



First Monday



*From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO
Monday, October 2, 2006, 8:00 a.m.*

Chancellor Ron Sexton shared his vision for the 2006-2007 academic year during the university opening meeting on September 6. Some of the goals highlighted by Dr. Sexton were:

- The development of a precise mix of academic programs that take full advantage of the demand for our graduates in key areas.
- The integration of the next generation of technologies into all areas of the university.
- Discussion between the higher education community and state legislators about the rampant increases in the cost of college tuition in Montana. Sexton said legislators must increase the level of state support for Montana universities to keep college affordable.

Barb Pedula, an instructor at the College of Technology, received the **Walter and Charlotte Pippenger Excellence in Innovation Award**, with a check for \$5,000, during the university opening meeting. The award and check were presented to Pedula by Shaun Cox, a 1991 alumnus of MSU-Billings and a grandson of Walter and Charlotte Pippenger, for whom the award is named. Walter Pippenger, who is deceased, and Charlotte Pippenger are the parents of Cheri Cox, who, along with her husband, Dick, are longtime supporters of MSU-Billings. Dick and Cheri Cox, along with their other son, Scott, were also on hand for the presentation ceremony.

The Cox family established the award to annually recognize individuals or groups whose efforts result in significant improvement to the undergraduate learning experience at MSU-Billings. Pedula was selected to receive the 2006 Pippenger Award because of her leadership in helping the MSU-Billings College of Technology make tremendous strides in program review, assessment, and improvement.

Some recent gifts:

- **The Haynes Foundation** granted \$104,000 to fund scholarships for Montana undergraduates who maintain a 3.4 GPA.
- **High Tech Construction** and **Langlas & Associates, Inc.** each pledged \$100,000, at \$20,000 per year for five years, to establish the High Tech Construction Carpentry Scholarships and the Langlas & Associates, Inc. Carpentry

Scholarships. The scholarships benefit students enrolled in the Construction Trades Program at the COT.

- **Dr. Marilyn Grams** donated a new C. Bechstein grand piano—considered by many pianists to be the finest piano in the world, with a retail price of \$100,000—for use by the music department.
- **First Citizens Bank** gave \$45,000 to help create a management information systems lab in McDonald Hall, which houses the College of Business.
- **Drs. Tasneem and Shafiq Khaleel** pledged \$15,000 to establish an endowed scholarship. Tasneem Khaleel is dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
- **Reporter Big Sky Office** donated \$10,000 worth of furniture to university administration and reception areas. In addition, **Frank & Kathy Cross, Dan & Sherry Muller**, and **Craig & Darcy Bartholomew** each made \$5,000 personal donations for the same project, bringing the total to \$25,000.
- **Yellowstone County Implement** donated \$15,600 toward a John Deere diesel engine for the College of Technology's diesel program.
- **ExxonMobil** pledged \$15,000 and **Cenex Harvest States** contributed \$5,000 toward the Process Plant Technology Faculty Excellence Fund.
- **ConocoPhillips** donated \$4,750 for process plant technology program scholarships.
- **The Jane Buttrey Memorial Trust** granted \$3,600 for scholarships benefiting undergraduate humanities and social sciences majors.

Dr. Jess & Kate Schwidde lost a daughter to a tragic accident 30 years ago and established an endowed scholarship in her memory at that time. The Schwiddes continued to contribute to the endowment and also named the scholarship fund as a beneficiary of their estates. \$62,000 was added to the fund through Kate's Will when she died in 2000. Jess died in 2005, and this month his estate distributed \$80,000 to the endowment. As a result of contributions through the years and the Schwiddes' estate planning, the Catherine J. Schwidde Memorial Scholarship now awards \$3,500 yearly.

Tax-free, charitable transfers directly from your IRA are now possible. This opportunity is available for 2006 and 2007 by IRA owners who are at least age 70½. For information, call 406-657-2244 or email foundation@msubillings.edu.

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