

## Service to Business, Government, and Education

### State Need:

- The Board of Regents and the Montana University System are much more active in economic development, outreach, and collaboration with government entities and educational organizations. There is a greater emphasis on outreach, partnerships, and re-engineering for efficiency across the Montana University System. These activities benefit the entire state but often require coordination through the OCHE. Examples include Shared Leadership for a Stronger Montana Economy, development of a data warehouse to analyze student success (transfer, time to graduation, etc.), defining quality, implementation of a self-funded workers' compensation program to save state and student dollars, and development of the Montana Family Education Savings Program to enhance access for Montana citizens. These and other activities have the potential to improve the Montana Economy and provide savings to citizens through more coordinated and efficient operations.

### Market Reality:

- The OCHE staff has had few options to take on these new initiatives and activities. Most employees have simply taken on the increased work and juggle priorities as best they can. However, to fully realize the potential of these activities and initiate other programs, additional staff will be required.

### Current Problem:

- OCHE staff has taken on many additional service and outreach activities over the past years without any increase in general fund FTE. Workloads have increased substantially for OCHE staff with the growth in the number of university system students, employees, bargaining units and facilities as well as the increase in the size, number and complexity of budgets and academic programs. There are increasing numbers of state and federal laws, regulations, and accountability and reporting requirements that impact the workload of OCHE employees. The increase in the number of externally funded positions in OCHE has impacted the workloads of a majority of general funded positions in OCHE, most noticeably in the areas of payroll and accounting.

### Proposed Solution:

- If resources were available, several new positions should be added to the OCHE. This would increase the effectiveness of the MUS, Regents and the Commissioner and allow for greater coordination, efficiency, oversight and accountability within the university system. It would also provide support that will allow senior staff at OCHE the ability to engage in outreach activities with business, other governmental agencies, and other educational agencies that will benefit the economy and increase operational efficiencies.

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- Two positions are recommended at this time. These new positions would assume responsibilities including but not limited to:
    - Establish partnerships with business, industry, government and MUS representatives
    - Use partnerships to develop and implement strategic plans to advance initiatives in such areas as: a) workforce training and education; b) distance learning; c) expanding partnerships between the MUS and Montana businesses; and d) promoting and enhancing access to postsecondary education
    - Enhance collaboration between the MUS and other governmental entities and increase MUS involvement in the development of innovative recommendations for addressing policy decisions facing state leaders
    - Serve in a liaison role with partners, stakeholders and constituency groups
    - Initiate or assist in projects that advance the Commissioner's and Regents' agenda through communication and publications
    - Participate as a leader or team member on special task forces, work groups or teams and committees
    - Increase media relations and develop, execute and manage the communications plan for the MUS
    - Develop and utilize an extensive communications network for providing information, analyzing issues, and communicating informed perspectives
    - Administrative support for both the Commissioner and the Associate Commissioner for Fiscal Affairs

**Required Investment:**

- \$180,000 in FY06 and \$180,000 in FY07

**Return on Investment:**

- This initiative will provide critical resources necessary to forge partnerships between business, industry, government, and the MUS that will benefit Montanans and help grow the Montana economy. The development of partnerships and collaboration throughout the state in areas such as workforce development, distance learning, and commercialization will provide short and long term benefit to the state by assisting citizens and businesses increase direct economic activity. The addition of administrative support will allow OCHE to dedicate existing resources to the accomplishment of these and other activities intended to move Montana forward.