ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENTS

DATE: August 24, 2022

TO: Montana Board of Regents

CC: Commissioner of Higher Education
                   Chief Academic Officers

FROM: Brock Tessman, Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, and Student Affairs

RE: 2022-2023 Academic Priorities and Planning Statements

Contained in this memorandum are the 2022/23 Academic Priority and Planning Statement submissions from Montana University System campuses and Montana's community colleges. These statements are meant to inform the Montana Board of Regents regarding institutions' academic directions, internal academic prioritization processes, and upcoming academic proposals.

- **Montana State University Billings**

- **Montana State University Bozeman**

- **Great Falls College Montana State University**

- **Montana State University Northern**

- **The University of Montana Missoula**

- **Montana Technological University**

- **The University of Montana-Western**

- **Helena College University of Montana**

Montana State University Billings

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than <u>5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th, 2022</u>.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the "Request to Plan" portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the "Request to Plan" stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. <u>**Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**</u>

   Led by Chancellor Stefani Hicswa and her leadership team, and in alignment with the institutional strategic plan, Montana State University (MSU) Billings has prioritized initiatives that promote student success, with a clear focus on improving student outcomes. Selected initiatives are summarized below, all of which rely on strong cross-divisional partnerships and collaborations.

   <u>2022–2027 Retention and Graduation Plan</u>. Charged by Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, MSU Billings developed a five-year retention and graduation plan (2022–2027). The plan sets five-year and annual targets for retention rates and graduation rates. The five-year targets are to be achieved by Fall 2027. For retention rates, two high-level metrics were chosen to establish institutional targets. These are Fall-to-Spring and Fall-to-Fall retention rates for all new students starting in the Fall semester. The Fall-to-Spring retention rate target is 90% and the Fall-to-Fall retention rate target is 70%, to be achieved by Fall 2027. Similarly, 150% graduation rate targets were established for new, full-time freshman and transfer students starting in the fall term. The 150% graduation rate for freshman students is set at 55% and the rate for transfer students is set at 70%, to be achieved by Fall 2027. To achieve these retention and graduation rate goals, ten initiatives have been proposed. Each initiative has a number of action items designed to enhance the student experience at MSU Billings, leading to improved retention and graduation rates. For each action item, responsible individuals/teams, timeline for implementation, desired outcomes, and metrics for measuring the outcomes have been identified. The ten initiatives are as follows: (1) Establish strategic and systematized data-informed communication interventions; (2) Improve visibility and marketing of student support programs; (3) Develop a holistic and shared advising model; (4) Mitigate barriers for matriculation, registration, and course scheduling; (5) Implement high-impact student success strategies in the classroom; (6) Implement strategies to improve degree completion; (7) Redesign the transfer student experience; (8) Implement high-impact practices to address DFWI rates; (9) Cultivate strategies to increase students' sense of belonging; and (10) Strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion. Details of the initiatives and action items are included in the plan.

   <u>Interstate Passport</u>. MSU Billings has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) to join the Interstate Passport Network. Interstate

Passport is a national program that enables seamless block transfer of lower-division general education requirements based on an agreed upon set of learning outcomes. Starting in Fall 2022, MSU Billings will be prepared to accept passport blocks from transfer students, as well as award passport blocks to MSU Billings students who complete lower-division general education requirements. The completion of this project was enabled through strong collaborative work between the Faculty General Education Committee of the Academic Senate, University Registrar, Institutional Research, and Assessment and Accreditation. MSU Billings is proud to be the first four-year institution in Montana to join WICHE's Interstate Passport Network.

Montana 10. MSU Billings is honored to be the third institution of higher education in Montana to launch the Montana 10 (MT10) Scholars program. MSU Billings will have MT10 Scholars on both the University and City College campuses, welcoming the first cohort in Fall 2022. Working closely with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and other MT10 sites, the MSU Billings team has created a formal program application, developed an intake flow chart, established data/cohort tracking processes, and launched a program website. We are working to fill the program to the allowed capacity of 100 University campus students and 70 City College students before the Fall 2022 census. MSU Billings has established an advisory team comprised of a dynamic team of leaders from both campuses including Financial Aid, Admissions, New Student Services, Registrar's office, Advising, Housing, tutoring, TRIO, and the Native American Achievement Center. We will continue to identify gaps in matriculation and other areas to support the MT10 Scholars with wrap-around student support services to increase retention and graduation efforts at MSU Billings. Additionally, members of the advisory team will be actively engaged in the Montana 10 Academy in partnership with SHEEO and MDRC. The university faculty, staff, and administration are incredibly excited to launch the MT10 Scholars program and share this opportunity with new and prospective students.

Second Chance Pell. MSU Billings has been chosen (along with three other MUS institutions) to participate in the third round of the Second Chance Pell Experiment, an initiative launched by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides incarcerated individuals access to post-secondary education opportunities and federal need-based Pell Grants. These programs have been shown to reduce recidivism, support economic development, contribute to workforce development, and enhance community safety. Through a partnership between MSU Billings, the Montana Women's Prison, and Montana State Prison, MSU Billings will enroll up to 20 Pell Grant eligible students into the online Associate of Applied Sciences in Business program and the online Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts program beginning in academic year 2022-2023. As a former recipient of several Department of Justice Second Chance Act grants, MSU Billings has experience in delivering educational and reentry services to incarcerated students in partnership with Montana Correctional Enterprises and the Montana Department of Corrections. MSU Billings understands the logistics involved in working with correctional facilities, the educational needs of incarcerated students, and the challenges formerly incarcerated individuals face in reintegration. Providing incarcerated individuals opportunities to participate in higher education aligns with the university's mission to deliver a transformative education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed.

Restructuring efforts to improve academic support services. MSU Billings has engaged in a comprehensive review of the academic support services that are essential to achieving our desired student success outcomes. As a result, through an internal reorganization within the Division of Academic Affairs, four existing areas will be clustered within a newly created Office of Academic Success. The Office of Academic Success will be composed of the following areas: (1) Registrar's Office, (2) Advising Center, (3) Academic Support Center, and (4) Career and Employment Services. The explicit goal of this reorganization is to promote synergies, closer partnerships and collaborations, as well as efficiencies to better serve the

academic success needs of MSU Billings students. The Office of Academic Success will be led by the Executive Director of Academic Success, which reports directly to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The leadership within each of the four areas within the Office of Academic Success will report directly to the Executive Director of Academic Success.

