

May 18-19, 2022

ITEM 200-2006-R0522

Request for Authorization to Name the Proposed MSU Computing Building, Gianforte Hall; Montana State University

THAT

Consistent with the Board's authority to manage and control the Montana University System and provisions of BOR Policy 1004.1, the Board of Regents authorizes Montana State University to name its proposed MSU Computing Building, Gianforte Hall.

EXPLANATION

In March 2022, the Gianforte Family Foundation 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.

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, such as film, photography and music technologies.

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.

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 starting salaries for computer science graduates jumped 7.1 percent in the last year to \$72,000.

Property and programs may be considered for naming by the Board pursuant to policy 1004.1 upon a minimum of 14 days' notice to the public and an opportunity for members of the public to be heard on the campus where the proposed property or program naming is located. Per the policy, MSU is recommending the naming of Gianforte Hall.

ATTACHMENTS

None