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Interviewer: Donna McCrea

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Donna McCrea: Today is March 26 of 2018. I'm Donna McCrea, archivist for the University of Montana, and today I'm interviewing Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Beverly Edmond. Dr. Edmond, thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. I have a set of questions, and we'll see how far we get through them.

To begin our interview, I was hoping that you could provide some brief background on yourself—an introduction to people in the future who won't be familiar with you—just a little bit about where you're from, kind of what prepared you for this position.

Beverly Edmond: Sure, thank you very much. Very much appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts as I wrap up a wonderful 21 months in the service of Interim Provost and VP for Academic Affairs here at the University of Montana. As some people will know, I entered this position on the interim through the organization called The Registry [for College and University Presidents]. The Registry is a national organization that takes retirees and places them in temporary interim positions while institutions either restructure or do a search for a permanent person. So that's really how I found myself coming here to the University of Montana.

By way of my background, I'm originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where I grew up; although, I spent a large number of years in Georgia where my father's home was. I have a lot of Georgia in me, and it would be natural for me after I graduated from college to relocate to Georgia, which is where I live now with lots of family and friends and good experiences there.

I think if I had to sum up what prepared me for this position, I think it was a combination of things. First of all, I have over 40 years of both public service and higher education experience. I worked for about 15 years in the federal government, and then for the remainder of my professional career was in higher education, starting out as a faculty member and then moving up to department chair, serving as vice provost, provost, and even a stint as interim president at an institution. So, I've had quite a bit of experience in higher education leadership positions.

I would think that the other thing that helped to prepare me for this position was my academic background. My master's degree is in public administration, my terminal degree is a Ph.D. in political science with a concentration in public administration. In public administration, to put it as simplistically as possible, is the flip side of business administration in the public sector. There are some unique things about public organizations or public sector organizations in general that make the application of general business administrative principles and theories a little bit more

difficult to apply, and so emerged this discipline of public administration which took into account some of the unique issues public organizations have to face in doing, administratively, what all organizations try to do. That is to carry out the objectives for which they were intended. I think because of my academic background and some of the experiences that I've had, serving as provost and then other leadership positions in higher education, this really helped me to prepare for this wonderful opportunity at the University of Montana.

DM: Great. So you were originally hired on a one-year contract which then got extended for another year to facilitate hiring a permanent president before UM [University of Montana] hired a permanent provost. Can you talk a bit about what your vision was for your role when you came in originally and then whether that vision evolved during your time here and, if so, how?

BE: Absolutely. As I mentioned, my placement here was through the University of Montana's working with an organization called The Registry. When one is placed at an institution through The Registry, they enter into an agreement that is captured in what they call "an expectations document," and that document is developed between the institution—in this case, the president of the institution and The Registry. It outlines the expectations that the individual who will be taking the assignment is expected to accomplish during that period of time. As you mentioned, of course, that this assignment was originally to be for 12 months. In the expectations document, in addition to the general administrative management things—overseeing the deans, providing visionary leadership, and things of that nature—there were two specific assignments that were articulated that I particularly focused on.

One was a reference to implementation of the AAIP results—the Academic Alignment and Innovation Project. I think that's the appropriate name for the acronym AAIP. The second was to help implement the strategic plan and the specific goals and objectives related to the strategic plan. Well, those were going to be my kind of, high-water activities and then, of course, just other things that would come up as I engage. However, as I got here and we began to look at some of the challenges the University was facing, it became clear that while AAIP provided a good foundation for the University, its focus on departments did not give the level of specificity in areas where the University might be able to shift some of its resources.

At the same time, the University...Montana University System began pushing all of the institutions to consider conducting further prioritization so that the kinds of decisions that AAIP might make—and we were still struggling to figure out how to make those—that through a more focused prioritization process, we might be able to do that. My work and my primary focus shifted from AAIP's implementation to working through the APASP [Academic Program and Administrative Services Prioritization] process, as the task force for prioritization was titled. At the same time, when I entered, President Engstrom had asked the...had convened a Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee [SPCC] to take a look at the existing strategic plan and to give

him some feedback as to whether or not it needed to be modified, whether there needed to be things add it to it, and so on and so forth.

With the focus on looking at the strategic plan being an ongoing process and AAIP being replaced by APASP—what a bunch of acronyms that is—I shifted my focus. One, to kind of let the SPCC work, go forward, without trying to just implement specific items in the existing strategic plan but to wait and see what that work might produce. Then there was quite a bit we needed to do to get APASP up and running. Of course, over this transitional period of shifting from AAIP to the prioritization efforts through APASP, we also had a new presidential transition. So I began to work specifically in implementing APASP with the new Interim President Sheila Stearns. Through her leadership, we built a kind of a ground-up APASP, shared-governance task force, and we charged to move forward over the next several months with coming up with programs and services in some form of prioritization.

DM: Right, so you've led strategic planning processes at other institutions. Can you describe how your approach or your experience there informed your approach and maybe, specifically, your work with Mr. [Robert C.] Dickeson and his program prioritization? But you can take this in any direction that you want to.

BE: Sure, sure. Before I move into that, let me also say that in addition to working on APASP, one of the other things that I became very clear...that became very clear to me was necessary here, was an enhanced focus on enrollment management. When I entered the University the new Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs had just been created, had been taken out of the some of the administrative units reporting to Academic Affairs, and it was now beginning to build its own momentum and its structure.

What I discovered was that when I talked to colleagues around campus about enrollment management as a focus area, most of them tended to describe it in the context of recruitment, and very little attention or very little discussion about the other important elements of enrollment management—retention, persistence, and completion—were being discussed. While I recognized and respected the fact that the recruitment component of enrollment management was in dire need of structure here, it was also important for me to help change the conversation or broaden the conversation among the campus. So the APASP process and my efforts to try to move better attention and understanding of the broader context of enrollment management were part of my top priorities here.

DM: After you got here, you recognized these as issues above and beyond what was in your original contract?

BE: Absolutely. Absolutely. They were really key to the issue of some of the decline in students and budget challenges because, as I explain to people as I try to make the point of how important it is to look beyond recruitment, I explain to them that if you looked at the total

student population of any institution, roughly a third of those students are new students, the other two-thirds are returning students. So if you're going to turn UM's enrollment around and if you're going to address budgetary problems, you're not only going to have to focus on new students, but you're going to have to spend a lot of time making sure the existing students come back, persist, and ultimately complete. That was part of what I was trying to kind of do once I got on the ground and saw this there was a real disconnect there.

