

March 2026

ITEM 223-1005-R0326

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Anthropology on Randall R. Skelton – University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Randall R. Skelton from the faculty of The University of Montana after 34 years of service, we recommend that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Skelton earned the Ph.D. at University of California, Davis, in 1983. He worked part-time as a Visiting Lecturer and Visiting Assistant Professor in Anthropology for 5 years at UCD and for 3 years as Assistant Professor in Anthropology at Emory University. He joined the Anthropology Department at the University of Montana in 1991. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1993 and to Professor in 2000.

Professor Skelton was a very successful and popular teacher. His teaching evaluations were always outstanding. He taught courses at all levels from freshman to graduate. He developed several new courses over his career. Over his career he consistently taught at least 3 courses each semester (compared to the normal teaching load of 2) and some semesters taught 4 or 5 courses. He served as Chair or member of over 175 graduate student thesis/dissertation committees. He served in many departmental roles including Curator of the Forensic Collection, Director of the Certificate in Forensic Sciences, Graduate Advising Coordinator, and serving on many departmental committees for varied purposes.

Professor Skelton's research was eclectic within Anthropology. He is best known for his involvement in introducing phylogenetic methods to paleoanthropology in the 1980's and to material culture evolution in the 2010's. His work has been published in several peer-reviewed journals and he has given several conference presentations.

Professor Skelton is also distinguished in his service to the University and the State of Montana. He served several terms on Faculty Senate and several terms on Graduate Council, including serving as Chair of Graduate Council from 1995 to 1996. From 1995 to 2010, he was appointed by the Governor of Montana to the Montana State Burial Board. He provided consultation to the State Medical Examiner and State Forensic Science Laboratory on over 200 cases involving forensic anthropology.

Given these accomplishments, the Department of Anthropology is pleased to nominate Professor Skelton for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None