Montana University System

INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Program/Center/Institute Title: Institute for Neurodiversity and Applied Behavior Analysis

Campus, School/Department: Montana State University Billings

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Expected Submission Date: July 2019

To increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process, please complete this form not more than 18 months in advance of the anticipated date of submission of the proposed program/center/institute to the Board of Regents for approval. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the Intent to Plan process, please visit http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp.

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

Montana State University Billings proposes to establish an Institute for Neurodiversity and Applied Behavior Analysis. The institute will provide an on-campus demonstration site for socially valid applied behavior analysis programs for children and adolescents with social and behavioral challenges including autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), developmental disabilities, anxiety disorders, and other behavioral disabilities. The Institute will serve both the public and the University, while functioning as a site for University graduate students to complete their clinical internships and supervision requirements for MSUB’s Master of Science in Special Education Adv. Studies ABA degree program, recently accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International. In addition to ASD, Students with behavioral issues related to mental health (e.g., opposition, anxiety, disruption) and neurodiversity (e.g., ADHD, OCD, Tourette's Syndrome) have specific needs for behavioral interventions that can be extremely challenging for teachers to implement due to the individualized nature and design of treatment. The multi-tier system of behavior support that has been adopted by the Office of Public Instruction provides a structure for training schools in effective interventions. A demonstration project through MSU Billings Institute for Neurodiversity and Applied Behavior Analysis would (a) extend and enhance training opportunities for school and community partners in the science of behavior analysis and (b) increase the number of board certified, licensed behavior analysts in this region, and (c) reduce waitlists/wait-time for children in the community who are in need of ABA treatment for socially valid behavior change.

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

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control increased the US estimate of autism prevalence by 15 percent, to 1 in 59 children. The CDC and the U.S. Surgeon General support Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy for autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to reduce problem behaviors. ABA has reached the standard of evidence based practice for the treatment of autism.

A 2019 survey by Centria Autism, an ABA provider in 10 states, reported that 99% of parents believed early intervention was important for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but on average it took 15 months to start treatment. Waitlists are commonplace for ABA treatment; in an informal survey, ABA providers in the
Montana University System
INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Billings area reported their waitlists ranged from 5 to 28 children, and, depending on complicated insurance and authorizations, time on the list ranged from six months to two years.

In Montana, ABA treatment is provided by Licensed Behavior Analysts (LBAs) who are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). There are 33 LBAs with only 51% of them listed as Medicaid providers leaving a gap in coverage for low-income clients. In comparison to the whole state, the Billings area has approximately 25 to 30% of the population who could benefit from ABA treatment living in this region. In addition, due to the rural nature of the eastern part of the state, the number of clinical opportunities for graduate students in ABA are extremely sparse. The need for a clinic to support our graduate ABA practicum is extremely important to maintain accreditation.

The Institute will alleviate long wait lists for children who need ABA services by functioning as both provider of services as well as a clinical training site for graduate students in ABA who will soon enter the labor market as behavior analysts.

The multi-tier system of behavior support which has been adopted by the Office of Public Instruction provides a structure for training schools in effective interventions. A demonstration project through MSU Billings Institute for Neurodiversity and Applied Behavior Analysis would (a) extend and enhance training opportunities for school and community to proactively reduce problem behavior through social/emotional learning, functional analysis and positive behavior interventions, and (b) increase the number of board certified, licensed behavior analysts in this region, and (c) reduce waitlists/wait-time for children in the community who are in need of ABA treatment for socially valid behavior change.

3) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing institutional program array.

As an extension of the Graduate MSSED ABA Program, the Institute aligns with the MSUB and COE mission statements through excellent teaching, support for individual learning, engagement in civic responsibility, and intellectual, cultural, social and economic community enhancement. Further, the ABA program is congruent with these mission statements by emphasizing its dedication to: (a) developing incomparable, caring, and committed professionals for schools and communities in Montana and beyond, (b) conducting socially significant applied research to improve the human condition, (c) providing community service to improve the quality of life in Montana, and (d) providing graduate and continuing education for career-long professional development.

The Institute for Neurodiversity and Applied Behavioral Analysis will be an affiliate institute of the Montana Center for Inclusive Education at Montana State University Billings. The Montana Center has served the disability community of Montana since 1947. In recent decades, with the exception of audiology services, the work of the Montana Center has been focused on educational services. This institute returns the Montana Center to its historic roots of providing therapeutic treatment to children in partnership with the medical community of Billings. The institute will support and promote the Montana Center’s mission of serving the diverse population of Montana through providing holistic therapeutic treatment to children in renewed partnerships with the region’s extensive medical community.

4) Describe how the program/center/institute overlaps, complements, or duplicates existing efforts in the MUS. Describe efforts that will be made to collaborate with similar programs at other institutions. If no efforts will be made, please explain why.
Montana University System
INTENT TO PLAN FORM

While other campuses have on-site clinics, lab schools/centers, or professional development institutes, none provide the comprehensive nature of this demonstration project in applied behavior analysis for neurodiversity.

Contact has already been initiated with providers in the Billings area, and we have also begun talks with Montana State University in order to best collaborate on this endeavor.

The Institute will provide field and clinical experiences for students, pre-service training for behavior analysts, professional development for school teams, and continuing education for licensed professionals. It provides an opportunity to establish partnerships with organizations in the community (e.g., hospitals, clinics). The operation of an on-campus clinic is something that will attract students from the Rocky Mountain and Northern Plains States, as well as Western Canada. Besides Cal State, Los Angeles, MSU Billings is the only accredited Master’s program by the Association for Behavior Analysis International in the Western United States. The Institute for Behavior Analysis & Neurodiversity would be a beacon of hope to communities and other states in this region.

Date of Final Review:

When submitting the proposal to the BOR, include this signed form with the Level II request.

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6. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD Regions) and Childcare Resource and Referral Regions of Montana lists by County compared with 2017 OPI Child Count Data.
Signature/Date
College/School Dean: [Signature]
Chief Academic Officer: [Signature]
Chief Executive Officer:
Flagship Provost*: [Signature] 7/23/19
Flagship President*: [Signature] July 23, 2019
*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Date of Final Review: