

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Chair Lozar:

All right. Good morning everybody and welcome to the summer board meeting for the Montana Board of Regents. It's fantastic to see everyone here this morning, and that you traveled here safely. I wanted to first thank Amy for setting up our room in a socially distance arrangement. So thank you, Amy. Speaking of which, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member of the Montana Board of Regents, Amy Sexton of MSU Billings. We're thrilled to have you here with us this year and we look forward to working alongside of you. Regent Sexton, if you wanted to do just a quick introduction?

Regent Sexton:

Certainly. Good morning everybody, and thank you so much for the welcome. I am from MSU Billings and I am double majoring in accounting and math. I am technically a senior, although I will be taking another year to complete my math degree. I'm really excited to be here, I had an excellent introduction to everything yesterday. From all the OCHE staff, and everyone was wonderful. So I'm really excited to be here as well, I think it's going to be a really interesting year and a great year to be part of the Board.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Amy. I also would like to applaud our outgoing student Regent John Miller, for his exceptional devotion to the Board, the Montana University system, and its students. Unfortunately, John wasn't able to make it here this morning, but he will be joining over the phone this morning. Thank you, John, for your service and we'll certainly miss you, and we wish you all the best.

Regent Miller:

Thanks, Regent Lozar.

Chair Lozar:

And so I don't forget, we want to make sure that Regent Miller has the opportunity to share some remarks at the end of the business part of the meeting.

Regent Miller:

Perfect.

Chair Lozar:

Before we move into the agenda, I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible work happening across our campuses right now, as we prepare for a healthy return to campus, which is now only seven to eight weeks away.

Chair Lozar:

While we continue to monitor the COVID crisis and are prepared to adjust as necessary, one thing is absolutely clear, each of our campuses is working with local and state health officials to design plans that mitigate health risk while maintaining the excellent academic student life and work experience that our students and employees expect from the Montana University system. OCHE has been out at the forefront monitoring our current public health crisis and its potential impact in the system, and we'll hear more about their efforts later this morning as Deputy Commissioner, Brock Tessman, updates us on

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

the work of the Montana university system Healthy Fall Task Force, but for now I want our campus teams to know how much their efforts are appreciated during one of the most uncertain and challenging times our university system has ever faced.

Chair Lozar:

Returning back to this morning's agenda, I just want to note that the Board will move into executive session following the business meeting to address annual evaluations. Just a couple notes, we are muting all the lines so we don't get any feedback, and this meeting is being recorded.

Chair Lozar:

So, moving to the meeting minutes, approval of meeting minutes from May 20th, 2020 meeting minutes, I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

Regent Sheehy:

So moved.

Chair Lozar:

Moved by Regent Sheehy. Is there any discussion or corrections from members of the Board? Is there any comments from the campuses? Is there any public comment? Seeing no further comment, I'll call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Chair Lozar:

Any opposed, same sign? Motion passes. Mr. Commissioner, we'll move on to your portion of this morning's meeting for the Commissioner's report.

Commissioner Christian:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too like to extend my appreciation to the board members for traveling here today and participating in this meeting and the evaluations that will follow. They're important feedback for all of your leadership team, and it will be a very helpful conversation as we move through the day. Sort of keeping with the conference call tradition, I don't have a whole lot of Commissioner's comments this morning. I would briefly extend a thanks to the Governor for prioritizing higher education with the GEER's funding. That announcement came out last week, and those are some incredibly needed dollars within MUS, given all that we've faced this spring, and greatly appreciate that.

Commissioner Christian:

I had the pleasure to participate on a panel yesterday talking about working with governors, and what a blessing Montana has seen over the last eight years. And we know as we move forward, we'll continue a good relationship with our next governor, but this is a governor that's prioritized education in Montana, and I'm very pleased with that and very grateful to him and his cabinet for looking out for the interest of public universities across the state. Again, your campus reports are posted online. There's some great

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

information in there. We've shared some information over the last few weeks that I think is important in the MUSings, and we'll continue to do that as our main vehicle for broadcasting MUS news. Other than that, Mr. Chair, I think we can move to introductions if there are any. They're a little challenging on the phone. If there's anything that we need to say from the campuses, now we can unmute the lines and do that, otherwise we'll do some official introductions in September.

Chair Lozar:

Are there any introductions from the campus communities? Okay. You're unmuted if you'd like to make an introduction.

Commissioner Christian:

Very well. Mr. Chair, I think we can move on with the agenda.

Chair Lozar:

Okay. Moving on to the next item, the next portion of this morning's business meeting is the Consent Agenda. You'll see staff items and emeriti items and other Consent Agenda items, A through J. I will entertain a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Regent Nystuen:

So moved.

Chair Lozar:

Moved by Regent Nystuen. Is there any discussion or comments from members of the Board? Are there any discussion or comments from the campuses?

Regent Nystuen:

Y'all unmuted? Amy, you're going to have to unmute for this portion.

Chair Lozar:

I'll go back. Are there any questions or comments from the campuses? Is there any public comment? Seeing no further comment, I'll call for all those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Chair Lozar:

Any opposed, same sign? Motion passes. And moving on to... is there anyone we want to unmute... unmute all?

Regent Nystuen:

Well, we're going to have [inaudible 00:08:42].

Chair Lozar:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Oh. Okay.

Regent Nystuen:

Just tell-

Commissioner Christian:

Maybe we could ask everybody, if you're not speaking, make sure your line is muted. We're going to remove the mute all, so those that need to speak can, and you'll be in control of your own mute button. But if you're not speaking, if you could make sure you're on mute, that would be very helpful.

Chair Lozar:

And moving on to the first action item for this morning's meeting. Action Item A, request for authorization to plan a new dining facility, University of Montana, Missoula. I believe Dr. Muffick will be introducing this item.

Mr. Muffick:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the board. This item authorizes project planning and programming and schematic design work only, and it does not authorize construction financing or any operations and maintenance. Again, this is a request from the University of Montana in Missoula for authorization to plan a new dining facility. The request is for \$360,000, and funding is from the recent bond issue proceeds.

Mr. Muffick:

Some background on the need for this facility. The new dining facility is a critical piece of the ongoing student services master plan and upgrade of facilities, which U of M is in the midst of. The current dining facility located in the Lommasson Center, was built in 1954. There have been some renovations in the late nineties, early two thousands to the facility, but the facility does not provide the modern amenities found in dining facilities at peer institutions.

