

From: Deputy Commissioner John Cech  
To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Level II items that are being proposed for your review and action at the May 2017 meeting of the Board of Regents. These items have been submitted by the campuses and reviewed by the Chief Academic Officers of the Montana University System and community colleges. OCHE staff has reviewed the items and provided a short analysis below relying on information submitted by the campuses. For more information and specific details on each item, please see the supporting documentation included on the Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee agenda.

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### **Montana State University**

#### **Individual Interdisciplinary Program Ph.D.**

Montana State University proposes a new Ph.D., Individual Interdisciplinary Program (IIP), to serve students who seek a degree that is problem-oriented rather than discipline or technique-oriented. The program curriculum is individualized and developed by the student's graduate committee within one year of application to the program. The IIP is not intended to be a replacement for students' who can receive a doctoral degree in well-established programs. The IIP will encourage integration and collaboration among the different colleges but only in the context that a single discipline cannot achieve what the student's program of study proposes.

The Graduate School anticipates accepting the first cohort of no more than three students Fall 2017. The customized curriculum will draw upon existing course work, so no additional funds are required to develop new courses. An IIP similar to this proposed program exists at the University of Montana, but there is substantial room for differentiation rather than duplication since both the institutions have different discipline emphases.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

### **Montana State University Northern**

#### **College of Health Sciences**

MSU Northern proposes the formation of a College of Health Sciences to incorporate existing nursing, allied health, and health promotion programs. The mission of the college will be to provide professional health care education for a diverse student population in north central Montana and surrounding areas. The current structure of the one College of Education, Arts & Sciences and Nursing poses challenges to collective bargaining and the hiring of a qualified head of nursing. A separate College of Health Sciences will enhance both Colleges' ability to serve their distinctly diverse student and faculty cohorts.

No new hires are required for the creation of the College and space is available on campus to house the college. The current Director of Nursing, Chair and staff would transition into the College without further changes to personnel, equipment or space requirements. The programs needed to establish the College of Health Sciences are already in place on MSU Northern's campus, so no new relationships in the MUS system will be created by the proposal.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

## **University of Montana**

### **Retitle the Montana Center for Childhood Trauma to the National Native Children's Trauma Center**

University of Montana requests authorization to retitle the Montana Center for Childhood Trauma to the National Native Children's Trauma Center to match the center name with the name of the grant that funds it. The former name is no longer descriptive of the center's mission or its focus on Native children. No new resources are requested to make the change and there is no concern over the center's name in relation to other MUS centers or programs.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

## **Montana State University Billings and University of Montana (Joint Proposal)**

### **Occupational Therapy M.S.**

In a collaborative effort MSU Billings and UM request degree granting authority for a single master of science program in Occupational Therapy (OT). A consortium model has been developed for this program so as to share resources, a single student cohort, and program accreditation. The curriculum proposed for the M.S. in OT is largely driven by accreditation requirements that mandate minimum standards (American Occupational Therapy Association). Several of the courses will be taught interprofessionally with other existing programs.

A public university Master of OT program is needed to serve Montana's growing population and the surrounding region. Therapists surveyed in Montana overwhelmingly believed there was a need for an OT program. According to the Montana Office of Rural Health/Area Health Education Center, the 2015 estimate of employed occupational therapists in Montana is 360 and the 2025-estimated need is 489 demonstrating the need to graduate additional occupational therapists to fill this gap and replace the current OT workforce as they age out of active employment. A 2016 feasibility study indicated a high demand for an OT program at UM specifically and in the MUS generally. It is assumed there will be cohorts of 20 students at UM-Missoula and cohorts of 20 at MSU Billings beginning 2018/2019.

To meet the needs of a new program on two campuses, four faculty members and one program chair will be hired between the collaborating campuses. The campuses expect to seek appropriate funding through a combination of private gifts, state agency support, internal resource reallocation and public-private partnerships with area health care providers where possible. There are currently no degree programs in Occupational Therapy within the Montana University System.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve*

## **University of Montana**

### **Department of Occupational Therapy**

To house the master of science degree in Occupational Therapy if approved, the University of Montana requests authorization to create a Department of Occupational Therapy within the School of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Science in the College of Health Professions & Biomedical Sciences.

*OCHE Staff Recommendation: Approve – contingent upon the approval of the Occupational Therapy M.S.*