



Minutes Montana Board of Regents July 9, 2026

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Meeting convened at 9:01 am

Regents Present: Loren Bough, Chair, Jeff Southworth, Todd Buchanan, Dan Spoon, Dean Folkvord, Heather Hoyer, and Quindy Gronley. Ex officio members present included Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian and Governor Greg Gianforte, represented by Manish Bhatt. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Susie Hedalen, was excused.

Comments by Chair Bough | 00:00:54

Chair Bough thanked everyone for their leadership and commitment to higher education. He thanked the Board for the honor of being selected to serve as Chair and is looking forward to advancing the MUS. He welcomed the new student regent, Quindy Gronley. He introduced and welcomed Governor Gianforte's education policy advisor, Manish Bhatt, and the University of Montana's new president, Dr. Jeremiah Shinn. He then gave a brief agenda overview.

Approval of Minutes | 00:05:49

- May 20th, 2026, Meeting Minutes

With no corrections offered, the minutes were approved as distributed.

Commissioner's Report | 00:06:16

Commissioner Christian congratulated Chair Bough on his new role. He thanked everyone for their attendance. He welcomed Regent Gronley.

- Campus Reports | 00:08:25

Commissioner Christian said OCHE has submitted the MUS proposed budget, LRBP priorities, and legislative initiatives to the Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning. He said a draft executive budget should be available in October and a final one in mid-November. He expressed his gratitude to Governor Gianforte and his team for their continued support of the MUS.

- Introductions | 00:10:24

Commissioner Christian introduced President Shinn.

President Shinn introduced the new Vice President of Marketing and Communication, Dave Kuntz, and the new Dean of Missoula College, Lauren Fern.



Montana University System

Chancellor Estee Aiken, UM Western, introduced Interim Provost, Dr. Eric Wright, and Interim Dean of Strategic Initiatives, Dr. Hilary Risser.

CONSENT | 00:17:44

Emeriti Items:

- a. Stone; UM Missoula ITEM 225-1001-R0726
- b. White; MT Tech ITEM 225-1501-R0726

Tenure Faculty:

- c. MSU Bozeman; ITEM 225-2000-R0726

Facilities:

- d. Request for Authorization to Lease Space in the Engineworks Building for the MSU Catalyst Incubator; MSU Bozeman ITEM 225-2002-R0726 | Attachment #1
- e. Request for Authorization to Repair and Replace Windows at Renne Library; MSU Bozeman ITEM 225-2003-R0726 | Attachment #1
- f. Request for Authorization to Grant a Utility Easement to Northwest Energy; MT Tech ITEM 225-1503-R0726 | Attachment #1

Other:

- g. Request for Authorization to Exclude Certain Officers and Directors from Personnel Security Clearance; UM Missoula ITEM 225-1002-R0726 | Attachment #1
- h. Request for Approval of University System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407; MT Tech ITEM 225-1502-R0726 | Attachment #1
- i. Request for Approval of University System/Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation Under MUSP 407 – McCrory, Westlund and Poplin, MSU Bozeman ITEM 225-2001-R0726 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of consent items a.- i. was made by Regent Buchanan; motion passed (7-0).

ACTION | 00:18:58

- a. Policy Revisions; OCHE/MUS ITEM 225-101-R0726 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2 | Attachment #3 | Attachment #4 | Attachment #5 | Attachment #6 | Attachment #7

Chief Legal Counsel, Ali Bovingdon, said this item is part of the annual policy review. She said these revisions will modernize policies and reflect best practices and organizational updates. She reviewed six of the policy revisions.

Deputy Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Tyler Trevor, reviewed the proposed revision to policy 940.13 on tuition waivers.

A motion for approval of action item a. ITEM 225-101-R0726 was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (7-0).



Montana University System

b. Request to Plan Item; MT Tech ITEM 225-1506-R0726

Interim Deputy Commissioner of Academic, Research, and Student Affairs, Joe Thiel, presented the request to plan for an Associates of Applied Science in Heavy Equipment Operations and Maintenance at MT Tech.

A motion for approval of action item b. ITEM 225-1506-R0726 was made by Regent Folkvord; motion passed (7-0).

INFORMATION | 00:27:34

a. Proposed Revisions to Board of Regents Policy 221 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2

Interim Deputy Commissioner Thiel said this policy is the process for institutions to be authorized in Montana, and these revisions will more closely align the policy with best practices and other states' policies.

Associate Legal Counsel, Hannah Tokerud, presented proposed revisions to existing Board Policy 221 regarding state authorization. She noted that the proposed revisions would better align the Board's policy with current regulatory best practices. She also presented a proposed new policy regarding the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. Discussion followed.

Appeal | 00:38:47

Chair Bough explained the process related to appeals. He called for a motion to hear the appeal. No motion was made to hear the appeal, and the Commissioner's decision was upheld.

Public Comment | 00:40:12

Deborah Kottel, Interim Academic Dean at the University of Providence, shared her concerns of the proposed policy revision to Board of Regents Policy 221 and asked the board to consider input from existing private institutions before implementing these revisions.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:45 am

Approved by the Board of Regents on

September 24, 2026

Date

Clayton T. Christian
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

September 24, 2026

Date

Loren Bough
Chair, Board of Regents