Now with respect to the issue of strategic planning, I had had the opportunity to work at a couple of institutions and align my work with strategic planning, as well as prioritization. I did have an experience as a provost at another institution. I arrived after they had gone through their APASP process and arrived as their first provost. They changed the position from vice president of academic affairs to provost, and so I was the first provost and VP for academic affairs after they had gone through the prioritization process using the Dickeson model. This was within the University System of Georgia and it was done across all institutions.

I walked in the door inheriting decisions that have been made by someone else, and so I was very familiar with the pushback and the concerns and took some of those concerns with me as I tried to make sure that what we did here had the level of input and connectivity with the faculty, staff, and other shared governance components such that when you got ready to implement it, it wouldn't be a question of, "Where did these decisions come from? I wasn't engaged." At the previous institution, my responsibilities were to simply take the results of the prioritization for academic affairs and to begin implementing it, and of course, working with deans and the system—the University system—to make whatever changes were necessary.

I had also had another, somewhat prioritization, experience, but it wasn't using the Dickeson model, at another institution. I was in the position of vice provost when the institution was going through some serious financial challenges, and in fact, they were on the cusp of a major financial crash, if you will. So we had to make some changes very quickly in order to get our budget back in balance. We did some things without much shared governance. It was a small committee of us, and it was really a financial exercise to see where we could make some cuts. There were some hard decisions made. In looking back on it, I know we did the best we could and we did what had to be done but it was not very systematic. It was more budget, it was more dollar driven. So I had those experiences.

On the other side of that, in terms of strategic planning, I spent most of my higher education career in the South under the oversight of the regional accreditor—the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. SACS is the acronym there. SACS had, as one of its primary mandates, was the notion of what they call "continuous quality improvement. They expected all of the institutions to go through cycles of planning, assessment, review, making changes. Planning, assessment, review, making changes. For me, when I came here and, in fact, I'm very candid in saying that when I looked on UM's website, and I saw a reference to the Planning Assessment and Budgeting Continuum, as something that was already in operation here, it was one of the

primary reasons I thought this might be a good fit for me, because I had had quite a number of years of experience in working with strategic planning and continuous improvement.

I must admit, I thought I was coming to an institution where the debate over the usefulness of the Planning Assessment Budgeting Continuum had already been resolved, and now it was just a question of working out the particulars. For me, this was an important piece of this. As I said, the continuous quality improvement is predicated on the assumption that you set your goals, but goals in public organizations are not set as finite. That they need to be reviewed, even when you're doing well. It's not a question of only changing when you're not doing well, but it's a process of always trying to do a little better and a little better and a little better. In doing this, of course, the assumption is that you're, first of all, using data. That you're setting measurable goals and that there are action...actionable plans being developed that can be tracked to the original goal, the assessment of the data, and then a way to improve it. That, to me, is so fundamental in how we operate effective organizations and efficient organizations. For me, being able to share with the University of Montana my experience with that. For example, when working on the accreditation for one of the institutions I worked with in the SACS region, my responsibility was to work with developing a systematic assessment cycle for academic programs, and because of my association with my profession in public administration, I had served on the accrediting body in public administration for multiple years looking at institutions' MPA [Masters of Public Administration] program—public administration and public policy programs—against our standards and reviewing them. So I had quite a bit of experience doing that.

I also had experience working on SACS review teams, going to other institutions and being an external reviewer. I brought all of this experience and perspective and expertise here, and within the institution—I think I drifted a bit there—within the institution that I was working with and responsible for creating the cycle of academic program reviews, I was a part of a team that developed the standards by which we would use internally to review our programs and the cycle by which we would review them and then the mechanics. Such that we went through a whole thing of identifying which academic programs would be reviewed over a three-year period and the cycle of that would go forward, who would review them internally, the templates necessary to reflect the outcomes of those assessments, and then just tying them back to strategic plan.

It was, to me, a very meaningful work. So with all of that backdrop for experience, and as I said, looking at UM and saying, "Oh, well, maybe I can just get in and fit in," [laughs] I felt that was a good fit for me. That's where my experiences, I thought, would be helpful to this institution.

DM: One of the critiques that I've heard of the APASP process, as it was implemented here, is that it tried to do both a program prioritization process and, sort of, deal with a really bad budget situation process at the same time, and that maybe those messages got mixed or it was not as clean as it could have been in terms of, "Here's what we need to do to address the

budget, and here are the programs that are not doing well and the programs that are doing well.” They were very much meshed in the conversation.

BE: There was a big debate about that. One of the things that I did as Chair of the APASP Taskforce, was I intentionally served somewhat as a facilitator more than a chair and more than a person making directives. I encouraged that the task force members themselves define a lot of the parameters and the particulars. Because, as I said, one, I knew I was going to be leaving at the end of some period, hopefully in a reasonable amount of time, but also because they needed to own it. They needed to understand it, and they needed to be able to talk one-on-one with colleagues about it. Well, the downside of that is that sometimes the decisions made through their collective deliberation might not have been the decisions that I would have made if I were saying, “No, this is what we're going to do,” but it's somewhat of a trade-off.

The issue came up early on of the nexus between the budget challenges we face and what APASP was charged with doing, and that was determining which were strong programs, which were our weaker programs and services. That did make it a bit cumbersome, but the fact of the matter was that, because the University had never done any type of prioritization before, I felt that it was important to put aside the budget issue for just a minute. We always knew that the budget issues were there and the budget issues would drive a lot of the final decisions, but I believed it was important, as did the task force, ultimately, that we put the budget issues aside and come up with a process criteria—metrics, an analysis—that was purely about whether or not the programs should be at the top, middle, or bottom rung of our priorities.

That way you're not skewed by looking at, “Well, this is a program that really should be in the middle of our priorities, but it costs so much. We've got budget over here. Let's put it...” so it made it...I think it made it a cleaner process; although, some people believe that we should have had the budget information driving it. I still don't believe that was appropriate. Because what came out of the APASP process, even though I think they did somehow, somewhat succumb to the pressure of not pointing programs out that really probably needed to be pointed out for consideration for discontinuation, what they did do was created, for the first time for the University, metrics, data, and analysis at the program level.

Remember, AAIP did it departmentally, and so they collapsed, for example, four or five degree programs into a department and so the data was very skewed. They didn't identify, “Well, you have eight programs, degree programs, in this department. Three are very weak and need to be done away with.” What it came out with was average data that made it seem like the department overall was doing well. This process allowed for a much more programmatic review, and from it, we were able to really discern some real performance indicators that are, I think, driving now what is being done by the University Planning Committee [UPC].