Mr. Muffick:

The new facility will improve the student experience on campus. Serves about 13,000 people at U of M, as far as the dining facilities there. That includes faculty, staff, and students. Again, this is for planning only. We anticipate coming to the Board of Regents in the fall to discuss recommendations for proceeding with the project, which would include cost estimates and the schematics, and then followed by a bid process or construction. With the intent of beginning construction in the spring of 2021, with the targeted completion date and aggressive completion date by fall of 2022. Again, those will all be dates that may be in flux depending on how the planning process goes. So I'll stand for any questions and I believe Vice President Paul Lasiter is also available for any questions, Mr. Chair.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Mr. Muffick. Any questions on the planning of the new dining facility at University of Montana? Any questions for Mr. Muffick? Seeing none. We're going to go through each one of these items and take action. So I will entertain a motion to approve action item A, request for authorization to plan a new dining facility at University of Montana, Missoula.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Regent Dombrowski:

So moved.

Chair Lozar:

Moved by Regent Dombrowski. Is there any comments or discussion from members of the board? Are there any comments from the campuses? Any public comment? Any public comment? Seeing no for their comment, I'll call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Chair Lozar:

Any opposed, same sign? Motion passes. Moving on to action item B, request for authorization to restructure the ASUM activity fee, University of Montana, Missoula. I believe Deputy Commissioner Trevor will introduce this item.

Dep. Comm'r Trevor:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the board. This is Tyler here. Good morning. This is a item that was intended to be packaged with a couple of other restructuring fee items, that is a student driven item and brought to you. The other two were originally brought in May. This fee, which is a specific portion of the ASUM activity fee, pertains to the sustainability opt-out fee. And that's a \$6 fee charged to all students, students could opt out if they do not choose to participate. I think the most current look at how many opt out was about 29%, so it runs somewhere between 29 and 33% of the students are opting out. The request here is to do away with the opt-out, and just charge \$6 to everyone. So, this is completely aligned with board policy to bring student-driven fees at any time.

Dep. Comm'r Trevor:

I'll just remind everybody that the Board of Regents takes up fees every other year. It's traditionally the May board meeting, following a legislative session, but student-driven fees can come at any time. And so this comes to you with a vote, a positive vote of the students. In fact, the vote on this one was slightly better than the other two restructuring items that you approved for the University of Montana in May. So with that, I'd mentioned that Vice President Lasiter is on the line to help answer questions as well. Mr. Chair, we'd stand for questions.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Deputy Commissioner Trevor. Any questions on this item?

Regent Rogers:

I don't have a question. I'm just excited to see so much student support for this. It was great to see the outcome of the vote and the spread for each of the items that passed and the really strong support for this. It's really exciting to see this type of effort at one of our campuses and especially that it's supported by students.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Regent Rogers. Any other questions or comments? Seeing none. I will entertain a motion to approve action item B.

Regent Tuss:

So moved.

Chair Lozar:

Moved by Regent Tuss. Is there any discussion or comments from members of the board? Any discussion or comments from campuses? Is there any public comment? Any public comment? Seeing no further comment, I-

James Flanagan:

Sorry. This is James Flanagan, ASUM Vice President for University of Montana. I wanted to give a quick public comment on this eager restructure. I just wanted to really commend the student body. They showed a lot of ingenuity to getting this passed. They're very driven on getting this passed, so it's something they really wanted. And I'm very proud of this student-led initiative, and I hope that all the regents can see the care that the students put into this initiative. Thank you.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Mr. Flanagan. Any additional public comment?

Taylor Gregory:

Yes, this is Taylor Gregory. I'm the president of ASUM. And I also wanted to echo the statements of James and applaud the work of the students at the University of Montana, and just provide a little bit more background on our sustainability fee. So per ASUM's fiscal policy, our sustainability fee funds our Sustainability Center, and our class sustainability fund, which both create student-driven sustainability projects at UM, where previous projects in the past five years have included an upgrade to our ASUM bus garage with our heaters, numerous reusable water bottle stations around campus, and covered bike parking in front of our University Center. Just a couple of projects that this fee has funded in the last five years. So I just wanted to provide that background and applaud the work of the students.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Mr. Gregory. Is there any additional public comment? Any additional public comment? Seeing no further comment, I'll call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Chair Lozar:

Any opposed, same sign? Motion passes. The next item is action item C, level two proposal. This morning, we've got a single proposal that's in front of us to take action on. It is from the University of

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Montana, Missoula a BS in Public Health. I believe Deputy Commissioner Tessman will introduce this item for us this morning. Deputy Commissioner.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

That's right. Mr. Chair and members of the board, Brock Tessman here. We do have just a single level two proposal for you today. And as you'll remember, we'll be phasing out these level two action items and moving to the request to plan process that is part of our new approval protocol. The item today does come from the University of Montana, Bachelor's of Science in public health with four options, one in general public health, one in community health, one in population health and one in global health. On the line, I believe we have Dr. Tony Ward, who is the chair of the UM School of Public and Community Health Sciences. And I know that Provost Harbor and incoming Provost Humphrey are also on the line should we need some backup. But I would turn it over to Dr. Ward now, if he is on the line.

Dr. Tony Ward:

Yeah, thank you. This is Tony Ward from Missoula, and we're excited to be proposing this level two proposal. I think there's no better time to invest in a public health program than right now, given the pandemic. So we're building off of our accredited Master's level public health program and our accredited PhD program by proposing this new undergraduate degree in public health. Getting a lot of great feedback from potential students on campus. And we look forward to any questions or addressing any concerns that you may have.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Dr. Ward. Any questions or comments for Deputy Commissioner Tessman, or Dr. Ward? Okay, seeing none. I will entertain a motion to approve action item C.

Regent Dombrowski:

So moved.

Chair Lozar:

Moved by Regent Dombrowski. Is there any discussion or comments from members of the board?

Regent Rogers:

Actually.

Chair Lozar:

Yeah. Regent Rogers?

Regent Rogers:

I just will note that I really appreciate the workforce bent of this proposal and trying to be prepared for future workforce needs as forecasted. So, thanks for including all that information in the proposal.

Chair Lozar:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Thank you, Regent Rogers. Any other comments from members of the board? Any comments or discussion from the campuses? Is there any public comment? Any public comment? Seeing no further comment, I will call for the vote. All those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Chair Lozar:

Any opposed, same sign? Motion passes. Okay, next up, we've got a single information item this morning. I believe Deputy Commissioner Tessman and Commissioner Christian will be covering this particular item, Healthy Fall Task Force update. Deputy Commissioner?

