

The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Item for Action

Subject: New non-Rackham graduate degree program in the School for Environment and Sustainability

Action Requested: Approval to offer a new non-Rackham Master of Energy Leadership and Business Innovation at the University of Michigan Center for Innovation in Detroit

Effective Date: September 17, 2026

Background

The University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) proposed to launch a new 31-credit Master of Energy Leadership and Business Innovation (MELBI). This interdisciplinary graduate program is designed to prepare professionals to lead the transition toward a sustainable, low-carbon, and equitable energy future and builds on SEAS's longstanding strengths in sustainability, environmental justice, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. The program uniquely integrates energy technology, environmental and energy policy, justice-centered frameworks, and business innovation into a cohesive curriculum that equips students with the analytical, managerial, and leadership skills needed in today's rapidly evolving energy landscape.

The program responds to a clear academic, workforce, and societal need. MELBI directly advances the University's commitment to the University of Michigan Center for Innovation (UMCI), which seeks to expand U-M's educational footprint in Detroit through graduate programs that foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic mobility. Locating MELBI at UMCI leverages Detroit's industrial heritage, mobility ecosystem, and community leadership to create a living laboratory for students and a pipeline of talent for regional employers. The thoughtfully designed MELBI program will attract recent graduates to Detroit, in addition to early- and mid-career professionals, and career-changers seeking to advance into leadership roles in the rapidly evolving energy sector. The new MELBI will be offered alongside other inaugural degree programs launching at UMCI in Fall 2027.

We request that the Regents approve the offering of the non-Rackham graduate degree, Master of Energy Leadership and Business Innovation. Pending approval, the first students will enter the program in Fall 2027, following further approval from the Michigan Association of State Universities.

Recommended by:

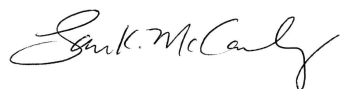
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Jonathan T. Overpeck

Samuel A. Graham Dean

School of Environment and Sustainability

Recommendation endorsed by:

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Laurie K. McCauley

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

September 2026