The issue that I think some people may not grasp, as important as a distinction, is that APASP rightly or wrongly focused primarily on looking at the quality of programs based on a whole set

of metrics and analysis. Now the UPC, and I've said this to President Bodnar and I've said it to the deans and I've said it to whoever will listen to me, is now the issue is sustainability. That has nothing to do with the quality of the program. This is really, quite frankly, it's a cost and productivity issue. So you have all this great data from APASP, now you need to look at whether or not we can sustain these programs. Now you can bring the budget stuff back in, and that has to be front and center. I think it makes a lot more sense, and it's a lot more clean. Others don't quite see it that way, but I do.

I also think that by not looking at the budget information until now, we have a better sense of the gaps. One of the questions you'll get to has to do with the leadership team of the three interims—the three interims that were here—Interim President Sheila Stearns, myself and Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, Rosi Keller. What Rosi did, when she came in, was she was able to dig much deeper into our financial challenges and unearth some things that, had we used budget numbers early on, we would not have been hitting the targets that, ultimately, she was able to help us identify that, based on one-time funding, we kind of skated over. Then with the complexities of the student waiver system, which quite frankly, I still don't have a full handle on, that the new division of enrollment management under Tom Crady was charged with creating, had not been quite fully vetted nor budgeted properly.

I think it worked out, in my opinion, much better because even though the number that was being bounced around when we were doing APASP, and some on the APASP task force really wanted us to have a budget number, it would have been a number that was not at all the number we now know needs to be addressed to get us on a balanced budget. So the sustainability issue and UPC now have that task, and they have a better idea of it. That's kind of, for me, that the importance of strategic planning and the difference in what I experienced here versus what I experienced at some other institutions.

DM: Thank you. Will you talk please about some of the challenges that you faced at UM and how you addressed them? You've mentioned one or two already, but if there's anything else that you want to mention.

BE: Sure. Beyond the fact that, as I said, the presentation on the website that the University of Montana had and was embracing, this Planning Assessment and Budgeting Continuum, that was a challenge because they had not. I should also mention that even as I found out they had attempted to—because I don't it want to sound as if they just had it on the website and just never gave any attention to it—the problem was, is that to have an effective Planning Assessment and Budgeting Continuum, you have to be able to have resources that are then to be used for your strategic planning. Because we were always cutting budgets for the last several years, it made, what the continuum process generated, kind of null and void.

I'm told that for a number of years they would go through an exercise of identifying strategic priorities that were requesting additional funding just to be told there's no funding for them.

After a while, that becomes almost a negative. Why even put people through that? So that was one thing. But what I think I found as well was the limited use of data. I was very surprised at the absence of data in academic planning and management. For example, I would be asked about, let's just say, filling a faculty vacancy. I was used to having data that said, or performance indicators or metrics, that said, "Okay, your request to fill behind this vacancy,"—whether it was created by a retirement or resignation or some other attrition factor, it wasn't an automatic, "Okay, you get to refill that." You had to submit justification showing whatever the performance metrics are. First of all, enrollment, student credit hours, demand, or something so that I would be able to make a determination, yea or nay, was something that was very transparent. So, it wouldn't be a question of how persuasive was your argument, as much as it was the solidness of the data.

I also was surprised to find that there was not an ongoing process of using data in academic planning and management. So the schedules were set multiple semesters in advance, but there was no data assessment process to say, "Let's look at a particular semester and determine whether the sections we offer at the times we were offering them makes sense. Should we make modifications to that? Do we need to add or collapse or what to sections..." It was just a continuous repeating of it, and that didn't make sense.

The other thing was the fact that there was no review of the balance between tenured, tenure-track faculty workload and adjunct workload and somebody looking to see that data suggesting that, you know, 60 percent of your courses are being taught by adjuncts is not...That's a problem. Or 60 percent of your 100- and 200-level classes being taught by a contingent or adjunct. That's a problem, and not having that. So, anyway, that kind of analysis.

Not to say that, it's not always just a number. Sometimes there's logic. I know. I mean, there are courses in the College of Visual and Performing Arts that are going to have low numbers or even one-on-one because they're instructional. I also know in labs and their accreditation standards. I mean, it's not a clean thing, but the lack of that kind of data was problematic and what we did was...

Actually, the University, we had already engaged in an organization called the Education Advisory Board [EAB]. EAB is an organization that works with higher education institutions on a range of things. One of the things they were doing was working with Dawn Russell and our institutional research folks to clean up the data and to create an academic performance solutions system that would allow us to use just that kind of data that would be able to spit out, for example, what the fill-rate was on certain sections of courses offered the previous fall, which was supposed to then drive the scheduling. Even as we wound up looking at some of that data, we were seeing that some colleges and schools only had a 50 percent rate of fill on sections, so, why have two sections filled at 50 percent, when you could have one filled at 80 to 90 percent. Isn't that a better utilization of your faculty? So there was just not that kind of sophisticated data management analysis.

The second thing I found was that there were not a lot of written policies. Outside of the CBA, which is the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which is fine and I respect it, there—as it currently exists—there’s contradictory language in it. Plus, it’s a union document, and obviously the particulars on how to aren’t supposed to be in it. Someone would come in, and say for example, a dean might say, “Well, we have a faculty member we’re trying to bring on board and they have a spouse, and they want to know what we can do for spousal accommodation.”

So, I said, “Well, what’s the policy on spousal accommodation?”

“We don’t have one.” Well, they have practices which may vary from...That’s just not an efficient way or fair way to run a university. I found this consistently. The lack of written policies in place outside of maybe what was in the CBA or what OCHE [Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education] said we had to do. The budget allocation model was, I found...was just, again, it goes back to the lack of data. I was not used to a budget allocating money to units simply based on incremental up or down increases or decreases from the previous year. Most budget models use metrics to determine where the money should go, and we weren’t doing that. As I continued to look at individual units—not just the academic programs but some of the administrative support units that report to this office—I was just taken aback and how we were starving them. I mean, because once you do your personnel and your contractual personnel, there’s no money left to do anything in terms of operating. It was bad. That was one of the other things that I found, and I was happy to say that there was another task force that was put together actually through finance and administration’s leadership to begin to look at a budget allocation model. We’re right on the cusp of adopting it. However, we have to be able to balance the budget before you can start allocating funds on a systematic basis.

I also was a little challenged by the fact that the performance evaluation system here was not linked to strategic plan or didn’t...wasn’t based on objectives. I was used to having, for example, for deans and other direct reports, them establishing performance objectives that were tied to the strategic plan that then were assessed. What I started getting from people, when I started asking about performance feedback, is a list of all the meetings they had gone to. I was like this is not performance-based. So I created somewhat of an ad hoc kind of one, or maybe a hybrid approach, when I did evaluations last time to just say, “Okay, here for (unintelligible): fiscal accountability, enrollment management, professional development, and one other. Tell me what you’ve achieved measurably in these areas.” That was where everybody was held consistent, but that’s a big problem. It needs to be a university system.

