

REQUEST TO PLAN MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 24, 2024

TO: Chief Academic Officers, Montana University System

FROM: Joe Thiel, Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, and Student Affairs

RE: November 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 you cannot resolve your concerns, raise them at the Chief Academic Officer's conference call Wednesday, October 30th. Issues not resolved at that meeting should be submitted in writing to OCHE by noon on Friday, November 1, 2024. If no concerns are received, OCHE will assume that the proposals have your approval.

Requests to Plan

Montana State University Billings:

- Request to plan a Master of Science in Criminal Justice
[Item #215-2701-R1124](#)

The University of Montana Western:

- Request to plan a Minor in Professional Communications
[Item #215-1602-R1124](#)
- Request to plan a Minor in Environmental Writing
[Item #215-1603-R1124](#)

The University of Montana Missoula:

- Request to plan to create concentrations for the Master of Fine Arts Theatre Degree
[Item #215-1001-R1124](#)
- Request to plan to create concentrations within the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Music degrees
[Item #215-1002-R1124](#)
- Request to plan a Master of Natural Resource Management
[Item #215-1003-R1124](#)
- Request for authorization to establish an Academic Organizational Model
[Item #215-1004-R1124](#)

Montana Technological University:

- Request to plan a Certificate of Applied Science in Behavioral Health
[Item #215-1501-R1124](#)

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM**ITEM 2701 R1124****Meeting Date November 2024****Item Name: Request for Authorization to Plan a Master of Science in Criminal Justice**Program/Center/Institute Title: **Master of Science in Criminal Justice**Planned 6-digit CIP code: **430104**Campus, School/Department: **MSU Billings / Social Sciences & Cultural Studies**Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2025**Contact Name/Info: **Dr. Jennifer Scroggins / Jennifer.scroggins@msubillings.edu / 406-657-2935**

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.

The Department of Social Sciences & Cultural Studies at MSU Billings currently offers an Associate of Science (AS) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees in Criminal Justice. We propose to build upon these programs with a Master of Science (MS) degree in Criminal Justice. All coursework for the proposed MS will be offered in HyFlex format so that students may choose to complete the program fully in-person, fully online, or via some combination of the two modalities. Each semester, four graduate-level courses (two in the first 8-week session and two in the second 8-week session) will be offered, and full-time students (those who take two courses during each 8-week session) can expect to complete the program in just one academic year (one fall, one spring, and one summer semester).

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).

Nationwide, opportunities for employment in criminal justice occupations are expected to increase over the next decade. By 2033, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts 3% growth for occupations related to police and detective work, 3% growth for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists, 3% growth for emergency management specialists, 6% growth for private detectives and investigators, and 13% growth for forensic science technicians (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). For those who hope to help prepare the next generation of criminal justice workers, there is an 8% growth in demand for post-secondary educators in criminal justice forecast for the next decade (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Despite increased demand for criminal justice professionals, the labor pool for criminal justice workers in Montana is undersupplied in most regions, and nationwide, 78% of law enforcement agencies report difficulty recruiting qualified candidates (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2019; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, 2024).

At the undergraduate level, criminal justice education largely emphasizes understanding of the structure and functioning of the criminal justice system (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, 2022). At the graduate level, quantitative data analysis and critical thinking skills, understanding of ethical perspectives and ability to make ethical judgments, as well as knowledge of issues related to diversity and equity within the justice system are expected areas of emphasis (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, 2022). The United States Department of Justice (2019) associates these graduate-level skills with success in a range of criminal justice occupations, and some agencies have

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established a graduate-level degree as a minimum requirement for promotion into leadership positions (Gardiner, 2017).

Emphasis on graduate-level skills such as data analysis and critical thinking creates a stronger job candidate pool, and poorly qualified candidates are cited as one reason criminal justice agencies—including agencies across Montana—are currently understaffed (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2019; Karch, 2024; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, 2024). Nationwide, fewer than 10% of law enforcement officers possess a graduate-level degree, although the need for criminal justice practitioners skilled in the collection, analysis, and implementation of research—graduate-level skillsets—is growing (Gardiner, 2017; Mitchell & Naoriz, 2021).

In response to staffing challenges and to better recruit and retain qualified candidates, more than half of the nation's criminal justice employers (55.8%) incentivize higher educational attainment through educational incentive pay and tuition reimbursement programs (Gardiner, 2017; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services 2019). The largest law enforcement agency in the state of Montana, the Billings Police Department, offers a tuition reimbursement program, as does Alternatives, Inc, a Yellowstone County leader in community corrections (www.billingsmt.gov; www.altinc.net).

The criminal justice faculty at MSU Billings have worked closely with the Billings Police Department to better understand the educational training needs of police officers that lead to enhanced skillsets, as well as pave the path for career growth opportunities. In November 2023, the criminal justice faculty engaged in planning conversations with Administrative Lieutenant Matt Lennick of Billings Police Department regarding preliminary plans to add a graduate program in criminal justice; following that conversation, Lieutenant Lennick discussed the plan with officers under his supervision, and those officers expressed significant interest in enrolling in the program should it be approved. In March 2024, faculty also spoke with Training Sergeant Jeff Stovall of Billings Police Department regarding the fast-track degree completion (3 semesters of full-time study) made possible by the planned graduate program. Sergeant Stovall indicated willingness to partner with MSU Billings to identify paths to graduate program enrollment and completion for officers under his command.

Additionally, the criminal justice faculty spoke with Alpha House Director John Williams in both December 2023 and May 2024 about plans for the department to offer a graduate degree in criminal justice. In both conversations, Director Williams expressed support for the plan, noting the need for well-trained (graduate-level) staff, including those with advanced data analysis skills, within his own agency. In support of his claims, Director Williams shared that case management staff at Alternatives, Inc. (the parent organization of Alpha House) who hold a master's degree are offered a higher starting wage than those with only an undergraduate education.