Concurrent with the structural reorganization noted above, MSU Billings will redesign its advising structure to better serve the full spectrum of advising, academic support, and career exploration needs of our students. Rather than assign each student to only one academic advisor, each student will be assigned to an "Academic Success Team" that will have the totality of the expertise needed to support the student's academic success needs. Each Academic Success Team will have four core members: (1) faculty advisor, (2) professional advisor, (3) career specialist, and (4) academic support specialist. Together, this team can effectively assist students with the full spectrum of routine and specialized advising, career exploration, tutoring, and other academic support needs. Depending on the student, a fifth professional advisor with additional specialized knowledge and training may be added to the Academic Success Team. This will be the case for American Indian students, students in TRIO and Montana 10, Military Affiliated students, student athletes, international students, and students in the Honors Program.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

At MSU Billings, we follow a collaborative, inclusive, consultative, and transparent process for establishing academic and institutional priorities, ensuring that all constituents are engaged in the decision-making process. Forthcoming program proposals follow a transparent process. Faculty bring initial ideas and plans to the Academic Senate, where the merits and justification for forthcoming program proposals are thoroughly discussed. The large academic and institutional priorities noted above emerged as a result of extensive input provided by all academic colleges, including the faculty, academic deans, associate deans, and academic directors, as well as input from other divisions of the university. As an example, the 2022–2027 Retention and Graduation Plan noted under #1 above was initially drafted by the Retention and Graduation Council, which included a broad cross-divisional representation of faculty, staff, directors, and vice chancellors. Feedback was then actively sought from key constituent groups including the Academic Senate, Associated Students of MSU Billings, and other leadership teams within all university divisions. Similarly, for each of the other priorities noted, a core team of individuals representing appropriate constituencies work together to advance the goals of the initiative.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

Through close engagements with students, advisory boards, employers, and the community, MSU Billings remains responsive to student and workforce development needs. Several potential academic programs are now in the initial stages of campus discussion, consultation, and consideration. A few are highlighted here. In response to requests from local employers and small business owners, MSU Billings is considering developing a Certificate in Small and Family Business Management. The certificate will be a series of 6–8 courses designed to provide individuals involved in managing and operating small/family businesses the knowledge needed to achieve long-term business sustainability. In response to requests from local business leaders and local business professionals, MSU Billings is considering developing a graduate-level Certificate in Executive Leadership and Management. This graduate certificate will be designed to meet the needs of local mid-career professionals, and will have online and immersive in-person components.

Responding to student demand, we are considering developing a <u>Psychology Bachelor to Master 3 + 2 program</u>. Also responding to student demand, MSU Billings is considering developing a <u>Global Studies Certificate</u>. The elimination of our International Studies Minor a few years ago created a gap for students who aim to add a global component to their studies. This is particularly beneficial to students in fields such as Business, Art, History, and Political Science, and also to students who participate in study abroad programs.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

   As detailed below under #5, from 2018 through 2020, MSU Billings engaged in a comprehensive Strategic Program Alignment (SPA) process, which led to the identification of 82 academic programs to be placed on moratorium and phased out. Most of the programs phased out had zero or unsustainable student enrollment levels. Since the completion of the SPA process, we annually monitor a variety of metrics for all academic programs to ensure that programs are not only viable and sustainable, but that they demonstrate effective student outcomes, including retention and completion rates. This ongoing, data-informed monitoring process has established a clear and objective mechanism by which additional academic programs may be designated as candidates to be phased out.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

   From 2018 through 2020, MSU Billings engaged in a comprehensive two-phase Strategic Program Alignment (SPA) process. This process established the institutional foundation for making decisions related to areas in which new programs should be developed. Through this process, MSU Billings generated a framework to guide the classification of programs as (i) maintain, (ii) integrate/invigorate, or (iii) phase out. Programs were further assessed systematically and designated as candidates for intensive review based on enrollment, retention, and completion trends. These processes culminated in identification of programs that would be maintained or phased out, as well as identification of programs that needed revisions. As a result of SPA, 135 programs were selected to be maintained and received specific charges to analyze the curriculum with the goals of streamlining offerings and providing clear academic roadmaps and course rotation schedules. Importantly, SPA identified 82 academic programs to be placed on moratorium and phased out. Since the completion of the SPA process, MSU Billings has been very intentional about offering new academic programs that are responsive to the needs of students, employers, community, and emerging workforce trends. In addition, MSU Billings annually monitors key academic program metrics to ensure the viability of its academic programs. Moreover, each academic program undergoes a comprehensive Academic Program Review (APR) process every seven years.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

   In academic year 2021-2022, MSU Billings completed its Mid-Cycle Review (Year 3). In August 2021, we submitted our Mid-Cycle Report (https://www.msubillings.edu/assessment/pdf/MSUB%20Mid%20Cycle%20Report%202021%20final.pdf)

to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). This was followed by a successful virtual site visit in Fall 2021. The entire campus, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators were fully engaged with the site visit and benefited from productive interactions with the visiting team members. The Mid-Cycle Evaluation report provided to the campus was invaluable in addressing the two prior recommendations, as well as providing observations related to activities in support of mission fulfillment, student achievement, and programmatic assessment. Based on the mid-cycle review, prior Recommendation 4: Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability is now fulfilled, and prior Recommendation 2: Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability continues as Recommendation 1: Fall 2021 Mid-Cycle Review to ensure MSU Billings will continue its commitment to stabilize its administrative team (https://www.msubillings.edu/assessment/pdf/Commission_Letter-Montana%20State%20University%20-%20Billings-1_18_2022.pdf). Since the NWCCU action, we have made additional progress in further stabilizing the administrative team at MSU Billings. After a thorough national search, Tami Haaland was appointed as the permanent Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

In the upcoming year, MSU Billings will engage in planning and activities to prepare for our Year 6 review (Standard 2 - Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review), which will take place in Fall 2024.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

Led by Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, MSU Billings continues to make significant progress toward advancing the goals of the institution's strategic plan (https://www.msubillings.edu/chancellor/pdf/MSUB-Strategic-Plan.pdf). The strategic plan (2019–2026) established the institutional vision, mission, and values. In addition, the plan identified four Core Themes, each with its own objectives and subobjectives to advance various institutional priorities. The Core Themes are:

   I.   Build educational programs to support student needs
   II. Progressively grow the university
   III. Strengthen relationships with the community to enhance partnership opportunities
   IV. Unify, invigorate, and engage in MSUB's structure and culture

