

A JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, POLITICS, AND CULTURE | FOUNDED 1991

# MONTANA

## *Professor*

- 2 CRITICAL ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
- 6 FOCUS ON TEACHING
- 11 CURRENT RESEARCH



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**Philip Gaines, PhD**

Associate Professor of Linguistics and Chair, Department of English,  
Montana State University Bozeman

Welcome to the latest issue of *Montana Professor*. Here is a summary of what we have to offer this time around:

In **Focus on Teaching**, MSU Bozeman writing instructor Jill Davis, recent winner of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching, shares her insights on the community-engaged scholarship model of service learning that she developed for her class of WRIT 101 students. I think you'll find Jill's approach—and her remarkable results—inspiring and informing of your own teaching.

For this issue's **MP Interview**, *Montana Professor* poses questions to four presidents of tenure-track faculty unions in the Montana University System about the state of collective bargaining in our higher education units and the relation of unions to university administrations. To call their answers hard-hitting is almost euphemistic.

There is only one **Book Review** in this issue, but it's a good one. *MP* Book Review Editor Marvin Lansverk takes over the space to talk about Derek Bok's latest offering on the state of higher education. Bok is always engaging and provocative—if not sharply controversial—and Lansverk represents his perspectives astutely.

Professor Emeritus Jerry Coffey brings us another of our **Critical Issues in Higher Education**—a sobering analysis of the near- and longer-term prospect on retirements among the tenure-track faculty in the MUS. Coffey knows whereof he speaks, having served the system for many years as a strong voice on benefits and retirement. His insights and concern deserve a close reading.

For **Current Research**, we hear from Montana Tech's Martha Apple and Keith Edgerton from MSU Billings. Apple reports on her research into the effects of climate change on alpine plants in Glacier National Park, the Pioneer Mountains, and Cairngorms National Park in Scotland. Keith Edgerton gives us an intriguing and sometimes surprising look into the life, times, and impact—for good and ill—of copper king William Clark, whom Edgerton calls one of “the most powerful, influential, and ruthless of the 19th century American robber barons.”

Finally, don't miss emeritus professor Bill Locke's contribution in **Reader Response**, in large part a reaction to the *MP* Interview with former Board of Regents Chair Angela McLean in the last issue. Although McLean has since left her board position to become Montana's Lieutenant Governor, Locke's letter provides a perspective that will still resonate with many. Warning: It's another hard hitter.

On that last point, allow me to editorialize for a moment. When *Montana Professor* first came into being, it was understood that the journal would be a voice for the interests and concerns of the Montana professoriate. Over the years, those concerns have included sometimes sharp criticism of the policies and perspectives of the Board of Regents, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and university administrations. And as we all know, one of the proclivities of university faculty has always been taking the administration to task when they don't like something.

It is to be noted, however, that for most of *MP*'s life, the journal has been funded by the two flagship campuses of those very administrations. This relationship model, in which an institution funds the work of an entity whose constituents sometimes criticize it, is in keeping with a time-honored American tradition of freedom of expression, even when that expression is strong dissent. Obviously, the administrations' support for the journal does not imply agreement with the dissent of its contributors, but it does evince a kind of magnanimity that is, in my view, healthy and productive. Whenever people are given a chance to speak out, sometimes in strong terms, about matters of concern, they are empowered in feeling that they have made a worthwhile contribution. Moreover, the conversation about the issues in play can only become richer and more nuanced as a result. This journal's board, its editor, and its readership appreciate the opportunity that UM Missoula and MSU Bozeman have provided for the tenure track faculty of our fine four-year institutions to say what they think. 🍷



Philip Gaines

**WHENEVER PEOPLE ARE GIVEN A CHANCE TO SPEAK OUT, SOMETIMES IN STRONG TERMS, ABOUT MATTERS OF CONCERN, THEY ARE EMPOWERED IN FEELING THAT THEY HAVE MADE A WORTHWHILE CONTRIBUTION.**



## THE IMPENDING RETIREMENT CRISIS

**Jerome E. Coffey**

*Professor Emeritus, MSU*



*Jerry Coffey*

**A HUGE NUMBER OF FACULTY WERE HIRED DURING THE EXPANSION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S AND THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE NOW ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT.**

### Introduction

There is a retirement crisis of vast proportions within MUS and yet nobody seems to be even noticing. While the majority of tenured faculty in the Montana University System are likely eligible for retirement, very few are actually giving up their tenured positions. Hard data are difficult to come by, but my institution, Montana State, probably reflects what is going on system-wide. There are 460 tenured or tenure track faculty currently at MSU. Based on age and length of service it is probable that over 50% qualify for a pension under either the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or TIAA-CREF provisions. Yet last year (FY2013) only 12 professors gave up their tenure and actually retired from MSU.

The problem is double-edged. A huge number of faculty were hired during the expansion of colleges and universities in the late 1960's and early 1970's and these individuals are now eligible for retirement. At the same time, there are a large pool of well trained PhDs biding their time in post-doctorates or teaching as adjuncts while awaiting the freeing up of tenure track positions. All universities depend upon the infusion of energy, current training, and new advances in knowledge and techniques from their junior faculty. Yet, at the same time, the senior faculty seem increasingly reluctant to retire. However, if all the faculty currently eligible to retire were to pull the plug at the same time, the loss of institutional knowledge and experience could prove to be catastrophic. There is a desperate need for planning for these impending transitions but no indication that anyone in the Montana university system is doing so. The purpose of this article is to outline in detail how these problems are currently affecting the university and to suggest possible solutions.

### Retirement Eligibility

For University faculty, mandatory retirement ended in 1994. This is what keeps university presidents up late at night as they try to figure out how they might encourage their senior faculty to retire, "freshen" their staff with new recruits, and manage their payroll expenses. As it stands now, tenured faculty, no matter their

age, can only be forced to retire for cause—provable incompetence or moral turpitude. Needless to say, termination for cause is extremely rare.

The eligibility standards for retirement and for continuation under the MUS Health Insurance Plans are slightly different. One is eligible for a full retirement with the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) with 25 years of creditable service at any age or 5 years of service at age 60. There are provisions for early retirement under TRS at reduced benefits. With the TIAA-CREF regular retirement plan, withdrawals can begin at age 59 1/2 regardless of years of service. IRS tax regulations do allow for earlier withdrawals without the 10% penalty in certain circumstances after age 55. In order to continue with the MUS Health Insurance Plans one must be age 50 and have 5 years of service. Under these standards we estimate that roughly 50% of tenured or tenure track faculty are eligible to retire at the present time. One must, of course, give up tenure and terminate service in order to qualify for any of these retirement benefits.

### Reluctance to Retire

According to a recent study conducted by Fidelity Investments of higher education faculty "some 74 percent of professors aged 49-67 plan to delay retirement past age 65 or never retire at all." (Ragnoni, 2013) Their reasons are both economic and personal:

*(Note: Those surveyed could list multiple reasons.)*

#### **Economic concerns (total) 69%**

- Unsure whether they'll have enough to retire comfortably 55%
- Want to maximize Social Security payments 42%
- Will need to continue receiving health insurance benefits 42%

#### **Personal/professional reasons (total) 81%**

- Want to stay busy and productive 89%
  - Love the work too much to give it up 64%
  - Want continued access to and affiliation with institution 41%
- (Ragnoni, 2013)

We will address each of these reasons in turn and suggest possible solutions that the MUS might institute to turn these reluctant warriors into happy and productive retirees willing to continue to contribute their skills and knowledge to their home institutions.

### **Financial Insecurity**

The market meltdown in 2008 and the recession which followed no doubt left the MUS faculty wishing that they had access to or had remained in the defined benefit plan administered by TRS. Remember that since 1993 the so-called Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) with TIAA-CREF has been no longer optional and all new hires were required to participate. Only 35 of 460 tenure track faculty remain in TRS on the MSU campus. Other units of MUS likely have similar ratios. This means that the vast majority of MUS faculty are now subject to the vagaries of the financial markets when it comes to planning for their retirement. Another meltdown such as the one we recently experienced could prove devastating to the recently retired or delay plans for those anticipating retirement. Of course, the recent recovery of the financial markets makes these considerations less a factor in retirement planning than they might have been just a few years ago.

### **Social Security**

Most MUS employees are eligible for Social Security Benefits upon retirement. While it is possible to begin withdrawals as early as age 62, the reductions in benefits are considerable and continue the remainder of your life. If you choose to retire at 62, for example, and your “full retirement age” is 66, you will face a 25% reduction in benefits for as long as you live. “Full retirement age” is 65 for those born before 1938 and increases incrementally to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later. Most MUS faculty approaching retirement likely have a full retirement age of 66 (for those born between 1943 and 1954). Benefits increase 2% a year for each year that you delay taking Social Security after you reach your full retirement age. Benefits are capped at age 70. Your annual Social Security statement gives you an estimate of these various options on an individual basis. It should be obvious that the way that Social Security is structured gives our faculty powerful

economic incentives to delay retirement as long as possible even up to age 70.

### **Medical Insecurity**

One of the greatest disincentives to retirement in recent years is the concern of our staff about future healthcare costs. A recent study by the TIAA-CREF Institute details this concern:

Forty-two percent of near-retirees in higher education are very concerned about being unable to afford good health care in retirement, with an additional 29% somewhat concerned. In fact, near-retirees are more concerned about health care than with other issues they will face in retirement—by comparison, 33% are very concerned about having enough money to retire when planned and 22% are very concerned about outliving their savings in retirement. (Yakoboski, December 2009)

The reason that healthcare costs loom so large in the retirement decision is that they are so hard to predict. None of our staff can know if they will need long-term care at the end of their lives or for how long this expensive care might be needed. Studies suggest that fully 25% of all seniors will end up sometime in their lives in an assisted living facility. Long-term care insurance is expensive and provides only partial protection in most cases. Furthermore, the effects of the Affordable Healthcare Act on medical insurance costs are unknown at the present time. The bottom line is that healthcare costs are the hardest factor to plan for in retirement.

The MUS staff are wise to be concerned about these future medical costs. Estimates from a variety of sources suggest that the out-of-pocket health care costs for an average retiree from age 65 until death will likely exceed a quarter of a million dollars and that amount should be doubled for a couple. A Society of Actuaries study provides the details:

The future health care needs for a retiree vary by the retiree's current age and their expected lifetime, but are estimated to be about \$146,400 for someone currently age 65 with an average expected lifetime of 20 years (\$292,800 for a couple of the same age). That amount includes health care costs not paid for by the federal government

### **ANY FACULTY MEMBER ANTICIPATING RETIREMENT SHOULD MAKE AN HONEST ESTIMATE OF THEIR TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS FOR HEALTHCARE INSURANCE BASED ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**

through the Medicare program (including Medicare Parts B and C premiums). If they think they will live until age 90 (25 years instead of 20 years) they will need \$220,600 (or \$441,200 for a couple). These amounts are for the “average” retiree and do not include long term care costs that some retirees may incur. (Yamamoto, June 2013)

“Average” in the data above are for a retiree in reasonable good health with no serious health problems going into retirement. The estimate for those in poor health at retirement would be considerably higher. Remember that Medicare does not typically cover long-term care and these costs are not included in estimates above.

So the question then becomes: how well does MUS protect its retirees’ health care needs after they leave the System? The honest answer would be: not very well. A current TIAA-CREF study found that 90% of all universities give continuing access to their health care plan to their retirees. The Montana University System does allow continuing coverage after 5 years of service, but it is a one-way gate. If the retiree leaves the plan for any reason whatsoever (coverage by a spouse, a more affordable plan elsewhere, etc.), they can never be readmitted to the plan. Moreover, 13% of universities nationwide cover the cost of the health insurance premium entirely and 49% share the cost with the individual retiree. MUS is among only a third of universities that make no contribution to their retirees’ health care costs at all (Yakoboski and Conley, 2013).

The costs to retirees for remaining on the MUS medical plan are not trivial. Early retirees before Medicare eligibility at age 65 face very high premiums. Presently in FY 2014 an individual faces a monthly premium of \$591 to \$687 depending upon the plan chosen, and a couple faces \$623 to \$1073 in premiums, again depending upon the plan selected and whether or not the spouse is Medicare eligible. Costs are considerably reduced for Medicare eligible retirees since Medicare covers much of the liability. An over-65 retiree will see monthly premiums range from \$180 to \$291. Medicare eligible retirees will face premiums from \$360 to \$699 to cover themselves and their spouses, again depending on the plan and whether the spouse is Medicare eligible. Added to all of these costs are premiums for dental and vision

coverage if selected and a \$104.90 premium per individual per month for Medicare Plan B coverage.

Any faculty member anticipating retirement should make an honest estimate of their total annual costs for healthcare insurance based on their individual circumstances. Most will see that since MUS makes no contribution to their post-retirement premiums and since these premiums are quite costly, many might consider delaying retirement in order to continue to benefit from the State contribution. In fairness it must be said that the MUS medical plan provides excellent coverage and all employees would be wise to continue on the plan after retirement if they can afford the costs. However, these high medical premiums no doubt provide strong disincentives to retirement especially for those younger than age 65.

