January 15, 2016

Subject: Montana University System Employment Contracts

Dear Campus Leaders:

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has an ongoing interest in maintaining and improving the consistency of our human resources policies and practices across the Montana University System. From time to time, a focused effort is necessary to review, refine and align various human resources practices. These efforts are based on the need to respond to shifting federal and state regulatory environments and also our own goals to maintain effective, efficient and consistent human resources systems.

We will be working in partnership with campus leadership this year to conduct a review of job categorizations of employees and their corresponding contract/employment type. This effort is needed to:

1. Ensure consistency in the use of employment categories and contracts for various purposes across the Montana University System in accordance with MUS policy.

2. Ensure consistent reporting of employee jobs within the Montana University System, as well as to federal databases (i.e. the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, IPEDS).

3. Ensure campuses are effectively prepared to implement anticipated changes to federal rules relating to the payment of overtime. As you may have seen in news reports in the past several months, the U.S. Department of Labor has proposed changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The proposed changes will require all employers to identify -- under new standards -- the employees who are required to be paid on an hourly basis and eligible for overtime.

Having addressed the “what” and the “why” of this effort, we believe the “how” is a matter to be addressed appropriately at the campus level. University leaders, in collaboration with campus human resources professionals, are best suited and equipped to organize this effort. You can anticipate receiving additional communications from your campus in the
near future with more information on upcoming activities and plans related to the job categorization review.

For further information or questions, please feel free to contact me or the human resources department on your campus. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education will be working with each campus to help achieve successful outcomes that work right for your institutions and for your valued workforce in service to the students and people of Montana.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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