



**MINUTES**  
**Montana Board of Regents**  
Conference Call Meeting  
June 28, 2012

The meeting convened at 9:30 AM.

Roll call indicated a quorum present.

**Regents Present:**, Angela McLean, Chair, Todd Buchanan, Vice Chair, Paul Tuss, Pat Williams, Joe Thiel, and Jeff Krauss, all by phone. Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian, *ex officio*, participated by phone. Regent Major Robinson, Governor Brian Schweitzer, *ex officio*, and Superintendent Denise Juneau *ex officio* were excused.

Sites represented by phone were: Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern, and the University of Great Falls.

**CONSENT**

- a. Professor Emeritus of Safety, Health and Industrial Hygiene: Spear; MT Tech; *ITEM 155-1501-C0612*
- b. Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences: Douglass; MT Tech *ITEM 155-1502-C0612*
- c. Authorization to Expend Student Computer Fees; UM Western *ITEM 155-1601-C0612*
- d. Authorization to Expend Reverted Appropriations; UM Western *ITEM 155-1602-C0612 | Attachment #1*
- e. Authorization to Execute New Lease for Safety & Risk Management; MSU-Bozeman: *ITEM 155-2001-C0612*
- f. Staff Item: MSU-Great Falls COT; *ITEM 155-2900-C0612*

Regent Joe Thiel moved approval of the consent agenda items a-f. Motion passed 6-0, with Regent Robinson being absent.

**ACTION**

- a. Renaming of MSU-Great Falls COT; OCHE *ITEM 155-101-C0612*

Regent Thiel noted that the primary purpose of the conference call was to finalize the new name for the MSU Great Falls College of Technology to ensure that the campus and community can move forward with planning the rollout of their new name and brand. He reminded the board of the action taken at the May 2012 meeting in which they approved the new names for six two-year colleges and programs of the Montana University System (MUS) with the names including place, mission and affiliation. At that



meeting, the board extended the date for approving the new name for MSU Great Falls COT to allow for additional stakeholder feedback to occur. This was agreed to in consideration of concerns expressed by the leadership of the University of Great Falls.

The commissioner's office prioritized the effort and engaged in a collaborative process, participated in by representatives of the University of Great Falls and of the MUS, and facilitated by a third-party mediator explained Regent Thiel. He noted that this initiative has gained momentum and the intent is to continue to move the College!NOW program forward in its entirety. Regent Thiel noted the student involvement throughout the process.

Deputy Commissioner John Cech opened his comments by quoting Regent Pat Williams' remarks from the May 2012 board meeting. Quote from Regent Williams: "We have learned that changing names is a difficult process and the public often resists it. Whether you are changing the name of a street, or a mountain, or a river, or a swamp, the public likes to cling to the old names. And, that's understandable, but in this instance, because of the comprehensive nature of what I understand to be a very long process here, well-considered and studied, name changes do seem to be appropriate. One of the main things I wanted to know when I first came on the board with regard to this issue was (1) has appropriate time been taken and (2) has the public been fully informed. I've looked closely at it and have talked to several people, both in Great Falls and in other cities, and people here on the board as well as the staff. And for my part, I'm satisfied that this board, long before I got on it, has avoided the midnight slam dunk and tried its best to bring each of the administrators and the public from various cities affected into the conversation."

Dr. Cech noted that the comprehensive two-year mission expansion process has been underway for the past seven years with significant input from each of the campuses impacted. In Great Falls, input was received from a community College!NOW listening session, a student focus group, community surveys, employer surveys, faculty and staff surveys, an additional survey sent to 4,000 individuals, electronic bulletin boards on the COT campus, an electronic well wisher board, and three meetings including students, faculty and staff and a community breakfast. Dr. Cech said based on the suggestion of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce and as a suggestion of the president of UGF, a facilitated discussion taskforce was convened comprised of six people representing each institution, a note-taker, and a well experienced facilitator. The charge to the group was to discuss common concerns and ways to work together. He reminded the board that the intent was not for a group of six members to re-do the naming work that had already been done in the region.

Dr. Cech pointed out that the taskforce prepared a consensus report which is attached to the board agenda.

Regent Thiel moved approval of the resolution to rename MSU Great Falls College of Technology as Great Falls College MSU. Included in his motion is the request that the commissioner's staff shall identify resources in the College!NOW grant to support rebranding of Great Falls College MSU, including differentiation between the public two-year college and the private faith-based baccalaureate university in Great Falls.



