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Sector: Provost

Division: College of Humanities and Sciences

Unit for Assessment: Anthropology Collections

State the mission, objectives, and primary functions of this unit: The University of Montana’s Anthropological Collections Facility (UMACF) houses more than one million ethnographic and archaeological artifacts, representing ancient and recent cultures in Montana and the surrounding Northern Plains region, as well as objects from various places in the world, for use in teaching and/or research at UM. These cultural heritage collections are part of the foundation of the University of Montana (UM), with a history grounded in bequests and acquisitions to the Museum of Northwest History (which is now closed), research activities by university staff and students, Smithsonian River Basin Surveys, and collections deposition by Federal, Tribal, and State agencies. Today, the UMACF functions primarily as an educational and research facility, housing cultural collections and archival records and cultivating an atmosphere of collaboration with Federal, Tribal, and State agencies to facilitate continued support and joint research opportunities. The UMACF, as a subsidiary of the Montana University System (MUS), recognizes its role as a public facility to uphold its ethical and legal obligations to these collections. In this spirit, the UMACF’s mission is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and sustaining Montana’s cultural heritage for present and future generations.

Moreover, as a R1 Research University, the UM is only as good as its research collections—and with materials-based fields like archaeology, cultural anthropology, and forensics, the UMACF museum collections are an inherent part of serving internal and external users at UM in terms of the research, educational, and cultural needs of those users.

Identify the primary users of the unit: The primary users of the UMACF are enrolled UM and visiting students, UM and visiting faculty, UM and visiting researchers, K-12 students, Federal and State agencies, as well as descendant communities whose ancestors made and used these exceptional, irreplaceable objects, namely Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Cultural Committees, and Tribal colleges. Please note that trends over the past several years have improved the UMACF profile in the region. For decades, UM had a negative reputation as an institution that did not live up to its legal mandate in terms of archival-quality artifact storage and user access to the museum collections. Such problems for the users have been perceived to be the result of the ambivalence of past UM leadership. Hence, due to support from recent UM leaders and grant funds, the UMACF has been able to “right the ship” and serve as the world-class cultural heritage education and research facility it was always meant to be.

Submit Organizational Chart: SubmitOrganizationalChart_17Admin169_1004015050.pdf
Using the space below, address any issues with your FTE Detail Sheet.: Please see FTE detail sheet.

Research: Pre-award, Post-award, Research compliance

Human Resources: Employee Training

Communications: Social Media, Event Planning

Development: Alumni Relations, Fundraising

Criteria 1. - Bullet 1.: Diversity: Anthropology and anthropological collections align with the UM2020 Strategic Plan’s emphasis on diversity, fostering an appreciation for the diversity of the human condition. In terms of historically underrepresented groups mentioned in the Strategic Plan, the UMACF cultural heritage collections derive from the numerous cultural groups who historically and currently make up the population of our state, providing students, researchers, and visitors with direct connections to the descendant communities of these diverse cultural groups through material culture.

Sustainability: In terms of the UMACF’s ability to align with the Strategic Plan’s values of sustainability, the UMACF has been upgrading the facility to reinforce the “greening” goals of the University of Montana’s (UM’s) Office of Sustainability. These measures underscored the UMACF’s commitment to UM’s environmental sustainability mission by decreasing our carbon footprint—and we recently received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections grant to continue to reduce the UMACF’s reliance on mechanical systems while maintaining ideal climate control and security for the collections. At the UMACF, we also view sustainability—and resilience—as essential components of a community-based process and received additional NEH funds to support Summits with Tribal cultural heritage leaders and descendant communities to collaborate on plans for the long-term care and stewardship of UMACF collections.

Leadership: The Summits and community-based ethos noted above provide a venue where students are empowered to professionally conduct themselves by practicing responsible, ethical leadership skills and learning through partnerships with the region’s Tribal cultural heritage leaders.

Criteria 1. - Bullet 2.: The UMACF is essential to UM because it is the entity on campus that helps UM uphold promises, agreements, and commitments past leadership has made to donors of the collections for the past century. UM is not only bound to these past agreements, but is also legally mandated to provide support in perpetuity for a Curator to uphold legal and ethical obligations (memo from Legal Counsel on file at UMACF).

Due to decreased financial support for a UMACF Curator, the impacts have been most obvious in the reduction of student opportunities. Examples include:

- Violation of UM’s legal mandate to the anthropological collections (as outlined in memo from UM Legal Counsel, April 13, 2016), which sets an embarrassing example for our students because UM leads by example;
threatening the trajectory of currently enrolled students from completing projects associated with UMACF collections;

denying access to UM students (who may represent descendant communities with cultural connections to the collections), as well as professional UM researchers, to any of the resources and information UMACF provides;

Fewer opportunities for internships because of the Curator’s reduced hours;

Loss of teaching collections in our classrooms.

