

May 15-16, 2024

ITEM 212-2012-R0524

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Physics upon Dr. Gregory Evan Francis; Montana State University

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Gregory Evan Francis from the College of Letters and Science at Montana State University, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for their service to the University, the Montana University System, and the people of the State of Montana.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Francis graduated with a B.S. in Physics from BYU and received his Ph. D. at MIT. His dissertation work in Plasma Physics carried him into a postdoctoral appointment at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Naturally, Greg could have continued as a researcher, but he followed his calling – teaching. He joined the Physics Education Group at the University of Washington in 1990. Physics Education was undergoing dramatic changes and the group in Washington was at the forefront. After two years, Greg carried his new-found knowledge to MSU. Greg and Dr. Jeff Adams completely revamped the College Physics course, taken by students of the life sciences and Architecture, introducing inquiry-based learning. This effort brought MSU to the forefront of Physics Education. Dr. Francis also coauthored two college textbooks and accompanying material and developed teaching seminars for all entering graduate students.

While at MSU, Dr. Francis served 31 years on the University Teachers Education Committee, a time-consuming task when MSU's Education Department underwent accreditation. He served 8 years on the University Curriculum Committee and as a board member for the MSU Bookstore, and 4 years as Director of the Masters of Science in Science Education program, MSU's innovative graduate program for science educators, which offers courses in on-line and campus-based formats.

Dr. Francis was especially generous in educating the general public about science, and through his outreach activities. He was MSU's person of choice for science demonstrations at MSU Fridays, Parents Weekend, half-time shows, and many other events. He also provided physics demonstrations twice a year for the MSU-for-a-day program, a three-day road trip to Montana high schools. Greg's service to Montana K-12 schools extended beyond this program, through individual visits, upon request, to schools throughout our state. These visits ended with the students making, and eating, ice cream made in minutes with liquid nitrogen. As one might imagine, there were many such requests!

Professor Gregory Francis taught thousands of freshmen physics students. He received 16 teaching awards during his time at MSU, surely a record! His contributions to the teaching of Physics were rewarded with the Robert A. Millikan Medal from the American Association of Physics, which *recognizes those who have made notable and intellectually creative contributions to the teaching of physics.*

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer on Dr. Gregory Evan Francis the rank of Professor Emeritus of Physics at Montana State University and wishes them well for many years into the future.

ATTACHMENTS

None