Okay, so that’s what I do, really. I became kind of known as the task force provost rather than committees. Task forces are created, as you know, to...with the specific assignment, get it done and move on. I created a task force to look at the scheduling issue, a task force to look at university workload policy, a task force to look at online education and how we could enhance that. These produced good...First of all, they were constructed to reflect shared governance—

student, staff, faculty, administration—gave them what the charge was, and in every case they were able to come back with some very cogent recommendations. Some are still in works in progress. Some are being implemented. For example, the model for the summer, modified summer school, that's being pushed now came out of one of those task forces, and it's ready to go. It's incentivizing faculty. It's moving into a whole different structure. We've got the results of the Online Course Enhancement Task Force ready to be implemented. It'll be left to my successor to address, and hopefully it'll incentivize and move that forward. Then we've done some other things as well.

One other thing that I found, and this kind of relates to the data issue, when the University was given authority to do the voluntary employee...VERIP [Voluntary Employee Retirement Incentive Plan]. I can't think of the—

DM: Severance package.

BE: Yes. Right. The guidance we got from the Office of the Commissioner was that we could not fill behind those VERIP positions and we had to track them. I was used to having a database of all faculty positions by position number so that if my position was 842X3 and it was VERIP-ed—as I use the verb—and taken off, I could show always that if I filled a position it wasn't the one. But we didn't have a database like that, I could not believe that this university did not have a sophisticated database. Could have actually gotten one through Banner without having to spend a lot of money. I asked the staff, I said, "We have got to create, for my successor, a database of faculty vacancies, because he or she will go absolutely bonkers not knowing how to manage that." That was something that was a problem and that we created.

DM: You've mentioned data and metrics a number of times so, just briefly, could you talk about what you think—beyond what you've already established—what you think needs to happen for this university to come up to speed on its data management and—

BE: Absolutely. I had had a conversation at the Cabinet level sharing my opinion that the University really needs to look long and hard into the use of institutional research and institutional research data. That, at a previous institution, there actually was a vice president for institutional research, strategic planning, and assessment, and their office was much more robust than what we have here. I come from institutions that are historically black colleges and universities with far fewer resources than this university.

The importance though, was because of where we were in terms of SACS, the Southern Association accrediting body, and the expectation at what we were doing would be fully ingrained in the notion of continuous quality improvement. We had to have data, and we had to have a very robust data system. We talked a little bit about this at Cabinet, and I actually had found an article in *The Chronicle*, which talked about the need to really have a more robust institutional research element even at the Cabinet level. You know, Dawn and her staff, they've

done a yeoman's job in keeping us afloat, but, she's just...I mean, we got to deal with that. You aren't going to be able to improve the quality of this university's operation without a strong data arm and assessment arm all packaged in a planning...That's going to be your bread and butter. So strengthening and beefing up institutional research is very important. Dawn has been working with EAB, for example, on...

One of the things you often hear around here—heard it for APASP and you're probably going to hear it for UPC—is the data. The data's wrong, the data's wrong, the data's wrong. Well, the problem with the data is that we don't have a strong data governance process, and therefore it's garbage in garbage out. I heard somebody say, and this bothers me extensively, there are people who will say, "Well, we're using EAB data," because they want to deflect the problems in our data on this external organization. We're not using EAB data, we're using EAB systems, but we're using our own data. So if there is no clear governance standards in how we enter certain things, I don't care who you bring in here, you're going to have flaws in your data. We don't...Dawn and the EAB staff introduced a data governance suggestion structure, but it's gone nowhere. We have not embraced the idea of a higher-level institutional research presence. With all due respect to President Bodnar, and I do understand this environment, he's doing the very best he can and trying to make incremental changes, the new structure of the institution, while making sense for what this community would probably tolerate, I think that not having a strategic planning assessment, assessment VP in institutional research is always going to be a problem and until we can get to that. But, I understand right now it's enrollment, get things done, and that kind of thing, but anyway. My take on it. [laughs]

DM: Thank you for that.

BE: Sure.

DM: Can you talk about what areas you believe that you excelled in at UM and what you might consider to be your greatest accomplishments. I think you've, again, touched on just a few areas where you feel like you've strengthened the institution through your work here, but if you'll talk about your accomplishments.

BE: Sure, sure, sure. I think that, for me, the broad kinds of things that I would address here are, what kind of leader do I think I am and what kind of leader do I want to be. I've given a lot of reflection to that over the years, and I have made a commitment to the concept of service leadership. Where, for me, it is a privilege to serve, and therefore, I treat my leadership role with delicacy and I know that...I'm somewhat of a spiritual person too. I believe that I've been gifted with certain skills, and that is incumbent upon me to use those skills to the best of my ability. In coming into this position, or in any position, the leadership values that guide my interaction are things like transparency. I believe that if people know, why, what, when and how, they may not always agree, but at least it's not a mystery and they don't feel like something's going on behind their backs. Empowerment.

I've worked with people—leaders, CEOs, presidents of colleges—who seem insecure about helping those that reported to them become empowered to make decisions, because somehow they seemed to feel like that was going to lessen their authority or whatever. I don't operate like that. I believe in empowering people. In other words, I believe in taking people and giving them all of the support and all of the encouragement and all the responsibility and accountability they need in order to get the job done, and that I need to motivate them to be the best that they can be and so that's another one of my values.

I talk about accountability. I think that with empowerment comes accountability. I want you to know that you have the power to make those decisions and to operate, but you're going to be accountable. That's not a negative. It's just at the end of the day, I'm accountable so you're going to be accountable.

Another of my leadership values is rationality of decision making. I think it's got to be logic. I mean, if it doesn't make sense, I just can't get my head wrapped around it. I try to be very rational. What makes sense.

Then there's the respect for differences and a value of diversity. I sit down with all of my direct reports, when I have my first meeting or so with them, and I tell them what my expectations are. I tell them, I said, "I have a zero tolerance for you disrespecting the people who report to you. I will not tolerate it. I will not tolerate it. You're the boss, you call the shots, but you do not have to disrespect people." I've been in situations where people in authority have been very abusive, and I don't...I've had some of it levied on me. I have a zero tolerance for that, and some of my subordinates know that I've had to call a few of them in to task, when things have bubbled up that are showing disrespect and devaluing of their subordinates. Do not tolerate it. For me, as I said, leadership is something...There's a difference between management and leadership. Leadership is inspiring people to want to go that extra mile for you, to carry that water just a little further, to want a step aside and help move things forward. I feel like that's one of my strengths, because of the way I treat people and empower them and encourage them.

