

**ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS**
PLAYBOOK

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DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Academic Affairs sector is the core of the University of Montana, supporting rigorous academics, impactful research and creative scholarship, and vital workforce training. The scholars, researchers, artists, and practitioners who make up our faculty play a pivotal role in delivering transformational experiences that enrich student lives and positively impact communities from Missoula to the global stage.

For the first time in a decade, the university has growing enrollment and a balanced budget. Academic Affairs receives 52.5% of the University's general fund budget, well within national norms. Yet, even as our overall revenues and expenses are balanced, the University continues to experience financial strain, including in the current administrative and curricular configurations of our academic portfolio. Continuing to deliver our academic portfolio as it exists, severely limits our ability to deliver our curriculum while maintaining necessary student and administrative services across our academic units. We must seek flexibility to be responsive to changes in academic program demand and the public service expectations of our stakeholders across the state. Changes to the Academic Affairs budget allocation model are under consideration, but reallocation on its own will not cover the shortfalls caused by increased instructional costs and flat revenue.

Essentially, we have more programs than we can sustain, and we must rethink our academic portfolio.

With this Academic Affairs Playbook, we endeavor to redirect our collective energies toward a more systematic vision for academics at UM. Earlier this fall, the deans critically evaluated their colleges, offering outlooks for the next three years. This exercise revealed common internal pressures across campus, leading to the following essential themes:

- All decisions must prioritize student success.
- We must be responsive to evolving educational landscapes.
- The interdependencies between our research mission and academic offerings are varied and do not conform to a simple model.
- Thoughtful resource management is required to ensure academic and operational allocations align with our objectives and values.
- Strategic alignment around a shared vision and common objectives is critical.

Therefore, to stabilize and enhance the operations of our sector we must:

- Unite around a vision for UM as an open-access, comprehensive, research university.
- Ensure students have clear curricular pathways to timely degree completion that prepare them for careers and life.
- Review all academic programs and identify those facing declining enrollment, completion, and demand.
- Reorganize, consolidate, or sunset academic programs and/or departments based on the findings of the review process.
- Implement a consistent faculty workload policy and procedure to ensure we are effectively utilizing the talent already on campus.
- Increase our online offerings to reach new and returning demographic populations,

especially those who are place-bound.

- Enhance our data infrastructure for informed decision-making.
- Establish predictable revenue and expenditure projections, coupled with adjustments to the academic affairs budget allocation model, to sufficiently resource programs and initiatives that move the University forward.

Our goal is to focus and enhance the quality of academics at UM. While specifics may differ by college, these actions are fundamental to achieving that goal over the next three years.

Subsequent sections outline courses of action to enhance our strengths and address current limitations. With the coming demographic cliff in the next three years and declines in participation across higher education, targeted investment to increase our market share and generate revenue must be strategic.

To comprehend the necessity of these actions, a clear-eyed understanding of our context is imperative. We must answer the question, “What is the purpose of a flagship university today, and what might it be in ten years?”

2. PURPOSE OF THE FLAGSHIP UNIVERSITY

What is the purpose of a flagship university today, and what might it be in ten years? Over the past 200 years, many have questioned the purpose of the flagship university at different junctures: with the creation of the prototype of the research university in Prussia in the early nineteenth century; after the U.S. Civil War with the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which provided for the creation of land-grant universities, agricultural universities, and historically Black colleges and universities; at the turn of the twentieth with the creation of distinct social science disciplines and their separation from the humanities; after World War II with the rapid expansion of scientific and area studies programs; and, now in the early decades of the twenty-first century.¹ Running parallel to each reprisal of the question, technological developments upset the established order of things economically, socially, and politically. The early nineteenth century witnessed the invention of the steam engine and the demise of guilds. Mechanization continued through the mid-nineteenth century in transportation and weapons, prompting the rapid Euroamerican settlement of North America and wreaking devastation in the Civil War and the colonization of the American West. By the turn of the twentieth century, factories expanded in urban centers, forming a network of industries linked by railroads and shipping. Following World War II, the Cold War and the belief that American ingenuity and technology could solve any problem fueled research discovery and advancement. Post-

¹ Yale College, Reports on the Course of Instruction in Yale College (New Haven : Printed by Hezekiah Howe, 1828), <http://archive.org/details/reportsoncourseo07yale>; Charles William Eliot, “The Aims of Higher Education,” in Educational Reform: Essays and Addresses (New York: Century Co., 1898), 221–49, <http://archive.org/details/cu31924030572600>; Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1963); Richard J. Storr, The Beginning of the Future: A Historical Approach to Graduate Education in the Arts and Sciences, The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education 14 (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1973).

