



**MINUTES**  
**Montana Board of Regents**  
OCHE Office  
January 8, 2019

**Tuesday, January 8, 2019**

Meeting Convened at 10:00am

Roll call indicated a quorum present. Regents Present: Fran Albrecht, Chair; Bob Nystuen, Vice Chair; Paul Tuss; Martha Sheehy; Casey Lozar; Dalton Johnson. Regent Brianne Rogers was excused. Ex officio members included: Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian; Ex officio Governor Bullock was represented by Ms. Siri Smillie, and Ex officio Superintendent Elsie Arntzen.

Welcome and Comments by Chair Albrecht

Chair Albrecht welcomed all attendees and extended a welcome back to students, across the MUS, who are starting the Spring semester. She spoke to recent commencement events held and the importance of ensuring student success to complete their education and cross the stage. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting and noted the beginning of the Legislative session and related work that OCHE is doing to coordinate MUS efforts.

Approval of Minutes

- November 15-16, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Regent Tuss made a motion to approve the November 2018 BOR meeting minutes; motion passed 6-0.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Christian spoke to the charge from the Board to further the Strategic Initiatives. He addressed efforts focused on improving student access and affordability, including the opportunity for Montana Juniors to take the ACT on April 2nd at no cost. Also, through a partnership with OPI, this opportunity and others like the One-Two-Free dual enrollment options are being shared with greater outreach to students. Commissioner Christian discussed the work to date on a portal that would serve as a central hub for students to find helpful information and resources related to the admissions process and financial aid.

Commissioner Christian discussed the Legislative session and extended thanks to Governor Bullock and Director Livers for placing the MUS and OCHE in a prominent spot on the budget. This placement will provide excellent opportunities for students for years to come through the investment in need-based aid to make higher education more accessible to students. He discussed the proposed tuition freeze, noting that Montana has a long history of tuition freezes and through this approach, Montana remains one of the most affordable higher education systems in the nation.



## MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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Commissioner Christian reiterated that the tuition freeze is not a freeze on expenditures and that this is an increase in revenue to the campuses that otherwise would be filled by student tuition. He noted that the OCHE office will keep the Board aware throughout the session and would be actively tracking and monitoring bills. The campus foundations have agreed to match the Governor's proposed need-based aid, serving as another example of how the state, campuses, and foundations can work together to support the younger generations of Montana.

Deputy Commissioner Trevor walked through the College Access Portal, noting the intention to go live by the end of the month. He stressed the importance of OPI having input and noted that focus is currently on communicating the opportunities, associated with ACT, to students and parents. He described the various "opt-in" opportunities related to ACT, Dual Enrollment, One-Two-Free, Admissions Process, and Financial Aid that would be housed on the portal. Mr. Trevor provided detail of the opt-in options associated with the ACT, noting that marking Box L and M on the exam, would allow MUS to provide students with basic, detailed information about these opportunities. OCHE will continue to work on the portal to further develop and incorporate feedback from campus leaders and the K-12 community. Discussion followed. Superintendent Arntzen spoke to the work to be done on educating Legislators on the importance of this opportunity.

- Legislative Update

Commissioner Christian noted that the vision for the University System is focused on four main themes: access and affordability, aided by the proposed tuition freeze. He described access aid as another area of focus, also included in the Governor's budget and would include a match from the Foundations. Also, important is the pay plan included in HB 13 and the LRBP list which provides for three MUS projects in the Governor's budget. Commissioner Christian confirmed that the OCHE team would monitor any other bills that relate to the MUS/BOR. Discussion followed.

- Campus Reports
- Other

### **CONSENT**

- a. Labor Agreements; OCHE ITEM 182-101-C0119 | Attachment #1

#### **Staff Items**

- b. Staff Item; MSU-Bozeman ITEM 182-2000-C0119

#### **Emeriti Faculty**

- c. Newman; MSU-Bozeman ITEM 182-2001-C0119

Regent Sheehy made a motion to approve consent items a.-c. The motion passed 6-0.