Guided by the mission statement, the Core Themes establish a strong foundation to direct the work of the institution. Each Core Theme contains a major objective and subobjectives that operationalize the work. Each subobjective is overseen by the Chancellor or a Vice Chancellor. Teams of strategically selected individuals work on each subobjective to ensure that ongoing progress is made. To track and report progress, mid-year and annual progress reports are submitted for each subobjective. Each year, the Chancellor's Operational Plan gives additional visibility to one or more subobjectives of the strategic plan. For example, in academic year 2021-2022, a comprehensive five-year Retention and Graduation Plan was formulated in support of subobjective 2.2 Improve student retention and graduation rates. Overall, significant progress was made in academic year 2021-2022 for each of the strategic plan subobjectives. Work and progress on the strategic plan will continue in academic year 2022-2023. It is anticipated that MSU Billings will start a campus process to develop a new strategic plan in academic year 2025-2026.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than <u>5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th, 2022.</u>**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the "Request to Plan" portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the "Request to Plan" stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. <u>**Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**</u>

The academic priorities for Montana State University align with the university's strategic plan, *Choosing Promise*. The plan consists of three areas of Intentional Focus, each supported by several goals, objectives and metrics.

Choosing Promise: Montana State University's Strategic Plan

INTENTIONAL FOCUS 1: Drive Transformational Learning Experiences Creating Outstanding Educational Outcomes for All Students

Montana State University students are challenged and changed by their active participation in high quality, innovative experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate level, becoming learned professionals and global citizens.

GOAL 1.1: Broaden access for underrepresented populations and increase academic success for all students through excellence in undergraduate education.

As the state's land-grant university, Montana State invites participation in exceptional higher education, widens participation of under-represented student populations, and improves student success outcomes overall.

GOAL 1.2: Expand high-quality graduate education

Montana State University will enroll and graduate more degree-seeking students at the graduate level and enhance the quality of graduate degree programs.

GOAL 1.3: Implement evidence-based high quality, high impact teaching and learning practices for every student

Montana State University improves the curricular and co-curricular experience with demonstrated educational practices integrated with discovery and engagement that enhance learning and develop engaged global citizens and informed professionals.

INTENTIONAL FOCUS 2: Improve Lives and Society through Research, Creativity, and Scholarship

Montana State University faculty, staff, and students are known nationally and internationally for discovering, applying, testing, and sharing knowledge and creative works that expand understanding and positively impact lives and society.

GOAL 2.1: Enhance the significance and impact of scholarship

Montana State University research and creative activity demonstrates impact on the state's and the world's pressing challenges through application of our discoveries in communities, industry, and organizations, as well as through academic indicators of the expansion of knowledge.

GOAL 2.2: Expand interdisciplinary scholarship

Montana State University's interdisciplinary expertise as the University of the Yellowstone™ carries unique possibilities for inference, translation, and impact. Our research and creative activity throughout the university increasingly spans traditional disciplinary boundaries to solve the world's pressing challenges.

GOAL 2.3: Strengthen institutional reputation in scholarship

Montana State University's success in scholarship results in increased state, national, and international prominence.

GOAL 2.4: Elevate expectations for scholarship

Montana State University faculty, staff, and students hold themselves to the highest standards of research and creative outcomes.

INTENTIONAL FOCUS 3: Expand Mutually Beneficial and Responsive Engagement for the Advancement of Montana

Montana State University students, faculty and staff work together and with partners across the state and around the world to enhance the well-being of individuals, organizations, and communities.

GOAL 3.1: Increase mutually beneficial collaborations with Tribal nations and partners

Montana State University works cooperatively with Tribal governments, colleges, community groups, and Indigenous students to develop and achieve beneficial outcomes.

GOAL 3.2: Grow mutually beneficial partnerships across Montana

Montana State University and its partners attain collaboratively defined outcomes that improve the lives and livelihoods of Montanans.

GOAL 3.3: Foster a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, and individual growth

Montana State University and its students, faculty, and staff engage in a reciprocal relationship that values each member and improves the university environment.

The focus areas during both FY22 and FY23 are Goals 1.1, 1.2, 2.4, and 3.3.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

Montana State's strategic plan Choosing Promise was developed over 12 months with widespread participation across the campus and local community. A ten-member Strategic Planning Committee, comprising faculty, staff, administrators, and a student, met regularly to design, receive feedback, and rewrite. Hundreds of stakeholders on and off campus drafted and commented on language through an ongoing anonymous web forum, multiple public charrettes, one-on-one meetings, departmental, affinity, employee and student governance group meetings, and email submissions. The final plan adopted by University Council in November, 2018, features a mission statement, vision, core values, three areas of intentional focus, and attendant goals, metrics, and actions.

Choosing Promise specifies university-level direction, outcomes, and actions, and leaves room for more local and specific goal-setting and action in alignment with the university's goals. Since 2019, colleges and other units across campus have developed and implemented their own alignment documents with input from their stakeholders. Strategic investment proposals must include evidence of alignment with the plan as well as assessment strategies. The university-level direction lends scope to academic programming, student activities, student, faculty, and staff services and administrative support. Hence, it serves as the academic plan to guide and align new developments in academic planning across colleges.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

Montana State University's anticipated new academic programs and research centers/institutes are described in the AY22-23 Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet. The planned programs have either proceeded through MSU's internal review processes or are planned to be introduced during AY22-23. During this review, all are asked to align with and are evaluated against the strategic plan priorities outlined in *Choosing Promise*.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

One planned moratorium: B.S. in Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems – Livestock Production Option.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

   Montana State's proposals for new degrees and options include interdisciplinary degrees, expansion of options within established and successful programs, and modalities beyond traditional face-to-face instruction.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

   Montana State is currently developing the Year Six report on Policies, Regulations and Financial Review for our accreditor, NWCCU. Report will be submitted in July 2023.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

   Montana State's current five-year Strategic Plan, *Choosing Promise*, was enacted in 2019. During AY 22-23 we will continue our efforts to assess and implement the goals in the current strategic plan.

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

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1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

Programming
Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Foster an environment that expands enrollment and celebrates student resiliency.

The results of an in-depth process to show the current state of programming at Great Falls College illustrated the capacity to add programs that complement the current programming mix, satisfy industry demands, and provide livable wages. With modifications to current facility space, there is also room to house the programs. In addition, Great Falls College has identified programs that could increase capacity of its offerings through use of OneMSU, dual enrollment academies, workforce partnerships, and on-site through additional cohort offerings or space modifications.

