

LEVEL II BOARD OF REGENTS ITEMS

CURRICULUM PROPOSALS

1. Overview

The University of Montana Western seeks to create a new Equine Studies Department incorporating programs and faculty that currently reside in its Business and Technology Department. Equine programs began at Montana Western in 2002. They were originally housed in the Business and Technology Department because the initial A.A.S. in Equine Studies had a strong business focus. Later program additions have been more interdisciplinary in nature with a strong focus on natural science, equine skills, and sometimes business. The program has grown and diversified to the extent that a new department would benefit both the program and its students with no additional costs to the campus.

2. Provide a one paragraph description of the proposed program. Be specific about what degree, major, minor or option is sought.

A new department is sought.

3. Need

a. To what specific need is the institution responding in developing the proposed program?

There is a need for an interdisciplinary Equine Studies Department because the current equine programs and faculty do not have a close fit with any existing department, including the Business and Technology Department where they are currently housed. The number of faculty and students are comparable to those of some other current departments.

b. How will students and any other affected constituencies be served by the proposed program?

Students would be better served by establishing a new department since the new department would better indicate to potential students, potential employers, and graduate and professional schools the interdisciplinary nature of the equine degree programs. For example, a number of current students are interested in graduate school in the sciences or preparation for veterinary school. They are therefore sometimes reluctant to sign up for a degree program housed in the Business and Technology Department.

c. What is the anticipated demand for the program? How was this determined?

There were a total of 78 students enrolled in the A.A.S. in Equine Studies and the A.A.S. and B.S. in Natural Horsemanship in the fall of 2009. Additional numbers of equine students were enrolled in equine option areas within other campus degree programs. This increase has been from an initial enrollment of 7 students in the fall of 2002, the first year of the A.A.S. in Equine Studies. Student interest in the programs remains strong.

4. Institutional and System Fit

a. What is the connection between the proposed program and existing programs at the institution?

The current Equine Studies Program would become an interdisciplinary Equine Studies Department. As such, it would continue to incorporate much coursework in its programs from other departments in addition to general education.

b. Will approval of the proposed program require changes to any existing programs at the institution? If so, please describe.

No. The programs will remain the same within the new department.

- c. Describe what differentiates this program from other, closely related programs at the institution (if appropriate).
This new department will contain programs that are all interdisciplinary in nature containing significant natural science, social science, business, and/or equine skills coursework.
 - d. How does the proposed program serve to advance the strategic goals of the institution?
This new department would contain programs that have been a natural fit for a university in a rural setting in Montana with access to horse care and training facilities in the private sector. These programs have led to a more socially diverse student body and have improved relationships with the community.
 - e. Describe the relationship between the proposed program and any similar programs within the Montana University System. In cases of substantial duplication, explain the need for the proposed program at an additional institution. Describe any efforts that were made to collaborate with these similar programs; and if no efforts were made, explain why. If articulation or transfer agreements have been developed for the substantially duplicated programs, please include the agreement(s) as part of the documentation.
Montana Western faculty have worked with the faculty of Miles Community College to ease transfer of MCC students to Montana Western after those students have completed a two-year degree at MCC.
5. Program Details
- a. Provide a detailed description of the proposed curriculum. Where possible, present the information in the form intended to appear in the catalog or other publications. NOTE: In the case of two-year degree programs and certificates of applied science, the curriculum should include enough detail to determine if the characteristics set out in Regents' Policy 301.12 have been met.
There are no new curricula
 - b. Describe the planned implementation of the proposed program, including estimates of numbers of students at each stage.
The new department, if approved by the BOR, would be phased in during the 2010-11 academic year. Numbers of students are expected to be stable to growing over the next several years.
6. Resources
- a. Will additional faculty resources be required to implement this program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.
No
 - b. Are other, additional resources required to ensure the success of the proposed program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.
The new department, as with most departments at Montana Western, would have no staff paid with state funds. As with all current department chairs at Montana Western, the chair of the new department would receive no release time or compensation for additional services. The small operating budget would come from the budget currently assigned to the Equine Programs in the Business and Technology Department. Costs to students of the program compared with similar programs across the nation have been kept low due to the generosity of private industry, primarily La Cense Montana, which has provided facilities and employee assistance to the program. Possibilities for the expansion of this support from other individuals, companies, and foundations are currently being pursued.
7. Assessment

How will the success of the program be measured?

The success of the new department will primarily be measured by its success at attracting and graduating students; maintaining current and developing new relationships with private industry; and attracting external funds to enhance the primary teaching mission of the university.

8. Process Leading to Submission

Describe the process of developing and approving the proposed program. Indicate, where appropriate, involvement by faculty, students, community members, potential employers, accrediting agencies, etc.

The Equine Faculty initially discussed this with the administration of the university and then went through Faculty Senate for its recommendation. Faculty Senate recommended to the administration that the new department be approved. Students, faculty, staff, and community members were all involved in the discussions leading to the Faculty Senate positive recommendation. This included community members with close ties to the equine industry. There was general agreement that this would be a positive move.