

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Julie Baldwin, Interim Dean *Julia A. Baldwin*
College of Humanities and Sciences

To: Montana University System Board of Regents

Date: June 8, 2022

Re: Proposal to Name the Liberal Arts Building

It is with great enthusiasm that I offer full support for the proposal to rename UM's Liberal Arts Building. The proposed name, The Dennis and Gretchen Eck Liberal Arts Building, is fitting, given the generous support Dennis and Gretchen have provided to the College over the past several years. The support of Dennis Eck '68 and his wife Gretchen has enabled us to undertake a complete transformation of the teaching, learning, and technology environment of one of UM's most heavily used buildings for academic instruction. Their generous support will impact students for generations to come.

Each semester, thousands of UM students attend classes in the Liberal Arts Building. Until the remodeling of Eck Hall, this space was largely a time capsule, without any significant updates since it was constructed. The support and partnership of the Ecks in recent years has resulted in a complete renovation of 25 classrooms, including one large auditorium hall. The next phase of the remodel will include the final 6 classrooms, for a total of 31 remodeled classrooms supported by the Ecks generosity. In addition, their support has allowed us to create lounge spaces on three floors and opening of a new café/coffee shop, operated by Dining Services, on the second floor. Six bathrooms have been remodeled, including the creation of two gender-inclusive restrooms. Finally, remodeling of former graduate offices resulted in the creation of new centralized Academic Advising Suite with nine advisor offices and a conference room.

The generosity of Dennis and Gretchen Eck has been a point of pride for the College. This space helps our faculty teach better and our students to learn more effectively. This investment has created more inviting and functional spaces in both the classrooms and lounge spaces, where students can collaborate and have quiet spaces to study. The new classrooms encourage and facilitate the use of modern technologies that promote active learning and increased classroom engagement. This allows our students to engage in creating new knowledge and learning about and solving the most pressing wicked problems our society faces. These spaces inspire creativity, promote critical thinking, and encourage active dialogue.

In recognition of the significant support of Dennis and Gretchen Eck for the College of Humanities and Sciences, I recommend to President Seth Bodnar that the Liberal Arts Building be renamed the Dennis and Gretchen Eck Liberal Arts Building.