Persistence and Retention
Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Align human, physical, and/or financial resources to support strategic plan initiatives.

Beginning July 1, 2022, the Director of Instruction will oversee general education, pre-program and student support systems in place at Great Falls College. The re-alignment shifts some operational responsibilities to provide time to focus on using data to design processes that support continuous quality improvement in student persistence and retention.

Assessment of Student Learning
Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Priority: Seek and encourage efficiency and innovation in the work of the college.

Great Falls College spent the last couple of years developing qualitative course-level assessment practices. Over the next few years, the college will add quantitative success measures for assessment and create processes that provide opportunities to make decisions based on the information to "close the loop."

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

Programming
The Chief Academic Officer used program capacity data to summarize the current state of programming at Great Falls College MSU. The information gathered was shared with stakeholders across campus including department chairs, faculty, administrators, key individuals in the Montana State University system, and development board members. Regular updates to the academic plan were made at committee meetings including Academic Affairs Leadership Team, CPBAC, and Faculty Senate as well as at Spring Convocation 2022 to all employees of Great Falls College MSU.

Much of the work was organized around five discrete but interrelated components of the research effort:
    Component 1: Current programming mix
    Component 2: Educational trends
    Component 3: Labor and Industry Trends/Academic Program Review
    Component 4: Academic structures and resources
    Component 5: Conclusions and recommendations

The first three components focused heavily on current academic programs and how they align with educational and labor and industry trends. The fourth component centered on data provided annually through the program review process and aligned the organizational structure to the strategic plan priorities and the current educational and labor and industry trends. The final component was a summation of all the previous analysis to give recommendations to optimize programming efforts over the next five years.

Persistence and Retention
The re-alignment of duties and responsibilities occurred over an 8-month timeframe with the Executive Team and other committees. The new responsibilities ensure time is devoted to monitor course persistence and retention from semester to semester and year to year.

Assessment of Student Learning
To meet the NWCCU 2020 Standards 1.B.1. and 1.B3., the college will need to continue to develop an ongoing and systematic evaluation and inclusive planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign

resources, and improve student learning and achievement. Implementing quantitative measurements into the assessment process at the course and program levels, the college will meet the standards.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

Proposed new associate degree programs
Based on the current programming mix, industry trends, state and local industry demands, and enrollment opportunities, the following programs, expansions, and opportunities arose.

Five new CAS and/or AAS programs will be implemented over the next 5 years.
- Early Childhood Education (fall 2022, implement fall 2023)
- Individualized Technical Studies (fall 2022, implement fall 2023)
- Public Safety Specialist (fall 2023, implement fall 2024)
- Veterinary Technician (fall 2023, implement fall 2025)
- Veterinary Assistant (fall 2023, implement fall 2025)

Program Directors overseeing 2 different healthcare programs will embark on feasibility studies to potentially add an additional cohort within 5 years.
- Dental Hygienist
- RN Nursing

Program Directors overseeing 2 healthcare programs will partner with OneMSU colleges and other MUS colleges to expand healthcare-related educational opportunities to Montanans.
- Dental Assistant
- Physical Therapy Assistant

4 programs will be considered for new workforce partnerships
- Youth Build
- Montana Build
- Commercial Driver's License
- Apprenticeship to Associates Pathways

A minimum of 5 Dual Enrollment Academies will be developed over the next 5 years. For consideration are the following:
- Cybersecurity
- General education
- Elementary Education
- Welding
- Carpentry/Building Trades
- Office Support
- Accounting

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

Great Falls College has a robust Academic Program Review process in place. There are no current plans to discontinue programs.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

Great Falls College has developed a comprehensive vetting process for bringing forward new programs, expanding current programs, and engaging in partnerships with business and industry to provide training and academic programming relevant to their needs. The process was incorporated into an Academic Plan tied to strategic initiatives and setting the basis for a comprehensive facilities plan and development board activities.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

Great Falls College completed a Year Seven Site Review April 20-22, 2022. A copy of the report submitted is [here.](#)

The college received the following recommendations from the Site Committee:

1. Continue to develop an ongoing and systematic evaluation and inclusive planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement (NWCCU 2020 Standards 1.B.1 and 1.B.3)
2. Widely publish and use disaggregated indicators of student achievement to identify and mitigate gaps in achievement and equity through planning, decision making, and allocation of resources (NWCCU 2020 Standards 1.D.3 and 1.D.4)

On June 22, 2022, the CEO/Dean will attend the NWCCU Commission Board meeting in Reno, NV to share strategies planned to address the recommendations and respond to any additional questions the assigned readers may have.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

Great Falls College has wrapped up its 2016-2022 strategic plan and is in the process of creating a 2022-2027 strategic plan. At this time, a draft and collegewide metrics are being finalized. Approved versions will be available on the planning page of the Great Falls College website. Processes for operational planning tied to strategic plan goals are being developed with plans to implement for AY23.

FOR OCHE USE

[OCHE COMMENTS]

Montana State University Northern

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-23

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes (https://mus.edu/borpol/bor300/303-1.pdf). Toward that end, we ask that each year institutions submit a report, of no more than three pages, eight weeks prior to the July BOR Meeting. This report should include:

- A high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.
- A brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.
- A description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.
- If/where applicable, a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.
- Additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the "Request to Plan" portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the "Request to Plan" stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

MSUN Mission Statement

MSU-Northern provides higher education to students for professional and technical careers through an institution dedicated to teaching and the pursuit of knowledge.

Approved by the Board of Regents on May 2016.

MSUN Core Themes

1. Provide liberal arts, professional and technical programs that serve a diverse student population.
2. Promote student centered and culturally enriched environment which fosters student success.
3. Partner with external entities to enhance and expand learning experiences.

MSUN's strategic plan builds on our Mission and includes a priority goal of reaching 1500 students to ensure institutional stability and sustainability. To build our capacity and serve the largest geographic region in the state, MSUN has and continues to provide relevant, quality academic programs that address the needs of the region and the state. Our history of providing education, technical, and regionally relevant high-quality programming drives our academic priorities and planning. Our Strategic plan notes that "MSUN is proud to be ranked the #1 school in Montana for economic mobility, and #15 in the nation. A significant number of MSUN's graduates start college in the bottom 20 percent of income distribution, and go on to reach the top 20 percent. MSU-Northern graduates also have better workforce outcomes right out of college than graduates from other four-year colleges in the state. Northern provides an Education that Works."

