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January 18, 2019

Dr. Dan Edelman
Chancellor
Montana State University - Billings
1500 University Drive
Billings, MT 59101-0298

Dear Chancellor Edelman:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) at its meeting on January 9-11, 2019, concerning the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation of Montana State University – Billings. This action was taken after consideration of evidence, including the institution’s Self-Evaluation Report, the Peer-Evaluation Report, the optional Institutional Response to the Peer-Evaluation Report, and information received as part of the institutional representative meeting with Commissioners.

Accreditation

- Reaffirm Accreditation.

Status of Previous Recommendations Addressed in this Evaluation

- Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report are continued and are out of compliance.

Commendations

The Commission commends Montana State University - Billings for:

- The faculty and staff commitment to students and their perseverance in providing thoughtful, responsive, and innovative services and support throughout periods of instability in university leadership.
- The extensive information made available to the University by its Institutional Research Department in an easily accessible format to facilitate decision-making on multiple levels.

Recommendations Out of Compliance

The Commission finds that the following Recommendations are areas where Montana State University - Billings is out of compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. According to U.S. Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 602.20 and Commission Policy, Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance Within Specified Period (enclosed), the Commission requires that Montana State University - Billings take appropriate action to ensure these Recommendations are addressed and resolved in the prescribed two-year period.

The Commission recommends that Montana State University – Billings:

1. Develop indicators of achievement that are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its Core Themes (Standard 1.B.2).

3. Ensure the University is addressing human resources issues that have been highlighted previously as needing attention, including issues related to duties, responsibilities, and authority of all positions, and evaluate if there is a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support operations (Standard 2.B.1).

Recommendations Substantially in Compliance but in Need of Improvement

The Commission recommends that Montana State University - Billings:

2. (Revised) Demonstrate a commitment to stabilize its administrative team and provide effective leadership and management, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, for the major support and operational functions and units to foster fulfillment of its mission (Standard 2.A.9; 2.A.11).
4. Develop a plan to monitor its internal and external environments and to inform and guide its strategic direction, including review and revision of its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement (Standard 5.B.3).

Required Follow-Up

- Again address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report and address Recommendations 1 and 3 of the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment Peer-Evaluation Report in an Ad Hoc Report with a visit in Spring 2020.
- Address Recommendations 2 and 4 of the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Peer-Evaluation Report as an addendum to the Fall 2021 Mid-Cycle Report.

Future Evaluations

- Mission and Core Themes Report in Spring 2020.
- Ad Hoc Report with a visit in Spring 2020 to again address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report and address Recommendations 1 and 3 of the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment Peer-Evaluation Report.
- Mid-Cycle Evaluation and visit in Fall 2021 with an addendum to address Recommendations 2 and 4 of the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Peer-Evaluation Report.
- Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation and visit in Fall 2025.

NWCCU is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your staff liaison, Senior Fellow Dr. Mac Powell.

Sincerely,



Sonny Ramaswamy
President

SR:rb

cc: Dr. Susan Balter-Reitz, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ms. Fran Albrecht, Chair, Montana University System Board of Regents
Ms. Selena Grace, Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Peer-Evaluation
Committee Chair