

May 20, 2020

ITEM 188-1006-R0520

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus on Gyda Swaney, University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the retirement of Gyda Swaney from the faculty of the University of Montana, the faculty wish to express their appreciation for her 19 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

Dr. Swaney earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Montana and completed a predoctoral internship at Boston City Hospital and Boston University School of Medicine. She joined the Department of Psychology at the University in 2000.

Dr. Swaney educated countless undergraduate students, scores of graduate students and many colleagues. Her undergraduate classroom-based teaching responsibilities included Multicultural Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, and Intergroup Dialogues. At the graduate level she taught Multicultural Psychology, Ethics and Professional Issues, and she supervised graduate students' clinical skills development in Applied Clinical Methods. Dr. Swaney's mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students was recognized with numerous awards and certificates of appreciation including from the Office of Student Affairs, The McNair Scholars Program, and Bridges to the Baccalaureate.

Dr. Swaney's contribution to the graduate level training and education of Native American clinical psychologists was phenomenal. She was the Director of the Indians into Psychology (InPsych) Program, one of only three in the entire nation. Under her leadership the program secured continuous funding for 20 years (with renewal applications every year) from the federal government to support Native students' education and training. During this period, 13 InPsych and other Native students obtained doctoral degrees in clinical psychology at UM (with 4 more in progress), a remarkable number in light of the few doctoral level clinical psychologists in the entire nation.

Dr. Swaney also championed the Mental Health Career Opportunity Program (MHCOP), which was instrumental in building education pathways from Montana's reservation high schools to the tribal colleges and, ultimately, to UM. Thanks to Dr. Swaney's efforts, all Montana tribal colleges developed Psychology programs that facilitate students' transfer to undergraduate psychology majors. In addition, Salish Kootenai College developed its own BA program in psychology thanks largely to MHCOP support and Dr. Swaney's guidance.

As a scholar, Dr. Swaney contributed to the knowledge base regarding cultural issues in psychological assessment, coping strategies and resilience in Native elders, trauma and traumatic grief, indigenous methodologies, and health psychology. In concert with other investigators, she secured nearly a half a million dollars in research funding, published numerous peer-reviewed articles, and presented papers at local, state, national and international conferences. As a testament to her dedication to mentorship, the majority of her scholarly works were created with students as co-authors.

Finally, Dr. Swaney was generous with her time and expertise, donating both to tireless advocacy and public service. She served as the Montana delegate to the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association. In that role, she represented Montana's interests and chaired the elections committee for the Ethnic Minority Issues Caucus. Dr. Swaney also served on the Board of Directors of the Montana Psychological Association for more than a decade, first as Academic/Scientific Officer and then as Diversity Coordinator. Dr. Swaney's contributions to the community are staggering in extent and scope. Among other numerous and diverse service activities, she has occupied board seats for Missoula's YWCA, the Partnership for Children, and Nk'wusm, the Salish Language Institute.

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our colleague and friend, and as the Department of Psychology, we join other University colleagues in seeking to honor her contributions to the scholarly life of the University of Montana and her tireless efforts to improve the health and well-being of all Montanans and indigenous populations everywhere. She will forever stand as an aspirational ideal and role model for faculty and students in our department. We are humbled and pleased to nominate Dr. Gyda Swaney for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None.