Any further reduction to our budget will be detrimental to UM and dishonor the UM2020 Strategic Plan’s emphasis on diversity, sustainability, and leadership and place-based mission of the UMACF.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 1.: Internal Users: Students and faculty.

Internal Trends: Past and ongoing trends indicate that the UMACF serves internal users by providing teaching collections for archaeology, cultural anthropology, and forensics, as well as for other departments on campus, including History and Fine Arts.

Measuring Demand: Demand is measured by curation loan records, as well as student enrollment and internship records, which are measured by credit and contact hours. NOTE: interns are among the more prominent internal users, and the UMACF continues to be a top provider of on-campus internships at UM.

Results:

- Loan records over the past five years indicate that scores of UMACF artifacts are used in classrooms on campus each semester.
- Student enrollment in the courses that use the collections (e.g., ANTY 101, ANTY 133, ANTY 250, ANTY 251, ANTY 254, ANTY 455, ANTY 456, ANTY 401, ANTY 403) indicate that hundreds of students (particularly taking into account collections presented to individual sections of ANTY 101, which in a Fall semester may reach over 300) have had opportunities to learn from collections over the past five years.
- Student internship records are summarized as follows: Spring 2014, 6 interns; Fall 2014, 7 interns; Spring 2015, 5 interns; Fall 2015, 7 interns; Spring 2016, 4 interns; Fall 2016, 6 interns; Spring 2017, 6 interns; and Fall 2017, 2 interns.

Due to the Curator’s limited hours [which is the result of a limited budget], we are struggling to keep the UMACF open to accommodate the demand.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 2.: External Users -- Measuring the Demand:

NOTE: Demand, by definition at a museum facility, assumes that curation services MUST exist in perpetuity. By curating cultural collections, UM is mandated by law to uphold its obligation to this demand.

Examples of external users and how we measure their demand include:
• Tribal Historic Preservation Officers -- demand measured by attendance and participation in annual Summits (100% of Montana’s eight tribal nations have attended the Summits), as well as legal documents and agreements;
• Tribal Colleges – demand measured by records of collaborative workshops, presentations, field visits, proposals, and publications.
• External government and private agencies (i.e. paying customers) – demand measured by contracts for curation of archaeological collections;
• Visiting scholars – demand measured by visitor log, theses/dissertations, publications, programs.
• School groups and summer camps -- demand measured by numbers and frequency of teacher requests and number of K-12 students served.

External Trends: Recent trends indicate that the UMACF is intended to serve as a regional cultural collections center that values and valorizes Montana’s diverse cultural heritage through collaborations with Federal, Tribal, and State agencies.

Results: Until recently, agencies have been hesitant to pay for curation services at the UMACF because of more than a century of vacillations by UM leadership. However, as a result of the undertakings described above, UM has not only regained the faith of external users, but now has contracts on file and under development for curation services.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 1.: National and Industry Benchmarks: As noted above, the UMACF’s stakeholder protocols and inclusion of the region’s Tribal descendant communities in collections planning and decision-making set regional and national precedents, establishing benchmarks and training content for museums across Montana, and for regional and national/international organizations such as the Museum Association of Montana, the Montana Archaeological Society, the Society for Historical Archaeology, and the National Park Service. As a result, our colleagues, students, and descendant communities are awaiting the next steps in our unfolding series of “best practices” for cultural heritage collections management and education.

Evidence: Evidence of such benchmarks can be found in co-authored documents such as cross-cultural policies and object handling procedures, a Scope of Collections, a peer-reviewed manuscript being prepared for publication, and a Programmatic Agreement to be signed by all Montana Tribal nations.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 2.:
• The Museum Association of Montana, Montana Archaeological Society, and Tribal Collections, such as Salish Kootenai College have all asked UMACF Curator to give workshops about the UMACF and its community-oriented approaches to Montana’s cultural heritage.
• The UMACF Curator serves as the Chair of the governor-appointed Montana Historic Preservation Review Board.
• The UMACF Curator sat on Indigenous Peoples Committee for UM’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).
• The UMACF Curator served on UM’s Building Safety Committee.
• The UMACF Curator organized THPO Summits;
• The UMACF Curator frequently participates in the Pedagogy Workshops at UM.
• The Director of UMACF Collections and Faculty Coordinator have been consistently engaged with the UM Foundation to develop capacity-building strategies for the UMACF.
Recent UMACF interns received prestigious internships and training invitations to institutions such as the Smithsonian and Peabody Essex Museum.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 3.: UMACF collections have facilitated numerous doctoral dissertations and master’s theses, publications, and multiple research and outreach projects. Evidence of such scholarly productivity can be found in the Mansfield Library’s collections of theses and dissertations, with at least 40 of these involving UMACF collections. The UMACF keeps a record of these dissertations, theses, and publications related to the collections. While the list of these is too large to include under this bullet due to the word count limits, some samples are provided below to give reviewers a sense of the UMACF’s commitment to scholarship and dissemination:


