



DATE: October 24, 2014

TO: Members of the Montana Board of Regents

FROM: Royce C. Engstrom, President *Royce C Engstrom*

RE: University of Montana Campus Report for the November BOR Meeting

There are many great things happening on the UM campus. Here are some of the highlights I'd like to share with you:

- For the third year in a row, **UM has been ranked among the top 350 universities worldwide** in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. UM is ranked in the 301-350 level of the 2014-15 list and is the only Montana university on the list. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the most comprehensive global rankings of higher education institutions, using 13 performance indicators to examine a university's strengths against its core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook. The data is collected and analyzed by Thomson Reuters.
- UM is ranked in the **top 200 colleges and universities across the nation**, according to U.S. News & World Report. In the 2015 Edition of U.S. News' Best College rankings, UM tied for 194th place. The University last made the list two years ago, when it was ranked 199. UM is the only Montana institution to make it onto the top 200 list this year. U.S. News released its flagship Best Colleges rankings on Sept. 9 after surveying 1,800 colleges and universities across the nation. Eligible schools are ranked on up to 16 measures of academic excellence such as peer assessment, high school counselor assessment, retention, graduation rate and faculty resources.
- **Annie Belcourt**, Assistant Professor in UM's College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, has accepted an invitation from Harvard University to be a JPB Environmental Health Fellow for the next three years. The fellowship will allow Belcourt, a faculty member in pharmacy practice and public health, to extend her work in environmental health while developing new collaborative research projects aimed at tribal populations in Montana. Her research and clinical practice priorities include mental health disparities, trauma, post-traumatic stress reactions, risk, resiliency and psychiatric disorder within the culture context of American Indian communities. Belcourt's research has been published in a variety of peer-reviewed scientific journals, including American

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Psychologist, the American Journal of Public Health and Psychological Bulletin. The fellowship allows Belcourt to remain at UM while attending multiple advanced training sessions with Harvard School of Environmental Public Health faculty both in Cambridge, Mass., and Santa Fe, N.M. The funding provides up to \$350,000 to support her direct research and time researching, projects and travel. The fellowship began Oct. 1 and continues through December 2017.

- A team led by UM researcher **Frank Rosenzweig** has been awarded a five-year, \$8.9 million NASA grant to study how life evolved and became more complex on Earth. Space agency officials believe that a better understanding of how life arises, propagates and becomes increasingly complex will help them find and recognize it elsewhere in the universe. Rosenzweig's team was one of seven nationwide selected to receive grants that totaled \$50 million to assist NASA with astrobiology research. The title of his group's successful 177-page proposal was "Reliving the History of Life: Experimental Evolution of Major Transitions." UM's partner institutions on the project are Stanford University; the University of Colorado, Boulder; the University of New Hampshire; the University of New Mexico; the Santa Fe Institute; and the University of Pennsylvania. Rosenzweig said \$3.9 million of the grant will be funneled to UM's partner institutions, while \$5 million will stay on campus. His research team will become part of the NASA Astrobiology Institute, headquartered at the Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, Calif. Research team members at UM will include Rosenzweig, **John McCutcheon, Scott Miller, Matthew Herron, Margie Kinnersley** and **Eric Smith**.
- UM Professor **Brian Steele**, of the Department of Mathematical Sciences, recently received a 2014 IBM Big Data Faculty Award. The award, which includes a \$10,000 prize, recognizes Steele's interest in advancing coursework in big data, which is the analysis and study of extremely large data sets.
- UM dedicated the new **Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute** on October 10, during a ceremony in the Bonnie HeavyRunner Gathering Place of The Payne Family Native American Center. The Institute offers unprecedented technology and learning environments to UM students and the opportunity for collaborations with tribal colleges. It occupies the entire garden level of The Payne Family Native American Center. The institute is named in honor of Cobell, a leading advocate from the Blackfeet Tribe who in 1985 embarked on one of the largest and most complicated class-action lawsuits ever brought against the U.S. government. Cobell died in 2011 at the age of 65.
- UM celebrated **Homecoming Week** with the theme "Montana is Griz Territory" to commemorate the establishment of Montana Territory 150 years ago and celebrated Grizzly pride throughout the state. The UM School of Journalism celebrated 100 years during Homecoming Week and will continue to host events throughout the rest of their Centennial Year.

