



## Office of the Chancellor MONTANA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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1300 West Park Street  
Butte, Montana 59701

January 7, 2026

Dear Commissioner Christian and members of the Montana University System Board of Regents:

It is my great honor to nominate **Mr. Ryan M. Lance**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of ConocoPhillips, for the Honorary Doctorate of Science degree from Montana Technological University. Mr. Lance's global leadership in the energy sector, his steadfast commitment to ethical and sustainable practices, and his extraordinary passion and support for higher education – especially his alma mater – exemplify the innovation, integrity, and impact that Montana Tech seeks to recognize through its highest distinction.

### **National and Global Impact**

Ryan Lance is widely regarded as one of the most respected and visionary leaders in the global energy industry. Since becoming Chairman and CEO of ConocoPhillips in 2012, he has guided one of the world's largest independent exploration and production companies through an era defined by energy transition, technological transformation, and geopolitical volatility.

Under his leadership, ConocoPhillips has emerged as a model for responsible resource development and environmental stewardship – balancing operational excellence with a long-term vision for sustainability, workforce development, and community engagement. Mr. Lance has been a leading national voice in shaping energy policy, advocating for innovation-driven approaches that reconcile energy security, carbon management, and economic growth.

His influence extends far beyond corporate performance. He serves on numerous national boards and policy councils, contributing to discussions on climate strategy, economic development, and the future of energy education. He is a member of the executive committee and former chairman of the American Petroleum Institute and has chaired the National Petroleum Council's Agenda Committee, serves on the board of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and is a trustee of the George H. W. Bush Library Foundation and PGA Reach. In addition, he supports youth-focused initiatives through Spindletop International and the University of Texas Energy Institute.

As a petroleum engineer by training and a leader by conviction, Mr. Lance exemplifies the rare combination of technical expertise and ethical clarity – qualities that have earned him the trust and respect of policymakers, scientists, and industry peers alike.

## **Impact on Montana and Montana Technological University**

While his professional influence is global, Ryan Lance's heart remains rooted in the Montana soil where he spent summers on his family's farm in Wolf Point, Montana. A graduate of Great Falls High School and a 1984 Montana Tech Petroleum Engineering alumnus, Ryan worked as a roughneck on oil rigs to fund his education. This firsthand experience – from the farm to the drilling rigs – has made him one of the university's most transformative advocates. As a mentor, donor, ambassador, and advocate, he continues to ensure that the grit and determination he learned in Montana remains the hallmark of a Montana Tech degree. His ordinary beginnings have led him to lead an extraordinary life where he has not only championed the university's mission but has fundamentally elevated its standing on the world stage.

Together with his wife, Lisa, Ryan made a historic investment in Montana Tech – the most significant philanthropic gift in the university's history. This landmark contribution is already redefining the university's future. Two vital elements of his investment – the Lance Scholars Program and the Lance Energy Chair – have advanced the university's core strategic priorities and opened doors of opportunity for Montana's students and fostered world-class faculty excellence in energy research and education.

The Lance Scholars Program invests in Montana's youth and provides high school students the opportunity to attend Montana Tech. By supporting students who demonstrate grit, leadership potential, and a commitment to community, the program fulfills Montana Tech's promise to "meet students where they are." By fostering opportunity, Ryan and Lisa are strengthening Montana's educational and economic pipeline. To date, this life-changing initiative has already provided 146 scholarships to deserving Montana students.

The Lance Energy Chair represents a bold and enduring investment in academic excellence. This endowed position ensures Montana Tech remains at the forefront of energy education and innovation – preparing students not only for today's workforce but also for the emerging energy landscape. It allows the university to attract and retain exceptional faculty, promote interdisciplinary research, and position Montana Tech as a national leader in energy and natural resources.

Beyond his extraordinary philanthropy, Ryan Lance remains a constant, hands-on presence at Montana Tech. He frequently returns to campus to engage with students, share his insights on leadership and ethics, and model the values that define Montana Tech. His commitment is more than financial – it is deeply personal. Ryan proves his enduring belief that education is the ultimate engine of opportunity and the most powerful catalyst for societal progress.

## **Conclusion**

Ryan M. Lance's professional achievements, moral leadership, and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education, innovation, and opportunity make him an exemplary candidate for this honor. His career represents a rare synthesis of global influence and local loyalty – a reflection of the very best values Montana Tech seeks to elevate through the Doctorate of Science, *honoris causa*.

For his visionary leadership in the global energy sector principled stewardship of corporate and community resources, and transformational generosity in establishing the Lance Scholars Program and Lance Energy Chair, I am proud to nominate Ryan M. Lance for this distinguished honor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J MacLean', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Johnny MacLean, Ph.D.

Chancellor

Montana Technological University



Dr. Tim Elgren, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor  
Montana Technological University  
1300 West Park St  
September 30, 2025

Dear Dr. Elgren:

I am writing to nominate Mr. Ryan Lance to be awarded an honorary doctorate from Montana Technological University. Mr. Lance's exemplary contributions to the field of petroleum engineering and his unwavering commitment to the advancement of science, engineering, and technology have not only brought distinction to Montana Tech but have also significantly impacted the broader community.

Ryan Lance, a distinguished alumnus of Montana Tech, graduated with a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering in 1984. His professional journey has been marked by remarkable achievements, including serving as the CEO of ConocoPhillips since 2012, where he has led the company's transformation into the world's largest independent oil and natural gas exploration and production company. With over 37 years of industry executive and technical experience, Mr. Lance has demonstrated exceptional leadership and vision in the energy sector.

Mr. Lance's dedication to Montana Tech is evident through his continuous support for the university's development and educational excellence initiatives. Ryan and Lisa Lance's generous donation of \$31M, the largest in the university's history, has facilitated the renaming of the School of Mines & Engineering to the Lance College of Mines & Engineering, a testament to his commitment to the institution's growth and success.