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

Addition of the MS degree in criminal justice necessitates development of a graduate curriculum in the discipline. Proposed courses for the MS program include advanced coursework on contemporary issues in each of the three primary areas of criminal justice (policing, corrections, and the courts), advanced exploration of special topics such as victimology and juvenile delinquency, as well as advanced coursework on public organization dynamics, ethics and public policy, leadership, theories of crime and criminal justice, and applied research methods (how to collect and make sense of data within criminal justice organizations). The proposed curriculum will consist of 39 credits, and MS students will receive training that aligns directly with graduate-level skills known to benefit criminal justice organizations, as well as the qualifications listed in the variety of criminal justice occupations/job openings available on the State of Montana Careers website.

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In anticipation of the proposed MS degree, a new tenure-track faculty line was added to the criminal justice program effective the 2024-25 AY. No additional staff, facility, or technology needs are anticipated.

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).

During the 2023-24 AY, criminal justice faculty at MSU Billings consulted with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at MSU Bozeman (Dr. Cody Warner, Chair), and with the Department of Sociology at the University of Montana Missoula (Dr. Daisy Rooks, Chair) regarding our plans for developing the MS in criminal justice. Neither program identified concerns regarding our proposed addition of the graduate program at MSU Billings.

In addition to consultation with faculty at MSU Bozeman and the University of Montana Missoula, criminal justice faculty also consulted with faculty in the Psychology and Public Relations graduate programs at MSU Billings regarding opportunities to share required and/or restricted elective coursework. Both programs expressed support.

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 MSU Billings Strategic Plan includes four themes: (1) Build educational programs to support student need; (2) Progressively grow the university; (3) Strengthen relationships with the community to enhance partnership opportunities; and (4) Unify, invigorate, and engage MSUB's structure and culture (<https://www.msubillings.edu/chancellor/pdf/MSUB-Strategic-Plan.pdf>). The proposed MS in Criminal Justice is aligned with each of these themes.

First, the proposed MS in Criminal Justice builds educational programs to support student need. Specifically, it adds a programmatic offering that is need-responsive to an important segment of the Montana economy. It also helps address workforce shortfalls in a range of criminal justice careers, while providing a flexible opportunity (via its HyFlex design) for working professionals to pursue graduate studies.


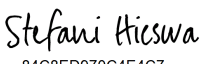
Second, the proposed MS in Criminal Justice helps progressively grow the university. Specifically, it will increase student enrollment via the addition of the state's only master of science graduate program in Criminal Justice (The Department of Sociology at the University of Montana offers a MA program in sociology, and students in that program may choose criminology as their area of emphasis within the discipline of sociology.) The proposed program also addresses an important gap in graduate programs currently offered at MSU Billings, as extant programs do not provide adequate training or preparation for most criminal justice careers. For students whose educational needs are met by current programs (in psychology, for example), the proposed program offers additional choice in restricted elective offerings.

Third, the proposed MS in Criminal Justice helps strengthen relationships with the community to enhance partnership opportunities. Local employers including the Billings Police Department, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office, and Alternatives, Inc., turn to MSU Billings to aid in their recruitment efforts by participating in on-campus job fairs and sending guest speakers to relevant classes to discuss employment opportunities for graduates. A required course in the proposed MS program will be an internship/leadership practicum, in which late-stage

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graduate students will be expected to work with a relevant criminal justice agency to gain leadership and problem-solving experience. We expect this experience will enhance partnership opportunities throughout the criminal justice community and lead to better employment outcomes for our graduates.

Finally, the proposed MS in criminal justice helps unify, invigorate, and engage MSUB's structure and culture. Specifically, we expect that growth in the graduate student body brought about by the addition of a graduate program in Criminal Justice will contribute to a vibrant campus atmosphere, especially given the range of experiences (both personal and professional) those students are likely to bring to campus.

<u>Signature/Date</u>	
Chief Academic Officer:	Signed by:  9/3/2024 <small>151D5B91B28F4B0...</small>
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	DocuSigned by:  9/3/2024 <small>84C8ED970C4E4C7...</small>
Flagship Provost**:	
Flagship President**:	
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>	

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ITEM 215-1602-R1124

Meeting Date November 2024

Item Name: Request for Authorization to Plan a Minor in Professional Communications

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Minor in Professional Communications, The University of Montana Western**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:

Campus, School/Department: **UMW Division of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and UMW Division of Professional Studies**

Expected Final Submission Date: **December, 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Brian England / brian.english@umwestern.edu / 406-683-7178; Debbie Huber / debbie.huber@umwestern.edu / 406-683-7204; Brian Elliott / brian.elliott@umwestern.edu / 406-683-7104**

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.

The Professional Communications minor is an interdisciplinary program focused on combining the knowledge, approaches, and experiences of business, art, digital media, and writing to provide students with the creative and critical skills to effectively communicate in a variety of mediums and settings. The proposed minor brings together courses from several different areas of study, including business management, marketing, traditional art, graphic design, and English, offering students a broad foundation in written and visual design while also ensuring the flexibility to pursue personal or professional areas of interest at the upper division. The program is designed to be open to students of any major or field of study.

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).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in media and communications are expected to average over 100,000 openings per year between 2023 and 2033, with median annual wages above those of all occupations. As the University of Southern California notes, "Nearly every job posting contains the words 'strong communication skills' or 'effective communication skills.'" ("Why is Effective Communication Important?"). With a foundation across four disciplines and the advantages of experiential learning our courses provide, UMW's minor offers the skills and versatility that allow graduates to stand out, both in communicating with potential employers and in reaching target audiences once employed.

Beyond employment, effective communication has become a necessity of modern life. "How one communicates can be a make or break factor in securing a job, maintaining a healthy relationship, and healthy self expression," says "The Importance of Effective Communication" page from Stevenson University. As multimedia and visual communication continues to grow, the ability to work effectively with both images and words also grows, a set of integrated skills this minor emphasizes. As the Center for Disease Control's Visual Communication Resources page nicely frames it, "Visuals can make the presentation of complex information easier to comprehend and more

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attractive. They can also reinforce written or spoken... messages.” But, importantly, “visuals can’t speak for themselves.” UMW’s minor gives graduates the knowledge, experience, and skills in written and visual communication to effectively present information in the variety of ways necessary to live and work in our increasingly interconnected region and beyond.