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Yep. Mr. Chair, members of the board. I'm happy to give a brief update here on the progress of our Healthy Fall 2020 Task Force. I think most of the board would remember that in early June, we finalized our planning guidelines for our campuses. The Task Force was comprised of a dozen members from across the university system. We really focused on the student and academic experience in some of our earlier discussions, and then branched out to public health experts, human resources experts, our legal teams, budget and finance teams, and other experts on our campuses at OG and across the state.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

I think those guidelines were digested by our campuses and served as the basis for a lot of their campus-specific plans. And at this point, on June 30th, we have about half of the campuses now having submitted a more detailed plan for the fall semester. And I imagine the remainder of the campuses will be submitting their plans again soon. I want to reiterate that the Task Force itself is not charged with writing specific plans and nor is the Task Force or our office working through, word by word in editing and redrafting. The campuses really are driving this process and we're here as a sounding board and certainly as a problem solving entity. Throughout the process thus far [crosstalk 00:23:31], and certainly as we move forward-

Chair Lozar:

Deputy Commissioner [crosstalk 00:23:37]. Deputy Commissioner. Let's pause for a second. I just want to make an announcement that all those that are on the line, can you please mute yourself. All those on the line, please mute yourself. We're getting some conversations. That sounds better. Deputy Commissioner, if you could proceed.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. So throughout the process, our goal has been obviously to mitigate the health risk for our students and employees, and then also maximize the quality of the academic and work experience, and the student life experience. We are still in the middle of all of this. That's not for me to tell you. You all understand that. We continue to monitor public health conditions. We continue to stay in close contact with public health officials at the local and state level. We continue to monitor our capacity in terms of protective equipment, testing, and these kinds of elements that are important parts of our fall planning. So it's an evolving discussion. We have certainly discussions around testing

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

strategies, discussions around athletics, discussions around staffing, and if you've been plugged in you'll know that there is a great deal of discussion around masks and face coverings.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

As I mentioned, this is absolutely an ongoing conversation. I feel like we're very meaningfully engaged with key stakeholders and not just campus leadership at the administrative level, but faculty and staff and community members. It's tough to kind of wrap your arms around, but it's just a fluid situation right now. And our focus really is on building a culture of mask wearing. That's what matters to us most. We want as many students and employees as possible to be responsible in all sorts of ways, with social distancing, with health monitoring, with hand-washing, and certainly with wearing masks.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

And our goal is to establish that culture by setting a strong example from the top down. Certainly campus leadership, student leadership will be part of our strategy of building this positive culture. I think education is an important element here, and just really letting everyone know that we have an expectation that students and employees are going to be wearing masks as we return to our campuses. And I guess the best way to put it is that that's our focus really more than any kind of legal terminology or specific wording right now. I'll continue to give these updates, certainly throughout the fall, and am available to answer any questions right now. Thanks Mr. Chair, and I would stand for questions.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Brock. Any questions for Deputy Commissioner? Regent Sheehy?

Regent Sheehy:

I got a couple of questions. What's the scope of the authority that you're providing to the campuses. You say that you're not instituting any plans, but how are we going to do that as an MUS?

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Regent Sheehy. So I like to think of the planning guidelines we established as sideboards. So they establish kind of boundaries of planning for our campuses. An example might be around the concept of social distancing, and we've asked campuses at workspaces and in classroom spaces, and we're able to implement social distancing policy. And it's not in our purview, I think, to look at blueprints of every classroom and every one of our campuses and to make specific recommendations. But if we did have a campus that submitted a plan and said their main instructional building was not going to adhere to a policy of social distancing, that's a point where I think the Task Force and honestly this office would engage and work with them to make sure that that was in fact the case, and that there was no option to sort of come up [inaudible 00:28:11].

Regent Sheehy:

I know that a lot of private entities would rather that there be actual rules. I'm wondering if some of our campuses wouldn't really appreciate some actual rules so that they could then decide how to enforce them rather than whether those are guidelines or rules. Has that been contemplated at all?

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Mr. Chair, Regent Sheehy, could you provide an example of what a rule would be that you would expect to stretch beyond guidelines?

Regent Sheehy:

Like masks should be worn in public areas.

Commissioner Christian:

Regent Sheehy, Mr.Chair, if I could weigh in on this. I think in the guidance, what we anticipate because it's such a diversity across all of our campuses, that as those campus plans are developed, they would have guidance in there that much more approach and start with the rules, what that campus expectations are. We're working with the campuses, just sort of embrace that. So it's not all nebulous, but we've tried to create with the healthy taskforce work sort of a framework for planning, and then allow campuses to work with their campus communities, address the nuances of each campus and develop plans that will resemble rules to some extent that suggest how the campus will operate and what those expectations are. And-

Regent Sheehy:

So will the campuses be able to set rules? I'm just using mask wearing as an example. Can [crosstalk 00:29:44] rules?

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Mr. Chair, Regent Sheehy, I think that we're asking the campuses to stay right now within the boundaries of what is said in the recommendations.

Regent Sheehy:

So recommend no rule?

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

But those are still kind of fluid. And I think as we approach the return, those will solidify to a large extent, and we'll have guidance on campus. As we develop rules, we also have the conversations around enforcing the rules and what the ramifications of those actions will be, and that becomes a bit more challenging. I'm not saying we're trying to completely run from that, but those are conversations that are going on right now, as we continue to sort of vet this. Moving up to the start, we are looking at what will be guidance, what will be necessary to create rules around. And then ultimately if we create rules or requirements, then how would we enforce those and what would the mechanism be? I mean, you've got OCHE and campuses, legal HR, shared governance groups that are actively working on this. I mean, we literally have calls almost daily on this topic. And so we'll continue to sort of monitor and update as we move forward.

Regent Sheehy:

I just want to reiterate that, I think that how we open, when we open, these issues around opening are right smack dab in the authority of this board. And while I appreciate all the information I and appreciate all the hard work that's been done, I think this is our job. I think you should be taking it on. And if rules have to be made and how to enforce those rules, those are things we should be considering.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

We will not meet again before the schools open. It concerns me greatly that the board hasn't addressed this public health issues, just like the presence of guns on campus and how we monitor that within the scope of this board's duties or obligations. So I think we should be involved in this.

Dep. Comm'r Tessman:

Yeah. Regent Nystuen?

Regent Nystuen:

Do I have to hit a button?

Chair Lozar:

No, it's on.

