

*Recognizing excellence  
in teaching, research, and service  
to the campus and community*



*Faculty*  
EXCELLENCE

*Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019*



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS



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## PROGRAM

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### Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Dan Edelman  
Chancellor

### Ceremony

Dr. Melinda Arnold  
Provost, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

### Presentation of Awards

Halle Keltner, ASMSUB President, and Taylor Kurkoski, ASMSUB Student Resolution Officer, will present ASMSUB Outstanding Faculty awards  
Dr. Susan Balter-Reitz, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Office, will present the two MCIE Awards for Support of Students with Disabilities

Dr. Jennifer Lynn, Associate Professor of History,  
College of Arts and Sciences, will present the

Dr. Tasneem Khaleel Award for Mentoring Young Female Professionals

Dr. Christine Shearer, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences,  
will present the Part-Time Faculty award

Mr. Ed Garding, Interim Dean, College of Business,  
will present the Outstanding Service Learning award  
and the Excellence Award for Non-Tenured Faculty

Dr. Paul Foster, Director of International Studies,  
will present the Promoting International Student Success award

Dr. Vicki Trier, Dean, City College,  
will present the City College Faculty Leadership award

Dr. Joy Honea, Acting Associate Dean, College of Allied Health Professions,  
will present one Faculty Excellence award

Dr. Christine Shearer, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences,  
will present two Faculty Excellence awards

Chancellor Edelman, Dr. Christine Shearer, and a Cox Family member  
will present the Winston & Helen Cox Fellowship award

Chancellor Edelman and a Cox Family member  
will present the Pippenger award

### Years of Service and Retirees

### Closing Remarks

Dr. Dan Edelman  
Chancellor



## **Ms. Patricia Nichols**

University Lecturer  
Rehabilitation and Human Services  
College of Allied Health Professions



## **Mr. Chad Landon**

Director  
Paramedic Program  
City College



## **Ms. Salma Boumediene**

Associate Professor  
Business Administration  
College of Business



## **Mrs. Corinne Day**

University Lecturer  
Educational Theory and Practice  
College of Education



## **Dr. Melissa Boehm**

Assistant Professor  
Communication and Theatre  
College of Arts and Sciences



# Lynne Fitzgerald

*Assistant Professor, Outdoor Adventure Leadership, CAHP*



**M**SUB Assistant Professor Lynne Fitzgerald, program coordinator for the Outdoor Adventure Leadership major and minor, has been tapped for the MCIE Faculty Award for Exceptional Support of Students with Disabilities. The award recognizes MSUB faculty who demonstrate outstanding support to a student with a disability; Lynne strives to promote student success no matter the difficulties they may face.

For one student, she has been very influential in his journey through higher education. “In 2013, I was diagnosed with very severe COPD,” one of her students stated. “One of my degree core classes is Outdoor Living Skills, which includes a six-day hike in the Beartooth Mountains, at altitudes nearing 12,000 feet.”

When the student’s care provider deemed this activity unsafe, Lynne worked with the student to create an accessible learning opportunity that would meet the academic requirements. “Lynne’s proactive modification to my curriculum is the best choice for my health and future, and she is most deserving to receive this award.”

In addition to her academic support of students, Lynne also facilitates outdoor adventure programs with a variety of local groups such as the Scouts, Montana Audubon Center, Skyview High School, and MSUB alumni and families. Her classes support the local community by increasing student engagement outside the university. The clean-up project, in collaboration with Billings Parks and Recreation, called “Refresh the Rims” is one of many initiatives providing service learning opportunities for students in the community.

Lynne truly believes in the potential of each student, regardless of their ability level. This type of care and support can make the difference for a student in need of extra assistance. Lynne’s efforts affirm her character and her desire to see students succeed; adapting to challenges and overcoming barriers.



# Brian Gurney

*Adjunct Assistant Professor, Management and Business Administration, COB*



In his 20 years of involvement at Montana State University Billings, Brian Gurney has been driven to support all students throughout the course of their higher education.

