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# 1990-2000

## The Dennison Decade



THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA - MISSOULA  
PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2000

*"The University, it shall prosper."*

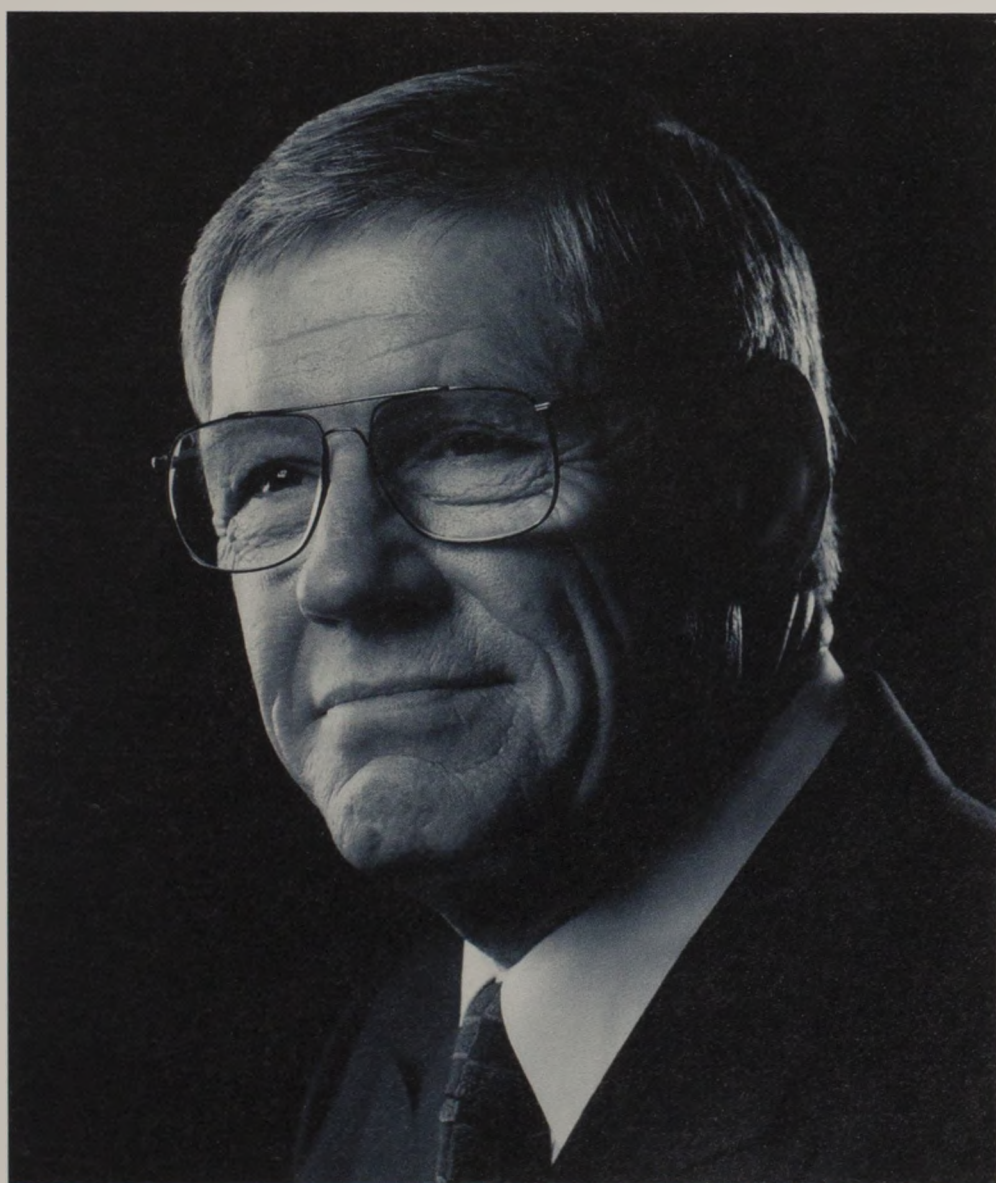
Oscar J. Craig  
Founding President  
The University of Montana  
September 1895



*The University of Montana - 1905*

“Over the course of a decade, we have accomplished a great deal....”

