

May 20, 2020

**ITEM 188-1602-R0520**

**Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of English on Dr. O. Alan Weltzien, The University of Montana Western**

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**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. O. Alan Weltzien from the faculty of The University of Montana Western, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his 29 years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

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**EXPLANATION**

O. Alan Weltzien earned his Ph.D. in English from the University of Virginia in 1982. He began his career as a professor at Ferrum College in Virginia before coming to The University of Montana Western (then Western Montana College) in 1991. During his time at Montana Western, he built and rebuilt the Department of English, strengthening its commitment to first-year writing and remedial writing by developing broad and deep knowledge of the field of rhetoric and composition, an area of study entirely divorced from his previous academic pursuits. Concurrently, he worked tirelessly among the small group of faculty, staff, and administrators who transitioned Montana Western to its current, wildly successful, X1 model of Block scheduling and experiential education.

Over the past twenty-nine years, Dr. Weltzien has inspired generations of Montana Western students in literature and creative writing courses. He developed and organized "Dances with Words," Montana Western's visiting writer series, which has brought dozens of authors to Dillon for free, public events over the years. Dances with Words has become one of the most beloved events in the Dillon community. He has also been instrumental in building UMW's international and travel programs, both through his service on the international committee and by leading courses to destinations ranging from Greece to Belize to Death Valley. He has also been the recipient of several prestigious awards, including two Fulbright grants, to Poland in 1989-1990 and Bulgaria in 1997-1998, and he taught as a visiting scholar at Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, Australia, in 2003.

Dr. Weltzien has also published numerous books, essays, and poems over the course of his distinguished career, with much of it focused on Montana and Montana writers Thomas Savage and Norman Maclean. He is the author of *Rembrandt in the Stairwell*, *Exceptional Mountains: A Cultural History of Pacific Northwest Volcanoes*, *The Snowpeaks*, *To Kilimanjaro and Back*, and *A Father and an Island: Reflections on Loss*, editor of *The Literary Art and Activism of Rick Bass* and *The Norman Maclean Reader*, and co-editor of *Coming Into McPhee Country: John McPhee and the Art of Literary Nonfiction* and *Thinking Continental: Writing the Planet One Place at a Time*.

The English Department enthusiastically nominates Professor Weltzien for emeritus status.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

None