

INFORMATION ITEM – MSU Building Naming

March 10-11, 2022

1. The Gianforte Family Foundation has announced a \$50 million gift to the university for the construction of a new building to house the Gianforte School of Computing. The gift is a continuation of more than 20 years of philanthropy by the Gianforte Family Foundation in supporting students at the university. Since its inception, the Gianforte Family Foundation has provided significant support to MSU that enabled its computer science program to boost enrollments, award scholarships and provide competitive start-up packages to six new faculty members. In 2016, the Gianforte Family Foundation donated \$8 million to establish the Gianforte School of Computing at Montana State University.
2. A new building for the Gianforte School of Computing at Montana State University will elevate the experience of students pursuing computer science degrees and complementary degrees in computing-related fields such as cybersecurity, optics and photonics, electrical engineering, and creative industries. The new building will also enhance Montana State University efforts to retain and graduate larger numbers of students through its state-of-the-art classrooms, modern computer labs, student research facilities and interdisciplinary collaborative spaces.
3. Graduates with in-demand computing skills and knowledge will benefit the state's economy by providing a much needed and expanded workforce for Montana's rapidly growing high-tech industry. The new building will enhance a student's ability to pursue technology-related opportunities by bringing together computer science personnel – who are currently dispersed in five buildings – with others whose work is computationally focused. The new building will also continue to strengthen dual-enrollment opportunities with Montana high school students.
4. Computer science graduates are in high demand both in Montana and nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employment of computer and information research scientists is projected to grow 22 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations. A 2021 report by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana found that members of the Montana High Tech Business Alliance expected to add 1,500 jobs in 2021 and that "growth projected in member and nonmember high-tech businesses significantly exceeds average statewide economic growth." Further, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, average national salaries for computer science graduates jumped 7.1 percent in the last year to \$72,000.
5. Board of Regents policy 1004.1 establishes a process for naming campus property and buildings. Given the significance of the gift to the university and in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 1004.1, Montana State University will begin the process to name the new building Gianforte Hall.
6. As part of the naming process, after Montana State University receives public input, the naming proposal will be provided to the Board of Regents for consideration at the May 2022 meeting.