### **ACTION**



- a. Authorization to Reduce Room Rates & Offer Additional Meal Plans and Room Rate Options; MSU-Billings ITEM 182-2701-C0119 | Attachment #1

Chancellor Edelman presented this request before the Board for approval of a reduction in the current room rates, addition of room rate options and revised meal plans for students. Discussion followed.

Regent Johnson made a motion to approve action item a. ITEM 182-2701-C0119; motion passed 6-0.

- b. Authorization to Revise BOR Policy 940.1 – Residency; OCHE ITEM 182-102-C0019 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2

Ms. Helen Thigpen, Associate Legal Counsel at OCHE, spoke to this item noting that the proposed revisions seek to clarify the Board’s residency policy. Discussion followed.

Regent Johnson made a motion to approve action item b. ITEM 182-102-C0119; motion passed 6-0.

### **INFORMATION**

- a. Tuition Freeze Update

Deputy Commissioner Trevor provided an update on information related to the proposed tuition freeze in the Governor’s budget. Mr. Trevor described the attempt to unite the resident student access initiative with items of the Governor’s budget to produce a cohesive package of how we intended to describe the goal of creating a unified approach to resident student recruitment and enrollment. Mr. Trevor discussed the MUS capture rate data of high school graduates and explained the attributing factors of the economy, the reduction in funding of state financial aid, and a data issue associated with recruitment using ACT data. Going forward, he discussed plans to ensure long-term, sustainable, low-cost resident tuition rates; improving access and providing financial aid to improve access for lower and middle income students as well as adult learners; lastly the goal of removing barriers and developing a College Access Portal which offers a single point of access to the ACT, Dual Enrollment, college admissions, and financial aid information. Discussion followed.

- b. Audit Reports
  - Montana Tech Foundation-June 30, 2018-Unmodified (Clean) Opinion
  - Montana State University Foundation-June 30, 2018-Unmodified (Clean) Opinion

Deputy Commissioner Trevor noted that these audits are reported annually, these two were not available for the November BOR meeting. He noted that these audits came back clean with no findings.



Student Appeal #1

Regent Albrecht explained the process related to the student appeal.

Regent Sheehy made a motion to hear Student Appeal #1; motion failed (5-1). The request to hear the appeal is denied and the Commissioner’s decision is upheld.

Student Appeal #2

Regent Albrecht explained the process related to the student appeal. No motion was made; therefore, the Commissioner’s decision is upheld.

Public Comment

Mr. Adam Thuen, a graduate student at MSU, spoke to the conflict over the future of the department of cell biology and neuroscience involving faculty and university administration. He encouraged the Board to review this situation further at their next meeting.

Chair Albrecht convened an executive session. She determined that the matters of discussion relate to matters of individual privacy and that the demands of the individual privacy outweigh the merits of public disclosure. Executive session convened at 11:35am.

Executive Session

- *Honorary Doctorate Nomination # 1 – UM*
- *Honorary Doctorate Nomination #2 – UM*
  
- *Honorary Doctorate Nomination #1 – MSU*
- *Honorary Doctorate Nomination #2 – MSU*
  
- *Legal Update*

Meeting to adjourned at 12:05pm

Approved by the Board of Regents on

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Clayton T. Christian  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

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Fran Albrecht  
Chair, Board of Regents

Other than the meeting starting time, times listed are approximate. In addition, agenda items may be rearranged unless an item is listed as having a “time certain.” Action may be taken on any item listed on the Board or Committee Agendas. Public comment is welcome on all items. The Board of Regents will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual’s ability to participate. Persons requiring such accommodations should make their requests to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education as soon as possible before the meeting to allow adequate time for special arrangements. You may call or write to: ADA Coordinator, P. O. Box 203201, Helena MT 59620-3201, 406-444-6570, 1-800-253-4091 (TDD)