



Recommendations to the President and President's Cabinet

Academic Programs and Administrative Services Prioritization (APASP) Task Force

All referenced materials can be found at www.umt.edu/apasp.

Preface

The documents you have before you are the culmination of eight months of work by University of Montana-Missoula stakeholders. The primary goal of prioritization is to take a wholesale look at what we do and restructure in a forward-looking way. When Bob Dickeson visited campus in the spring of 2017 he insisted that APASP needed to spend time, up front, defining where UM wanted to go. As a Task Force (TF), we endeavored to balance what our guiding values were over the last five years—UM2020— with our intentions for the future — the UM Strategic Vision. This preface will endeavor to contextualize the results and provide guidance for implementation in a way that prioritizes the mission, vision, and values of the University of Montana and its 125-year history.

Key Findings

Before we share our recommendations for prioritization, we want to highlight a few overarching findings that emerged during the course of our work; identify important principles that oriented our work, explain how those principles led to important strengths and limitations of our process, and perhaps most importantly, discuss how those limitations should be considered during the implementation phase of prioritization.

- **The Task Force finds that most units at UM are performing well, but personnel and budget reductions have hindered their growth and development.** This holds true across academic and administrative units, and partly explains the large number of units placed in the “middle” prioritization category.
- **The Task Force finds that many internal practices and processes are hindering the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the University.** The TF has been keeping a list of these items and will present something more formal to the Cabinet during Phase II.
- **The Task Force finds that the emerging data needs for this type of program prioritization present a significant challenge for Institutional Research.** The TF worked closely with Institutional Research to adapt and refine existing data for this process, and both entities recognize that changes in data gathering will be necessary to improve future prioritization efforts.

- **The Task Force finds that its ability to produce actionable results was hampered by a lack of concrete goals—in particular, a target amount for budget reduction and/or reallocation.** For many on the TF, the relationship between APASP and the university budget has been a mystery. The lack of direction from the Cabinet and lack of engagement from university budget officials left the TF with a very limited capacity to incorporate financial considerations during the review and recommendation process.
- **The Task Force finds that its ability to produce recommendations was hampered by a deadline that forced a rushed review process.** The scope of the task—to prioritize 400+ academic and administrative units—could not reasonably be accommodated in the available time. Other parts of the preface will address how this condition led to limitations in our process that must be accounted for in making decisions.
- **The Task Force finds that its recommendations should be carefully considered and cautiously applied by those charged with final decision-making and implementation.** The limitations of our process, outlined below, lead the TF to offer our recommendations as a “rough cut” deserving further deliberation by the campus, rather than a blueprint for action. We strongly recommend that the Cabinet consider the actual reports, scoring, reviewer comments, and dean, sector head and author responses in deliberations regarding specific action.

Positive Principles

The TF made several decisions early in our work as we developed the broad process for prioritization. These were principled decisions based on the values laid out in our framework document, but in hindsight some of these decisions made a monumental task even more challenging and led to the limitations outlined later in this document.

- Transparency at all levels of decision making was a key value for the taskforce. We aimed to include participation by the university community at every step in the process, and we appreciated that the campus resisted the initial proposal to carry out our prioritization over the summer.
- We were adamant that examining all Academic Programs and all Administrative Services at the same time was crucial to a fair process. This included giving Academic Programs opportunities to examine and correct centralized data and working with Administrative Services to determine the appropriate level of analysis for their units.
- We decided to apply a single set of Criteria to all academic units and another, parallel set to all administrative units. This ensured a basic level of fairness, but also made it difficult to fully account for the varying missions and goals of different units.
- We were committed to incorporating both quantitative data and qualitative accounts of unit performance. Although this allowed units to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of their units, challenges with centralized data and the sheer amount of evidence available for each unit complicated the scoring and review of units.
- We began our work committed to respecting the diverse student body and campus community at the University of Montana. Empowering UM students for success in higher education was a key value and student representation was crucial. We also had a

lively group of well-informed representatives from shared governance groups and the administration.

- We endeavored to examine all units equally and without setting aside the “obvious” high performers. We sought to protect our identity as an internationally recognized flagship Liberal Arts University without compromising the agility of our professional training and support services to meet current and future labor market demands in Montana and beyond.