Cold War, universities have been regarded as economic drivers in their local communities and states, carrying with it the expectation that universities should be worth investing in by philanthropists, as a form of self-investment by students, and, for public institutions, the state. Today, we are experiencing the accelerated growth of digital tools and generative artificial intelligence in the wake of a pandemic, prompting many to ask, “Does college matter?” Framed another way, one can ask, “What value does college bring to my life and my world?”²

When the question of “Does college matter?” is reflective of popular sentiment, the interwoven threads of continuity and change are pulling at different speeds. Those that are slow-moving are the durable threads that are recognizable over time. Those that are fast-moving are the shifting threads that appear differently with each iteration of the research university.

Speaking to an audience in Chicago in 1891, Charles William Eliot, Harvard’s president noted that the three purposes of higher education were to: 1) teach; 2) serve as a repository of knowledge, particularly with a strong library; and, 3) investigate. In his words, universities “are teachers, storehouses, and searchers for truth.”³ Universities are also places where students form social connections and networks. These four purposes are durable, and they appear again and again in the twentieth century as universities expanded throughout the United States.⁴ What has changed over time are the fast-moving, external shifts and shocks that change the tension and design of the university. These shifts and shocks, in turn, evoke different public sentiment toward the university. They have likewise served as factors in the development of new academic disciplines, differing emphases on specific career pathways, and a keystone institution in ensuring an educated citizenry.⁵ Such changes were taking place in the sciences and social sciences in the late nineteenth century, when the University of Montana, among other institutions, was created.

The University of Montana was, in fact, part of a larger movement in the late nineteenth century to establish public universities throughout the West and Midwest. Founded in 1893 and opened in 1895, the University of Montana was created at the same time a number of other flagship and land grant universities in the U.S. were established. The creation of learning institutions like universities and libraries was part of the zeitgeist of the time: respectability and commitment to the Euroamerican settlement of the American West came with their construction. Such creation, though, also came with a profound tradeoff, one with which UM grapples—the dispossession of land that had been held by American Indians. Education was bound up in colonization as evidenced in federal

² American Council on Education, “Reorienting Higher Education to Focus on Access, Equity, and Success: Reimagining the Carnegie Classification Systems to Recognize Institutions That Make Social and Economic Mobility a Reality” (American Council on Education, February 22, 2023), <https://carnegie-classifications.acenet.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/22-0711-Carnegie-Fact-Sheet-update.pdf>.

³ Eliot, “The Aims of Higher Education,” 225.

⁴ See, for example, Kerr, *The Uses of the University*; Storr, *The Beginning of the Future: A Historical Approach to Graduate Education in the Arts and Sciences*.

⁵ Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, 1st edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001); I. Wallerstein et al., *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

land policy.⁶ For K–12 schools, the Land Ordinance of 1785 set aside sections of land for the building and funding of schools, and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 encouraged their construction and operation.⁷ For higher education, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 set aside land, or script from the sale of land, for agricultural and mechanical schools and historically Black colleges and universities, respectively.⁸ Similarly, the U.S. Congress passed an act in 1881 that set aside land for the University of Montana and other state flagship universities in new states in the West, including Idaho, Dakotas, Arizona, and Wyoming.⁹ The construction of universities throughout the American West was entwined with colonization and providing a means for settlers to create economically, politically, and socially viable lives for themselves. Once flagship universities were established in the nineteenth century, additional education institutions, such as two-year vocational schools and community colleges, opened in the early twentieth century.

In 2023 we find ourselves in a similarly dynamic time as the one in which UM was constructed. For many faculty, staff, and administrators, the durable threads of the flagship university grow—we are committed to teaching, to serving as a repository of knowledge, creating new knowledge, and providing spaces in which students can form connections with one another and prepare for specific careers. Externalities, though, are pushing us to shift the tension and design of the fabric that is UM. This is uncomfortable. Many of us pursued advanced degrees because of our love of learning. Many of us joined UM because of its comprehensive portfolio and the serendipity such a scope can produce. And, some of us joined the University because of its perceived durability. To have a decade of budget struggles, enrollment unpredictability, and a newfound and seemingly ubiquitous questioning of the fundamental value of higher education is both trying and demoralizing. The COVID-19 pandemic, political volatility, and the emergence of new technologies like generative artificial intelligence are forcing changes in conceptions of what constitutes reality, how we come to understand the world around us, and what we value. The flagship university—UM—is not immune to these externalities. We cannot expect that what we’ve done over the past decade in response to the changing world will yield different results, particularly since those changes seem to be accelerating. Where does this leave us? How might we continue to serve our students and the state of Montana?

