

Several other institutions in the MUS have related courses and programs, including UM's undergraduate and graduate certificates in environmental and nature writing and Literature and the Environment BA and MSU's Environmental Writing option under the Liberal Studies BA. While the focus of each program differs from our proposed minor, the availability of courses in these areas, along with transfer potential and the additional credentials the certificate programs offer, means there is ample opportunity for collaboration without significant duplication of already existing curricula.

#### **The University of Montana Missoula**

##### **Request to plan to create concentrations for the Master of Fine Arts Theatre Degree**

The goal of this proposal is to officially recognize the four tracks that are offered through the MFA and Theatre degrees. Concentration helps to effectively advise students in the program. The concentrations will be in acting, design/technology, directing, and music directing.

Concentrations appear on student transcripts. This transparency will better serve students when applying for jobs.

No new resources are needed. Current structure includes faculty, facilities and resources needed. No other MUS institutions carry this program.

##### **Request to plan to create concentrations within the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Music degrees.**

Under this proposal, the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Music will eliminate 11 advising tracks and replace with 2-5 concentrations. Fewer, better-designed concentrations will make advising clearer for students and allow for better data tracking within the institution. Concentrations also appear on student transcripts and diplomas, which better serve students in their applications for jobs and/or graduate study.

No new resources are needed. The new concentrations will be delivered and support through current faculty, facilities, and resources.

##### **Request to plan a Master of Natural Resource Management**

The goal of this proposal is to provide a graduate level program to serve students who seek managerial positions in natural resource agencies, conservation NGOs, and a growing number of private sector conservation industries.

Montana currently does not offer a graduate program in natural resource management.

To launch the program a small investment will be necessary for advertising and staff assistance. As the program grows, additional teach and advising capacities will be needed. At 10 students a Professor of Practice position will be required. At full capacity of forty students, a total of 3 professor of practice positions will be required along with administrative assistance. Tuition revenue from enrollment is expected to exceed the additional hiring needed.

Currently, MSU offers an MS in Environmental Sciences. This degree focuses on environmental science and less so on policy development, management, and human/natural resource interactions. UM believes that the proposed program will pull a different population of students.

### **Request for permission to reorganize parts of the University of Montana Academic Model**

This proposed reorganization seeks to accomplish the following core goals:

- **Create a New Franke College:** The Departments of **Geosciences** and **Environmental Studies** will move from the College of Humanities and Sciences to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation by the end of the academic year. Over the next 18 months, we will establish a new iteration of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This college will become a hub for innovative research and teaching in the environment and sustainability, offering students the opportunity to engage deeply with Montana's unique ecosystems and policy issues.
- **Establish a College of Science:** The new College of Science will bring together Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and related interdisciplinary initiatives. This structure will support the University's research mission across disciplines and expand access to STEM education for all Montanans.
- **Establish a College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences:** We will create a new college that brings together departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences and related interdisciplinary programs with the departments that make up the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education. This new Phyllis J. Washington College will create a cohesive academic environment where students study the human condition, examine, and seek answers to enduring questions, and develop the skills necessary to become engaged citizens, leaders, and educators.

### **Montana Technological University**

#### **Request to plan a Certificate of Applied Science in Behavioral Health**

This proposal will focus on providing mental health educational opportunities to correctional officers, Montana State Hospital Psychiatric Techs, Shodair Mental Health Technicians, other law enforcement staff, EMTs, and other workforce members who want to provide hands-on mental health care.

This proposal will be designed with three tracks: dual credit for high school students wanting to enter mental health fields, behavioral health workforce certification for correctional officers, and a traditional certificate of applied science in behavioral health.

Montana's Department of Corrections has been discussing with Highlands College the need for their correctional officers at Montana State Prison to have more mental health education. According to the Montana State Hospital training department and staffing office, 80% of their staff are contract or travel staff. Most of the contract or travel staff fill the psychiatric technician and nursing jobs. Shodair's new building in Helena is only working with three to four of their six units open. The reason they are not 100% open is mainly due to staffing concerns, including not filling their mental health technician positions.

One full-time faculty will be needed to develop a new curriculum during the Spring 2025 semester. Once the curriculum is developed, other faculty may be needed to teach the on-line courses. Program would be online apart from the Behavioral Health Crisis Practicum. This course will be hybrid with online didactic material and labs/clinical. No new facility or space is needed. The simulation and virtual reality experience will use the current Health labs at Highlands College, and clinicals will be held at off-site employment sites like Montana State Hospital and the Butte Rescue Mission.