References and further reading:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. “Visual Communication Resources.” *Health Literacy*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 7 Feb 2022, www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/visual-communication.html. Accessed 24 Sept 2024.

“Why Is Effective Communication Important to Career Success?” *Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism*, University of Southern California, 15 Nov 2023, communicationgmt.usc.edu/blog/improve-workplace-communication. Accessed 24 Sept 2024.

“The Importance of Effective Communication.” *Stevenson University Online*, Stevenson University, www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/news/importance-effective-communication/. Accessed 24 Sept 2024.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Media and Communications Occupations.” *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Dept. of Labor, 29 Aug 2024, www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/home.htm. Accessed 24 Sept 2024.

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

Because the program comprises courses already taught by UMW faculty and currently either in rotation or planned to be introduced into regular rotation, the Professional Communications minor requires no additional resources.

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).

Several other institutions in the MUS have related courses and programs; however, the focus of each program differs from our proposed minor in ways that avoid significant duplication. As an undergraduate minor, Professional Communications allows students from many different majors access due to its smaller overall credit load versus majors and major options. The Professional Communications minor is also designed to provide a balanced foundation in professional writing, visual design, digital media, and business communication, whereas other programs in the MUS tend to favor one of those areas, with limited or no exposure to the others. Finally, the proposed minor also allows students to customize their path by selecting a particular focus at the middle tier of courses and the upper-division capstone options, making for a tailored experience that more easily aligns with student goals. In these ways, the Professional Communications minor brings something unique to the greater MUS offerings in this area.



Given the diversity of focus of related current programs in the MUS, there is not currently an opportunity to collaborate with other institutions. The proposed minor’s balanced course requirements allow students to take courses in business, art, digital media, and professional writing; while individual courses in each are available across the MUS, the minor’s structure is such that it is not duplicated at other institutions. For the future, UMW will

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consider possibilities for program expansion, both in additional options and tracks in the minor and in the possibility of a major, as we review student demands and interest and the availability of additional necessary resources. This opens the possibility of additional courses added through the MUS Course Exchange as well as collaboration with other campuses via the University of Montana Affiliation.

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.

This program aligns with both UMW's mission and strategy as well as the MUS's current strategic goals. As a regional comprehensive university, UMW's mission, per BOR policy, includes contributing "to economic development, social and cultural enhancement, and civic engagement" locally and regionally. UMW's strategic plan includes the objective to "Strengthen the Experience One program," a subcategory of which is to increase high impact educational practices (HIPs), while the MUS strategic plan includes "workforce development." As an interdisciplinary program, the Professional Communications minor achieves UMW and MUS strategic goals in its use of high-impact practices like writing-intensive courses, collaborative work, and integration of knowledge, purposes, and practices from diverse perspectives. As a minor open to all learners the program also offers students an advantage over their competition in the job market and provides employers with higher-skilled employees, contributing to workforce and economic development.

Signature/Date	
Chief Academic Officer:	
	10/7/2024
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	
	10/7/2024
Flagship Provost**:	
Flagship President**:	
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>	

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ITEM 215-1603-R1124

Meeting Date November 2024

Item Name: Request for Authorization to Plan a Minor in Environmental Writing

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Minor in Environmental Writing**

Planned 6-digit CIP code:

Campus, School/Department: **UMW Division of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and UMW Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, The University of Montana Western**

Expected Final Submission Date: **December, 2024**

Contact Name/Info: **Brian Elliott / brian.elliott@umwestern.edu / 406-683-7104; Arica Crootof / arica.crootof@umwestern.edu**

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

The Environmental Writing minor is an interdisciplinary program focused on combining the knowledge, approaches, and experiences of the scientific study of the natural world with the skills in creativity and communication of professional writing. As an interdisciplinary minor, the program brings together courses from several different areas of study, including biology, geology, natural resource management, environmental science and sustainability, and English, with the goal of providing students a broad foundation in science and communication while also ensuring enough flexibility to pursue any personal areas of interest at the upper division. The program is designed to be open to students of any major or field of study.

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).

The Environmental Writing minor fulfills several differing needs for UMW's students, both as citizens of their communities and as learners at our institution. As environmental concerns increasingly shape policy, industry, and community life in Montana and the Mountain West, the need for greater scientific understanding has become fundamentally tied to the need to communicate that understanding to a variety of audiences. "Environmental solutions cannot come from one type of knowledge or way of thinking," states Middlebury College's Environmental Studies Program website: "They come instead from leaders, thinkers, and innovators who can draw skills and knowledge from multiple fields of knowledge and work with teams of thinkers from every corner of the campus and the globe" (Environmental Studies"). The Environmental Writing minor will equip UMW's students with the interdisciplinary skills and knowledge necessary to be those leaders, thinkers, and innovators and to thrive in a variety of careers related to environmental study, sustainability, and communications.

On the larger level, the workforce is shifting towards sustainability and environmental stewardship across numerous industries, including agriculture, energy, natural resources management, tourism, and government. Companies, nonprofits, and government agencies are increasingly seeking employees who have a strong understanding of environmental issues, regulations, and sustainable practices along with the ability to

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communicate related information effectively. As stated by University of Pennsylvania's College of Liberal and Professional Studies website, "Successful communication [in this area] requires strong scientific and industry expertise and practical messaging skills to bridge the knowledge gap between researchers and other diverse groups" ("Why Excellent Communication"). An Environmental Writing minor prepares students from various majors to communicate in this way with practical experience and skills in writing, critical thinking, environmental policy, ecological literacy, and problem solving.