⁶ See, for example, Margaret A. Nash, “Entangled Pasts: Land-Grant Colleges and American Indian Dispossession,” *History of Education Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (October 29, 2019): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2019.31>.

⁷ “Land Ordinance of 1785,” 29 *Journals of the Continental Congress* § (1785), [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsdcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(bdsdcc13201\)\)#132010001](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsdcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(bdsdcc13201))#132010001); Worthington Chauncey Ford et al., “An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States North West of the River Ohio,” § *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (1787), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/llscdam.lljc032/?sp=344&st=image>.

⁸ “Morrill Act of 1862,” 12 *Stat. §* (1862), 503; “Morrill Act of 1890,” 26 *Stat. §* (1890), 417.

⁹ “An Act to Grant Lands to Dakota, Montana, Arizona, Idaho, and Wyoming for University Purposes,” *Pub. L. No. 46–61*, 21 *Stat. 326* (1881), 326.

The context in which UM finds itself reflects a constellation of shifts and fragilities linked with several shocks.¹⁰ One of the major shifts we've experienced over the last thirty years has been the hinged phenomena of declining public funding for public higher education and the perspective that education is a private good.¹¹ This shift has put the financial onus of attending college on individual students or their families. It has also shifted the thinking around a degree from something that is earned and marks growth and the potential for societal contribution to that of a credential that one "purchases" through a series of transactions resulting in a credential. A second shift we have experienced over the past twenty-five years has been the incorporation of online modalities, both asynchronous and synchronous. For some areas of study, this has opened up new populations of learners who otherwise would not have been able to enroll, particularly in professional graduate programs. Alongside online modality developments in higher education has been the transition to executing day-to-day commercial and communications activities online and with mobile devices, resulting in near instantaneous results with an ease of connection that simply wasn't possible thirty years ago.

A third shift we have seen over the last twenty years has been the rapid accumulation of big data and the subsequent need to make sense of those data in relation to larger systems with which we interact and on which we've come to depend. A looming shift that will affect most institutions of higher education is demographic. By the end of this decade the U.S. will experience a decline in the numbers of young adults completing high school.¹² Not only will fewer students complete high school, but a larger portion of those who do will come from racial and ethnic groups that have traditionally been underserved in K-12 schools and underrepresented in higher education. With less access to educational resources -- family incomes that are 60% that of white families, and one-sixth the wealth of white families -- these students will require more systemic reports.¹³

At the same time, before the COVID-19 pandemic, people were living longer, particularly those with a college degree. During the pandemic, those without a college degree experienced higher mortality rates than those with college degrees.¹⁴

¹⁰ Economist Martin Wolf provides a compelling three-part framework to analyze the 2008 financial crisis: shifts, shocks, and fragilities. See Martin Wolf, *The Shifts and the Shocks: What We've Learned—and Have Still to Learn—from the Financial Crisis* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

¹¹ David F. Labaree, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning: The Credentials Race in American Education* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹² Nathan D. Grawe, *Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); Nathan Grawe, *The Agile College: How Institutions Successfully Navigate Demographic Changes*, D. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).

¹³ Lisa Camner McKay, "How the Racial Wealth Gap Has Evolved—and Why It Persists," Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (blog), October 3, 2023, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2022/how-the-racial-wealth-gap-has-evolved-and-why-it-persists>.

¹⁴ Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Opinion | Without a College Degree, Life in America Is Staggeringly Shorter," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2023, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/opinion/life-expectancy-college-degree.html>; Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Accounting for the Widening Mortality Gap between American Adults with and without a BA" (Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2023), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/1_Case-Deaton_unembargoed.pdf.

With shifts have also come shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid rollout of generative AI. The pandemic alone exposed the economic and social fragilities in our economy and in higher education that forced an existential evaluation of the business model of public higher education. Lockdowns pulled the curtain back on chasms in childcare, consistent K–12 schooling access, broadband access, healthcare access, and food and housing security. Even with such chasms revealed and questions about values revisited, trust in “staid” institutions waned. Our existential consideration of how we might make it out of the pandemic more or less intact involved a unit-by-unit examination of workload, how the University could help the state such as with COVID testing, how we might engage students in different ways, how we could design our future, and how we could use a range of modalities and digital tools to teach, hold knowledge, and conduct research. For UM, the COVID-19 shock was layered on top of a significant enrollment decline, budgetary shortfalls, and nonstrategic faculty and staff reductions, collectively leaving many feeling short of the human and fiscal resources as individuals took on more work. In other words, we lost the economy-of-scale benefit we had when enrollments were high. The more recent shock of generative AI, particularly through ChatGPT, has forced the question of what types of learning are still relevant in a world in which AI chatbots can produce written work that can pass the bar exam. What does this mean for how we teach? What we teach? How we go about research? What does it mean to be an educated person in this new world? What are we to do?

3. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AROUND A SHARED VISION

The University of Montana’s mission is:

The University of Montana transforms lives by providing a high-quality and accessible education and by generating world-class research and creative scholarship in an exceptional place. We integrate the liberal arts and sciences into undergraduate, graduate and professional studies to shape global citizens who are creative and agile learners committed to expanding the boundaries of knowledge and to building and sustaining diverse communities.

UM’s vision came out of the work the University Design Team (UDT) did during the 2020–2021 academic year:

The University of Montana will be a flagship for the future, fostering inclusive prosperity and democracy, and creating new knowledge and ways of learning.

With this vision, the UDT offered a set of new narratives and recommendations to position the University for a changing education landscape:

- *Our programs should deliver value for our students, our employees, and the community, recognizing that this a job we must all do. Enrollment is not exogenous to the curriculum, nor is it in and of itself a strategy.*
- *The liberal arts and a focus on career outcomes and professional education are symbiotic, not an either-or proposition. We believe that UM must inspire life-long learning and intellectual development and provide students with clear pathways*

to meaningful and sustained employment.

- *In developing strategy, we need to honestly assess our strengths and weaknesses, recognizing that we are good and even great at some things, are average or poor at others.¹⁵*

Even with societal and technological changes in the past two years, the narratives above still hold. In fact, a number of the UDT recommendations have been taken up by UM's Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation (OSPI) and units across the University in this time, such as:

- *The creation and adoption of annual processes to generate, consider, and fund strategic initiatives, as well as efforts to expand access to a university education and enable UM's teaching and research impact;¹⁶*
- *Improvements to our technological and administrative systems;*
- *The re-envisioning of Human Resources Services towards People and Culture; and*
- *Securing our cyber-infrastructure and migrating Banner to the cloud.*

These changes within other sectors at the University were not simply technical—they were adaptive. They required organizational changes in assumptions, workflows, and attitudes. Through these adaptations and through our ongoing struggle to balance our revenues and expenses, it has become clear that Academic Affairs needs a systems approach rather than a siloed one.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIONS

The state of higher education today is volatile. At the same time, the vision and new narratives laid out by the UDT offer a path forward as a university that is interconnected, that improves our students' lives, that serves our state and region, and that is adaptable. To achieve the UDT's vision, we also must prioritize the following shared responsibilities and objectives.

These responsibilities also require actions across several timeframes to help us adapt.

A. IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO ADDRESS OUR RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

1. Establish an annual comprehensive Academic Portfolio Review to ensure ongoing strategic maintenance of our catalog of academic programs and courses (see Section 5).
2. Retire no or low-enrolled academic programs or options within programs.

¹⁵ "University Design Team Report and Recommendations" (Missoula, MT: University of Montana, April 22, 2021), 3, <https://www.umt.edu/president/udt/>.

¹⁶ Specifically, the Strategic Enrollment Process and Flagship Fund have established an annual procedure for soliciting, evaluating, and funding strategic initiatives. Access has been opened up through the expansion of AccelerateMT and Grizzly Promise. And, we are getting better at recognizing our impact through new tools like [UM Impact](#).

3. Facilitate the transition of affected tenured and tenure-track faculty members to new instructional roles, offering supportive professional development opportunities. Ensure compassionate notice and provide transitional support for non-tenurable faculty members who are non-renewed.
4. Implement Faculty Activity Reporting in Interfolio, utilizing standard disciplinary and university definitions of workload effort encompassing research and creative scholarship, teaching, and service to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, instructional efficiency, and investment.¹⁷
5. Implement the Courseleaf Class platform and move to two-year course scheduling cycle to better serve student needs and demand for coursework.
6. Align the Academic Affairs budget model with our objectives and vision.
7. Establish budget allocation processes that allow for long-term planning and predictability.
8. Improve certificate advising to alert students to available certificates that they are close to fulfilling and automate the awarding of those certificates as students complete the requirements for them.
9. Develop systems maps for curricula, fiscal, and communications to understand and ameliorate gaps in our assumptions and processes.