Ryan Lance is the reason Montana Tech was able to build the Natural Resources Research Center by encouraging ConocoPhillips, Halliburton, and Anadarko to donate to Montana Tech. The Lance Scholars Program has been game changing for students seeking an excellent, hands-on education at Montana Tech. The establishment of the Lance Energy Chair to ensure Montana Tech is the higher-education leader in the field of energy has yielded immediate results with Bob Morris being named as the inaugural Lance Energy Chair and enhancing Montana Tech's presence in energy issues important to industry, National Laboratories, and government.

In light of Mr. Lance's outstanding achievements, his dedication to Montana Tech, and his unwavering commitment to the betterment of society, I firmly believe that he deserves the honor of an honorary doctorate from our esteemed university. Granting this recognition would not only honor Mr. Lance's remarkable accomplishments but also inspire current and future students to strive for excellence and make a positive impact on the world.

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Thank you for considering this nomination. I am confident that Mr. Lance's acceptance of this honorary degree would be a testament to Montana Tech's commitment to fostering excellence and innovation in the field of engineering and technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack L. Skinner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jack L. Skinner, Ph.D., P.E.

Dean of the Lance College of Mines and Engineering

September 29, 2025

Attention: Dr. Timothy Elgren

Provost, Executive Vice Chancellor

Montana Technological University

Reference: Ryan Lance

Letter of Recommendation

Montana Technological University Honorary Doctorate Nomination

Dear Dr. Elgren:

I recommend Mr. Ryan Lance for an honorary doctorate at Montana Technological University. Ryan has not only contributed significantly financially to Montana Tech; he has also contributed an incredible amount of time and effort supporting the school in a variety of ways. His efforts have directly resulted in increased recognition of Montana Tech throughout the state of Montana, the oil and gas industry and beyond. He has been, and continues to be, a great ambassador for the college.

I've known Ryan for over forty years. I was the college recruiter for ARCO and interviewed and successfully recruited Ryan upon his graduation in 1984. Since graduation, we have both worked in the petroleum industry and jointly on several Montana Tech boards.

I represent a good cross section of the industry. During my career, I held several executive level positions in numerous oil and gas companies including my most recent position of President, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Gastar Exploration, Ltd. I retired when the company was sold in 2019. In addition, I have served as a director on multiple oil and gas company boards.

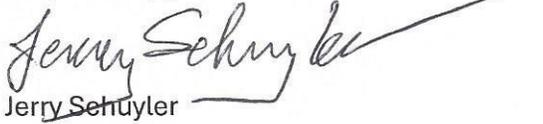
At a relatively young age in 2012, Ryan was promoted into the top job of what is now the largest independent exploration and production company in the United States. The respect that he has earned in the industry and academia is evidenced by some of the positions he has held since becoming the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board for ConocoPhillips. He has served as chairman of the American Petroleum Institute, Vice Chair of the National Petroleum Council and has been a board member of the Independent Petroleum Association just to name a few industry associations. In the academic world, he has served on the Advisory Council for the University of Texas Energy Institute and on the University of Houston's Energy Advisory Board. In addition, Mr. Lance is a Trustee for the George and Barbara Bush Foundation, Trustee of PGA Reach, served on the Board of Spindletop International, and he is an active and passionate supporter of Yellowstone Forever. This list is by no means comprehensive but intended to demonstrate the extent of his experience and involvement outside of his company.

Throughout his career, Ryan has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership, integrity, and a deep commitment to the values and mission of Montana Tech. His mentorship of students and young professionals has had a profound and lasting impact, inspiring many to pursue

successful careers in the energy sector. His recent creation and mentoring of the endowed Lance Energy Chair position is also providing increased recognition of the critical need for the research, training and professional development provided by Montana Technological University.

Ryan has helped improve the overall effectiveness and reputation of Montana Tech for more than four decades. He is a tremendous ambassador for the college. Mr. Lance deserves serious consideration for an honorary doctorate at Montana Technological University.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Schuyler". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Jerry Schuyler

President, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman (Retired)

Gastar Exploration, Ltd.



September 23, 2025

To: Montana Board of Regents, Montana Tech Chancellor, Montana Tech Provost

From: Gary Kolstad, Montana Tech Alumni, Donor, Foundation Board Member

RE: Nomination of Ryan Lance for an Honorary Degree

I am pleased to nominate Ryan Lance for an Honorary Degree from Montana Tech. His support of Montana Tech, the Montana University System, the State of Montana, and the resultant positive impact on each make him a very deserving candidate.

We have known each other for over 40 years, starting with our years together as students at Montana Tech. We have kept crossing paths with different global assignments in the Oil & Gas industry.

Ryan's professional career has been marked by business success, strong personal values and integrity, and excellent leadership shown. He has been instrumental in driving the message of the world's need for more STEM engineers and how Montana Tech can help provide those needs.

Ryan's and Lisa's wonderful financial gift to Montana Tech, which supports many Montana students with scholarships, has been instrumental in increasing the number of students that can afford to go to college, and raised the awareness of the great degree programs we offer.

At Montana Tech we have a saying "*Ordinary Beginnings, Extraordinary Lives.*" Ryan is a great example. Their scholarships are creating the same opportunity for so many students to enhance their lives. We have a strong history of producing great leaders in various industries and some students receiving their scholarships will no doubt continue that same leadership success after they graduate.

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Importantly, he has achieved these accomplishments while remaining true to his Montana upbringing of having a strong work ethic and remaining humble. In addition, he has raised a wonderful family that shares those values.

I am proud to call Ryan a friend and hope you will award him the Honorary Degree,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gary Kolstad'.

Gary Kolstad  
Chairman