



**The University of Montana Rural Institute: Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research, and Service**

**Senate Recommendation**

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**A. Written Report Summary:**

1. **Purpose:** The Rural Institute's purpose is included in its mission statement: "To enhance the independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals and their families and to improve the quality of life for people with severe disabilities, especially those individuals living in Montana and other rural areas of the country." The Institute's report contains a copy of their Charter.
2. **Objectives:** The Rural Institute has developed multiple objectives to meet each of seven goals. Detailed objectives under each of these goals are specified in the Rural Institute's report.
  - Interdisciplinary Preservice Education
  - Research and Evaluation
  - Community Service and Supports
  - Dissemination
  - Constituency Involvement and Diversity:
  - Leveraging
  - Administration
3. **Anticipated activities:** The Rural Institute's many activities and grant projects are detailed on their website: <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/projects.asp>. Their major activities include education, research and service.
4. **Other organizations involved:** The Rural Institute collaborates with many universities, state governments and service providers across the nation, including several agencies in Montana and Montana State University. Their report includes an impressive map.
5. **Reporting line:** The Executive Director reports directly to the Vice-President for Research and Development. Five departments have reporting lines under the Executive Director.
6. **Relationships with institutional mission and contribution to academic programs:** The Rural Institute's state and federal funding sources support its research faculty teaching through schools, colleges and departments across campus. "In a typical semester, the Rural Institute will generate 40-60 FTE for various Departments."
7. **Similar programs:** "There is at least one University Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research and Service in each state." The only other similar program in Montana is the Montana Center on Disabilities at MSU-Billings, but their mission does not include teaching or research.
8. **Budget:**
  - a. **1. Current faculty and percentage of time:** 12 full-time research faculty; 1 tenured faculty member at .5 FTE.  
**Current staff:** 63
  - 2. Need and cost for new faculty (next five years):** New grant projects may require new faculty that would be supported through grant funding.

**3. Need for other personnel:** Administrative and IT staff as new projects are funded.

**b. Use and anticipated needs (next five years) of University Resources:**

**1. Library:** Frequent use of literature and research materials

**2. Technology/equipment:** Technology infrastructure is supported and improved through grants, though this continues to be a challenge.

**3. Facility and space:** The Rural Institute occupies approximately 12,500 sq. ft. of office, classroom and clinical space on campus

**c. Source of Funding (Provide figures for the last fiscal year):** The Rural Institute is funded entirely through federal and state grants and income accounts. In 2008, the Institute received \$8,117,135.

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## **B. Review and Approval Process**

**2.** The Faculty Senate through its Chair, who in turn shall distribute it to ECOS and other committees, and approve or disapprove the proposal by a vote of the Senate.

Review in terms of Scope as stated in academic policy 100.0

To provide instruction, scholarship, or service to the University, state or world by: (1) focusing attention on an area of strength and/or addressing a critical issue, or (2) facilitating collaborative, multi-disciplinary endeavors to combine resources from several programs or institutions to address issues of common interest.

The Rural Institute fulfills both criteria. The Institute's role in research and education focused on "enhancing the quality of life for people with severe and long-lasting disabilities," especially those living in rural communities, provides an important addition to the scholarship in various fields and a better quality of life to people living with disabilities. The Institute is multidisciplinary, though instead of combining the resources of programs, they provide resources to several units.

Review in terms of the University's mission.

- Comments: None
- Does ECOS/Faculty Senate consider this center controversial? No. The Rural Institute is 100% self-funding and continues to work toward its mission.
- Is the relationship with academic units beneficial? Yes. The Rural Institute is a multidisciplinary center that generates FTE in several academic units.
- Is the program revenue neutral or does it consume more resources than it generates? If so, is the use of University resources justified? All of the Rural Institutes programs, faculty and staff are grant funded and the Rural Institute uses only amount of space on campus.
- Is the entity making progress toward objectives? Yes.

**Recommendation: Continue**

**Justification:**