Criteria 3. - Bullet 4.: Teaching:

- UMACF teaching contributions include internships field schools, artifact analysis classes, museology classes, and other methods-based classes in Anthropology and related fields. In terms of UMACF internships, these provide undergraduate and graduate students with academic credit via on-the-job training in a real world setting, preparing them to thrive in national and global arenas. Our teaching/training philosophies are centered on ensuring that interns and other students are given the leadership tools to go above and beyond legal and ethical requirements of collections management and cultural heritage stewardship, witnessing the pay-offs that arise from collaboration and more engaged, relevant, and respectful approaches to descendant community involvement.

Evidence of Quality:

- Evidence of the quality of these activities can be observed in teaching evaluations and student successes such as employment, awards, papers, degree completion, and publications.
- Evidence of the quality of UMACF internships can be measured by considering the exciting fact that, in the summer of 2017, two UMACF interns were selected for prestigious internship positions at the Smithsonian and another UMACF intern received an invitation to train at the Peabody Essex Museum.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 1.: Please see Administrative Services FTE Detail Sheets FY13 through FY17 for the origin of these figures:

FY13

- Classified Staff, $10,862 (non-general funds)
- Contract Professional, $46,456 (non-general funds)
- Student Employee, $14,060 (non-general funds)
FY14

- Classified Staff, $320 (non-general funds)
- Contract Professional, $15,621 (non-general funds)
- Student Employee, $3,952 (non-general funds)

FY15

- Contract Professional, $8470 (non-general funds)
- Temporary Staff, $13,520 (non-general funds); $13,520 (general funds)
- Student Employee, $905 (non-general funds)?

FY16

- Temporary Staff, $9,194 (non-general funds); $29,744 (general funds)
- Student Employee, $9,818 (non-general funds); $2,496 (general funds)

FY17

- Temporary Staff, $18,387 (non-general funds); $9,193 (general funds)
- Student Employee, $3,224 (non-general funds)

Criteria 4. - Bullet 2.: Impacts: Due to decreased financial support for a UMACF Curator, the impacts have been most obvious in the reduction of student opportunities and access to UMACF collections by Federal, Tribal, and State agencies and descendant communities. Yet these internal and external users continue to expect the UMACF to serve as a full-time repository of artifacts and information, which means that the current trajectory of reduced resources to this unit will undermine all that we have achieved over the past five years by:

- violating UM’s legal mandate to the anthropological collections (as outlined in memo from UM Legal Counsel, April 13, 2016);
- jeopardizing the relationships and incipient trust the UMACF has worked so hard to build with the region’s tribal cultural heritage leaders, as well as federal and state agencies – and fellow professionals in the region;
- counteracting our recent successes at receiving outside funding for auxiliary support for the UMACF (e.g., funds for annual Summits and educational workshops with Tribal nations);
- requiring UM to renege on curation contract negotiations;
- threatening the trajectory of currently enrolled students from completing projects associated with UMACF collections;
- denying access to UM students, as well as professional researchers outside UM, to any of the resources and information UMACF provides;
- and thwarting UM’s ability to serve as a regional model for negotiating a nationwide curation crisis.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 3.: Collaboration: We have requested help from CH&S, the Provost, and the VPR to maintain the bare essentials because the UMACF collections are UM’s overall responsibility. We also rely on IDCs from the Department of Anthropology and use sabbatical backfill and/or teaching buyouts to provide the Curator with additional FTE to integrate classroom and UMACF activities. In order to pick up the balance in the UMACF workload, UMACF imposes upon volunteers to help with anything from coordinating/hosting events like Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) Summits, to assisting with
legal cases. Since the CH&S Dean prioritized the UMACF for the UM Foundation, collaboration with the Foundation has been consistent, with the most recent collaborative project being a UMACF pre-proposal for capacity-building funds from the Hearst Foundations (submitted in September 2017).

**Impacts and Benchmarks:** Outcomes of THPO Summits include collaboration with Tribal nations in planning and decision-making. Such developments set a regional precedent, catching the attention of museums across Montana, the Museum Association of Montana, and the Montana Archaeological Society. An international, “flagship” professional society invited UMACF to submit a publication summarizing the Summits and requested to use our case study in Montana as an example of professional standards. The U.S. National Park Service has already requested a copy of our Summit outcome documents for use in their cultural heritage collections plans. Thus, the UMACF is establishing regional and national benchmarks and “best practices” in the field of cultural heritage collections management.

