WELCOME
Good morning! Welcome to the new academic year! I hope you were able spend some time this summer enjoying Montana with your friends and family. For those of you who are new to the area, I offer a special welcome. You have landed in one of the most beautiful places and one of the most special universities in the nation.

Now the excitement begins anew, with a fresh group of students who have come to the University of Montana to fulfill their dreams. Those students have great expectations of us, as do their parents and the general public. And, of course, we have great expectations for ourselves as we set the standard for higher education in Montana and the region.

I want to thank some special guests here with us today. We are governed constitutionally by the Montana Board of Regents. Regents are volunteers who are chosen by the Governor because of their dedication to the ideals of education and because of their standing in our communities in Montana. In the audience today is Regent Fran Albrecht and Student Regent Mariah Williams.

Also with us is Clay Christian, the Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Montana, a graduate of UM himself. Clay is a tireless advocate for higher education in Montana. Thank you for your leadership.

UM MINUTE
Let’s take a few minutes to celebrate some accomplishments of the people that make this University such a remarkable place. For those of you who are new to campus, we open our meetings with a UM Minute to remind ourselves of why we are here.

I will begin by recognizing a pioneering faculty member. Fred Allendorf, Regents Professor Emeritus at UM, has been a leader in building a discipline known as Conservation Genomics. Last summer, the U. S. Forest Service announced that they were dedicating a new National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation in honor of Fred. Many of you know that Fred and his wife, Michael, were caught in a freak avalanche that sadly took Michael’s life. Fred has exhibited extreme courage and tenacity in recovery from his own injuries, and I am delighted to recognize Fred today and ask him to stand as we welcome him back to campus.

Several weeks ago, Thompson Reuters conducted a study that asked the question, “Who are some of the best and brightest scientific minds of our time?” The conducted of the impact of scientific work and identified the top 1% of scientists around the world. Three of those
scientists are UM faculty members and they are with us today. Please stand as I say your names.

- Regents Professor of Ecology, Steve Running
- Associate Professor of Conservation Ecology, Gordon Luikart
- Professor of Biology, Ray Callaway

Thank you all for the distinction with which you represent yourselves and UM. I should note that these three were the only scientists from Montana so recognized.

UM has a reputation for producing champions from within our student body as well. Last year, three of our undergraduates, coached by a graduate student, went to the 18th International Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, competing with 32 teams. The UM team won the competition and became the national champions. I want to recognize them now and believe we have at least one representative of the team in the audience:

- Students Hayden Hooker, Joel Johnson and Alan Rolph
- Team Coach Neil Bennett

The Udall Foundation was created in 1992 to honor Morris and Stewart Udall for their work as national public servants. The Foundation created the Udall Scholarship, a nationally competitive scholarship that recognizes work in public service, the environment, and Native American issues. That profile fits the University of Montana so well that we lead the nation in the number of Udall Scholars. Last spring, we were notified that yet another of our students, Hope Radford, became our 37th Udall Scholar.

Our 36th Udall Scholar, Mara Menahan, was named our 14th Truman Scholar this past year. She was also named a Newman Civic Fellow. Mara, a student in the Davidson Honors College, will graduate in December with majors in Environmental Studies and Geography, and she plans to pursue an MFA in Art. Please congratulate Mara on her tremendous accomplishments.

Our Dining Services staff has performed with distinction. Last spring, Director of Dining Services Mark LoParco was selected by the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association to receive the Silver Plate Award for the colleges and universities category. In addition, the National Association of College and University Food services recognized the entire UM Dining Program with its 2014 Gold Award for Sustainability. We have a number of people here with us from Dining Services and I would like them to stand and be recognized.

Two weeks ago, we held a truly remarkable event in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. Sir Paul McCartney selected Missoula and UM to be a stop on his “Out There” tour. The evening was nothing short of spectacular and I, for one, will remember it forever. That special evening happened because of the tremendously hard work of many, many people at UM. I would like to thank Brad Murphy and the McCartney team.
Our Athletics program continues to be a powerhouse, as we strive for excellence in the classroom, excellence in the community, and excellence in competition. Our men’s and women’s tennis teams became the Big Sky Champions last year. Our student-athletes excelled in competition while collectively earning a GPA above 3.0 for the 18th semester in a row. And in the process, they contributed over 2,000 hours of volunteer service to the Missoula community. We have some representatives of student-athletes, coaching staff, and support staff here today. Please stand to be recognized.

Finally, let me recognize a distinguished group of students who help to make UM a place for students of all ages. We have a program called the Montana Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – MOLLI – designed to provide educational opportunities for people over 50 years old. Course topics include world geopolitics, sciences, the arts, history, and more. Last spring semester we enrolled over 800 students in MOLLI courses, people from the Missoula area who have a passion for learning. The MOLLI program is overseen by a community-based board, chaired by Ann Boone, illustrating just one example of the terrific supportive relationship we have with our host community. Members of the Board are here today; please welcome them to campus.