### **Economic Incentives**

As we have seen, the main economic drivers for delaying retirement are threefold: worries about the adequacy of retirement savings, the desire to maximize Social Security benefits, and medical insecurity. The only way to address these economic concerns is with financial tools and in that realm the University System has very limited resources at its disposal. Typically most universities nationwide offer some kind of early retirement incentives to make room for new hires. These usually come in the form of retirement bonuses, service credit, or other forms of buyouts.

System-wide retirement incentive programs are common nationwide but rare in Montana. Since 2007, 61% of all institutions have offered an early retirement buyout to their full-time faculty (Yakoboski and Conley, 2013). The last time that such a buyout plan was offered to MUS faculty was several decades ago. The frugal nature of the Montana Legislature is only part of the reason that such buyout offers are no longer tendered. Such early retirement incentive programs are not very effective and frequently result in serious unintended consequences. Often the most productive and still marketable faculty members accept the incentives and move on to another institution to finish their careers, while less productive faculty remain. Such retirement incentives can result in a net loss to the institution.

Nor are the salary savings to the Montana University System all that great. There is

considerable salary compression system-wide so the differentials between a senior faculty member's pay and what it takes to hire a junior staff member at market are not all that great. Furthermore, upon retirement the institution is obligated to come up with termination pay for the retiring senior staff member. For a long-term professor such termination pay might be in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range or sometimes even more. Most departments or colleges have no set-asides for these costs, and termination pay ends up being an unfunded liability. Often the only way that these termination costs can be covered is through "vacancy savings," leaving the position open for a year or two while these termination costs are covered. Obviously, this is far from an ideal solution for an institution trying to maintain the integrity of its programs. The bottom line is that system-wide retirement incentive programs rarely work as planned and often result in very negative consequences to the institutions and their programs.

While most long-term faculty members have never seen a MUS system-wide retirement incentive program, all have witnessed buyouts on an individual level. Following the sometimes used principle that "no bad deed goes unrewarded," particularly unproductive or troublesome faculty members are sometimes offered financial incentives to give up tenure and retire. To be fair, the institution and its programs often benefit from such individual buyouts and a burned out and disillusioned faculty member might benefit as well.

MUS has limited financial resources that can be used to encourage retirement and economic incentives are not particularly effective anyway. There are good reasons for this. As the Fidelity study indicated, while economic concerns are important in retirement decisions, personal and professional factors play a larger role (Flaherty, June 2013). Professors as a whole want to stay busy and productive (89%), love the work too much to give it up (64%), and want continued access to and affiliation with their institutions (41%). Obviously, purely economic incentives completely fail to address these concerns. There are other strategies, however, that can be used to encourage retirement to the benefit of both the retirees themselves and their institutions.

### **Non-Economic Incentives**

Many MUS retirees have been frustrated at the retirement process. Often they are given

limited information about the procedures that must be followed, forms that must be filled out, and rights and privileges they might enjoy after they give up tenure. As the day approaches, they are simply asked to clean out their offices and laboratories and turn in their keys. After a lifetime of service to the university, they are made to feel all of a sudden like non-entities with nothing more to contribute to their home institutions. This often leaves these retirees disillusioned and angry. A survey done some years ago by the MSU Association of Retired Faculty (ARF) indicated that these feelings were widespread among recent retirees. The sad thing is that with proper procedures and flexible paths to retirement, these negative results do not need to be.

Most institutions nationwide use some mixture of the following programs to address the non-economic personal and professional concerns that often delay the retirement decision: phased retirement plans, post-retirement agreements, emeritus status, enhanced retiree rights and privileges, and emeritus colleges. Each of these programs will be looked at in turn and MUS procedures compared to national standards. What will become abundantly clear is that these programs, if properly structured, can potentially provide great benefits to both the retirees themselves and their home institutions.

### **Phased Retirement and Post-Retirement Agreements**

Many professors at the end of their careers are not looking to stop working completely but rather seek more time to pursue other interests, to travel more widely, or to spend more time with their children and grandchildren. What they face instead is a Sophie's Choice: a full-time position even more time demanding at the end of careers than ever or complete disengagement from a field they have dedicated their lives to. Since neither option is very appealing, many reluctantly delay retirement. Others simply decide to "retire in place" by making the minimum commitment to their profession so that they have time to pursue other interests – obviously neither is a beneficial outcome for the university nor the faculty member. A well-structured phased retirement program with flexible post-retirement agreements can go a long way to prevent these negative outcomes.

Nationally 39% of institutions identified in

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PRIVILEGES, AND  
EMERITUS COLLEGES.**

*See RETIREMENT, continued on page 25*



## EMPOWERED ENGAGEMENT: A COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY OF INTERVIEW AND NARRATIVE FOR FIRST YEAR WRITING STUDENTS

Jill Davis, MA

Senior Instructor of Writing, Montana State University Bozeman

*"I wish you courage to ask of everything you meet: what bridge are we?"*  
— Mark Nepo



Jill Davis

Zach, a first year writing student, stood before the group of 30, legs shaking, hands quivering, and after taking in a deep breath, began reading from his essay. *"While growing up, I was oblivious to the three suspects that burglarized one of my family's most cherished possessions. Drugs, disability, and disappointment crept into our home while at the same time casting my sister to the streets. In hindsight it is clear my sister Hayley was homeless while still living under the same roof as the rest of us...I have to admit, with a degree of guilt, that it was almost comforting during those periods my sister was amiss. Her absence meant less stress in the house. No confrontations about her choices, directions, and friends. I know for certain that part of her reason for running was to give us relief, to save us from the effect she had on the family. It was a battle, never to be won. We were trying to save her, she was trying to spare us, and no amount of family fighting, church influence or family counseling was going to keep that train wreck from happening. The silence we now experience from her absence is louder and more disruptive than any of her worst outbursts..."* Zach continued his poignant interview essay bridging his sister Hayley's story to "Loretta's"—about a homeless mother of two—whom he met at The Bozeman Homeless Connect Day. He closed with these words. *"I wish for all of you, a personal connection with one of the nearly one million Hayley's and 'Loretta's' that are on the streets today, and hope you find that the condition of homelessness is shared by us all. I see my sister's face in every homeless individual I meet. And no matter whom it is that wears Hayley's face, as long as they are experiencing life without a home, there will be a part of me that is homeless as well."*

The project Zach signed up for in our WRIT 101 course was the Homeless Connect Yearbook Project, which interviews housing-challenged individuals and offers them a platform to tell their stories of adversity and triumph. Like many other students, Zach

attended Homeless Connect, a day Bozeman-ites come together to offer struggling individuals one-stop access to a broad range of services in a welcoming environment. Six weeks later on a snowy day in February, he, along with some of his classmates, read his essay to the members of the Greater Gallatin Homeless Action Coalition, the mayor of Bozeman, and other key stakeholders in the community. Zach and his fellow students wrote draft after draft, revising frequently; each student needed to get it just right. Their essays not only had to honor the individuals who shared heroic stories about living under immense challenges but also to educate and advocate in a meaningful way.

That day in February when Zach finished reading his essay, he noticed tears in the eyes of some of his listeners. He realized then that he had accomplished his mission of using his writing to stimulate organizers into compassionate action: *"I never thought that I could touch people with my writing. I have, and now I know what that feels like. It is amazing!"*

"Stories heal," Maya Angelou is noted for saying, and my students have learned the truth of these words through our interview initiatives. Stories kept the ancients around the first campfires and inspired them to paint epics on cave walls. Stories entertain, stimulate, educate, and give both teller and listener a sense of connection. Stories are known to open doors to new perceptions. This is why I use stories to bring about "social action."

### A Pedagogy of Opportunity

Helping my writing students find meaning in their composition work and their academic careers is a passion of mine. My intention is to ignite a similar passion and interest in writing and help them find audiences who need to hear their words. When I discovered Thomas Deans's work on cultivating writing practices for, about, and with community in his *Writing Partnerships: Service Learning in Composition*, I



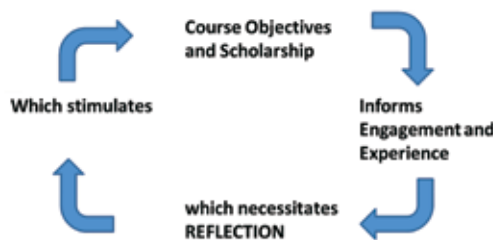
knew I had hit paydirt. Deans provides a two-fold scholarship process that addresses community needs together with structured educational objectives intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Many college campuses across the United States have taken greater pains to involve students in a distinctive form of active learning that combines academic skill development with service projects. This movement has its roots in the action-reflection theories of John Dewey, who understood the importance of connecting theory, action, and reflection to bring about greater learning competences. In most academic circles today, with the help of scholars like Christy Price, 2012's Carnegie Foundation's Professor of the Year, instructors corroborate curriculums built on innovative teaching methods that stimulate scholarly performance, increase student understanding of the responsibilities of living in a democratic society, and encourage student involvement in the social problems facing their communities (Crews 1999). Price (2009:5) defines optimum learning as those conditions that employ research-based methodologies built on clear rationales, relevant information, and purpose-driven pedagogies, thus furthering Dewey's notion that "knowing emerges from palpable experience, and is realized in action" (Deans 2000:32).

### Deepening Student Learning

In order for students to experience writing as a "social action," I have found it advantageous to "move the writing instruction out of the classroom into the community" (Heilker 1997:71). The outcome of such practice generates an evolution from transactional composition methodology to a transcendent writing practice with engagement providing the scaffolding for the pedagogical "lift." Robert Nash, author of *Helping College Students Find Purpose*, puts it this way:

The search for meaning is most likely to be successful on college campuses where students see the deep connection between subject matter, marketable skills, their personal values, and their interests in contributing to the common good- whether by performing community service to others, or dedicating themselves to a social cause that results in self-transcendence (Nash 2010:87).

### A Community-Engaged Scholarship Model



When skills and a sound knowledge base are attained in first year composition classes, they can be further enhanced with engagement experiences and a rigorous reflective process which expands and deepens scholarship acumen. The reflective process is integral since it "transforms experience into learning" (Hutchings and Wutzdorf 1988, p. 15).

### History of the Interview Projects

In 2009, when Family Promise of Gallatin County invited my students to utilize writing and interviewing skills to produce the *Homeless Connect Yearbook*, a project that had been piloted in both Seattle and Portland, I realized this opportunity was a perfect experiential match for our theoretical course readings, research, and discussions. When I pitched the idea to my students, they jumped at the opportunity for two main reasons: 1) they wanted to learn first-hand the challenges homeless individuals faced, and 2) they wanted to collaborate with community members to advocate for constructive services and positive change.

After participating in interview training sessions and a research process concerning national and local housing challenges, my students attended the first Bozeman Homeless Connect Day. With waivers, recording devices, and gas vouchers in hand, students found a plethora of individuals willing to be interviewed.

After completing the interviews, students transcribed conversations and wrote narratives which included thoughtful reflection discussing misnomers, stereotypes, and confusions they held about displaced and marginalized individuals. One student commented, "*Growing up in Montana, I've lived a pretty sheltered life and never spent time listening to a homeless person's story. But while interviewing at the Homeless Connect Day, I learned how I've been stereotyping homeless people in diminutive ways and that is not OK anymore.*"

**WHEN SKILLS AND A SOUND KNOWLEDGE BASE ARE ATTAINED IN FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION CLASSES, THEY CAN BE FURTHER ENHANCED WITH ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES AND A RIGOROUS REFLECTIVE PROCESS WHICH EXPANDS AND DEEPENS SCHOLARSHIP ACUMEN.**

**BECAUSE WE LIVE OUR LIVES FORWARD AND UNDERSTAND THEM BACKWARDS, REMINISCENCE IS COMMON AT THE END OF LIFE, AND OUR SENIORS FIND IT HELPFUL TO REFLECT WITH AN ATTENTIVE, THOUGHTFUL LISTENER, WHILE STUDENTS FIND IT BENEFICIAL TO SLOW DOWN AND SHARE THE FABRIC OF THEIR BUSY LIVES WITH AN ELDER WHO CARES AND OFFERS SAGE COUNSEL.**

Word got around the community that these student-writers had something important to say, so they were invited to present their findings to organizations including Rotary, local church groups, various senior centers, and Family Promise. Students read essays and presented their projects to the ASMSU Senate, and the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* digitized and archived the student stories for public record. Additionally, their stories were published for the National Coalition for the Homeless.