Because of the diverse courses and flexible requirements offered in the Environmental Writing minor, students can also choose to focus on creative writing, connecting with the long tradition of writing about nature and the landscape that is a quintessential part of Montana's history and culture. As Iowa State's Creative Writing and Environment MFA website reminds us, "From Homer's *Odyssey* to Melville's *Moby Dick*, from Black Elk to *Black Boy*, from Virginia Woolf to Tobias Wolff, the literary arts acknowledge an inherent connection between the imprint of place and environment on the stories and images that shape the work of literary writers" (Creative Writing). The Environmental Writing minor allows students to gain a background in the variety of complex issues involved in our current relationship with the natural world while also providing them the experience and guidance necessary to develop their own artistic voices.

References and further reading:

"Creative Writing and the Environment: MFA." *Department of English*, Iowa State University, <https://engl.iastate.edu/academics/graduate-studies/mfa-program-in-creative-writing-and-environment/>, Accessed 30 Aug 2024.

"Environmental Studies." *Environmental Studies Department*, Middlebury College, <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/environmental-studies>. Accessed 30 Aug 2024.

"Why Excellent Communication Skills Are Vital to a Successful Science Career." *Penn LPS Online*, University of Pennsylvania, <https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/why-excellent-communication-skills-are-vital-successful-science-career>. Accessed 30 Aug 2024.

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

Because the program comprises courses already taught by UMW faculty and currently either in rotation or planned to be introduced into regular rotation, the Environmental Writing minor requires no additional resources.

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).



Several other institutions in the MUS have related courses and programs, including UM's undergraduate and graduate certificates in environmental and nature writing and Literature and the Environment BA and MSU's Environmental Writing option under the Liberal Studies BA. While the focus of each program differs from our proposed minor, the availability of courses in these areas, along with transfer potential and the additional credentials the certificate programs offer, means there is ample opportunity for collaboration without significant duplication of already-existing curricula.

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Further, the proposed Environmental Writing minor occupies a different space from these other programs, adding a new option to the MUS but avoiding too much overlap with existing offerings. As a minor, Environmental Writing includes more coursework than the certificate programs while also allowing students from many different majors access due to its smaller overall credit load versus majors and major options. The Environmental Writing minor is also designed to provide a balanced foundation in both writing and environment-related sciences, whereas other programs tend to favor one or the other. Finally, the proposed minor also allows students to customize their path, selecting a particular scientific focus or a specific writing path, including upper-division capstone courses, making for a tailored experience that more easily aligns with student goals. In these ways, the Environmental Writing minor brings something unique to the greater MUS offerings in this 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.

This minor provides students opportunities to develop a tailored program that mixes scientific understanding with professional writing communication skills that will serve students in a wide array of jobs as well as graduate programs. This is a truly experiential education, one connected directly to their lived experiences. This supports both the UMW Mission and Strategic Plan's Objective One. As mentioned above, this also expands on institutional program offerings and available credentials for students in all areas of study.

Signature/Date
Chief Academic Officer:  10/7/2024
Chief Research Officer*:
Chief Executive Officer:  10/7/2024
Flagship Provost**:
Flagship President**:
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1001-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name – Request for authorization to plan to create concentrations for the Master of Fine Arts Theatre Degree

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **50.0512**

Campus, School/Department: **School of Theatre and Dance**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2025**

Contact Name/Info: **Bernadette Sweeney (bernadette1.sweeney@umontana.edu)**

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.

To align with recommendations from the UM's Office of the Provost, we wish to officially recognize the four tracks in our MFA/THTR degree as concentrations. Official concentrations are preferred in order to track and effectively advise students in the program. This is existing curriculum and will require no new resources. Our MFA in Theatre is a terminal degree in the disciplines of acting, design/technology, directing, and music directing. We are the only School offering these concentrations in the 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).

Now that DegreeWorks has been implemented for graduate programs, official concentrations will make advising clearer for MFA candidates. Concentrations will also appear on student transcripts and diplomas, which better serve students in their applications for jobs.

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

No new resources are needed. Our current advising tracks are long-standing; we have the faculty, facilities, and resources already in place to easily adjust the curricular vocabulary to concentrations.



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).

While there is no duplication of the proposed curricula within the MUS, efforts are underway to identify courses that can be shared across our College.

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- 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.

Recognition of concentrations for the MFA in Theatre aligns with UM's Priorities for Action by simplifying advising in service of student success and retention. We hope that more clearly delineated degree pathways will result in an increased understanding of each student's requirements for graduation.

Signature/Date	
Chief Academic Officer:	approved 9/25/2024
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	
Flagship Provost**:	 9/25/2024
Flagship President**:	 9/26/2024
*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.	

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1002-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name – Request for authorization to plan to create concentrations within the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Music degrees

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **50.0903**

Campus, School/Department: **School of Music**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Spring 2025**

Contact Name/Info: **James Randall (james.randall@umontana.edu)**

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.

To align with recommendations from the UM's Office of the Provost and our accrediting body, the National Association of Schools of Music, we wish to eliminate 11 advising tracks within the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts degrees. In their place, we will propose 2-5 concentrations, which will better serve the current needs of our students, as well as the strengths of our faculty.

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).

Our 11 advising tracks across the BM and the BA create extra labor in advising and are poorly tracked on Degreeworks. Fewer, better-designed concentrations will make advising clearer for students and are fully tracked through Degreeworks. Concentrations also appear on student transcripts and diplomas, which better serve students in their applications for jobs and graduate study. Our current advising tracks are too specialized. For instance, within the BM, we offer specific tracks in Instrumental Performance, Vocal Performance, and Piano Performance. These would be consolidated under one "Performance" concentration. This process of consolidation also allows us to think strategically about courses which serve a greater number of students. For instance, rather than a specialized course that serves only pianists or vocalists, we can offer courses that serve a broader population of performance-oriented students. These classes include Studio Start-Up, which gives students skills in setting up a small business for music instruction, and Body Mapping, which instructs students on physiology and physical wellness to prevent performance injury. Both of these courses have proven popular as special topics offerings that students currently take as electives; however, they are important enough that they should really be integrated into our required coursework as part of a modernized performance curriculum.

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

No new resources are needed. Our new concentrations will be delivered by current faculty using existing courses in the catalog, or are courses offered as successful special topics by faculty in the past three years, which we now wish to include in designing our concentrations.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

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).

