Montana University System

INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Program/Center/Institute Title: PhD in Public Health with a Concentration in Social Work

Campus, School/Department: School of Public and Community Health Sciences, School of Social Work

Expected Submission Date: 1/4/19

Contact Name/Info: Tony Ward and Jim Caringi

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 School of Public and Community Health Sciences and the School of Social Work intend to begin planning for an optional Concentration in Social Work within the existing Public Health Doctoral program. The Concentration in Social Work will meet the needs of students interested in developing the requisite skill set to respond to both the public health and social justice challenges faced in many areas of professional practice. The program will be developed through coordination and utilization of existing resources in both Schools.

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

Interdisciplinary education has become increasingly popular as a means of addressing the ever increasing complexity and needs of today's world. Social work and public health have an intertwined history that dates back early 20th century efforts including settlement houses, communicable-disease control, and infant and maternal health. The two professions espouse mutual commitments to social justice, enhancing people's wellbeing, and reducing social health problems. Ten years ago, roughly 20 Master of Social Work and Master of Public Health dual degree programs existed in the United States (Ruth et al., 2008). As of 2015, the number of dual degree programs has grown to over 40. Researchers conducted a survey of 41 of the 42 administrators of the MSW/MPH dual degree programs. The findings suggest that MSW/MPH programs are increasing in number and popularity and are drawing talented students interested in trans-disciplinary public health social work practice (Ziperstein et al., 2015). As this will be the only program of its kind within Montana and the Northern Rocky Mountain region, developing this program addresses an important need, and provides opportunities for students to directly engage with research activities related to Social Work/Public Health issues in our region.
3) **Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing institutional program array.**

The University of Montana seeks to prepare students qualified to effectively engage within the workforce. The University of Montana’s recent Academic Program and Administrative Services Prioritization has identified the Master of Social Work program as a “Priority for Development and Growth” and the Bachelor of Social Work and Public Health programs in the category “Consider for Development and/of Modification” (Office of the President, 2017).

This proposed program also addresses former President Stearns’ Recommendation 13 of “investing in growing graduate programs unique to UM”, and Recommendation 15 of “ensuring sustainability of independently accredited programs and to support new professional/specialized accreditations” (APASP Recommendations and Reflections, 2017).

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.**

The proposed doctoral Concentration in Social Work within the existing Public Health Doctoral program compliments existing programs within the MUS system. The School of Social Work and the School of Public and Community Health Sciences share similar goals for their graduates. The School of Public and Community Health Sciences currently offers an online Master of Public Health, as well as recently established campus-based Doctorate of Public Health. The proposed campus-based PhD in Public Health with a concentration in Social Work will allow students to utilize the existing resources of other programs on the University of Montana’s campus, including those of the Master of Social Work program.
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Signature/Date

College/School Dean: Reed Humphrey 1/4/2019

Chief Academic Officer:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost*: Jon Harbor 1/8/2019

Flagship President*: Seth Bodnar 1/11/2019

*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.