I very much believe in professional development, I want everybody to feel like whatever their future careers, interests, are that they have those opportunities, and so I invest in people. You know, I have a little bit of an HR [human resources] background as well when I was in government, so I come here with a lot of HR kind of notions about the importance of human capital development and how important it is to invest. It's like we invest in our technology and infrastructure. We need to invest in people. So, I'm very much supportive of that.

If you ask me, I mean people will tell me, "I don't know. We'll see," because they say the proof's in the pudding. I've tried to do...to show a level of leadership here which has raised expectations, and that forever and forever in a day, people will have a certain expectation of

leadership. They will expect certain values. They'll expect respect. They'll expect that whoever is in this position, or the presidency, or whoever it is, that there's a certain level of leadership that is inspiring and encouraging. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to demonstrate that here. So, for me, that's it for me. I think I've tried to be the model of service leadership.

DM: I'm wondering if you think any of that interest in service leadership or your talent at it comes from being a woman in a profession at this level, at the level of administration which tends to have more men, I think, than women in higher ed [education]. And more people who are not of color than people of color—

BE: Absolutely.

DM: Are you driven in any way by those aspects?

BE: Absolutely. Absolutely. In addressing a little bit of the question that you shared with me in advance about the role of women in leadership, I thought about my commitment to breaking the glass ceiling. Done research on it. I've written on it. Have taught on it and talked a lot about it to professional...in professional settings. Understanding the attributes that we as women bring to leadership and the important perspective that we have, certainly, has been a motivation for me. For me, further motivating me as kind of a double-edged sword, has been being a woman of color. I have been and experienced being marginalized, being devalued, being disrespected. What those experiences said to me, or did for me, was that they only cemented in my own value structure, "I will never do that. I will never ever, ever." I said, "If you give me the opportunity to lead, give me the..." I said, "I will never replicate the things that I experienced that were hurtful, that were insensitive, and that were done simply because of who I am and the fact that I'm a woman and an African-American woman." So, yes.

I think that there's research that shows that women have, historically, brought a different type of perspective to decision-making because of the way we experience life. There are always going to be these generalizations that don't apply to this one or the other, but I think the fact that we tend to be more collaborative, we tend to be more conciliatory, we tend to be a little bit more comfortable letting others shine, if you will. I think those are good traits and values in leadership. I think that in public service, in particular, one of the things that we learn is that one's perspective helps in decision-making so if you're trying to wrestle with a problem or issue that impacts a certain cohort in society and you have never experienced life as that cohort, it does make it difficult sometimes for you to see what is the best decision that might be made for them. For me, I try to use that lens as I make decisions.

Really, as I mentioned before, some of the values that I've developed and I hold very dear have come through just being who I am. I am a product of the '60s, I was in college when Martin Luther King was assassinated. I've always been a social activist. I've never been...I never had a real strong interest in the private sector. I've always wanted to be of service. My family has

always encouraged me and us to be very open and helpful in our lives, and so that's how I...those things just became important to me. As a product of the 60s, and as I saw some of the systemic inequities—racism and sexism—in society and how it was impacting the quality of life for folks, I just felt like I needed to champion—do the right thing. Pushing people. I wanted to be...part of what pushed me to public administration at the graduate, the master's level, was I wanted to be able to bring thoughtfulness to the solution of public problems. Domestic problems, issues, and how do we improve things. How do we make government more responsible? For me, as I said, that's important.

But I have experience, I mean...I felt like I need always have...I always felt like I needed to be overly qualified. So, I had to go out and get a Ph.D. I had to go out and do experience, and I had...I did all those things because, I joke with some of my white friends, I say, "Because you all told us that's what we need to do." [laughs] "Then you want to deny me still. You want to tell me, 'Well, it wasn't the right school.'" But anyway, you do the right thing. For me, I've been in in professional meetings where my Ph.D. has three letters like everybody else's. But I've been talking with colleagues, and I've had white males that come up and just act like I'm not even there and just start conversations with the person and engage them. The person often looks surprised, but...I've had to endure that. I've had to be overlooked or told that, "Well, if you had these credentials, you could get this job." Then I see other people who don't have them, and they get the job. I'm not bitter behind any of that. It just makes me sensitive enough to know that it's still there, I mean. Again I think being a woman is a challenge, and I think being a woman of color is a challenge.

As I thought about the issue of diversity here at this university, I wanted to...A couple of points. First of all, I give much support to Royce Engstrom. Because he could have chosen someone that looks just like him to come in here, and for whatever reason, he was guided to offer me the position. I think he should be commended for that, because it...although you've had other people of color in leadership positions. I met her when I...the Student Affairs—

DM: Teresa Branch.

BE: Yes, thank you, Teresa. Having a person second in command, that's a big deal. So I commend Royce for that. But as I said before, too, earlier, the fact that ultimately it became the women's triad of leadership, with President Sterns and VP Keller and myself. We just got along fabulously in terms of wanting to do the right thing and each of us bringing a lot of experience and knowledge and understanding to the University and to its challenges.

But with respect to the issue of diversity, I do want to go on record as saying that the University of Montana has a major diversity issue. It's bubbling right up under the surface, and it is not just in terms of gender but its race, ethnicity, as well as a range of other areas that needs attention. I would really strongly encourage this institution to dig deeply, and to not find itself being on the front page of *The Chronicle*, because, some of the things that have occurred that they don't

even know about...I've got a number of black students who've come to me with issues that they've experienced—racial slurs and other things, I've had women faculty members come to me and tell me some things that they're going through. I've had a few LGBTQ students in my presence share problems. I've had Native American students. So, what I'm saying is that...Those are anecdotal so I don't want to suggest that they represent any massive issue, but I suspect that it's a bigger problem than this university has acknowledged and that it really needs to be given attention.

DM: How would you suggest that might happen, or how would the University best begin that process?

BE: The thing that this experience has taught me that I hadn't thought about before is how our lives can be so different and we be in the same space. What happened to me was the day that it was...We were having a Cabinet meeting, and it was the day that...It was after the University of Virginia tragedy and activity. I happened to get up and I guess I was watching CNBC, MSNBC, or whatever it was, and it just so happened that day, before I left home, there was a news story that the young woman...I apologize for not being able to recall her name because she deserves to have her name said [Heather Heyer] —the young woman that was killed in Virginia that that day was her funeral. As a mother, I went to Cabinet meeting, and I just couldn't shake the fact that everybody...We were having a pleasant conversation, but I couldn't shake the fact that here we sat, this morning, talking about issues of importance, but that there was a mother somewhere in this country burying her child because her child did the right thing as a young white woman. She was there protesting injustice by and large towards people of color, and she paid the ultimate sacrifice with her life. Her mother...No mother, as you know, we never want to think about burying our children. That's not the way it's supposed to be. They're supposed to bury us. Not that that makes it better for my daughter, because she says, "Mom, would you stop being so morbid." [laughs] But the fact is that I sat there, and so I just decided to speak from the heart, and I said, "I know," I said, "I don't want to derail the Cabinet meeting, but," I said, "it's just hard for me to remove myself from the fact that if some mother is going through something right now,"—then that was right now'—"right now, to bury their child because their child stood up did the right thing."