B. NEAR-TERM ACTIONS TO ADDRESS STUDENT DEMAND AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES

1. Revise the program review process to monitor a program's lifecycle based on productivity and demand;
2. Analyze trends within degree programs to better understand patterns, bottlenecks, and completion rates in relation to headcount;
3. Reduce curricular complexity and clarify the curricular pathways to improve time to degree;
4. Audit how prior learning through dual enrollment, advance placement, course-sharing, and transfer credits contribute to enrollment and degree completion and scale our general education and degree requirements appropriately;
5. Build career readiness, experiential learning, sustained research, and creative scholarship projects into general education and degree programs as appropriate, with attention paid to scale and disciplinary best practices;
6. Address how artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies integrate into and impact academic programs; and
7. Ensure all UM students learn the creative process, critical thinking, leadership, adaptability, data analysis and interpretation, communication, and cultural agility through learning across multiple disciplines.

¹⁷ This is a continuation of the "Percentage of Effort" project that was presented to Faculty Senate in Spring 2023.

C. ONGOING ACTIONS TO AMPLIFY AREAS OF STRENGTH

1. Address the question of “How do we work together?” with a systems approach that values collaboration and partnership over siloing.
2. Double down on teaching excellence and explore how faculty workload might evolve over the course of a career, considering teaching, research, and service across all appointment types.
3. Maintain high quality and high-impact research and doctoral degree conferrals to ensure our continuing status as a comprehensive Research-1 university.
4. Actualize recommendations of the Matson Report, leaning into our strengths in the environment, sustainability, and conservation across disciplines and colleges.
5. Continue partnerships with tribal colleges and universities that are reciprocal, respectful, and relevant so that we can bolster one another’s missions. If it becomes possible through the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, we should move toward becoming an Indigenous Serving Institution.
6. Continue to increase our veteran student population enrollment, persistence, and degree completion through Prior Learning Assessment and established relationships that serve active-duty personnel.
7. Leverage UM and Missoula’s status as the regional arts hub for Montana and the Pacific Northwest. Numerous students choose UM for its vibrant arts traditions and activities, even if they pursue majors outside the arts.
8. Capitalize on the reputation and growing population of the Davidson Honors College as evidence of our distinct intellectual culture.
9. Consider the creative process as something that all students learn at UM. Strands within this might include story, sound, critique, and design thinking.
10. Double down on integrating learning in leadership, adaptability, communication, data analysis and interpretation, and cultural agility in academic programs.
11. Regard the humanities as a durable thread across our curriculum that offers ways of thinking and engaging with the world that automation and generative AI have not mastered. Expand the ways in which we engage in civil dialogue on campus and in the community. Civil dialogue should permeate our campus.
12. Grow partnerships with a range of sectors internal and external to UM to facilitate students’ experiential learning and serve stakeholder and workforce needs.
13. Serve new and lifelong learners as an avenue to open new streams of revenue. Learn from AccelerateMT, UOnline, UM Summer, MOLLI, GEO, and the LAB School about how these successes can be integrated into college budgets and their attendant practices.

D. EXPERIMENT WITH EMERGING FIELDS

1. Develop processes and procedures that facilitate joint appointments, shared curriculum, collaborative research, and creative scholarship opportunities across academic units and colleges.
2. Actualize the Emerging and Applied Technologies Initiative.

3. Consider what new fields could emerge with investment and reprioritization by carrying out the overarching recommendations for environment and sustainability contained in the Matson Report, and by continuing efforts already under way in the College of the Arts and Media.
4. Consider experimenting with humanics, the new field centering on the intersection of the humanities and emerging technologies.¹⁸
5. Seed interdisciplinary collaborations in teaching, research, and service, particularly around grand challenges, such as health, climate, education, food security, and democracy.
6. Use online and multimodal approaches (including extended reality) experimentally in instruction to learn what is effective and why.

5. ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Environmental, technological, regulatory, and social changes are prompting the reconsideration of academic specialization at the undergraduate level. Trends in specialization can quickly become obsolete with each global transformation. With the pace of change accelerating, responsive learning is better accomplished through 1) access to foundational disciplines to provide depth, and 2) interdisciplinary exploration to provide breadth. In addition, coming federal regulatory changes and reporting requirements governing “Accountability, Transparency, & Financial Value for Postsecondary students,”¹ the way that we recruit prospective students across our workforce, undergraduate, and graduate offerings will change.

Addressing these circumstances will require an ongoing, comprehensive review of our academic portfolio. This has been attempted before. The following history of these initiatives is presented chronologically, with the recommendations presented as bulleted lists of programs. If a resulting action was taken it is noted in parentheses.

