

May 20, 2026

**ITEM 224-2001-R0526**

**Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering upon Dr. Douglas Cairns; Montana State University**

---

**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the relinquishment of tenure and assignment as Research Professor of Dr. Douglas Cairns from Montana State University, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for his service to the University, the Montana University System and the people of the State of Montana.

---

**EXPLANATION**

Dr. Cairns joined the Mechanical Engineering Department in 1995 as a non-tenured Associate Professor after an approximately 10-year career in the aerospace industry, which included a distinguished record of research and scholarly publications. After establishing the largest research program in Mechanical Engineering at the time, he was granted continuous tenure and promoted to Full Professor in 1998. He plans to vacate and surrender his continuous tenure status at MSU on June 30, 2026.

Dr. Cairns is an award-winning teacher and researcher at MSU. During the past 30 years, he has taught approximately 30 independent courses, developed and implemented over eight (8) new engineering courses to strengthen MSU relevance in materials, design and analysis, manufacturing, and testing. Most notably, he developed and implemented the MSU Aerospace Minor, which is to our knowledge, the largest independent minor for which there is no major at MSU. He has been the primary advisor for dozens of graduate students, all of whom have gone on to careers including university faculty positions, government research laboratory positions, industry engineering and management positions, and entrepreneurial development of engineering companies. That is a testament to the impact his mentorship has had while at MSU.

In addition to the teaching and research discussed above, Dr. Cairns has brought attention and prestige to MSU's land grant mission through his teaching, research, and service. He has received multiple awards for this work including: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics for Distinguished Service as Chairman of the Materials Technical Committee and Distinguished Service for bringing Wind Energy to the Structures, Structural Dynamics and Materials (SDM) Conference. He is a past Associate Editor for the Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites and the ASME Journal of Solar Energy (Co-Editor for Wind Papers).

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon Dr. Douglas Cairns the rank of Professor Emeritus of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering in the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at Montana State University and wishes him well for many years.

---

**ATTACHMENTS**

None