Montana State University

GIANFORTE HALL:

New home for fields of computer science, electrical and computer engineering, cybersecurity, optics and photonics, and complementary creative industries

Request for Authority Only

Montana State University is seeking authority to construct Gianforte Hall, a new home for the Gianforte School of Computing, with funds from a $50 million gift from the Gianforte Family Foundation, received in February 2022.

The new building would further the fields of computer science, electrical and computer engineering, cybersecurity, optics and photonics, and complementary creative industries such as animation, film production, digital photography and music technology.
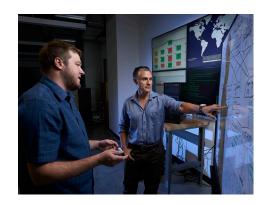
Having a single building will help foster interdisciplinary opportunities for students and faculty alike, as the Gianforte School of Computing's personnel are currently dispersed across five buildings at Montana State University.

In addition to computer science, the building will house classrooms for high school students to take dual enrollment courses and get a hands-on taste of the many fields that rely on computer science.

Demand for Graduates

Computer science graduates are in high demand both in Montana and nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employment of computer and information research scientists is projected to grow 22% from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations. A 2021 report by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana found that members of the Montana High Tech Business Alliance expected to add 1,500 jobs in 2021 and that "growth projected in member and nonmember high-tech businesses significantly exceeds average statewide economic growth."

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, average national starting salaries of computer science graduates jumped 7.1% from 2021 to 2022 up to $72,000.

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