

Montana NIRSA Regional Realignment Proposal

*Submitted 9.11.17
Reviewed by NHQ 9.15.17*

The Proposal

The state of Montana is bringing forth an official request and proposal to be regionally realigned from NIRSA Region V to Region VI.

Background and Demonstrated Member Support

Montana Campus Recreation professionals and students have had many discussions on moving their current Region from Region V to Region VI.

In the 2015 Regional Realignment Task Force Member Survey:

- 17 out of 18 total Montana members in 2015 said that they believe that Montana should be moved to another region, believing that Region VI would be a better fit.
- 88 % of Montana NIRSA members said they would have greater involvement if the events were closer.
- 50 % of Montana NIRSA members said that they would have greater involvement if they felt more connected.

In the 2017 Regional Realignment Petition:

- 21 of 21 total Montana members in 2017 said they supported a move to Region VI.
- 6 of 6 institutions had a member support the realignment petition to move to Region VI.

Montana Rationale

Montana is a large state geographically, but the population does not reflect its actual size. Montana has six participating NIRSA institutions and 21 members as of September 2017. These participating institutions are anywhere from two to seven hours apart from one another. To continue professional growth and to expand the presence of NIRSA in the state, particularly to students, Montana would be better suited in Region VI where there are 10 moderate- to large-sized institutions closer to Montana than the closest school in Region V.

Specific benefits for Montana include:

- Increased professional development due to shorter travel and enhanced ability to host events.
- Decreased travel distances, which will decrease travel costs. In terms of flight costs, it is consistently and substantially cheaper to fly west than east.
- Increased networking with universities more comparable to Montana values and culture.
- Increased student engagement development; will be more affordable and desirable for students.
- A stronger regional network with more opportunities for hosting NIRSA events as well as general increase in social, recreational and professional interactions. For example, engagement opportunities in Idaho have stronger appeal and access than opportunities in Iowa.
- The Great Plains makes a natural divider. Few schools reside in between the eastern and western boundaries of the region.

The NIRSA Benefits

NIRSA's mission is to be a leader in higher education and the advocate for the advancement of recreation, sport, and wellness by providing educational and developmental opportunities, generating and sharing knowledge, and promoting networking and growth for our members. Goals II and III of the strategic plan contain objectives that support professional and student development.

It is believed that some of the benefits to NIRSA in taking this step will include:

- Increased professional development opportunities.
- Increased feeling of being connected by Montana NIRSA members.
- Increased involvement from Montana NIRSA members.
- Increased networking with closer vicinity institutions.
- Stronger regional connections for Region V and Region VI.
- Increased student engagement and increased student development.
- A stronger regional network with more opportunities for social, recreational and professional interactions.

Region V Representative Comments

“As Region V Representative, I endorse this request for the State of Montana NIRSA member re-alignment to Region VI. Although individual members and institutional relationships are strong in Region V, I understand the request in terms of professional development. The University of Montana and Montana State University are "Regional Comprehensive Size Institutions" like many schools in Region V, but the desire to move to Region VI seems logical as type of institution should not supersede the desire of the membership. I believe that many Region V members will be disappointed by this re-alignment but will also stand in support of the desire of their colleagues from the State of Montana. If we are truly an Association that stands for its members, then how can we not support a vote of 6 of 6 institutions and 20 of 21 individual members.” –Chris Denison, Region V Representative.

Region VI Representative Comments

“I support their move as it seems to be what the majority of their members prefer based on the last two years of feedback. As the Member Network, our role is to engage the members in our regions and if they feel that being a part of Region VI will allow them to increase their participation in NIRSA events and Regional events then we should allow this to be brought forward. My only real concern is lessening the membership in Region V.” –Brian Smith, Region VI Representative.

Summary

The state of Montana has fulfilled its requirement for realignment according to NIRSA Regional Composition Policy by demonstrating greater than 50% membership support and by acknowledging the following:

- The region from which the requestor is departing shall maintain sufficient states, provinces, and/or countries to meet the Region Composition Requirements. Documentation shall be required.

NHQ staff verified on 9.15.17: Region V is comprised of eight states. Therefore, if one leaves the region it would still meet the minimum requirement of five states or provinces.

- The region from which the requestor is departing shall maintain sufficient professional membership and institutional membership numbers to meet the Region Composition Requirements. Documentation shall be required.

NHQ verified on 9.15.17: Region V currently has 55 institutional members, and 259 professional members. The state of Montana has 4 institutional members, and 20 professional members. Therefore, if Montana were to leave the region, Region V would still meet the minimum regional requirement of 10 institutional and 150 professional members.

- The requestor shall abandon its right to any funds previously deposited and any access to the contingency fund of its current region.
- The requestor shall abandon its right to any funds previously deposited into endowment accounts associated with its current region.
- The requestor's proposal shall identify Association-wide leaders that are elected or appointed on the basis of the requestor's region and reside in the requestor's area and make recommendations for appropriate leadership transition.

NHQ verified on 9.15.17: Currently there are no Association-wide leaders in Montana, that have been elected or appointed based on region. Therefore, recommendations for leadership transition are not needed in this proposal.