It is for this unwavering dedication that Brian Gurney is one of this year's recipients of the MCIE Faculty Award for Exceptional Support of Students with Disabilities.

Joining MSUB as a lecturer in 1999, Gurney has come to be recognized by his students and colleagues as one who will go the extra mile when it comes to support of students in need of extra assistance. He puts his students first, and does anything he can to accommodate each student's unique needs.

"I give Brian Gurney hands up for his passion for teaching and desire to help his students learn," one of his students stated. "Brian never once hesitated or complained about me needing captioning for the videos in cyber security. He is easygoing, understanding, caring, and very willing."

A crucial part of teaching is ensuring that students understand the course material and are successful learners. Gurney embodies this philosophy, providing transformative opportunities for all students by making sure that each one is equipped with the tools they need to succeed.

He wants to see each student prepared for success and uses his real-world approach to teaching to allow students to apply what they have learned in real life.

His students reflect the passion that he has for teaching the many aspects of business and commend him for adapting to their needs. His goal is to incite that same passion in his students, so they can truly have a positive impact in their field.

"I was nervous about taking operational management until I learned that Brian was teaching it," a student said, "I have no doubt in my mind that Brian would give any student with any disability the same dedication, commitment, and passion as he did with me."



## Joy C. Honea, Ph.D.

*Professor, Sociology, CAS*



**D**edicated to empowering women, supporting junior faculty and improving gender equity, Joy Honea, Ph.D., has devoted her career at MSU Billings to supporting women as she represents the “epitome of advocacy for women.”

Honea has worked as a mentor to junior faculty of the university, not only in her field but across multiple departments. A colleague notes “many junior faculty members (myself included) have underscored how important she has been for our careers. Her institutional knowledge, careful understanding of policies, and enthusiasm for our successes have not gone unnoticed.”

Outside of her involvement in mentoring junior faculty, Honea was also involved in creation of the Women’s Studies Office, which has since been expanded into the Women’s and Gender Studies Center. Honea has helped with navigating the program and budget requests, creating ideas for the center, and hiring work study students. “There is no possible way that we could have done it without her,” says a colleague. “She was always willing to lend an ear and offer advice on teaching, research opportunities and important reminders related to work/life balance.”

Honea has also served as an integral part of the Women’s Faculty Caucus where she helped shape the supportive and intellectual atmosphere of female faculty members.

According to her nominator, however, one of Honea’s most important contributions to MSU Billings was her “tireless work to promote a more inclusive Family Leave Policy in our Collective Bargaining Agreement.” Through Honea and the work of her colleagues, the Faculty Modified Duties section was added to the Family Leave Policy.

Off campus, Honea is a leader in Billings and regionally. She served on the board of the Presidents Commission on the Status of University Women and served on the Social Science Research Team with colleagues at Montana State University on a National Science Foundation ADVNCE grant, focused on issues of institutional equity and increasing the representation of women in the sciences.

Honea is clearly deserving of the Dr. Tasneem Khaleel Award for Mentoring Young Female Professionals as she continues to mentor women at MSU Billings and advocates for the advancement of all women.



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## PART-TIME FACULTY AWARD

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# Elizabeth Adcock

*Part-time Faculty, Music, CAS*



**E**lizabeth Adcock has been employed at MSU Billings for 28 years and her impact on students has not gone unnoticed during this time. Putting in extra time to help the department recruit new students, provide extra lessons, and be there for her students, Adcock's dedication to her students is the reason why she has been selected as this year's recipient of the Part-Time Faculty Award.

A colleague notes that Adcock, a guitar teacher in the College of Arts and Sciences, provides students with extra time because "she knows it takes a lot of effort to get beginning guitarists to a level acceptable for performance." Many students studying music with the guitar do not have the same level of exposure to the instrument other musicians have because the guitar is not an instrument typically taught in schools; they arrive with little to no traditional music background. Adcock takes beginners and "turns them into true performers and teachers."