So, you see, those of you who are new to campus are joining a remarkable group of people who care deeply about the University of Montana.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ADMINISTRATORS
Provost Brown introduced our new faculty members. Let me now introduce some other new people to the University:

- Larry Abramson, Dean, School of Journalism
- Kimberly Brown Campbell, Campus Assault Prevention Coordinator
- Royelle Bundy, Director, American Indian Student Services
- Travis DeCuire, Head Men's Basketball Coach
- Laurie Fisher, Director, Career Services
- David Gant, Assistant Vice President of Gift Planning, UM Foundation
- Shawn Grove, Director, VETS Office
- Art Held, Vice President of Development Services, UM Foundation
- Reed Humphrey, Dean, College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences
- Barry Kenfield, Director and Chief Operating Officer, Family Medical Residency of Western Montana
- Nathan Lindsay, Associate Provost for Dynamic Learning
- Marty Ludemann, Director, Office of Public Safety and Chief of Police
- Greg Munro, Interim Dean, School of Law
- Jamie Pinkerton, Head Softball Coach
- Jamie Stanton, Chief Financial Officer, UM Foundation
- Joni Stephens, Head Women's Golf Coach
• Jessica Weltman, Director and Title IX Coordinator, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Shared governance is fundamental to UM. We have with us the leadership of our:
• Faculty Senate: Chair Steve Lodmell, Chair-Elect Bill Borrie
• ASUM: Re-elected for the first time that we know of, President Asa Hohman, and Vice-President, Sean McQuillan.
• Staff Senate: President Maggie Linder, Vice-President Matt Filer.

MAJOR ISSUES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR

Let me turn to some of the hard work that we as a University have taken on during this past year. If there was a theme for last year, it would be turning challenge into leadership. Let me give some examples.

We were challenged by the issue of campus safety and particularly, the issue of sexual assault. We see now that the nation has recognized sexual assault as a matter of almost epidemic proportions. We were among the first to interact with the Department of Justice through a Resolution document; now some 75 institutions around the country are going through the same process. We at UM took this matter extremely seriously, recognizing that we have a key responsibility to our students. The educational programming, PETSA, now completed by 20,000 students has made a difference and has served as a model for other institutions. Difficult a time as that was, we emerged as a stronger institution, a safer campus, much better integrated with Missoula Law Enforcement, and something of a national leader.

Enrollment has been a challenge for us in this past couple of years. As a result, we had to do a serious self-evaluation of our recruiting and marketing efforts. We made many important changes. We now have a program that includes more vibrant general marketing built around electronic communication and social media, completely revamped recruiting materials and an aggressive schedule of contact with prospective students, and renewed connections to high schools through our faculty. For example, Brent Ruby and Matt Bundle took their exciting program around human performance and exercise physiology to students in the Flathead Valley. We live in an extremely competitive environment and we must all play an active role in recruiting and retaining students.

Student success remains among the top priorities of the Regents and this University. Among the biggest challenges to incoming students is their academic preparedness in the area of mathematics. A year ago, folks at UM, including Bob Currie of the Montana Digital Academy, Dean Bobbie Evans, Erika Twedt of the UM Foundation, and Sharon O’Hare from the Provost’s office, piloted a new program called Ed Ready, a digital approach to moving students from a level of developmental math to college-level math. The pilot results were impressive, 86%, of the students involved in the Ed Ready pilot successfully made the transition to college level math. With financial support from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, UM and the
Digital Academy are now implementing Ed Ready on a state-wide scale so that every student in Montana can be ready for college-level math in the future.

Our Academic Programming presents educational opportunities that form a solid foundation for a life of citizenship and fulfillment, and that represent state-of-the-art thinking in groundbreaking areas. This last year brought two major cross-disciplinary initiatives into focus.

The Brain Initiative recognizes the tremendous academic strength across our campus, ranging from neuroscience, to the newly approved Neural Injury Center, to work in cognition and brain development in young people, to the connection between the creative arts and brain function.

The Data Science Initiative is emerging in partnership with a vibrant business community in Missoula. The Missoula College is initiating a Cyber Security Certificate; with financial assistance from businesses in Missoula we launched a new Cyber Innovation Laboratory; in the School of Business we have offered for several semesters now a “big-data” curriculum in connection with IBM, the first of its kind at the undergraduate level. Just recently, the software giant, Symantec, just launched a new Academic Outreach program and they began their program with one institution – UM. Symantec provided UM with $100,000 worth of software to teach a special course on eDiscovery.

In other academic innovation, our Media Arts program is making their entire undergraduate program online beginning this fall in an innovative approach to reaching students through the best technology available.

