ITEM 136-2703-R0907 **Authorization to Change Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Practical Nursing Program and Establish an Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ASN); MSU Billings College of Technology**

THAT: Board of Regents of Higher Education authorizes MSU Billings College of Technology to establish a new degree: Associate of Science Degree: Nursing (ASN).

EXPLANATION: MSU Billings College of Technology (COT) seeks underline substantive change approval from the Montana Board of Regents to change its existing AAS degree in Practical Nursing to align with the common curricula for two-year nursing programs adopted by the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. These curriculum changes permit students the option to complete their Associate of Applied Science Degree: Practical Nursing following the completion of 50 credits.

In addition to this change the MSU Billings COT requests Level II approval for the addition of an Associate of Science Degree: Nursing (ASN). This change will bring its program into conformity with the common 72-credit ASN curriculum for two-year nursing programs recently adopted by the Montana Office of the Commissioner for Higher Education.

In 1994, the well-established Billings Vo-Tech Practical Nursing program merged fully into MSU Billings campus system during the Board of Regents' reorganization. Since that time the MSU Billings COT has been graduating an average of 37 Practical Nursing students a year. MSU Billings COT students have maintained a pass rate on the Licensed Practical Nurse exam above the national average 12 out of the 14 years.

When the COT merged with the parent MSU Billings campus, students were allowed to move freely back and forth for general education credits, online courses, and student services. In 2004-06, this flexibility also allowed 59 Billings-site baccalaureate nursing students from MSU Bozeman's program to transfer into the Practical Nursing program after unsuccessful application to MSU Bozeman upper division nursing selection criteria.