In 2015, the Academic Alignment and Innovation Program (AAIP) identified six programs as “challenged.” According to the report, “these programs had a significant drop in enrollment coupled with low overall enrollment. AAIP identified the following programs as the most challenged by low enrollment or a perception of lack of relevance.”

- Philosophy, graduate program (restructured)
- Sociology, graduate program (restructured)
- Parks, Tourism & Recreation Management, Graduate Program (restructured)
- Electronics Technology AAS
- Energy Technology AAS
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures, Graduate Program

¹⁸ The creation of a new field of study—Humanics—attends to just this. Understanding the interaction of humans and AI, among other forms of technology, is necessary in our world. See Joseph E. Aoun, *Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018).

Many of these programs persisted through the Academic Programs and Administrative Services Prioritization (APASP) during the 2017-2018 academic year. APASP identified the additional academic programs as “challenged,” warranting “Priority for Substantial Modification.”

The following actions were taken to address programs in this category:

- Bioethics Certificate (discontinued)
- Ecosystem Management, Graduate Program (discontinued)
- Electronics Technology AAS (discontinued)
- Energy Technology AAS (discontinued)
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures, Graduate Program (discontinued)
- Recreational Power Equipment Certificate (discontinued)
- Computer Aided Design Certificate (restructured)
- Computer Support Certificate (restructured)
- Cybersecurity Certificate (restructured)
- Food Service Management AAS (restructured)
- Health Information Technology Certificate (restructured)
- Global Health Certificate (moved online)

No immediate action was taken to address the remaining programs identified as Priority for Substantial Modification. They were recommended for further review during the “next prioritization process,” which never came to pass.

- Bachelor of Applied Science
- Classics BA
- East Asian Studies BA
- Film Studies Minor
- French BA
- Global Humanities and Religions BA and Minor
- Latin American Studies Minor
- Medical Reception Certificate
- Paralegal Studies AAS
- Sales and Marketing Certificate

The Instructional Staffing Plan (ISP) of 2019 was a budgeting exercise designed to address some of the remaining challenged programs with the following recommended actions.

- End major and minors in Global Humanities and Religions (complete)
- Convert Masters in Musical Theatre into an option in Theatre BFA (complete)
- End Film Studies Minor (complete)
- End the BA and MA in Geography (complete)
- Suspend the PhD in Materials Science (complete)
- End the South and Southeast Asian Studies Minor
- Consolidate Language Degrees and Create Language Options
- Suspend Organ Concentration in Music
- Suspend the Mountain Studies Minor

These lists and narratives illustrate how challenging it has been to enact lasting change to our academic portfolio, even within the context of constrained fiscal and instructional resources. It has had significant impacts on our ability to deliver our academic programs efficiently when weighed against student demand. The programs discontinued during AAIP, APASP, and the ISP had minimal effect on the reallocation of instructional resources. Those that remained are academically valuable, some contributing significant student credit hours in service of general education and foundational learning but are not drivers of overall enrollment or recruiting. They are dependent on specific instructional expertise that may or may not be sustainable.

Moving forward, Academic Affairs will conduct an annual Academic Portfolio Review that limits the qualitative drivers that have maintained challenged programs that were quantitatively found in need of substantial modification. BOR policy requires that we review enrollment and degree completion trends for each academic program every seven years. This process is crucial to the ongoing assessment of program quality required for accreditation. However, it does not provide an actionable, holistic longitudinal review of our academic portfolio that can address progress toward institutional objectives or key performance indicators of student success.

In the proposed Academic Portfolio Review, the Office of the Provost will conduct a comprehensive quantitative analysis and qualitative review each year using seven years of program data that aligns with regulatory reporting requirements, the University's strategic objectives, and the Academic Affairs Playbook. The first three years of Academic Portfolio Review will address the following priorities for action:

- **2023-2024:** Identify programs needing modification, consolidation, or moratorium to realign our current portfolio with student demand. Compressed timeline: Initiate and complete in Spring 2024.
- **2024-2025:** Identify program curricular complexity impacting students' time and credits to degree and improve performance in our six-year graduation rate (undergraduate and general education programs), gainful employment (workforce programs), Financial Value Transparency (workforce and graduate programs), and R-1 completion rate (PhD/doctoral programs). Target timeline: initiate Spring 2024 and complete Spring 2025.
- **2025-2026:** To be determined. The lessons learned from the first two years of review will inform subsequent years.

The full framework for this ongoing process is presented separate from the playbook but integral to its objectives. The data collected and the actions taken, will be integrated into our seven-year Program Review and NWCCU Accreditation cycles. It will become part of our regular operating rhythm as a sector in which we are consistently assessing our productivity and refining our Academic Portfolio to provide the access to the learning and knowledge that our students rely upon for their future success.