Now clearly, I would be proud of my daughter if she had wanted to protest because I'm very...But to know that I lost my daughter, lost that, so we had a very open dialogue about it. Everybody has been just wonderful to me throughout, but this was a great time for us to talk and people were very, very supportive and we brainstormed and everything. What it made me understand was that we can live in this world and be untouched by certain things that might really impact someone else, and we have to be always cognizant of that. Just the other day, when the young man, Stephon Clark in Sacramento, was killed, I asked the staff if they knew anything about it. It hadn't bothered them. They hadn't heard about it, and it didn't bother them. But, for me, as an African-American woman with two grandsons and a son-in-law and cousins and nephews, and I worry about them as black men every day being in the wrong place

at the wrong time and being killed. It made me realize how good people, good people, good-hearted people, could live without the sensitivity that I have. So it's not so much that we don't care or we're not supportive, but it's made me understand how people can just live their lives and just not be affected. Just like for me, as an African-American woman, I read things about Native Americans and what's happening on some of the reservations and this whole loss of land and drilling and it hits me that I've been removed from that. It's just something we have to be very cognizant of. So, my answer to this, and I've shared this to Jessica and some others—Jessica Weltman and others here—I said, “I think that the University needs to bring in an external person to do a climate survey—someone who's totally removed from the University—and see the depth to which diversity issues really are impacting the University and from that, build a very robust response to embracing diversity.” My caution is, if the University is not serious about it, don't do it. Because if you start it and then you sideline it because you don't have the resources or it's not a priority, whatever, it's probably worse than not doing it all or waiting until you can get it done.

I think it's called the American Indian Native...whatever the AIN Project is. I'm not sure what the acronym exactly says. It was adopted by OCHE, and within that, all of the institutions have committed to getting and hiring a diversity officer—chief diversity officer—UM included. There's a little bit of debate as to whether that person should report to the provost or should report to the president. I think for this institution at this time needs to report to the president. But it needs to report to the president with an infrastructure, and it needs to be empowered and if you're not ready for it, don't do it. I would rather see them just wait and be criticized for not doing something quick enough than to jump out there and do something, and then it just be like, they weren't serious, it was just window dressing.

DM: I'm glad you touched on that because I was going to ask you about diversity and this has been really valuable and really interesting. Can we talk a bit about women in leadership? You have mentioned a couple times, and you knew this question was coming so you clearly have thought about it, the fact that you did serve, have served as provost at a time when we had an interim president, our first female president of the University, and interim VP for Administration and Finance, also a woman. You mentioned that you had a good working relationship. Can you speak more broadly based on your observations to women in leadership at UM, or even just to your experience working as one of the three really important women at a really difficult time at UM?

BE: Sure, sure. I think that, as I said, it just so happens that the three individuals that came together all had very deep expertise and experience in their chosen area of focus. Which meant that when we came together, we were able to offer a very meaningful and viable solutions to problems. I think that each of us—we never talked about it—but I suspect that each of us had also had our individual trials and tribulations, being respected in the workplace. So we had just a kind of an organic interaction with each other of mutual respect as well as admiration for our leadership efforts. So it was great.

I've worked with women, and of course I've worked with men as well, but I've worked with a number of women who've been just a delight to work with, and some to report to. A couple of provosts that I reported to really were very much guided my own leadership. I still keep a network of women presidents who've retired and just really a very...much like mentors to me. So I think it just came together very...I guess the best word is, organically. It just seemed to flow well together, but it was always the depth of their understanding of issues and solutions that they offered that made it the most valuable. So yes, I think it's important, and I think the University will have to wrestle with this because of the bias towards...Sometimes it gets hidden behind things like, well, we're looking for people who have certain work experiences. If those work experiences have generally excluded certain individuals, then you can say that you're not excluding women or people of color, but in effect you are. I think it's going to be important for the University to do that.

At the same time, I am one who believes that the best person for the job should get the job, but I'm also smart enough to know that at certain points, those issues become secondary. My HR background again. We go through a process where everybody competes at the same pace, on the same basis, but ultimately you get down to three individuals who all have—three or four—all have the same qualities and qualifications. You only have one position. There's something that is going to be very subjective that chooses this person over that person. My position is that, it is at that point where your thoughts about gender and diversity ought to be as important as, well, he went to my college or he's in my fraternity or...It just kind of reminds me when I was a young so-and-so. That's just as important, and it doesn't take away from the fact that you've had a very open and fair process or those three or four people wouldn't have gotten to that level.

DM: Would you speak more generally to leadership at the University of Montana? Anything that you believe, based on your experience, that we could or should be doing better that is—I mean it could also be gender and diversity—but if there are other observations that you have about leadership at UM, would you speak to those?

BE: I think training and development for leadership for all employees is important. I'm struck by the fact that even for chairs and deans, there's not a required leadership training. The expectation is that they'll just get in there and they'll know what to do. I'm here to say they won't, and they'll struggle. They don't know how to coach and to resolve conflict and to mentor. So there's certain things that you have to do, and I think that...I know that there's some discussions now through the staff assembly, of Staff Senate, about how to improve professional development across the campus. But within that, I think cultivating leaders should be an important part of it so that as will happen in every organization, vacancies occur, you'll have a cadre of people who have, first of all, indicated an interest in stepping forward and then be able to have a skill set ready to go. As opposed to pulling your hair out and saying, "Okay, now what are we going to do now that this person has resigned or, for whatever reason, stepped away

from the position.” But all of that goes back to the broader issue of investing in people. But that also goes into a performance system that has to be reconfigured so that it includes professional development as an annual assessment of my management, of my subordinates. What am I doing that's in align with helping them to advance professionally, and that's a part of it but it's a bigger...it's a big piece.

DM: I'm going to shift gears slightly...well, maybe not. The past several years, we've seen quite a bit of turnover in top positions at the University. Some people have not had their contracts renewed or have departed unexpectedly before we expected them to retire, yourself included, and so I'm just wondering if you would be willing to comment on this situation at UM as a professional in public administration and what you feel the impact is on the University, on a perception of transparency or non-transparency, and on our ability to achieve goals.