Regent Nystuen:

Question is can county health officers basically mandate things in one county and not another county, correct, Joyce? Regent Dombrowski. So in theory, if the health officer in Missoula county mandates this, University of Montana would have to follow suit. But in contrast, if Gallatin County [inaudible 00:32:18] requires masks, I presume that that's... I mean, we're at the whim or at the discretion or at the judgment, if you will, of the county health officers, is that correct?

Regent Dombrowski:

Yes.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Dombrowski?

Regent Dombrowski:

Yeah. Regent Nystuen, yes, the county health department has the legal authority... My attorney called it the legal authority to create rules within the county, but that could be certainly stricter, not any less, of course. That's coming from the governor's office or the federal. So, that's I believe that part of this conversation is to have an acknowledgement to that particular-

Commissioner Christian:

Mr. Chair, if [inaudible 00:33:04] Regent Nystuen, I completely agree. And that's been pretty clear in the governor's guidance too, that counties can do unique things for the county. I agree with Regent Sheehy though. This board could also take a policy decision that something that we, if one county does it, we could apply across the system or not. And certainly as this sort of unfolds we can have a meeting to that effect if necessary, to address those very concerns. I think we are meeting frequently with those local health officials, trying to get a sense of what they're doing. Obviously the landscape has changed even a little bit in the last week. And so as the counties unfold, their requirements or their concerns, we may need things to address those and certainly appreciate your flexibility in terms of timing and the rest.

Commissioner Christian:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

This may very well be that the board needs to create some policy around it and enforcement policy around it, and the rest. I think we are working closely with local officials, county by county, to see what they anticipate moving forward. And then we could certainly interact with the board as necessary to try to enforce those or not, or whatever is the will of this board. And I guess to the earlier question, when it comes to policy and rules, I think it is a board. And so most of what we've done is guidance, which I think OCHE can do. And so, as we sort of move along, we'll see where we need to land on this thing. Ultimately though, what Brock said, I think is the baseline and I think you've heard our governor say it over and over too.

Commissioner Christian:

More than any rule can do, we've got to create a culture around a healthy start, and that includes a whole lot of things, masks, social distancing. It's really not going to matter if we have some of those without the others. If we still have dozens of students congregating in a dorm room, that's not going to work. And so we're going to have to work through all of those aspects. We're working closely with the county to do that. We've got to develop a culture, and Montana Tech's doing a lot of work on sort of leading the way in terms of a pledge, even to say we're going to embrace a culture of trying to be healthy, to stick around on weekends, to not travel a lot, to really work together, to try to see that we can keep these campuses open for an in-person experience.

Commissioner Christian:

That's what students overwhelmingly tell us they're interested in, but we have to do that. We have to do it carefully. We have to do it consistent with what the health guidelines are from the state and county. So it's going to be all of the above. The main thing though, we have to develop a culture, and students, faculty, staff, community members, you're going to have to embrace that, whether we're talking about all of those things you mentioned from athletics to God knows what. If we're going to do any of this, we're going to have to do it, and we're going to have to do it right, and we're going to have to be compliant. I think some of our struggles of late is, as a state we sort of move from phase one to phase three. We kind of skip that phase two when we're all going to be really careful. We can't do that on our campuses or none of this effort will be of value. So it's developing the culture first and then see what we can do in terms of guidance, rules, the rest as we move forward.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Sheehy.

Regent Sheehy:

I agree with that. But I think that we have to recognize that as a culture, changing the culture usually takes a long time and time we do not have. Our employees and our students don't have it. I just think back. Most of you aren't old enough to remember when we enacted the seatbelt law, but it took a long time for people to take that obvious step towards public safety. So in changing the culture, I think it's really important that we not just rely on the absence of policy from us, to allow guidelines to be put in place.

Regent Sheehy:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

I think this board has to act at some point about how we are opening our schools. And I'm not saying we get into the nitty-gritty necessarily, but I am thinking that we should look at, are we going to go case by case, adopt the public health for each campus that exists in their county, our rate, how are we going to do it? Are we going to adopt the strictest public health for the whole MUS in accord with the one MUS theory? What are we going to do for our students, for our employees in eight weeks? I think we have to decide. And I think that's where the culture has to start with us.

Commissioner Christian:

I appreciate that.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Dombrowski, maybe I'll weigh in. I agree with you. I agree with you completely. If we go back seven days, 14 days ago, the whole context has sort of shifted and changed. In terms of COVID, in terms of conversation around social distancing, states are shifting their reopening phases and their reopening plans. So I think there's a lot of change underfoot. And I think I've certainly heard in this discussion, the words, "fluid" and "evolving." And I think we as a board, need to recognize that and be very agile. I agree with you a hundred percent that the board can take action on this. And I think we need to continue to engage with the Commissioner's office and the Task Force and the work that Deputy Commissioner Tessman is doing and listening to local health officials and the local campus needs, et cetera, so that we have what we need to be able to make a decision.

Chair Lozar:

And in terms of what the Commissioner says, in terms of building a culture I agree with you that it does take time, but I think there's a lot of power in student leaders, staff leaders, faculty and administrators, really leading by example, and choosing how they interact with each other, how did they keep distance from each other, wearing masks coverings, et cetera. At this point in time, that's the one thing I would double down on and underscore for folks in the campus community, is now is the time to wear masks, now is the time to socially distance. And now is the time to just sort of be a role model in your community. And I think what has changed in the last two weeks is a lot. What may change in the next eight weeks could be a lot.

Chair Lozar:

And so as this board, I think we need to be ready to come back together and have some conversations. If there are significant shifts, understand that the sort of challenges that come with enforcing. And we've got 14 units across the state and each one are at different communities, with different experiences with the virus. And so we're going to need to make a decision should the whole pandemic shift and change in the state of Montana. So I guess maybe an urging to all of us on the board to be really vigilant and I know I will be communicating very closely with you all. I know the Commissioner has been communicating closely with Paul and I, and others on the team as we learn more about the pandemic and where we're at in the state of Montana.

Chair Lozar:

I think we need to be ready to make a decision if we need to make a decision. But right now, I think, again, double down on developing that culture of of mask wearing and social distancing. It will be a

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

really good thing for our campuses. And I think this goes not just for this topic about reopening, but it goes to what's happened the last three-and-a-half months is every campus is different in our system, and yet they have all figured out a way to prioritize what is best for their community, prioritize what is best for students on their campus. And I know that's going to continue on now in the opening of the residential experience in the university system. And we really look forward to open and honest conversations with those leaders on campuses and in those communities as we hear feedback from folks across the state on the reopening plan for the university system.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Nystuen.