GEORGE M. DENNISON  
*16th President  
The University of Montana*



“George Dennison has outlined an ambitious agenda for the next five years, but based on his track record, there’s no question he’ll achieve his goals.”

HARRY FRITZ  
*Professor and Chair  
UM Department of History*

Eleven years ago I had the honor of nominating George M. Dennison for the presidency of The University of Montana. I’d known George when he was an undergraduate history major here because he played guitar in a rock band downtown at the Ratskeller. I knew he’d had a successful career since then as a historian and an administrator. And he was a Montanan from Kalispell. The first UM president I knew, Bob Fantzer, was a Montanan, and he was the best. Why not another?

The most significant aspect of President Dennison’s tenure is its length – a decade and counting, longer than all but one of his predecessors. In 1963, the year he received his master’s degree, Time magazine called UM the “graveyard of presidents.” But Fantzer and his successors were strong leaders. They built a foundation for George. He took a good university and made it better.



College presidents can no longer sit back and wait for legislative appropriations to pour in. Such appropriations are skimpy in Montana – skimpier than elsewhere – and they do not cover basic necessities. To prosper, universities must strike out on their own. George has led the drive for self-sufficiency in numerous ways. First, regrettably but necessarily, he has acceded to a tuition increase. In Montana, tuition rates historically have been low. They still are by national standards, but students today pay for a higher percentage of their education than their parents did in their day. Or should we say that parents pay more for their children?

Second, President Dennison has presided over the most extensive building boom since the University’s enrollment more than doubled after World War II. Again, UM cannot rely on the Legislature to meet space needs. The last state-funded edifice constructed here was the Gallagher Building, and even that required private seed money and some truly astonishing legislative log-rolling. Low national interest rates, timely bond issues and individual donations have financed dormitories, a parking garage, the Davidson Honors



College, the Skaggs Building, the James Todd Building, improved athletic facilities and expanded student services in the Lodge and in the Curry Health Center. The campus model in Main Hall is constantly changing. We still have problems – historians need larger offices – but many of us enjoy the new elbow room.

Third, outside funding for research has increased by almost 450 percent – from \$7 million to \$38 million – during the 1990s. This support helps faculty and staff members, provides space and equipment, and puts UM on the national education map. Finally, all alumni know that George Dennison presided over the most successful capital campaign in Montana's history. The UM Foundation raised more than \$70 million – almost twice its goal – for scholarships and institutional support.

Two other achievements must be noted. Diversity is a modern hallmark of American higher education, and George has reached out to Montana's Indian population, establishing scholarships funded by him and his wife, Jane, and creating an official Department of Native American Studies. The number of foreign students attending UM also has increased. Many come from universities with which UM has exchange agreements – in Japan, Denmark, Canada, England and Chile. I took advantage of George's internationalism by teaching summer school at Northampton College in England this year. I enjoyed everything about the experience except for the price of gas.

There are other achievements: Internet access; administrative restructuring with Montana Tech, Western Montana College and the Colleges of Technology in Helena and Missoula; a Division I-AA national football championship in 1995; and a new institutional theme, "The Discovery Continues." George Dennison has outlined an ambitious agenda for the next five years, but based on his track record, there's no question he'll achieve his goals. Just one problem: George's biggest headache remains unsolved and apparently unsolvable – parking. I have the answer to that one and will reveal it in return for a guaranteed space.

Harry Fritz  
December 2000

“I cannot imagine a set of commendations more reflective of the institutional mission and our preoccupations during the last decade.”

GEORGE M. DENNISON  
*President*

In reaffirming the University's accreditation in spring 2000, the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges commended UM for:

- ☛ Its high quality, intellectually sound General Education Program, which fulfills UM's mission that an education here “nurtures in students the capability to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to understand the world as they mature intellectually and emotionally.”
- ☛ Its emphasis on the importance of artistic activities and the high level of student involvement, as well as for its statewide cultural leadership and extensive artistic outreach efforts.
- ☛ Faculty and staff's concern for the academic success and general welfare of students, which is apparent at all levels of classroom, laboratory, research and extracurricular interaction, as well as in the extensive involvement of students in planning, implementing and evaluating student support services.
- ☛ Creating and supporting the unique Native American studies department, which offers an academic degree and fosters relationships with various tribal communities.
- ☛ Retaining an experienced and dedicated support staff who — despite increasing responsibilities — demonstrate daily their commitment to students, faculty and the University's mission through service and loyalty.
- ☛ Maintaining the character of campus while introducing new facilities and renovated space for enhanced student life and in developing facilities for innovative teaching and learning environments, particularly in pharmacy, business and the honors program.
- ☛ Achieving rapid growth in its extramural research funding.

