

Montana University System
INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Program/Center/Institute Title: Masters in Natural Resources Policy & Law

Campus, School/Department: Law & Forestry

Expected Submission Date: 09/19

Contact Name/Info: Michelle Bryan (243-6753) and Martin Nie (243-6795)

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.

The W.A. Franke School of Forestry & Conservation and the Alexander Blewett III School of Law propose a new Masters in Natural Resources Law & Policy. This degree is not currently available within the Montana University System, and caters to a unique demographic of government employees, tribal leaders, and other professionals whose careers require a background in law and policy. The School of Forestry & Conservation has a strong program in natural resource policy, and the School of Law in turn has a recognized Natural Resource & Environmental Law Program (NREP) and Summer Indian Law Program. By allowing masters students to take advantage of these distinct yet complimentary program offerings, we can provide a unique degree opportunity that showcases two existing university programs.

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

Natural resources is an "area of excellence" at UM that draws students to our institution. An understanding of the laws and policies that shape natural resources decision making in the West is important for public and private sector professionals working in land management, energy development, water supply, wildlife protection, and recreational industries. An increasing number of post-baccalaureate students want a substantive foundation in natural resources law and policy without needing to become practicing lawyers. (The steady enrollment of UM graduate students in law cross-listed courses is one indicator of this need and interest). This proposed masters program is also specifically designed to meet a surge of national and regional demand in this area. (See, e.g., EAB: "Understanding the Changing Market for Professional Master's Programs"; USDA "Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources, and the Environment"). Many schools with outstanding programs in law and/or science have begun developing similar options in other regions of the country (see e.g., Yale, Lewis & Clark, University of Arizona, University of New Mexico, University of Denver, University of Vermont).

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

The proposed program embodies the strategic vision of the University of Montana. It is focused on the professional needs of students, providing them a focused but flexible curriculum that can be individually tailored in collaboration with their faculty advisor(s) (engaging students where they are). Graduates will leave the program knowing the law, but also the policies, management context, planning processes, and politics that shape its implementation on the ground—where it matters (reinventing the heart of the curriculum).

What will set the program apart from the competition is the place. Montana’s remarkable natural and cultural environment offers unparalleled opportunities for students to apply their coursework to real world environmental challenges. The program will prioritize “partnering with place” and developing collaborative relationships that foster “sustainable solutions for social and ecological challenges.” Few states offer an educational setting such as Montana, from its prized public lands and water resources to the array of tribal governments and rural communities that enrich the state. The Program will take advantage of this setting, and the access it provides, to “reinvent the heart of the curriculum” and “rebrand [this] Model of education.”

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.

This program supports and complements the University's efforts to elevate its areas of excellence and to foster collaboration among institutional units. There is no other comparable program in the MUS. In developing the program, we will incorporate existing, relevant coursework from other programs such as the MPA program and the Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Certificate.

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Signature/Date

College/School Dean:

DocuSigned by:
P.F. Kyri
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7/7/2019

DocuSigned by:
Thomas H DeLuca
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7/2/2019

Chief Academic Officer:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost*:

DocuSigned by:
Jon Harbor
DocuSigned by:...

7/7/2019

Flagship President*:

DocuSigned by:
Seth Bodnar
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7/7/2019

*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Date of Final Review:

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