Regent Nystuen:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Deputy Commissioner Tessman, Commissioner Christian. I would echo Regent Sheehy's comments about being a [inaudible 00:42:40] central driver and ultimately what our campuses do. I guess we get a lot of communications from the Regents, from the MUSings and things like that, but I think it's time to double down, Mr. Chair, on the amount of communications [inaudible 00:42:58] with [inaudible 00:42:58] when you're having meetings [inaudible 00:43:01] be informed about those, what are the discussion points and outcomes and so forth?

Regent Nystuen:

I'd be curious to know what the Healthy Montana campus group is doing with regards to monitoring what Idaho, Wyoming, how the Dakotas are doing. I don't know about eastern Washington. I think Washington is different and so forth, but it'd be interesting to start getting information from your office as to we're not in this alone. What are you hearing from WICHE people and others? This is developing story. I guess I'd like to have more regular communications from this group for us to help make sure we're making a unified decision in that regard. This isn't the Commissioner's decision, this isn't the regent's [inaudible 00:43:52]. This is the campus. We're in this, all this together. And therefore I think the best way to do that is to [inaudible 00:43:58].

Commissioner Christian:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Regent Nystuen. More than happy... I mean, we literally are meeting daily on these topics. I have a WICHE and a SHEEO and a NASH call every week. AGB met last week. I mean, there is a lot of activity, so we're clearly are looking at what is best practice around the country, best practice in our neighborhood across the west. Others of course, nuances there, but we'll try to communicate what is the outflow of that conversation. I know it feels like the first day of class is right around the corner and it is, and I strongly acknowledge that. And I think I also acknowledge that the flow of this pandemic is almost at a daily pace now. Some really good information out of the President's council last week, sort of community by community.

Commissioner Christian:

We're almost needing to make different decisions now, based on hot spots and what's transpiring in those local communities. And so, we continue to monitor that. I mean, one thing we are seeing across the country is the presence of hot spots, whether that's a wedding or a meeting or a conference, or whatever are absolutely the case. And that is certainly a concern that I hear raised across the university

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

systems throughout the nation. That could resemble us if we're not careful, so we're definitely monitoring that, and we'll try to communicate that.

Regent Nystuen:

Again, my point is the information on it, just not state [inaudible 00:45:39]. I think it needs to get out to a much wider audience. I think that that will help people accept this if they know what's coming, they're better prepared, they can buy in, they can ask questions, rather than all of a sudden we make the decision at the 11th hour, this is how it's going to be. So, they're forewarned, whether it's a winter storm or it's some other calamity. People will be able to better adapt to it. They're part of the process and they're informed along the way.

Commissioner Christian:

Can I ask a clarifying question? So, what information you said you need... This information should be out, maybe you're talking about out to the campus community, or out somewhere. What specific information are you looking to be spread out-

Regent Nystuen:

Mr. Commissioner, Chair Lozar, are you keeping minutes of this group? Of your meetings? I don't mean to answer your question with another question, but are you keeping minutes of the Task Force, the Healthy Fall Task Force?

Commissioner Christian:

Mr. Chair, Regent Nystuen, the Task Force is... I don't know if [crosstalk 00:46:59] they're keeping official minutes, but they're certainly taking notes. A lot of the national conversations, the Zoom meetings are being recorded, so I think there's a record of those. We can share those links, or we could share...

Regent Nystuen:

And I understand there's a need of times around boardroom tables, but not every piece of information [inaudible 00:47:24]. I know we're a public body and some things like that, but there can be very sensitive information or private information or something like that. I know that not everything has to be documented to a tee, and exactly who says what. But I think if there's general consensus being built around the direction that we should be going or the message we need to convey, that ought to be a part of some type of minutes, and some type of dialogue that gets reported back out to all the stakeholders. That's from my vantage point what I think is important, as we move forward here. It would be one thing if we saw the trends going the other direction. But I don't feel that way.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Sheehy?

Regent Sheehy:

My point is kind of related to Bob's, which is this is our job, so if we're going to wait for somebody else to come up with things, maybe we should, as a policy, delegate our duty officially. But at the moment, we're not doing our job. I'm not opposed to any of the different ways that we could do this, that allow for flexibility. In times of crisis, such as... say a strike, an employee strike, sometimes the Board will

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

delegate its duties to their administrators or some other body. But if we can't get the information to make this decision, that doesn't mean it's not our decision. It is our decision. And if we're going to proceed in a way that is sound, then we should decide to either delegate that authority, to take a report and vote on it, but we are opening the schools under different circumstances than usual. And that should either be our decision or we should have delegated it to someone else to make.

Regent Sheehy:

We're waiting for more information, I get that, but this is our decision. And we can't impliedly delegate it. So, how we open these schools in seven weeks, we got to vote. There has to be a vote on one mechanism or another, for delegating our authority, adopting local... Whatever it is we decide to do, we need to decide that. Or else it has no authority, in my opinion. I think it is clear under the statute imposing our obligations, that one of them is how and when and in what manner to open the schools. So that's my point.

Chair Lozar:

So, Regent Sheehy, what do you see as a solution, moving forward? This morning, we had an update from the Task Force, an update from the Commissioner on where things are at, and what the Task Force is doing, and where it's at in terms of its plan and its recommendations with the information that we know right now. So, what-

Regent Sheehy:

I think we have to either approve to plan, to implement it, revise the plan, or delegate our authority. I think we need to act. I don't think we can do it today. There are ways that we could adopt a plan that are fluid. We could adopt the plan that we are delegating the investigative authority to this Task Force, and that we are adopting the CDC guidelines in place, now and in the future, for county entities. Or whatever it is, whatever their plan is, we can just adopt the plan. But to not act is to abrogate our duty. I'm really worried about not fulfilling the duty that we have as board members. I think it's really important. It all comes in together. This is such an unusual time. But when you talk about a culture, describing a culture and changing the culture, that's our job. We're supposed to be the ones at the top of the system saying, "This is the new culture. And here's how we're adopting it." [inaudible 00:51:34]

Regent Sheehy:

Most of all, I think it's up to us to determine the safety of our students and our employees by implementing a plan or delegating that duty.

Chair Lozar:

Maybe a question for the Commissioner. When we put together this Task Force several weeks ago now, were they sort of charged from your office of coming up with a plan for the fall, or coming up with guidance, or coming up as a body that was collecting information from communities? What was its charge, and thinking about Regent Sheehy's comments, and granted, I completely understand. Every day is different. And so, for the Task Force to come up with a plan that we have in front of us and we shift the next day or the day before, who really knows? But is that Task Force designed in a way to make some specific recommendations to this board?

