

Montana University System
REQUEST TO PLAN FORM

ITEM 205-1003-R0323

Meeting Date March 2023

Request for authorization to plan a new Academic Organizational Model

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

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

Campus, School/Department: **College of Humanities and Sciences, Franke
College of Forestry and Conservation,
University of Montana-Missoula**

Expected Final Submission Date: **April 2023**

Contact Name/Info: **Executive Vice President and Provost Pardis Mahdavi, pardis.mahdavi@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.

This is a request to plan a new organizational model for the University of Montana's College of Humanities and Science (H&S) and the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, and proposes a new interdisciplinary School of Emerging and Applied Technologies.

The new academic affairs organization will offer UM, its students, and its faculty many benefits. The architecture will promote interdisciplinary approaches to teaching, learning, scholarship, and service around the most significant challenges facing Montana and our world. The structure will better prepare our students for the workforce of the future. It will encourage innovation, strengthen our ability to recruit and retain excellent faculty, and open up more research grant opportunities for those faculty. This will allow the university to move more to a shared services model for some critical functions, and will reduce administrative costs. Not least of all, this innovation will create fundraising opportunities for those interested in playing a significant part in the University of Montana's bold step into the future.

In addition to campus-wide events and surveys in Fall 2022, each UM college's leadership involved chairs and directors in discussions regarding names and composition of schools. Chairs and directors have largely served as the conduit between H&S leadership and their faculty. Beginning in January 2023, a more deliberate process of all college faculty and staff involvement is planned. Individual faculty and staff will have opportunities to be involved in determining the names, composition, and missions/visions of schools. Additionally, facilitated college meetings are planned early in the Spring Semester to discuss new interdisciplinary curricula and pathways

2) Changes Proposed.

College of Humanities and Sciences:

The College of Humanities & Sciences intends to explore the feasibility of re-organizing the college into schools.

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A previous version of potential interdisciplinary schools was presented to the Faculty Senate on December 8, 2022. After further consultation with associate deans, chairs, directors, and faculty, the following schools are proposed:

- School of Biological, Physical, Mathematical, and Computational Sciences
- School of Language, Culture, and Mind
- School of Policy, Social Interaction, and Civic Engagement

These schools will be made up of 3-6 existing departments with a goal of facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration, developing new curricular opportunities for students, and improving the clarity of pathways for students pursuing degrees in existing and future programs. The division of departments into schools is also expected to address the organizational challenges associated with the size of H&S and the enrollment declines that the college has experienced over the past decade by allowing for more targeted recruitment of students and enhanced philanthropic opportunities. Throughout Spring 2023, H&S leadership will work with the faculty and staff of the College, the Provost's Office, and the other academic administrators to develop metrics to finalize the appropriate number and size of schools, define the role and compensation of school directors, determine the costs associated with establishing schools within the college, and consider implications arising from new leadership roles associated with organization of schools on the collective bargaining agreement with the University Faculty Association.

The proposed reorganization of the College of Humanities & Sciences into schools facilitates the growth of interdisciplinary academic programs and aligns with the University's academic priorities by addressing the need to create learning opportunities rooted in critical thinking and problem solving. The proposed structure is designed to facilitate new curricula devoted to understanding and addressing the world's most wicked problems. For example, a school director will likely be able to oversee an interdisciplinary major that spans multiple departments or serve as a liaison for programs crossing colleges; an example includes the most recently approved degree in Criminology. The role of school directors easing the process of designing clear degree pathways will also improve student persistence and retention and allow students to achieve their academic goals more efficiently. These outcomes align with the University's mission of fostering inclusive prosperity.

Franke College of Forestry and Conservation:

The W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation (FCFC) has more than a 100-year history at the University of Montana, and enjoys a strong national reputation in several areas. These include Forestry, Wildlife Biology, Environmental Social Science, Applied Ecology and Recreation Management, Conservation Science and more. The Wildlife Biology Program, shared with the Division of Biological Sciences, is top ranked in the country, and the new Environmental Science and Sustainability major is the fastest growing one on campus. Given the longstanding strengths of the college, and the clear national demand for its cognizant areas, in January of 2022 President Bodnar commissioned an outside review of both the college and the broader strengths in environment and sustainability at UM from Dr. Pam Matson, Dean Emeritus of the School of Earth, Energy and Environment at Stanford University and Chair of the National Academies of Sciences efforts on Sustainability. The goals of this review were to seek guidance on how UM could improve its profile and offerings even further in this arena.

The resulting report made several recommendations that serve as the central guide for UM's next steps, as part of a document that stressed both the current strengths and future opportunities. At the heart of the recommendations is an expansion of the Franke College to be an even clearer centerpiece of environment, natural resources and sustainability teaching, research and stakeholder engagement, tied also to the construction of a new building for the college that was

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approved by the legislature in the spring of last year. As part of her overarching summary, Dr. Matson states: “such a new college could be like nothing else in the country.”

