



Montana Board of Regents
Conference Call Meeting
February 13, 2009

Friday, February 13, 2009

The Board convened at 1:00 PM.

Roll call indicated a quorum present.

Regents Present: Stephen M. Barrett Chair, Clayton Christian Vice Chair, Lynn Hamilton, Lila Taylor, Janine Pease, Todd Buchanan, and Mitch Jessen, all by phone. Commissioner of Higher Education Sheila Stearns, *ex officio*, was present in person, Governor Brian Schweitzer, *ex officio*, was represented by Jan Lombardi by phone. Superintendent Denise Juneau, *ex officio*, was excused.

Sites represented by phone were: Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), UM-Missoula, UM-Western, UM-MT Tech, UM-Helena COT, MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, MSU-Northern, MSU-Great Falls COT, Flathead Valley Community College, Miles Community College, and the Office of the Governor.

1. Budget Update

Deputy Commissioner Mick Robinson, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), gave a brief update on the three professional student exchange programs that offer educational opportunities at specific, out-of-state professional programs in select fields of study the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Colorado, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI), and Minnesota Dental Programs. Funding for these programs was approved in executive action. The legislature is currently receiving the final revenue estimates and will, therefore, be more comfortable finalizing executive action next week.

Associate Commissioner Tyler Trevor, OCHE, said he will provide current enrollment data to the Joint Education Subcommittee during executive action the coming week. He told the regents that there is an upward trend in enrollment and that The University of Montana-Missoula has a large enrollment increase to report. Mr. Trevor will have the 15th day census report on enrollment for the Board at the March 5-6, 2009 Board of Regents meeting.

Following executive action by the Joint Education Subcommittee the week of February 16-20, 2009, Regent Steve Barrett requested that OCHE compile budget data including indicating what executive action took place, the status of the Montana University System (MUS) budget, what has been approved, where the MUS is in relation to the November 15, 2008 executive budget and the December 15, 2008 executive budget level, present law adjustments, and initiatives included in the MUS Strategic Plan.



2. Legislative Update

Associate Commissioner Tyler Trevor highlighted changes in SJ 12, which is the proposed Bitterroot Valley Community College resolution heard last week. The hearing for SJ 12 has been re-opened due to concern by legislative committee members that the hearing had been hurried and that there had not been adequate time for the opponents to speak, nor for the committee members to ask questions. The committee members have questions related to fiscal aspects. The hearing has been scheduled for February 16, 2009.

Bills of interest discussed:

- HB 228, sponsored by Representative Krayton Kerns, citizen self-defense and firearm rights bill
- SB 304, sponsored by Senator Roy Brown, keep our kids here tax credit bill
- HB 478, sponsored by Representative Dave McAlpin, university system bonding for new buildings bill
- HB 355, sponsored by Representative Edie McClafferty, to fund a math and science academy at Montana Tech
- SJ 25, sponsored by Senator Jim Peterson, which requests an interim study by rural and urban institute, but lacks funding to do so
- SB 250, sponsored by Senator Dave Wanzonried, which strengthens protection against counterfeit logos

3. Federal Recovery Reinvestment Act as it Relates to Higher Education

Deputy Commissioner Mick Robinson gave a brief update including the following points on the current status of the Federal Recovery Reinvestment Act as it relates to higher education:

- Some of the infrastructure for higher education portion has been eliminated
- Montana currently is to receive \$124 million, with the majority focused on education and based on a formula determining the amount designated for post secondary education
- The campuses have provided a list of possible infrastructure projects to OCHE that fall within the allowable amount of funding. Mr. Robinson has provided the list to the legislature and the Governor's Office.
- Competitive grants included in the area of research
- Increase in maximum Pell Grants
- Increase in work study funding
- Increase of \$2000 per year in student loan limits

Public Comment

Maureen Weiland, ASMSU, voiced concern of the impact of HB 228, the citizen self defense bill, on the campuses and across the state.



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 PM.

Posted on

Approved by the Board of Regents on

Date

Date

Sheila M. Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

Stephen Barrett
Chair, Board of Regents