Under consideration as concentrations for our BA are Pre-Music Therapy and Popular and Commercial Music. Pre-Music Therapy would draw from existing courses offered in Psychology, as does the Pre-Dance Therapy concentration within the BA offered by UM's School of Theatre and Dance. Similarly, a Popular and Commercial Music concentration would draw from existing courses offered in the School of Visual and Media Arts. In the future, both the Pre-Music Therapy concentration, as well as the Commercial Music concentration offer opportunities for collaboration across the college and campus.

Additionally, in choosing requirements for our concentrations, we hope to embed curriculum from existing UM certificate programs where ever appropriate. This will allow students to strategically choose electives in areas of adjacent interest that resulting in a certificate that benefits them academically or professionally. For example, a student earning a BA with a concentration in Popular and Commercial Music, may be just a couple electives shy of a Certificate in Creative Entrepreneurship, a Certificate in Jazz Studies, or a Certificate in Entertainment Management.

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 design of new concentrations with the BM and BA fully aligns with UM's Priorities for Action, adapting our offerings in music to fit contemporary student need and to simplify advising in service of student success and retention. More specifically, this redesign serves UM's Objectives 1-4 in tangible and strategic ways. We hope that clearer and better designed degree pathways will result in a more discernable brand identity for our school, which also serves strategic marketing and recruitment. In our collaborative approach, which draws upon the strengths of our current music faculty, as well the strengths of faculty across our college, and in adjacent such as non-profit administration, business, and psychology, we hope to enhance student experience, increase retention and persistence, and model a more integrated curriculum.


Montana University System
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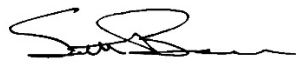
Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer: approved 9/18/2024

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**  **9/25/2024**

Flagship President:**  **9/26/2024**

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1003-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name – Request for Authorization to plan a Masters of Natural Resource Management

Program/Center/Institute Title: **University of Montana - Missoula**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **03.0201**

Campus, School/Department: **W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2025**

Contact Name/Info: **Paul Lukacs (paul.lukacs@umontana.edu)**

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.

The Master's of Natural Resource Management (MNRM) will provide graduate-level, professional education for the natural resources field. The master's degree will be designed to meet the needs of students who seek managerial positions in natural resource agencies, conservation NGOs, and a growing private sector conservation industry.

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).

No professional master's degree programs in natural resource management currently exist in Montana, yet there is a growing workforce demand for people with these skills. UM currently excels in advanced education of natural resource science as evidenced by the global recognition of the MS and PhD programs within the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. These programs produce top-tier graduates in natural resource sciences, but do not necessarily prepare students for the management and policy sides of the profession. We consistently hear from our government and industry partners that more people are needed with advanced skills in natural resource management. Furthermore, providing a professional master's degree option broadens the pool of potential students by providing an opportunity for an advanced degree that is more flexible in terms of time and location commitment than a research-based degree.

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

The initial launch of the program can be done with a small investment in advertising and staff assistance. As the program grows, additional teaching and advising capacity will be needed. At 10 students a Professor of Practice position will be required. At full capacity of 40 students, a total of 3 professor of practice positions will be required along with administrative assistance. Tuition revenue from enrollment will exceed the additional hiring needed. We expect this to provide a positive return on investment. In addition, the professor of practice positions will contribute to instruction across college programs providing a value-added proposition.

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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).

The MNRM program will be highly collaborative. All existing programs in FCFC will be engaged in the MNRM program. In addition, the Natural Resource Conflict Resolution Program, Master's in Public Administration program, and College of Business all offer courses that would be directly relevant to the MNRM program.

MSU offers an online MS in Environmental Sciences. This degree focuses solely on environmental science. It does not consider policy, management, or human/natural resource interactions. The degrees would pull from different populations of potential students.

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 MNRM fosters inclusive prosperity. The MNRM program opens pathways to people seeking higher salary positions in managerial roles of natural resource agencies and companies. It also provides alternative learning models from the current research-based master's degree programs in FCFC allowing a broader population to enroll and excel in the degree program.

The MNRM program compliments the research-based graduate degrees within FCFC. The program aligns with Partnering in Place as UM serves as a hub on natural research education and research. The FCFC campus resources along with Lubrecht Experimental Forest, Bandy Ranch, and the Missoula-area natural resources community make UM an ideal location for the MNRM program.

We are excited to offer both the Master of Natural Resource Management (MNRM) and the Master of Science in Natural Resources Law and Policy (MSNRLP) programs, which, while appealing to professionals in the natural resources sector, serve distinct career paths. The MNRM program is designed for those aspiring to manage teams of scientists and land managers, with a curriculum focused on the science and management practices needed to achieve conservation goals. In contrast, the MSNRLP program is aimed at individuals pursuing leadership roles in policy and regulatory management, equipping them with expertise in natural resources law and policy. While there is some overlap in foundational knowledge, the MNRM emphasizes scientific and practical resource management, whereas the MSNRLP focuses on developing and implementing policies that shape conservation efforts. By offering these complementary but distinct pathways, we ensure students can tailor their education to their professional goals, whether in management or policy.

Montana University System
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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer: approved 9/24/2024

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**



9/26/2024

Flagship President:**



9/26/2024

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1004-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Academic Organizational Model**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **NA**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana-Missoula, College of Humanities and Sciences, Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Phyllis J. Washington College of Education**

Expected Final Submission Date: **May 2026**

Contact Name/Info: **President Seth Bodnar, seth.bodnar@umontana.edu, Provost Adrea Lawrence, adrea.lawrence@umontana.edu**

1) Description of the program/center/institute.

This is a request to plan a new organizational model for the University of Montana-Missoula's College of Humanities and Science (H&S), Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, and Phyllis J. Washington College of Education.

Over the last five years UM has worked to align our significant academic strengths with opportunities to better serve students and society. This request continues our efforts to leverage our existing strengths in Health and Wellness, the Arts and Technology, Environment and Sustainability, Leadership and Civic Engagement, and world-class research. This request is the culmination of a significant organizational restructuring that began with the naming of the College of Health and the creation of the College of the Arts and Media.

