

ITEM 148-1001-R0910

President and Professor Emeritus: George M. Dennison; The University of Montana

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of George M. Dennison from the presidency of The University of Montana, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for his service to The University of Montana, the Montana University System, and the people of the State of Montana by conferring the title President and Professor Emeritus (effective upon the termination date as President).

EXPLANATION

George M. Dennison grew up outside Kalispell and earned an Associate of Arts degree from Miles Community College (formerly Custer County Junior College). He received his B.A. with highest honors in History from The University of Montana in 1962 and his Master's degree from The University of Montana in 1963. In 1967 he earned his Ph.D. in History from the University of Washington.

After appointments at the Universities of Arkansas and Washington in earlier years, President Dennison served 18 years at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. He began his career at CSU as a history professor and then served in numerous other positions. He held simultaneously the positions as Associate Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and Associate Dean of the Graduate School for International Development Studies. He also served as Acting Academic Vice President, Associate Academic Vice President, and Director of Admissions and Records. From 1987-1990, he served as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo before returning to his *alma mater* to assume the Presidency in August 1990.

As The University of Montana's sixteenth and longest serving President, Dr. Dennison's leadership has grown and enhanced all areas of the University. Committed to access and affordability, his campaign encouraging Montanans to "keep your options open" and the MPACT program addressed a declining population of high school students by suggesting college as a possibility that might not have been considered prior to his intervention. Overall, enrollments increased nearly 50 percent during President Dennison's tenure, including significant growth in Native American, minority, and international students. His attention to graduate education and research generated an increase from \$7 million to \$71 million in external grant funding, a development that over time created new graduate programs and enabled UM to sustain its Carnegie Classification as a graduate research university.

In terms of physical enhancements, President Dennison recognized and addressed facility demands and needs of a growing student population as well as world-class faculty. Without impact to educational programs, employee salaries, or student contributions, he secured public and private funding to add approximately 1.3 million square feet of usable space on the UM campus. Some highlights of his leadership efforts in this area include the Phyllis J. Washington Education Center, Don Anderson Hall, The Payne Family Native American Center, the addition to the School of Law, the Gallagher Business Building, the Davidson Honors College, and expansions of Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Over the course of the last 8 years, President Dennison has inspired a commitment to addressing one of the defining challenges of this century—re-stabilizing the Earth's climate so that human health and social and economic progress can continue well into the future. In February 2007, he signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, making UM a charter signatory institution. This significant

pledge launched several initiatives and programs on campus which address sustainability including the inventory of greenhouse gases, the requirement of all new buildings on campus to be LEED Silver certified, establishment of the UM Sustainability Office charged with leading the sustainability efforts on campus, and the issuing of the UM Climate Action Plan announced to campus on Earth Day 2010.

As a result of his passionate engagement with alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations, President Dennison nurtured a “culture of philanthropy” at UM. His efforts raised nearly \$500 million and increased the University’s endowment from \$17.3 to \$120 million. Additionally, UM completed two major fundraising campaigns under President Dennison including the “Invest in Discovery” campaign from 2002 to 2007 which inspired contributions of \$131 million in donations, making it the most successful campaign ever launched by a Montana nonprofit organization.

For two decades, through his support and example, Dr. Dennison has encouraged the development of “habits of the heart” and the civic engagement of students, faculty, and staff. His institutional commitment to this element of good citizenship has earned the University the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement and a place on the President’s Higher Education Honor Roll for Community Service. He has personally demonstrated the value of civic engagement and service learning through his own engagement on numerous local and national boards and service organizations. He led the establishment of the Montana Campus Compact and served as the founding Chair of the Montana Commission on Community Service. He serves on the International Student Exchange Program, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, the International Heart Institute of Montana, the Institute of Medicine and Humanities, the Montana Campus Compact, the Neuro Science Institute Foundation, the National Security Education Board (appointed by President George W. Bush), and the National Transportation Policy Task Force.

Inspired and guided by the University’s original charge—“to provide the best and most efficient manner of imparting to young men and women, on equal terms, a liberal education and thorough knowledge of the different branches of literature, science, and the arts, with the varied applications”—Dr. Dennison has shepherded The University of Montana into the 21st century. Under his leadership, the campus celebrated significant academic progress and noteworthy development. Over the years, his commitment to students and his passion for service remained at the forefront of the faculty, staff, and administrations under his employ. Furthermore, his involvement in relevant discussions on the import of higher education has brought recognition to the University at the State and national levels.

For these and his other numerous contributions to The University of Montana, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon George M. Dennison the rank of President and Professor Emeritus of The University of Montana and thanks him for his dedicated service to The University of Montana.