In 2009, we expanded our work to include two other projects. *The FACES Project*, which consisted of student interviews with Sexual Assault survivors on the MSU campus with the mission to educate fellow students and advocate for services with the VOICE Center. As one interviewer reflected, *"Our class wanted to educate our student body and eradicate this problem forever. When we read our essays at Take Back the Night, I couldn't believe how many people came up to us and thanked us. It felt really good to know I was actually doing something in a writing class to hopefully make our campus safer."*

Another project was *The Resiliency Project: Interviews with Remarkable MSU Students*, consisting of interviews with fellow students who had triumphed over adversity. One undergraduate gives testimony to the power of this project: *"I didn't know that the person sitting next to me in Physics was getting chemo treatments every Friday morning—that is not until I participated in interviewing for the Resiliency Project for my writing class. I was so inspired by her story and that she went to all of her classes while doing chemo. She is my new found hero!"*

All of these projects were published in one form or another, and students presented their work at local venues. One engineering student commented, *"I think it's really awesome that this writing class encourages us to get into the community and interview people who have been through hard times and use our interviews to make their lives better and ours too."* Students have a choice of projects and then are partnered with suitable interviewees. While presenting these various projects to seniors at an assisted living facility, an individual asked, "Why not interview us?" Thus began the *Tuesdays with Morrie Interview Project* modeled after Mitch Albom's narrative about his weekly visits with Morrie Schwartz.

Unlike our other projects which consisted of one-hour interviews culminating in a biograph-

ical narrative/reflective essay, the "Tuesdays" project requires a ten-week meeting commitment with a senior elder to learn about his/her life story. Because we live our lives forward and understand them backwards, reminiscence is common at the end of life, and our seniors find it helpful to reflect with an attentive, thoughtful listener, while students find it beneficial to slow down and share the fabric of their busy lives with an elder who cares and offers sage counsel. The descriptive narratives produced by students are seen as valuable documents for the interviewee's family, as was recently realized when a portion of a student essay was read at his partner's memorial service. It has been heartwarming to witness the bonds that form from these partnerships and the challenges emerging from inevitable differences. What began as an oral history interview endeavor has progressed into meaningful intergenerational dialogues with enlightened discussions and inspirational outcomes. Heather, a health and human development student, wrote, *"After spending eight weeks with Stu... I realize his life changed many, including mine. I entered this project hoping to write a paper to honor someone's life. I hope I have accomplished that, but now it is something so much greater. I know now that Stuart Knapp entered my life to inspire me. To show me that nothing can hold me back from my dreams. To show me just how much one person has the potential to positively influence the lives of many others."*

### Learner Outcomes and Implications

- Outcomes from the interview projects show significant writing development and personal empowerment.
- Class members transition from students to writers and more importantly, from self-contained writers to empowered collaborators.
- Our writing has moved from the academy to the public arena. The investment of an audience outside the classroom raises risks but offers greater rewards for writing. As an added bonus, real-world audiences enhance accountability in data collecting and accuracy in reporting.
- The traditionally sequestered classroom is now linked to another discourse community which contributes significantly to students' academic opportunities and identities.
- We as an academic community have built greater awareness of surrounding communi-

ties, the ties we have to one another, and to larger social systems.

- Students have learned to suspend judgment, demonstrate compassion, and enter into an empathetic relationship with one who can be seen as “other.”
- The engagement experience closes the gap between theory and practice. The wedding of composition, engagement, and rhetoric builds greater scholarship experiences.
- These interview projects encourage students to create a body of relevant and meaningful work while inspiring an industrious attitude towards revision work.

In addition, the Reflection Practice:

- inspires learning about individual goals and values and how these connect to larger social issues.
- challenges students to make connections between service activities and course objectives
- encourages critical thinking and problem solving.
- works against the perpetuation of stereotypes by raising students’ awareness of the social structures and biases towards given communities.
- fosters a sense of connection to the community and a deeper awareness of community needs.
- increases the likelihood that students will remain committed to civic engagement beyond the parameters of the course.

Student journal entries radiate with exuberance for the project. A second year cell biology student said:

*What I learned from AJ will change the future of my work as his introduction and stimulating example of volunteerism... I also could see my writing improve tremendously in the weekly help sessions... working with brainstorming, concept mapping, outlining, and small group draft work, all of these were very effective in helping me write the best essay possible. I completed six drafts before getting to the final version, which is rare since I have revision-aversion.... Never have I seen a class come together and become friends in an academic setting like we did. It was entirely due to... the classroom environment, and how excited we were about the project.*

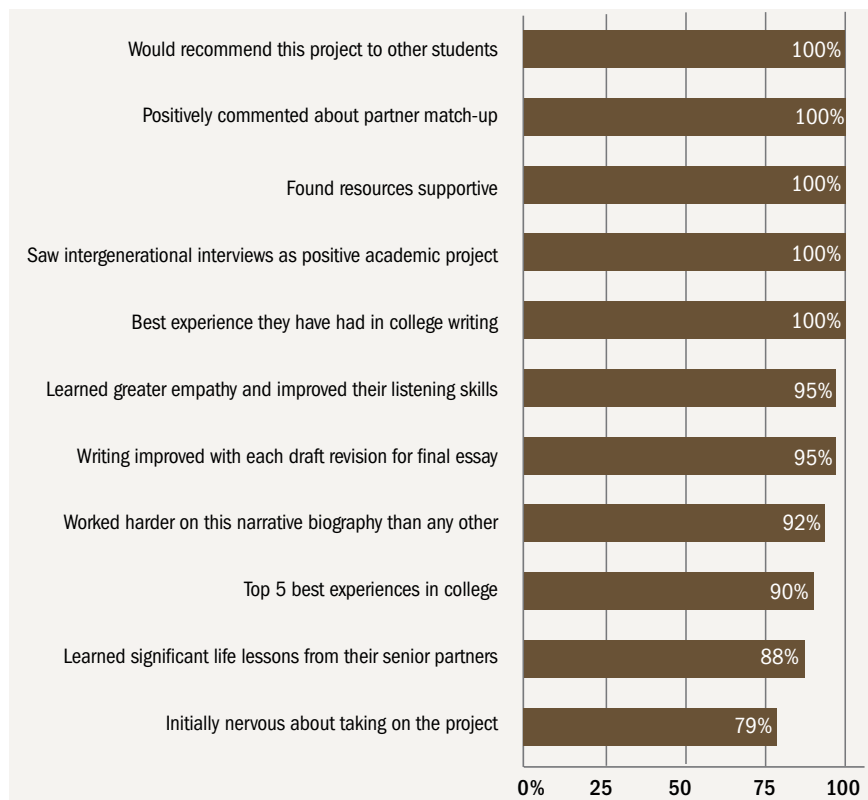
Sharon Daloz Parks reminds us that students continually ask faculty, “What is the purpose of our curriculum and how does it apply to real world needs?” They want to know how one curriculum is connected to other curriculums; they are searching for a sense of connection, pattern, order, and significance. These interview projects address Parks’s concerns and provide strong connections between course content, outcomes, philosophy, and reflection by offering civic learning experiences that bring about meaningful and purposeful scholarship for students.

When a first-year writing student like Zach stands before a formidable audience to share an essay containing his thoughts and feelings about his interview experience, and when he moves his audience to tears with his words, I know I am experiencing something extraordinary. What greater gift can a teacher receive than watching her students build stronger bridges of self-efficacy through civic engagement? 🍌

## Appendix A

\*Data collected by Lauren Favero:  
MSU English Education Student Intern

### STUDENT FEEDBACK TUESDAY’S PROJECT (2010-2012)



## Appendix B

The process for *Tuesdays with Morrie*: Interview project.

1. Letter of introduction sent to Activity Directors at three Retirement Homes inviting residents to join the project.
2. Interested individuals sign up.
3. Then a meeting with interested seniors to explain how the project was arranged. Sign-up sheets with pertinent contact information and commitment forms were circulated for interested individuals.
4. One-on-one meeting times scheduled to learn about motivation and intent to be interviewed.
5. Pitch made to students for sign-up/ matches between MSU students and seniors according to energy levels.
6. Students set project goals, outcomes, rationale, hours, and sign agreement form covering project expectations.
7. Meet and greet planned for students and senior partners to meet and find weekly meeting times.
8. Tuesday afternoons from 4-6 I meet with students to discuss *Tuesdays with Morrie* text, aging process, memory, story-telling practices, interviewing techniques, crafting engaging narratives. I bring in experts from hospice, HDD at MSU, Gerontology Society speakers, and others. I usually invite an MSU senior from our English dept. or Health and Human Development program to assist in the semester project as an intern.
9. Students meet for eight-ten visits one hour a week with their senior partner. They are responsible to find a schedule that works for both parties and to commit to that time each week.
10. A very important part of the engagement experience is found in the reflection experience. Students evaluate their growth as stewards and participants of a larger discursive community as well as individual writing practices and improvement.
11. Weekly DEAL method reflections: Description of what is happening, Examining bias, previous learning,

- feelings etc., and Articulating the Learning students experience with the project make formative reflections useful for summative reflection papers.
12. As we begin writing our formal essays, we also explore our writing process as writers asking why am doing this project, who is my audience, what can I learn from my partner, and what are the constraints of this writing process. We discuss this often in our meetings as transparency on these reflective points brings clarity to the paper. It becomes apparent to students that as they collect data, they begin to see patterns and unfolding themes. Thus, about week four we begin to outline narratives around central concepts. I bring in Writing Center Tutors and English majors to assist with the development of narratives and students form four-member writing groups and are expected to work together for the duration of the project to help each other re-vision the essay and make necessary edits. I am always amazed with this process as many of my students will conduct 10-12 revisions of their essays as they want them to be perfect for their Senior and his/her family.
  13. Midway through the semester, seniors filled out a short-answer evaluation and I met with any senior who had concerns. Seniors and students both sign a waiver form giving rights to written material.
  14. At the close of the semester, we have a celebratory party with Seniors and gift them with a reading of our narratives. Often, our seniors and are amazed at the specifics of the essay and express gratitude for the experience. What they have given my students is enormous, and my students, nervous in their readings, are always surprised by the positive reaction they receive from their senior partners. Students correct any misinformation and include photographs in the final narratives.

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### ALPINE PLANTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Martha E. Apple, PhD**

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Alpine plants and their environments are sensitive to climate change (Gottfried *et al.*, 2012; Pauli *et al.*, 2012). The following is an account of three related research projects that share the goal of predicting and discovering trends in the responses of alpine plants to climate change.

#### **Project One:**

#### **Measuring Impacts to Rare Peripheral Arctic-Alpine Plants at the Edges of Permanent Snowfields/Glaciers that are Receding due to Climate Change in Glacier National Park**

Glaciers and snowfields are intrinsic parts of the alpine landscape at Glacier National Park; however, they are retreating and shrinking at a rapid rate (Watson *et al.* 2008, Fagre 2010). In this project, (initiated in the summer of 2012 and funded through RM-CESU), we study plants growing at the edges of snowfields, where melting snow provides water during the brief alpine summers. These rare peripheral plants are so-called because of their scarcity and/or because they live in Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park at the southern edge, or periphery, of their arctic-alpine ranges, which extend northward into Canada.

To study these plants, we established pairs of geospatially referenced transects, marked by cairns, at the lateral edges and toes of snowfields at Glacier National Park. The paired transects were placed at a large and steep snowfield near Siyeh Pass; at a smaller and less steep snowfield, or nivation hollow, in Preston Park; at a snowfield on the summit of Piegan Pass; and at a more ephemeral snowfield on Mt. Clements near Logan Pass. At 5m intervals along each 50m transect, we placed 1m<sup>2</sup> quadrats above and below a measuring tape. We photographed the resulting 2m<sup>2</sup> area and recorded the presence and percentage of ground covered by different species of vascular plants, mosses, and lichens, as well as the percentage of ground consisting of rocks, snow, and soil. We constructed a list of vascular plant species found along the transects and at other nearby scouting locations such as isolated snowfields along cliff bands at Mt. Clements and Siyeh Pass; the edge of the Sexton Glacier; the Mt. Clements moraine; and at

alpine fens, tarns, springs, and bogs. In addition, we searched for rare peripheral arctic-alpine plants in all of these locations (Apple 2012).

The snowfield at Mt. Clements turned out to be ephemeral. Although it was extensive in late July 2012, a rain-on-snow event took place in early August, and by mid-August, the seemingly permanent snowfield had melted completely. In one day, the edge melted 4.2 meters inward. The edge of a snowfield changes constantly, as does the edge habitat, which is characterized by the availability of cold water from the melted snow. The substrata on the edges of the snowfields were generally a combination of rock and scree, with soil increasingly visible with distance from the snowfield's edge. Lichens on rocks near the snowfields can be used as indicators of how long an area has been free of snow and are thus valuable tools in determining a snowfield's recent extent. Since the edges of snowfields can be visualized from above, it is likely that our group will begin looking at ortho-rectified images (courtesy of archeological and other researchers at Glacier National Park) of the snowfields to determine changes in snowfield edges with time. If so, we will have a basis to establish the spatial and temporal boundaries of the snowfields.

