



November 21, 2022

Commissioner Clayton Christian
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
560 North Park Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620-3201

Dear Commissioner Christian:

This is a request for the Board of Regents to confirm the recommendation of an honorary degree to Ms. Robyn Jones, to be awarded at Montana State University's (MSU) commencement ceremony in the Spring 2023. Robyn Jones was recommended by the MSU Honorary Degree Committee and Faculty Senate leadership will vote on this honorary degree recommendation on Dec. 7, 2022.

Robyn Jones (Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters):

Robyn Jones grew up across the Montana border in Lethbridge, Alberta, and married her high school sweetheart, Mark Jones, after graduating from high school. While raising their six children, she was always a hard worker and go-getter. She started flipping houses on the side and while doing this, discovered there was tremendous opportunity in the insurance market for a new way of working with clients. She obtained an insurance license and in 2003 founded Goosehead Insurance, where she serves as vice chair today.

Goosehead Insurance is a rapidly growing and innovative personal lines insurance agency that distributes its products and services through more than 1,800 offices in the United States. Goosehead Insurance went public in 2018.

Robyn and Mark split time between Texas and Whitefish, Montana, enjoying quality time with their children and grandchildren in their adopted state of Montana, where both Robyn and Mark spent time as children.

Robyn deeply understands the challenges that Montanans are face regarding healthcare in rural areas, and the critical impact that nurses and nurse practitioners can have on their communities. In August 2022, Robyn and Mark Jones made a historic \$101 million philanthropic investment in Montana State University's College of Nursing. The gift — the largest ever given to a college of nursing, as well as the largest private gift in the history of the state of Montana — will:

- Fund the construction of new facilities at each of the MSU Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing's five campuses in Bozeman, Billings, Great Falls, Kalispell and Missoula. Equipped with modern classrooms and state-of-the-art simulation labs, nursing students will hone their critical thinking and practice their skills in these new facilities.

Office of the President

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- Establish five endowed faculty professorships — the first in the history of the MSU College of Nursing. These endowed professorships will position MSU to attract top faculty talent during a nationwide nursing faculty shortage.
- Develop an endowed scholarship fund that will allow the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing to keep the cost of nursing education affordable for all students.
- Create Montana’s only certified nurse midwifery program preparing doctoral level nurses who will significantly increase the number of specialized maternal health care providers capable and willing to provide services to rural and remote communities in Montana.

With additional space to grow its enrollment, MSU estimates it will be able to meet the state’s projected nursing shortage by 2030.

Robyn is determined to make this world a better place and the contributions she has made to the lives of Montanans will be felt for generations to come. Letters of support shared this sentiment over and over. One nominator shared, “The commitment of Robyn Jones to support nursing in the state of Montana represents an unprecedented opportunity for nursing excellent – a mission that will have vastly positive implications for Montana’s largely rural communities. Robyn understands this need having grown up in a rural area. She believes Montana’s families living in rural and remote areas deserve a healthy state to life yet know how they struggle to access care. Robyn is committed to ensuring better futures for families by providing the philanthropic support to create the first midwifery program in Montana and at Montana State University’s Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing. It is hard to overstate the future impact of Robyn’s vision and generosity as we reap the benefits of a larger workforce dedicated to providing care to mothers and their infants.”

In closing, Montana State University wholeheartedly supports the nomination of Robyn Jones for an honorary doctorate degree from Montana State University. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration as the students, faculty and staff of Montana State University would be so proud to honor Robyn Jones at MSU’s Spring 2023 commencement ceremony.

Sincerely,



Waded Cruzado
President