MSUN's academic priorities are driven by the four goals in MSUN's strategic Plan; 1. Stability; 2. Quality and Efficiency; 3. Engagement; 4. Collaboration. The academic priorities are developed through the campus strategic planning process that outlines opportunities existing programmatic expansion and growth and to identify potential programmatic opportunities through our collaborative efforts with industry partners. Strategically, we are moving to having 100% of our academic programs have advisory boards that meet at least twice a year and include input on industry needs.

Academic program proposals are largely based on the input from our industry partners through the active input from our Advisory Boards. These priorities are also vetted through the College faculty, Academic Senate and other relevant committees on campus (e.g., Graduate Committee, Marketing Committee, etc.). The Student Senate also is involved in the development of our academic priorities.

MSUN has identified three particular areas of academic priority for the next academic year based on the goals and strategies of our strategic plan. These programmatic areas are clustered around rebuilding our education and related programs, workforce development, and expanding program areas that meet local and state level industry needs.

Education and related programs have historically been a strength at MSUN and is evidenced by the number and scope of teachers and counselors within our region that have received their training from MSUN. The Education program had suffered decline over the past 10 years due to a variety of factors. After forming an Education Advisory Board and working with the Rural Superintends group within the region, MSUN set a priority to expand our Education program to address a critical shortage of teachers and counselors. These efforts have been successful through collaboratively working with Great Falls College to build our 2+2 cohort in Great Falls, collaborating with two tribal colleges to initiate a 2+2 grant funded program, and collaborating with the regional school districts. There are several Education related program priorities that we are proposing for this academic year that address the specific needs of the region and in which we have faculty expertise to develop and include secondary endorsements in Math and Drama. Another area of strategic academic growth that our regional partners are requesting is to address the need for advanced academic training in education, social sciences and humanities and a 4+1 Masters in Education.

MSUN continues to build its strength in workforce development and programs. We will be proposing several new programmatic offerings that build on our successful GEAR grant funded accelerated apprenticeship trainings in more major areas of the state. We are also looking at building a stronger administrative model to support the expanding implementation.

And finally, we have strong academic programming in the agricultural sciences and agricultural mechanics that connect closely with our agriculture industry in the region. In this area we identifying strategic opportunities in precision agriculture, meat processing, equine studies. These academic priorities have been strongly supported by our local and state industries and economic development partners.

FOR OCHE USE

[OCHE COMMENT]

University of Montana - Missoula

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

Mission
The University of Montana transforms lives by providing a high-quality and accessible education and by generating world-class research and creative scholarship in an exceptional place. We integrate the liberal arts and sciences into undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies to shape global citizens who are creative and agile learners committed to expanding the boundaries of knowledge and to building and sustaining diverse communities.

Vision
Our vision is that the University of Montana will be a flagship for the future, fostering inclusive prosperity and democracy, and creating new knowledge and ways of learning.

Design Principles
The University's six Design Principles – impact, interdisciplinarity, inclusivity, inquiry, innovation and internationalization – frame UM's overarching strategy and shape our institutional priorities.

Priorities for Action
Our institutional priorities are expressed and regularly updated through UM's five Priorities for Action:

- Priority for Action 1: Place Student Success at the Center of All We Do
- Priority for Action 2: Drive Excellence in Innovation, Teaching, Learning, and Research
- Priority for Action 3: Embody the Principle of Mission First, People Always
- Priority for Action 4: Partner with Place
- Priority for Action 5: Proudly Tell the UM Story

Each priority includes a set of objectives, strategies to meet each objective, and stepwise actions to ensure incremental progress in areas such as curriculum design, research emphases, student experience, operations, marketing, and community engagement.

UM's Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI) facilitates an annual Strategic Operating Rhythm to ensure implementation of these priorities, to measure progress, and to annually update the strategies we employ to meet our objectives (further outlined below under #7).

This iterative, annual process aims to ensure we remain agile and responsive enough to seize opportunities, address challenges, and maintain momentum. This is especially vital given that institutions of higher education are facing significant challenges with increasing pressure to adapt our business models to a fiercely competitive and rapidly changing environment. Public doubts about the value of higher education, unprecedented demographic changes, and evolving student expectations in a new economic reality require us to enhance our understanding of how, why, and where we deliver our curriculum.

And so, UM's annual planning process cultivates responsiveness to the need for higher education to serve a more diverse set of learners and shifting societal needs. Our current academic priorities reflect our commitment to:
- develop interdisciplinary capabilities,
- provide experiential learning opportunities that demonstrate the applied value of a UM education,

- deliver education through multiple modalities,
- ensure 21st century skills in our students, not just for their first step beyond UM, but for a life of impact in their communities.

We intend to foster the adaptive, innovative, and entrepreneurial mindset that can equip the workforce, employers, and Montana to succeed in a period of accelerated disruption. These elements drive our instruction and research priorities.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

Nested in UM's broad Strategic Operating Rhythm is an annual academic planning process that provides an opportunity for the academic and research functions of the institution to think strategically about our current state and the need for data-informed innovation.

To inform our annual academic planning, in July 2021, the University launched its Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) process. UM's SEP is a data-informed, dynamic, and continuous process that identifies, develops, implements, evaluates, and modifies strategies that effectively align: 1) the institution's mission, goals, and capabilities; 2) how the University serves students, both currently and in the future; and 3) a rapidly changing marketplace. SEP was a natural extension of the University Design Team's work from the previous year and will be built into UM's annual planning moving forward.

The University identified faculty and staff with a variety of roles and perspectives, including representatives from all campus governance groups, to serve on the SEP steering committee. The SEP steering committee, the President's cabinet, and the deans collaborated on a framework and organizational structure for the SEP process, identified the SEP key performance indicators, and established a set of planning assumptions for the work. The SEP steering committee tasked seven working groups to develop situation analyses in their respective focus areas. Three of these working groups (undergraduate academic programs, graduate academic programs, and new learner opportunities) focused specifically on the academic enterprise, a fourth working group (Missoula College) dealt mainly with academic programs and workforce development, and a fifth working group (student success and retention) spent most of its energy considering the co-curriculum and academic support.

