

September 21-22, 2022

ITEM 202-1005-R0922

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences on Dr. John M. Gerdes; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor John M. Gerdes from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his 20 years of dedicated, effective and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

The University of Montana (UM) requests the Board of Regents appoint Dr. John M. Gerdes as Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Skaggs School of Pharmacy. Dr. Gerdes retired as Research Professor in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy effective June 30, 2021. He served as a tenured full Professor and Associate Professor during his service to the institution.

Dr. Gerdes received his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Colorado State University in 1978. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from the University of California Riverside in 1982 and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Medicinal and Organic Chemistry from the University of California Berkeley between 1982-1985. After holding a tenured position at Central Washington University, he joined the faculty at UM in 2001 as an Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry before moving to the Skaggs School of Pharmacy in 2005. Dr. Gerdes was promoted to Full Professor in 2010, and after taking a leave from the UM in 2014, returned as a Research Professor in 2016. He had a distinguished, productive tenure while at UM until his retirement in June 2021.

As faculty, Dr. Gerdes distinguished himself in teaching, research and professional service. He principally taught central nervous system (CNS) topics in Medicinal Chemistry I and II, but contributed to other courses in the pharmacy program including, Integrated Studies, Pharmaceutics, Pharmaceutics Laboratory, and Clinical Pharmacokinetics. He was also active in graduate courses, teaching for various graduate programs in the Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Students regularly ranked his instruction positively.

Dr. Gerdes' research focuses on pharmacology and medicinal chemistry of drug targets to treat CNS diseases, particularly neurodegenerative diseases and neuropsychiatric disorders. A review of his CV shows his many achievements that acknowledge his substantial contributions to the UM and the field of CNS disease pathology and drug development. During his career, he has published over 70 papers, and notably has another 5 manuscripts that he listed in preparation, demonstrating that he is still active in research. Dr. Gerdes has filed 7 patents, 4 clinical trials, and has consulted for several pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. He has been awarded 35 grants that have been completed over his career, has another 10 grants currently active, and 2 more that are pending review. Dr. Gerdes has presented his research over fifty times at local, national, and international venues, thereby advancing the University's research mission. Dr. Gerdes also made an exceptional contribution to UM through training student scientists and mentoring dozens of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral trainees in research in his laboratory. Under his mentorship, he graduated five Ph.D. students at UM (and another 5 M.S. students at Central Washington University) and served on 16 Ph.D. and M.S. graduate student committees. He has mentored an additional 19 postdoctoral fellows.

Dr. Gerdes also served in several important capacities at UM, including as the Director of the Molecular Computation Core Facility and Co-Director for the UM Core Laboratory for Neuromolecular Production. Dr. Gerdes also served on a number of committees in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy, Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Center for Structural and Functional Neuroscience.

Overall, the University of Montana has been well served by having Dr. Gerdes as a faculty member during an exceptional career. The Skaggs School of Pharmacy is well respected both regionally and nationally, principally because the dedication and hard work by faculty such as Dr. Gerdes. He is well respected by his peers, UM students, and the University community at-large. The Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences is pleased to enthusiastically nominate Professor John M. Gerdes for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None