The Global Leadership Initiative held its first “passport ceremony” last spring, symbolically and literally sending its students off to exciting places around the world that will enhance their education with a world-view. The first class of GLI students will graduate this coming May.

The impact and relevance of our research was illustrated in a dramatic manner by the announcement of a record-setting $45 Million Cooperative Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers. Under the direction of Professor Ric Hauer, UM researchers will conduct ecological and anthropological studies on lands managed by the Corps around the country. UM was chosen for this project because of its broad, top-level expertise in research of this nature and because of the leadership of Professor Hauer.

Another example of the impact of our scholarship to hard-hitting issues is the work of Professor Nate Levtow from Liberal Studies, in the area of censorship. Nate is the recipient of a prestigious Berlin Prize as well as a Fulbright Fellowship to study historical instances of censorship even in pre-biblical times. He will study at the American Academy in Berlin this fall and is a member of a highly selective group of scholars chosen for this opportunity.

The research portfolio of a major research institution covers the spectrum from very basic work that expands the knowledge base of human society and enriches our lives, to the application of
knowledge to today’s challenges and opportunities. Economic Development is an increasingly important expectation of the work we do and it is a contribution we can and must make.

MonTEC is our business incubator facility that resides across the river from campus and houses start-up businesses that have a connection to the University. The anchor tenant is Rivertop Renewables, a company that we showcased to Regents and Legislators during a recent tour. Rivertop received a remarkable infusion of capital $26 million during this past year and it is thriving. Rivertop was created by Professor Emeritus Don Kiely based on research he conducted as a faculty member, and is now a company that employs UM graduates from several disciplines. What a success story!

The next major entrepreneur is likely currently enrolled in the new Blackstone Launchpad, a project aimed to help current students and alums move their ideas into the private sector. The Launchpad is housed in the UC and led by Paul Gladen.

We made important progress on our Facilities and infrastructure during this past year:

- The next phase of work was completed on the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building, leaving only one floor left to build out.
- This fall, we will open the Eloise Cobell Land and Culture Institute in the lower level of The Payne Family Native American Center. The Institute will house a state-of-the-art GIS laboratory, a film-studies theatre, a new classroom, and a distinctive ceremonial space that doubles as a planetarium.
- Under construction now is a new computing facility to ensure reliable and expansive computing on our campus. An innovative approach using Technology Modular Units will provide the best security and protection available while using a minimum of energy.
- **Wi-Fi** became available in all residence halls, and we are now connected to the world’s research community through a new 100 Gigabit network.

A great university is assisted by donations from people who are passionate about higher education. The UM Foundation had a truly amazing year, logging $53.7 million in private donations. This is both a record dollar amount and a record number of donors. The record resulted from the hard work of countless individuals in the Foundation, the University, and volunteers from our extensive network of alumni and friends and it resulted because of an intensely focused campaign called Investing in Student Success.

I could go on and on about the many things we have done together this past year, but I want to turn our focus to the future.

**LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR**
The future is not just bright for UM, it is brilliant! Why do I think this? Because the innovative spirit is running very high, we are powered by creative, hard-working, and dedicated people, and because Montana and the country needs places like the University of Montana – flagship
institutions that educate students for tomorrow, carry out scholarship that transforms lives, and hold dear the exchange and debate of ideas so critical to our democracy. I want to focus on several areas of work this year that I believe will make us an even stronger institution.

The first of these is the Academic Alignment and Innovation Project. Last spring, I wrote to the leadership of the Faculty Senate, the Deans, and the Provost, asking that they undertake this project. If we are to be an indispensable, society-driving, door-opening institution, we must make sure that we are offering the most impactful, attractive, and relevant curriculum possible. My charge was as follows:

- Examine how we ensure that the liberal arts are central to today’s higher education and identify the best way to communicate the importance of the liberal arts.
- Design a process for identifying programs across campus that are challenged by low enrollment or perception of relevance. For those programs, examine what we can do to strengthen them and make them more attractive to today’s students.
- Identify existing undergraduate, graduate, or professional programs that present distinctive opportunities for growth or strengthening because they are already in high demand and have strong placement opportunities.
- Suggest programs that are not yet present on campus, but should be, given our mission and the opportunities that those programs present.
- Suggest new or expanded opportunities for interdisciplinary, international, and online offerings.

As they go through their work, I want them to keep in mind the drive toward National Distinction among our programmatic offerings. I also want them to keep in mind the tough issues to which today’s students need exposure.

I am delighted that the Faculty Senate and deans have embraced the challenge. The Senate requested that a Faculty Leadership Fellow be appointed to lead this effort, and we have selected Professor Andrew Ware for the role.