The members of the SEP steering committee and representatives from the Provost's Office also met with the deans and faculty in all of the colleges to solicit additional ideas for potential academic strategies. Faculty teams developed these ideas – both those surfaced by the working groups and those directly from the faculty – into strategy action plans. The academic strategy action plans included a detailed strategy description, an implementation timeline, an evaluation and assessment plan, a thorough budget, and enrollment projections. The SEP steering committee discussed each strategy with the faculty teams, the faculty teams incorporated the feedback into revisions, and the steering committee provided UM's leadership with prioritized recommendations for implementation.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

Guided by the elements described above, the University plans to pursue new and enhanced academic and research programming that prepares our students to thrive in the 21st century economy. These priorities are built on UM's existing strengths and reflect our enduring commitment to interdisciplinarity and impact. Some

examples of this include the development of research accelerators such as an Institute for Humanities Research and an Institute for Social Science Research that develop interdisciplinary research opportunities through seed funding and grant guidance and support.

Online Modalities
While remaining focused on UM's robust and successful in-person educational experience, UM also will aggressively pursue online delivery of existing and potential new programs. The possibility of online modalities will serve as a consistent lens through which we will consider all new programs and our entire academic portfolio.

Cybersecurity
UM will serve as Montana's center for cybersecurity education and training. A bachelor's degree in cybersecurity as well as new workforce training programs will add to existing cybersecurity offerings at Missoula College and the College of Business, strengthening UM's position as this education and training hub. This will include a deliberate focus on building our computer science and data science offerings, which will meet both computing research needs and student demand for training in the technological side of management. There are strong opportunities for growth and collaboration in data science across the Business, Mathematics, Statistics, Computer Science, and Economics disciplines.

Environment and Sustainability
UM's broad swath of successful and impactful programs focused on the environment, resource management, sustainability, earth sciences, and other associated programs position UM as an existing national leader in environment and sustainability. We currently are undergoing a survey of these areas of strength to ensure we align our research and curriculum to best capitalize on those strengths. This will result in newly packaged programs that are market responsive and that showcase the value we provide to students and society.

Arts and Media
We will build on our strengths in arts and media to align with industry needs, emphasizing the importance of design and creativity in the new economy. For example, we will aggressively build out our game design and interactive media degree, which shows growing demand, preparing students to be leaders in these rapidly growing industries. We also hope to bring together our strength in humanities, science and technology to create new epistemologies and experiential learning opportunities around Virtual Reality and Alternate Reality. This will be a truly interdisciplinary collaboration located at the nexus of arts, media, and STEM.

Humanities Infused Approaches to Social Sciences and Science
The Humanities have tremendous epistemological impacts on other disciplines. To create learning opportunities rooted in critical thinking and problem solving, we need a humanities-infused approach to understanding the world's most wicked problems like human trafficking, climate change, and viral pandemics. We propose a series of interdisciplinary degrees, including well-established majors such as Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE), that prepare students to think critically and change the world. Sprinkling the humanities into areas of inquiry such as science and technology, environment and sustainability, and health allows students to have truly robust training in approaching these hands-on interdisciplinary areas with a critical and collaborative lens. As we re-think the humanities through a collaborative, rather than argumentative knowledge base, this is an opportune moment to bring these ways of knowing to other fields.

Health Sciences
UM will aggressively respond to the state's healthcare needs through responsive programming. Seven existing programs across three UM colleges will work collaboratively to increase the number of mental health

practitioners in Montana. We plan to offer online programs in health sciences and human services to expand educational access and address critical workforce shortages in areas vital to our state.

Criminology
In response to market needs and our existing strengths, UM will provide a new criminology bachelor's degree with both in-person and online options. This will provide opportunities for both traditional-age students and adult learners in a field of considerable importance to our communities. The job market demonstrates reliable job growth regionally, a need UM is poised to meet.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

We are planning to put our Machining Certificate into moratorium as we revamp this program.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

N/A

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

For NWCCU accreditation, we are preparing for our Year 6 report in 2023, and our Year 7 report in 2024.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g., revision of your campus strategic plan).**

In January, UM created the Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI). OSPI facilitates an annual Strategic Operating Rhythm. Each year, OSPI will support campus efforts to generate, refine, and prioritize mission-aligned ideas; to translate those ideas into action; to monitor progress on key initiatives; and to support leaders accountable for progress.

These OSPI functions are meaningfully integrated with UM's planning, budget, and accreditation processes as demonstrated by the development of a new university strategic operating rhythm that intentionally aligns all of these elements. This iterative, annual process aims to ensure we remain agile and responsive enough to seize opportunities, address challenges, and maintain momentum. Annual academic program planning will nest annually under this broader Strategic Operating Rhythm.

Montana Technological University

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than <u>5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th, 2022</u>.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the "Request to Plan" portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the "Request to Plan" stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. **<u>Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.</u>**

   The vision of Montana Tech is: To be the institution of opportunity. One of the three goals of our strategic plan is: Programs of Distinction: Deliberately committed to excellence in all programs, we provide transformational experiences in learning, research, and service through experiential learning, mentoring, community and industry engagement. We empower collaborative problem solvers, determined doers who make an impact in their profession and our world.

   As is the case with most universities, we are continuously evaluating our current academic portfolio, including research to identify those programs that are performing well, have potential to perform better, and those that are struggling. The primary metric in evaluating the performance of our programs is enrollment. Of course, there are a number of other key indicators of program success that includes completion rates, time to graduation, student to faculty ratios, service courses, etc. The strategic plan provides context for evaluating program success; those programs that will be successful in the hyper-competitive landscape of higher education, must be of the highest quality and set us apart from others by virtue of an educational experience that is not offered elsewhere. These are programs of distinction that are innovative and provide exceptional opportunities for our students.

   We anticipate that in the coming year there will be significant conversations as to how to encourage programs that have enrollment challenges to innovate and transform into programs of distinction. For example, the Montana Tech Center for Environmental Remediation and Assessment (**Center for Environmental Remediation and Assessment (mtech.edu)**) is being reinvigorated to be a focal point for research and collaborations between a number of departments, community, government, and industry. The reincarnation of the center will provide undergraduate and graduate students and researchers unique opportunities to address some of the most relevant environmental questions facing the state and nation as we remediate and extract natural resources.

In order to grow enrollment in our graduate programs, we will consider developing certificate programs in engineering where there is significant demand from industry. These certificates would be developed for remote delivery and would be stackable to eventually lead to a MS degree. Industrial partners that have expressed strong interest include mining and electrical engineering.

As noted in this statement from last year, we continue to sharpen the focus of Highlands College on trades and technical programing. We have been able to create several successful partnerships with industry and local government to provide targeted workforce development. Many of these partnerships have been funded by the partners. We will continue to grow Highlands College based upon this successful model.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used to determine these academic priorities.**

The strategic plan continues to focus our efforts and resources to be successful in educating students and fulfilling our mission as the institution of opportunity and innovation. We have established metrics that are used on a continuous bases to evaluate program health and identify those areas for investment.