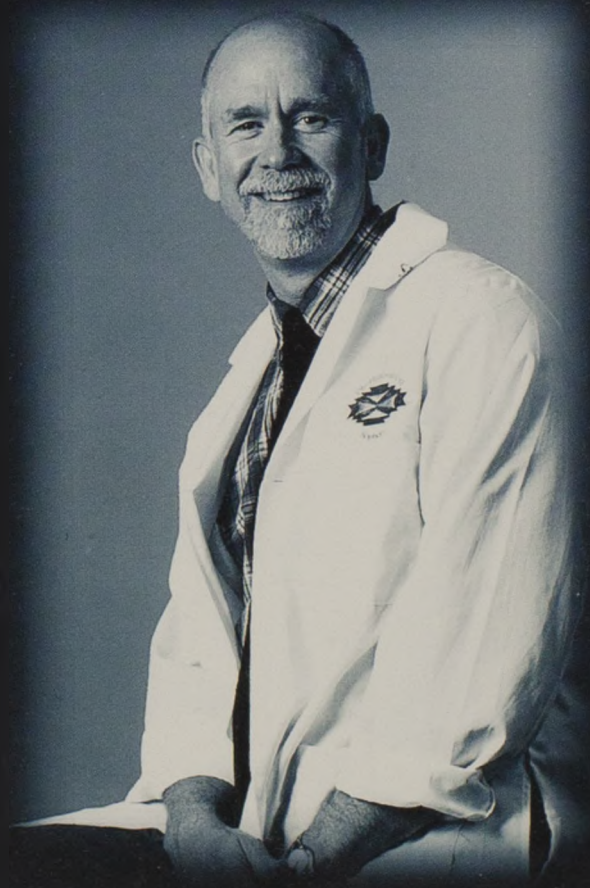


The University underwent its first accreditation process of Dennison's tenure when evaluators from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges visited campus in April 2000. The site visit culminated a two-year self-evaluation by a campus committee led by Jerry Fetz, dean of the Davidson Honors College. In its report and final letter of approval, the NASC evaluation team gave the University more commendations for excellence than recommendations for improvement, even though it cited repeatedly UM's obvious struggle with insufficient state funding. "The commendations provide confirmation of our own opinion that The University of Montana offers a wonderful experience to students who choose to come," President Dennison said. "The most serious problems, as the report makes quite clear, derive from the unwillingness or inability of the state to provide a more appropriate funding base."



"I was drawn to UM because of the potential that exists here to build productive research programs. Much of this potential is directly attributable to the commitment and vision of our administrative leadership."

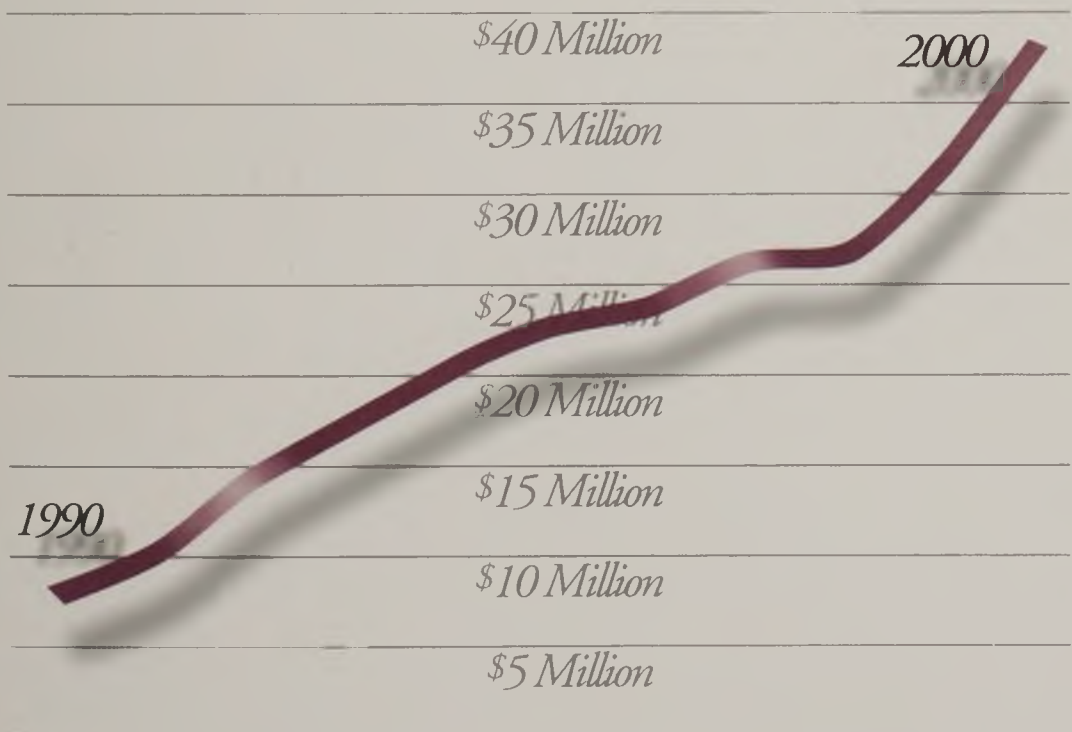
PROFESSOR RICHARD BRIDGES  
*Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences*





