

ECOS reviewed the February 2019, report of the Neural Injury Center. Its purpose is threefold: 1) Support student success for veterans and student athletes with concussion and other neural injuries, and help them to achieve their educational and life goals, through comprehensive screening and support strategies. Screen and support others with concussion and neural injuries as time and resources allow. 2) Conduct clinical and translational research in neural injury, with a focus on traumatic brain injury (TBI) and other concomitant issues (e.g. PTSD, depression). 3) Provide strategies for family and partner education, organize and conduct community outreach and education in neural injury and related challenges. It is the only center of its kind in Montana, one of five in the Pacific Northwest / Northern Rockies.

The Center lists several initiatives for 2019-2020, including: 1) Build on and refine the new operational model to enhance service to those impacted by neural injuries. This will be accomplished through coordinated clinical and psychosocial screening, and expanded outreach and support activities 2) Reintegrate translational/scientific research collaborations into the Center's advisory and functional capacity 2) Engage and enhance experiences for undergraduates in neuroscience and other health sciences, and other like-minded programs on campus in the NIC's activities—(e.g. Center for Translational Medicine, Speech and Hearing Sciences, IPE Committee activities, UMHM, and the undergraduate neuroscience program). 4) Harness the power of an integrated approach aligned in an articulated multidisciplinary structure to stimulate and attract new funding opportunities.

The Center is housed in the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences and reports to Dean Reed Humphrey. It's funding for this year (\$193,341) comes from designated funds (MPH018 and 017) as well as external private funds; there are no general funds supporting their budget.

An external review described the Neural Injury Center as “a very important and worthwhile project due to the high rates of TBI and other concomitant issues (e.g., PTSD, depression) in Montana. There is no other comprehensive, interdisciplinary model of care in our area, or any other rural area. The NIC was initially developed with seed money through grant funding to enhance military veteran student success and has evolved with academic and community interest. The NIC has been able to recruit many talented and committed collaborators that reflect expertise in many relevant disciplines. These collaborators have been key in the early development and continued success of the NIC, particularly in light of the NIC's very modest funding. The NIC is well positioned to be the foundation of a comprehensive program with far reaching impact in terms of research, education, clinical application, and community needs.”

ECOS does not consider the Center controversial and recommends continuation.