BE: Well, yes, I have no difficulty commenting on this. I think the issue has to be clearly understood that at certain levels, in certain positions, we serve at the pleasure, and that within higher education or public service or even the private sector, turnover at the executive level or in leadership positions is the norm. It is not a reflection at all of a lack or failure of the individual who leaves the position. It is more about the ability of the individual who's coming in in the top leadership position to assemble a team of individuals who he or she feels there's a symbiotic kind of relationship with, to help them get their goals and objectives accomplished. I remind people, for example, that in every presidential administration, all of the secretaries of the various cabinet level agencies turn in their resignations and sit and wait for the transition. It just comes with it. Even some subordinate positions. Not all the positions, but there's a few that that happens with. So, I don't see it...I've been at the mercy of, a couple of times, much to my surprise, a new president comes in and they don't know me, but they've asked me, “Okay, let's figure your exit strategy, because I want that position open so I can do a search and get the person in that I want.” Of course, I jokingly tell them, I said, “Well, you're not going to get anybody better than me, but I'll do what you ask.” [laughs]

I think the point is that, this happens, and I don't see it, I don't see it at UM being any different than any other thing. I think what would worry me is if these positions were...this turnover was going deeper than at that level. In other words, if people were being targeted who were not at the top level. Then that would be more problematic because then it would seem like, what is this, kind of a personal...I mean, what's going on here would be the concern, but it's, quite frankly, no different in other higher education institutions and in the public service in general—this level of turnover.

DM: You feel like that's a positive for the University? For the leadership to be...the president to be able to make the decisions that he or she needs to make set that initiative?

BE: Yes, I think the president...Somebody told me once—they used this as a metaphor and it stuck with me—this is for people in my position, they say, “The relationship between the

president and the provost is like a marriage.” That you have to feel that connection and comfort where the president can tell you whatever he or she has...deepest thing and feel confident and vice versa. You sometimes...building that relationship requires starting anew. One of the things that I've tried to do over the course of my experience as a provost, having served there in three different institutions, is go in immediately and develop that relationship with the president. They may not have had that with me, but they very quickly see that I'm on their team, I got their back, and I need to do that. I think of it as I'm on my third president just here.

Royce and I had a great relationship. Sheila and I had a great relationship. I've only worked with Seth, now, for maybe about six, eight weeks and our relationship is starting out pretty well and all of that, but it wasn't in the cards for me to stay anyway. I wouldn't have stayed, regardless, but I think that I could have built such a relationship with him because I understand exactly what presidents need. It doesn't hurt that I've been a president before, so I can kind of know what they need. But no, I don't think it hurts. I think what would be more concerning is that, if the President...Cabinet level staff gets in place and then you start seeing turnover after they've selected, then that would be problematic. Why is it that the president is picking these people, and they're not sticking. So right now it wouldn't be of concern, but I would be concerned if after some of these key positions are filled within a year, maybe a year or two, there's turnover there. That's not explainable. Like people get sick or whatever, that's one thing, but if it's just like this... that would be kind of make me raise my eyebrow as to what's going on.

DM: Good, thank you. In your work as a provost, I'm wondering if you believe—either at UM or generally—if a provost should interact directly with faculty and academic units. If so, why or why not. What is that relationship? What should it be?

BE: Oh yes. Absolutely, they should. They absolutely should. Because the best way to understand the pulse of the organization is to get out and about and hear it for yourself—have those kinds of relationships. So I think that as a provost, should meet with the faculty both informally and formally. You should go out and have meetings with departments, attend their faculty meetings, go to administrative service units, go to their meetings, interact with them, interact with students and that kind of thing. The challenge often is, is that I have found even here in my time here, that I've been so landlocked the meetings and emails and other things, that it's not...I've not been able to get out and about as much as I would have liked to. But, if I'm going to understand the true nature of the decisions that are being made, the decisions that need to be made, the one way to do that is to have a better interaction on the ground level with the people who are on the front lines. Again, faculty, students, and staff.

DM: Do you feel that in the course of meeting with a faculty unit that the dean should be present or...so that there's always that structure in place, or do you feel like you...that the provost could meet with faculty without a dean? Would there ever be a reason to do that?

BE: Well, I think it just depends. I'd be very careful with how I would approach that, because one, I am a stickler on protocol and I would not want to encourage any unit to feel that they could go around their immediate supervisor. If however, they openly said, "We want to have a meeting, we've got some problems and we want to be able to talk candidly," I would talk to the Dean or talk to the unit head and say, "I'm going to do this. I want you to be aware of it because..." and I would take what I heard with a grain of salt. Because they say, there's two sides, and then there's the truth. So you have to be careful with that. But I would probably accommodate that, if it was necessary. Otherwise, I don't know that, it'd be too much...In fact, I discourage people from even coming to me to talk to me if they haven't gone to their supervisor or...unless it's something that they say, "Okay I just don't want to talk about it with them." I will meet with people, but I also let them know that don't look for me to resolve it there, I'm going to hear you out but nine times out of ten I'm going to have to go back around to wherever the problem exists and get some input and so...but to hear your side I certainly will. So yes, I think there's some instances, but by and large I think it should be really with full disclosure to the dean or to the unit head that I'm coming to meet with your folks and they've got things to say.

DM: What in your opinion is a good institutional structure and staff for a provost? What would you need? What do you need to be effective either at UM or at another institution?

BE: Well, this is one of my items that I'm leaving here on the table with the new provost or the executive vice president. This office is totally understaffed, and I understand that the shared governance groups already believing this to be too top-heavy and all that and they can say what they want. Their opinions don't reflect the reality of this office. This provost, me, 24 direct reports. Twenty-four. The theory talks about a span of control of maybe about eight. So you've got that. We've got a key vacancy in one of the associate provost's positions that needs to be filled, and now on top of that we're adding Student Affairs. You're going to bog this office down so much that it's not going to be able to be functional. So I think that we need to get the number of direct reports from the president...excuse me, from the provost down to something more aligned with maybe, oh gosh, I'd say somewhere around 18 or so might work.

That's still a lot, but that's because you have so many deans. All of them still would have to be in and that's 12 right there, so maybe six, but I've got four staff so we really...but it needs to be addressed. Then the staffing in this office, there was criticism I think that thought that we would try to fill the position on the associate provost position because people who were equating the need to reduce the number of faculty we have with...but you're hiring...it's apples and oranges. It's a different thing. The demands of the office are such that I think it would warrant it. So I think my exiting statement to the executive vice president coming in is that you need to really take a look at the staffing structure here because you're not going to be able to support the president at the level that you would like to unless you have a number of direct reports who can support you.