Students who have studied with her are thankful for the extra time she spends with them. "The simple fact is, not only does she do this, but she gets these students to exceed the standards and expectations of the department and become some of the finest musicians the school produces. It is a baffling feat," notes a student.

Also directing the guitar ensemble, Adcock finds attention-grabbing music for whatever sized group she has each semester. "The concerts are well played using interesting choices of music from a wide variety of genres," notes her colleague.

Adcock also impacts her students beyond the classroom. As one student explained, she was there for students both inside and outside the classroom: "Elizabeth was always there for me, pushing me to better myself as a musician and as a person. She stood by me and pushed me to do my best and rise above and beyond the expectations of those who didn't believe in me."

Adcock's dedication to her students and the time she takes to help them succeed become the core reasons why she has been selected for this award.



# Christopher A. Craig, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor, Management, COB*



**F**rom Arizona and Washington to Wyoming and Montana, Christopher Craig, Ph.D., has engaged students across the state and region in service learning projects within their communities.

Two and a half years ago, Craig began integrating service learning into his courses. The integration, as of now, has included over 300 students, 90 organizations, and has resulted in over 800 service hours.

Many students who have participated in the service learning have been pleasantly surprised with the results of their service and the impact that it has had on them. Craig

incorporates a reflection component into the projects that highlights how the students have not only impacted their communities through these hours logged, but how the students have been impacted as well.

“You hear about the low income class in the news and how tough they have it,” a student who participated in “Night on the Van” with the Salvation Army and MSU Billings noted. “But until you see the living conditions and disparity they face, it doesn’t really hit home.”

Students enrolled in Craig’s courses are expected to locate a service learning opportunity with a non-profit community partner; understand and explain what they did to meet the service learning requirement and project impacts; complete at least two hours of service; be able to explain the real-world relevance to knowledge gained in the course; and reflect on their experience. “There will always be someone who notices what I am doing and an impact may be greater than I realize,” another student noted.

Craig’s service learning methodology is student driven. Because online students are involved in the projects, it is necessary for distance students to engage in service learning opportunities within their own communities. Through these students completing a student-learning contact, Craig is able to verify student service learning and build a list of regional community partners for the future. At the conclusion of the experience, students are required to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback about their service learning experience.

Craig has impacted students, our campus, and communities through his incorporation of service learning projects into his classroom curriculum.



# Anna Talafuse, Ph.D.

*Adjunct Assistant Professor, Marketing, COB*



**A** technologically-forward teacher actively involved on campus and a scholar of marketing, Anna Talafuse, Ph.D., has been awarded this year's Excellence Award for Non-Tenured Faculty.

Eight years ago, Talafuse began her teaching career at MSU Billings as a part-time instructor in the College of Business. Since then, Anna has received her doctorate in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing, which in turn helped solidify the AACSB accreditation of the COB. Talafuse was an integral part of expanding the marketing discipline at the university, and her involvement led to the offering of a completely-online marketing degree.

Talafuse is dedicated to helping students learn about current technology and trends related to business. She has incorporated new technological advancements into her classroom and was one of the first College of Business faculty members to embrace teaching in the Western Security Bank Technology Enhanced Integrative Learning (TEIL) room. "It is the classroom of the future," a colleague notes. "But Anna has no hesitation introducing it to students now." Talafuse is also noted for her "active" communication style in her online classes. "If she is awake and a student sends an email, whether it is 1:00 p.m. or 1:00 a.m., Dr. Talafuse will respond," her nominator says. "Her personal policy of responding as soon as she can has made her a favorite among students."

An energetic member of the MSUB community, Talafuse currently serves on five campus committees, mentors other part-time faculty members, and goes out of her way to make sure the faculty members receive answers, so they can complete tasks in a timely manner.

Talafuse has co-authored two research papers and has presented several times on both campuses. She contributes to her field through publications about student advising satisfaction and sales call anxiety, topics relevant to the field of business today. Her colleague notes "she strives to include others in learning and has asked two colleagues from the COB to aid in the research process."

Talafuse's impact on her students and the College of Business helped her solidify the Excellence Award for Non-Tenured Faculty.



