VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Posted May 11, 2023

Position Title: Director of Online Initiatives and Academic Collaborations
Location: Helena, Montana
Salary Range: Approximately $85,000 to $95,000 depending on experience.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education invites applications for the position of Director of Online Initiatives and Academic Collaborations.

This position is a full-time, term-contract position renewable annually in accordance with Board of Regents personnel policies. The position is eligible for employee benefits (health insurance, sick leave and vacation leave, state holidays, retirement program, staff & dependent tuition waivers in accordance with state law and Board of Regents policy).

Description of Work Unit

The Montana University System is the state-supported system of higher education in Montana governed by the Board of Regents of Higher Education and administered by the Commissioner of Higher Education. The MUS delivers an array of teaching, learning, research, and support services to more than 45,000 enrolled college and university students across 16 campuses in Montana. The MUS includes two preeminent Research 1 universities (Montana State University and the University of Montana), four regional comprehensive universities, a number of two-year institutions, and three community colleges.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is in Helena, Montana, the state’s capital city. Helena is located along the Rocky Mountains continental divide near the scenic Missouri River to the north of Yellowstone Park and to the southeast of Glacier National Park.

The Director of Online Initiatives and Academic Collaborations reports to the Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, and Student Affairs (ARSA) for the Montana University System and works closely with ARSA staff, as well as personnel from all campuses in the University System.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Director of Online Initiatives and Academic Collaborations provides leadership for all Montana University System efforts to expand online and hybrid academic opportunities. The Director provides leadership for the Montana University System eLearning Advisory Council, oversees deployment and collaboration on learning technologies, including an ongoing effort to move to a single system LMS across MUS campuses, and leads the
Montana Online Course Exchange, an initiative to provide a single catalog of online courses, with simplified and streamlined enrollment, billing, financial aid, and transcript exchange, across MUS campuses. Success in this role requires developing and strengthening partnerships with campus and industry stakeholders, coordinating complex campus and OCHE teams to advance strategic initiatives, and careful attention to detail and timelines to ensure and advance professionalization of the ARSA Division’s activities.

**Direct: Online Initiatives**

*Identify, implement, manage, and assess activities, tools, and policies that improve Montana students’ access to and the effectiveness of the online, hybrid, and hyflex course and program offerings of Montana institutions.*

- Convene and coordinate the MUS eLearning Advisory Council
- Develop, recommend, and implement strategies to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of the online, hybrid, and hyflex course and program offerings of MUS campuses.
- Develop strategies to meet specific online learning objectives established by the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner of Higher Education.
- Advise the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, board of regents, legislature and campuses regarding the online learning strategic landscape and emerging regulatory requirements that might impact the Montana University System’s online offerings.
- Coordinate and/or develop trainings, events, conferences, and other strategies to increase adoption by MUS campuses, faculty, and staff of effective online learning pedagogies, technologies, and approaches and to improve compliance with regulatory requirements for online learning.
- Provide regular updates to the Commissioner, Board, Legislature, and other stakeholders as required on the Montana University System’s online learning initiatives.
- Serve as the designated OCHE representative on regional and national online learning related initiatives, including the WICHE Collaborative for Education Technologies, among others.

**Direct: Learning Technologies**

*Plan, coordinate, and operationalize system technology initiatives to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and increase the efficiency of MUS academic operations.*

- Coordinate effective implementation and faculty/staff uptake of a single learning management solution for MUS campuses.
- In coordination with the MUS eLearning Advisory Council and MUS CIOs, identify, guide, and execute other shared procurement and operations opportunities for learning technologies.
- In coordination with the ARSA Deputy Commissioner and other ARSA Directors, develop a teaching and learning agenda for the OCHE, providing support and guidance for campus and faculty communities to adopt and scale evidence-based pedagogical approaches and quality open educational resources. The Director of Online Initiatives and Academic Technologies will take particular leadership in developing programming and tools related to the adoption and effective use of learning technologies and online/hybrid pedagogies.
Direct: Academic Collaborations

Lead the Montana Online Course Exchange, developing and implementing strategies that leverage the exchange to deepen multi-campus collaborations that enhance the efficiency of MUS campuses and provide new opportunities to Montana students.

- Provide operational, project management, and policy leadership for the campus teams that guide the ongoing operations of the Montana Online Course Exchange. These teams typically include but are not limited to, campus representatives for online learning, registrars, financial aid, admissions, veteran services, student accounts, and academic affairs.
- Develop and coordinate an exchange governance structure to develop and review exchange policies.
- Coordinate interactions with vendors that support the exchange and lead any related procurement efforts.
- Provide ongoing reports to the Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner, campus leadership, the regents and state government leadership on the Exchange and the progress of MUS academic collaborations.
- Coordinate deployment of the exchange to new contexts, including dual enrollment, tribal and private college collaborations, and program sharing.
- In coordination with the ARSA DC, facilitate campus academic leadership and faculty to identify and deploy high-value use cases for course and program sharing.
- In coordination with OCHE and campus marketing staff, develop resources and coordinate efforts to communicate the exchange and MUS academic collaborations to a variety of stakeholders.
- Develop and deploy resources to facilitate multi-campus academic partnerships.
- Be the main OCHE contact and driver of MUS participation in the National Association of System Heads “Network Improvement Community” on curricular flexibility.

Support and Coordinate: Industry Partnerships

- Support the ARSA DC and other ARSA staff in coordinating program development aligned with industry partners, with particular leadership when such program development leverages online pedagogies or multi-campus academic partnerships.

Qualifications

- Demonstrated experience of online learning technologies and pedagogies.
- Demonstrated understanding of higher education issues, with particular emphasis on academic affairs and workforce development issues.
- Demonstrated ability to collect and analyze data and to make data-informed decisions.
- Professional experience with higher education systems and/or higher education administration.
- A demonstrated orientation toward action and solutions.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Excellent teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Capacity to work effectively with plans and policies of the Board of Regents, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Montana University System colleagues.
Education and Experience

A master’s degree and at least three years of work experience in higher education administration or a closely related field is required. A terminal degree is preferred.

Application Requirements

Please submit (1.) a cover letter that addresses the qualifications, duties and responsibilities listed in the vacancy announcement, (2.) a comprehensive resume, and (3.) a list of three professional references. Applications may be mailed to OCHE (Attention: Human Resources), PO Box 203201, Helena, MT 59620-3201, or emailed to OCHEhr@montana.edu, or submitted on the State of Montana Careers website (https://statecareers.mt.gov/). Electronic submission of application materials is encouraged.

The position is open until filled. Candidates should submit applications by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 8, 2023, to receive early consideration in an initial screening of applications. This position is eligible for veterans’ preference in accordance with state law. Approval will be obtained before contacting the candidates’ current employer.

Reasonable Accommodations: Under state and federal law qualified applicants with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Modifications or adjustments may be provided to assist applicants to compete in the recruitment and selection process. An applicant must request an accommodation when needed. If you need any such accommodation, contact the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education at 406-449-9155. TDD users may use the relay service by dialing 711.

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