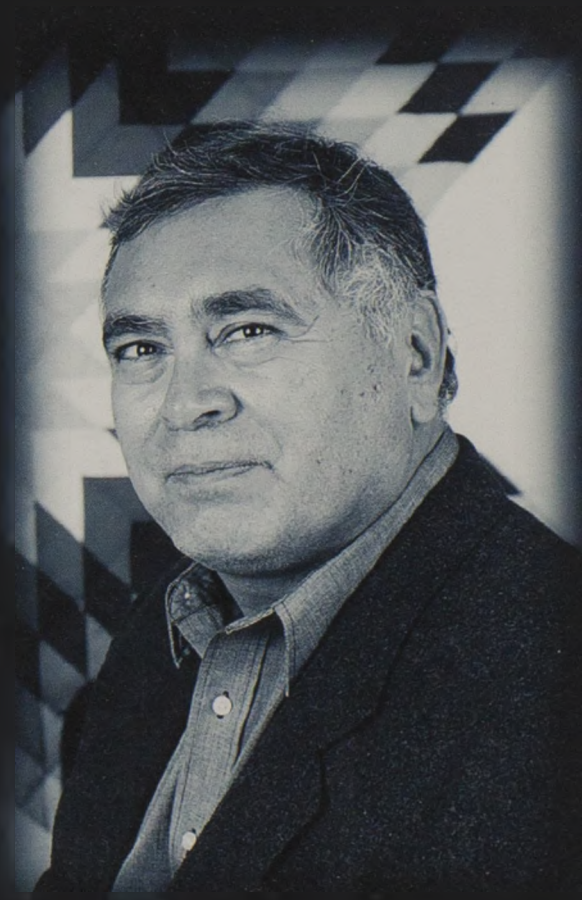
**E**xternal funding for research at UM barely reached \$7 million annually in 1990. With greater emphasis placed on attracting top professionals to lead cutting-edge research, UM has seen a steady increase in grants each year since. In 1999-2000, faculty research funding from outside sources topped \$38 million, creating more jobs and better opportunities for undergraduate students to do research. Working side by side, faculty mentors and students have gained worldwide acclaim for discoveries made at UM.

### Grant Volume 1990-2000



“Statistics do not tell the whole story about the value of President Dennison’s continuing commitment to diversity. Diversity contributes to the vitality of our intellectual and cultural life as a university.”

PROFESSOR RAY CROSS  
*School of Law  
Diversity Advisory Council Chair*





**P**resident Dennison started the Diversity Advisory Council at UM in 1991 to promote cultural diversity through campus programs and events. Since then his unwavering commitment to diversity at UM has helped bring about significant growth in minority student enrollment. From 1990 to 1999, American Indian student enrollment increased by 60.7 percent, African-American student enrollment increased by 12.5 percent, Asian/Pacific Islander student enrollment increased by 16 percent and Hispanic enrollment increased by 11.3 percent. More than 700 minority students were enrolled during fall 1999 in undergraduate and graduate programs. The University has worked over the past decade to establish programs that help American Indian students succeed in higher education. American Indian enrollment has increased from 239 students in 1990 to 376 in 2000. By putting up their own money to create new scholarships, the Dennisons led the way in making it possible for more American Indian students to attend UM. In the past decade, the University has strengthened its international exchange opportunities, signing agreements with universities in Canada, Europe, Asia and South America.

