

November 17-18, 2022

ITEM 203-1014-R1122

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus on Steven K. Hesla – University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Steven K. Hesla from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his 43 years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Steven K. Hesla received a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois. Before coming to the University of Montana, he was an assistant professor of piano at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

At UM Professor Hesla taught piano-applied lessons, piano literature, chamber music, and keyboard skills for 43 years (1978-2021), demonstrating a consistent and strong record of outstanding teaching, creative scholarship, and service throughout his tenure. He was the recipient of three merit awards, as well as numerous honors and awards from UM and colleagues in his field. In 2017 he was awarded the “Top Teacher” honor by New York based Steinway and Sons, and in 2016 he was awarded the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) “National Foundation Fellow” in the field of piano pedagogy. In 1996 he was recognized as a Distinguished Professor for the School of Fine Arts at UM.

Professor Hesla’s work ethic, positive energy, concern for students, and national reputation made him an exceptionally well-respected and productive faculty member. He received outstanding reviews from students, who commented on his patience and understanding, his willingness to employ different techniques of teaching to accommodate students, and his ability to help students listen to nuances in music, for tone, breath, and rhythm. Many of his students received national and regional recognition in piano competitions. He produced 13 state winners in various levels of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) competitions, many winning divisional and national recognition. His students also won 31 Gold Medals and 17 Silver Medals in MusicFest Northwest competitions and were winners of the annual UM Concerto/Aria Competition. Graduates of his studio have been accepted into prestigious music programs with full assistantships. Today Professor Hesla’s students are performing artists, teachers, and arts leaders in their respective communities across the United States.

Professor Hesla is an accomplished pianist who performed extensively as a chamber musician, soloist, and collaborative pianist throughout the region, nationally, and internationally. He commissioned and premiered Concerto No. 2 for Piano, Winds, and Percussion by David Maslanka, one of the leading composers of contemporary wind ensemble music. He recorded this work with the Wind Symphony of Illinois State University in 2003 for Albany Records. Professor Hesla has also recorded under the ACA Digital Atlanta label, and his piano pedagogy works are published by Stipes Publishing, Champaign, IL. As a member of the Montana Piano Trio, he toured nationally and internationally. In 2018 he was a guest artist recitalist for 25th Anniversary of Partnership Cities: Missoula, Montana & Neckargemünd, Germany, at the Prinz Carl-Saal, Neckargemünd, Germany.

Professor Hesla's record of service has also been outstanding. For decades he was the chair of the department's curriculum committee assisting and leading activities in several successful national accreditation projects. He was the co-creator and artistic co-director of the Celebrate Piano Series and Pianissimo!, events that raised thousands of dollars annually for the piano area. In 2011 he received the Outstanding Service Award from Montana State Music Teachers Association (MSMTA). He was one of the founders of UM Allies, a group dedicated to providing a safe environment for LGBTIQ+ students and colleagues. For this work, he was awarded the 2013 UM Nancy Borgmann Diversity Award from the Office of the President and presented the Keynote Address for the UM Diversity Advisory Council's Student Achievement Awards ceremony.

Professor Hesla's longstanding record as faculty member has been unique and outstanding. In 2012, the UM School of Music honored Steven Hesla for coordinating The Grand Campaign to purchase a new Steinway Concert Grand for our Music Recital Hall. This campaign resulted in the acquisition of a world-class \$150,000 concert instrument from Steinway, a signed instrument, called "the Hesla." Steven K. Hesla continues to be a valued member in his field. He was recently elected to serve as Northwest Division Director for the Music Teachers National Association. As a passionate UM community member, he was a leader in the creation of the Howard and ChinWon Reinhardt Peony Garden on the UM Campus.

The University of Montana School of Music is pleased to nominate Professor Hesla for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None