

MUS initiative process / Legislation

Background

The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) is both a non-regulatory state agency and a department within the Montana University System (MUS) at Montana Tech of The University of Montana (UofM). This relationship with the MUS means that funding changes for the MBMG are usually included in funding changes for the MUS.

Under normal conditions, if the MBMG wants consideration by the Legislature for additional funding, it must participate in the MUS initiative process:

- 1) The funding initiative is generated by the Director of the MBMG and submitted to the Chancellor of Montana Tech.
- 2) Upon approval, it is submitted with other Montana Tech and College of Technology initiatives to the President of the UofM.
- 3) The UofM will submit approved initiatives from the MBMG, Montana Tech, the Montana Tech College of Technology, Western Montana College, The University of Montana and its College of Technology to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).
- 4) Approved initiatives from the entire MUS are submitted to the MUS Board of Regents.

Initiatives that survive the process are included in the MUS budget proposed to the Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP). Thus, to comply with MUS procedures, the MBMG in cooperation with WPIC submitted an initiative for a new ground-water investigation program (GWIP) to Montana Tech in December, 2007. The intent is for this initiative to be parallel to potential legislation by WPIC (LC5007).

Status of initiative (2.20.08)

The MBMG met with OCHE on 2.15.08 to discuss the details and status of the GWIP initiative. As of 2.20.08, the initiative will be submitted by UofM to OCHE and presented to the MUS Board of Regents by the President of The University of Montana at its March meeting (5th -7th at UofM-Western, Dillon). The date for the final decision on the initiative has not been announced, but is expected to be at the May meeting.

Issues to date (2.20.08)

Several discussions within the MUS have focused on whether the initiative should be included in the MUS budget or held separate from the MUS budget submitted to OBPP. The decision will affect how the potential funding will be accounted for within the MUS budget.