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Donna McCrea (DM): Today is March 8th of 2018. This is Donna McCrea, Head of Archives and Special Collections at the University of Montana and today I'm interviewing the former University of Montana provost and former president Royce Engstrom. Royce, thank you for coming back and sitting for another interview. We have a previous interview that was recorded in August of 2017 that gives some background about you and at this interview I wanted to move more into your time as provost and as president. And so I will just begin with the question for what was your vision for UM when you became our president. Or if you'd like to talk more about your time as provost, certainly feel free to do that as well.

Royce C. Engstrom (RE): Well thanks, Donna, for inviting me back and look forward to the conversation today. So some of what we'll talk about today will incorporate both time as provost and president and so there will be some blending of that. But to kind of address your specific question about division as president—so when we came in as president we worked that first six months to develop really a strategic plan—a vision for the University of Montana. Then we ended up calling that “UM 2020: Building a University for the Global Century.” And so the idea behind that vision was to make the University of Montana kind of achieve its rightful place as one of the nation's flagship institutions. On the small side to be sure because of where we live—but still one of the 50 flagship institutions—“the University of” —and fill in the state. And so that meant really focusing on building our academic programs to be among some of the best in the country. Our research portfolio, our outreach and service portfolio, you know, those standard directions of any major flagship institution making sure that the University of Montana was viewed in a leadership role in those areas. Again recognizing that we would not compete on a quantitative scale with the big institutions—but certainly on a quality sense and in an intensity sense. So if you go back and look at that strategic plan—UM 2020—it had five basic areas behind it, and that's all in the record and so on. So I'd like to just talk through some of the specific focus areas that we identified in that plan and some of the specific projects that played out during the last six or seven years under sort of the umbrella of UM 2020.

DM: Great.

RE: So one of the key focus areas of that plan was to build stellar academics. And so again this is a project that I want to talk about that sort of overlaps the area of provost and president in my time, and that's the Global Leadership Initiative. And when we started to talk about that last August, but I felt at that time and still again—still feel at this time that the University of Montana is the ideal environment in which to design an academic thrust that really prepares students for the modern world—for today's world that they're going to enter. And so we began in those provost years by getting a group of faculty members together and actually challenging

them with, “If you could design any academic program that bridges disciplines and that prepares students for today’s world—what would it look like?” And so over the period of two to three years really what ultimately emerged as the Global Leadership Initiative came out of those faculty discussions. And those faculty groups evolved over those three year periods by culminating in a group that went to a summer workshop of the organization AAC&U—the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

So that summer a group of faculty members and administrators spent a couple of weeks putting together then what became the Global Leadership Initiative, and it had really four tenets behind it. One was to insure that our students receive the context in which their education is delivered, and we talked about—started that discussion last August. The idea that our students as freshmen would be challenged with the big questions before us as a society and the big opportunities before us as a society so that then they could start making better decisions about what major they wanted to pursue, how would that major fit into these bigger issues before them, and also help them develop a more coherent General Education Program as well—getting away from the notion that the Gen Ed Program tends to be a bit of a random selection of courses and so on. This group wanted that General Education Program also to provide context for the students. So that gave rise to the first year of the GLI—the context year of seminars on the big questions and asking those students then to design a more definitive role on designing their education. The second tenet of that GLI was leadership development and so the second year has developed over time to be a Leadership Development Program for those students, and that has evolved over the last several years. But the focus has been how do we instill in these students leadership characteristics and even more importantly the notion of them seeing themselves as leaders? And kind of picking up that torch to become a leader at whatever level is appropriate for them upon graduation. The third basic tenet and what became the third year of the program then was an experience beyond the classroom. And so those students study abroad or they get involved in research. They get involved in an internship—but something that can continue their education beyond the boundaries of the University of Montana. And then finally the fourth pillar of the GLI is the senior capstone that is not just an individual project but a team-based project where the students have to come up with a complex problem that requires multidisciplinary thinking to solve that problem. And I’ve been so impressed with the first several years of those projects. I’ve tried to attend those presentations each year, and they are getting increasingly sophisticated [laughs] as the years go on, and the students are biting off meatier problems, and they’re actually I think bringing, you know, their expertise—their experience to bear in interesting ways. So the popularity of that program I think says something about its importance. So currently I believe they’re accepting 175 students—freshmen—into the program, and there has been a waiting list every year. And boy—wouldn’t I love to see the demand be so great that essentially the GLI becomes the de facto curriculum at the University of Montana. I don’t know if that [laughs] will ever happen but the students I think are responding very well to it. A cadre of faculty members seems to be responding very well to it also. We’ve had great leadership for the program, and the people involved in it are so dedicated to that idea. So I’m very proud of the Global Leadership Initiative as an innovative academic program that has developed now over several years, and I believe is

