



AUG 05 2010

July 28, 2010

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Dr. George M. Dennison
President
The University of Montana - Missoula
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear President Dennison: *George*

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to report that the accreditation of The University of Montana - Missoula has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Spring 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation. Congratulations on receiving this recognition.

The policy of the Commission is not to grant accreditation for a definite number of years. Instead, accreditation must be reaffirmed periodically. In the case of The University of Montana - Missoula, the Commission requests that the institution submit an addendum to the institution's Spring 2011 Year One Report to address Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the Spring 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report. A copy of the Recommendations is enclosed for your reference.

In reaffirming accreditation, the Commission finds that Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Spring 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report are areas where The University of Montana - Missoula is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement.

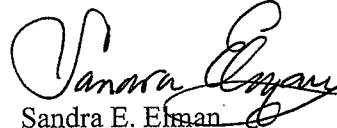
The Commission commends the University's faculty and staff for their dedication, energy, and commitment in providing a culture supportive not only of each other but also of the student body. Likewise, the Commission commends the University for its system and spirit of shared governance in which faculty, staff and students all have appropriate voices and influence. Moreover, the Commission applauds the University for the growth and quality of research and creative/scholarly activity of its faculty as their work has achieved national and international visibility for the University at large. Further, the Commission finds laudable the University's extensive renovation and construction of new facilities over the past ten years. In addition, the Commission commends the University for its emphasis on the goal of "ensuring access for American Indians and fostering the preservation of their culture," which is manifested in multiple ways including the completion of an architecturally-significant building dedicated to American Indian studies, culture, and service; a robust Native American Studies program; and academic and outreach initiatives throughout the institution. The Commission further commends the University for bringing together the many disparate elements of information technology. Lastly, the Commission finds noteworthy the commitment of the Davidson Honors College to enhancing the student experience through an Honors curriculum, study abroad, service learning, guided application for prestigious scholarships, and undergraduate research.

President George M. Dennison
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If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes for a rewarding academic year.

Sincerely,


Sandra E. Eisman
President

SEE:rb

Enclosure: Recommendations

cc: Dr. Royce Engstrom, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. Clayton Christian, Chair, Montana Board of Regents
Dr. Sheila Stearns, Commissioner, Montana University System

Comprehensive Evaluation Report
Spring 2010
The University of Montana - Missoula
Recommendations

1. A variety of University of Montana - Missoula plans, including UM Strategic Directions and the Academic Strategic Plan, contain multiple goals but the specificity with which the progress toward these goals is monitored and documented varies widely. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the University develop and implement standardized procedures to monitor and assess the extent to which it achieves all institutional goals and that progress in achieving them be documented and made public (Standards 1.A.3, 1.B.1, 2.B).
2. While it is clear that a comprehensive set of plans generally guides the decision-making processes at the University of Montana - Missoula, it is not so clear how the goals in those plans are directly related to setting budget and academic priorities. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the institution develop procedures that more clearly connect its planning and evaluation processes with resource allocation and actions to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities (Standards 1.B.4, 1.B.5, 2.B.1).
3. The Committee recommends that the University put in place accessible structures and resources to support faculty development in light of increasing expectations for research/scholarly activity and improvements in pedagogy. In addition, it is recommended that the University continue its efforts to address salary issues, including compression/inversion (Standards 2.A.1, 4.A, 4.B.5).
4. While the University has made great progress in educational outcomes assessment and while there are some exemplary examples of this process at the University of Montana - Missoula, there are areas in which implementation of the assessment process is not complete. Therefore, the Committee recommends that all programs (including General Education) have up-to-date and effective assessment plans and evidence of improvement based upon assessment (Standard 2.B, Policy 2.2).
5. The Committee recommends that the University establish a clear and commonly understood definition of academic advising, more fully identify intended outcomes of advising, better articulate this to faculty and students, and then fully assess how well the outcomes are being met (Standards 2.C.5, 3.D.10).
6. The physical infrastructure of College of Technology is inadequate for many of its activities and has not kept pace with enrollment. For example, modular units and the main building do not have appropriate temperature control and science laboratories are held in regular classrooms. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the institution address the facility needs of the College of Technology (Standard 2.A.1).
7. The Committee recommends that the University ensure appropriate orientation activities for all graduate students (Standard 3.D.9).