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Commissioner Christian:

Mr. Chair, I think if you review that document, what the Task Force was really challenged with doing is to evaluate what is happening currently, to look at best practice in our region, in our country, CDC guidelines, so there's a lot of the footnotes to that report you'll see came from a myriad of documents around best practice guidelines that are published at a federal, state, local levels. But essentially create a template for the campuses to do the plans. The campuses are coming up with and are asked to create a plan. It wasn't to create a one MUS plan. We just didn't know if we could easily do that with the nuances from campus to campus. To be honest, some campuses were making progress already when the document came out. A lot of them were a long ways down that path. Others hadn't made much progress.

Commissioner Christian:

I think part of the objective of the plan was to ask the questions to campuses. Are you thinking about these seven things? And each page of that lists some topics around HR, around research, around different topics to say have you, as a campus body, thought through all of these? If you haven't, you should, and if you are, great. But if you could address things that are found within these and then recommendations found within the plan itself, the guidelines, for lack of a better term. It probably is, as Brock described, sideboards, guidelines. The campuses have been asked to do campus plans.

Commissioner Christian:

We can vet this a little more in terms of... An action item that may help address Regent Sheehy's concern and that of others in terms of either to delegate or to embrace the guidelines and ask the campuses, delegate the plan-making ability to a campus, I think those are things we can do. And like I said, we may very well need to have a conference call or something before we get back to session. But I could see embracing the work of the Task Force. It was a broad Task Force, so it has looked at a whole lot of things. Maybe this board could embrace the work that's happened there and then require those campuses to make the plans through some delegation strategy and report those plans back that's what is in the works right now about half of the campuses are a long ways on the plan, have submitted the first round of those.

Commissioner Christian:

To OCHE, some are still working on it, but again, I want to stress, as much as we all want to get this done and have it nailed down, it remains fairly fluid, as the pandemic has remained quite fluid in terms of where we are. I mean, as things looks a lot different today than it did a couple weeks ago, then the plans will have to address that changing landscape as we move forward. But I think we can work around the guidance that we've been given here today.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Tuss.

Regent Tuss:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe a question for the Commissioner. As Regent Nystuen has said, we're not doing this alone. We're not in a vacuum associated with this, as long as this is a national, international problem. Commissioner, along the lines of what you just discussed, are there certain...

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Knowing that we're not health experts, with the exception of one regent, Regent Dombrowski. Thank you, Regent Dombrowski, for your service. But we're just not, and so I'm wondering if there are triggers or thresholds that are coming down from the CDC or nationally, as this entire nation looks to open campuses. I mean, this is going to be, as some people would say, a petri dish. Students coming from all... Literally, millions of students coming from all over the world to campuses all over our country.

Regent Tuss:

Are there thresholds that CDC or somebody is saying, "If this happens. If the rate looks like this on August 1st, this is what you should be doing." Or is it kind of a go alone, work with local health departments... Is there any consistency in what higher education nationally should be expected to do to keep students, staff effectively safe?

Commissioner Christian:

Mr. Chair, Regent Tuss, and Regent Dombrowski may want to help on this, but I mean, kind of all of the above. There are CDC guidelines around, and there is Department of Ed best practice for higher education institutions. We're clearly watching those, monitoring those. They're part of the work that the Task Force is engaged with. There is some CDC guidelines around large events that we continue to monitor. But there's also been this overwhelming presence that... most conversations even that started at the national level are, "Here's some thoughts, but whatever you guys think locally." And that's how it's eventually trickles out to local health departments, and we're engaging frequently with those local health departments, community by community to see where those go. And most of the state guidelines certainly have said, "Here's..." Much like our Task Force report, it said, "Here's some guidelines, some sort of sideboards from a state level, but whatever you guys think locally."

Commissioner Christian:

The structure we've employed is similar to that. So, yes, I think there are some guidelines that are incorporated into the body of work that has been done by the Task Force and that's being done at each campus level. But there's also a lot of local discretion. There is no hard and fast rules. I have not seen any about August 1st stuff that you referenced. It's been monitor your own communities, look at your own infection rates, do what's best, and so we're trying to embrace that as we move along. Is that your take?

Regent Dombrowski:

Sure. And Commissioner, yes. I just can't overemphasize how fluid this situation is, and that really is a challenge [inaudible 00:59:41] trying to make a decision by a certain point. If I may, I'll give you just a brief example from health care in the western part of the state. We eased our visitor restrictions. We saw the incidents rising. We said, "We're going to rethink that decision." And so now we've restricted visitors again. We're getting a lot of a pushback, but from the community getting support from the health department but the support is, "You have to do what you need to do." And so, that's what we're doing in Providence. Now, I think Kalispell is following suit, as is Community Medical Center. But only because we're sort of trying together to create a consistent standard.

Regent Dombrowski:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

So, I appreciate and want to be an action-oriented board. I think this pandemic is really not giving us an opportunity to do that very well. And so, I might suggest as we think about delegating it, delegate it to an incident command type of group that really then has the flexibility to work with the campuses and the county health departments, so there's a clear line. And the reason I say that is that's exactly what happens in health care. My board knows and has delegated the responsibilities to our incident command system, and so we go up, we go down, we go faster, we go slower, and then we even form the [inaudible 01:00:58], but the Board has clearly [inaudible 01:01:00], so thank you for that opportunity. [inaudible 01:01:04]

Chair Lozar:

Other comments? Yeah, Regent Rogers.

Regent Rogers:

I'll join in support of the concept that Regent Sheehy was trying to promote, that the Board does need to have some sort of discussion and vote on this, to delegate the authority or to maintain the authority. I think as we've all noted, and as we all experience in public health, this is a very fluid pandemic situation, and we need to have that flexibility to be able to [inaudible 01:01:34] the Board and to be nimble, and have a clear communication structure for our campuses as well. I think that that's the thing I'm the most concerned about is different campuses have different communication structures that are stronger or weaker, and there's only so much support that we can give them from the OCHE level. So how do we ensure that not only the communication to the campus is clear, but then the campuses have the appropriate support they need to really communicate that, not only to their employees, faculty, students, but also their communities, in a way that the communities understand and hopefully support the direction that they're going. Because ultimately, even if campuses seem a little bit insular and separated from the communities, they're not.

Regent Rogers:

So I think that we need to really think clearly about not only how we delegate large public health decisions, but also how we're delegating and having a clear incident command structure or other structure allows for this clear communication to continue.

