

May 19-20, 2016

**ITEM 171-1601-R0516**

**Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Sciences on Dr. Sheila Roberts – The University of Montana Western**

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**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Sheila Roberts from the faculty of The University of Montana Western, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for her 21 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 her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

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**EXPLANATION**

Dr. Sheila Roberts earned her Ph.D. at the University of Calgary and joined the Environmental Sciences Department at The University of Montana Western in 1995. Professor Roberts rose rapidly to the rank of Associate Professor and then Professor. She served as chair of the Department from 2001 to 2003.

Professor Roberts was a very successful and popular teacher at Montana Western. She was well known by students as a passionate and caring educator. She was heavily involved in geoscience public outreach, and co-led several GeoVenture field trips for the Geological Society of America and co-authored many geological interpretive signs that were placed along the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana.

Professor Roberts conducted research on a wide range of topics important to Montana. She researched weathering rates associated with smelter activity in Butte, Montana, preservation of archeological materials in the Dillon, Montana area, geology of the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana, and experiential geoscience education. She gave numerous public talks on these subjects and was involved in a number of grants dealing with research in these areas. Her work has been published in several outlets including geoscience journals such as the prestigious *Special Papers Volumes of the Geological Society of America*.

Professor Roberts played an important service role on campus by helping to bring Montana Western's unique Experience One program to the campus. She co-authored the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant that funded the Experience One pilot, which was instrumental in securing our transition to this experiential-learning system. Dr. Roberts participated in the University Faculty Association and the Montana Western Faculty Senate. Her proudest accomplishment was helping Montana Western become the first public university in the history of the United States to adopt immersion scheduling (i.e., the block system) for the purpose of facilitating experiential learning. This model not only increased campus enrollment and saved it from potential closure, but also brought the campus a great deal of national recognition. Numerous other campuses are now considering this immersion-learning model across the country, and her role was central to its success at Montana Western. The Department is pleased to nominate Professor Roberts for emeritus status.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

None