



Handbook & Facility Guidelines

INCLUSIVE
EXCELLENCE
FOR STUDENT SUCCESS





Branch Center Handbook & Facility Guideline

Created in collaboration with Branch Center Student Leaders and Inclusive Excellence for Student Success, January 2023

University of Montana
Branch Center
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<https://www.umt.edu/diversity/resources/branch-center/>

<https://www.umt.edu/uc/branchcenterdei/>

<https://www.umt.edu/diversity/inclusive-excellence/>

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Branch Center at the University of Montana Handbook & Facility Guidelines

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Montana resides on the traditional lands of many Indigenous peoples, including the Selis (Salish), Ksanka (Kootenai), and Qlispe (Kalispel). Many other Indigenous Peoples, including the Amskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet), Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), Shoshone, Bannock, and Coeur D'Alene, also relied upon their traditional knowledge and relationships with this land and this space for survival in the past and today.

The Branch Center

The Branch Center is a student-focused space where all UM students are encouraged to visit. Overseen by the Director of the Branch Center (THE BRANCH CENTER) and located in the University Center, the space houses ASUM Student Groups and Agencies who provide student leadership, employment, and volunteer opportunities. The Branch Center is a space dedicated to diversity and inclusion and includes student resources such as study spaces, student computers, lounge areas, and extensive programming and events. All UM students are welcome in our spaces if they are committed to respecting our mission and values.

Mission and Values

The Branch Center is a space for student diversity and inclusion at the University of Montana. It is dedicated to promoting respectful and collaborative dialogue, programming, and resources to foster understanding, support, and inclusion for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ students. In this space, we hope students will feel a sense of community and belonging.

The Branch Center houses several ASUM student group offices. Student groups at the University of Montana provide opportunities for individual leadership development, organizational success, and community engagement.

History of this Space

The Branch Center is dedicated to Dr. Theresa Branch, former vice president of Student Affairs, who wanted to create a place on campus that celebrated diversity. The Branch Center is a community space highlighting student diversity and inclusion.

Dr. Branch believes that diversity is vitally important for college campuses saying,

“Students need to know how to get along, how to work with [others], how to team with people who are unlike themselves. It’s very difficult to develop that sense of self and that ability to be comfortable with people unlike yourself without having that experience. It’s a matter of exposure and being open to that experience.”

The community in the Branch Center puts in to practice Dr. Branch’s hope for this space.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

UM’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan ([DEI Plan](#)) grows out of the thoughtful and multi-tier efforts of UM staff, faculty, administrators, and students. The plan aims to identify the equity gaps unique to our institution, to flag the policies and practices that contribute to these gaps, and to implement new policies and practices that will bridge them.

Our Collective Agreement

The Branch Center’s Collective Agreement, developed by our Branch Center Student Leaders, is directly incorporated into the work of the organizations housed in the Branch Center. We expect that all who access and use our space will read and understand the agreement.

- UM students are at the center of our work
- Community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice
- We respect others and ourselves
- Our goal is not to agree, but rather, to gain a deeper understanding
- We do not tolerate hate speech, derogatory language/actions, or oppressive language/actions
- We will work diligently to maintain the Branch Center’s mission and values
- Our student centers are vibrant, lively and not noise controlled spaces
- No alcohol or drugs on the premises or in the body

Facility Policy, Guidelines, and Instructions

Hours of Operation

The Branch Center follows the UC hours of operation; please see the UC website for updated hours. <https://www.umt.edu/uc/building-hours/explore/default.php> Note that summer hours differ from the academic year.

Common Space Details

The Branch Center’s common space is available for use by all UM students, with the purpose of building a community and providing a space for all students to feel welcomed. The common space is also a place to host student group activities, study, and gather with peers. This space is primarily used for student

groups to promote their diverse cultures. UM staff, faculty, and authorized guests are also permitted to use the space.

The Common Space hosts limited office hours for other UM student support programs:

- Experiential Learning and Career Success
- External Scholarships and Fellowships
- Writing and Public Speaking Center

Features of the space includes study and lounge areas, student computers, bulletin board/posting areas, printer/copy machine, popcorn machine, Smart TV, a kitchen with a microwave & fridge, and All Gender Restrooms.

- Kitchen and lounge area/study space areas can be used by all UM students, staff and faculty. Please clean up after yourself.
- Student computers, printer/copy machine and TV monitor can be used by all UM students, staff and faculty. Please see THE BRANCH CENTER Student Coordinator for help with equipment.
- Bulletin board/posting areas are maintained by THE BRANCH CENTER staff. All other use, please see THE BRANCH CENTER staff.
- Popcorn machine can be operated by Branch Center Student Groups. All other use, please see THE BRANCH CENTER staff.

[Use of Conference Room/Common Space](#)

The Conference Room and Common Space can be used by students, student groups and university units to gather for an event, meeting, or student activity.