Chair Lozar:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you, Regent Rogers. Well, this has been a very good conversation, a dynamic conversation. Just kind of reflecting on the comments this morning, and I do think we have a... Kind of going back to leading by example. As a board who has the authority to make these types of decisions, particularly for the health of our campus communities, that we have an opportunity to weigh in and make a decision, whatever those decision points may be. Right? I don't know if we know exactly. We've talked about masks, I think. Then there's probably other decision points that we have not discussed that are certainly embedded in the work of the Task Force, in the campus plans. But that we have the opportunity to weigh in and show our support for the work that has been done in terms of a recommendation. I don't know if the recommendations come from a Task Force or an incident command group, but I think I would feel comfortable, certainly in having listened to the folks on the Board. And we have the opportunity to make a decision.

Chair Lozar:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

And I don't know when that decision will be. To be honest with you, I think it would be totally artificial to put a date on this, and I see Regent Dombrowski nodding. So, in terms of next steps, I think we probably need to get a little more... I'm curious to see some of the campus plans. I know they're coming in, and I think we need to figure out some juncture during the summer that we meet and agree to evaluate where exactly we're at, and what the charge will be for the campuses. And then make a decision. I think to Paul's point, we are not public health officials ourselves, and so I think inherent in what we're talking about is delegating some of that information gathering from the experts. And I think we really need to listen to those experts. For us to be able to get a group together to make some recommendations to this board, I think is a combination of the incident command making some recommendations and us fulfilling our fiduciary duties as a board to make a decision, and sort of lead by example.

Chair Lozar:

So, with that, Mr. Commissioner... [inaudible 01:05:26] Did you have a comment, Regent Nystuen?

Commissioner Christian:

[inaudible 01:05:29], Casey?

Chair Lozar:

I was going to say with that, Mr. Commissioner, I think you kind of see where the Board is at in terms of continuing to get some information, even though it's sort of shifting and changing, and bringing some options, as you mentioned, maybe an action item in front of this board to give us the opportunity to deliberate... understand all the nuances of what's happening, but sort of closer to the reopening of the campuses in the fall. And then we can weigh in as a Board.

Regent Nystuen:

Mr. Chair, Mr. Commissioner, I guess I'm going to request one more time that we be provided information along the way, rather than, "Here it is. Here's a 48-hour notice, the Board's needs to vote on this plan." I think at a minimum, we should be provided a weekly update from the Task Force and the Commissioner's office as to what's going on. What are the next milestones, what's the next information you're gathering? What have you discerned so far? Who have the contacts been? And be transparent with us along the way. If we're going to be making a decision to vote yes or no on something that impacts thousands of people across this state, I think we need to be better informed along the way.

Chair Lozar:

Any other questions or comments from members of the Board? Any parting words, Deputy Commissioner Tessman?

Regent Dombrowski:

Speechless.

Chair Lozar:

Well, I think we've got a couple things that we need to work on, obviously, over the summer. And I'm going to reiterate it again, I just really appreciate the work that's being done at the campus community. I appreciate the feedback that we receive from our constituents across the state. I think that's really

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

helpful, as we hear from them, and their thoughts and ideas. And appreciate, Commissioner, your work on this, and Brock's work on trying to understand and grapple with what's happening in our campus communities, and really planning for... I think we're all shooting for the same thing. Right? A resident experience in the fall in the most healthy way we can possibly make it for everyone on campuses, including the communities in which our campuses are at. So, Mr. Commissioner, I think we've got a couple things to work on over the course of the summer.

Commissioner Christian:

Well, at least a couple.

Chair Lozar:

With that, if there's no other comments, we will move onto... This portion of the agenda is public comment, as we will be going into an executive session in the next few minutes. But right now, it's public comments. So, just make sure that the lines are unmuted. Are they unmuted?

Amy Unsworth:

I just unmuted all the lines.

Chair Lozar:

Okay. All the lines are unmuted. So, we're here to seek some public comments. If you wish to give public comments, please state your name... your first name and your last name for the record. And we just ask that you keep your comments brief and concise, within two or three minutes or so, just to afford others the opportunity to provide public comments as well. So, at this point in time, we'll entertain public comment.

Chair Lozar:

Is there any *6 or any of those things, or is [crosstalk 01:09:35] just? The lines are opened.

Amy Unsworth:

[inaudible 01:09:38] open and I'll be able to [inaudible 01:09:39].

Chair Lozar:

So, we'll entertain some public comments and I'll ask that if you're not providing public comment, that you mute yourself.

Chair Lozar:

Is there any public comment?

Tammy Harris:

This is Tammy Harris with MFPE.

Chair Lozar:

Hello, Tammy.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Tammy Harris:

Hey. Good morning. So, I appreciate the conversation that you guys just had regarding campuses and planning for fall. The only comment I would add is, I have to say I appreciate the Commissioner's Office and Deputy Commissioner McRae, and the admins on all campuses willing to have conversations very similar to what you guys just discussed. It is changing. It is a time that is uncomfortable and people are anxious for, but I think the more we can continue the conversation and discuss all of the options that we have going forward, we'll make it work for the best of everybody, everybody's safety and ability. And so, just thank you to the Commissioner's Office for including the Union and having weekly updates and calls [inaudible 01:10:50] and hearing our concerns and answering our questions as we go forward.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Miss Harris. Any additional public comment? Additional public comment?

James Flanagan:

Hi, this is James Flanagan, Vice President of ASUM speaking again. I just wanted to say thank you to the regents for having that conversation. It's on that frankly everyone on my campus has been needing to hear more on. We are very concerned about what reopening is going to look like, and I'll be honest, the students, faculty, staff and administration of UM are afraid and frustrated with not having the ability to be able to require masks. As we see the case count for COVID-19 rise in the state of Montana, it's one that we all feel would be very vital to the reopening of campuses in our state. It's one that I would urge everybody to consider. Recently, ASUM sent out a student feedback survey. Only a couple days ago, that same feedback survey already has over 600 responses and in that survey, the top area of concern for students is COVID-19 response, and among that response, each student is outlining that they would like masks to be required for the student body for the students that are less likely to wear those masks.

James Flanagan:

Most masks, unless you're wearing an N95 mask, only protect one way, and this creates a concern in itself. The students are only protecting those that aren't wearing their masks but aren't able to protect themselves just by taking the precautions to do so by wearing a mask for others. And so, taking that into account, as well as all the concerns of again the staff, faculty, students, and administration at the University of Montana, I would like the consideration for the requirement of masks to heavily be discussed and considered. And I'm glad the conversation was started today. Thank you.

