

March 8-9, 2018

**ITEM 178-2705-R0318**

**Request for authorization to confer the title of Professor Emeritus of Communication and Theatre upon Dr. Stephen Coffman, Montana State University Billings**

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**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Stephen Coffman from Montana State University Billings, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for his service to the University, Montana University System, and the people of the State of Montana.

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**EXPLANATION**

Dr. Coffman has demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarship and service to both the university and the community throughout his 41 years of service at MSU Billings. His exceptional leadership was formally recognized for his role as Faculty Association President and Chief Labor Negotiator. He served on the Academic Senate for many years, as well as Chair of the Communication and Theatre Department on four separate occasions. In 1998, he was one of the original faculty members to spearhead the online teaching program and continued for 20 years. Dr. Coffman has conducted an ongoing project to fund and bring recognized communication scholars to campus. Some of these scholars include: Dr. Linda Putnam (Texas A&M; 2 visits, one as a scholar the other as a labor negotiation facilitator), Dr. John Stewart (University of Washington), Dr. Dwight Conquergood (Northwestern University), Dr. Mara Adelman (Seattle University), Dr. Larry Frey (University of Colorado), Dr. Gregory Olson (Marquette University; visiting expert on Mike Mansfield), Dr. William Wilmot (University of Montana), and others.

In 1996, Dr. Coffman authored the successful MSU Billings Communication and Theatre application for the "Program of Distinction" Award presented by the National Communication Association to one College/University program each year. As KEMC station manager in 1978, he directed a student-run, 10-watt station broadcasting from the sixth floor of the Liberal Arts Building. That winter he was the primary author of a successful Title II grant for \$103,933 to build a 25,000-watt NPR affiliate station. He facilitated the Yellowstone Art Center's Board during their decision-making process that resulted in a capital campaign to build the current Yellowstone Art Museum. He assisted the Amend Park Board in their decision to construct Amend Park.

Dr. Coffman's commitment to the university is both national and statewide in nature. He was elected Chair of the Senior College and University Division of the National Communication Association and served on the Organization's legislative assembly. He represented MSU Billings at Montana Legislative committee meetings concerning funding for the University System.

In teaching, through his proficiency as a scholar in Organizational Communication, Dr. Coffman has provided an arena in which students have learned to expand their horizons, think critically, write well, graduate, and move on to successful lives and careers. He currently has nine former students working as faculty members and deans at prestigious institutions across the country such as the University Washington, University of Oregon, University of Colorado, and St. Louis University.

In scholarship, Dr. Coffman has published over 20 refereed journal articles and presented over 75 juried papers at National/regional Communication Conferences. In addition, he has authored five training manuals for organizational employees by St. Vincent Healthcare and the University of Lethbridge on various communication topics. He has been awarded the faculty excellence recognition three times, and earned a merit raise after every review since they were initiated.

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon Dr. Stephen Coffman the rank of Professor Emeritus of Communication and Theatre at Montana State University Billings and wishes him well for many years in the future.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None