one of the best programs of its type in the nation. So that's an accomplishment that I will carry with me for a long time to come. The fact that the Franke Family has endowed that program also I think speaks to its importance. Bill Franke is an outstanding business person and very knowledgeable about geopolitics if you will. Does business literally around the world, and has a passion for helping young people integrate into that global business sector. So the fact that somebody like Bill Franke would recognize the importance of the GLI and endow it—endow the program the way he and his family did is really gratifying for me to see.

Also in the area of academics I think there are a couple of other programs that I want to speak to. So the University of Montana became the first institution in the nation to put in place a formal academic program around climate change studies, and that began again in the years that I was provost but continuing on into the presidential years. We called for faculty members who were interested to come together and design a program around climate change studies. So they did that in record time. In the course of one year they put together a program that is a minor basically—not a major but a minor—and calls for students to again get an interdisciplinary view of this—of probably the challenge of our lifetime—global climate change. And also put that knowledge to work again in a project toward the end of the program. So we have terrific people who have been behind that program and again I think it fits so well with who the University of Montana is.

DM: Right.

RE: Another example of a more recent program that I think has responded to the times is in the Business School at the master's level. They put in place a program in data analytics and again they came together a group of faculty members and said, "We think that this is a program indicative of where the world is today. We want to put in place this data analytics master's program." And we—Larry Gianchetta, the dean of the Business School at the time, myself, and the provost—Perry Brown—all supported that effort—encouraged that effort. And so the business faculty put that in place in record time again—got the whole thing designed and approved by the Board of Regents within a year. And so now it's up and running, and I think serving students really well. Yet another example of I think a very forward thinking graduate program is the Ph.D. in Systems Ecology that came to be in effect in these last few years. And again a group of faculty members in that area recognized that the traditional graduate work in biology, forestry, and so on excellent as it was didn't quite capture the complexity of today's view of ecology. And so they designed and again we got passed a Ph.D. in Systems Ecology which is now populated with students, and I think giving those students a pretty distinctive kind of an education. That particular one was built around just this stellar faculty that we have here at the University of Montana in that broad area of ecology, conservation, so on—really the number one faculty in the country in terms of productivity in that area. So those are some academic developments that have occurred over these past several years that I think illustrate first and foremost the ingenuity of the faculty and their dedication to providing the best education possible. And I think it illustrates their desire, their ability to think creatively, to think broadly, and not be restricted to, you know, just traditional disciplinary boundaries.

DM: Right. You were mentioning the various points—key points of UM 2020—and one of those was around research. Was there anything that you wanted to specifically call out or talk about in the area of research?

RE: I do. The University of Montana has always been a place of research activity, and some stellar researchers have been here, you know, over the last many, many decades. But like many of the smaller state universities in the country it has been a little bit more of a recent development that research has become sort of an integral part—an expected part—of both the mission of the institution and the daily activity of the faculty. That development I would say has occurred over the last three decades or so. So you can see the University of Montana becoming more and more productive in research and creative scholarship over those decades. But in sort of the recent time our research portfolio had I would say plateaued in the, you know, as we got into the 2000s. And one of the key metrics of research that every institution uses is the amount of federal funding—the amount of research dollars—that come in play. It's not a perfect measure by any means but certainly one that is pervasive in higher education. And our again—our portfolio of funded research had sort of plateaued at a respectable level but not at a level that I think reflected our potential. So I do think that over the last six and seven years or so we've been able to make some pretty significant advances in that area. So one indicator is that we have set a new research record every year for the past number of years now due to the hard work of the faculty and the folks that are involved in our research administration. So that trajectory has been a very good one for the University of Montana over those years.

