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SB61-16/17: Resolution Regarding UM Foundation Strategic Funding Priorities

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Whereas, The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) represent the interests of over 12,000 students at the University of Montana (UM);

Whereas, ASUM is bound by its bylaws and mission statement to support student efforts to improve its campus, extending this to include all staff, faculty and the university community at large;

Whereas, The University of Montana Foundation (UM Foundation) is a non-profit organization pursuing a mission to “increase philanthropic support to ensure UM’s excellence, access and affordability...”;

Whereas, the UM Foundation’s vision is to be a leader among like-sized university development operations and foundations from across the country in their production practices, integrity of operations, and customer service;

Whereas, the UM Foundation’s primary fundraising priorities are: Faculty, Students, Facilities, and Unrestricted, and specific fundraising priorities are set by the University President in conjunction with the UM Foundation President;

Whereas, in a 2016 survey of approximately 450 staff and 200 faculty members at UM had 94 percent of faculty and 80 percent of staff express some level of support for large-scale renewable energy projects on campus, with a total of 62 percent of respondents in strong support of such projects on campus;

Whereas, The Sustainable Campus Committee (SCC), UM’s shared governance body on sustainability, has identified multiple sustainability-related campus projects in need of funding, including infrastructure updates and academic enrichment opportunities, such as the establishment of sustainability fellowships, sustainability oriented Residence Life positions, and sustainability conferences that provide opportunities for educational and professional development beyond the campus community;

Whereas, the long-running importance of environmental sustainability to UM students is exemplified through a wide variety of on-campus sustainability efforts, including campus improvement projects and infrastructure upgrades supported by the ASUM Sustainability Fee, the numerous student-led projects supported since 2009 by the Kless Revolving Energy Loan Fund Board (KRELF), and overwhelming student support in sustainability-focused campus-wide referenda;
Whereas, UM has made sustainability an important part of their overall mission, actions, and goals and sought to demonstrate its importance to campus and the community by supporting sustainable practices in construction, campus improvements, and campus infrastructure;

Whereas, including sustainability as an explicit part of the UM Foundation’s strategic fundraising goals would accurately reflect the emphasis the UM community places on the importance of sustainable practices and could help provide funding to projects already being pursued;

Whereas, the direct relationship between environmental sustainability and financial sustainability has been made clear as the University begins to enjoy return on investment from electric buses, solar and wind installations, and improved campus resource management in the form of diesel savings, electricity savings, and utility savings;

Whereas, the addition of sustainability as a strategic fundraising priority of the UM Foundation would not only help in furthering existing sustainability efforts at UM, but could also create broader appeal to potential donors focused on sustainability while providing attractive investment opportunities to such donors;

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved that the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) urge the University of Montana Foundation President and the UM President to direct the Board and staff of the UM Foundation to pursue environmental sustainability as a strategic fundraising priority for the University of Montana campus;

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved that ASUM requests that fundraising efforts focused on environmental sustainability be directed towards projects identified by the Sustainable Campus Committee (SCC);

Therefore; Let it Be Resolved that this resolution be forwarded to Sheila Stearns, Interim President, University of Montana; Shane Giese, President and CEO, UM Foundation; Mary Olson, Chair, UM Foundation; Alison Fuller, Chair, UM Alumni Association; Mack Clapp, Chair, UM Foundation Board Committee on Investment; John DeBoer, Chair, UM Faculty Senate; Jennifer Zellmer-Cuaresma, Chair, UM Staff Senate.

Passed by Committee: ____________________________, 2017

Passed by ASUM Senate: ________________________, 2017

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Kaden Harrison                                          Elizabeth Engebretson,
Chair of Sustainability Board                           Chair of the Senate