



ITEM 118-2004-R0103

June 30, 2003

Board of Regents of Higher Education
2500 Broadway
Helena, MT 59620-3101

RE: COLLABORATIVE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEGREE

In July, the administrations of MSU-Bozeman and MSU-Billings will be asking the Board of Regents of the Montana University System to approve a collaborative Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree which would be offered on the MSU-Billings campus. MSU-Bozeman already offers this degree. Faculty from both campuses would teach in the program which would expand the graduate degree offerings available in Billings.

I applaud this cooperation between the two universities and would like to see it expanded to other areas to increase the educational opportunities available in our community.

I believe that some of our employees who interact extensively with government entities would be interested in the new degree. It will also serve as a magnet attracting government employees to transfer to Billings to enroll in the program, encourage others to remain in the region to pursue the degree and help some workers achieve promotions after completing it. As a large health care employer, we regularly recruit professionals that have spouses either interested in pursuing graduate degrees or seeking employment in the government sector.

In conclusion, this collaborative MPA degree will increase graduate education opportunities in the greater Billings area and encourage the economic and governmental development needs of our region. I fully support the proposed new degree and encourage the Board of Regents to approve it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas J. Wolter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Nicholas J. Wolter, MD
Chief Executive Officer

Copy: Mr. Richard A. Crofts, Commissioner of Higher Education