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### SB31-15/16: Regarding FY17 Budget Cuts

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1                                   **The Associated Students of the University of Montana**  
2                                   **Resolution Regarding FY17 Budget Cuts**  
3                                   **December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

4                                   **SB31-15/16**

5                   **Authored by: Samuel K. Forstag, ASUM Senator; Cody Meixner, ASUM President;**  
6                                   **Sponsored by:**  
7

8   Whereas, The University of Montana (UM) Mountain Campus has experienced a significant  
9   decline in enrollment of 18.5% since Fall of 2009<sup>1</sup>;

10  
11   Whereas, UM’s mission, as stated in the University Mission Statement, is to pursue academic  
12   excellence “as demonstrated by the quality of curriculum, student performance, and faculty  
13   professional accomplishments”<sup>2</sup>;

14  
15   Whereas, the long-term success of UM depends largely on following through on our  
16   commitment to “providing unique educational experience,” as laid out in the University Mission  
17   Statement<sup>2</sup>;

18  
19   Whereas, UM has a continued interest and responsibility to ensure that we do not decrease our  
20   investments in the liberal arts at a level that is disproportionate to those programs’ declines in  
21   enrollment;

22  
23   Whereas, declining enrollment in the eight (8) Mountain Campus programs that have been slated  
24   for cuts (Anthropology, English, Geography, Liberal Studies, Political Science, Art, Forestry,  
25   and Journalism) accounts for approximately 39% of losses in enrollment over the past six years<sup>1</sup>;

26  
27   Whereas, declines in enrollment within the College of Humanities and Sciences’ 28 majors  
28   account for approximately 34.7% of losses in enrollment over the past six (6) years<sup>1</sup>;

29  
30   Whereas, declines in enrollment within the School of Business and Administration’s five (5)  
31   majors account for approximately 19.5% of losses in enrollment over the past six (6) years<sup>1</sup>;

32  
33   Whereas, declines in enrollment within the School of Visual and Performing Arts’ five (5)  
34   majors account for approximately 4.3% of losses in enrollment over the past six (6) years<sup>1</sup>;

35  
36   Whereas, declines in enrollment at the School of Journalism account for about 9% of lost  
37   enrollment over the past six (6) years<sup>1</sup>;

38  
39   Whereas, declining enrollment has been seen across the Montana University System (MUS),  
40   with enrollment drops in 11 out of 15 MUS campuses and an overall decline of about 2.1%<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Missoulian, Enrollments by Department at UM: Fall 2009-15, [http://missoulian.com/enrollments-by-department-at-um-fall/pdf\\_cdfc151f-ff7a-5e56-a2cc-1c8edf4f5a21.html](http://missoulian.com/enrollments-by-department-at-um-fall/pdf_cdfc151f-ff7a-5e56-a2cc-1c8edf4f5a21.html)

<sup>2</sup> University of Montana Mission Statements, <http://www.umt.edu/president/mission.php>

<sup>3</sup> Montana Board of Regents, Fall 2015 Census Enrollment Report, <https://mus.edu/board/meetings/2015/Nov2015/BOR%20Enrollment%20Update%20-%20Fall%202015%20Census.pdf>

41  
42 Whereas, the past six (6) years' enrollment declines necessitate cost-saving measures that must  
43 include, to some extent, laying off some members of UM faculty and staff and closing some  
44 open faculty and staff lines;

45  
46 Whereas, decisions made by the UM administrators involved with oversight of enrollment and  
47 recruitment efforts contributed to the past six (6) years' decline in enrollment;

48  
49 Whereas, the President of the University bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the  
50 institution's academic success as well as financial solvency;

51  
52 Whereas, a continued, strong commitment to the liberal arts is essential to the mission and  
53 identity of UM;

54  
55 Whereas, President Engstrom's presentation at the Campus Budget Forum on November 17<sup>th</sup>  
56 designated five (5) strategic areas for future investment and growth: (1) Healthcare and Human  
57 Development, (2) Data and Computational Science, (3) Business and Entrepreneurship, (4)  
58 Ecology and the Environment, (5) Workforce-Specific Programs;

