

March 12, 2026

ITEM 223-102-R0326

Request to Approve Level II Items

THAT

That the Board of Regents of Higher Education approves the following Level II item requests.

EXPLANATION

Level II proposals require initial approval and comment by the Board of Regents. These proposals entail more substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other MUS institutions and community colleges.

ITEM 223-2012-R0326; Request to re-title the “Thermal Biology Institute (TBI) to the “Extreme Biology Institute” (EBI)

Since the founding of the TBI, the research environment at MSU has changed. While in its early days most TBI-faculty worked on fundamental problems in biology and ecology with the goal of revealing the hidden microorganismal diversity of high temperature ecosystems, some of these faculty are now retired or will retire in early 2026 (for example, Ward, Young, Inskeep, McDermott). In the last several years, new faculty working on related but independent problems were hired and the focus of some established faculty has shifted towards more applied problems, including finding ways to exploit extreme microorganisms for biotechnology (for example, plastic degradation or mitigating the emission of climate-active gases such as methane). In addition, MSU faculty study biological systems that are not high temperature (loosely defined as higher than 120F) but are just as extreme at the ecosystems in Yellowstone National Park. Examples include Foreman and Skidmore (glacial ecosystems, including the Antarctic); Stewart (oxygen minimum zones); Watts and Ewing (Arctic permafrost); Fields, Gerlach, and Peyton (coal beds, heavy metal bioremediation, high pH algae), and Hatzenpichler (deep sea). Currently, the work by these research teams – who have their primary appointments in several departments within three different colleges - is not captured under the realm of the TBI and, therefore, these teams rarely meet and interact on a broader level on a regular basis. Bringing these teams under one umbrella institute would enable new cross-disciplinary interactions, lead to forging new collaborations and, in consequence, new opportunities in research funding, teaching, and exposure of MSU’s mission to the public. The idea of rebranding the TBI to the EBI is supported by all current TBI associated faculty and was positively received with external researchers with long-term relationships to the TBI.

ITEM 223-2013-R0326; Request to modify the name of the Center for American Indian And Rural Health Equity

The Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity received its first grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) of the National Institutes of Health in September 2014, and it received MUS BOR approval as a research center in 2016. Over the past decade the mission, research, outreach, grant funding, and other accomplishments of CAIRHE and its faculty investigators have broadened to include all aspects of optimum rural health and well-being for the citizens of Montana. CAIRHE is also in its 11th year as a grant recipient in the Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) program at NIGMS. Modifying the CAIRHE name to include “Excellence” represents a closer alignment with not only its major funder but also its work and reputation throughout the state.

ITEM 223-1014-R0326; Request to retitle the School of Public and Community Health Sciences to the School of Public and Community Health

This proposal seeks to Retitle the School of Public and Community Health Sciences to School of Public and Community Health. The current name has regularly been characterized as overly long/wordy. The new title is succinct and appropriately descriptive. The name School of Public Health is not permitted by the accrediting body, which only allows this name to be used for fully accredited schools of public health. UM's Public Health degree programs are accredited but the schools administrative structure and portfolio of offerings do not meet the requirements to qualify for the accredited name.

ITEM 223-1015-R0326; Request to retitle the Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences to the Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences

With the recent proposals to create degrees in Biomedical and Human Sciences, and to rename the Division of Biological Sciences as the Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, it is prudent for the department to distinguish its specific role in Pharmacy education on our campus. At the same time, retaining the 'Biomedical Sciences' portion of the department's name appropriately recognizes the research expertise of many of our faculty.

ATTACHMENTS

ITEM 223-2012-R0326
ITEM 223-2013-R0326
ITEM 223-1014-R0326
ITEM 223-1015-R0326