1) Changes Proposed.

The proposed restructuring includes the following elements:

- **Creation of a New Franke College:** The Departments of **Geosciences** and **Environmental Studies** will move from the College of Humanities and Sciences to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation by the end of the academic year. Over the next 18 months, we will establish a new iteration of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This college will become a hub for innovative research and teaching in the environment and sustainability, offering students the opportunity to engage deeply with Montana's unique ecosystems and policy issues. This reorganization aims to prepare students for meaningful careers that contribute to the stewardship of our natural resources while honoring the long history of the college and the storied programs that are joining.
- **Establishment of a College of Science:** The new College of Science will bring together Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and related interdisciplinary initiatives. This structure will support the University's R1 research mission, providing focused leadership and resources to nurture groundbreaking research and attract the next generation of scientists and innovators.
- **Reorganization of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences:** We will create a new college by bringing together departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences and related interdisciplinary programs with the departments that make up the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education. This renamed Phyllis J. Washington College will create a cohesive academic environment where students study the human condition, examine and seeks answers to enduring questions, and develop the skills necessary to become engaged citizens, leaders, and educators. It will

Montana University System REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

also allow for natural alignment for programs in behavioral and mental health that are fundamental to our objective to support the State's behavioral health workforce needs. This new college will play a key role in advancing our objective to provide students with the skills and practice necessary to engage in civil dialogue, seek collaboratively designed solutions that benefit communities, and contribute as engaged citizens.

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).

The world is evolving rapidly, and so must we. The proposed reorganizations will strengthen our colleges through the strategic alignment of missions, disciplinary practice, and cost structures for delivering instruction and conducting research and creative scholarship. This will enhance the University's ability to provide a transformative education that meets the needs of Montana's diverse communities and beyond. It is designed to position the University of Montana as a leader in addressing the complex challenges of our time.

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

Existing academic units and their associated faculty and staff will be strategically reassigned to the college most aligned with their discipline. Exceptions may be provided for units that assert preference to move to one of the other new or existing colleges. The proposed college structures will not require additional deans. The reorganization will be implemented within current facilities, with any necessary modifications managed through existing budgets. This approach maximizes resource efficiency while supporting the growth and development of our academic programs. The aligned missions and cost-structures will allow for better development planning and interdisciplinary collaboration when pursuing and administering extramural funding to support the new colleges.

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).

As we move forward, we will continue to engage faculty, staff, and students in the planning and implementation process, ensuring that the reorganization reflects our shared vision and goals. A task force has already been formed to begin planning the New Franke College. Disciplines in the sciences have produced a proposal for a College of Science. A similar process will be undertaken to bring stakeholders across the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education to collaborate and develop the vision and plan to create the new Phyllis J. Washington College. Our proposed timeline is:

- **By the End of the 24-25 Academic Year:** Complete the transfer of Geosciences and Environmental Studies to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. Create the College of Science. Complete the organization of the humanities, social sciences, and education into the New Phyllis J. Washington College.
- **Next 18 Months:** Finalize all structural changes and begin operation under the new organizational model. If opportunities to integrate current department structures with the new model arise, they will be included in the proposed changes.

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.

At the University of Montana, we believe in fostering *inclusive prosperity* that transforms lives and communities. This proposed academic reorganization aligns with our commitment to providing an education as expansive as Montana itself—equipping students to meet the challenges of a dynamic world while staying rooted in the land and communities

Montana University System
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we serve. Our mission is to create a flagship institution that is both accessible and accountable, a place where curiosity, creativity, and community thrive. This request to plan a comprehensive academic reorganization reflects the University of Montana's mission to empower every student to reach their full potential.

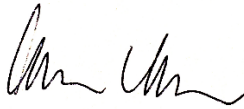
Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**



9/30/2024

Flagship President:**



9/30/2024

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1004-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Academic Organizational Model**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **NA**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana-Missoula, College of Humanities and Sciences, Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Phyllis J. Washington College of Education**

Expected Final Submission Date: **May 2026**

Contact Name/Info: **President Seth Bodnar, seth.bodnar@umontana.edu, Provost Adrea Lawrence, adrea.lawrence@umontana.edu**

1) Description of the program/center/institute.

This is a request to plan new organizational models for the University of Montana-Missoula's College of Humanities and Science (H&S), Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, and Phyllis J. Washington College of Education.

Over the last five years UM has worked to align our significant academic strengths with opportunities to better serve students and society. This request continues our efforts to leverage our existing strengths in Health and Wellness, the Arts and Technology, Environment and Sustainability, Leadership and Civic Engagement, and world-class research. This request is the culmination of a significant organizational restructuring that began with the naming of the College of Health and the creation of the College of the Arts and Media.

The proposed restructuring includes the following elements:

- **Create a New Franke College:** The Departments of **Geosciences** and **Environmental Studies** will move from the College of Humanities and Sciences to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation by the end of the academic year. Over the next 18 months, we will establish a new iteration of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This college will become a hub for innovative research and teaching in the environment and sustainability, offering students the opportunity to engage deeply with Montana's unique ecosystems and policy issues.
- **Establish a College of Science:** The new College of Science will bring together Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and related interdisciplinary initiatives. This structure will support the University's research mission across disciplines and expand access to STEM education for all Montanans.
- **Establish a College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences:** We will create a new college that brings together departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences and related interdisciplinary programs with the departments that make up the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education. This new Phyllis J. Washington College will create a cohesive academic environment where students study the human condition, examine and seeks answers to enduring questions, and develop the skills necessary to become engaged citizens, leaders, and educators.

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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).

The world is evolving rapidly, and so must we. The proposed reorganizations will strengthen our colleges through the strategic alignment of missions, disciplinary practice, and cost structures for delivering instruction and conducting research and creative scholarship. This will enhance the University's ability to provide a transformative education that meets the needs of Montana's diverse communities and beyond. It is designed to position the University of Montana as a leader in addressing the complex challenges of our time.