# Anne Cole

*Instructor, Reading and Writing, City College*



One individual can impact the life of a student and, in some cases, help determine their success or failure; for international students, failure means a return to their home countries and the end of their dream of receiving an American education. Anne Cole, for numerous international students, has been the individual who has helped them succeed in the MSU Billings classroom.

As one nominator noted, many international students coming to MSU Billings are first introduced to American pedagogy and the United States classroom format once they arrive on campus; many of those students begin their journey in the American university system in Cole's reading or writing courses, where she is patient in building relationships with her students and helping them adopt a new style of learning.

Cole's impact as an instructor often leads to a satisfied student who is ready to continue on their journey to higher education in a distant, strange land. Before the student gets to this point, though, they first must pass her class. Cole works tirelessly with the students both inside and outside the classroom and during her office hours to help them succeed. She challenges students to complete all assignments sufficiently to maintain fairness among all students; at the same time, she acknowledges when a student is struggling and addresses the issue in a timely manner either directly with the student, the student's advisor, or the Office of International Studies.

Cole's impact in the international community does not end at her classroom door. Cole is a familiar face at social functions, such as over Labor Day weekend, when she and her husband volunteered to drive international students from Billings to Yellowstone National Park. She also helps to build bridges between the Office of International Studies and the Billings community, which has helped support the extra-curricular needs of international students.

Cole is engaged, responsive, and communicative with her students and campus colleagues. Through the presentation of this award, according to a colleague, "she will join a select group of MSU Billings faculty who have made a difference in the academic and non-academic success of our international students."



# Steve Wodrich

*Autobody Instructor, Transportation and Welding, City College*



**A**n alumnus of the auto collision repair and refinishing program at City College, Steve Wodrich works diligently to give back to the program.

Wodrich took over the program in the spring of 2017 and has been pursuing ways to enhance the program ever since. As head of the only auto body program in the state of Montana, he has developed strong partnerships with local businesses to support the program and his students. Many students in the program have had the opportunity to work at local body shops while attending school, which Wodrich helped facilitate. “Wodrich goes above and beyond to make sure his students receive the opportunities to succeed in their industry while learning about the importance of being a part of something larger than themselves,” one of his City College colleagues notes.

He has impacted the students of City College in other ways as well. Wodrich’s active role in the Montana Collision Repair Association helped create a scholarship fund worth over \$17,000. The 2018 Rocky Mountain Trade Show also helped garner more than \$40,000 worth of new equipment funding, as well as an additional check for over \$29,000. Students were given the opportunity to take part in the trade show by designing and constructing pedal cars with the proceeds benefitting the students’ respective programs.

Wodrich was lead organizer of the Second Annual Auto Body Poker Run last spring. Rounding out the day’s events, Wodrich and his students presented a refurbished car to a local family in need. The vehicle was repaired by City College students and local shops and vendors in partnership with the National Auto body Council’s Recycled Rides program.

Wodrich goes above and beyond for the benefit of students and success of the program, as demonstrated by the impact he has had as the head of the program during three semesters. His community connections and campus involvement strengthen the program. According to a colleague, “Steve is the ideal faculty member to work with. More than once he has volunteered to come to a recruiting event with me... he is well deserving of this award.”



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## FACULTY EXCELLENCE

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# Suzette Nynas, Ed.D., LAT, ATC

*Assistant Professor, Health and Human Performance, CAHP*



In her 12 years at MSU Billings, Suzette Nynas, Ed.D., LAT, ATC, has modeled excellence in her teaching, scholarship, and service. In recognition of her work as an innovative educator, dedicated volunteer, and faculty role model, Nynas has been selected to receive this year's Faculty Excellence Award.

Nynas has served as faculty and program director of the athletic training program since 2009. Her genuine concern for students and her tireless efforts to help them succeed are evidence of her commitment to teaching. She is currently the chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance and yet continues to

teach undergraduate and graduate courses, supervise student internships and clinical education experiences, advise graduate and undergraduate students, and oversee thesis projects. She is organized, responsible, and innovative. "I have been impressed by how she manages multiple responsibilities and ensures that all tasks are completed," a colleague said. "I can think of no one more deserving of a Faculty Excellence Award."

