

July 10, 2025

ITEM 219-1002-R0725

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies on Neva Hassanein; The University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Neva Hassanein from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for her 25 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 her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Hassanein earned her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She joined the Environmental Studies Program in 2000. Hassanein rose to the rank of Associate Professor in 2004 and then to Professor in 2011.

Professor Hassanein has been a successful teacher and mentor, working with many undergraduate and graduate students over the years. Her courses, offered at all levels, focused on the environmental social sciences, contemporary agriculture and food systems, sustainable communities, and qualitative research methods, often including community-engaged teaching approaches. She also established and led the Program's emphasis in Sustainable Food and Farming, one of our most popular areas of study. She helped secure the educational aspects of the PEAS Farm – an award-winning, campus-community partnership with Garden City Harvest where students work on the farm for credit and produce food for the community including the Missoula Food Bank. Hassanein also facilitated the Program's efforts to re-vitalize our Masters curriculum, and based on that review, she created and taught a required course for the incoming graduate cohort called Foundations of Change.

Over the years, Hassanein has raised funds from major donors and private foundations to support graduate students through scholarships, including a key endowment. Hassanein also partnered with colleagues from across campus to secure and run UM BRIDGES: Bridging Divides across the Food, Energy, and Water Nexus, a National Science Foundation Research Traineeship (NRT) Program, which supported and educated numerous graduate students in a variety of fields across campus.

Dr. Hassanein's research has focused on contemporary agri-food studies. She is currently under contract for a book tentatively titled *Storied Foodscapes: Place and Possibility in Montana* (University of Nebraska Press). Her scholarship has included several widely cited articles on the theory and empirical understanding of "food democracy." She has published other peer-reviewed articles on the topics of beginning farmer land access, seed-saving networks, genetically modified crops, and farm-to-school programs. In 1999, her book, *Changing the Way America Farms* was published by University of Nebraska Press. In addition to her peer-reviewed publications, Hassanein and her students have carried out numerous community-based research projects, including: a community food assessment for Missoula County; a study of the Farm-to-College Program at UM; a study of the Western Montana Growers Cooperative; a report on the 2016 Governor's summit on food and agriculture; and a study of the loss of farmland in Missoula County.

In keeping with the Environmental Studies Program's tradition, Hassanein has coupled her teaching and scholarship with a strong service record on campus, in academic societies, and in community and civic organizations. In addition to her expected service to the Program, Hassanein served on the Sustainable

Campus Committee and on Graduate Council. Hassanein also served on the governing council and later became President of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society (AFHVS), an international interdisciplinary academic association. Hassanein and colleagues also proposed, organized, and hosted the Annual Meeting of AFHVS, bringing scholars to Missoula from around the country and the world to the UM in 2011. She and her students also partnered with UM Dining to create Montana's first farm-to-cafeteria program in 2003. She co-founded Grow Montana, a statewide food policy coalition, which also established the first FoodCorps service program in the country (it later became a national organization). She co-founded the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition, now known as Farm Connect. These efforts spearheaded by Hassanein have contributed significantly to the agricultural economy in Montana and will continue to have lasting impact, with many of Hassanein's former students leading and staffing these and other related organizations.

She served on the Missoula City-County Consolidated Planning Board for six years, as well as the steering committee that guided the City's growth policy in 2015. Hassanein has also served on the boards of numerous non-profit organizations. Most recently, Hassanein has led the effort to permanently protect a farm on the edge of Missoula, which became the first community land trust farm in Montana in 2024.

Hassanein's accomplishments have earned her numerous awards, including: the Excellence in Public Service Award from AFHVS; the Faculty Greening UM Award, Sustainable Campus Committee; the Don Aldrich Award from Missoula Conservation Roundtable; the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies; and more.

The Environmental Studies Program is pleased to nominate Professor Hassanein for Emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None