“My service has given me a sense of accountability not only for my own well-being but also for that of the community. I have matured in my communication and leadership skills, and I have discovered how important community outreach is for a university campus.”

TRINA ZAHLLER

*UM senior and CampusCorps volunteer*



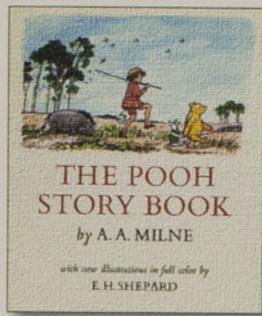


**P**resident Dennison was instrumental in establishing the UM-based Montana Campus Compact in 1993. A coalition of higher education leaders, the compact helps students develop the values and skills of citizenship through participation in public service. The compact is the only statewide higher education organization designed to support campus-based public service. President Dennison demonstrates his commitment to service and volunteerism as co-chair of the national Campus Compact board of directors and chair of the Governor's Commission on Community Service, which oversees the AmeriCorps programs operating statewide. The University's Volunteer Action Services program provides countless opportunities to help students better themselves and the local community by donating their time. Service projects range from stocking shelves at the Missoula Food Bank to helping schoolchildren build nature gardens at Fort Missoula. Many faculty members also incorporate service learning into their course curricula.

“President Dennison has supported us in weaving the fabric of literacy in Montana. The integrity of a literacy program requires that all threads of the community be involved. America Reads is the loom on which **UM**, students, teachers, and parents are weaving a bright and hopeful tapestry of literacy in America.”

PROFESSOR MARIAN MCKENNA  
*Curriculum and Instruction*





The University has been Montana's leader in helping promote literacy among school children. From the America Reads program grew Montana Reads, started by President Dennison in 1997 after he was appointed to President Bill Clinton's 21-member steering committee of college and university presidents to meet the challenge of increasing literacy. More than 60 UM student volunteers and work-study students visit Missoula schools regularly to provide tutoring to children in kindergarten through fifth grade. For the past two years UM has organized a community book drive to provide books for local schoolchildren being tutored through Montana Reads. Thousands of books have been collected in an effort to encourage reading and learning at home as well as in school, and to promote literacy awareness in the community.



“President Dennison’s vision and enthusiasm for UM’s future were an inspiration to donors and campaign volunteers alike. His commitment to better UM is evident wherever you look around campus and in its record for academic achievement and financial growth.”

PHYLLIS J. PETERSON WASHINGTON  
*National Chair, UM Capital Campaign*





resident Dennison and the UM Foundation led the most successful fund-raising campaign in Montana history, raising more than \$71 million in private money and exceeding the initial goal of \$40 million during the University's five-year Capital Campaign — "Ensuring a Tradition of Excellence." All Foundation fund-raising programs have grown steadily since 1990 — including major gifts, planned gifts and the Excellence Fund (the annual giving program). In fiscal year 2000, the Foundation provided \$8.8 million for scholarships and awards, academics and institutional support, and building projects. Nearly \$1.8 million alone funded scholarships for UM students.

“New construction on campus has enhanced the learning environment for students, but not only in terms of adding classrooms to help enrich our minds. The new student recreation center will be a place for students to energize their spirits and bodies.”