Nynas has an excellent record of scholarship and service with the department, college, and university. She is a devoted scholar and solid researcher. She has worked diligently on accreditation for the athletic training program and served as a co-author of the recent MSUB accreditation report for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. She serves the faculty as a member of the Academic Senate, the Sabbatical Committee, and the Faculty-Administration Collaborative Committee; all of which are crucial to faculty and involve investments of time and energy. Additionally, Nynas serves on the University's Strategic Program Alignment Committee.

Nynas' commitment to the success of her students, the faculty, the university, and her profession have set her apart and we are proud to honor her with this award.



## Matt Queen, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor, Biological and Physical Sciences, CAS*



**D**escribed as a jack-of-all-trades by his nominator, Matt Queen is a familiar face at MSU Billings and a professor who is dedicated to the university and the students who go here.

Known campus-wide, Queen has been involved in events such as the Atomic Circus at Montana Fair, Science Fun Day, and Girls-n-Science. Queen can be seen at orientation, the MSUB Mile, and campus star-gazing parties. He serves as the advisor for the Science Club and the Ski Club at MSU Billings. Queen's involvement in a variety of campus events and activities has helped organize informative, educational, and entertaining events for the community and current and potential students.

Working alongside students, Queen's expertise and skill in his field mingles with his sometimes funny and humorous approaches to teaching. His passion shows in the ways he helps his students learn. To help his students succeed, Queen helps them identify what kind of resources they need. He also works with a small cohort of international students to encourage them to stay at MSU Billings and helps draft a plan of study in order for them to be on track to graduate from the university. Additionally, Queen hosts international students and communicates with advising and the Office of International Studies when students need additional guidance or assistance.

Queen has presented locally, statewide, regionally, and nationally during his time at MSU Billings. Queen is currently operating three funded research projects, which total \$235,000 in grant monies. Outside the university, Queen is the treasurer and board member for the Montana Academy of Sciences.

Queen is known by many for his dedication to his students and spreading a love for science with current and future students as well as community members. "His commitment to the campus and his students is contagious," notes a colleague. "He's a well-rounded faculty member who strives to educate, excites students about education, and serves as an inspiring role model to students."



# Tom Rust, Ph.D.

*Professor, History, CAS*



**T**om Rust is described as an exemplary teacher who has been devoted to MSU Billings for nearly twenty years. Outside of his time at the university, he has earned national recognition as a scholar and has impacted the campus community, the community of Billings and the state of Montana.

Rust has faithfully served MSU Billings as a faculty member and other roles including Director of the University Honors Program, Interim Executive Director of International Studies, and Co-Service Learning Director, a position he voluntarily directed until funding was secured. Rust established the National

History Day program in Montana, which quickly grew to 400 students statewide.

To date, Rust has published four books and six articles on topics ranging from ancient Rome to the American West. His most recent article, “An ‘Undesirable Station’ The U.S. Army at Fort Yellowstone and the Creation of the National Park Service Program” received national attention, was a finalist for the Army Historical Foundation’s Distinguished Writing Awards, and is being considered for publication in a book with the University of Kansas Press.

Together with the National Park Service and the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Rust conducted archaeological research that confirmed the third known campsite on the Lewis and Clark trail, an endeavor that drew national recognition. He involved students in the excavation of the site as a service learning project, allowing them to gain hands-on experience and share in the excitement of a high-profile investigation.

Throughout all of this, as his colleague notes, “a five-minute conversation with Dr. Rust would reveal that he is first and foremost a teacher.” Rust is described as someone who takes great pride in his teaching and someone who cares deeply about his students. Students in Rust’s classes are not only challenged by the traditional textual learning of history, but are also encouraged to apply the skills they are learning from the classroom to help the community at large through service learning opportunities.