In 2012, most plants found within 5m of the edges of snowfields were usually not the rare peripheral arctic-alpine species; nor were they the showy-flowered species often featured in field guides. Instead, abundant species included *Oxyria digyna*, the mountain sorrel, which is a member of the buckwheat family (Polygonaceae); *Epilobium anagallidifolium*, a willow herb in the evening primrose family (Onagraceae); *Carex* sp. in the sedge family (Cyperaceae) and *Phacelia hastata*, a member of the waterleaf family (Hydrophyllaceae). Other species found near snowfields include *Arnica alpinum*, the alpine arnica in the sunflower family (Asteraceae); *Ranunculus* sp. in the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae), and *Arabis lemmonii*, in the mustard family (Brassicaceae). Species richness (a measure of the number of species per area) increased with distance from the snow. Rare, peripheral arctic-alpine species were found, but not necessarily near the edges of snowfields. For example, *Papaver pygmaeae*, the pygmy poppy,



Martha E. Apple

**GLACIERS AND SNOWFIELDS ARE INTRINSIC PARTS OF THE ALPINE LANDSCAPE AT GLACIER NATIONAL PARK; HOWEVER, THEY ARE RETREATING AND SHRINKING AT A RAPID RATE.**



Snowfield near Siyeh Pass ~7800 ft, 2377 m

(Papaveraceae), was found on the rocky fell field near the toe of the Siyeh Pass snowfield, while *Aquilegia jonesii*, the Jones's columbine, (Ranunculaceae), was found on a rocky ridge near the lateral edge of the Siyeh Pass snowfield. Cushion plants were generally not found along the immediate edge of snowfields but were found some meters away, possibly beyond the limits of continuous or nearly continuous snow cover, as these plants grow slowly and can live for many decades.

Interestingly, immature fruit tissue of *Silene stenophylla* from Siberia was radiocarbon dated with accelerator mass spectroscopy to be  $31,800 \pm 300$  years old and regenerated via tissue culture and clonal micropropagation into fertile plants (Yashina *et al.* 2012). A close relative of *S. stenophylla* is the abundant moss campion, *Silene acaulis*, a member of the pink family (Caryophyllaceae) that forms cushions near snowfields at GNP and in other alpine areas. It is intriguing to think about the dynamics of seed longevity in plants associated with snowfields. The snowfield project will be continued in the summer of 2014 when my students and I return to GNP to establish more transects, sample snowfield soil for seeds and spores, and examine functional traits in snowfield plants.

### **Project Two: Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments**

GLORIA is a long-term monitoring network of sites on mountain summits that are established to increase our understanding of the responses of alpine plants to climate change. Georg Grabherr, Harald Pauli, Michael Gottfried and others were instrumental in developing the GLORIA program, which is based on the philosophy of scientifically sound yet relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated implementation. Although GLORIA began circa 1999 with one target region in Austria, the program has expanded to consist of 116 active target regions ([www.gloria.ac.at](http://www.gloria.ac.at)). There are GLORIA sites (or target regions) on mountain summits of all continents except Antarctica. Montana has three GLORIA sites, with one at Glacier National Park (established in 2003 by Daniel Fagre, Lindsey Bengtson, and Karen Holzer), one in the Pioneer Mountains of southwestern Montana (established in 2008, by Martha Apple *et al.*), and one in the Beartooth Mountains (established in 2012, by Jennifer Lyman *et al.*).

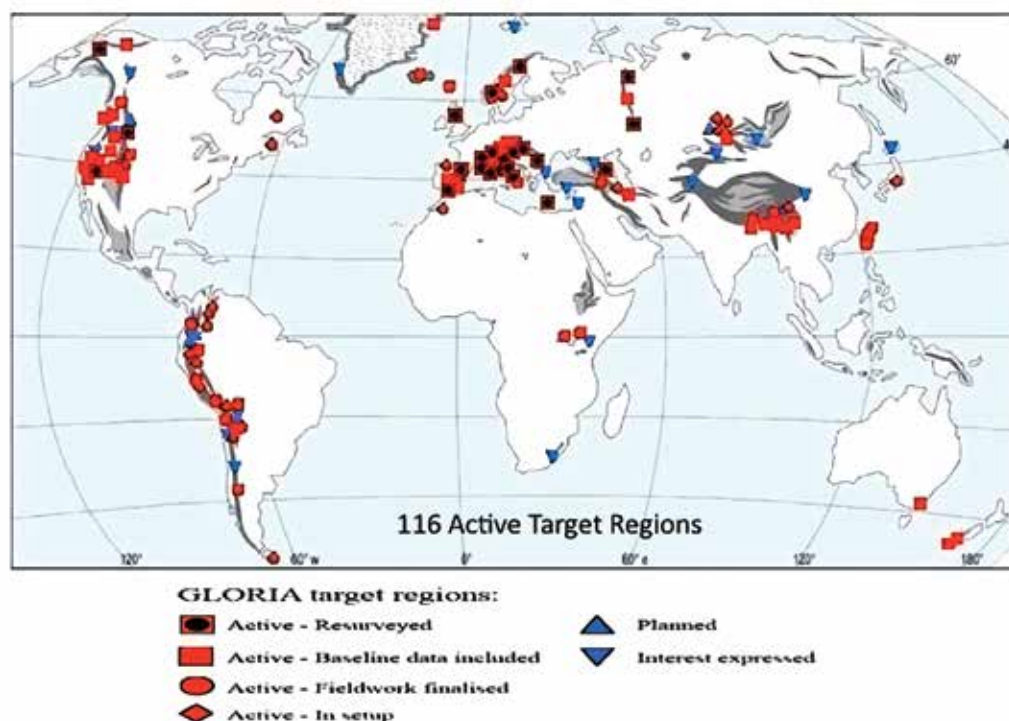
GLORIA target regions consist of four sub-summits along a gradient of elevation from treeline upward to the subalpine, alpine, and nival zones. Site selection is important, as non-volcanic summits with relatively even topography in all cardinal directions, safe conditions, and little disturbance from hikers, vehicles, livestock, or other sources are favored. To establish a target region, 3m x 3m quadrats are placed at each cardinal direction (N, S, E,

W) and 5m in elevation below the highest point of each sub-summit. Extensive plant surveys are taken within each of the four corners of the 3m x 3m quadrats. Temperature sensors are installed in the soil in the central square of the 3m x 3m quadrat, for a total of one sensor per cardinal direction, four per sub-summit, and 16 per target region. The sensors record temperature at hourly intervals and remain *in situ* throughout the year. Plant distribution and abundance is recorded from the high summit points downward to 10m beneath the summit. Lists of vascular plant species, bryophytes, and lichens are constructed. All quadrats are photographed and geospatially referenced. All data is submitted to the GLORIA database at the University of Vienna. Each target region is resurveyed every five years. On average, species moved upslope at the European GLORIA sites from 2001-08, but species richness declined with decreased availability of water at Mediterranean GLORIA sites (Pauli et al. 2012) and warm-adapted species increased through a process called thermophilization (Gottfried et al. 2012).

In 2008, we established the southwestern Montana GLORIA site in the Pioneer Mountains. The treeline, lower alpine, and upper alpine sub-summits are on Mt. Fleecer, a semi-isolated 9400 ft. peak in the northern Pioneer Range, while the highest sub-summit is on Mt. Keokirk (9801 ft.), a narrow ridge with granitic and limestone outcroppings in the

southern Pioneer Mountains. These summits were chosen because of their topography and because they are relatively accessible, and thus more readily available for long-term monitoring. While Mt. Fleecer's upper reaches consist of boulder fields that must be carefully navigated, and Mt. Keokirk has steep limestone cliffs below its summit ridge, neither peak has glaciated cirques that would be truly treacherous for botanical field research and which are fairly common in Montana's high country. The treeline at Mt. Fleecer is especially compelling, as it consists of a mixture of Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) and Subalpine Fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) trees. The Whitebark Pine trees at Mt. Fleecer are subjected to attack and subsequent mortality caused by blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola*) and mountain pine beetles (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*), (Larson 2011).

We resurveyed the southwestern Montana GLORIA site in the summer of 2013; preliminary analyses indicate some differences in species distributions. In addition, we began to compile a series of geospatially referenced photographs of Whitebark Pine trees at the treeline summit. The two upper sub-summits of Mt. Fleecer consist of rocky, granitic outcroppings interspersed with islands of plants. These plants and their distributions are likely influenced by the pika, as these small and very charming mammals gather leaves to make piles of hay. Thus, they influence plant growth and



**Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments, GLORIA**, is a network of long-term plant and temperature monitoring sites on alpine summits started by Georg Grabherr, Harald Pauli, Michael Gottfried et al, in the Austrian Alps. [www.gloria.ac.at](http://www.gloria.ac.at)

Pauli et al. Science 2012, Gottfried et al. Nature 2012

## FUNCTIONAL TRAITS OF PLANTS ARE ESSENTIALLY ANY CHARACTERISTICS OF PLANTS THAT INFLUENCE THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT; TRAITS INFLUENCED BY TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION MAY BE VALUABLE PREDICTORS OF RESPONSES OF PLANTS TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

act as agents of seed dispersal when they harvest seed-bearing stems.

### Project Three: Researching Alpine Plant Traits (RAPT)

Funded through the European Union's Interact Transnational Access Program ([www.eu-interact.org](http://www.eu-interact.org)) that supports access to a network of arctic and alpine field stations, the RAPT project began as an offshoot of the plan to include plant functional traits in the GLORIA database. Functional traits of plants are essentially any characteristics of plants that influence their interactions with the environment; traits influenced by temperature and precipitation may be valuable predictors of responses of plants to climate change. Functional trait approaches may simplify comparisons across regions with different taxonomic groups. Examples of functional traits include leaf characteristics; overall morphology or growth habit; pollination syndromes; clonal reproduction; root architecture; longevity; symbioses; and seed production, dispersal, and germination. The RAPT research group convened at Cairngorms National Park in Scotland in July 2013 to implement a pilot project on plant functional traits in the context of GLORIA. Jan Dick, Chris Andrews, Alba Gutiérrez-Girón, and I—in communication with other GLORIA researchers, including Harald Pauli and Laszlo Nagy—quantified and qualified a suite of plant functional traits along a gradient of elevation and inside and outside of snowfields on the slopes of the 1111m Sgòran Dubh Mòr in the Allt a'Mharcaidh catchment. Plant functional trait data from RAPT are currently being analyzed to determine whether there are trends with elevation and with abiotic factors that may be useful in predicting which plants with which particular traits are more likely to survive changes in abiotic factors that accompany climate change in alpine environments.

Since the Sgòran Dubh Mòr summit is also the high summit of the Scottish GLORIA site, the RAPT project ties in with GLORIA. Results of the RAPT project and re-survey results from the Scottish GLORIA site will likely tell an interesting story of plant distribution, functional traits, and responses to climate change. Eventually, the vast GLORIA database may be

expanded to include plant functional traits for use in predicting and measuring responses of alpine plants to climate change on mountain summits of the world. 🐦

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### WILLIAM CLARK, THE COPPER KING

**Keith Edgerton, PhD**

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William Andrews Clark was among the most powerful, influential, and ruthless of the 19th century American robber barons. Today, however, he is virtually anonymous. In fact, he may be the most famous—or infamous—person no one has ever heard of, especially outside of his adopted state of Montana where he was one of the vaunted copper kings who developed Butte into a world-class mining center. More surprisingly, no one has written a full-length biography of him. There have been any number of historical studies written around the peripheries, focusing primarily on the Butte he helped build and finance, but there has been no sustained attempt at chronicling his vast, complicated, and sprawling eighty-six-year life. A few years ago after a night in his Butte mansion he built in the 1880s (since converted to a bed and breakfast), my significant other suggested I take on the project. With any expansive endeavor, particularly researching and writing the biography of one of America's super-rich, one never really knows what one is getting into. Four years into the project (and counting), there have been a good many peaks and valleys with undoubtedly many more to come.

#### Clark's Midas Touch

Clark lived in an age (1839-1925) when his more well-known peers included John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, and Andrew Carnegie, all household names and each a captain of American industry at the time. Certainly Clark was one of the wealthiest, if not personally *the* wealthiest, man in the country during a time when the true measure of an individual's social and evolutionary fitness was the unapologetic, relentless, and successful accumulation of vast sums of capital. By that standard Clark was arguably the fittest of them all. And in Montana history, no one's shadow looms larger. Starting with nothing in the early 1860s, then making a fortune first in banking in Deer Lodge and then in western copper mining—foremost in Butte where he bought up played out silver mines and then turned them into industrial-strength copper producers—for roughly the two decades framing the turn of

the nineteenth century, Clark went toe-to-toe in national notoriety with his more illustrious counterparts. In the process he became a lightning rod for sustained public wrath, vicious enmity, even hatred. After a brandy-soaked dinner in 1907, Mark Twain described him as “as rotten a human being as can be found anywhere under the flag,” and “a shame to the American nation.”<sup>1</sup> Throughout his adult life, however, Clark's self-taxing work habits and his unmitigated talent for stockpiling unparalleled wealth were sources of endless fascination for an American public who historically have been drawn to the lives of the filthy rich.