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 215-2701-R1124

**ITEM NAME:** Request for Authorization to Plan a Master of Science in Criminal Justice

<b>OCHE ANALYSIS</b>					
<b>Labor market outlook</b>	<p>. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of police and detectives could grow by 5% from 2019 to 2029. As the number of police and detectives grow, so does the need for front-line supervisors for police and detectives, which is a common job for criminal justice professionals who hold a master's degree.</p> <p>The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the number of people employed as forensic science technicians will grow by 14% from 2019 to 2029, which is a very rapid rate of growth. The BLS states that this might be due to an increase in cases at state and local governments that require more forensic science technicians.</p> <p>According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of probation officers and correctional treatment specialists is expected to grow by 4% from 2019 to 2029. While the number of probation officers and correctional treatment specialists increases, so does the need for master's-level jobs like probation managers and correctional officer supervisors.</p>				
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	<p>UM – Sociology Programs  MSU – Sociology/Anthropology Programs</p> <p>Programs and departments were contacted at UM, MSU and MSUB. No concerns were presented.</p>				
<b>Budget Impact</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget</li> </ul>
New tenure-track faculty line, curriculum development					
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>					
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>					

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

**ITEM 215-1001-R1124**

**ITEM NAME:** Request for authorization to plan to create concentrations for the Masters of Fine Arts Theatre Degree

OCHE ANALYSIS				
<b>Labor market outlook</b>	While the concentrations will have differing outlooks, the creation of concentrations versus the current operation of multiple advising routes should provide clearer access to career pathways for students – while also providing better pathway and labor data.			
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	N/A			
<b>Budget Impact</b>	X	<b>LOW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only incidental costs</li> </ul>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget</li> </ul>
Restructuring of current offerings.				
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>				
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>				

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

**ITEM 215-1002-R1124**

**ITEM NAME:** Request for authorization to plan to create concentrations for the Bachelor of Arts in Music and Bachelor of Music Degrees

OCHE ANALYSIS				
<b>Labor market outlook</b>	Fewer, better-designed concentrations will make advising – and subsequent career outcomes -clearer for students. Concentrations also appear on student transcripts and diplomas, which better serve students in their applications for jobs and graduate study.			
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	N/A			
<b>Budget Impact</b>	X	<b>LOW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only incidental costs</li> </ul>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget</li> </ul>
current faculty using existing courses				
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>				
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>				

**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 215-1003-R1124

**ITEM NAME:** Request for authorization to plan to a Masters of Natural Resource Management

OCHE ANALYSIS					
<b>Labor market outlook</b>	. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor outlook for a Master's degree in Natural Resource Management is positive, with projected job growth for "Environmental Scientists and Specialists" at 7% from 2023 to 2033, which is faster than the average for all occupations.				
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	None in Montana. Some options are available regionally.				
<b>Budget Impact</b>		<b>LOW</b> • Only incidental costs	<b>X</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>HIGH</b> • substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget
Marketing, advertising, faculty line, staff assistance					
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>					
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>					



**Montana University System**  
**REQUEST TO PLAN – OCHE ANALYSIS**

ITEM 215-1501-R1124

**ITEM NAME:** Request for authorization to add a CAS in Behavioral Health

OCHE ANALYSIS					
<b>Labor market outlook</b>	<p>. The labor outlook for a certificate in behavioral health is very positive, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projecting significant job growth for roles like substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors, indicating a strong demand for individuals with behavioral health certifications, particularly due to the increasing need for mental health services across the country.</p> <p>A behavioral health certificate can open doors to various roles including psychiatric technicians, peer support specialists, case managers, and more, depending on the specific certification and additional training.</p>				
<b>Related programs / centers / institutes</b>	MSU/Gallatin College – Behavioral Health Worker Certificate				
<b>Budget Impact</b>	X	<p><b>LOW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only incidental costs</li> </ul>	X	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p><b>HIGH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial commitment of resources relative to institutional budget</li> </ul>
<b>CAO discussion and follow-up</b>	Will look to collaborate with Gallatin College and MSUB for long-term education/career pathways related to Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice				
<b>ARSA/BOR comment and direction for Level II proposal</b>					