STUDENT REGENT JESSICA KOBOS  
*Former UM Student Body President*



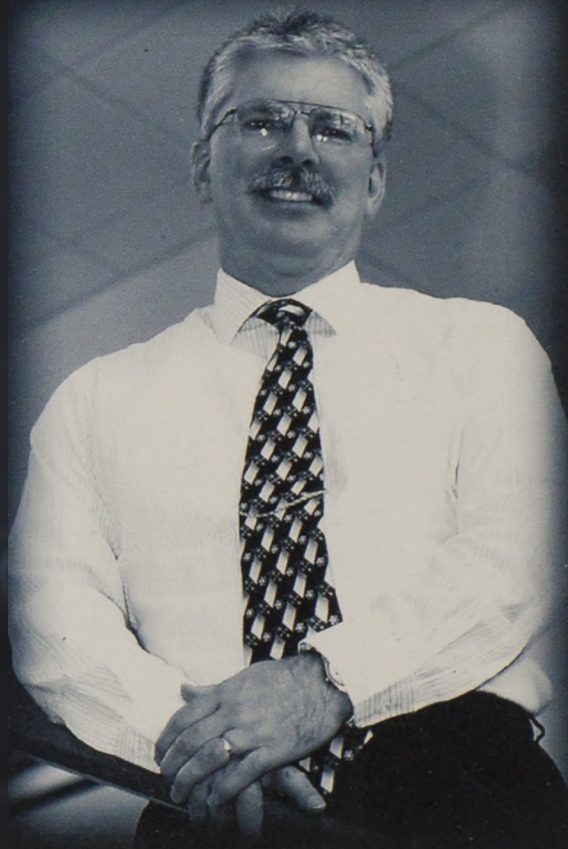


**W**ith financing almost exclusively from revenue bonds and private donations, President Dennison has led the biggest construction phase in campus history, including 14 major projects over the past decade and another in the works now. Two buildings were constructed to provide more classrooms and laboratories for students in the burgeoning business and pharmacy schools, while a third was built to house UM's Davidson Honors College. A new dormitory and family housing complex helped ease the housing burden as University enrollment continued its steady climb. Extensive remodeling of existing buildings created a one-stop shopping center for student services, state-of-the-art laboratories and conference centers, improved venues for sports and cultural events, and more efficient health services for students. With money from revenue bonds and some support from the Legislature, 100 percent of classrooms built before 1972 have been remodeled to enhance the University's learning environment.

“President Dennison has created an environment that encourages research in new and evolving technologies and has supported the transition of the University to include Internet-based resources and online learning opportunities.”

JOHN KUGLIN

*Director, Earth Observing System Education Project*





A decade-long partnership between UM researchers and NASA launched the University into the Information Age and established the institution as a premier provider of knowledge for schoolchildren and scientists worldwide. UM forestry Professor Steve Running and his associates are continuing to develop software for NASA satellites that generate images allowing scientists to better monitor Earth's land, water and atmosphere. As an offshoot of NASA's program, John Kuglin and his Earth Observing System Education Project bring educators to UM and teach them how to use satellite data in their classrooms. Kuglin also created an Internet-based program known as UMTONLINE to deliver courses to students in other parts of the country and around the world. With Dennison, Kuglin sees the virtual university as an inevitable step in the future of higher education in Montana.

"I believe that the University has systematically assembled all the components to focus attention on its strengths through image and marketing programs and initiatives."

BOB FRAZIER

*UM Executive Vice President*

*UM Marketing Committee Chair*





With a successful color change in 1995, the University permanently returned to its tradition of using maroon and silver as its school colors and introduced new sports and institutional logos as part of an ongoing campaign to provide a consistent and uniform image. The University provided informational manuals to all employees regarding the consistent usage of the University logos. The changes launched a new line of products and logo wear to promote UM's refined look. The new Grizzly image has been heralded nationally for its popularity and success in retail sales of apparel. In 1999 UM introduced Griz Gear, its own apparel line, and Griz Grub, its food product line that added beef jerky and a special UM Grizzlies Blend of coffee in fall 2000. In late 1999 the University announced its new institutional slogan "The Discovery Continues." In the year 2000, the University unveiled its first Grizzly truck, donated by Jim Falmer Trucking for use with University events and nationwide student recruiting. The 53-foot-long semitrailer sports UM's mascot on three sides.



“The renovation of the Adams Center and the Hoyt Athletic Complex has made a huge impact in our ability to recruit student athletes. Here they can compete in an incredible environment and enjoy the facilities that now are second to none.”