The Ulysses S. Doss Meeting Room is a meeting space with a conference table and seating. A monitor for presentations is also located in the conference room.

[Ulysses S. Doss Conference Room \(Room 207\)](#)

Conference room reservations are managed by [Conference and Event Services \(CES\)](#) in collaboration with THE BRANCH CENTER. Please contact CES to reserve the room.

Conference room 207 is dedicated to Ulysses S. Doss who founded UM's African American Studies Program in 1968 and led the department for twenty-five years. In 1967, Doss along with several students organized the first Black Student Union at UM making it the third such program established in the country. Doss was a fearless advocate for African American youth and a beloved educator who was well known by many generations of students.

[Smudge Policy](#)

The Smudge Space is a designated space ([UM Policy #1016](#)), located in the Branch Center for the UM campus community to smudge. Smudging is a traditional practice used by Indigenous people for prayer

or to cleanse a person or place by burning sacred plants. The UM campus community is invited to use this space and THE BRANCH CENTER provides smudging items for use.

Office Space Guidelines and Agreements for Student Groups

It is a privilege to hold an office space in the Branch Center. For student groups to continue to occupy space in the Branch Center, they must:

- Be a recognized [ASUM Student Group](#)
- Incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging into their student group organization bylaws
 - Bylaws must be shared with the Director of THE BRANCH CENTER at the beginning of the academic year. Submissions are due at the same time as when student group organizations send in applications to ASUM
- Comply with [Student Conduct Code](#)
- Comply with UC Policies

Student Group Expectations

- Utilize online communication platform regarding Branch Center activities (i.e. Slack, etc.)
- Send at least one student group representative to the Branch Center Student Leaders monthly meeting to help build community and be accountable to each other
- Post contact information and office hours on office doors and update each semester
- Complete the ASUM group recognition process: <https://www.umt.edu/asum/student-groups/default.php>
- Events and activities must align with the mission of the Branch Center
- Help maintain the Branch Center space
 - Return furniture to a usable order after an event
 - Report any furniture or equipment damage to THE BRANCH CENTER staff
- Be respectful to everyone in this space

Student group and ASUM agency office space will be evaluated each year on the basis of the above guidelines. If there is a violation of our collective agreement, space agreement, or expectations, the violation will be discussed among the individuals involved, the Director of THE BRANCH CENTER, and a mediator of choice, if requested (i.e., Vice President for Student Success and Campus Life, etc.).

Office Space Allocation Process for Student Groups if space becomes available, the Director of the Branch Center along with the Branch Center Student Leaders group will review requests. Process for occupancy will be determined based on the group's acceptance and commitment to the Branch Center mission and values. Additionally, the previously listed guidelines, agreements, and expectations must be met for requests to be considered.

Application forms are available at the Director of Inclusive Excellence's office. Completed applications must be submitted by the specified deadline on the application. Late applications and some exceptions can be considered by the Director of Inclusive Excellence.

Upon review, applicants will meet with the Director and current Branch Center Student Leaders. This will be an opportunity for applicants to ask and answer questions if further clarification or justification of application materials are needed. The final space allocation decision will be made by the Director of Inclusive Excellence and in collaboration with the [UM Space Management Committee](#).

Accessibility

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to participate in all Branch Center activities, programs, and leadership opportunities. If you are a person with a disability who requires accommodation to participate in our activities, please contact us by email IE.Coordinator@mso.umt.edu or phone 406.243.2669.

There are accessible entrances to the UC and Branch Center, The UC accessible entrances are on the North and West sides of the building. Please see the [UC building map](#) for more information. For more information about accommodation, the [Office of Disability Equity \(ODE\)](#) is an excellent resource. ODE can be contacted at ode@umontana.edu or 406.243-2243. Service Animals are always welcome in the Branch Center; however, we do not allow pets in our spaces. More information can be found on the ODE website: <https://www.umt.edu/disability/accommodations/Animals/>

ADA Chair Spacing

When wheelchair seating is beside fixed seats, clear floor space 30 inches by 48 inches (760 mm by 1220 mm) minimum must be provided. If wheelchair seating is across the front of fixed seating, the minimum required clear floor space is 42 inches by 48 inches (1065 mm by 1220 mm). It is everyone's responsibility to make sure space are accessible.

Neurodiversity

Ulysess S. Doss Conference Room 207 has Neurosensory light settings. Near the THE BRANCH CENTER office (on top of the school supply cabinet) there are neurosensory kits available and are provided by MOSSAIC. <https://www.umt.edu/speech-language-hearing-occupational-sciences/dewit-ritecare-clinic/mossaic.php>

Event and Meeting Space Scheduling

Scheduling Process

An online schedule of Branch Center Events hosted in the Common Space is managed by the THE BRANCH CENTER staff. Each semester, the Branch Center student group leader will be given access to the document for scheduling events in the Common Space and providing event details. The student groups will be required to add their events to the list as soon as they have them scheduled. Event

priority is given to those whose event details are listed in the document first. CES will also have access to the event list and add the student group events to the UC (EMS) schedule. If catering or set up is required, student groups will be responsible for reaching out to CES to arrange. Room 207 is its own entity that is not included when booking the "Branch Center" and must be scheduled through CES.