DM: I think I have two more questions. Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it. As someone with experience in public administration and with extensive experience in higher education administration, is there anything unexpected or unusual about UM's structure or situation, either positive or negative, which stands out to you and which you think warrants mentioning.

BE: I've said to people all along that the University of Montana is not facing any problems or challenges any other higher education institution is facing. Budget, enrollment, accountability, completion, retention—you just name it—the same thing. Now, the magnitude of it may be a little more intense, but it's the same problems. That was something that I think people need to really understand and be able to keep in mind always, as we look at how to move from point A to point B as an institution. I think the thing that struck me as kind of, a little bit unusual—not a lot of unusual—is the shared governance structure here, and the misapplication of shared governance conceptually, to decision-making here. I'm a strong, strong advocate for shared governance. In fact, my core decision-making skill, value, or style rather, says the more input you get the better decisions you make. But it's advisory, and what I've found here is that it has morphed into a belief that is more of approval. It has created situations in my opinion where the University administration has been frozen in its ability to make decisions, because people in certain shared governance roles have disagreed. I think that's problematic, and I think it needs to be addressed. That's not the way it is in other institutions. They know exactly the role and it's not, again, I've often gotten input from shared governance that has modified my approach. So I'm not talking about my authority being challenged. I'm simply saying that at the end of the day you got to make a decision, and I'm finding that this shared governance has really kind of gotten a little bit out of control.

I think the other issue is never have equated union representative with shared governance. That's also something that's been a little skewed here, and I think that the unions have a very important and powerful role in public organizations and I'm very pro-union. I mean, I'd make it very clear to people that I, having studied administration, I know that but for the diligence and hard work and commitment of unions we wouldn't have minimum wage, we wouldn't have safety issues, we wouldn't have a five-day work week—40-hour week—just on and on and on. So, for me, the unions and their value is deep and important. At the same time, they have a certain perspective, and in a shared governance environment, they have the union representing the rights and interests of employees as a separate issue from what happens in terms of decision making. So I would encourage and think that that's something that this University is going to have to figure out or deal with or address at some point in time.

I did find a little bit of this here, and I might...I'll be frank with you, I don't know...I have reflected on it, did it have to do with the fact that I'm a woman? Or a woman of color? But there were a couple of instances where I felt my direct reports did not respect me and my authority. They went over my head, or in some cases, simply failed to respond to a directive. Now, I found that to be real problematic, and I hadn't experienced that other places. So it made me wonder, does this have to do with the fact that I'm black or a woman or both? It's troubling

to me, because I don't take well to that, that that kind of disrespect. Small as it was, it still was there, and I don't think that a white male in this position would have had to experience that. Somebody said, "Beverly, you're blowing it out of proportion. Prove it." I can't. I can just tell you my perception of it, and I found it to be a bit of a challenge.

DM: You're not thinking that it was because you were here as an interim and people thought they would just wait you out, it was...it felt to you that it was disrespectful?

BE: Yes, because part of what I did to dispel the fact that...there was a bit of that...Some people even used that as an excuse, "Well, you're an interim." What difference does it make? I'm here. I'm doing it now. You're paying me a lot of money, and I want you to get every nickel of my work. When I came to the position, I understood that there's...the way you come in as an interim is not as a placeholder, and I made it clear from day one...In fact, I never for one second thought of myself and the decisions that I needed to make as...through the view of an interim. I was doing what was right for the organization based on the facts and the information that I was presented. I believe that anybody with the same information and facts would have made the similar decision. So it had to be done. Now, there were some things that, obviously, I would postpone making a decision on, like, a permanent dean for Education, a permanent dean for Missoula College. Yes. Those are things that...but to make some decisions that needed, for things that needed to be implemented immediately, I should wait for the...What? It didn't make sense to me. So I have had to wonder. I will never know because...but I will always have within the back of my mind, I wonder was that the issue. Then I have some, even, testimonials to say, people saying to me, "Well, a similar situation came up with your predecessor, and they were able to just..." So I don't know. But it did come up as an issue.

DM: Do you want to give us specific examples, or just leave it at that?

BE: No, I think I'll leave it like that. Yes, I want to leave it like that. I will say this though, that those...By and large, this experience has been truly value added to my own professional experiences. That 95, 98 percent of the people I've interacted with have been...even those who I've had some testy discussions with, still, have been very respectful. I know that their positions...they were coming from their heart now so it was not bad. So I will walk away from this experience with a truly positive view of the University of Montana, and I suspect that the future is very bright if we can make some decisions that...There's going to be hard decisions, but make the decisions, do the right thing, don't do what's politically expedient, do what's right for the institution and for the faculty and the staff and the students, and you'll be okay.

DM: Glad to hear that. What advice would you give for our new provost?

BE: I just did!

DM: That's it, good, all right. [laughs]

BE: That is it. I did have the chance to chat with each of the finalists, and they all have very strong skills. I think any of them probably could do this job. The thing that they're going to have to do is really come in, try to establish the kind of... not exactly what I've done, but try to establish the kind of leadership skills and values that are important to get people to want to go and follow your lead. That's going to be really important. Being transparent, respectful, empowering. Then the other thing, is what I've already said, they've got to understand that this is not a popularity contest. All of us want to be liked. I know I do. I want people to like me. But at the end of the day, if I've done what's right and it causes you to be upset with me or, even dare I say, to not like me, it's a sacrifice I'm willing to make because at the end of the day I've got to do what's right for the institution. I would suggest to them that they embrace that, and as I said before, to do what's right and not what's politically expedient. Not to say that politics won't come into play. You're going to get hints and suggestions that that's politically not feasible right now. That's not what I'm talking about, but if your goal is to make friends and influence people, if that's your primary thing—you want to be politically correct at all times and what you think may help you out politically in the future—you're going to fail at this job. The right thing is what you need to do. If it means, that you turn out getting some people who get kind of gruffy with you. Hey, it comes with the territory.

DM: Is there any question that I should have asked you that I did not? Anything else that you would want to put on the record?

BE: No, I think I've talked about just about everything. As I said, I have enjoyed this experience tremendously, I am very much looking forward to, of course, getting home and getting back into retirement and relaxing a bit. People have asked me...I probably will go back out on another Registry assignment so, I'm not jaded. [laughs] Not burnt out. It'll be a while. I'm going to take a little rest. I think you've asked me all the questions, and hopefully I've shared some of the importance of what I've tried to bring to this position and what I've tried to offer for the University and to those who I've had the privilege of working with.

DM: Thank you so much for this interview and for your service to UM. I really appreciate it.

BE: Thank you! All right.

[End of Interview]