Limited Time

On most campuses, prioritization processes usually take 18-24 months. Our Task Force ultimately had less than 8 months, from mid-April to the end of November, with much of the campus disengaged from the process for the summer months. Our accelerated timeline prevented substantive reflection within the Task Force and among the entire campus community on how the UM2020 Strategic Plan and the new UM Strategic Vision should inform prioritization. Other limitations related to the timeline include:

- Draft criteria, metrics, and evaluation rubrics were created quickly, in consultation with the campus community. The pilot process was expedited and limited to testing the review process rather than the efficacy of the rubrics in achieving the goal of categorization. The pilot was illuminating, but not all stages of the process were fully developed at that point. Although the pilot helped us streamline the metrics and criteria, develop training materials for authors and reviewers, and define the scope of work, a more robust pilot process could have helped mitigate other challenges during review and categorization.
- We attempted to gather distinct data from services regarding activities shared by multiple units of analysis. This level of granularity was ambitious, but led to redundant information spread across numerous reports. Data at the program and service level was useful, but the utility was often diluted or compromised by the department level data. This kept programs and services in several sectors from making the best case for their units, which denied the campus the opportunity to better understand their full contribution and made it difficult for the Task Force to categorize them.
- We did not reach adequate agreement within the Task Force or on campus for what constitutes an “essential” unit for either Academic Programs or Administrative Services.
- Academic Programs that focus on workforce development, particularly those at Missoula College, fared poorly in the review phase partially because the criteria attempted to be a one-size-fits all for all academic programs. Reviewers and Task Force members were inconsistent in how they interpreted the rubrics in regards to these programs.

Limited Experience

This was a new approach to a difficult process for all involved. The Task Force drew on the strong backgrounds of several experienced leaders on campus. However, we had to devise the structure for governance, leadership, and decision-making in a short amount of time. In

addition, we lacked a project manager whose only responsibility was to run APASP. Other experiential limitations included:

- Report authors and the reviewers were not given the same instructions on managing central data inconsistencies/problems.
- The Task Force realized in the summer that they would not have the time or capacity to execute the entire review process by themselves. As a result, we solicited volunteer reviewers from across campus to help us with the initial scoring of reports; a model based on grant proposal review processes. Unfortunately, the Task Force and these reviewers had minimal training and were not sufficiently "normed" to increase inter-rater reliability in their reviewing. This included not only the scoring, but the narrative of unit strengths and weaknesses as well.
- The established and publicly available review mechanism indicated that reports would be reviewed for strengths and weaknesses that would influence the scores and the Task Force vote. However, authors were not trained to specifically identify their program's strengths and weaknesses against known definitions. These reviewer training documents were developed after author training was complete rather than in tandem, which would have improved inter-rater reliability.
- The Task Force has struggled with developing a technical infrastructure for reports, review, and prioritization. As a result, we failed to meet benchmarks laid out in our framework and other documents—e.g., not posting agendas 48 hours in advance, limiting the ability of those outside the Task Force to fully participate.

Limited Outcomes

In its current design, the APASP process cannot locate the most basic of inefficiencies or opportunities to restructure existing programs in ways that make our university more cost effective and dynamic. Units had little incentive to provide substantive ideas about potential savings, which is what motivated this exercise in the first place. Instead we encouraged them to put their best foot forward, and most did what we asked. The reality is that the process yielded a wealth of information, but it did not lead to a level of knowledge among the Task Force about how UM should address its most pressing budget challenges. These limitations serve as a call to action.

Some specific examples of missed opportunities:

- We did not do enough to distinguish prioritization from other campus review processes, for example, curriculum review. Our task was not to examine the academic viability of a given unit, rather to scrutinize the demand, productivity, efficiency, and essentiality for that unit. Many units chose to speak to academic viability that was unquestionable but struggled to speak to demand and productivity.
- Our distributed General Education model on campus makes contribution to general education difficult to quantify. However, our process conflated quantity with quality in General Education. The available data are limited to the number of students served

rather than the number of students fulfilling general education in a particular program. The productivity data regarding non-major participation in a program were far more illuminating for all programs—2Y, certificate, graduate, and undergraduate.