## Public Comments

- President Gene McAllister, University of Great Falls, gave a brief history of the UGF campus, addressed the importance of meeting the needs of students, and encouraged the board to find a different name to use that did not include the words 'Great Falls.' He voiced that he thought UGF should have been consulted more throughout the process. President McAllister noted that the new name could be damaging to UGF, and questioned whether the proposed name was good for the city of Great Falls. He noted recognition that this was a decision of the Board of Regents.
- Will Weaver, retired dean and CEO of MSU Great Falls COT, noted that he was a member of the taskforce mentioned earlier. He clarified that he was speaking as a private citizen. He stressed that the concerns identified in the taskforce could be greatly minimized by identifying groups to work on those concerns. Mr. Weaver stated that the name should reflect the heritage and history of the Great Falls COT as well as where the campus wants to go in the future. He noted that the words 'Great Falls' have been included in the campus' name since 1969 and suggested that the only additional separation to be added would be if the board chose to insert "state" in the name. Mr. Weaver stressed that the two campuses need to look at how they complement each other, how they can work together, and how they can work with economic development to promote both campuses. Mr. Weaver urged the board to approve the name suggested by the taskforce.
- Mary Sheehy Moe, former dean and CEO of MSU-Great Falls COT, noted the positive and collaborative relationship that has existed for many years with the University of Great Falls. She stressed that the mission has evolved at the MSU-Great Falls COT campus and the name needs to reflect the comprehensive mission. She explained that the term 'college of technology' is a name only known in Montana and not known in other states; therefore, it is crucial to drop the COT name. She stressed the importance of keeping the name Great Falls in the campus name.
- Judy Hay, MSU Great Falls COT, spoke in support of working closely together on collaborative efforts. She stressed that animosity between the two campuses does not serve the community and assured the board that the COT would do everything they can to work together with UGF to benefit students and the community.

Regent Pat Williams spoke at length regarding the renaming and suggested possibly delaying the renaming decision, engaging in more discussion, and submitting a new name. He encouraged board members to vote against the motion in order to allow consideration of other names. He noted that, if there was a no vote, he would make a new motion delaying the decision.

Regent Buchanan acknowledged the passion and the role of the University of Great Falls across Montana. He stressed that it is more important for both campuses to look at the opportunities both campuses have to work together. He encouraged the board to continue to move the renaming process along. Regent Buchanan told the board that he had to leave the conference call meeting due to a prior commitment.

Commissioner Christian spoke on the detailed process that has already occurred over



the past three years, beginning long before Regent Williams became a board member, and said that the naming process has been in progress for several years. Although the University of Great Falls stated that they were not involved in the process, he noted that the process has been inclusive for several years but had not gotten the attention of UGF up to this point. Commissioner Christian cautioned the board against turning the naming over to a very select group of individuals and reminded them that the entire process has intentionally been very public. Commissioner Christian urged the new board members not to undo the process at this point and all the work that has been done. He reminded the board that UGF is not the only stakeholder in this process. He noted that he has spoken with President McAllister several times and talked about things they can work on together, but that they should not have a small group make the decision. Neither the delay nor the process has been flawed. The name that has come forward is just a name that is not overly embraced by UGF, but he stressed that the decision needs to be made now and the board needs to move forward. Commissioner Christian said he had told President McAllister that we are in the business of public education for all of Montana, both public and private campuses. He reminded the board that this IS the name that the process brought forward and that this is not the time to start over and decide to come up with a new, unvetted name.

Regent Thiel said the interest of the board is to advance higher education in Montana, whether public or private. He stressed that the board has no desire to harm UGF at all, but would hope that the decision can be made and that all will continue to work together and on how to advance higher education in Montana. He stressed that he does not think it is fair of the board to undo the process that has been followed to select a name. The taskforce report lists several ways in which the two campuses can work together. Regent Thiel urged the board to take action on the name today to allow the campuses to go forward to provide a better education for students. He was very opposed to extending the naming process. Furthermore, he doubted a longer process would bring forth anything better.

Regent Jeff Krauss acknowledged that even if the process were delayed, the same name would most likely come forward. He said the proposed name does not harm UGF and that a degree from UGF will still have the same value. He told the board that this need not cause any resentment and that the new name will enhance the mission. Providing post secondary degrees for the community needs to be the focus. Regent Krauss emphasized the need to choose to move forward and make this work as it would be a detriment to both campuses to delay the renaming decision any longer.

Motion passed 4-1, with Regent Williams voting no. Regent Buchanan was absent for the vote and Regent Robinson was excused from the meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Dr. Susan Wolfe, incoming Dean and CEO of the MSU-Great Falls COT, pledged to reach out to work with UGF and to work through this on behalf of the students in the region.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.



# MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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**Approved by the Board of Regents on**

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Date

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Date

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

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Angela McLean  
Chair, Board of Regents