The college proposes to bring in the current Department of Geosciences, now a part of the College of Humanities and Sciences, into a revised structure that both accentuates and coalesces strengths in Earth System Science at UM. The Matson Report also suggested a similar move for the Environmental Studies Program (EVST), but also noted that critical work in environment and sustainability will (and should) continue to happen across the entire campus, and that in addition to a revised FCFC, the university should consider bridge structures or other mechanisms to be sure that environment and sustainability activities and programs could effectively draw from multiple corners. In that vein, the current plan is to have EVST be part of a revised H&S structure, with clearly differentiated and complementary roles in curricular offerings being facilitated by the Office of the Provost. This structure will be reviewed and assessed after a two year period. More broadly, the provost’s office will also consider new mechanisms that can best facilitate interdisciplinary efforts in this and several other areas (as noted in the following section).

In keeping with Matson Report recommendations, the potential movement (or shift to joint appointments) of individual faculty from a number of other areas on campus, potentially including Ecology and Evolution, Economics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Law and more will be part of the Spring 2023 discussions about a revision of the scope and structure of FCFC.

School of Emerging and Applied Technologies (SEAT):

Finally, we request approval to plan for a School of Emerging and Applied Technologies, which will sit outside of the existing UM Colleges and will bring together, through joint appointments, faculty from across UM’s colleges. The aim is to create a vehicle to expeditiously collaborate to develop programs that are in-demand by students, industry, society, and research funding entities and study how emerging and applied technologies affect, interact with, and can be used to support learning effectively. Emerging and applied technologies cross disciplinary and college boundaries and include a wide range of theoretical and applied research, in the humanities, the social sciences, and professional fields, as well as emerging art forms and practices. This interdisciplinary school will encourage multiple opportunities for collaboration in teaching, research, and artistic performance that extend across colleges, departments, and disciplines. The unit will utilize joint appointments of faculty, leading to a likely structure where the unit reports through the Provost’s Office with faculty evaluation also occurring in their home department, and colleges. We envision that SEAT would house UM’s newly proposed interdisciplinary degree in Cybersecurity, as well as emerging expertise in virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence.

3) 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 world is in an unprecedented moment of change, and our challenges are considerable. To face these challenges head on, our students need to be prepared to solve unscripted problems. Disciplinary siloes that higher education has upheld for the past century do not allow universities to optimize their mission of upholding democracy, promoting social transformation, and preparing students for the work of the future. Specifically at the University of Montana, our academic organization is inconsistent, it does not always encourage interdisciplinary approaches to thinking about society’s thorniest issues, and disciplinary boundaries have made the development of new, cutting-edge programs more difficult.

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Members of our campus community have debated these organizational challenges and contemplated solutions over the past decade. Beginning with the 2011 Programs of National Distinction Process (PoND), and continuing through an external review of the University's environment and sustainability programs in Spring of 2022, UM faculty and staff have participated in multiple alignment, innovation, prioritization, reorganization, planning, restructuring, and review processes, and this RTP reflects the findings of that work.

Now is the time to engage in a bold academic reorganization, if we are to live out our mission of inclusive prosperity and the values that the University of Montana has long embraced. The processes of the past decade have significantly informed our thinking as we recognize that the obstacles we face in our world require us to adapt our organizational structure and embrace the interdisciplinary approach needed to understand complex issues and challenges and to solve them in the workplace and beyond.

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

No new facilities are proposed. School Directors will be appointed to lead the schools described above, drawing largely from existing directorships, associate dean, and chair positions in extant units. Some additional hires for the director roles and staff to support the academic and research enterprises will be required, and some existing staff will be reassigned to support the new school structures. We expect that units will propose new interdisciplinary degree programs, some of which may ultimately replace existing degree programs with low enrollments.

5) 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 described above, the process to arrive at this request to plan involved a series of consultative meetings with leaders across the UM Mountain and Missoula College campuses, including iterative and consultative executive leadership, academic officer, college deans, chairs, and directors, and all-college meetings. We also held multiple town halls with presentations of various organizational models and discussions of their costs and benefits. This process will continue across the Spring 2023 Semester, as faculty, chairs, and deans work together to identify the ways in which departments can collaborate within and across UM's colleges and schools to create degree pathways that prepare students to be engaged global citizens, and to be ready for the job market that awaits them.

6) 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.

In the 2022-2023 Academic Priorities and Planning Statement, we noted that public doubts about the value of higher education, unprecedented demographic changes, and evolving student expectations in a new economic reality require us to enhance our understanding of how, why, and where we deliver our curriculum.

This plan demonstrates our campus' responsiveness to the need for higher education to serve a more diverse set of learners and shifting societal needs. Our current academic priorities reflect our commitment to:

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

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Signature/Date

Chief Academic Officer:

Chief Research Officer*:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost:**  **1/17/23**

Flagship President:**

Approved electronically 1/18/23

*Center/Institute Proposal only

**Not applicable to the Community Colleges.