There are a few examples of research that I'd like to speak to. One of the shining stars of this university has been the Flathead Lake Biological Station. It's just almost inconceivable to think about the foresight that the founding people had to put the Flathead Lake Biological Station in place 100 plus years ago now. And certainly George Dennison's recent book on Morton Elrod, you know, tells that story really well. But we about three years ago—three or four years ago—we came to a point where the longtime director of the station, Jack Stanford, had decided to retire. He had been the director for many, many years and had done an outstanding job of raising the visibility of the station. So we put together a search committee, and the search committee came to me as president and said, "Before we embark upon this search let's bring in some of the leading national experts on biological stations and get their take on things." And so we did. We brought in a good team of people who had run stations themselves and so on, and their message was loud and clear. They said to me, "You have one of the best—maybe the best—biological station in the country right here at the University of Montana. So don't mess it up, you know, go find the absolute best people you can to run this station." And so we really kind of pulled out all the stops and in the end recruited Jim Elser, our new director, from Arizona State University—one of the world's leading ecologists, and that's not an exaggeration by any means. In this last year I've had the pleasure of doing a little more scientific reading, and I've been amazed at how many times his name has popped up in articles that I've been reading. So Jim has come in and really hit the ground running—has hired fantastic faculty members who themselves are national and international leaders in this area. And so I think the Biological

Station is on this amazing trajectory to strengthen its role as the leading station in the country and perhaps that means in the world. And what I like about the direction of the station is not only are they charging away at absolutely state of the art research, but they have very effectively integrated education into that. The summer program enrollment up there is doing wonderful things. They have done an outstanding job of talking to the public and so it's kind of running on all cylinders right now, and I think that that's just one example of one of our research efforts here at UM that is just terrific. Just yesterday I had the opportunity to listen to Rebecca Bendick of our Geosciences Program talk about earthquakes, and she and her colleagues—her students and so on—have just released recently a new way of predicting earthquake activity. And I was just blown away by the sophistication of her data and her modeling and so on. So another example of where UM research I think has risen now to both a reputational and a level of importance that is truly national and international, and it certainly doesn't stop with the sciences at all. Again our folks on the creative side are just doing outstanding work—again the creative writing program under Magpie Earling's direction is doing very, very well in attracting students from around the nation. I heard a story the other day of a student—an undergraduate here—going to the West Coast to one of the prestigious schools on the West Coast to do creative writing. She sat down with an advisor out there, and the advisor said, “What are you doing here? You should be at the University of Montana which is one of the best creative writing programs around.” And I think she did transfer back is the story I heard so that's good news. So that research and creative scholarship area is a whole area again that I think everybody at the University of Montana has much to be proud of.

DM: So you've mentioned the GLI, your goals for innovative practices there—your goals for improving, increasing, expanding research. Can you just touch briefly on what you would consider to be your leadership style? How do you motivate people to reach the goals that you're setting or to put in place ideas that you've had where you think the university needs to go or could go?

RE: Yeah. Well I think I have some good things to say about that and some not so good things to say about my leadership style, you know, having had the opportunity for now some reflection this past year. Sort of on the positive side I think that what has worked well for me and for others and for the university is bringing together—identifying and bringing together the people who are excited about a particular area. So that worked with that global climate change idea to identify the people—the 15 or 20 or so people—that expressed interest there—bring them together and give them as much support as possible. Not just financial support but almost more importantly just sort of that support of letting them know that the president is behind their idea. Worked very well there—it worked very well in the case of the GLI, and I think it's worked well in a number of other cases also. So part of my leadership style is trying to identify people who are excited, bringing them together, and putting before them a challenging agenda—a challenging question—and letting them run with it. And that has worked well in many, many cases. I think where—to be honest where my leadership style needs some improvement I guess I would say is I think I have—I haven't been as stern and dedicated to holding people's feet to the fire as I need to be. So I can look back at a few areas where in retrospect, you know, I

needed to be able to pound my fist on the table a little bit more and say directly to those people, “This is your responsibility. I’m going to hold you accountable and if things don’t work then we’re moving on.” So I would like to have been sort of more of a hard nose at times and so that’s, you know, something that I think about in terms of my own personal development.