Rust’s commitment to the university, service, and scholarship endeavors demonstrates his overall excellence and the reason why he has been selected as one of the recipients of the Faculty Excellence Awards.



## Dr. Tom Nurmi

*Assistant Professor, English, CAS*



**S**pecializing in American Literature, Dr. Tom Nurmi is an accomplished literary scholar and teacher. His career at MSU Billings began in 2014, and he is currently an Assistant Professor of English.

Nurmi's teaching, research, and other scholarly pursuits center on the relevance and real-world value of literature in today's technology-driven society. His teaching philosophy can be summarized as "engagement with diversity (of peoples, traditions, and methods) and technology (as both mode and subject of critical inquiry)."

Nurmi connects students with the Billings community through ventures like the NEA Big Read and field trips to the Yellowstone Art Museum, and his teaching also brings the local community into MSUB classrooms. Nurmi encourages students, community members, and colleagues alike to examine the stories around them in order to understand how concepts like nature, freedom, or even humankind develop at the historical intersections of narrative, society, and science.

His research is centered on nineteenth-century environmental humanities, particularly the writings of Herman Melville, which has led to two books and a number of articles. Nurmi's research has opened doors for service to his profession, including being a reader and book reviewer for three prominent journals, presenting his work at international conferences, and contributing to faculty seminars nationwide.

Nurmi has also conducted public lectures on and off campus and has served on a number of advisory boards, most notably the Montana Center for the Book, a statewide nonprofit affiliate of the NEA.

The service that Nurmi provides on local, state, national, and international levels is impressive, raising the profile of the English department and MSU Billings as a whole. While the early American literary texts he studies may seem "old" or "dusty," Nurmi's teaching, research, and service show how literary history continues to teach us important lessons as we face the planetary challenges of the 21st century.



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## YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

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### 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Allison Bailey

*General Education - General Education  
City College*

Dr. Melissa Boehm

*Assistant Professor  
Communication and Theatre*

Dr. Joseph Bryan

*Assistant Professor  
History Department*

Scott L. Butterfield, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor of Accounting  
College of Business*

Lance A. Mouser

*Math Instructor/General Education Chair  
City College*

Dr. Tom Nurmi

*Assistant Professor of English  
English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages*

Dr. Matthew Queen

*Assistant Professor  
Biological & Physical Sciences*

Timothy Stenson

*Welding Instructor  
City College*

Dr. Emily Arendt

*Assistant Professor of History  
History Department*

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### 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Ana Karina Diaz

*Associate Professor  
English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages*

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### 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Alan B. Christensen

*Lecturer  
Educational Theory & Practice*

Dr. Stephen L. Eliason

*Professor  
Department of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies*

Mark D. Jacobson, Ph.D.

*Professor of Math  
Mathematics Department*

Sarah N. Keller, Ph.D.

*Professor  
Communication and Theatre*

Dr. Steven Wiles

*Adjunct Assistant Professor  
Biological and Physical Sciences*

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### 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Mr. Brian Gurney

*Adjunct Assistant Professor  
College of Business*

Katherine S. Holt

*Adjunct Assistant Professor  
Educational Theory & Practice*

Dr. Tom Rust

*Professor  
History Department*

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### 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Dr. Keith Edgerton

*Professor  
History Department*

Tami Haaland

*Professor of English  
English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages*

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### 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Dr. Cindy Dell

*Associate Professor  
Educational Theory and Practice*

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### 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Mr. Michael Campbell

*Professor of Accounting  
College of Business*



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## **RETIREES**

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Dr. Mark Hardt  
Dr. Richard "Scott" Harris

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## **IN MEMORIAM: THOSE WE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR**

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Gary Acton  
Elizabeth Fullon

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## **AWARD SPONSORS**

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The Winston & Helen Cox Fund  
Montana State University Billings  
Associated Students of Montana State University Billings  
Montana State University Billings Foundation

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## **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

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the Faculty Excellence Committee  
and all those who nominated faculty for these awards

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## **RECEPTION TO FOLLOW**

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Please join us in the Glacier Room to continue the celebration







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