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Mr. Flanagan. Any other additional public comment? Additional public comment?

Chair Lozar:

Yes?

Chris Palmer:

Hello, this is Chris Palmer. I'm the Faculty Senator at the University of Montana in Missoula. And I would just like to reiterate what was just said. The students, faculty, staff on this campus are very concerned and would really like, at least be allowed as a campus, to decide whether we would have a mask requirement, or what sort of mask requirement we would have. [inaudible 01:13:56] or against.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Chair Lozar:

Thank you, Mr. Palmer. Additional public comment? Is there any additional public comment? Additional public comment?

Regent Miller:

Chair Lozar, this is Regent Miller. Would you like me to interject here with a [inaudible 01:14:44] remarks, or would you like me to wait till after public comment?

Chair Lozar:

Perhaps after public comment. So, Regent Miller, we'll give one last call for public comment. Hearing no public comment. Is there any other business for today? If so, it sounds like Regent Miller has some comments for us, and probably vice versa from members of the Board.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Miller, floor is yours.

Regent Miller:

Members of the Board, just want to give a few short remarks to recap this year and say thank you. Serving on this board as student regent has been one of the greatest honors of my undergraduate and graduate career. I'm immensely grateful for the experience of serving on this board, and for serving with such passionate and thoughtful people. Montana is lucky to have devoted leaders like each of you at the helm higher education system. Additionally, I would like to thank our campus administrators, faculty, and staff for your tireless efforts in leading our system into the future. I would like to thank our OCHE staff for answering my abundant questions and for doing all the behind-the-scenes work that is required for the Board to succeed.

Regent Miller:

This past year has been an unprecedented year. The pandemic has changed our higher education system in ways that none of us could have imagined. It is more important than ever to ensure and prioritize the safety of our students and our state. I'm confident that with the strong, dynamic and flexible leadership of the MUS, that we can continue to fulfill our board's mission, and continue to provide our students with an affordable and high quality education. I'd like to also take a moment to recognize the systemic injustices that are happening around our country and our state. Montana has a long history of state-endorsed violence perpetrated against Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color. I implore this board and our campuses to continue taking action to [inaudible 01:17:02] and meaningful conversations surrounding these injustices that are taking place in our great state of Montana and our university system.

Regent Miller:

Last, I would like to thank each of you for giving such weight to the student voice over the past year. It's truly been an honor, and I look forward to seeing what this Board and our Montana university system accomplishes in the coming months. Thank you for your time, mentorship and friendship.

Chair Lozar:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Thank you, Regent Miller. Yeah, Regent Sheehy.

Regent Sheehy:

John, we're going to miss you. You are the sixth student regent to have mentored me. I think you've done a pretty good job. You've taught me a lot. I look forward to seeing you in your new career, which you'll join me, I hope, as a member of the Montana Bar. I wanted you to know before you left that I very much enjoyed sitting next to you, I've enjoyed your smarts, I've enjoyed your wit and your various social skills. So, thank you so much, John, for your service to the Board.

Regent Miller:

Thanks, Martha.

Regent Sheehy:

Oh, and you'll get your song later in private.

Regent Miller:

Oh, joy.

Chair Lozar:

Regent Tuss.

Regent Tuss:

John, thank you for your service. I want to add one more thing that Regent Sheehy failed to address and that's that you certainly upped the dress code. When it came to this particular Board, I don't know if I appreciate that or not. But indeed, I wanted to mention that and I did want to, on a more serious note, thank you for your service to the students of the Montana University system. I certainly know, as does every regent around this table, that the students of Montana were always uppermost in your mind as you made important decisions over the last 12 months with regard to very important policy decisions in the Montana university system. So, I wish you well in your future endeavors and you will be missed. Thank you for your service.

Chair Lozar:

Mr. Commissioner.

Commissioner Christian:

Thank you, John. Appreciate your service. You certainly left an impact on the MUS and you did it with grace, and I agree with Regent Tuss, a bit of style along the way. Thank you for your service to the state, and we look forward to your continued service in your new capacity.

Regent Miller:

Thanks, Commissioner.

Chair Lozar:

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020

Yeah. Regent Sexton.

Regent Sexton:

Yeah, John, I just wanted to thank you for service over the last year, particularly for students. I really appreciated your approachability and I loved meeting you in March. I really looking forward to growing our friendship and to learning from your experience, I definitely feel like I have big shoes to fill, so thank you for setting the bar really high. Thank you so much.

Regent Miller:

Thanks, Amy, and good luck.

Regent Sexton:

Thank you.

Chair Lozar:

And Regent Miller, I echo all of that, the comments from our fellow Board members. You're certainly going to be missed on this Board. It's amazing what you are able to accomplish in 12 months on the Board as a Student Regent. It can be a really challenging position to hold with a lot of learning about the system and processes and policies, and I think your inquisitive nature allowed you to really jump in very quickly and ask questions and find that balance between posing questions and listening. I really appreciated your confidence in our meetings to speak up when there things that you disagreed on, or things that you really bought into or agreed on. And so, I really appreciate what you brought to the Board in that capacity, and I think in my four or five years that I've been on the Board, I don't think we've had a Student Regent chair a committee for a meeting, and you did that this year and you did a fantastic job in that role.

Chair Lozar:

So, I appreciate your service to this Board, your service to this state, service to the campus community, and just wanted to underscore one thing you mentioned in your closing remarks is the importance of publicly addressing the racial injustices that are happening across this country, that happen in the state of Montana. And as the Chair of the Board, I'll make sure that your comments and the actions that we take in the system are heard loudly and clearly, and we're willing to have those difficult conversations, to be thoughtful and inclusive to all of our students and our campus community. So with that, Regent Miller, thank you again for your service on this board. We really look forward to watching where your career goes, and I know you'll continue to be in public service in some capacity. And we look forward to seeing your profile across state with your prominent bow tie [inaudible 01:22:41].

Chair Lozar:

And, with that, the last item for today's meeting is Executive Session. As the presiding officer, I've determined that the demands of individual privacy in these matters clearly exceed the merits of public discourse. Therefore, I will be closing this meeting to all but the trustees and those necessary to the discussion of these matters. Immediately after the Executive Session, we will be adjourning, so everyone can please hang up, but wish you a very healthy summer, and we look forward to engaging with you all throughout the summer and certainly as we open the doors in the fall.

Board of Regents Conference Call Meeting Transcript

June 30, 2020