



DATE: August 23, 2017
TO: Montana University System Board of Regents
FROM: Sheila M. Stearns, President *Sheila M. Stearns*
RE: Proposal to Name the Academic Hall of the Liberal Arts Building

Having opportunities throughout this past year to get to know Dennis Eck and to learn more about his family's personal and financial investment in the students and faculty of the University of Montana's College of Humanities and Sciences, I offer my full support for the proposal to name the Academic Hall of the Liberal Arts Building The Dennis and Gretchen Eck Academic Hall. In a recent tour of the lovely classroom spaces that have already been completed and outfitted with advanced technology and the construction underway to improve accessibility, comfort, and functionality of the hall, I was particularly struck by the generosity of the Ecks and the positive impact of their support on the University of Montana.

I believe the level of support Dennis and Gretchen Eck have provided and pledged is appropriate to the recognition being proposed. Students and faculty will benefit from the technology within the hall and the ways in which it supports active learning; from the improved lighting and temperature control of the classrooms making them useable year-round; and from the many features of the renovations that make the hall safer, more inviting, and more accessible for our entire student body.

It is my hope that Regents tour the Academic Hall of the Liberal Arts Building – which is among the largest academic buildings on campus – to personally observe the contrast in pre- and post-renovation classroom and common spaces. I am confident others will find it as encouraging and uplifting of an experience as I did and will join me in offering gratitude for all that Dennis and Gretchen Eck are doing to improve teaching and learning environments at the University of Montana.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important request for the University of Montana and the potential it holds to encourage future private investment in critical campus facilities.