January 15, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

This month marks the completion of my first two years at Montana State University as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. It has been an especially rewarding time for me because the accomplishments of MSU’s academic community have instilled great pride and devotion. I feel honored to be part of a university with an extraordinary faculty who are clearly dedicated to their research, teaching and outreach endeavors, and who have successfully elevated MSU into the top tier of institutions in each of those categories.

MSU has many opportunities to develop its academic reputation among great universities in the country. I appreciate the ongoing support of faculty, staff and students at MSU and wanted to share with you some of the many accomplishments that Academic Affairs has had during the past two years. These accomplishments would not have been possible without a leadership team of associate provosts, deans and associate deans, department heads, faculty and many others across the campus.

Faculty

- Faculty Recruitment
  - 2011, 27 searches (25 assistant professors, 2 full professors).
  - 2012, 37 searches (35 assistant professors, 2 associate professors).
  - 2013, 11 faculty hired to date (10 assistant professors, 1 associate professor), 27 searches
  - Currently open (19 assistant, 4 assistant/associate, 3 associate/full, 1 full), and several additional searches approved.
  - 29 of these lines resulted from new funding.
  - The student faculty ratio has remained fairly consistently around 17:1 since 2008.

- Faculty Diversity
  - ADVANCE grant assistance with hires of women in STEM and SBS.
  - Additional interviews of women, 4 searches (provost provides majority of supplemental funds).
  - Tenure-track Diversity Depth Hires, 2.
  - Tenure-track new/leveraged lines, 2 with 2 additional ones under consideration.
  - Bridge Hires/Partner tenure track accommodations, 4.
  - Initiated ACE Internationalization Lab for external review and recommendations for campus globalization.

- Faculty Development
  - Created a Board of Regents-approved Center for Faculty Excellence with base funding to provide ongoing enrichment to all faculty in teaching, research and service.
Revised the sabbatical funding model to remove the limit on the number of awards from about 13/year to 18, 16 and 21 in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively.

- Faculty Recognition
  - Selection of most annual faculty award recipients decentralized to appropriate faculty constituencies and Councils.
  - Recognition of 19, 21, and 31 faculty in 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively, at Spring Convocation.
  - Received Board of Regents approval for two new Regents Professors.

**Research**

- MSU’s expenditures from sponsored research programs reached a record $112 million in fiscal year 2012, a 9.3% increase over fiscal year 2011.
- Created a model for joint faculty appointments between departments and the Institute on Ecosystems.
- Three new interdisciplinary positions for tenure-track faculty have been created in 2012-2013 to advance key areas of interdisciplinary research (EPSCoR Institute on Ecosystems and Rural Family Health).
- Augment research start-up funding for new faculty (with VPR).
- With input from Deans and Department heads, assigned space in Cooley Lab that re-establishes a presence of the Department of IMID on the campus core (with VPR).
- Created a subcommittee on Research Council to establish criteria for research space allocations on campus (with VPR).
- Garnered over $1M funding (five years) from DoEd to renew the McNair Scholars Program.
- Obtained Regents approval for a new doctoral program – Doctor of Nursing Practice, that will increase MSU doctoral degree conferral by 30% when activated.

**Board of Regents approval of academic initiatives**

**2011**

- Writing Option within BA in English (January 2011).
- Department Name Change to Graduate School (January 2011).
- Department Name Change to School of Music (January 2011).
- Professional Masters of Science and Engineering Management (March 2011).
- Certificate (Graduate): College Teaching (March 2011).
- Certificate (Graduate): Northern Plains Transition to Teaching Program (March 2011).
- Rename Motion Picture/Video/Theatre option in Film and Photography to Option in Film (May 2011).
- Offer the Montana Dietetic Internship Program (May 2011).
- Dual Degree Program between Civil Engineering MSU and Gazi University (September 2011).
- Option in Conservation Biology and Ecology within BS in Biological Science (September 2011).
• Rename option in Fish and Wildlife Management within BS in Biological Sciences to Fish and Wildlife Ecology and Management (September 2011).
• Dual Degree Program between MSU Microbiology, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, and Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology and the Department of Biotechnology at Ankara University (September 2011).
• China Studies Minor (November 2011).
• Food, Family and Community Health Sciences Option (November 2011).
• MS in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences (Plan B) – online delivery (November 2011).

2012
• Major in Religious Studies (March 2012).
• Associate of Arts Degree, Gallatin College (March 2012).
• Associate of Science Degree, Gallatin College (March 2012).
• Certificate of General Studies, Gallatin College (March 2012).
• BA in Liberal Studies Quaternity Option – online delivery (March 2012).
• Termination of Religious Studies Options in History and Philosophy (March 2012).
• Finance Minor (May 2012).
• Certificate (Graduate): Professional Practice of Architecture.
• Minor in Business Administration (September 2012).

2013
• Termination of Master’s Degree of Nursing-Advance Practice (January 2013).
• Termination of Post-Master’s Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate (January 2013).

