



## Office of the Chancellor MONTANA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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. David J. Lesar** for an Honorary Doctorate of Science degree from Montana Technological University. David Lesar has built a career defined by vision, integrity, and transformational impact across sectors vital to global stability: energy, infrastructure, and healthcare. These areas are directly aligned with Montana Tech's purpose and direction. His leadership is characterized by a unique ability to steer massive, complex organizations through periods of rapid technological evolution and regulatory change. He has significantly impacted Montana Tech and the people of Montana.

### **National and Global Impact**

As the longtime Chairman and CEO of Halliburton, one of the world's largest energy service providers, Mr. Lesar transitioned the company from a traditional oilfield services firm into a technology-driven, knowledge-based enterprise.

Under his leadership, Halliburton expanded through key acquisitions such as Landmark Graphics, Numar, and Sperry-Sun Drilling, integrating data analytics, geoscience, and engineering innovation in ways that revolutionized global energy exploration and production. His strategic and financial acumen led Halliburton to new levels of performance and helped secure its position as a global industry leader.

After his time at Halliburton, he served as President and CEO of CenterPoint Energy, where he championed massive investments in cleaner energy infrastructure and pipeline modernization, aligning corporate strategy with environmental responsibility and public safety.

Following his tenure in the energy sector, Mr. Lesar extended his leadership into the mission-critical field of healthcare. As a Board Member and Interim CEO of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC) – the nation's largest customer-owned health insurer which operates Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana as its Montana division – he led the organization through a pivotal era of digital transformation. His guidance strengthened HCSC's operational foundations, expanded its national hospital network, and deepened its investments in clinical quality and digital transformation.

Together, these roles reflect a rare breadth of influence across sectors that power and sustain society – from the energy that fuels our world to the healthcare systems that preserve its people. Mr. Lesar's leadership demonstrates an unwavering commitment to operational excellence, ethical governance, and service to the public good.

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

In Montana, Mr. Lesar applied the same strategic rigor found in his corporate career to solve the state's healthcare crisis. Recognizing that a robust healthcare system is the backbone of regional stability, he spearheaded initiatives to modernize medical education and accelerate workforce development. This work fundamentally strengthened the state's healthcare infrastructure, directly bridging the gap between academic excellence and the frontline medical needs of Montana's underserved populations.

Through a transformational gift, Mr. Lesar and his wife Sherry fundamentally revolutionized nursing education at Montana Tech. This investment served as the catalyst for a comprehensive expansion of the state's healthcare pipeline, significantly increasing the number of highly skilled professionals prepared to serve the critical needs of Montana and the surrounding region.

The investment elevated the Sherry Lesar School of Nursing into a high-performance center of excellence. This evolution created a permanent infrastructure for public health, ensuring that Montana Tech graduates are equipped with the clinical mastery and technological proficiency required to lead in today's complex medical landscape. The Sherry Lesar School of Nursing embodies the Lesars' belief that innovation and compassion work hand-in-hand. Today, Montana Tech graduates are filling critical workforce gaps in hospitals and clinics across the state.

The transformation also included the creation of the Lesar Family Nursing Simulation Center, a facility that mirrors Mr. Lesar's career-long commitment to high-tech, precision environments. In January 2025, the program achieved a historic milestone, becoming the first in Montana to receive the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice endorsement from the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL). This international recognition places Montana Tech at the forefront of global clinical education.

In 2016, the Lesars established an endowed professorship at Montana Tech, The Stan and Joyce Lesar Professorship. This critical professorship encouraged innovation and excellence in teaching and research.

Even prior to these landmark gifts, Mr. Lesar's leadership at Halliburton established a foundational philanthropic partnership with Montana Tech. Significant contributions to the Natural Resources Research Center (NRRC) enhanced the university's research infrastructure and forged a vital link between global industry and academia. This collaboration has empowered the Montana Tech research community, preparing students to lead the next generation in sustainable energy and environmental stewardship. Neither Dave nor Sherry are alumni of Montana Tech, yet their love for the university's people and purpose has only grown stronger since they first stepped onto campus in 2015."

Across every discipline – from energy and infrastructure to nursing and research – Mr. Lesar has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the future of Montana. His work has created a powerful bridge between innovation and service, ensuring the state remains at the forefront of both technological progress and community health.

## Conclusion

Mr. David Lesar's leadership exemplifies the core values at the heart of Montana Technological University: grit, innovation, integrity, and public service. His influence across the energy and healthcare sectors has not only strengthened the industries that define our future but has also fundamentally improved lives. Through his enduring personal and philanthropic partnership, Mr. Lesar has empowered our students and faculty to reach new heights in science, technology, engineering, math, and healthcare – advancing our mission and reinforcing Montana Tech's standing as the state's designated STEM university.

For these reasons, I am deeply honored to nominate Mr. David J. Lesar for the Honorary Doctor of Science from Montana Technological University. His life's work and leadership embody the very essence of our institution's vision – from energy to healthcare, from innovation to impact.

Respectfully submitted,



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. Dave Lesar to receive an honorary doctorate from Montana Technological University. Mr. Lesar's contributions to the energy sector and his philanthropic endeavors have not only advanced the field but have also significantly impacted our community.

