

May 21-22, 2015

ITEM 167-2006-R0515

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Education upon Dr. Elisabeth Swanson, Montana State University

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Elisabeth Swanson from the faculty of Montana State University, the faculty wishes to express its deep appreciation for her years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the state of Montana by requesting that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Elisabeth Swanson graduated in 1973 from the University of California, Berkeley, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Conservation of Natural Resources. She received her K-12 Teaching Certificate in Life Science and General Science in 1977. She taught at public and private K-12 schools in Alaska and New Mexico, and in Environmental Education programs in Yosemite and the Florida Everglades, for eight years. She earned her master's degree in 1980 in Environmental Education at the University of California, Davis, and completed her Ph.D. in Science Education at the University of Georgia in 1987.

Dr. Swanson joined Montana State University in 1987 as an Assistant Professor of Science Education and achieved tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in 1993. She became the Director of MSU's Science Math Resource Center (SMRC) in 1996 and provided exceptional leadership in this domain through 2012.

Dr. Swanson has been an active participant in campus, regional, and national efforts directed at instructional improvement for science and mathematics teacher preparation, undergraduate education in STEM fields, mentoring for early career K-12 teachers and university faculty, and outreach to tribal college science and mathematics faculty and students. Dr. Swanson served as a co-founder and Steering Committee Chair of the *Master of Science in Science Education* degree program at MSU Bozeman from 1997-2012, an interdisciplinary (four college, nine department), degree program with campus and distance delivery components serving teachers in 48 states and international locations.

During her 17 years (1996 –2012) as the Director of the Science Math Resource Center and a successful grant leader, Dr. Swanson secured a portfolio of funded projects that brought \$23.7 million in STEM education funding to Montana and partner states. Funding is an essential feature of any center's work, yet the numbers that counted the most to Dr. Swanson had to do with providing people with sustained access to learning and career opportunities, and disseminating research knowledge. Under Dr. Swanson's leadership, SMRC provided Faculty Fellowships for over 141 university and tribal college faculty to revise STEM courses that have enrolled tens of thousands of undergraduate students. Fellowships funded by the Center under Dr. Swanson allowed 104 undergraduates to complete teaching licensure in STEM fields and supported 65 master's students and 78 doctoral students. During Dr. Swanson's directorship, SMRC also provided sustained professional development for more than 1570 early career teachers, 982 experienced

teachers, and 401 higher education faculty in STEM fields. The teacher and faculty professional development figures are particularly noteworthy as, under Dr. Swanson's leadership, all participants were engaged for spans of 1-3 years, providing ample time for paradigm shifts toward more powerful STEM education in the teachers' K-12 schools.

Dr. Swanson is a nationally recognized expert in science education, focusing her research earlier in her career on children's perceptions of science, and how those perceptions were influenced by experiences in the family, schools and in the children's communities. Her research and publications more recently have investigated professional development for higher education faculty and K-12 teachers in learning and teaching in STEM. Dr. Swanson has been actively engaged in research and scholarship, publishing journal articles, book chapters, a monograph commissioned and published by the National Science Foundation (NSF); three films, accompanied by monographs, and aired on national public television by Annenberg Foundation; and convening multiple research conferences on diversity and equity topics at the request of NSF. She also served as the Associate Editor for the *Journal for Research in Science Teaching*, from June 2005 – Spring 2009.

The purpose of Emerita status is to signal recognition of merit in the professional achievements of retiring faculty. Throughout her 27 year career at MSU, Dr. Elisabeth Swanson has demonstrated the very highest levels of intelligence, purpose, energy, and engagement and has helped Montana State University to fulfill its mission as Montana's land grant institution.

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon Dr. Elisabeth Swanson the rank of Associate Professor Emeritus of Education at Montana State University and wishes her well for many years in the future.

ATTACHMENTS

None