And make and spend lots of money Clark did. Upon his death in 1925 observers conservatively calculated his fortune at over \$200 million. In contemporary terms, that would be roughly equivalent to \$31 billion; only Bill Gates and Warren Buffett exceed that total. Among his contemporaries only Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Morgan amassed more, though in their later years they began ambitious and far-sighted philanthropic projects, divesting themselves of vast portions of their riches or splitting their wealth among various corporate spin-offs. Clark never did. For over a half century, as he built a financial empire that stretched across the nation and employed thousands, every business venture William Andrews Clark touched turned to gold. Along with an elite handful of like-minded capitalists, Clark helped create what became, as the writer Charles Morris has called it, the American “supereconomy” that fueled the sustained boom of the 20th century. After Clark reached the Senate in 1901, fellow senator Robert La Follette astutely identified him as one of the 100 men who owned America. His story reveals naked and shameless ambition—and raw unrestrained greed at its basest level. Clark's life is a primer on the limitless power money could buy and reveals, in unvarnished terms, just how far one might go in the free-wheeling world of early 20th century American-style capitalism. Clark surely would have heartily endorsed Gordon Gecko's famous creed in Oliver Stone's film *Wall Street*: “Greed is good.”

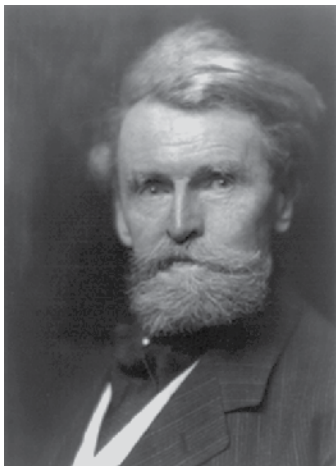


*Keith Edgerton*

PHOTO COURTESY OF MSU BILLINGS

**WILLIAM ANDREWS CLARK WAS AMONG THE MOST POWERFUL, INFLUENTIAL, AND RUTHLESS OF THE 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN ROBBER BARONS. TODAY, HOWEVER, HE IS VIRTUALLY ANONYMOUS.**

**CLARK WAS BOTH A ROBBER AND A BARON IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THOSE TERMS AND HE POSSESSED, AS ONE MONTANA HISTORIAN NOTED, “A PLUNGER’S GENIUS FOR COMPREHENDING THE REWARDS TO BE HAD IN GAMBLING ON A LARGE SCALE.”**



William Clark

Yet in spite of his notoriety, or perhaps because of it, the public adulation he desperately craved eluded him, and pundits like Twain and a sensationalist yellow press savaged him mercilessly for the nearly twenty years he remained in the public eye. Many viewed him as a shameless parvenu who purchased his way into the Senate and then elbowed his way into the upper crust New York world of Big Money and high society. From 1888 until 1900, he failed in four separate, bitterly contested campaigns to win a US Senate seat from Montana, incurring both the enmity and the weird fascination of an American public who followed his many controversies and peccadilloes.

### A Rags-to-Riches Saga

Similar to his celebrated corporate counterparts, Clark was born in the late 1830s, and like those other financial leviathans, he began with a life of modest means. His story, like theirs, was—and still is—a classic Horatio Alger tale. After a brief stint as a rural school teacher and an even briefer stint soldiering in Civil War Missouri (it’s unclear on which side he served), he arrived in the gold fields of the American West in the early 1860s with only a pack on his back and the ragged clothes he wore. His truly *is* a rags-to-riches saga. Like Rockefeller, Gould, Carnegie, and Morgan, ultimately Clark would amass a titanic-sized fortune, complete with a priceless European art collection and the most expensive monstrosity of a 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Gilded-Age mansion the bluebloods of New York City high society had ever seen. Still today architectural historians consider the mansion (sited directly across from Central Park, though demolished in 1927), as the most expensive private home ever constructed in New York City.

Clark’s long list of accomplishments, while inseparable from his political chicanery in his adopted state of Montana, are many. His brazen purchase of nearly the entire 1899 Montana legislature which resulted in his long-sought election as U.S. senator, contributed substantially to a Progressive-era populist groundswell that contributed to the passage of the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution in 1914, allowing for direct election of United States senators. Before that, he was the

president of the 1889 Montana constitutional convention, and his mineowner-friendly fingerprints were all over that document.<sup>2</sup> As such, he was instrumental in laying much of the legal foundation for later 20th century corporate and political abuses by the Anaconda Company. With his deep-pockets—and after a bitterly contested state race financed by his chief Montana rival, fellow copper king, Marcus Daly—Clark ensured, mostly single-handedly, that the state capital of Montana become Helena; still today, its capitol dome bears a copper patina from his mines. Farther afield, Nevadans consider him the founding father of a then-obscure and dusty little railroad watering stop in the southern part of the state that Clark and his brother bought and then began developing to assist their southwestern railroading empire. Las Vegas is the county seat today, fittingly, of Clark County, Nevada.

Clark was variously a farmer, a teacher, a soldier, a prospector, a wood-cutter, a teamster, a cattle driver, a grocer, a mining engineer, a banker, a real estate tycoon, a railroad magnate, and the developer of the southern California sugar beet industry. He claimed success in every endeavor. While in his 70s he became fluent in both French and German in order to consume, voraciously, as much literature about art collecting that he could manage to squeeze in during his routinely jam-packed, twenty-hour work days. During the forty-year period he called Montana home (the 1860s to the early 1900s) he lived at times in a covered wagon, a tent, a sod dug-out, a log cabin—then as a boarder, in a rented frame house, and ultimately in a Butte mansion whose walls he purportedly had adorned with pulverized gold dust mixed with the paint and illuminated with natural light streaming through imported Tiffany stained glass. Though barely five feet six inches tall, he led a life as big and as expansive as the country itself was becoming, fueled by his keen intelligence, a relentless stamina, obsessive attention to detail, and taking advantage at every opportunity of a predominately laissez faire economic regulatory environment. Clark was both a robber and a baron in the truest sense of those terms and he possessed, as one Montana historian noted, “a plunderer’s genius for comprehending the rewards to be had in gambling on a large scale.”<sup>3</sup>

His private life was no less sprawling or complicated as his public one. Clark fathered at least nine children with two different women. His mysterious and beautiful second wife Anna was a product of the rough-and-tumble Butte boarding house world, thirty-nine years his junior and who would outlive him by another thirty-eight (she died in 1963). His last child, a daughter, Huguette, was born in 1906 when he was sixty-seven. Remarkably, she lived until 2011 in New York City as a pathological recluse who had not been photographed in public since 1930 and who owned mansions she never occupied on both coasts and one of the toniest 5th Avenue apartments in New York, maintained but vacant for the last twenty-two years of her life. A hoarder, Huguette was the sole heir of the remnants of her father's vast fortune; her estate is currently the focus of a protracted legal battle between her former caregivers, attorney, and accountant and distant relatives by Clark's first marriage. Sixty boxes of historical material are currently in dispute, putting my own historical research in limbo. Two books on Huguette's odd life alone by two different New York journalists are in the final stages of publication.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Transmutation of Copper to Wealth, But Not to Fame**

Despite concerted efforts, bordering at times on the obsessive, to establish a lasting historical legacy, Clark himself has been largely forgotten.<sup>5</sup> His anonymity can be partly explained by the fact that he accumulated his enormous fortune and made his mark in some of the most remote reaches of the late nineteenth century American West. Outside of the perennial interest in the dénouement of George Armstrong Custer (his 1876 "Last Stand" occurred on the eastern Montana Plains), or on the other, though more celebrated, William A. Clark, part of the exploring tandem of Lewis and Clark in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Montana history, after all, is *not* front and center in the nation's history. Individuals like Clark, no matter how disreputable or deliciously execrable, have languished on the historical back burner. Unlike his more renowned contemporaries, and despite his vast fortune, Clark left no large or lasting national philanthropic monuments; there are no universities, endowed chairs of research, or

libraries bearing his name or thriving because of his money.<sup>6</sup> During his lifetime Clark controlled his financial kingdom exclusively. There never existed a "William Andrews Clark Corporation" and accompanying corporate empire. Everything was his, and his alone. Upon his death in 1925 his immediate family heirs donated only an eclectic collection of primarily 19<sup>th</sup> century French art work to the private Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, DC, (and this after the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York turned it down). Most of it today remains in storage hidden from the public. Montana, the wellspring of his vast fortune, certainly got the short end.

Clark also made much of his money in, and obtained most of his clout through, one of the least glamorous industries—mining—and extracting, on an industrial scale, one of the least glamorous of metals—copper. Copper has never been as seductive and as alluring as gold or silver. It just isn't a very sexy metal. For generations pulp and popular writers of the American West have treated readers to colorful tales of the 49ers and the gold rush to California or the silver strikes of the Comstock Lode in the Sierra Nevada (and more recently the gold-strikes of the Dakotas in HBO's series "Deadwood"). The gritty Western inner-mountain world of industrial-strength copper mining complete with its sulphurous and arsenic fume-belching smelters and its determined, hard-rock, unionized, and mostly immigrant laborers—the world and people which propelled Clark to national prominence and, ultimately, infamy—are not the stuff of romance or classic Hollywood westerns. Nonetheless, it was copper from his mines that helped electrify America precisely at the moment when Edison's Menlo Park light bulbs most needed it. It was copper from his Montana, and later Arizona, mines which conducted the electricity that in large measure fueled the meteoric late nineteenth century industrial expansion in the United States, thus positioning it as a looming world power on the precipice of the twentieth century. ⚡

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Mike Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 199.

<sup>2</sup> Montana's current constitution, ratified in 1972, superseded the 1889 one.

<sup>3</sup> Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 12.

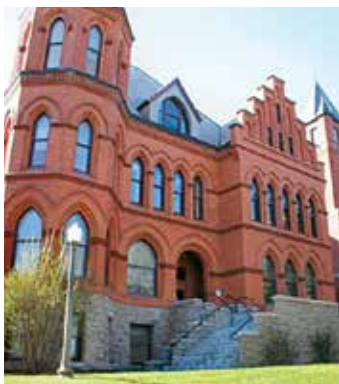
<sup>4</sup> In September Bill Dedman, Pulitzer-prize winning reporter, published his biography of Huguette, entitled *Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Spending of a Great American Fortune* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Though the recent media attention on Huguette has piqued national curiosity about the source of her vast wealth, I have been interviewed by, variously, an MSNBC reporter, a New York University journalism professor, and, oddly, a writer for *People* magazine.

<sup>6</sup> Notably, Clark's first son, William Andrews Clark Junior, (who died in 1934) became the principal benefactor of the nascent Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in the 1920s. He also collected rare literary works and eventually donated his collection and one of his homes, to the University California, Los Angeles, where today it is the William Andrews Clark Junior Memorial Library.



## TENURE TRACK FACULTY UNION PRESIDENTS



University of Montana Western

**INTIMIDATION TACTICS HAVE BECOME ALMOST COMMONPLACE. I WOULD HATE TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE AROUND HERE IF WE DIDN'T HAVE A UNION TO REPRESENT OUR INTERESTS.**



Montana State University Billings

*What recent developments have proven the importance of union representation for tenure-track faculty?*

**Delena Norris-Tull:**

I am relatively new in the leadership of the University of Montana Western union, so I don't have the long-range perspective. But I have seen that the Montana University System representative from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has been very antagonistic towards faculty in recent years. Intimidation tactics have become almost commonplace. I would hate to see what it would be like around here if we didn't have a union to represent our interests.

I see regular attempts to degrade the role of the union in protecting faculty. At UMW, our faculty have put in thousands of hours to bring about a complete revolution in how our university works. The implementation of block scheduling, which we call Experience One, was a faculty-driven initiative that took years of planning and implementation to bring to fruition.

We have received much notice in the press, and much praise from the BOR and Montana's former governor Brian Schweitzer, for the improvements we have brought about at our university. In addition, our faculty have received numerous teaching awards—seven state and national teaching awards in the past five years. And yet, when we go to the bargaining table, we are treated by the OCHE representative as though we are all expendable.

We have an Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the former Commissioner of Higher Education, Sheila Sterns, that promises that our university will make it a budget priority to improve faculty salaries, which are just about the lowest in the nation. And yet, every year since we obtained that MOU, we have had to fight for salary increases which barely can be considered cost of living increases.

*How has union contract negotiation changed in the last five years?*

**Keith Edgerton:**

I can't speak for the negotiations that have occurred on other campuses, though I do know that in 2009 after MSU-Bozeman faculty unionized, the MEA/MFT in Helena moved to

create a system-wide "Council of Union Faculty" (CUF) which consists of the faculty presidents from all of the units. Part of the goal, I believe, was to coordinate ideas and develop unified negotiation strategies across the system. At least we have a better idea now what is happening on other campuses (we used to fly pretty blindly in the past). I'm not sure that has changed the nature of negotiations locally, however.

