



**DATE:** October 26, 2016  
**TO:** Montana Board of Regents  
**FROM:** Royce C. Engstrom, President *Royce C Engstrom*  
**RE:** Campus Report for the November 2016 BOR Meeting

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**Debra Magpie Earling**, Bitterroot Salish tribal member, author, and UM Professor, was recently named the Director of the UM Creative Writing Program. She is the first Native American Director in the program's history. Earling, who teaches fiction at UM, has earned a Guggenheim Fellowship, and her novel *Perma Red* won the Western Writers Association Spur Award, WWA's Medicine Pipe Bearer Award for Best First Novel, a WILLA Literary Award and the American Book Award. She is the great-granddaughter of Paul Charlo, the last federally recognized chief of the Bitterroot Salish.

UM Professor **Robin Saha** is the 2016 recipient of the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award, bestowed by Campus Compact. Saha, an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, was selected for his exemplary leadership in student civic learning and conducting community-based research, fostering reciprocal partnerships, building institutional commitments to engagement and enhancing higher education's contribution. The award is named in honor of Thomas Ehrlich, former chair of the Campus Compact board of directors and president emeritus of Indiana University, and is sponsored by the KPMG Foundation.

**Norma Nickerson**, a Research Professor and Director of the UM Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR), was recently appointed to serve on the board of directors for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Helena Branch. Nickerson has 22 years of experience leading the ITRR and will join the Helena Branch board as a tourism and recreation expert. She researches and writes about Montana's tourism and recreation industry, has produced hundreds of reports for the industry and has presented globally about Montana tourism. She will begin her first term on Jan. 1, 2017. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up the Federal Reserve System, the nation's central bank. Helena Branch directors contribute regional perspectives on economic conditions as part of the Federal Reserve's monitoring of the national economy and the formulation of monetary policy.

**Research** is booming at UM and for the second year in a row, the University set a new record for external funding. UM brought in \$87 million in funding during the past fiscal year to support homegrown Montana research, entrepreneurship, and statewide outreach, exceeding the last year's record total of \$83 million. With these funds, UM researchers and scholars are designing new molecules with applications for drug development and environmental remediation. They are creating professional trainings to improve mental health among children living in rural communities. Among many other activities, they also are tracking elk to better understand their

migratory patterns and pursuing an array of other newly funded research efforts that promise to create local economic opportunity while addressing questions and challenges of global significance.

UM's **Wildlife Biology Program** – which offers students unrivaled access to hands-on, outdoor learning opportunities – is the No. 1 program in the U.S. and Canada, according to *Academic Analytics*. The ranking is based on faculty productivity. The Wildlife Biology Program is an interdisciplinary group of faculty from the College of Forestry and Conservation, the Division of Biological Sciences within the College of Humanities and Sciences, and the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.

UM was recently named to the **Princeton Review's 2017 list of top four-year colleges and universities in North America**. "The Best 381 Colleges: 2017 Edition" was released in August. The rankings in the 2017 edition are based on surveys of 143,000 students at the 381 colleges that appear in the book during the previous three school years. In addition to making "The Best 381 Colleges" list, UM also was listed among Princeton Review's "Best Western" colleges and "Green Colleges." Annually published since 1992, the annual Princeton Review ranking includes detailed profiles of each school and ratings in a variety of areas, such as academics, campus life and tuition and aid.

The Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society chose the **Penetralia chapter at UM** as one of the 36 winners for its Gold Torch award. The Gold Torch is a national distinction conferred annually upon the most outstanding chapters of Mortar Board. Recipients of the Gold Torch excel in all areas of chapter operations, while promoting scholarship, leadership and meaningful service to their institutions. Mortar Board is the premier national honor society recognizing college seniors for their outstanding achievements in scholarship, leadership and service.

The **Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM)** launched its first zero-emission vehicles on Sept. 30, making UM the first campus in America to bring fast-charging electric buses to a university fleet. According to DEQ, the Proterra buses will immediately improve local air quality when they enter service, reducing emissions by 1,392 tons during their 12-year lifespan. The DEQ also estimates that nearly 123,500 gallons of diesel fuel will not be burned as a result of the transition to the new technology. Founded in 1999 by a student referendum, ASUM Transportation has seen its ridership grow to nearly 15,000 people per week. Last year alone it provided more than 400,000 zero-fare rides to students, staff, faculty and visitors.