



# MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Board of Regents

## MINUTES

### Montana Board of Regents Meeting Conference Call Minutes

**Tuesday, August 19, 2008**

The board convened at 8:00 a.m.

Roll call indicated a quorum present.

**Regents Present:** Stephen M. Barrett Chair, Clayton Christian Vice Chair, Lynn Hamilton, Lila Taylor, Todd Buchanan, and Mitch Jessen, all by phone. Regent Pease was absent. Commissioner of Higher Education Sheila Stearns, *ex officio*, was present in person and Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch, *ex officio*, by phone.

**Others Present by Phone:** Present from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) were Mick Robinson, Tyler Trevor, Brad Eldredge, Mary Sheehy-Moe, Alyssa Townsend-Hudders, Laurie Tobol, Cathy Swift, Tom Gibson, and Lynette Brown; Pat Wise of the governor's office; President Geoff Gamble and Craig Roloff of Montana State University-Bozeman; President George Dennison, Bob Durringer, and Jim Foley of The University of Montana-Missoula; Interim Dean Joe Schaffer, Mary Ellen Baukol, and Judy Hay of Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology; and President Jim Cargill of Dawson Community College.

## ACTION

- a. Approval of Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program (MRPIP) Candidates  
[ITEM 140-101-C0808](#)

Regent Taylor moved approval of ITEM 140-101-C0808.

Commissioner Stearns presented the item, explaining that the program was created by the 1991 Legislature to address critical physician shortages in Montana. The statute provides a physician incentive for physicians who practice in rural and medically underserved areas of the state. Eligibility is determined by a committee appointed and chaired by the commissioner. Funding for the program comes from fees paid by WICHE and WWAMI medical and osteopathic medical students.

Cathy Swift, OCHE, clarified that the doctor listed on the item as serving Polson, MT, actually practices in Ronan, MT. She also clarified that the list of four doctors before the Board of Regents was first reviewed by the committee and the names were recommended to the commissioner. The committee is in the process of clarifying community eligibility due to the expansion of the program by the 2007 Legislature.

Laurie Tobol, OCHE, noted that applications received through June 2009, will be eligible under the former program for incentives up to \$45,000. Beginning July of 2009, physicians will be eligible to apply for incentives up to \$100,000.

Regent Buchanan urged care in the distribution of the incentives given the public nature of the program and requested that the MRPIP committee consider carefully the determination of need for purposes of this program.

The motion was approved 6-0.

b. Perkins Program Clarification

[ITEM 140-102-C0808](#) | [Supporting Material ITEM 140-102-C0808](#)

Brad Eldredge, OCHE, explained that this item is to update the BOR policy to reflect the new Perkins Act and conform the BOR policy to Montana statutes. The statute, which provides that the Board of Regents will meet regularly with teachers, students, and others on the development of a state Perkins Act plan, clarifies that the Commissioner of Higher Education is delegated the authority to carry out the activities relating to the development of the state plan, in accordance with current practice.

Ms. Swift noted that she and others had reviewed the state statute with members of legislative and OPI staff and noted that she has determined that it is the intent of the statute that the commissioner, on behalf of the board of regents, would coordinate the statutorily-required efforts in support of the Perkins Act activities.

Superintendent McCulloch stated she is comfortable with the way in which the commissioner has been coordinating this program.

Regent Hamilton moved approval of ITEM 140-102-C0808. The motion was approved 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

**Posted on**

**Approved by the Board of Regents on**

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Sheila M. Stearns  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

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Stephen M. Barrett  
Chair, Board of Regents