Our attractiveness and effectiveness are not limited to our academic programs, so today I am announcing that we will conduct a parallel Administrative Review. The objective is to ensure that we provide state-of-the-art services to our students, staff, faculty and visitors. This project will include the following elements:

- Develop an inventory of all non-academic programs.
- Develop a rubric for characterizing the quality, responsiveness, and effectiveness of the programs.
- As in the case of the academic process, identify those programs that are challenged with respect to effectiveness and develop a plan for improvement.
- Identify those programs that represent “best practice” in higher education and determine how we can capitalize on that strength and model it for other programs.
• Look for opportunities for greater collaboration or alternative organization that would provide better service in a more cost-effective manner.

Over the next couple of weeks, I will be working with our shared governance structure to build a team to lead this work.

I am also launching an initiative called Financial Management for Tomorrow’s UM. Resources at UM will always be finite and will never cover everything we want to accomplish. Therefore, it is imperative that we manage our resources with maximum effectiveness. We have in place a number of outdated practices and financial arrangements that need review. I have asked Vice President Mike Reid to lead a comprehensive review of our financial practices. Specifically, these points will be addressed:

• In partnership with the shared governance structure, develop a new methodology that provides strategic allocation of UM’s resources.
• Evaluate and update all internal financial agreements between UM departments, auxiliaries, and affiliate organizations. We can't continue to be constrained by agreements made years ago under entirely different circumstances.
• Evaluate and restructure the current use of designated funds, and related operations, to ensure they are providing appropriate support and benefit to the mission of the university.
• In cooperation with other sectors, analyze the manner in which we fund IT and how we make use of Indirect Cost Recovery from grant activity.
• Provide campus-wide communication and education to ensure a comprehensive understanding of our finances.

Another area of focus during this year will be our continued work to achieve the best possible Facilities and Infrastructure. We have a number of projects that will be actively underway during this year.

• The Harold and Priscilla Gilkey Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Education is ready for construction. The Center will be located just west of the Gallagher School of Business Administration. It will house programs from the School of Business as well as other units that reach out to businesses, non-profits, and other organizations to provide tailored educational programming. The Center will also be the new home for the UM Foundation. This building is funded mostly from private sources with a contribution from student facilities fees.
• The new Softball Complex is under construction. It is located on the South Campus right behind the soccer fields. We held a groundbreaking ceremony two weeks ago. We will play our first season, next spring, on the new field. The field will have an entirely synthetic surface, allowing for play and practice in almost any weather conditions. This project is being funded mostly from the student athletic fee, which students approved two years ago to increase athletic opportunities for our female students. About 20 young women have arrived on campus to form the first team under Coach Pinkerton.
• On Wednesday, we held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Student-Athlete Academic Center, to be constructed on the front end of the Adams Center. The area is already fenced off and construction is starting. This project is privately funded, and will help to ensure that our student athletes continue to excel.

• Of course, in just a few minutes, we will move across the river to the site of the new Missoula College for a groundbreaking ceremony. This ceremony represents a momentous day for the Missoula College, for UM, for Missoula, and for the state of Montana. We will say much more at the ceremony, but this brand new, beautiful building on a spectacular location will provide educational opportunities for thousands of students. We have many, many people to thank for this project. This is a $32 million project, funded through a state appropriation of $29 million approved during the last legislative session, matched by $3 million of private money. I hope to see you at the ceremony.

We will also use this year to position ourselves for transformative fundraising through private philanthropy. In partnership with the UM Foundation, we are moving toward full campaign mode. A campaign planning committee is in place; the Campus Development Committee is homing in on the priorities for fundraising; the Foundation Board of Trustees is gearing up to take a leadership role; and the Foundation staff, under Shane Giese’s leadership, is putting many pieces in place to run an ambitious and successful fundraising effort. Philanthropy has been key to UM’s success to date, and philanthropy will be key to our future. Building on the outstanding year we just completed, the Foundation’s work will set a whole new standard for private support of this University.

CONCLUSION
We will all be exceptionally busy this year; busy with providing our students with the best education possible, and busy building a great university for the state of Montana and for our nation. I extend my thanks to each of you for the role you play and for your dedication to UM. We have the privilege of working at a special place.

I will end with a brief message. Like most of you, I undergo an annual evaluation, culminating in an executive session with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner. I find it to be a time of frank conversation with the Regents, one that is helpful in many ways. This past May, one of the Regents, Major Robinson, made a simple, but powerful comment to me, and it has stuck with me. He said, “be sure to find the joy in your work.” We all lead busy, even hectic, lives. And we deal every day with challenges. But, we also have opportunity every day to find the joy in what we do. The joy of seeing a student winning a scholarship, of a faculty member receiving a national recognition, a staff member being singled out by a colleague for a job well done, a graduate writing back to say how much her education meant, and the joy of working with wonderful colleagues and friends. So, I urge all of you to take a little time to “find the joy” in your work for the University of Montana. Thank you and have a great year!