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

We anticipate that this proposal will maintain the current number of colleges and academic deans. All current academic units (schools and departments), along with their associated faculty and staff, will be integrated into colleges that align with their specific disciplines and foster a cohesive, shared mission and vision benefiting students. This will be implemented using existing facilities, with any necessary operational adjustments managed within current budgets. Aligning the missions and cost structures of these academic units will also enable more effective development planning and interdisciplinary collaboration when pursuing and managing extramural funding to support the new colleges. A phased approach to the transition within a revised budget model will be necessary. We will explore how this strategy can enhance strategic enrollment planning to ensure the colleges remain sustainable over time.

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).

As we move forward, we will continue to engage faculty, staff, and students in the planning and implementation process, ensuring that the reorganization reflects our shared vision and goals. A task force has already been formed to begin planning the New Franke College. Disciplines in the sciences have produced a proposal for a College of Science. A similar process will be undertaken to bring stakeholders across the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education to collaborate and develop the vision and plan to create the new Phyllis J. Washington College. Our proposed timeline is:

- **By the End of the 24-25 Academic Year:** Complete the transfer of Geosciences and Environmental Studies to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. Create the College of Science. Complete the organization of the humanities, social sciences, and education into the New Phyllis J. Washington College.
- **By August 2025:** Launch the searches for founding deans for the new Colleges.
- **Next 18 Months:** Finalize all structural changes through the Level II process and begin operation under the new organizational model. If opportunities to integrate current department structures with the new model arise, they will be included in the proposed changes.

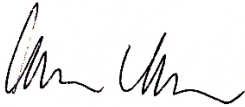

5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.

At the University of Montana, we believe in fostering *inclusive prosperity* that transforms lives and communities. This request aligns with our commitment to providing an education as expansive as Montana itself—equipping students to meet the challenges of a dynamic world while staying rooted in the land and communities we serve. We believe that this plan will allow the university to achieve the following:

Montana University System
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- Prepare students for meaningful careers that contribute to the stewardship of our natural resources while honoring the long history of our colleges and their storied programs;
- Support the University's R1 research mission, providing focused leadership and resources to nurture groundbreaking research and attract the next generation of scientists and innovators;
- Align programs in behavioral and mental health that are fundamental to our objective to support the State's behavioral health workforce needs;
- Provide students with the skills and practice necessary to engage in civil dialogue, seek collaboratively designed solutions that benefit communities, and contribute as engaged citizens.

This request to plan reflects the University of Montana's mission to empower every student to reach their full potential.

<u>Signature/Date</u>	
Chief Academic Officer:	
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	
Flagship Provost**:	 9/30/2024
Flagship President**:	 9/30/2024
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>	

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1501-R1124

November 2024

Request for authorization to add a C.A.S in Behavioral Health

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Behavioral Health, C.A.S.**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **51.2212**

Campus, School/Department: **Highlands College**

Expected Final Submission Date: **Fall 2027**

Contact Name/Info: **Karen VanDaveer, Dean/ kvandaveer@mtech.edu**

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.

The Behavioral Health Certificate will be focused on providing mental health educational opportunities to correctional officers, Montana State Hospital Psychiatric Techs, Shodair Mental Health Technicians, other law enforcement staff, EMTs and other workforce members who want to provide hands-on mental health care.

Highlands College is exploring the potential to provide three tracks for students.

- Dual Credit to entice students to enter mental health careers
- Behavioral Health Workforce Certification – including mental health correctional information
- CAS in Behavioral Health

All classes will be on-line with the exception of a behavioral health crisis course. It will be a hybrid course with mental health clinicals and labs, including law enforcement and healthcare de-escalation techniques via a virtual reality experience.

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).

The Department of Corrections has been discussing with Highlands College the need for their correctional officers at Montana State Prison to have more mental health education. According to the Montana State Hospital training department and staffing office, 80% of their staff is contract or travel staff. Most of the contract or travel staff fill the psychiatric technician and nursing jobs. Shodair's new building in Helena is only working with three to four of their six units open. The reason why they are not 100% open is mainly due to staffing concerns, including not filling their mental health technician positions.

According to the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, "From 2022 to 2032, employment for many mental health-related occupations is projected to grow faster than the 3-percent average for all occupations" (2024). This growth may be as much as triple the projections from other US jobs. Factors contributing to this growth include decreasing the stigma around seeking treatment and increasing the uncertainty in peoples' lives (CNN, 2024).

Montana University System
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Montana House Bill 872 or the Behavioral Health System for Future Generations governor's report discusses a lack of mental health workforce in rural Montana. It contains two provisions on recommendations to improve Montana's mental health workforce. Part of Provision #19, Incentivize Providers to Join the Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities Workforce, is to develop dual credit courses to encourage high school students to work in mental health careers. Provision #20 explores how to expand the training content available (dphhs.mt.gov, 2024).

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

One full-time faculty will be needed to develop a new curriculum during the Spring 2025 semester. Once curriculum is developed, other faculty may be needed to teach the on-line courses. Program would be online with the exception of the Behavioral Health Crisis Practicum. This course will be hybrid with online didactic material and labs/clinical. No new facility or space is needed. The simulation and virtual reality experience will use the current Health labs at Highlands College, and clinicals will be held at off-site employment sites like Montana State Hospital and the Butte Rescue Mission. The virtual reality program, MILO, is free to law enforcement, and our team is looking into collaborating with these groups to access this experience (faac.com, 2024).

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).

Highlands is collaborating with the Department of Corrections on curriculum development. Karen VanDaveer has been working with Scott Eychner in creating a curriculum that fits the needs of their MSP correctional officers while being general enough to meet the needs of other employers.

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.

Mental Health concerns are complex issues and innovative solutions are required to meet the upcoming challenges of caring for this population. Montana Tech and Highland College's Mission Statement says "developing leaders and advancing science, engineering, and technology, with the purpose of benefiting humanity while meeting the changing needs of society." Improving the quality of mental health workforce training and increasing the number of mental health workers in Montana aligns well with Highland College's Mission Statement.

