

September 22-23, 2010

**ITEM 148-2702-R0910**

**Authorization to Confer the Title of Chancellor Emeritus, Montana State University Billings:  
Ronald P. Sexton**

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**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Chancellor Ronald P. Sexton from the administration and faculty of Montana State University Billings, the faculty, students and administration wish to extend their appreciation for his 40 years of dedicated and valued service to the University, the City of Billings and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Chancellor Emeritus be conferred on him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

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**EXPLANATION**

Ronald Sexton, Ph.D., is a Billings native and grew up on the city's South Side. He worked his way through his career at Eastern Montana College, the predecessor of MSU Billings. He graduated in 1959, with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Social Sciences and History, and a Minor in Health, Physical Education and Recreation. In 1964, he earned the Masters of Science degree in Guidance and Counseling, with a Minor in Psychology, from EMC. After being awarded a Doctor of Philosophy-Education degree from the University of Oregon in 1971, he completed post-doctoral study at Boys Town in Omaha, NE, under the auspices of the University of Kansas.

Dr. Sexton served as a faculty member and Clinical Director for the College of Education at Central Michigan University from 1971-1977, but the pull of home brought him back to the Eastern Montana College campus in 1977, where he became Director of the EMC Institute for Habilitative Services and a Professor in the School of Education.

In August 1987, he was named EMC's Academic Vice President and Professor of Special Education and Reading. On July 1, 1994, he became Acting Chancellor, when Dr. Bruce Carpenter retired, and continued as a Professor of Special Education and Reading. On March 22, 1995, Dr. Sexton was appointed Chancellor of Montana State University Billings and has been the only Chancellor of the university.

Since becoming Chancellor, Dr. Sexton ushered many changes to the university and the system that will have lasting positive effects. Enrollment has grown to more than 5,000 students in 2010, and program offerings have morphed from strictly on-site classes to include online delivery of 21 academic programs that reach every county in Montana.

The physical presence of the university has also changed in the Billings community. During his tenure, Sexton has overseen major renovation of the Liberal Arts Building, acquisition of the College of Business building through the MSU Billings Foundation, renovation of the College of Education building, development of an on-campus day care center for students, faculty and staff, and increasing integration of MSU Billings into the community as an urban university. Through Dr. Sexton's leadership, MSU Billings has developed partnerships to boost educational access and success for adults, teenagers and underserved populations of the community.

Dr. Sexton has also been a champion of two-year post-secondary education. He pioneered a campaign of awareness and a call for change in the Montana University System, working to gather community and legislative support, resulting in:

- The continuing evolution of the MSU Billings College of Technology by utilizing a comprehensive community college model to better serve the needs of the region.
- A Montana University System Shared Leadership Initiative in the early part of the decade, highlighting two-year post-secondary education.
- Leadership with the MSU Billings Foundation and community leaders for acquisition of 6 acres of land on the West End for expansion of the COT campus.
- Montana legislative approval of a \$29.5 million bond issue for capital improvements on two-year campuses, including construction of the new Health Sciences Building at the COT campus that was completed in 2008.
- Federal funding of more than \$3 million to develop training programs for the construction, healthcare and energy industries at the MSU Billings COT.
- Renovation of the technology building at the COT to better meet student needs.

Because of Dr. Sexton's tireless efforts, the people in the greater Yellowstone region watched the MSU Billings College of Technology transform from a single building into a campus atmosphere. Under Dr. Sexton's stewardship, the MSU Billings COT has been expanding its role and scope in order to address continued workforce development and two-year education needs across the greater-Billings area, eastern Montana and the state, preparing to better serve the students and employers of tomorrow.

Known by many as MSU Billings Downtown, the College of Professional Studies and Lifelong Learning was established by Dr. Sexton to respond to the changing training and learning needs of a growing metropolitan area. The college serves as the main point of contact for youth summer camps, adult programming, short-term workforce training and community outreach. Through connections downtown and with community and government leaders, Dr. Sexton was able to build critical partnerships between the university, business, industry, the community and the state. He worked to develop the framework for a unique training program for inmates in the Montana Women's Prison and pushed to fully integrate the university into the community through an outreach center at Garfield School.

Lastly, through his leadership and participation, the five-year "People, Pride & Promise: The Campaign for Excellence at Montana State University Billings" raised more than \$30 million as the university's first-ever comprehensive campaign.

For those reasons and more, Montana State University Billings is honored to recommend Dr. Ronald P. Sexton for Emeritus status.