SHANNON CATE-SCHWEYEN  
*Assistant Coach, Lady Griz Basketball*  
*Former Lady Griz All-American*

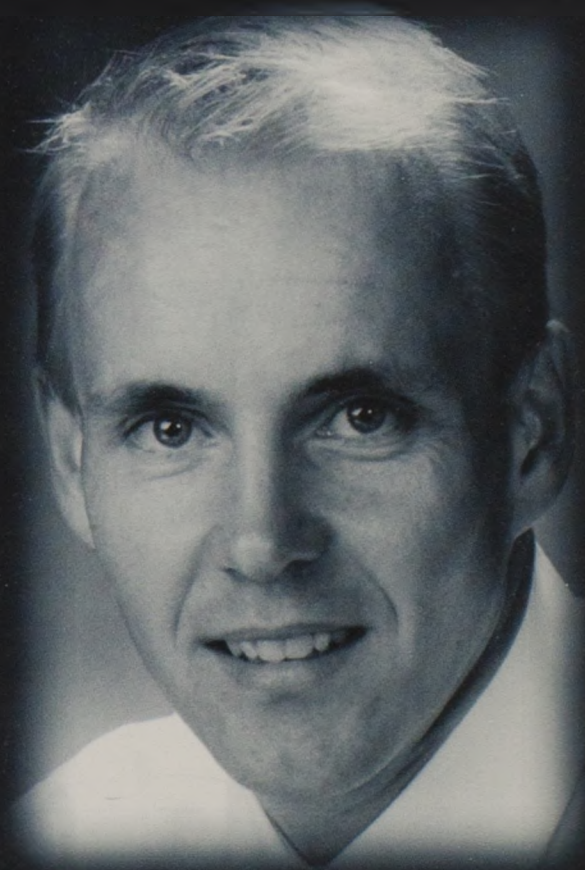


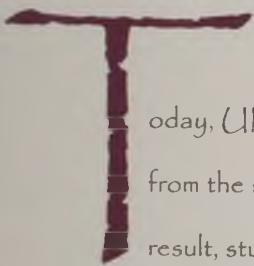


Construction of end-zone seating in Washington-Grizzly Stadium added 7,000 seats in 1995, which proved to be incredibly insightful. An NCAA Division I-AA championship that year took UM's football program to new heights, and the consistently top-ranked Montana Grizzlies have since played to packed houses of more than 18,000 fans in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The modern stadium and winning football program have combined to help UM recruit top players and coaches. The Grizzlies hold a Division I-AA record with eight consecutive football playoff appearances. The national attention UM receives in athletics has sent the University's star rising nationally. In fall 1999, a \$14.7 million renovation of the Adams Center provided an updated venue for Griz sports fans to watch basketball and volleyball. The centerpiece of the remodeling was a facelift for the main basketball arena, which now includes 5,500 cushioned seats upholstered in UM maroon.

“You’ll never hear President Dennison take credit for the remarkable change that’s taking place, but it wouldn’t have happened without his support and willingness to listen to staff and involve them in the governance of the University.”

GORDY PACE  
*Former Staff Senate President*





Today, UM serves 3,000 more students than it did 10 years ago, with fewer resources from the state. Student tuition rates have increased faster than inflation, and as a result, students expect and deserve more and better services. The situation has affected staff employees and called for action by President Dennison. He has responded by arguing for higher staff pay increases, implementing a staff sabbatical program and endorsing the Quality of Worklife initiative to improve working conditions for all UM employees. He worked actively with staff members to boost compensation, after years without pay increases. The collaboration helped the Missoula campus create the prototype that led to the development of the Montana Achievement Project, a progressive personnel system being piloted on campuses statewide. The new system values development of employee expertise and rewards teamwork, resourcefulness, communication, leadership and service. In 2000 the Dennisons contributed personal funds to establish new awards that recognize UM employees for outstanding service to the University.

“Western on its own could not have made the renovations of campus buildings that were needed. President Dennison and the affiliated campuses presented a joint strength that made this possible. The president felt a real sense of responsibility for our campus.”

SHEILA STEARNS

*President, Wayne State College (Nebraska)*

*Former Chancellor, Western Montana College of UM*





**F**or 100 years, the Montana University System functioned as individual units, alternately cooperating and competing with each other. That structure was not designed for the demands higher education now faces. In anticipating the educational needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Board of Regents in 1994 assigned the two largest Montana universities responsibility for the units within their geographic regions. Overseen by President Dennison, the four campuses of The University of Montana – located in Missoula, Butte, Dillon and Helena – now collaborate while preserving appropriate individual autonomy. The campuses run more efficiently and cost-effectively by sharing resources and databases and collaborating on research. The affiliation resulted in much-needed new construction and renovation of outdated facilities at UM's sister campuses. Consolidation of campuses also made it easier for students to transfer from two-year degree programs to four-year programs.