Sources:



CNN.com. (2024, September 7). Mental health jobs will grow 3 times the rate of all US jobs over the next decade. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/07/health/mental-health-jobs-projections-dg/index.html>

DPHHS.mt.gov. (2024, August). Behavioral Health System for Future Generations (BHSFG) Commission Report. <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/FutureGenerations/August2024Meeting/BHSFGCommissionAugust2024DraftReport.pdf>

FAAC.com. (2024, September 13). MILO. <https://www.faac.com/milo/virtual/milo-vr/>

Montana University System
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US Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2024, January 9). Strong growth projected in mental health-related employment.
<https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/strong-growth-projected-in-mental-health-related-employment.htm>

Signature/Date	
Chief Academic Officer:	 9/26/24
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	 9/20/24
Flagship Provost**:	
Flagship President**:	

*Center/Institute Proposal only
**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 215-1004-R1124

Meeting Date: November 2024

Item Name

Program/Center/Institute Title: **Academic Organizational Model**

Planned 6-digit CIP code: **NA**

Campus, School/Department: **University of Montana-Missoula, College of Humanities and Sciences, Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Phyllis J. Washington College of Education**

Expected Final Submission Date: **May 2026**

Contact Name/Info: **President Seth Bodnar, seth.bodnar@umontana.edu, Provost Adrea Lawrence, adrea.lawrence@umontana.edu**

1) Description of the program/center/institute.

This is a request to plan new organizational models for the University of Montana-Missoula's College of Humanities and Science (H&S), Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, and Phyllis J. Washington College of Education.

Over the last five years UM has worked to align our significant academic strengths with opportunities to better serve students and society. This request continues our efforts to leverage our existing strengths in Health and Wellness, the Arts and Technology, Environment and Sustainability, Leadership and Civic Engagement, and world-class research. This request is the culmination of a significant organizational restructuring that began with the naming of the College of Health and the creation of the College of the Arts and Media.

The proposed restructuring includes the following elements:

- **Create a New Franke College:** The Departments of **Geosciences** and **Environmental Studies** will move from the College of Humanities and Sciences to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation by the end of the academic year. Over the next 18 months, we will establish a new iteration of the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This college will become a hub for innovative research and teaching in the environment and sustainability, offering students the opportunity to engage deeply with Montana's unique ecosystems and policy issues.
- **Establish a College of Science:** The new College of Science will bring together Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and related interdisciplinary initiatives. This structure will support the University's research mission across disciplines and expand access to STEM education for all Montanans.
- **Establish a College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences:** We will create a new college that brings together departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences and related interdisciplinary programs with the departments that make up the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education. This new Phyllis J. Washington College will create a cohesive academic environment where students study the human condition, examine and seeks answers to enduring questions, and develop the skills necessary to become engaged citizens, leaders, and educators.

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

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).

The world is evolving rapidly, and so must we. The proposed reorganizations will strengthen our colleges through the strategic alignment of missions, disciplinary practice, and cost structures for delivering instruction and conducting research and creative scholarship. This will enhance the University's ability to provide a transformative education that meets the needs of Montana's diverse communities and beyond. It is designed to position the University of Montana as a leader in addressing the complex challenges of our time.

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

We anticipate that this proposal will maintain the current number of colleges and academic deans. All current academic units (schools and departments), along with their associated faculty and staff, will be integrated into colleges that align with their specific disciplines and foster a cohesive, shared mission and vision benefiting students. This will be implemented using existing facilities, with any necessary operational adjustments managed within current budgets. Aligning the missions and cost structures of these academic units will also enable more effective development planning and interdisciplinary collaboration when pursuing and managing extramural funding to support the new colleges. A phased approach to the transition within a revised budget model will be necessary. We will explore how this strategy can enhance strategic enrollment planning to ensure the colleges remain sustainable over time.

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).

As we move forward, we will continue to engage faculty, staff, and students in the planning and implementation process, ensuring that the reorganization reflects our shared vision and goals. A task force has already been formed to begin planning the New Franke College. Disciplines in the sciences have produced a proposal for a College of Science. A similar process will be undertaken to bring stakeholders across the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education to collaborate and develop the vision and plan to create the new Phyllis J. Washington College. Our proposed timeline is:

- **By the End of the 24-25 Academic Year:** Complete the transfer of Geosciences and Environmental Studies to the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. Create the College of Science. Complete the organization of the humanities, social sciences, and education into the New Phyllis J. Washington College.
- **By August 2025:** Launch the searches for founding deans for the new Colleges.
- **Next 18 Months:** Finalize all structural changes through the Level II process and begin operation under the new organizational model. If opportunities to integrate current department structures with the new model arise, they will be included in the proposed changes.

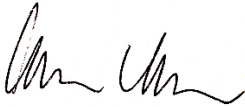

5) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities as described in the most recent Academic Priorities and Planning Statement.

At the University of Montana, we believe in fostering *inclusive prosperity* that transforms lives and communities. This request aligns with our commitment to providing an education as expansive as Montana itself—equipping students to meet the challenges of a dynamic world while staying rooted in the land and communities we serve. We believe that this plan will allow the university to achieve the following:

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

- Prepare students for meaningful careers that contribute to the stewardship of our natural resources while honoring the long history of our colleges and their storied programs;
- Support the University's R1 research mission, providing focused leadership and resources to nurture groundbreaking research and attract the next generation of scientists and innovators;
- Align programs in behavioral and mental health that are fundamental to our objective to support the State's behavioral health workforce needs;
- Provide students with the skills and practice necessary to engage in civil dialogue, seek collaboratively designed solutions that benefit communities, and contribute as engaged citizens.

This request to plan reflects the University of Montana's mission to empower every student to reach their full potential.

<u>Signature/Date</u>	
Chief Academic Officer:	
Chief Research Officer*:	
Chief Executive Officer:	
Flagship Provost**:	 9/30/2024
Flagship President**:	 9/30/2024
<small>*Center/Institute Proposal only **Not applicable to the Community Colleges.</small>	