6. STRUCTURAL POSSIBILITIES

In order to realize our potential as a university that is committed to inclusive prosperity and knowledge creation, we must also consider how the administrative structure of our academic units impact our collective potential. The rapid technological and environmental changes that have produced different social and economic behaviors undergird the options below. Addressing complexity across the curriculum also allows us to address administrative complexity in our academic units. In order to meet our responsibilities and our potential as a university, we must work together as an organization that learns, rather than one where learning is only evident in student work and faculty research.

A. RE-ENVISIONED FRANKE COLLEGE AROUND ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Dr. Pamela Matson, a professor and former dean from Stanford University, authored the Matson Report, which she delivered in 2022. In her report she observed that UM has tremendous potential with its coursework and research in the areas of environment, sustainability, and conservation. This is, in part, evident in the number of students selecting the relatively new Environmental Science and Sustainability major, and in part, evident in the research produced by faculty in disparate areas of the University. Our collective effort, if coalesced, could reshape how other universities and research organizations approach environmental science, sustainability, and conservation. At this point we anticipate a three-to-five-year process supported by the Provost's Office and the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Innovation.

PHASE I

1. Develop an overarching vision for what is possible in environment and sustainability that will distinguish UM.
2. Proceed with the process of actualizing the Matson Report, including discussions of moving related departments to the college. Engage faculty and students in areas that are already doing work in environment and sustainability to understand the contours of their work in relation to the Franke College.

PHASE II

3. Continue to engage faculty and students who are doing work in environment and sustainability.
4. Design courtesy and joint appointments, teaching collaborations, or research collaborations, as necessary. Interested faculty may come from related fields in the sciences, arts, humanities, and social sciences.

B. REIMAGINING THE ACADEMIC STRUCTURES ACROSS COLLEGES

We propose a streamlined administrative structure within colleges, where academic programs are housed in schools made of faculty from related disciplines. This will

allow faculty to maintain their communities of practice, scholarship, and advancement standards from their former departments. This will also allow decisions regarding course scheduling, resource allocation, and curriculum to be decided amongst a community of peers rather than from within disciplinary silos. This will likewise prevent duplication and prioritize course scheduling that ensures students have access to coursework they need for timely degree completion. It will also provide an avenue for integrating faculty from programs that have been reduced or folded into an interdisciplinary structure. Ideally, this will reduce curricular complexity.

The administrative details have yet to be fully realized, but the goal is a relatively commensurate distribution of representation of faculty and students within a College. Smaller colleges may choose to maintain a department structure. Each school will have a director/chair who will fulfill the chair requirements under the UFA collective bargaining agreement. How their duties and compensation might be appropriately scoped to acknowledge the breadth of their responsibilities is open for discussion.

Alongside the school directors/chairs, it will be important to maintain the application of unit standards as well as intellectual and methodological focus for graduate and undergraduate cohorts large enough to require such leadership. The College of Business has created the role of area coordinator to address this need. As we develop these roles, it will be important to consult with UFA leadership.

The Division of Biological Sciences, the College of Business, and the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation serve as examples of focusing on academic programs to form interdisciplinary structures that fuel collaboration. The College of Business is experimenting with a similar structure, and the diverse disciplines that make up the Schools in the College of the Arts and Media are similarly situated.

The College of Humanities and Sciences, as the largest and oldest college at UM, is the core of the University. The college has faced its share of struggles in the past 15 years, and discussion of reorganization occurred last year as part of the larger conversation around academic renewal. Since those discussions, the Division of Biological Sciences (DBS) composed a white paper, offering a vision of what DBS might look like as a standalone school or college. Subsequent discussions of the white paper illuminated the fiscal challenges that would come with “going it alone” and the interdependencies amongst the humanities and sciences—both social and natural—that balances the needs of the collective. Research intensive units depend on teaching intensive units for their ongoing success.

Concurrent with the discussions of CHS structure, the 2022–2023 renewal process included discussions around the creation of an emerging and applied technologies initiative. The college would be an obvious home for this work. Faculty are already working on such projects in an ad hoc way, e.g., Immersive Birds, game design, etc. We have the talent and the curiosity to amplify this work structurally. In addition, housing such the interdisciplinary efforts alongside and amongst the humanities would draw on the existing strengths of interdisciplinary units already housed in the college, such as Native American Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, among others.