Events hosted by student groups and ASUM agencies housed in the Branch Center have priority. Other requests will be reviewed by THE BRANCH CENTER staff after the organizations in the Branch Center have scheduled their events.

Please direct questions about availability and access to the event document by contacting the Director of The Branch Center in room 206 or at (406) 243-5776.

Canceling Space Reservation

To cancel an event on the online document, please strike through the event on the Branch Center Events document. The event coordinator must contact CES if the event included catering to our setup.

Please contact the Director of Inclusive Excellence in room 206 or at (406) 243-5776 with questions.

Prohibited Use

University facilities and areas may not be used in ways which:

- Obstruct or disrupt University activities or operations or any other authorized activities on university premises;
- Interfere with the rights of others to enter, use or leave any University facility, service, or activity;
- Expose persons or property to safety hazards or risk of injury; or
- Are illegal or unlawful.

Facilities Use Procedures

The University has a University Property Use and Access Procedure, [UM Policy No. 1007](#), that all users of the Branch Center are expected to follow.

Branch Center Organizations

The Branch Center houses ASUM Student Groups, ASUM Agencies, and Student Success and Campus Life programs. Student Groups are student led clubs and organizations that are funded through the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM). ASUM Agencies are programs and services paid for by the ASUM activity fee. Student Success and Campus Life programs are responsible for managing the student experience outside of the classroom providing services that support students, promote learning, and encourage personal growth.

ASUM Student Groups

Black Student Union

The Black Student Union (BSU) is an organization that supports, empowers, advocates and celebrates the black experience, history and success of African Americans and those of African descent on campus. Our goal is to create a safe space for black students on campus where their voices are heard, while also serving as a liaison between students of African descent and other minority groups on campus.

Room 205

Lambda Alliance

The Lambda Alliance aims to create an accepting, supportive, and engaging space for people of all sexualities and gender identities. Lambda hosts activities geared towards community interaction and enjoyment.

Room 209

Latiné Student Union

Latiné Student Union (LSU) is an organization dedicated to creating a safe space for Latiné students by spreading awareness of Latiné culture. LSU aims to accomplish these goals by sharing our traditions, culture, and joy by putting on our events.

Room 209A

Pacific Islanders Club

The purpose of the Pacific Islanders Club (PIC) is to enrich, promote, educate, and celebrate our different Pacific Islander cultures.

Room 211

United Territories of Pacific Islander Alliance Montana

United Territories of Pacific Islander Alliance Montana (UTOPIA Montana) aims to provide safe spaces to strengthen the minds of QTPI's - Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders – through community organizing, community care, civic engagement, and cultural stewardship.

Room 211

ASUM Agencies

Gender Equity Resource Center

The Gender Equity Resource Center (GERC) provides support, advocacy, resources, and referrals for gender-based issues on campus and in the community. These issues include sexual assault, domestic violence, gender discrimination, trans and nonbinary health, campus safety, and eating disorders. We are dedicated to advocating for the prosperity and safety of all students at UM, regardless of gender identity.

Room 210

KBGA College Radio

KBGA's top priority is providing the community with unique and diverse programming. Through our programming, we hope to uplift and inspire voices. We want to curate with the utmost intention and have dynamic communication with our listeners.

Rooms 208 & 212

Student Success and Campus Life

The Branch Center

In addition to being a physical space, THE BRANCH CENTER is also a student-centered office designed to support our diverse community and engage in diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and anti-racism efforts at UM. THE BRANCH CENTER is a component of the university's mission to foster inclusive excellence on our campus and fulfill UM's commitment to place student success at the center of all we do. THE BRANCH CENTER works directly with underrepresented students to both lift and give strength to their events and ideas, as well as address any concerns or issues students may have with the University, their peers, or the Missoula community.

Room 206

UM Allies

The goal of The University of Montana Allies Program (UM Allies) is to promote a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. In response to the distinct needs of the LGBTQ community, UM Allies provides visible and easily identifiable spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and non-binary students, faculty and staff where support and understanding are fundamental, and bigotry and discrimination are not tolerated. UM Allies is an opportunity for UM staff and faculty, regardless of sexual orientation, to take a prominent and active role in fostering and upholding a culture of safety and inclusion at UM.

Room 209

Note: This handbook will be scheduled to be reviewed and updated every two years by the Director of THE BRANCH CENTER and the Branch Center Leaders group. Created *January, 2023*.