- Pulling accurate enrollment numbers for minors and certificates was challenging, and little attention was paid to those housed in a major or the official options within a major. This was done for the sake of process efficiency at the loss of determining curricular efficiencies.
- Our metrics for efficiency were new and flawed. The data for sophomore retention rates were highly varied, with some programs having 100% in one year to be followed by 0% the following year. The years-to-degree metric focused only on the years between when a student started at UM and when they received their degree. Thus, a program that had a high percentage of transfer students fared well on this metric, while a program that had one or more students take several years off before coming back fared poorly. Given more time these metrics should be developed, checked and refined.
- We lack the ability to quantify or qualify faculty productivity in teaching/ service/ research and creative scholarship across a diversity of disciplines, unit standards, and load expectations. We asked that units explain how they interpret quality but then were unable to apply that interpretation in a way that allowed comparison with other units.
- We value interdisciplinary collaboration but have no method to account for tracking funding and effort when allocating resources to interdisciplinary programming.

Recommendations

Task Force recommendations should be thoroughly considered and cautiously applied by those charged with their implementation. We expect that the information generated by APASP will stimulate further discussion between units, Deans, and Sector Heads about opportunities for further development among these units. The limitations suggest it would be a serious mistake to pretend that our program prioritization results are without flaws. There are many insights to be drawn from the work of the Task Force. However, we urge you to listen to the knowledgeable voices of the Deans and Administrators who have offered their insights as well as the responses from report authors and unit heads appended to this document. It would be dangerous for the APASP process and its results to be applied in such a way that they dilute the academic foundations of our great University. There are many ways in which University of Montana could effectively move forward with the results of the APASP process and these recommendations are the first of what will be a long, sometimes painful process of rebirth for our great institution.

Priority for Development and Growth

The APASP Task Force will develop specific recommendations for all programs and services placed into the category, "Priority for Growth/Development" during Phase II of its review, starting in January 2018. Until then it should be noted that these units have strong potential for development and growth and should be prioritized for allocation of additional University resources. The following general recommendations should be considered by the administration when deliberating allocation of general fund dollars to these programs and services:

- Units should be sustained at current levels of funding from the general fund;
- Open and existing faculty/staff lines should be prioritized for general fund support with the expectation that open positions are filled strategically with a justifiable expectation of growth; and
- Additional general fund dollars should not go disproportionately to what are already strong programs (often with other substantial sources of revenue) until all other funding sources are exhausted.

Consider for Development and/or Modification

The Task Force is not making individual recommendations due to time constraints for units in the "Consider for Development and/or Modification" category. Some of these units received consideration for "Priority for Growth and Development" and some of these units received consideration for "Priority for Substantial Modification." At this point in our deliberations, the Task Force recommends that prior to modification of or investment in these units, further input from dean and sector heads be sought. The Task Force recommends exploring creation of an improvement plan, consolidation, restructuring, or reinvention within these units if modification is deemed necessary by the cabinet.

Priority for Substantial Modification

The following recommendations for each unit in “Priority for Substantial Modification,” were drafted by the Task Force workgroups in public meetings, considering written input submitted by Deans and Sector-heads, as well as information provided during public comment. Each was affirmed by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the Task Force. Some recommendations are applied to groups of units from the same sector or college due to commonalities in the reports and the mission of those units.

Administrative Services

5 Crown of the Continent - President

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend determining the best placement of this unit.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

20 Event Management - Athletics

- This unit was placed in category three because the unit report provided insufficient information.
- The Athletic Director’s response offered no substantive suggestions for modification.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

44 Treasury/Cashiers - A&F

45 Accounting - A&F

46 Procurement - A&F

47 Systems Support - A&F

48 Property Management - A&F

49 Student Accounts Office - A&F

50 Accounts Payable - A&F

- These units were placed in category three because the unit reports provided insufficient information.
- Recommend exploring new technology solutions for these units as laid out in the VP for A&F's report.
- Recommend allowing the next VP for A&F to assess units and potential reorganization.
- Recommend these units be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

70 FA Tuition Waivers - Enroll&SA

- This unit was placed in category three because the unit report provided insufficient information.
- Recommend developing an undergraduate Enrollment Management Plan and determine the optimal use of tuition waivers in such a plan.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

88 O'Connor Ctr - Research and Creative Scholarship

- Follow VP for Research & Creative Scholarship's recommendation for continuation.

141 PEAS Farm - Provost

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend removing this as a unit of analysis and reviewing it as part of EVST in the future, as suggested in public comment.

143 Wright Zoological Museum - Provost

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend removing this as a unit of analysis and reviewing it as part of DBS in the future, as suggested in public comment.

145 Dennison Theatre - Provost

- Recommend examining organization of performance and entertainment venues for efficiencies, reduction of competition, elimination of redundancies, and promote ease of access for campus and outside constituencies.