59  
60 Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the Associated Students of the University of Montana  
61 (ASUM) urges that any cost-saving measures that affect academic departments be proportionate  
62 to those programs' enrollment declines over the past six (6) years;

63  
64 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM insists that the impacts many programs have  
65 already experienced from unfilled faculty and staff positions be considered in the distribution of  
66 budget cuts across departments;

67  
68 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM urges UM President Royce Engstrom to clarify  
69 the University's commitment to those programs, which he stated were, "essential to our mission  
70 and identity" by including liberal arts programming among the Strategic Areas for Growth that  
71 were listed in the Campus Budget Forum presentation;

72  
73 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM requests that the administration increase the  
74 transparency of the 'right-sizing' process by clarifying any outstanding factors which the  
75 administration intends to consider in the elimination, consolidation, or reduction of programs at  
76 UM, apart from declines in departmental and programmatic enrollment;

77  
78 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM asks that student evaluations play a chief role in  
79 any decisions within departments as to which faculty members will be retained or laid off;

80  
81 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM encourages the UM administration to work with  
82 ASUM, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate to seek and approve alternative cost-saving measures,  
83 such as across-the-board or selective furloughs, adjusting class sizes, early retirement incentives,  
84 and the withholding of bonuses and performance pay;

85

86 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM requests that any effort to ‘right-size’ UM’s  
87 budget include substantive actions reflecting the administration’s ultimate responsibility for the  
88 current budget shortfall;

89  
90 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM requests an audit of the effectiveness of the  
91 specific departments and employees who may be responsible for UM’s enrollment, recruitment,  
92 and retention efforts, including, but not limited to: Office for Integrated Communications; Office  
93 of Admissions; New Student Services; Enrollment Services; Financial Aid Office; Registrar’s  
94 Office; the Office of Planning, Budget, and Analysis;

95  
96 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that ASUM encourages responsible administrators to  
97 decline any performance-based bonuses, as an act of solidarity, accountability, and shared  
98 commitment to overcoming UM’s current budgetary challenges;

99  
100 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that ASUM calls upon the Montana Board of Regents and  
101 the Commissioner of Higher Education to assist UM in its current struggles by making this issue  
102 their top priority and aiding President Engstrom and his leadership team in the coordination of  
103 modern, competitive recruitment and enrollment strategies;

104  
105 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that ASUM calls upon the Montana Board of Regents and  
106 the Commissioner of Higher Education to assist UM by instituting the substantive changes  
107 needed to ensure the continued success and financial solvency of UM as Montana’s flagship  
108 liberal arts and research university;

109  
110 Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, this resolution shall be sent to: Royce Engstrom,  
111 President of the University of Montana; Perry Brown, Provost and Vice President for Academic  
112 Affairs; Mike Reid, Vice President for Administration and Finance; Teresa Branch, Vice  
113 President for Student Affairs; Peggy Kuhr, Vice President for Integrated Communications; Scott  
114 Whittenburg, Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship; Bill Borrie, Chair of Faculty  
115 Senate; Jennifer Zellmer-Cuaresma, President of Staff Senate; Steve Bullock, Governor of the  
116 State of Montana; Denise Juneau, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Clay Christian,  
117 Commissioner of Higher Education; Paul Tuss, Chair of the Board of Regents; Fran Albrecht,  
118 Vice Chair of the Board of Regents; Asa Hohman, Student Regent; William Johnstone, Regent;  
119 Robert Nystuen, Regent; Martha Sheehy, Regent; Jed Liston, Assistant Vice President for  
120 Enrollment; Sharon O’Hare, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success.

121  
122  
123 Passed by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_, 2015

124  
125 Passed by ASUM Senate: \_\_\_\_\_, 2015

126  
127  
128 \_\_\_\_\_  
129 Katie Hopingardner  
130 Chair, Resolutions & Affairs  
131  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Betsy Story  
Chair of the Senate