DM: Would you talk a little bit about Missoula College and maybe just dive a little bit into the history of that for our audience who might be 50 years in the future and your role in that development, the new building, but also the sort of the concept around Missoula College?

RE: Yeah. So the whole idea of Missoula College is another area that as a university I think we can be very proud of what we have done there together. So long before my time at the University of Montana the system—the Montana University System—made the decision to incorporate two-year education into the system. And that is a little bit unusual—not unique—but it’s certainly unusual around the country that two-year education is an integral part of the regular university system. So here at the University of Montana by the time I got here we had had for some 10 or 12 years at least what was then called the College of Technology as an integral part of the University of Montana. And the College of Technology was the unit designed to do essentially two-year education both in academic areas but also in the trades. So really more or less a community college type setting. And so at the time partly because of the economic conditions and so on in those early years the enrollment at Missoula College was booming but the conditions for those students and faculty were really substandard. I mean they were in essentially what was an old high school kind of harkening back to the vo-tech days, and I think those physical facilities were substandard. But that also reflected the esteem or lack thereof in which we held two-year education and the people involved in it. And so when I came here as provost I really hadn’t had much experience with two-year education, and I said that in my first meeting with the faculty members at what was then the College of Technology. And I said, “You’re gonna have to help me learn about this.” And they did. They did a fantastic job of educating me as provost and continuing that into my presidential years. So one of the ideas that I felt we captured or needed to capture in that UM 2020 idea, you know, in education for the global century was to lift up two-year education as a respectable way of students pursuing an educational path in higher education. But also a mechanism to help our community—our communities—our state—develop in both an economic and intellectual sense. So I identified the Missoula College facility as a major need for this university, and that wasn’t a completely new idea. I mean the idea had been on the books. We just hadn’t made really any progress on it. And so in the first few years as president that became a high priority item—was to get funding from the legislature to build a new facility for the Missoula College. So we embarked upon that. We were not successful in the first legislative session. They ended up not funding really any infrastructure, and I think it was our second legislative session in my years as president where we actually got \$29 million to build a new Missoula College facility. So with the money at that point in hand then we embarked upon—I mean these overlap—but anyway embarked upon the planning for the new Missoula College. The university’s long-term master plan called for the Missoula College to be built on what we called the South Campus—better known as the University Golf Course. And when this Missoula College started to become a

reality I would say that the community came a little bit unglued [laughs] about putting the Missoula College on that location. Even though, you know, we had had for many years the master plan called for the development of South Campus as the expansion area for the university. And we hadn't received very much pushback up until that time, but I think it just was too abstract of an idea until—okay—this money looks like it's coming. So we had some great conversation harkening back to my earlier comments about Missoula being an outspoken place. I think that issue captured [laughs] that notion very effectively. Many, many people came forward and objected to, you know, taking what they viewed as that open space and converting it into more campus buildings. We were none the less determined to move forward but during that time probably encouraged by some of that community pushback we did start—we did take a good objective look and say, "Well is there a better place for the Missoula College?" And I don't remember exactly how this all came together, you know, the moment of sort of enlightenment, but we did identify the tract of land that we already owned across the river next to MonTECH—our business incubator center—as at least a potential site for Missoula College. And the more I thought about that the more I liked that location for several reasons. One—it's adjacent to downtown Missoula, and I think that sent a strong message that education and perhaps two-year education in particular is tied—should be tied—to sort of the business sector and the economy of not just Missoula but our state, our nation, you know, in a more general sense. And so locating the Missoula College there by the business community I think sent a good strong positive message about the role of two-year education. Secondly it's a very visible place. You can't come into Missoula now without seeing that beautiful building—the University of Montana and Missoula College right there. So I think it brings a visibility to higher education in Missoula that we would not have gotten by tucking it back in this really beautiful but pretty isolated setting of the South Campus. The only people who would see the Missoula College there are the ones who are going specifically to it. Whereas at this location it's right there. And then thirdly it did accomplish what we said was a high priority—what I said was a high priority—and that is the integration of Missoula College with the university. And so prior to that it had been sort of isolated over by—well not isolated but situated by Sentinel High School, and I think sent a message that it was more associated with high school than it was higher education. Many people in the community wanted it to be at some other remote location—maybe Fort Missoula where part of it resides now, and I was determined that it would be more integrated physically with the campus. So in the end that location checked out, you know, in terms of all of our due diligence, and we went forward and built the Missoula College building there—brought in a good architect to make sure that the building turned out to be a beautiful building and one that sent a message about the importance of higher education—the importance of two-year education. Since its opening I think it is working out really, really well. You know, the view out the back of that building is spectacular sitting right out over the river. Now we need to clean up the facilities area on the other [laughs] side of the river that nobody saw before. So but that will get done as well. So I think the location has turned out really well. The feedback from the community has been quite positive I think. And so there are a couple of interesting stories about that building that I'd like to get on the record. So one of them involves the culinary program. When we first designed the building we didn't think we had the money to build a facility that would incorporate all of the programs that were in the old building. And in

