Dear Students and Colleagues,

As we approach the end of finals week at UM, I wish you a happy holiday season. My hope is that every one of you gets the opportunity to relax, spend time with friends and family, and enjoy a little time off. Everyone works so hard during the semester, and our collective accomplishments are many. Thank you for the role you play at UM and congratulations on completing another semester of work or study.

We are fortunate to have such passion for our University among the students and employees. As we wrestle with challenging enrollments and budgets, you have raised important concerns, you have asked thoughtful questions, and you have generated constructive ideas. I am proud of the energy around our conversations.

In response to comments that came in over the past few weeks and in dialogue with many people, I want to provide an update in a few areas.

First, I have decided to expand my Cabinet to include the leadership of the Faculty, Staff and Student Senates. Although we have had strong and regular interaction with all three groups, incorporating them into the regular Cabinet conversations will help ensure that all good ideas are brought to the table. We will begin this new Cabinet arrangement in January.

Second, we are quite certain that we will make the necessary faculty adjustments without eroding our core intellectual capacity, the tenure/tenure-track faculty. We will finalize these actions over the course of the next couple of weeks.

Third, I want you to know I have heard the strong message regarding the centrality of the liberal arts to our university. They will remain strong and vibrant.

The University of Montana is a remarkable institution and a special place to learn and work. We will continue working together to make it a shining star among public universities in our country.

Thanks for your help and have a great holiday!

Sincerely,

Royce C. Engstrom, President