

Academic Processes Working Group

AY 25/26 Charge:

1. With support from OCHE staff, review and recommend a framework and system metrics to guide program approval and ongoing review of the MUS academic inventory.
2. Evaluate BOR Policy 303.3: Program Review to determine if there is a need to update the policy and propose changes to the Board. Review related OCHE and campus processes to recommend inputs and expectations of high-quality program review.
3. Review and make recommendations on the annual academic priorities and planning process.
4. Continue to review national conversations on reduced-credit Baccalaureate degrees and make recommendations to OCHE and the Board regarding system action.

Deliverables

- *January 2026 – Initial report and recommendations to MUS CAOs, soliciting input from campus stakeholders.*
- *March 2026 – Report and recommendations to Montana Board of Regents.*
- *May 2026 – Notice to board of policy changes.*
- *July or September 2026 – Policy changes for final board review.*

Background

In recent years, the national conversation surrounding higher education has increasingly focused on the need for transparency and accountability in academic program offerings. Several states, including Indiana, Texas, Utah, and Ohio, have passed legislation setting enrollment thresholds for higher education programs, in part to ensure that state resources are being used as effectively as possible and facilitate alignment with changing workforce needs.

The Montana University system has a policy in place to ensure review of program quality and effective stewardship of resources (303.3), and its system of review for new programs requires institutions to predict enrollment thresholds, reassessing programs who fail to reach enrollment goals. While these processes provide a starting point, they can be strengthened through improved and shared metrics on MUS academic offerings aligned to a system framework guiding both program approval and ongoing review of our academic inventory.

Membership (continuing):

Joseph Thiel (Chair)	DC ARSA	OCHE
Estee Aiken	Dean of Strategic Initiatives	UM Western
John DeBoer	Vice Provost for Academic Affairs	University of Montana
Tracy Dougher	Vice Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation	Montana State University
Jennifer Brown	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Montana State University Northern

Membership (new):

- Registrar representative
- Business office representative
- Ensure representation from: MSU-Billings, Montana Tech, Helena College, Great Falls College

Working Group Staffing:

- Susan Balter-Reitz
- Eric Meredith
- Shauna Lyons