Relative to the other units of the Montana University System, we are a mid-range size campus at MSU-Billings (5,000 students, 130 contract faculty). In the seventeen years after the 1994 merger, our local contract negotiations were, to put it charitably, difficult. The administration during that time was captive to a much older, increasingly antiquated model of "collective bargaining," vice the "collaborative bargaining" which we utilize now. Negotiations were usually divisive and often adversarial with a steady dose of an "us versus them" attitude. Rigid, unyielding positions frequently influenced by suspicion or even contempt for faculty motivations, were often de rigueur. The negotiations were usually personality driven and during bargaining each side knew well in advance, based on past experience and personal agendas, what would (or more aptly, wouldn't) happen or would (or wouldn't) be achieved. It was chronically frustrating, and it was virtually impossible for the union to find any leverage to change things for the better. The administration knew we would never choose a nuclear option of striking; the last faculty work stoppage within the university system was in 1991 and even then it was in sympathy to an admin staff strike, and faculty unions across the state were divided in the extent of membership participation. In short, there were few, if any, pressure points the union could find to change things. Often, too, as one of the smaller units we were captive to the bargaining timetable that occurred at the University of Montana and then, by default, whatever salary increases Montana State University-Bozeman faculty received. (Salary negotiations are by far the most important union issue year in and year out). Once U of M settled and MSU-Bozeman had budgeted its own analogous salary increases, then we at MSU-Billings knew our achievable salary parameters—lest we ever receive *more* than our colleagues at the bigger schools.



However, in the last several years our local negotiations at MSU-Billings have changed dramatically. We have experienced a turnover in administrative leadership and our new administrative cadre has been exceptionally willing to work with our faculty association at addressing our long-standing working condition concerns and to obtain meaningful, data-driven, salary enhancements for our faculty. Our difficulties now in bargaining, such as they are, are with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. There is the sense that despite substantial objective evidence that our faculty salaries are among the lowest, not only in the nation, but compared to our regional peers, and despite our current local administration making good faith efforts at locating funding within our overall budget to address our salary disparities, OCHE wants to hold the line and ensure that no unit's local manages to negotiate more than anyone else's. The (unspoken) inference that we've received over the years is "we need to show the legislature we can control our spending (i.e., holding the line on salary increases) otherwise they'll cut our budget next biennium, and then we'll all be *really* bad off, and even further behind etc." But the message we receive at the local level is that indeed the university system can make do with persistently less funding, and faculty salaries are always among the lowest priorities. The result—especially after a number of biennia where the legislature budgeted 0/0 state pay plan increases—is that all of the units (and by extension most of the rank and file faculty union members) have had to endure extended salary stagnation and our ability to recruit and retain highly qualified faculty in a national market continues to erode. Our inversion and compression salary disparities, whereby newer junior faculty are making in some cases more than their long-serving senior colleagues, are appalling and contributes to persistent faculty demoralization. Additionally, of the 133 contract faculty on our campus, 124 of us are making less, and many substantially less, than our regional, (not merely national) peers in comparable disciplines and ranks. At MSU-Billings alone it will take well over a million new and permanent dollars to bring our salaries simply to the current, comparable levels of our regional peers.

As we have discovered over the years, because the ultimate authority over the Montana University System is the Board of Regents, and all union agreements must run through the

Commissioner's office and then be approved by the Board, there is increasingly little incentive to bargain anything meaningful locally with our administration despite their (recently) principled efforts on our behalf. I think all of us in positions of union leadership are aware that currently no matter what we bargain or how enlightened, progressive, or far-sighted our local agreements, if the Commissioner's office in Helena doesn't agree (and then, by extension determines it won't put our agreements before the Board of Regents for discussion and possible approval or disapproval), we have essentially engaged in an exercise in futility and have wasted an exceptional amount of time and energy. Despite that, I know that our union at MSU-Billings is a strong and important voice for our faculty and I dread thinking where we would be without it. We will continue to advocate and lobby on behalf of faculty despite the seemingly uphill battles we must persistently wage.

*How important are faculty unions at the present moment in the development of higher education policies in Montana?*

**Gregory Clouse:**

Faculty unions are committed stakeholders in the future of higher education in Montana, making the level of importance of faculty unions regarding the development of higher education policies in Montana the very highest. For example, on our campus, the union represents a closed shop; all faculty belong to the Federation. This results in a direct or indirect union presence on the Faculty Senate and its various sub-committees.

Any faculty member who has been in this system for any length of time knows how effective—or ineffective—some of the higher education policies are in Montana. Often, changes in policy have been based on very weak data and not much rationale. In many cases, the union acts as brakes for many policies that are so weak they can't stand a test first.

Another important policy issue is differential pay: Should two new faculty with the same degree who start teaching at the same time in the same university at the same rank have a salary spread of thousands of dollars because someone thinks one discipline is thought of as a harder discipline to recruit for? The interesting thing is that this happens in one unionized institution in our state; their CBA allows for it.

About five years ago when I was attending a

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE AND LOBBY ON BEHALF OF FACULTY DESPITE THE SEEMINGLY UPHILL BATTLES WE MUST PERSISTENTLY WAGE.**



Montana State University Northern

**TO UPHOLD THE INTEGRITY AND "SPIRIT" OF EDUCATION AT AN INSTITUTION, FACULTY HAVE TO BE RECRUITED AND RETAINED.**

Board of Regents meeting in Billings, a faculty member from MSU-Bozeman asked me if I like being in a union, and I said, "Absolutely!" Then he asked why. I thought about this for a moment and decided to ask *him* a couple of questions. "How many years have you been a faculty member at MSU?" 21. "What is your faculty rank?" *Associate Professor*. "Do you think you will ever make Full Professor?" *No*. I went on to tell him I was a Full Professor and had been for over 10 years—because of our union and the procedures outlined in our Collective Bargaining Agreement. To uphold the integrity and "spirit" of education at an institution, faculty have to be recruited and retained.

I think I know where the development of higher education policy in Montana is headed in the future. Many of our state leaders and administrators would love to see faculty unions disappear; shortcomings on our campus are often blamed on the faculty union and our CBA. Yet it seems to be very difficult to explain to leaders, law makers, and administrators that there are two signatures on every union CBA—one by the administration and one by the federation president. To me, this means there is policy ownership on the part of both entities.

*The tenure-track faculty at MSU Bozeman has recently voted to decertify its union representation, making it the only four-year campus in Montana without a faculty union for the professoriate. What do you see as the short and/or long-term implications of this move?*


## David Shively:

I can speak to this question quite well given my experience of having spent a week on the MSU Bozeman campus in January of 2013 visiting with faculty to understand their concerns about workplace issues, financial compensation, and the faculty role in university governance. One implication of the decertification will be inequitable compensation to the faculty. The decertification of the tenure-track union was inspired and led by a few faculty members who felt they would stand to gain from this. The first (and only!) collective bargaining agreement that was negotiated by the union required that the negotiated pay increase would be allocated across the board to all faculty members, as is appropriate. Thus, higher profile faculty (as measured by high profile research) and/or those more favored by the administration received the same increase (really a cost of living adjustment) as all others. In

the past these faculty had benefited from favoritism and decisions by unit heads and deans to award them larger pay increases than their colleagues, and these beneficiaries undoubtedly felt this was justified because they were more meritorious. However, the negotiated compensation also included a merit pool to fund competitive awards to faculty applicants as well as a market adjustment pool that would address "exceptional salary circumstances" (such as retention, market equity, gender/racial equity considerations, and internal salary compression or inversion). Such market pools are generally used to retain those higher profile faculty members who can present compelling evidence of their marketability. In short, the faculty would essentially have to compete with their colleagues in order to benefit as they had before, and even if the outcomes were relatively predictable, the work and documentation entailed in this process is less palatable than otherwise.

Another important implication is that the faculty role in university governance is now less certain. Faculty participation in governance is much more effective and meaningful when it is authorized and required by a CBA. While the CBA language concerning a faculty senate was rather weak (the senate would exist at the prerogative of the administration), the union would doubtless have worked to strengthen this to a requirement. Without such language, the administration could conceivably disband any sitting senate, especially one that challenges administration actions in the area of academic affairs or elsewhere.

Lastly, if I'm an early career faculty member at MSU who is on the path to promotion and tenure, I would be quite alarmed by my inability to grieve any promotion or tenure decision that is substantively or procedurally flawed. The CBA that AFMSU negotiated worked to protect the faculty from arbitrary and/or capricious decision making by administrators, effectively protecting them from having years of study and training as well as the promise of a career derailed by a bad decision.

These implications of the decertification are quite real. I hope that, with or without them coming to pass, that my colleagues at MSU will take a closer look at them and realize that a university can function much better with a guaranteed faculty role in governance, fair pay provisions for all employees, and clear and enforceable standards for faculty advancement. 



University of Montana Missoula

**THE DECERTIFICATION OF THE TENURE-TRACK UNION WAS INSPIRED AND LED BY A FEW FACULTY MEMBERS WHO FELT THEY WOULD STAND TO GAIN FROM THIS.**

### HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Derek Bok

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, 496 pages. \$35.00

Reviewed by Marvin Lansverk, Professor of English Literature, MSU Bozeman

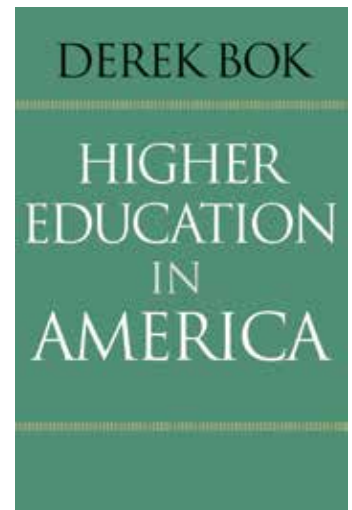
DEREK BOK'S LATEST OFFERING, *Higher Education in America* is a hefty volume. Daunting in length and ambitious in scope, it manages to succeed on many counts, both ancient and modern. By ancient standards—at least as encompassed in the Horatian dictum from the *Ars Poetica*, that works should both “teach and delight”—Bok's book is a success. It is a wealth of information about higher education, even to the already well-informed; and it is a pleasure, albeit an academic one, to read (I'll provide my explanation of *academic pleasure* below). And by modern standards, it has managed to create “buzz,” garnering good reviews and attention across the spectrum, including social media—for all the best reasons. Most importantly, it promises to be *useful* to a variety of interested audiences, faculty, administrators, regents, legislators and parents alike. Certain to attract attention as well are the book's failures, its failure to give in to what is often an overwhelming temptation in books about academe: to overgeneralize, to take cheap shots, or purport to have all the answers. Instead, Bok is to be praised for his balance, his attention to nuance, his evidence based methodology, and his wisdom. He doesn't offer patent medicine solutions to all that ails higher education, but he does provide clear headed views of the problems and ongoing promise of the vast array of American institutions of higher education.

Bok's credentials are impressive. A lawyer by training, and an academic, he was twice president of Harvard, from 1971-1991, and then again for a year as acting president in 2006-07 while an ongoing search was completed. And in between, he has shown himself to be a prolific scholar on a variety of subjects, including higher education itself, with many previous books, notably, his 2009 *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More*. Bok's new book sustains some themes developed in his previous work, but is more ambitious, attempting to consider what its title implies: the scope and variety of higher education across America. As such, it attempts to serve as a primer on the diversity, strengths, and weaknesses of our

American system, encompassing undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools, addressing teaching, research, and service along the way. The result is a kind of *Consumer Reports*-type account, not in the sense that he is providing a Buyer's Guide to specific American colleges; rather, that the book provides a systematic overview of the various components and issues involved in addressing the complex system, helping readers know what they are looking at and what to look for, as a result. And along the way, Bok provides some history and plenty of context.

The broad scope affects all aspects of the book. Because it is broadly focused, it can't go into extreme depth on its many subjects: on any given topic, there are longer analyses to be found (many of which Bok actually uses and cites). But in not just focusing on a particular sector of higher education, or a particular set of problems lies the book's greatest strength and some of the greatest academic pleasures (referred to above) the book affords. Bok knows (as do most people who work inside it) that higher education is an interconnected web. Addressing one problem (take graduation rates, for example) can have consequences—sometimes deleterious—on other parts of the system (quality of instruction, for example). Reading the work of someone who understands this interconnectedness and can *explain* these connections authoritatively is part of the fun of reading the book (ok maybe “delight” is too strong a word)—and also the source of some of its most important advice.

