

REQUEST TO PLAN MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 21, 2023

TO: Chief Academic Officers, Montana University System

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

RE: January 2024 Request to Plan Proposals

The campuses of the Montana University System have proposed new academic programs or changes under the Request to Plan process authorized by the Montana Board of Regents. The proposals are being sent to you for your review and approval. If you have concerns about a particular proposal, you should share those concerns with your colleagues at that institution and try to come to some understanding. If no concerns are received, OCHE will assume that the proposals have your approval.

Requests to Plan

Montana State University Northern

- Request for authorization to plan a Masters in Science of Teaching (content area focus options)
[Item #210-2801-R0124](#)

Montana University System**REQUEST TO PLAN FORM****ITEM #-2801-R073****Meeting Date-July 2023****Item Name-Request for Authorization to plan a Master's in Science of Teaching (content area focus options)****Masters in Science of Teaching (content area focus options)**Program/Center/Institute Title: **Graduate Programs**Planned 6-digit CIP code: 13.12⁹⁹Campus, School/Department: **MSU-Northern**Expected Final Submission Date: **Sept. 2023**Contact Name/Info: **Carol Reifschneider/406-265-3726**

This form is meant to increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the program/center/institute approval process, please visit

<http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp>.

1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.

A Master's of Science in Teaching is being proposed to appeal to multiple potential students interested in a Master's program that is also firmly grounded in pedagogy.

The Master's degree will offer courses at the 500 level in pedagogy and in a content area chosen by the student in conjunction with an advisor.

This program is of interest to the education department as the new graduate degree is a practical solution to a teacher shortage in Havre and across the Hi-Line. Current teachers will be able to pursue graduate level content knowledge in additional areas of interest and need, making it possible for regional schools to keep their schools staffed with difficult to fill positions such as Secondary Math, CTE, Secondary English, and Secondary Science.

Additionally, potential graduate students who would like to pursue nonteaching careers or careers in community colleges will be able to develop a Master's program that best meets their needs, preparing them to eventually pursue doctoral work if they choose.

Enrollment is expected to come from across the Hi-Line, including recent graduates from MSUN interested in further degrees as well as from K-12 schools that are looking not only to hire teachers in specific content areas but also to offer incentives for current teachers to become endorsed in a new content area. For instance, the shortage of math teachers across the hi-line has motivated several teachers to earn a math endorsement and many of them are currently taking courses online through Western Governors University. This degree would have the potential to meet that need in-state.

2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student, state, and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).

There is a strong interest among superintendents for MSUN to increase its offerings for graduate programs in a variety of endorsable areas. The model of this programs allows the college to teach these courses, which will be taught on a normal rotation anyway, at the 500 level in order to meet that need.

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Additionally, the Hi-Line has a significant place-bound population who are still interested in pursuing higher level degrees but who cannot relocate. This degree would allow us to meet their needs as well, but within a structure that allows for students to be in cohort in their pedagogy courses and then branch out into content areas of interest.

Further, there are very few options for students interested in pursuing advanced degrees that do not require relocation. This degree can be offered in-person, online, or in hyflex format to meet a variety of needs.

3) Describe any significant new resources (financial, staff, facility, new curricula) needed to launch and sustain the program/center/institute.

The current existing classroom facilities in Cowan Hall, Hagener Science Center and Brockman Hall will be sufficient. There may be a need to offer these courses in an evening or hybrid format in order to accommodate the teacher's working schedule and faculty will be prepared to offer courses in a variety of modalities. We are able to offer hybrid formats using WebEx and Zoom for synchronous learning experiences and Brightspace for asynchronous virtual learning experiences.

Any new 500-level course will be offered in a shared course cap with a 300-level version of the course, with increasingly rigorous objectives and requirements for the graduate students. The majority of these courses already are taught and/or exist in the MSUN catalog so it would not require additional programming, merely an efficient and structured model to establish graduate expectations instead of undergraduate requirements.

4) Describe any efforts or opportunities you have identified for collaboration either within the institution or between MUS institutions (i.e. articulation, course-sharing, research collaboration).

There will be strong collaboration between the Education program, graduate programs, and content area programs as faculty from multiple disciplines will be teaching courses at the 500 level to ensure graduate rigor and requirements are met.

In addition, courses will be accepted from other MUS system schools, and there is the potential for research collaboration as students develop their culminating thesis or research capstone in their content area.

5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.

The program meets many of the strategic plan goals and highlights the mission of MSUN. In the area of excellence this degree option recognizes that learning is individualized and occurs at all times and places. As the need for hi-line schools to adopt a grow-your-own model increases, this program will support teachers and community members seeking to earn a new MT teaching endorsement by studying a new content area at the graduate level. In the area of authenticity, the need for this degree began in conversation with hi-line administrators at (Montana Administrators and Superintendents) MASS meetings and is a direct reflection of MSUN and "our charge to serve

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Montana.” Finally, in the area of stewardship this degree would help to ensure hi-line schools are staffed not only with highly qualified teachers, but highly qualified teachers in difficult-to-fill positions thus safeguarding the education of hi-line and MT students now and in the future.

The existing institutional program array includes a graduate program in curriculum and instruction which serves the needs of individuals interested in advanced learning in the field of education, and a program in counselor education, but the institution does not have any programs for students interested in pursuing an advanced degree within a content area. This degree will allow us to do so without straining resources so that we can best meet the needs of the area.

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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

Carol A. Ruffschneider 4-13-23

Chief Research Officer*:

→ Chief Executive Officer:

Gregory O. Kegel 4.13.2023

Flagship Provost**:

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Robert Mokwa
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Flagship President**:

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*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.