Executive Summary

Overall, the data presented in this letter suggest there is little need for another culinary arts program in Montana or within the NW region. Additionally, the program proposal provides minimal compelling evidence of a need. Below is a summary of data on the supply and demand for culinary services programs and graduates along with key questions that should be resolved prior to moving forward.

There are 2 culinary programs in Montana and 113 culinary programs in the Rocky Mountain and west regions (IPEDS data). The proposal’s own employment outlook estimate suggests that NW regional culinary demand is -17.5%. This is below, but in-line with national estimates. It is unlikely that there will be much demand for this program outside Gallatin valley, so the demand must be locally driven. A mid-career chef earns $9.88 per hour (with starting wages even lower).

The majority of the hospitality management degree budget is directed towards the culinary arts program. For example, $217K of the $569K of annual operation costs and $518K of the $553K in start-up expenses are all for the culinary arts program. In addition, the commercial kitchen/restaurant lab is $0 (but under review)

Questions Regarding Culinary Arts program

1) Is there evidence of need for another culinary arts program in the MUS such as letters of support from the 2 existing culinary arts programs in Montana attesting to such?

2) Why is this program being put forward with a -17.5% employment trajectory in the NW region?

3) Why is an AS degree being put forward that permits earnings of $10-$11 per hour? How will students be able to pay off student loans with below average pay?