Happy Holidays! I am delighted to share in representing the amazing group of professional employees here at MSU. Each of us—and you can view our names in the box to the right—want to wish you and your families a rich holiday season filled with peace and serenity. Remember as well that your input is welcome at our professional council meetings, and any of its members would be happy to pass on messages of concern or questions. We are here for each of you.

Associated with the MSU Department of Education for over a decade and a half, I have held my current position as Assistant Director of Field Placement and Licensure for two years. Our office is a non-stop time machine of living in multiple semesters at any given moment. However, our greatest pleasure is when students walk in our doors—to receive a bit of comfort in a stressful time or just to grab some chocolate, which we always have available!

You are more than welcome anytime to contact me with questions at virginia.mohr@montana.edu

### CHANGES IN MSU'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM WILL AFFECT APPROXIMATELY 1900 EMPLOYEES.

On Nov. 8, MSU Professional Council representatives met with Sara King from MSU Human Resources to hear her explanation of the university system’s enhancement to employee retirement plans. After a third-party review, representatives determined that moving from a multi-vendor system to TIAA as the single record keeper would provide employees and the MUS with significant benefits including savings both in time and money, according to King.

When asked who would be affected by the switch, King pointed to those employees with 401(a) and 403(b) plans. Approximately 1900 workers will likely experience some alterations in retirement contribution allocations, so employees will want to watch for email updates from MSU Human Resources. Additionally, OCHE will provide information on the change during a public presentation on December 7 at 10:30 am in SUB Ballroom B, and an informational mailing will go out to homes from TIAA at the end of December. Individual financial counseling sessions with TIAA representatives will also be available beginning January 8, 2018.

Other still-developing news stories include HR’s continued work on Fair Labor Standards Act FLSA compliance and efforts to ensure all employees are appropriately equipped for timekeeping, as well as how budget cuts will be affecting MSU in the months to come. The good news from Terry Leist, VP of Admin and Finance, was that, as of early November, there were no plans for reductions in MSU’s workforce.

Also stay tuned for a coming update on the latest from both the University Facilities Building and Planning (UFPUB), as well as the Transportation and Advisory Committees (PTAC).

Watch for our January newsletter to keep informed about decisions across campus that affect MSU professional employees.
Professional Development Opportunities

November 7 - Management Development Certificate—MD301, Title IX, Sexual Harrassment, Public Employees and Employee Relations, 8:00AM—11:30AM

EEO information will be presented on Title IX, sexual harassment, discrimination and reporting requirements. The course will go over public information and employees as it relates to what is public and what is confidential, including discussions on FERPA, HIPAA and a brief employment law overview. Labor and employee relations such as union contracts, bargaining, and the status of non-union employees will also be covered.

November 30 – Building Emotional Intelligence: Strategies, Tips, and Tools for Raising Your EQ, 1-3 pm, SUB 233
Presenters: Julie Clay, COA, PMP and Dallas Dallman, MEd

Join us for this two-hour workshop where we will provide strategies, tips and tools for each of the four skills that Emotional Intelligence identifies: Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management. This workshop will be conducted in combination with group mini-exercises, personal reflective work, and large group discussion.

January 31, February 7, 21, & 28, 8:30AM—12:30PM – Crucial Conversations training course (16 hours of training)
Offered through PD&T, housed in the Office of Human Resources

Crucial Conversations training can improve the safety, reliability, courtesy and competence of the employees working for our university. Through Crucial Conversations, we learn to see issues through the lens of the stakeholder, make it safe to dialogue on important issues, work more effectively as committed team members, and problem-solve in ways that reduce barriers. Crucial Conversations can help team members learn to use their voices to discuss risky topics, have their opinions heard, participate in decision-making, and address challenging situations in the office. Organizations around the world have used Crucial Conversations Training to improve results in productivity, quality, team work, relationships, performance and efficiency.

TO REGISTER, VISIT: http://www.montana.edu/hr/development/

Useful Resources/Websites

University Council —http://www.montana.edu/universitycouncil/
The University Council’s mission is to ensure that the institutional policies and procedures support the university’s strategic plan and land grant mission. The council establishes and maintains reciprocal communication with representatives from the constituent groups on the Council regarding programs, policies and procedures that have campus wide impact.

Space Management Committee —http://www.montana.edu/smc/index.html
Develop policies and plans in alignment with the University Strategic Plan and institutional priorities for allocations, conversions and growth; report on assignments and utilization of spaces; make recommendations to the President regarding university space.

Outreach & Engagement Council —http://www.montana.edu/outreachengagementcouncil/
The Outreach & Engagement Council’s mission is to strategically champion engagement at MSU through outreach, leadership, and service to fulfill the land-grant mission. The council guides outreach, engagement, and leadership at MSU by collaborating with off-campus communities and other external partners, leveraging resources and pursuing extramural funding.