

September 20-21, 2023

From: Interim Deputy Commissioner Joe Thiel

To: Board of Regents

Please see below for an executive overview of the Request to Plan items that are being proposed for your review and action at the September 2023 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.

Montana State University Billings

Request for authorization to create two options in the Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling: (1) Rehabilitation Counseling Option, and (2) Mental Health Counseling Option

MSUB offers a Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (MSCRMHC) degree. This degree prepares students for licensure in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and/or Mental Health Counseling. This program is fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

CACREP has released new regulations, beginning in 2024, that students will no longer be able to gain dual certifications as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) and a Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC). CACREP will not require separate academic program offerings for each certification. However, in order to maintain accreditation, MSUB needs to move forward with providing students with two pathway options. Students will now be required to choose their specialty within the first year of the program and there will need to be clear differences between the two options.

To create the requirement of two distinct options for students, there will be four new classes, a separate practicum, and a separate internship course. No new faculty will be required for the creation of the new options.

Workforce demand remains strong for students graduating in these fields, with O*Net projecting a minimum 10% growth rate for both.

Helena College University of Montana

Request for authorization to plan an Associate of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant

The Occupational Therapy Assistant program would enable graduates to work in many different healthcare settings; hospitals, clinics, nursing facilities, schools, etc. Graduates of this program would be prepared to gain licensure in any state for practice as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. This program would become licensed under the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACTOE).

This degree would be a named associate degree that leads directly to licensure, but also maintains options for transfer to baccalaureate options, as the program will include a full MUS general education core.

Occupational Therapy Assistants are in high demand. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of Occupational Therapy Assistants is expected to grow 34 percent from 2020-2030 with the average annual salaries in Montana listed at \$67,000.

Currently there are no OTA programs in the state of Montana. Students must leave the state or attend virtually in order to obtain licensure. Additionally, the early coursework of the OTA program overlaps with pre-nursing requirements, making OTA an additional option for students beginning a healthcare pathway.

Conversations have begun to establish direct transfer pathways at both University of Montana and University of Montana Western. Additionally, Helena College is exploring the idea of structuring the OTA in a hub/spoke format which would allow the program to expand to serve Montana's rural communities.

University of Montana Missoula

Request for authorization to plan a MS in Natural Resources Law and Policy

The proposed Masters of Science program leverages coursework from two existing University of Montana programs; The College of Forestry's degree in natural resource policy and the School of Law Natural Resources and Environmental Law Program and Summer Indian Law Program.

There has been demand from students to enroll in post-baccalaureate natural resources law curriculum, without having to become law students or lawyers. Additionally, the proposed program is designed to meet the workforce demand in this area. According to EAB student enrollment in specialized master's programs (Masters of Marketing vs. MBA) have more than doubled, as these opportunities offer options to serve traditional and new student groups.

As the proposed degree is made up of two existing programs, there is no request for additional new resources.

Request for authorization to plan a Bachelor's degree in Sports, Hotel, Events, and Entertainment Management (SHEEM)

Currently the University of Montana College of Business offers a certificate in Entertainment Management and has a focus on the music/recording industry. This certificate has been popular with students. The proposed Bachelor's degree would expand that certification in entertainment to include sports management, events management, and a wider entertainment focus to encompass the growing film and television industry in Montana. The proposed program will include the College of Business lower core and 25 upper-division business credits.

In addition to growing student interest, this program seeks to address specific Montana workforce needs. With hospitality and sports as major economic drivers in Montana, many companies are struggling to meet staffing needs. The current certificate program has dedicated industry partners who are committed to supporting these growth efforts.

While many of the required structures are in place, the College of Business forecasts a need for one or two future faculty members.

The SHEEM program will be interdisciplinary in design and will draw from multiple programs across the UM campus. The program will be an option for students who are just beginning their higher education pathway and will also provide a pathway for individuals who have some experience in hospitality and entertainment who are looking to transition into management roles.

Request for authorization to plan a Minor in Democracy Studies

The proposed minor in Democracy Studies would provide students with further knowledge and tools to process and dissect the critical and challenging questions of our engaged citizenry. The goals of the minor include outcomes where students are challenged to think critically across multiple disciplines, communicate effectively, pursue problem solving, and make effective and equitable decisions.

The Democracy Minor will be made up of several different departments across the University of Montana campus, therefore not requiring any additional resources.

The program is interdisciplinary in design and would allow students to select courses from a variety of disciplines. Additionally, students will complete a capstone with the option of completing a research project, an internship, or a substantive civic engagement project.