

November 20-21, 2025

ITEM 221-1002-R1125

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus in the College of Science on Dr. Alden Wright; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

The faculty in the Department of Computer Science wishes to express its appreciation for Alden Wright's 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 him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Alden Wright grew up in Missoula and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in mathematics from Dartmouth College. He was awarded an NSF Graduate Fellowship, which he used to earn a Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1969. He began his academic career with a one-year appointment at the University of Utah, followed by 13 years in the Department of Mathematics at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, where he also taught computer programming.

In 1983, Dr. Wright returned to Missoula to join the Computer Science Department at the University of Montana. There, he transitioned his research focus to computer science and taught himself the discipline by leading nearly every undergraduate course, numerous seminars, and several graduate courses—especially in algorithms and artificial intelligence. He supervised numerous master's theses and projects and played a key role in stabilizing the department during a time when qualified computer science Ph.D.s were difficult to recruit.

Throughout his tenure at UM, Dr. Wright remained active in research and consistently published peer-reviewed work in computer science. Scholar GPS recently recognized him as a lifetime top scholar in the field of genetic algorithms. He served as department chair for six years before officially retiring in 2009, though he continued to teach part-time and conduct research for several years afterward. He remains actively engaged in research today.

ATTACHMENTS

None