- One year after taking on the **Real Food Challenge**, UM has already surpassed its goal. UM President Royce Engstrom, UM Dining Director Mark LoParco and Associated Students of UM President Asa Hohman signed the Real Food Campus Commitment on Oct. 24, 2013, pledging to buy at least 20 percent “real food” annually by 2020. UM was the first university in the Northwest to sign the RFCC pledge and is the only university in Montana to have signed it. The Real Food Calculator, an assessment tool developed by Real Food Challenge student researchers and associated food experts, aims to support a local food system that is community-based, ecologically sound, fair and humane. The pledge specifically details the types of purchases that fall into a “real food” category. By using Real Food Calculator standards, UM Dining aligns itself with the most progressive metric for institutional food service.
- The **UM Penetralia Chapter of Mortar Board National Honor Society** received a prestigious national award at the 2014 Mortar Board National Conference held in August. The UM chapter received the Gold Torch Award, an honor awarded to only the most exceptional chapters of the organization. The Gold Torch Award was given to 24 chapters who demonstrated significant accomplishments in chapter management and contributed meaningful service to their institutions. Mortar Board is a national honor society that recognizes college seniors for outstanding achievement, scholarship, leadership and service. The UM Penetralia Chapter was chartered in 1927, and is one of 229 chapters across the nation.
- Missoula residents Suzanne and Dave Peterson announced their **\$1.5 million commitment** to UM’s **Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences** on September 12. Their generous gift will create the Suzanne and Dave Peterson Distinguished Professor of Gifted Education. The new faculty member will specialize in gifted education, an area of growing interest nationwide that has received less funding and attention than other kinds of special education. With a specialist in this discipline, UM will become the only university in the Northern Rockies to offer a comprehensive education in the field of personalized learning. In addition to training tomorrow’s educators, the college will contribute to ongoing research into how and why gifted children are best motivated to succeed.
- UM, Bozeman Public Schools, and other partners have been awarded a **three-year, \$3.3 million grant** for Developing Knowledge About What Works to Make Schools Safe. BPS is one of 24 agencies nationwide to receive the National Institute of Justice grant, which will examine how to implement comprehensive, integrated prevention support for students. The Bozeman school district was the only applicant in Montana to be awarded the funding this year. BPS will collaborate on the grant with the Montana Safe Schools Center and the National Native Children’s Trauma Center, both housed at UM’s **Institute for Educational Research and Service**, led by Director **Rick van den Pol**. Other partners are Gallatin County Youth Court Services, school- and

community-based mental health providers, and THRIVE, a local nonprofit that provides services related to school and family engagement. Titled "School and Family Engagement – Trauma Informed (SAFE-TI)," the grant will evaluate the school-safety impacts of implementing an approach applied within a tiered assessment and intervention framework. SAFE-TI will provide trauma screening, assessment and treatment of student-specific risk factors that impact school safety, including threat-to-self and threat-to-others. The project will launch in January 2015.

- The **Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library** recently received a \$49,343 National Leadership Grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Electronic Irish Research Experience, or EIRE, will serve as a national model for conveying the diaspora experience through an effective combination of primary source content and scholarly context. During the project, partners, advisory board members and consultants will design a community- and learning-focused platform to convey the Irish-American experience. EIRE will establish and support collaborations between international libraries, archives, universities and academic programs to identify and gather materials that build community and preserve cultural heritage. Partners in the project include **Traolach O’Riordain** of UM’s Irish Studies Program, Ellen Crain of the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives and Colette McKenna of the Boole Library at University College Cork, Ireland.
- The **UM Department of Psychology** recently received a five-year, \$1.2 million federal grant to continue its highly successful Indians Into Psychology (InPsych) Program. The grant, awarded by Indian Health Service, will provide financial support and unique educational opportunities for Native American students as they pursue degrees in clinical psychology. Program Director **Gyda Swaney** attributes the success of the InPsych Program to the caliber of Native students involved and the training and mentorship the students receive from the UM Department of Psychology faculty. The InPsych Program was established as part of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and seeks to provide summer programs to expose Native American students to the various fields of psychology, stipends for students to pursue careers in clinical psychology, tribal community outreach and health professions recruitment. The program also aims to develop affiliation agreements with tribal colleges and universities to enhance Native students’ education and, ultimately, provide psychological services to under-served Native American communities by providing training opportunities for psychology graduate students in those communities.
- A UM class, **Engaging Social Responsibility through Philanthropy**, will grant a total of \$12,500 to local nonprofits this semester. The grants will benefit local nonprofits and enhance the Missoula community. The class focuses on giving monetary donations to nonprofits that operate within Missoula County and address the needs of mental health and/or hunger. The UM philanthropy class teaches students about social responsibility and community-building to address

and resolve social issues. Students study the role of philanthropy and giving strategies to meet local needs. The class, which receives funding from the Learning by Giving Foundation and the PPL Montana Community Fund, engages students in a philanthropic experience, allowing them to research community needs, review applications and disperse grants.

- The **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Montana (MOLLI)**, which offers non-credit academic short courses to individuals who are age 50 and older, has surpassed its all-time enrollment high. This fall, there are 930 individuals registered for courses, and MOLLI membership grew to 737 members. MOLLI is one of many Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes across the country. The program is a resource for older adults who enjoy learning, connecting socially with others and having a relationship with UM.
- UM's Office of International Programs reports **832 international students** enrolled this semester, representing about 5 percent of the entire student population, compared to about 4 percent last year. Students from Brazil account for the biggest increase in enrollment, more than doubling from last spring's 45 students to more than 100 enrolled this semester. UM has about 90 Chinese students this semester. Currently, 105 students from Brazil are enrolled at UM, second only to Japan's 109 students and to the Philippines' 168 students (although most of these students are taking online courses in the health professions). Nearly 80 students from Saudi Arabia are enrolled at UM this fall. The international students attending UM this fall come from 81 different countries. Nearly half of them chose business administration, health professions or intensive English as their field of study.