Because the book is so lengthy and encyclopedic, any attempt to provide a full summary would itself have to be long. Rather than a comprehensive summary, then, my aims here are to be somewhat selective, identifying the various parts covered, concentrating on a few particular sections. For those in a hurry, reading the introduction and conclusion as stand-alone essays isn't a bad strategy. In fact, the book is organized so that it can be used as a reference book. While reading the entire work is recommended—since the full import of the interconnections comes into focus in doing so—never-



Marvin Lansverk



**QUICKLY COMPARING OUR SYSTEM TO EUROPE'S, BOK NOTES THAT WE HAVE MANY MORE INSTITUTIONS AND ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE A WIDER SLICE OF OUR POPULATIONS (FUNDING FROM ALL SOURCES FOR OUR UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING TUITION, COMPRISES 2.4% OF NATIONAL INCOME, COMPARED TO HALF THAT FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION), AND WE HAVE MUCH MORE DIVERSITY AS A RESULT.**

theless, much can be gained just by reading particular sections one happens to be interested in. The introduction lays out some of Bok's premises and explains his intents. After musing about the paradox that American higher education is still the envy of the world yet simultaneously has spawned a cottage industry in the publishing of jeremiads about the failing state of American universities, Bok shows his cards: there *are* many, difficult problems but not everything is as bad as is often made out. In fact, near the end of the book, Bok scolds the authors of the jeremiads for distracting us from real problems. As he says, "The principal problem with many of the [overly general] criticisms just described is not that they are wrong but that their sweeping nature diverts attention from significant weaknesses than can and should be remedied" (385).

Bok's method is to avoid overgeneralization. And he begins with a quick overview of the diverse structure of higher education in America, surveying the multiple and sometimes conflicting functions that institutions have grown up to serve (teaching undergraduates, economic development, producing research, delivering outreach) and the various types of institutions we've developed to do so (research universities, comprehensives, four years, community colleges; privates, publics, and for-profits). Quickly comparing our system to Europe's, Bok notes that we have many more institutions and attempt to educate a wider slice of our populations (funding from all sources for our universities, including tuition, comprises 2.4% of national income, compared to half that for the European Union), and we have much more diversity as a result. An important aspect of our higher education landscape is that our institutions compete with each other: for students, for prestige, and for funds. While competition leads to many useful consequences (the explanation and analysis of which Bok effectively addresses throughout the book, in various sections), it also creates some of the problems. As Bok points out, and as all academics know, some things are easier to measure than others. And too often, a focus on (or competition on the basis of) only the things that can be measured leads to suboptimal results. Most trenchantly, Bok discusses how it has always been easier to measure incoming SAT averages of high school students, research grant production of faculty, publications, and even graduation rates than to measure the quality and effectiveness of

various types of instruction. One danger is that the "fuzzy and uneven knowledge about the performance of universities could easily lead academic leaders to make unwise decisions about the goals and priorities of the institution" (23). Bok's point, in starting here, is not to take issue with using data to drive decision making, or to criticize any particular constituency (regents, legislatures, faculty), but to argue for the need for *education*, when talking about education, for both good data and a good understanding of how it all works. And Bok's president's eye view, supplemented by years of additional study, provides both.

The organization of Bok's book that follows, true to his comprehensive intent, intersperses discussions of various issues (from shared governance, to the future of tenure, to the role of research across the various types of universities, to whether faculty are too liberal, to online learning, to for-profit universities), with discussions of trends and critiques of higher ed (including attempts to increase enrollment and accessibility, rising costs, and graduation rates), with a subsequent systematic treatment of undergraduate education, graduate education, and the professional schools, in sequence. His early discussion of governance is a good example of his methodology.

He begins with it in part to telegraph that his main purpose is to address what universities themselves can and should do in response to modern challenges, rather than concentrating solely on the level of government policy—though he well knows that these, too, are interconnected. In short, in spite of recent critiques from various sources, including one Association of Governing Boards commission report from 1996 that longstanding procedures of shared governance now too often lead to stalemate and an inability to change, Bok turns to the peer reviewed evidence. And after a succinct discussion he concludes that "in the end, it is difficult to accept the view of trustees and former presidents who claim that the system is dysfunctional and faculty participation should diminish" (61-62). In most places, it continues to work fairly well—with most of the large scale debacles more the fault of too much executive authority, rather than the reverse.

On the related issue of state oversight, Bok traces the familiar numbers and the current situation: that at the very time that state funding for public institutions continues to shrink (by 2009, state revenues for public universities had



fallen to 18% of their budgets), most states have nevertheless made serious efforts to make universities more accountable, leading to various experiments, some extremely intrusive. As Bok relates, among these were attempts by legislatures in the 1990's to implement so-called "performance based budgeting," many of which faded when it became clear that developing reliable outcome measures proved more difficult than had been anticipated and often had unforeseen negative consequences. Some states (including Montana), are nevertheless trying to get on the performance based funding bandwagon (perhaps more accurately called *target based budgeting*), still trying to leverage dwindling state appropriations to achieve specific ends, now focusing especially on graduation rates and to a lesser degree on access. The trouble is, again, that such measures tend to reduce complex systems with multiple and competing goals to single targets. Bok's point is that new experiments should continue to be informed by the failures of previous ones and by an understanding of the complexities involved. Important goals need nuanced solutions, not just slogans or reductive targets.

A few other quick takes (of what are actually long sections of the book): Is there any truth to the occasional charge that too much focus on research necessarily competes with teaching, negatively affecting undergraduate education? Answer: the evidence says no. In fact, Bok cites statistics that 70% of faculty overall—including faculty at research universities such as Montana State University—indicate they are nevertheless more oriented toward teaching than research. Does "mission creep" negatively affect universities, where institutions in one classification attempt to improve their prestige and possibly their funding sources by trying to move up, say from a four year comprehensive to a research university? Answer: yes. The evidence shows that developing Ph.D. programs as part of a goal of "moving up," is expensive and rarely works. Do some universities pay too much attention to prestige lists such as the *US News and World Reports* annual rankings? Answer: yes, most definitely. In continuing to compete for a dwindling pool of students, universities public and private (but especially private) engage in many suboptimal behaviors, such as using merit scholarships to raise their incoming SAT averages, instead of using this money for increasing diversity or making more funding available to needy students. Are universities too expensive? Answer: yes, but

there also isn't a simple, single answer to this question. Of course they are expensive, and the cost of education has exceeded the inflation rate for years, but so have many other sectors of the economy that get less attention. Still, all universities need to continue to work on accessibility. Does administrative bloat drive up the cost of college? Answer: yes, and you should read the section about this. Is it really true that Bok suggests that some universities should seriously consider giving up their sports programs as an unnecessary expense? Answer: yes, but he's not holding his breath that many more institutions than already have will do this, and it's not a major part of his discussion. Is tenure the only way to guarantee academic freedom? Answer: no, and alternative models should be explored—beyond the current de facto ones of relying more and more on adjunct faculty—though tenure isn't the cause of many ills of higher education, as some critics would have it and probably saves institutions money by offering job security instead of higher salaries. Finally, does Bok spend some time discussing admissions policies of the Ivys and other elites? Answer: yes, but most of the book really is not primarily concerned with these schools, since by percentage, they affect such a small number of the undergraduate student population (though our news media remains obsessively preoccupied with them).

By far the largest focus on the book, spread across several different sections, is what Bok identifies as the two biggest challenges facing higher education at this time, overshadowing all others: the two "q's," quantity and quality; in other words, graduation rates and the effectiveness of undergraduate education. While Bok's discussion of these two is sobering, it is also one of the most interesting parts of the book, again, because Bok doesn't treat these as separate problems (or separate silos, to use a favorite metaphor of the day—though thankfully a metaphor Bok doesn't use). Bok knows, as too many commentators on these two problems don't, that they *can* be inversely related. But they don't have to be, if we are careful, which is why this section of the book deserves a careful reading, including by everyone wrestling with these problems in Montana. Beginning with the quantity side, Bok rehearses some of the well-known facts, including the Obama administration goals for regaining America's lead. Alarming, degree production now puts us near the bottom of 27 advanced countries, in the

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**THE STRENGTH OF HIS BOOK LIES IN BOK'S SIFTING EVIDENCE, CLEAR ANALYSIS, AND EXAMINATION OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS—THOUGH HE RESISTS ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL CONCLUSIONS.**

percentage of students who graduate. One third of students entering four year institutions don't graduate within 8.5 years. 70% of high school graduates continue on to some higher education, but only 50% currently have the preparation to make them capable of succeeding. And once in college, students nowadays do far less work: from 1961 to 2000, the amount of time spent in class and on homework went from 40 hours a week to 27. And on and on. Many readers will already be familiar with the gloomy statistics. But what to do about it? Unfortunately, many of the root causes and therefore adequate solutions are beyond the control of higher education institutions themselves, so that expecting them to solve the problem has many risks. Nevertheless, there are many appropriate responses, and Bok usefully summarizes and assesses many of the ongoing experiments, including attempts to increase accessibility and to improve financial aid, remediation, and the two-year sector. Breaking down the problem, he also discusses the different obligations of each type of institution. But he also knows that simply pressuring institutions to increase degree production isn't by itself an answer. In fact, as he says, "if colleges are pushed too hard to increase graduation rates, they may respond by lowering their requirements and accepting less effort from their students, thus dimming the prospects for improving the quality of education" (220). In fact, given the current state of the discussion, Bok calls this result the "likely" one. And it is exacerbated by the aforementioned "quantification problem," that it is easier to measure number of degrees than quality of instruction: "If America is to regain a significant edge, educators and public officials will have to concern themselves not only with the *quantity* of higher education, but with its *quality* as well" (223).

Which leads to one of Bok's passions, and his most important challenge to our institutions: a re-examination of the undergraduate curriculum and of teaching methods used to deliver it. Much of this isn't new and is ongoing in many, many places already, including Montana, but Bok's discussion is powerful nevertheless. Institutions and especially faculty need to continue the drive towards outcomes assessment, recognizing at the same time that not all outcomes are easy to assess. Yet even where it is hard, it must be done, for just as decision making about higher education policy needs to be data driven, so should teaching itself. Further, curricula should be continually reexam-

ined by faculty, including scrutiny of the total credits needed for a degree, the relative proportions of credits needed for that degree (divided between one's major, electives, and general education—which Bok defends, if done well), and more instruction should take advantage of active, experiential learning techniques. Bok is eloquent about the possibilities here because it is one place, perhaps the best place, for institutions to make progress on both quality and quantity at the same time. Importantly, within this discussion of quality and quantity, Bok also reminds readers of another set of interconnections, of the tripartite mission of higher education, as it has emerged over the years in this country. It is part of our American fabric that our colleges and universities do not just one but three (interconnected!) things: 1) they equip students for careers by providing skills and training—what is so often called "workforce development"; 2) they prepare students to become enlightened citizens of our democracy; and 3) they prepare students to live full, satisfying lives capable of reflection and self knowledge (166-67). Government officials and policymakers do a disservice when they only speak of the first—as they too often do—and only in the context of increasing our global competitiveness. And reformers and other critics miss the mark if their solutions only concentrate on vocational preparation. Part of what has made the American system the envy of the world is embedded in its multiple goals and its determination to make progress on these goals available to as wide a swath of the population as has ever been attempted.

The strength of his book lies in Bok's sifting evidence, clear analysis, and examination of possible solutions—though he resists one-size-fits-all conclusions. And most importantly, his commentary is relevant for Montana, and timely, since our system contains each of the types of institutions Bok addresses (except an Ivy, though it does grow here). And our campus leaders, faculty, administrators, regents, commissioner, and legislators are wrestling with these same issues every day. So why not do it with even more information, and nuanced guidance, of the kind Bok provides? After all, wouldn't it be great if the Horatian dictum applied not just to books that can "teach and delight," but to our discussions about Montana's future as well? Now that's a conversation I'd like to keep having. 🍷

a recent TIAA-CREF poll reported offering a phased retirement program for its tenured faculty. Eligibility was based on a combination of age and service with age 60 and 10 years of service the typical minimum requirements. Phased retirement programs were almost never offered as entitlements but as options which required administrative approval. The maximum phase period was usually three years. Time commitments ranged from full time to one-quarter time during the phase period and the work could be spread over one term or a full academic year. Specific provisions were negotiated and formalized in a post-retirement contract, and the faculty member was required to give up tenure before beginning the phase period. During the phase period, 83% of institutions contributed to the health insurance premium, 61 % allowed for partial retirement benefits in addition to salary, and 36% provided extra retirement plan contributions or credits (Yakoboski and Conley, 2013).

### **The MUS Post-Retirement Program**

The Board of Regents has set the general policies for post-retirement employment in the Montana University System, and TIAA-CREF and the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) have set the maximum salary levels after taking retirement benefits. A post-retirement contract is subject to administrative approval and can be written for a maximum of three years. The faculty member relinquishes tenure and undergoes annual reviews during the post-retirement contract. The work can be for one term or spread over an entire fiscal year. The contract must be in writing and can be terminated for cause or financial exigency (MUS Policy 360.00, December 1999). Under TRS, salary is capped at one-third of the retiree's final average salary. TIAA-CREF allows employment up to .49 FTE. The University makes no contribution to the retiree's health care premium.