**Criteria 4. - Bullet 4.: Are we able to generate revenue?** Yes, but in a limited way. We have acquired grants (e.g., Montana State Parks, National Endowment for the Humanities, Humanities Montana, National Park Service, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) and we have acquired curation fees from state agencies. However, we cannot actually generate enough to sustain the facility unless we can ensure there is a full-time Curator to keep up with the requirements. For example, agencies will not commit to paying $20,000 for a lifetime curation contract when UM cannot confirm that there will be a full-time Curator on staff to oversee this curatorial investment. Moreover, sources of soft money support for museum facilities require a full-time permanent Curator to meet the criteria of their grants. Until the UMACF can demonstrate that it has UM’s overarching institutional support and investment in a full-time Curator, we cannot ensure the legal requirements and trust necessary to create future long-term curation agreements for curation that will generate more income.

Montana State Parks has recently become a fee-paying agency and was also awarded a US National Park Service grant to have its UMACF Ghost Cave collection curated by means of uploading photographic and observational data onto Past Perfect, cutting-edge curation software. The NPS grant support the Curator in completing these tasks.

**Criteria 5. - Bullet 1.:** With regard to Strategic Vision (Strategic Opportunity #3 Partner with Place, Initiative #1) UMACF has already been contributing to opportunities outlined therein.

UMACF collections represent great accomplishments from the past and foster settings for social interaction that bring together students, researchers, and descendant communities to reconnect with the region’s heritage and celebrate Montana as a place.

For example, UMACF collections are deeply connected with western Montana as a place and with the people who lived here since time immemorial. The UMACF is committed to working with local communities, cognizant of the collections’ roots and importance to the people of Montana. UMACF collections and educational activities provide curriculum content and internship projects that connect students with Montana’s natural and cultural environment, integrating local surroundings into UMACF curricula and services. Using the characteristics of western Montana’s natural and cultural history, UMACF provides students with experiential education, equipping them with the tools to understand and respect the perspectives and human rights issues of our own and other nations.

The UMACF also contributes to leadership (Invest in Leadership Opportunity #1), as the UMACF Curator serves as the Chair of the governor-appointed Montana Historic Preservation Review Board and leads workshops in “Best Practices” experiments in collaborative, community-oriented museum collections management. As noted, State, regional and national societies have drawn attention to the
UMACF’s best practices over the past few years and we have drafts of documents co-authored with Montana’s eight Tribal nations that document and measure these achievements.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 2.: The UMACF is a unique entity on campus, as no other group on campus provides the services we do, especially with regard to the legally required tribal consultation for cultural heritage collections and our integrated platform for research, education, and community connections. While the UMACF may seem to be similar to the Montana Museum of Art and Culture (MMAC), the MMAC does not engage in tribal collaboration as UMACF does; the UMACF is also more Montana place-based than MMAC. While the UMACF certainly benefits from the expertise and commitment of Anthropology faculty and therefore should continue to be affiliated with that Department, the collections are, actually, a state collection, stemming from the Museum of Northwest History (which is now closed), which means they have been waiting over 80 years for the UM President/Main Hall to take responsibility and accountability for the UMACF. We invite discussions about how the UM President’s Office can collaborate with the Department of Anthropology to share the burden of responsibility for these important cultural collections.

In terms of the UMACF’s role as an administrative unit with academic duties, there have already been preliminary conversations with Fine Arts, MMAC, and Paleontology to promote an Interdisciplinary Museology Certificate. UMACF staff and Anthropology faculty envision continuing to collaborate with such entities on campus to increase the diversity of interdisciplinary internship opportunities for UM students.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 3.: By investing in UMACF, UM will demonstrate its commitment to respecting diversity through partnership and interconnectedness and building a culture of inclusive excellence by actively valuing the material forms of diversity (Strategic Vision, Strategic Opportunity #3, Initiative 3).

Created on a shoestring budget, the UMACF has been an example of resilience, with staff committed to sustaining UM’s cultural research and teaching collections and to providing a place where descendant communities can assemble to determine the future of these collections despite institutional cuts to the Curator FTE. We are looking to UM’s leaders to heed and understand UM’s legal obligation to support a full-time Curator, which will, in turn, enable our facility to expand place-based partnerships with descendant communities, generate additional curation contracts and income, and serve as a regional curation repository that values Montana’s diverse cultural heritage.

While we have been resilient and adaptable, our current trajectory of unmet demands is unsustainable unless UM demonstrates its commitment to the UMACF. With more resources, UMACF could expand the place-based staff and provide opportunities for Indigenous students to build partnerships between those students and their own tribes so they can directly apply lessons learned from the UMACF to their community’s cultural heritage needs. In turn, they can provide the UMACF with relevant information for the appropriate handling, storing, conservation, and use of certain objects.