Administrative Initiatives
• Substantial reorganization of Academic Affairs staffing with two associate provosts (David Singel, Ron Larsen) now covering the prior work of 3 vice provosts.
• Hired new deans in:
  o Arts and Architecture (Cornwell)
  o Business (Aytes)
  o Education, Health and Human Development (Ransdell)
  o Letters and Sciences (Rae)
  o Library (Arlitsch)
• Initiated an external review of MSU IT capabilities that led to the hiring of a Chief Information Officer (Dewitt Latimer).
• Successfully increased the base funding for Academic Affairs. For fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013, $15.1M (61%) of all new institutional revenues (base dollars, from both state and tuition funds) have been directed to Academic Affairs. $4.9M in one-time-only funds were also provided during that time frame.
  o Distributed $2.8M in base dollars from extra section enrollment growth to the deans and academic units. These funds were previously held centrally.
- Increased college base budgets based on Delaware benchmark data - $400K.
- In 2011-2012, enrollment based funding adjustments were made to colleges totaling $1.5M. An additional $1.5M was allocated for new faculty lines. In 2012-13, $2M was targeted for new faculty hires with 14 new positions released thus far.
- Strategic Investment proposal funding in 2012 added $787K to academic affairs initiatives.
- Implementation of a Collective Bargaining Agreement:
  - Promotion, market and merit adjustments for faculty of >$1M.
  - Development of a template for Workload and Role and Scope Documents.
  - Assignment of NTT faculty to ranks.
  - Hired Debora Barkley to support CBA implementation (with Human Resources).
- Reorganization of Academic Affairs office space and staff to create a welcoming, service-oriented environment with back-up support for walk-in and phone traffic.
- Through Advancing MSU, one-time-only funding in 2012 has been directed to Academic Affairs ($1.46M) for academic support, software for DegreeWorks and faculty reporting, and for upgrades to student/faculty gathering spaces. Most of these funds are still in the process of being expended.
- Successful nomination of Robert Marley for an ACE Fellowship and Lynda Ransdell for the Harvard Management Development Program. Also Nancy Cornwell has been nominated for the Scripps Howard Academic Leadership Academy.
- Implementing a new "TEAL" (Technology Enhanced/Active Learning) classroom in Gaines Hall with development of a second in Wilson.
- Initiation of student-requested activities courses.
- Enhanced the program review process by providing more detailed guidelines and more follow-through on evaluator’s recommendations.
- Accreditation:
  - Year One Accreditation Report accomplished with follow-up.
  - Board-approved Core Themes identified and developed through a consultative process.
  - Assessment of student learning outcomes of Core 2.0 is in progress.
- Faculty Senate collaboration on policy and procedures for:
  - Approval of degree candidates.
  - Decentralizing more curriculum decision-making to the faculty (e.g., course approvals).
  - Combined the new program review functions of UGSC and Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee into a single Program Review Committee
  - Emeritus Faculty.
  - Honorary Degrees.
  - Regent’s Professorships.
- Transitioned two successful graduate programs from self-support funding to base funding (Native American Studies, Science and Natural History Filmmaking).

**Student Enrollment- Academics**
- Created a new timeslot for classes during the week by shaving 5 min off of each “time between classes” for Tuesday/Thursday classes.
• Created a new teaching lab for Anatomy and Physiology to relieve the backlog of students and allow each semester of the two semester sequence to be offered every semester.
• Improved the sequence in which students may register for classes (with Registrar).
• Created a winter graduation (with Registrar).
• More than doubled the number of on-line programs.
• Improved scheduling with the purchase of Ad Astra platinum analytics.
• Developed better documentation and document management for response to enrollment pressure.
• Offered to increase tuition waiver support for graduate students to promote degree completion.
• Moved the “early” late fee penalty so that there is no longer a reason for graduate students to put off registration (allows for speedier appointments and better course planning).

Student Recruitment/Retention
• Created base funding for research endeavors in the Undergraduate Scholars Program.
• An Advising Task Force, as a four campus initiative, resulted in support for:
  o Degree Works for advising and degree audit (4-campus implementation).
  o A presentation to the BOR on advising.
  o Department entry of advisors info into MYINFO.
  o Financial literacy sessions.
  o Expanded peer advising.
• Distributed $100K for retention initiatives Spring 2011.
• Distributed $300K to the Graduate Dean to address recruitment efforts and fellowships to attract top graduate students (with VPR).
• A modest investment in the Math Department has resulted in higher pass rates in some introductory courses.
• Distributed $240K to date (2 years) for Native American Recruitment/Retention initiatives (ongoing).
• Led Higher Education Summit Task Force (now called Graduation Success Team) resulting in initiatives for:
  o Successful 1-credit pilot courses offered the week before fall 2012 semester.
  o Math placement exam with on-line remedial opportunities for summer 2012 (pilot).
  o “Freshman 15.”
  o Newly emerging committees for 2013 for summer/mini-courses/J-term, accelerated masters degrees, barrier/gateway courses, 3-year degrees, dual credit courses, on-line seamless model.

During the fall 2012 semester, the Deans’ Council developed a draft strategic plan for Academic Affairs that aligns with the University strategic plan. The plan benefitted from the early stages of the research strategic plan being developed by the Research Council. The draft of the Academic Strategic Plan can be found on the Provost’s website at:
http://www.montana.edu/wwwprov/StrategicPlans/AcademicStrategicPlan20Dec12.pdf. An open forum will be held on January 17, 2013 from 3-5 p.m. in Ballroom B of the Student Union and comments on the plan are welcome.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty for their hard work every day in keeping academic excellence in the forefront of all that they do. It is the collection of individual achievements, in teaching and mentoring our students, in research and in scholarly and creative pursuits, and in serving our communities and our professions that make our institution great.

Sincerely,

Martha A. Potvin
Provost/ Vice President for Academic Affairs