“President Dennison has provided UM with consistent, effective leadership during an immensely challenging era for higher education, not only in Montana but throughout the country.”

MARC RACICOT  
*Former Governor of Montana*





Getting an education costs a lot more than it used to. Funding has been a major hurdle for the Montana University System, especially during the past decade. Costs have rapidly outpaced state budgetary appropriations for higher education over the past two decades and shifted the financial burden to students and their families. During the 1990s, the state altered the way it funds higher education, forcing tuition increases. Early in the decade, state funds accounted for about 70 percent of the support for UM's educational programs and about 45 percent of the total budget. Today state funds contribute 20 percent of UM's total operating budget.

### Appropriations of State Tax Funds for Higher Education Per \$1,000 Personal Income





“By 2005, I envision the University as even more student-centered in that we take seriously our commitment to provide an education second to none.”

GEORGE M. DENNISON  
*President*

In the life of a great institution, 10 years hardly amounts to a moment. But for an individual, 10 years marks a significant period. I returned to The University of Montana as president in August 1990. Since then, I have found innumerable reasons to celebrate the wonders of moving from student to president. My admiration has grown for the dedication, commitment and accomplishments of the faculty and staff who indulged my inevitable, but hopefully infrequent, mistakes and helped propel the University forward.

This report looks retrospectively and from differing perspectives at the events and developments of the '90s decade. When asked about the extent of the construction work that occurred, I typically explain that I do not have an “edifice” complex, no matter what

anyone says. The effort grew from the recognition that students, faculty and staff require adequate and appropriate facilities to realize their potential and serve the state, region, nation and world. What we have done together has made it possible for students to thrive and for faculty and staff to achieve some truly remarkable accomplishments.

What of the future? Have we achieved all that we can anticipate? Do we need now simply to hold steady? No! We must strive to ensure the continued development of the University as a research-oriented, doctorate-granting institution that offers a quality undergraduate education. Realizing that objective will demand creativity and ingenuity in identifying resources to support such an institution.

By 2005, I envision the University as even more student-centered in that we take seriously our commitment to provide an education second to none. During the next few years, we will identify the skills, insights, understandings, attitudes, competencies and knowledge that educated people of the 21st century will need. And we will develop the means to help our graduates prepare for life in an increasingly technological and interdependent global society. Building on the foundations we have established, we can educate students for meaningful and rewarding lives by engaging them as citizens while they study so that they can develop those “habits of the heart” that make good citizens.





I have great confidence in that. And if we succeed, our communities will flourish.

In the next five years, the University will have developed the facilities and infrastructure to sustain a funded research program in excess of \$55 million annually and the awarding of more than 50 doctorates per year. The faculty researchers and their graduate student assistants will maintain a careful balance between basic and applied research so that the University always has something to apply. The graduate students will exceed 3,000 of the total student population of 13,000, while American Indians and international students together will account for some 2,000 of the total. The program inventory will have changed in response to opportunities and needs, with a decided shift toward the environmental and health sciences. At the same time, an emphasis upon regional and human concerns will provide the foundation for a flowering of the arts, humanities and social sciences. Finally, I believe we also will see a coming-together of the K-12 sector with higher education so that students of all ages – from 5 to 90 – will perceive the much heralded, but seldom if ever realized, “seamless educational web.”

Ambitious as it sounds, I believe that vision attainable, based upon our accomplishments to date. However, we will need resources to make it happen. In part, they must come from the state, since the University takes great pride in its status as a public institution committed to the public good. The leverage from increased state funding provides assurance of success in attracting funds from external agencies and the private sector to support the vital work of the faculty, staff and students. It makes eminent sense for the state to initiate such an investment in order to realize the educational, economic, intellectual, social and cultural benefits that great universities provide. In the past, I often have commented that we cannot have great societies without great public universities, but that we cannot have great universities without significant support from the private sector. We now have come to understand the reverse of that proposition, that we cannot have significant private support without appropriate investment by the public.

The University in partnership with its constituencies – students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends – can make the difference for Montana as it moves into the 21st century. I look forward to working closely with you as we pursue that worthy goal.



The University of  
**Montana**