We do not anticipate the elimination of any programs in the coming year. However, we do have programs that will not be sustainable very far into the future if they continue to suffer further enrollment declines. We are optimistic that we can work with the faculty in these programs to be reimagined to be relevant and attractive to students.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

We do not anticipate having any major new program proposals in the coming year. Our efforts will be focused on improving and reconfiguring existing programs. For example, we anticipate moving our Computer Science (CS) department from the College of Letters Science and Professional Studies to the School of Mines and Engineering. We also will move our existing BS in Cybersecurity into the CS department. Additionally, we will provide a seamless transition from our AS Cybersecurity degree to the BS. These changes will better serve students and provide a unified vision and curriculum that is aligned with our focus on undergraduate education in CS. These changes will also have some operational and overhead efficiencies.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

We anticipate that enrollment next year will be lower than present. Over the last several years we have eliminated and consolidated a number of programs in anticipation of declining enrollment. Therefore, we anticipate that student demand for our existing programs is sustainable. However, if enrollment declines significantly next year, it is likely that we will have to make further adjustments that may include program reconfigurations and/or reduction.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

It would be beneficial if there could be a thorough analysis of how the addition of a duplicate program impacts a campus that currently has a program.

A look at the big picture. The concept that every institution in the state can continuously grow is not reasonable or sustainable in light of demographics in Montana and beyond. As a campus adds a duplicate program that has the promise of growth, it will be at the expense of the campus(es) that already have the program.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

We will be in the final stages of the cyclical ABET accreditation process for our ABET accredited engineering programs.

We will be submitting our Year 6 NWCCU Report in March of 2023. During the 2022-2023 AY, we will be preparing for submission of our NWCCU Year 7 Report.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

We have completed the framework. The prioritization of the initiatives for implementation will occur this fall. Along with implementation, metrics and performance indicators will be developed to determine progress.

University of Montana Western

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th, 2022.**

Separately, please fill-in the Forthcoming Academic Proposals spreadsheet describing academic programs or research centers/institutes that you anticipate may proceed to the "Request to Plan" portion of the approval process in the next year. Please include contact information for a campus lead on each anticipated proposal. A proposal need not be listed in this report to proceed to the "Request to Plan" stage. However, listing proposals likely to move forward is an appreciated courtesy intended to encourage early communication and collaboration.

1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

In alignment with the University of Montana Western's strategic plan, our academic priorities and planning for the 2022-2023 academic year focus on the first two objectives:

> Objective One – Strengthening Experiential Learning
> Objective Two – Enhancing the Whole Student Experience

Specifically, we are prioritizing programs that (1) advance the Experience One model in which students take one course at a time, engage with faculty in small classes, and become immersed in experiential learning; (2) serve populations of Montanans (and beyond) who are currently underserved by institutions of higher education; and (3) provide support for faculty to continually improve their experiential education craft. These priorities are well-aligned with UMW's mission and vision:

> Mission – As a leader and innovator in experiential education, the University of Montana Western educates undergraduate students through immersive practices in their field of study, strives for continuous improvement, and achieves evidence-supported student learning and achievement outcomes.

> Vision – The University of Montana Western will be recognized as the leader in innovative experiential education.

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

The current administrative structure in Academic Affairs at UMW consists of four Division Chairs who lead the Divisions of Education; Humanities & Social Sciences; Mathematics & Sciences; and Health, Equine, & Business. The Office of the Provost worked directly with these Division Chairs and the Dean of the School of Outreach to determine UMW's 2022-2023 academic priorities.

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

In support of UMW's academic priorities, we hope to pursue the following:

In Academic Affairs, we will pursue a Center of Experiential Education, which will be a formal administrative structure designed to support faculty professional development aligned with our experiential learning mission. We will also add partnerships with the National Student Exchange program, several international universities, and discipline-specific organizations.

In the Division of Education, we hope to pursue 2+2 partnerships with Helena College to provide licensure programs in Industrial Technology, General Science Broadfield and Secondary Education, Art Education K-12, and Broadfield Social Science and Secondary Education. We hope to pursue a Music K-12 Certificate for online post-baccalaureate students, distance delivery for Elementary Education undergraduates and post-baccalaureate students, and a Master of Education. In the coming years, we also hope to pursue certificates in K-12 Reading, Teacher Librarian, and potentially Computer Science. We are currently collaborating with the Office of Public Instruction to develop a residency program and the Department of Labor to explore potential apprenticeship programs in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education.

In the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, we hope to propose minors in Art History and Popular Cultural Studies. We are considering moving the Music K12 Minor to distance and/or hybrid delivery.

In the Division of Health, Equine, and Business, we hope to create a Tourism and Hospitality minor. We also hope to partner with Helena College to create various 2+2 programs. Finally, we are continuing to discuss the possibility of developing a Master's degree in Natural Horsemanship.

The Division of Mathematics and Sciences does not currently plan to propose any new programs.

The School of Outreach is considering the potential feasibility of adding new Career & Technical Education programs in welding, EMT, and other trades.

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

We are considering the possibility of placing the following programs into moratorium: Interdisciplinary Social Sciences and Secondary Education, Anthropology minor, Illustration minor, Music K-12 major, and Management Accounting minor.

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

As we develop our requests to plan, we will collaborate with other MUS institutions and the OCHE staff as appropriate.

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

The 2021-2022 academic year was the fourth year of our current 7-year cycle with NWCCU. We did not submit any reports or receive any responses or recommendations during the 2021-2022 academic year. Our next scheduled report is an ad hoc report due to NWCCU in Spring 2023 about continuous improvement and mission fulfillment. After that, the "Year Six, Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review" will be due in Spring 2024.

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

We do not plan to revise our strategic plan. We do, however, plan to create an Academic Roadmap that describes how each division's efforts align with the strategic plan, as well as how each department hopes to continually improve as we all advance the institution's mission. The departments will focus on improvements to curricula, pedagogy, and student support.

