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January 29, 2010

Dr. Waded Cruzado  
President  
Montana State University - Bozeman  
P.O. Box 172420  
Bozeman, MT 59717-2420

Dear President <sup>Waded</sup> ~~Cruzado~~:

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to report that the accreditation of Montana State University - Bozeman has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Fall 2009 Comprehensive Evaluation. Congratulations on receiving this continued recognition.

The following actions taken by the Board of Commissioners are based on the standards and process in effect at the time of the evaluation visit. You will be notified under separate cover of any modifications to these actions resulting from the conversion to the new standards and process.

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 Montana State University - Bozeman, the Commission requests that the institution submit a focused interim report and host a visit in spring 2011 to address Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Fall 2009 Comprehensive Evaluation Report. A copy of the Recommendations is enclosed for your reference.

In reaffirming accreditation, the Commission finds that Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2009 Comprehensive Evaluation Report is an area where Montana State University - Bozeman is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement.

The Commission finds that Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 of the Fall 2009 Comprehensive Evaluation Report are areas where Montana State University - Bozeman does not meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation. According to U.S. Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 602.20 and Commission Policy A-18, *Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance Within Specified Period* (enclosed), the Commission requires that Montana State University - Bozeman take appropriate action to ensure that Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 of the Fall 2009 Comprehensive Evaluation Report are addressed and resolved within the prescribed two-year period.

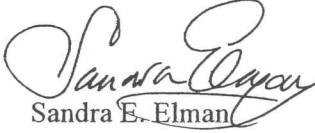
In the unlikely event the Commission should conclude that an institution is in danger of being unable to fulfill its mission and goals or to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements or Standards, the Commission reserves the right to request that the institution submit a report or host one or more evaluators for a special review.

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The Commission commends the University's faculty, staff, and administration for their extraordinarily high level of productivity and effectiveness, as evidenced by the creative and innovative use of resources. The institution is further commended for attainment of the highest classification for research universities by the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching. Moreover, the Commission applauds the University for its stated and demonstrated commitment to undergraduate research and its effective efforts to increase annually the percentage of the student body that has this experience. Further, the Commission finds laudable the University's extraordinarily pervasive culture of collaboration across departments, units, and programs through widespread and sustained commitment of faculty and staff which results in rich and truly distinctive educational opportunities for students, teaching opportunities for faculty, and promising new areas of research and funding. Lastly, the Commission commends the University for its development in 1992 of the "Facilities Condition Inventory" that tracks the variable condition of campus buildings. Not only has this provided an objective, consistent, and systematic evaluation of the general condition and deferred maintenance profile of buildings at MSU Bozeman, it has been adopted elsewhere in Montana and has been recognized nationally as a best practice.

Best wishes for a rewarding year.

Sincerely,



Sandra E. Elman  
President

SEE:rb

Enclosure: Recommendations, Policy A-18

cc: Dr. Joseph J. Fedock, Interim Provost ✓  
Mr. Stephen M. Barrett, Board Chair  
Dr. Sheila M. Stearns, Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana University System

**Comprehensive Evaluation Report**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Montana State University - Bozeman**  
**Recommendations**

1. The committee, recognizing the University's stated commitment to further development as a "Very High Research" institution (consistent with its mission), notes with concern the increasing tension between critical needs and available resources. It acknowledges that in any college or university, and particularly one aspiring to ever higher levels of achievement and recognition, there will always be a perceived lack of adequate funds or at least a perceived mismatch of allocated funds. Nonetheless, the committee respectfully recommends that either additional resources be generated to support such areas as research, graduate education, undergraduate research, faculty and staff development, and facilities management; or that strategic reallocations be made to ensure such support and that the process by which this is achieved be consultative, participatory, and transparent consistent with the University's own commitment to those values (Standard 7.B.1).
2. The committee acknowledges the steps that have been taken since the 2004 Regular Interim Report to clarify the mission, role, and operations of the affiliated campuses, but it recommends, nonetheless, that the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Higher Education to achieve better articulation among these campuses and to take advantage of possible efficiencies through standardization of processes, realignment of programs, and coordination of schedules (Standard 6.A and 6.B).
3. Consistent with recommendations from the 1999 Full-Scale Evaluation Report and the 2004 Regular Interim Report, the evaluation committee again recommends that the University work with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Higher Education to develop comprehensive compensation policies and practices that will ensure competitive salaries and benefits for the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and administrators. This, in turn, will serve to maintain the current high quality of operations as well as support further fulfillment of the University's stated goals (Standard 4 and Standard 7).
4. The committee acknowledges that significant progress has been made University-wide to define and publish expected student learning outcomes (especially in some professionally-oriented programs), but notes that this is, at present, still a largely decentralized and uneven process. Accordingly, the committee recommends that further steps be taken promptly to ensure that the importance of educational assessment is communicated effectively across all academic departments and programs (including the Core 2.0) and that steps be taken to ensure that all are: (a) defining and publishing expected student learning outcomes, (b) evaluating student achievement, (c) analyzing the results, and (d) providing evidence that changes in student learning experiences are made as needed (Standard 2.B and Policy 2.2).

## ***Policy A-18 Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance Within Specified Period***

If the Commission determines that an institution it accredits is not in compliance with a Commission standard for accreditation, the Commission will immediately initiate adverse action against the institution or require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance within a time period that shall not exceed: 1) twelve months, if the longest program offered by the institution, is less than one year in length; 2) eighteen months, if the longest program offered by the institution, is at least one year, but less than two years, in length; or 3) two years, if the longest program offered by the institution, is at least two years in length.

The Commission may extend the period for compliance noted above should it reasonably expect that, based upon the institution's progress toward meeting the Commission's standard for accreditation, the institution will come into full compliance within a reasonable timeframe. Should an institution deem that as a result of mitigating circumstances it is not able to comply with the standard for accreditation within the specified period of time, the institution may submit a written request to the Commission for additional time to come into compliance with the standard for accreditation. The request is to be submitted prior to the time limit for corrective action set forth by the Commission, provide a detailed explanation of the reasons why the institution cannot comply with the standard for accreditation within the designated time period, and demonstrate that the institution is making good progress in meeting the standard for accreditation. Following a review of the request, the Commission will make a determination as to whether the institution has based its request on valid reasons. If the Commission determines that the institution has substantiated good cause for not complying within the specified time period and is making good progress to come into compliance, the Commission will extend the period for achieving compliance and stipulate requirements for continuing oversight of the institution's accreditation during the extension.

Adopted 1997/Revised 2002