These opportunities would facilitate collaboration and innovation that benefit pedagogy, research, and how UM serves the state. The realization of an emerging and applied technologies initiative, as outlined in the request to plan approved by the Board of Regents, offers the parallel opportunity to consider how the structure of the College of Humanities and Sciences can better attend to needs in research - as delineated by the Division of Biological Sciences - and interdisciplinarity as well as align our resources with staffing.

The ultimate structure of the College will be dependent on the outcomes of Academic Portfolio Review in Spring 2024 and successfully recruiting a dean with the vision to steward these changes. Ultimately, it will be their responsibility to establish a nimble leadership team while addressing functional need areas currently spread across our two co-deans and department chairs. By delimiting the scope of work for each role more clearly, we expect that the CHS leadership team will be able to work with efficacy and efficiency as the schools chart their missions and the college designs a vision that includes its longstanding durable threads and dynamic, interwoven strands.

PHASE I

1. Engage CHS leadership, including deans and department chairs, Faculty Senate, the UFA, and Staff Senate to address and resolve questions and concerns, particularly around unit standards and their application in the faculty review process, and develop a change management process that will unfold over the next three-to-five years.

PHASE II

2. Develop a set of Level I and II proposals that creates schools from the current department structures and address the curricular changes enacted as a result of academic portfolio review.
3. Each school will develop an overarching mission.
4. The College will develop a vision that is inclusive of its schools and disciplines and the instructional and research strengths they offer.

C. GENERAL EDUCATION

UM's general education offerings are profuse. The volume is such that general education is difficult to manage, as multiple Faculty Senate committee members have noted. As the Montana University System task force on general education and the core curriculum meets this academic year, and possibly next, UM would be wise to experiment in ways that amplify our known strengths.

PHASE I

1. **Value effective teaching in general education.** Students need effective teachers in their general education courses, and general education instructors, many of whom are non-tenure track faculty who need stability in their teaching assignments.

Invest in these faculty as future teaching positions become available to ensure that their scholarly contribution to the success of our academic enterprise is valued alongside their colleagues in research-intensive positions.

2. **Continue to work with learning assistants in general education courses.** The learning assistants program at UM has demonstrated its value to student learning year after year. Not only are learning assistants training in effective teaching and learning techniques and approaches, they are able to connect with students in their classes as peers, reducing the risk and anxiety new college students may feel. They have had a demonstrable impact on decreasing DFW rates in courses that are vital to student progress into upper division coursework.
3. **Begin to examine how introductory general education courses on the river and mountain campuses might be considered holistically to better serve students and optimize our shared resources.** Both Missoula College and the UM campus offer many of the same general education courses, and students do not always find themselves in course section format that considers their prior learning and current readiness. We should: 1) ensure that students are enrolled in general education sections that meet them where they are, working closely with the Office of Student Success and the Registrar's Office; 2) provide training for graduate students and others who are interested in evidence-based pedagogical approaches and skills for effective student learning; 3) work with faculty in affiliated disciplines on both campuses to strengthen connections and collaboration between their units and strengthen pathways for student matriculation; and, 4) document the processes and decision points along the way so that we can refine and improve our practices as a campus.

PHASE II

4. **Implement Montana10 academic momentum strategies into large enrollment general education courses.** The efficacy of Montana10 has been demonstrated at UM and across the Montana University System to ensure that students have the academic, social, and financial support they need. Implementing these strategies would offer individualized attention to students in danger of stopping or dropping out, and it would release instructors from much of the communications and counseling volume they experience. Advisor notes in EAB Navigate can be analyzed, and students can be interviewed in focus groups or individually to refine and improve our practices. Scaling will be a challenge, but successful models of community-building, engagement, and wrap-around support already exist at Missoula College, in the Davidson Honors College, and Athletics. They can serve as thought partners in these efforts.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Academic Affairs must continually evaluate our relevancy as an institution of higher education and our contributions to inclusive prosperity. Significant questions will endure as we look to the future, and we must be critical and thoughtful in our approach to seeking answers and addressing what is at stake.

- What value proposition do or don't we see in a UM education?
- What value proposition do or don't others see?
- What does it mean to be an educated person?
- Why does society need an educated populace?
- What are the consequences of not having an educated populace?
- What habits of mind do we need to make sense of the world and our place in it?

This playbook is the first in an ongoing process examining enrollment, student success, degree completion, time and credits to degree, curricular complexity, and programmatic interdependencies in addition to externalities affecting academic affairs. It will require us to operate in transparent, fiscally sustainable ways as evidenced by consistent budget and workload planning. We are eager for feedback and dialogue regarding the vision, objectives, actions, and questions described above.

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