



DATE: June 17, 2015

TO: Montana Board of Regents

FROM: Royce C. Engstrom, President 

RE: Campus Report for the July 2015 BOR Conference Call

- UM Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies **Rosalyn LaPier** was recently appointed a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Research associates are senior experts in their field who maintain a formal scholarly affiliation and academic appointment with the Smithsonian. They are given access to Smithsonian collections and facilities. In exchange, LaPier will bring her own outside expertise and knowledge to the Smithsonian, which includes more than 25 years of experience working with Blackfeet elders researching ethobotany and traditional ecological knowledge. The appointment will last at least three years and may be renewed. LaPier also has worked to revitalize and preserve Native American languages the past 25 years. She will continue her research on ethobotany, traditional ecological knowledge and Blackfeet religious beliefs of nature and the environment at the Smithsonian and within traditional Blackfeet territory in the U.S. and Canada. LaPier holds a doctorate degree in history from UM. She is one of four Native American professors at a research university in the U.S. in an environmental studies/sciences department. She is an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Tribe and also is Métis.
- **Brock Tessman** was recently named the next dean of the Davidson Honors College at UM. Tessman, a political scientist who most recently served the University of Georgia as associate director of the Center for the Study of Global Issues and director of graduate programs in the UGA Department of International Affairs, was selected for the position after an extensive national search. Tessman will begin his new duties mid-July. Tessman is a highly acclaimed teacher and scholar who has won numerous awards during his tenure at UGA. Tessman earned his bachelor's degree in international relations from Brown University. He earned a doctorate in political science and a master's degree in international affairs from the University of Colorado at Boulder.
- The journal *Molecular Ecology* chose UM Regents Professor Emeritus **Fred Allendorf** as the recipient of its 2015 Molecular Ecology Prize. Allendorf joins some of the most distinguished pioneers in this discipline. A committee with a rotating membership was established to call for nominations and decide on prize winners. Allendorf is one of a handful of people who founded the field of conservation genetics. He was one of the first to apply genetics to real-world conservation problems, and he has continued to

Office of the President

advance the application of genetics, and now genomics, to pressing conservation problems. His research focuses on the application of population and evolutionary genetics to problems in conservation biology. His book "Conservation and the Genetics of Populations," co-written with UM Professor Gordon Luikart and Sally Aitken of the University of British Columbia, provides an understanding of how genetics can be used to conserve species threatened with extinction. Allendorf, along with holding the position of Regents Professor Emeritus of Biology at UM, is a Professorial Research Fellow at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. He was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Aarhus in Denmark and at Nottingham University in England. He also was a Senior Fulbright Fellow at Victoria University of Wellington and has held positions at the University of California, Davis; the University of Oregon; the University of Minnesota; and the University of Western Australia. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a past president of the American Genetic Association and also served as director of the Population Biology Program of the National Science Foundation.

- UM junior **Philip Thomas** recently earned a prestigious \$5,000 grant from Psi Chi, the national honors society of psychology. The scholarship will support his research to understand the effectiveness of UM's Youth Engagement Through Intervention (YETI) program, a weeklong intensive treatment designed by UM researchers. Thomas majors in psychology and aims to pursue an educational-specialist degree in school psychology. YETI is an intensive, weeklong social-skills intervention for children ages 8 to 13 with autism spectrum and related disorders. The program uses evidence-based practices such as video modeling, visual schedules and social narratives to improve social skills. Thomas' research with the YETI program aims to examine whether the skills taught in the program are being maintained and used at home and whether individualized treatments are effective for reducing disruptive behaviors within group settings.
- UM student **Ellen Ipsen** will hop across the pond this summer to attend the Fulbright UK Summer Institute for Undergraduates, a program that fosters relations between the United States and United Kingdom and teaches American students more about the UK. Ipsen, a sophomore majoring in history, will examine the topic of slavery and the Atlantic heritage while studying at the University of Bristol's Fulbright Institute in southwest England. Ipsen graduated from Hellgate High School in 2013. During her freshman year at UM, Ipsen took the Davidson Honors College study abroad trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland, and she will attend Leiden University in the Netherlands for fall semester 2015. The US-UK Fulbright Commission sends U.S. students with at least two years of undergraduate study left to the UK for an academic and cultural summer program.
- With 18 students accepted into medical schools this year, the **Pre-Medical Sciences Program at UM** reached an acceptance rate of 64 percent – 20 points higher than the national average of 44 percent. The pre-med program has seen a steady increase in the number of students admitted into medical programs the past several years.
- Twelve **UM Athletic Training students** recently took the Board of Certification exam, a high-stakes evaluation that enables students graduating from accredited athletic training programs to enter the work force as certified athletic trainers. All 12 students

graduating from the UM program this spring took the exam in April, and all of them passed on their first try. UM students far exceed the national average first-time pass rate of 82 percent. Over the past four years, 34 out of 35 students in the UM Athletic Training Program have passed the exam on their first attempt, bringing the program's overall first-time pass rate up to 97 percent for the past four years. This year's 100 percent pass rate also includes the inaugural class of students graduating from the Masters in Athletic Training Program, setting the program off to a promising start.

- The **Montana Grizzlies Hurling Team** claimed its second championship title on May 24th. The team hosted the National Collegiate Gaelic Athletic Association (NCGAA) Hurling Championship of America at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula. The win marked the NCGAA's first-ever repeat championship.
- UM graduates **Ryan Bell**, **Brinna Boettger** and **Dylan Gomes** recently received Fulbright Scholarship award notifications for the coming year. Bell earned his M.F.A. in nonfiction creative writing from UM in 2014. He was awarded a coveted Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellowship. Bell will serve as one of five Fellows, selected out of a pool of more than 400 applicants, who will undertake an in-depth research project on a globally relevant issue, comparing and contrasting how it is experienced across borders. Boettger graduated from UM in 2013 with degrees in Russian and English. She earned a prestigious English Teaching Assistant Fulbright Scholarship, which places recent college graduates and young professionals overseas as English teaching assistants in primary, secondary schools or universities overseas. The program aims to improve foreign students' English language abilities and knowledge of the United States while increasing the U.S. student's own language skills and knowledge of the host country. Before departing for Belarus, Boettger will attend a pre-departure orientation in Washington, D.C., and then will serve as a teaching assistant for nine months. Gomes graduated from UM in 2014 with a biology degree. He earned a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant to study bats at the Max Planck Institutes in Germany. Gomes is one of more than 1,900 U.S. citizens who will travel abroad for the 2015-2016 academic year through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. The program operates in more than 160 countries worldwide.
- UM is now home to a 100-gigabit-per-second fiber connection as an **Internet2 Network** connector site in Missoula. The ultra-high-speed capability advances UM's research efforts and expands opportunities to support educational, research and health care institutions across the state. The new capability, which is 10 times faster than UM's previous connection, will further research efforts in the areas of ecosystems, climate change, environmental health, neuroscience, the search for Earth-like planets in nearby solar systems and more. UM connects a portion of Montana's higher education institutions, including four-year, two-year and tribal colleges, as well as the U.S. Forest Service. The new 100G connection provides an opportunity to expand connectivity to more higher education institutions, to the K-12 community, health care facilities, libraries and research laboratories across Montana.