



Joint Sub Committee On Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget

60TH Montana Legislature

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Resolution on Faculty/Staff Retention Issues in the Montana University System

June 12, 2008

WHEREAS, the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget subcommittee (PEPB) as stated in the Shared Policy Goals and Accountability Measures for the Montana University System (MUS) for the 2009 biennium “is committed to academic quality throughout the Montana University System such that funding a high quality postsecondary education is a critical goal of the State of Montana”; and

WHEREAS, the campuses of the MUS are experiencing increasing difficulty providing competitive wages and salaries necessary to recruit and retain capable employees; and

WHEREAS, the current entry wage for support staff on the MUS classified pay plan correlates to 90 percent of the 25th percentile for Montana employers; in other words, on a job-to-job comparison, the MUS starting wage is 90 percent of the average wage of the lowest-paying quarter of Montana public and private sector employers; and

WHEREAS, the majority of faculty, professional-level, and administrative positions in the MUS are recruited nationally, yet, salaries in the MUS typically rank about 70 percent of the national average for comparable institutions and systems; and

WHEREAS, the employer contribution of 5.96 percent of employee salary for faculty and staff who are in the Montana defined contribution retirement plan (non-TRS and non-PERS) typically ranks among the lowest three of the 50 states; and

WHEREAS, salary related recruitment and retention problems are making it increasingly difficult for campuses to secure academic accreditation; recruit and retain students until they graduate; maintain access to facilities and environments that are clean, safe, and conducive to good teaching, learning, service, and research; ensure a high-quality system of postsecondary education for the citizens of Montana; and

WHEREAS, the PEPB subcommittee is concerned that the loss of key faculty and staff may be negatively impacting students’ ability to access core classes in the proper sequence for timely graduation and that it is the sense of the PEPB that faculty and staff retention levels are creating problems at MUS educational units that are having a negative impact upon the overall quality of education;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the PEPB is supportive of using external salary data, including Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) regional data and relevant CUPA data (*College and University Professional Association of Human Resources*), for evaluating faculty and staff salary levels in the Montana University System educational units and that PEPB will use this data to monitor progress in this area; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PEPB is supportive of using external data for evaluating faculty and staff retirement benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is the sense of the PEPB that increased funding for staff and faculty salary and retirement benefits in the Montana University System educational units would have a measureable, positive impact on faculty and staff retention rates, and thus have an impact upon the quality of education for the citizens of Montana.

Approved on this ____ day of ____ 2008.

Senator Bob Hawks, Chair
PEPB Subcommittee

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