Helena College

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Academic Year 2022-2023

The Montana University System (MUS) Board of Regents (BOR) has requested additional context to support the decisions they make regarding "Requests to Plan" for new academic programs and research centers/institutes. **Toward that end, we ask that each institution submit a report addressing all questions listed below, not to exceed four pages, no later than <u>5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25th, 2022.</u>**

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1. **Provide a high-level overview of your institution's current academic priorities (instruction and research), with a focus on how those priorities fit the institutional mission and current strategic plan.**

2. **Provide a brief description of the process used determine these academic priorities.**

3. **Provide a description highlighting new academic or research programing that your institution hopes to pursue in the coming year, with a focus on how those new programs will support your academic priorities.**

4. **If/where applicable, provide a high-level overview of areas that will be somewhat less prioritized, including any areas in which your institution will consider disinvestment, moratorium, and/or termination.**

5. **Include additional details you find relevant for the BOR to consider as they make decisions about "Requests to Plan."**

6. **Briefly describe any accreditation activities completed over the past year (e.g. reports submitted, responses received, accreditor recommendations) and accreditation activities planned for the upcoming year.**

7. **Briefly describe any strategic planning activities anticipated to occur in the coming year (e.g. revision of your campus strategic plan).**

1. **Academic Priorities AY 2022-2023:**

Helena College is entering AY 2022-2023 with an updated Strategic Plan, with the following mission, vision, and guiding principles:

Mission: Helena College supports our diverse community by providing the paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Vision: Helena College aspires to empower our students through impactful, affordable, lifelong education that is responsive to the needs of our community in ways that are enriching, collaborative, and equitable.

Guiding Principles: Effectiveness, Stewardship, Impact, and Equity

The following academic priorities have been identified for AY 22-23 and align with the strategic plan for 2022-2027:

- Cosmetology: RTP for an AAS in Cosmetology has been approved and a Level II proposal will be submitted for approval. Exploration of a possible RTP and Level II for a an AAS in Barbering is also a priority for this program.
- IT & Programming: This program has been transitioning over the past two years, with the Network Administration AAS placed on moratorium in AY 20-21 and the program name change approved in AY 21-22. The following changes are prioritized for AY 22-23:
    - Network Administration AAS will be terminated. It is currently on moratorium and will be replaced with the new AAS below.
    - Cloud DevOps AAS: A RTP for a new AAS in Cloud DevOps will be submitted, followed by the Level II proposal. This new AAS option for students is largely based on the feedback and needs of employers and the program advisory council and will replace the terminated AAS in Network Administration.
    - IT Help Desk CAS: A RTP for a new CAS in IT Help Desk will be submitted, followed by the Level II proposal. This new CAS option for students is largely based on the feedback and needs of industry partners, employers, and the program advisory council and will be stackable with both the AAS in Cloud DevOps and the existing AAS in Software Development. This CAS is designed to get students employed in help desk positions.
    - Certificate for Low Code/No Code Training & Employment: A second certificate option will be explored in AY 22-23 focused on training workforce for the Low Code/No Code programs that are becoming prevalent in many organizations. This new certificate option is based on feedback and needs of employers and the program advisory council.
- Expansion of LPN Program: Based on lessons learned through the partnership with Bitterroot College to deliver the LPN in Hamilton, Helena College will explore additional locations with other critical care hospitals.
- Pre-Elementary Education AS: RTP for a named AS degree in Pre-Elementary Education to meet both educational and career needs for students in the program will be submitted. The Helena College elementary education program/pathway leads to both UM and UMW and students would benefit from a named AS degree in Pre-Elementary Education. This program is expected to increase in enrollment due to a need for educators and to increased promotion of the program.

- Industrial Arts/Trades Education: Exploring a collaborative program with UM Western to offer Industrial Arts/Trades Education to students in both Helena and Dillon. A RTP is expected in AY 22-23.
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant: Exploring a new program and AAS option for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA). There are currently no programs in Montana and all Montana students interested in this career option move out of state for school. Helena College was approached with a community need for a program in Montana, which requires an associate's degree from an accredited occupational therapy assistant program. The college will continue to work with local occupational therapists to explore what the addition of a program would entail and explore the possible transfer opportunities available for students interested in continuing their education after earning an associate's degree. If the exploration returns positive results, a RTP will be submitted in AY 22-23.
- Continued Expansion of Academic Transfer Pathways: The College will continue to explore and add new academic pathway options for students interested in transferring to a university partner. A Public Health transfer to UM has been identified as one of the priorities for AY 22-23.
- Continued Exploration of Dual Enrollment Opportunities: The College will continue to explore new opportunities for dual enrollment collaboration with high school partners.

2. **Prioritization Process**: Academic priorities for AY 22-23 were determined in conjunction with industry partners, collaboration with local employers, collaboration with university partners, advice from program advisory councils, and research and work completed by faculty and academic departments and programs. Several of the priorities, such as those in the IT & Programming area, were prioritized years ago and are now ready to move forward. All CTE programs have active advisory councils that contribute to academic planning and priorities.

3. **New Academic Programs**: Helena College is exploring a new program in Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). Exploration is still in the early stages; however, the College was approached with a community need for the program which results in skilled workforce for occupational therapist's offices, hospitals, schools, nursing care facilities, and private homes. The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists the median annual wage for COTA's at $61,730 in May 2021 and projects that overall employment of COTA's will grow 34% from 2020 to 2030, which is much faster than other occupations. Montana does not currently offer any COTA programs, so there is an opportunity for skilled workforce development in this area. This program would offer another degree opportunity in the allied health field, would utilize many of the general education courses the College already offers, and could meet both a community and a state need if structured correctly.

4. **Disinvestment, Moratorium, and Termination**: The Network Administration AAS will be officially terminated in AY 22-23, as planned. This degree option has seen decreased enrollment over the past several years and is currently on moratorium. All enrolled students finished the degree program in May 2022 so the College will submit a request for termination. The degree will be replaced by the new AAS in Cloud DevOps, scheduled for a RTP in fall 2022.

5. **Additional Details for Requests to Plan**: All submitted RTP's have been researched and determined to benefit students and the community. Helena College is committed to collaboration with industry partners and/or university partners whenever possible, thus enriching the academic programs and degrees available for students.

6. **Accreditation Activities**: Helena College is in year 6 of the NWCCU 7-year accreditation cycle. In year 6, the Commission evaluates Standard 2 governing policies, regulations, and financials. There is a report due by March 1, 2023 and an offsite peer review will be conducted by the Commission in the spring.

7. **Strategic Planning Activities**: Helena College completed a revision of the strategic plan in May 2022 and has an updated strategic plan for 2022-2027. In the upcoming year, all academic departments will align annual work plans to the revised strategic goals and defining characteristics of the guiding principles of the institution.