Ideally a post retirement contract can be of great benefit to both the individual retiree and the University. The retiree continues his professional life but on a reduced level and gains time to pursue other interests. The University has the services of a senior staff member with all of the experience and institutional knowledge that has accrued over an entire career but at a reduced cost. In the technical fields the retiree has the opportunity to mentor his younger replacement and pass his institutional and local

knowledge on to his junior colleague. The transition is made easier and the specialized programs are able to maintain their continuity. Everyone benefits.

While this may be the ideal, in practice this scenario almost never plays out. The cost of termination pay and the lack of set-asides for these known expenses are the primary reasons for this. Often the only way that a department or college can cover the costs of termination pay is to delay replacing the retiring faculty member and use the vacancy savings that result to cover termination expenses. The lack of overlap between senior faculty members and their replacements that results from this strategy obviously negatively impacts program continuity and senior staff mentoring. The chain of expertise is broken and much institutional knowledge walks out the door—never to be recovered.

This same problem of funding retirement results in few post-retirement agreements given approval by the administration. Deans and department chairs facing an impending retirement know that they must not only cover the costs of termination pay but the expenses of recruitment for a new hire. To add a post-retirement contract to the mix often breaks the bank. To fund such a contract might well delay the replacement hire by a year or two. For this reason administrators are very reluctant to approve phased retirement agreements. In fact some Deans at MSU have said publicly that they would never approve a post-retirement contract regardless of its merits. The only way that MUS can make phased retirement a viable option for those reluctant to give up tenure is to address the problem of these unfunded liabilities directly. Termination pay and recruitment costs are known future expenses and budgets must be structured to accommodate these liabilities. Otherwise, the post-retirement employment policy will remain on the books but rarely be used to encourage senior staff to transition into retirement.

Regulations need to be changed as well to allow for more flexibility in post-retirement employment. As it stands now, research professors, as one example, are not permitted to go down to two thirds or half-time work even though they may hold grants that would fully cover their salary and medical benefits at no cost to the University. There are many hands in the post-retirement regulatory stew: TRS, MUS

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and its agreements with TIAA-CREF, Montana statute, Board of Regents policies, Federal and State labor laws, and even the IRS. Change, however ponderous, is still possible and should begin before the impending wave of retirement hits the shore of inertia. Otherwise, post-retirement is a policy that will exist largely on paper.

### **Emeritus**

A well-structured emeritus policy with a rich portfolio of rights and privileges can go a long way in addressing those personal and professional concerns of faculty nearing retirement. Board of Regents policy dictates the general outlines of emeritus designation upon retirement (*MUS Policy 350.00*, December, 1999). The retiree must be nominated by the President or Chancellor of the home institution. Final approval rests with the Board of Regents. Each campus is free to develop the specific criteria for such nominations and the rights and privileges that accrue from emeritus designation.

MSU- Bozeman policies are typical those that apply to other campuses in the System (*MSU-Bozeman Policy 352.00*, May, 2011). A nominee must have achieved the rank of Associate Professor or higher and have served the university a minimum of 10 years as a tenured faculty member. Administrators can have the honor of emeritus status bestowed upon them at retirement as well ("Dean Emeritus," "President Emeritus," etc.). Currently, adjunct faculty and non-tenured research faculty are not eligible for emeritus status even though they have met the service requirements. This may be about to change as the MSU Faculty Senate recently voted to include these two groups in the emeritus eligibility standards. The faculty member must request emeritus status six months before or no later than three years after retirement. The letter of nomination proceeds through all of the administrative levels and gains final approval from the Board of Regents.

The current rights and privileges accorded emeritus faculty vary somewhat from campus to campus. MSU policies give their emeritus faculty the following benefits:

Emeritus status shall entail continued campus courtesies including, but not necessarily limited to, the options to:

1. Use library facilities.
2. Become honorary members of the Alumni

Association.

3. Receive publications sent to active faculty and members of the Alumni Association.
4. Use recreational facilities at a reduced rate.
5. Participate in academic convocations, commencements, and other academic endeavors.
6. Request that their names be retained in the University catalog, if desired, until their death.
7. Attend, without vote, meetings of their department and college.
8. Act as principal investigator for MSU grant proposals consistent with the policies of the Office of Sponsored programs.
9. Request office, laboratory space, and/or secretarial help, as available. Since the resources of the various departments vary, no university-wide policy can guarantee access. Such accommodations may be extended to emeritus faculty with the understanding that the instructional, research, and service requirements of the tenurable faculty have priority.

Note: Any or all privileges granted emeritus faculty may be rescinded should it become necessary to do so. (*MSU-Bozeman Policy 352.00*, May 2011)

In addition to the specific privileges enjoyed by emeriti listed above, all retired employees at MSU enjoy free parking permits and access to wellness programs, recreational facilities, and Outdoor Recreation Center programs and equipment. Retirees are sometimes offered reduced tickets to on-campus sporting events, plays, and concerts as well.

### **Retired Faculty Associations**

Roger Baldwin, professor of educational administration at Michigan State University, has studied retired faculty organizations and points out that "while such organizations can vary in their level of activity, they can be effective in giving professors a sense of purpose and identity following retirement . . . I think many people are delaying retirement because there are no clear options as to how they're going to continue an intellectually fulfilling life once they 'drop off a cliff' (Baldwin and Zeig, 2012)."

Retired Faculty Organizations (RFOs) exist nationwide to offer retirees continuing opportunities for learning, to maintain their social and professional ties with their institutions, to



support their continued academic engagement and scholarly productivity, and to provide emeriti with opportunities for service to their institutions, communities, and professions. Baldwin and Zeig draw the following conclusions from their nationwide assessment of RFOs: "Healthy, productive professors deserve the opportunity to continue learning and serving even while they make way for new colleagues to enter the profession, and colleges and universities can benefit from the teaching, mentoring, and many forms of service emeritus faculty can continue to provide (2012)."

The Association of Retired Faculty (ARF) at MSU was founded a decade ago and has provided many services to the university during this time. Members have continued to teach, to serve as principal investigators on research grants, to mentor junior faculty and students, to serve on departmental and college-wide committees, to provide pre-retirement and benefits workshops and advising, to offer informative monthly bag lunch presentations on a variety of topics, and to volunteer their services widely to the campus and community. ARF is currently drafting a proposal for the establishment of an Emeritus College on the MSU campus ([www.montana.edu/retired/](http://www.montana.edu/retired/)). The University of Montana has a similar Retirees' Association that offers comparable activities and services ([www.umt.edu/retirees/](http://www.umt.edu/retirees/)).

### **Emeritus College**

One idea that is gaining traction in making the role of emeriti faculty more meaningful and engaged is the establishment of emeritus colleges.

"Emeritus colleges are attractive to a growing number of institutions for their potential to make more meaningful the honorary but often hollow rank of 'emeritus' professor and offer a 'renegotiated' path to retirement to faculty in general," said Roger Baldwin, a professor of higher, adult and lifelong education at Michigan State University (Flaherty, October 2013).

Several such colleges have been established in the last decade, and most seem to follow similar models. A dean of the Emeritus College is appointed and reports directly to the chief academic officer. This Dean is usually retired

and typically serves without pay or with a very modest salary. All emeriti from the institution are appointed as faculty of the emeritus college, and often the staff is enriched with emeritus professors from other institutions who live in the area. The college is housed in a building on campus or in a home just off campus. Parking and access are critical considerations for this group of aging faculty. Office space, meeting rooms, computers, and internet are provided to the staff, and typically a part-time secretary handles the administrative duties. Arizona State University, one of the first to establish an emeritus college, provides diverse and extensive opportunities for its retirees ([emerituscollege.asu.edu](http://emerituscollege.asu.edu)). Emory University also developed another very successful model of what an emeritus college can be ([www.emory.edu/emertus/](http://www.emory.edu/emertus/)).

Emeritus colleges are far more than retired faculty clubs. While opportunities to meet and engage in stimulating conversation with colleagues are no doubt important to retirees, emeritus colleges go far beyond this. They support ongoing research and sponsor symposia and lectures on topics of current interest. Many sponsor courses and a few emeritus colleges even publish their own journals. They coordinate mentoring activities with junior faculty and students and volunteer opportunities on their campuses and within their communities. Speaker bureaus are often established to offer guest lectures on a variety of topics to classes and community organizations. Many emeriti continue to teach and serve on campus committees. The emeritus college provides a professional home for these individuals who frequently have had their offices and laboratories stripped from them upon retirement (Baldwin and Zeig, 2012).


### **Conclusions**

The impending wave of retirements are going to hit the shores of MUS whether we plan for this tsunami or not. The current procedures available to those transitioning into retirement are often inadequate to meet both their economic needs and their continuing professional aspirations. When a tenured professor leaves the academy embittered and disillusioned as a result of this process, both the individual and the university lose. In their article "Utilizing America's Most Wasted Resource," (2007) Robert Diamond and Merle Allshouse point out

the obvious: “In most university and college communities there is a growing pool of talented retired or transitioning individuals who would like nothing more than to make a difference by using their knowledge and experience to improve their communities and institutions while continuing the process of their own personal development.” We could not agree more.

What then can the MUS do to turn these professors so reluctant to retire into productive latter-day academics eager to continue to grow and to contribute to their home institutions after they relinquish tenure? On the economic side there is realistically little that might be possible given the frugal nature of the Montana Legislature. System-wide retirement buyouts are expensive and rarely effective. The current plans in process to simplify MUS’s regular and supplemental retirement plans might offer better options to current employees and enhance their retirement funds in the long run. These welcomed reforms will have little effect, however, on those now approaching retirement. Better advising about investment options and retirement planning would certainly be of benefit to all. Finally, modest contributions to benefits premiums might help with the medical insecurity that most retirees face, but again this is unlikely in the current political climate.

Non-economic retirement incentives are likely to be the most feasible and effective options. Budgeting for the known costs of termination pay and recruitment expenses would go a long way toward helping fund post-retirement contracts in a way other than “vacancy savings.” Phased retirement agreements need to be made more flexible than current regulations allow in order to accommodate an increasing variety of career paths and appointments. Emeritus status should be awarded to all faculty retirees with 10 or more years of service regardless of the nature of their appointment (tenured, adjunct, or research). The rights and privileges of emeriti faculty need to be enhanced. Institutions should support retired faculty associations on each of the campuses. Ideally, emeritus colleges should be established and funded at the major institutions (UM and MSU at a minimum). If the Montana University

System were to institute some of these reforms, both the individual retiree and the institution would stand to gain. Then the reluctant professor can walk confidently through the retirement door knowing there is professional life on the other side. 

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## READER RESPONSE

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*Dear Editor,*

*When I see a new copy of the Montana Professor in my mailbox, I have mixed emotions. I expect to see a few things that remind me why I taught, and several that remind me why I quit. The latest issue was no exception.*

*The articles regarding online education were a disappointment. Two (Scarlett et al. and Gonsbak) set up false dichotomies in their titles. Anyone who has been involved with online education knows that there are some styles and content matter (peer instruction, fact transfer) for which it is excellent and other forms (Socratic dialogue, experiential learning) for which it is not. The key issues now are how widely to incorporate it and how to make the integration of online and traditional education as painless as possible for all concerned. Squires' summary and Young-Pelton's anecdote are at least a step in that direction. But as long as faculty trained in traditional modes are free to ignore or actively resist online education, we will continue to hemorrhage clients and their dollars to nontraditional institutions and campuses.*

*Regent Chair McLean upholds her role as an impediment to higher education in Montana. She is (charitably) clueless about students, faculty, and state needs.*

- 1) Are there students who could be better served? Surely. But the biggest single student issue in my experience is lack of motivation (as much as 40% in entry-level classes). Encouraging higher attendance (in whatever mode) is likely to harm the educational experience of the rest to an even greater degree than at present. The goal of 60% of Montanans with a degree or equivalent is easy to meet – just send them out with tax refund checks! But if achieving higher education is the goal, 60% of Montanans have to want it first.*
- 2) Her argument regarding the efficiency of the MUS is specious. Individual campuses are lean to the point of emaciation; it is the system that is bloated. That is the result of poor management by the governors, legislatures, commissioners, and regents and Ms. McLean seems unlikely to understand it, much less change it.*
- 3) She values faculty and staff recruitment and retention, but seems ignorant of the fact that faculty salary funding has never kept pace with the world outside Montana, and that rewards to excellent faculty can and have only come out of the pockets of good faculty. The only ways to raise all boats are to tax Montanans unconscionably or to prune the system.*
- 4) Finally, she touts accountability. Many faculty will remember the Productivity, Quality, and Outcomes initiative of the 1990's. We spent years on that accountability program, only to find that faculty met almost every standard, goal, and guideline, and administration met... none. The next accountability initiative will likely do what the last one did, which is waste faculty time (valued at zero for accounting purposes).*

*I conclude, inevitably, that I am better off out of that train wreck.*

*Best,*

*Bill Locke, Emeritus, Earth Sciences*

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