168 MC Dean - Provost

- Recommend a thorough systems analysis of Missoula College as suggested in the Dean's report.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

170 Café - Provost

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend removing this as a unit of analysis and reviewing it as part of the Culinary Arts program in the future, as suggested by the Dean in public comment.

Academic Programs

11 Applied Science - UG - H&S

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend that Cabinet obtain input from the Dean of Missoula College before making substantial modification to this program.

13 Bioethics - Cert - H&S

- Recommendation to discontinue this program as suggested in the Dean's response.

15 East Asian Studies - UG - H&S

- Recommend integrating several programs of Asian Studies into a cohesive program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend exploring integrating this unit into a new Division of World Languages and Cultures, as suggested in the Dean's response.

16 Latin American Studies - Minor - H&S

- Recommend exploring integrating this unit into a new Division of World Languages and Cultures, as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

35 Film Studies - Minor - H&S

- Recommend exploring integration and efficiencies with Media Arts as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

49 Global Humanities & Religions - UG - H&S

- Recommend eliminating this program but that a) current majors be assisted in completing and graduating, and b) that the tenure-track faculty be incorporated into other H&S departments, as suggested in the Dean's response.

58 Classics - UG - H&S

- Recommend reducing three concentrations into one and exploring integrating into a new Division of World Languages & Culture, as suggested in the Dean's response.

60 French - UG - H&S

- Recommend continuing this program and exploring integrating into a new Division of World Languages & Culture, as recommended in the Dean's response.

65 Modern Languages & Literature - Grad - H&S

- Recommend leaving this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's response.

89 Administrative Systems Management - Minor - COEHS

- Recommend discontinuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.

94 Library Media Services - Minor - COEHS

- Recommend discontinuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.

109 Ecosystem Management - Grad - WAFCCF

- Recommend leaving this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's response.

133 Global Health - Cert - CHPBS

- Recommend placing this program in Insufficient Evidence category as it's one year old.

152 Computer Aided Design - Cert - MC

- Recommend that the curriculum be modified via reduction in the number of credits required for this certificate, as suggested by the Dean in public comment.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

153 Computer Support - Cert - MC

- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend developing a process to inform students of the availability of the certificate within the 2-year program.
- Recommend that In future prioritization cycles, this program be evaluated within the 2-year Information Technology degree.

154 Cybersecurity - Cert - MC

- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend developing a process to inform students of the availability of the certificate within the 2-year program.
- Recommend that In future prioritization cycles, this program be evaluated within the 2-year Information Technology degree.

155 Electronics Technology - 2Y - MC

- Recommend putting this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's response.

156 Energy Technology - 2Y - MC

- Recommend putting this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's response.

157 Health Information Technology - Cert - MC

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend developing a process to inform students of the availability of the certificate within the 2-year program.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

165 Food Service Management - 2Y - MC

- This unit was placed into category three due to incomplete information in the unit report.
- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.

167 Medical Reception - Cert - MC

- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend developing a process to inform students of the availability of the certificate within the 2-year program.

170 Paralegal Studies - 2Y - MC

- This unit was placed into category three due to incomplete information in the unit report and the reviewers did not have access to centralized data.
- Recommend exploring collaboration on this program between MC and the Law School, as suggested by the deans of MC and the Law School.

171 Sales and Marketing - Cert - MC

- Recommend continuing this program as suggested in the Dean's response.
- Recommend developing a process to inform students of the availability of the certificate within the 2-year program.
- Recommend that for future prioritization cycles this certificate be evaluated within the 2-year Management degree.

187 Recreational Power Equipment - Cert - MC

- Recommend placing this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's report.

197 Entrepreneurship - Cert - MC

- Recommend placing this program in moratorium as suggested in the Dean's report.

207 Interdisciplinary Studies - Grad - GS

- Recommend that this unit develop a program of support for Interdisciplinary Graduate Program students and develop themes and structures for interdisciplinary degrees based on existing strengths of our faculty and areas of growth in research and student interest, as suggested in the Dean's report.
- Recommend this unit be reviewed in the next prioritization cycle.

211 Bitterroot College - Provost

- This unit was placed in category three because no unit report was submitted.
- Recommend a comprehensive review of Bitterroot College, including (at a minimum): Administrative reporting line; mission; structure; academic offerings; and financial sustainability.