As the former CEO of Halliburton, Mr. Lesar led the company through a transformative period, shifting its focus from traditional oil services to a technology-driven approach. His strategic acquisitions of Landmark Graphics, Numar, and Sperry-Sun Drilling under the guidance of Dick Cheney's vision, and his own leadership, propelled Halliburton to become the world's leading provider of hydraulic fracturing services. Under his tenure, Halliburton's share price rose by 68%.

Upon retiring from Halliburton, Mr. Lesar joined CenterPoint Energy as President and CEO, where he continued to demonstrate his leadership and vision by investing in clean energy and infrastructure projects. His efforts have led to billions of dollars' worth of new projects, including pipeline modernization and the integration of renewable energy sources, which have significantly improved the safety, reliability, and resiliency of the utility systems.

Mr. Lesar's dedication to the betterment of society and his commitment to fostering education and research in natural resource management are commendable. His philanthropic contributions and leadership in the energy industry have left an indelible mark on Montana Tech and the broader community. Mr. Lesar's commitment to innovation and growth extended beyond his corporate role. During his time at Halliburton, Dave Lesar ensured that Halliburton donated to the Natural Resources Research Center, which was a critical investment for Montana Tech and set the stage for future philanthropic donations to Montana Tech. Dave and Sherry Lesar's \$7M donation to the Sherry Lesar School of Nursing has ensured Montana Tech's position as an educational leader of future nurses. Dave and Sherry Lesar donated \$1M in 2016 to establish the Stan and Joyce Lesar Professorship, honoring Dave's parents. The Stan and Joyce Lesar Professorship was used to support programming and research focused on enhancing Montana Tech's ability to responsibly develop and use natural resources.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements and contributions, I strongly believe that Mr. Lesar deserves to be awarded an honorary doctorate from Montana Technological University. His legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire future generations of leaders and innovators.

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Thank you for considering my nomination.

Sincerely,

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

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

Dean of the Lance College of Mines and Engineering



October 6, 2025

Honorary Doctorate Selection Committee  
Montana Technological University

Dear Committee Members,

I am honored to nominate Mr. Dave Lesar for an Honorary Doctorate from Montana Technological University. His unwavering commitment to our students, faculty, and staff has strengthened our institution and elevated its national reputation.

Dave earned both his B.S. and M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He began his career at Arthur Andersen, where he spent 16 years as an auditor and partner, before joining Halliburton Energy Services in 1993 as Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration. He advanced through the company's leadership ranks and served as President and CEO from 2000 to 2017. Dave has demonstrated wide-ranging leadership beyond the energy sector, serving on the Board of Directors of the Health Care Service Corporation, the largest customer-owned health insurer in the nation, and as its Interim CEO from 2019 to 2020. He later returned to the energy industry as President and CEO of CenterPoint Energy from 2020 to 2024.

Dave's connection to Montana Tech began during his tenure at Halliburton, where he hired many of our graduates and collaborated closely with alumni, including Tom Bandy (Petroleum Engineering, '76), a colleague and friend. Dave often relates a story about attending a Tech football game with Tom where his admiration for the grit and determination of our students, faculty, and alumni was solidified. These are traits we proudly celebrate as hallmarks of Determined Doers. Dave's respect for the quality of education Tech provides led to a \$1M gift in 2016 establishing the Stan and Joyce Lesar Professorship in honor of Dave's parents. This gift provided resources to faculty to foster interdisciplinary research focused on sustainable and responsible natural resource development, and rewarded faculty excellence in related disciplines.

A \$750,000 gift in 2019 established the Lesar Family Nursing Simulation Center and in 2021, Dave and his wife Sherry honored Montana Tech with a \$7M gift that established the Sherry Lesar School of Nursing. At that time, it was the largest gift in Montana Tech's history and transformational for the nursing program. An additional \$2M gift in 2023 has supported the

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# MONTANA

TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

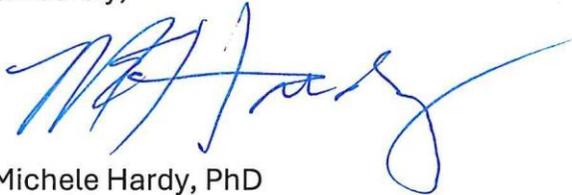
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additional permanent faculty necessary for program expansion. The Sherry Lesar School of Nursing continues to rank as the #1 nursing program in Montana and recently earned the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) endorsement for Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice, distinguishing it as the only program in Montana to earn this designation, and one of only 40 such INACSL endorsements worldwide. This endorsement underscores the program's innovation, rigor, and alignment with global best practices in nursing education. The nursing program's success at Montana Tech is due in no small part to Dave's and Sherry's dedication, vision, and generosity.

Although not an alumnus, Dave's sustained engagement and belief in Montana Tech's mission exemplify the impact of our partnerships beyond campus. His distinguished leadership in the energy sector, commitment to healthcare access and his enduring support for higher education embody the values and excellence we strive to instill in all our graduates no matter the academic discipline.

For his visionary leadership, philanthropic spirit, and steadfast support, I am honored to nominate Mr. Dave Lesar for an Honorary Doctorate from Montana Technological University.

Sincerely,



Michele Hardy, PhD  
Dean, College of Letters, Sciences and Professional Studies  
Montana Technological University  
406-496-4835

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