fact we had kind of gone down a planning path that said, “Well we’ll leave the culinary program where it is—try to, you know, do some remodeling or whatever and move everything else but culinary program over.” And that’s really the way we presented it to the legislature. As we got into the design of the building and looked at cost measures and things like that it became clear that we could in fact bring culinary over into the new building. Well now culinary is sort of the symbol of that great new building. The culinary program has this fantastic state-of-the-art kitchen—a restaurant that’s open every day for lunch. They have a patio that looks out over the river so I’m sure this summer that will be a busy place. So in a way the culinary program is one of the shining stars of that new facility and, you know, for a while we weren’t even gonna have the culinary program in there. So I’m very happy that that turned out the way it did. A second [laughs] story about the building is we had started the design and the placement of the building, and Eric Greene—one of our biologists—came into see me and said, “Mr. President, by the way do you know that there’s an osprey nest right on that where about where you want to put that new building? And not only an osprey nest but an osprey nest that is viewed by a million plus people a year via camera that’s focused on that nest?” And so I said, “No I didn’t realize that.” And fortunately Eric said, “Osprey are pretty tolerant birds. So all we need to do is move the building to the other end of the lot, and I think things will be okay.” Well long story short the osprey seemed to be very happy with things and now because of the building we actually have more people aware of and focused on that osprey nest around the world. So it turned out to be a great story in the end.

DM: As you know the enrollment was really strong when conversations first started about a new building. The Missoula College—College of Technology—was really overflowing and bursting its seams. Now enrollment has declined for two-year colleges and for Missoula College. What would you say to the fact that there is this new building? Do you still in 2018 feel like the investment was worth it given current enrollment?

RE: I absolutely do. Enrollment is one important aspect of the university’s work—no question about it. Quality of education and quality of the educational experience is even more important in my opinion and the experience that those students and faculty had in the old facility was certainly not a college level experience. I mean they were in trailers that the carpentry program built themselves. And so I absolutely think that the educational experience those students are getting is now a state-of-the-art experience, and that is as important as anything. Enrollment in two-year education does cycle with the economy and fortunately for the economy it’s in pretty good shape right now. Unemployment in the Missoula area is about as low as it can get. And so that means that two-year education enrollment wise suffers a little bit. And, you know, so it’s going to cycle and what we’ve seen at Missoula College isn’t all that different from national trends in terms of two-year education—certainly trends in the rest of the state of Montana. So, you know, there are still—I don’t know today’s exact enrollment over there, but I mean there are still 1,800 or 2,000 students that are benefitting from the educational opportunities at the Missoula College. And it should play a role of buffering in a way and providing people with opportunities when jobs get scarce. I think in those early years of the recession I think we have a great example of the role that Missoula College could play. Smurfit-Stone—one of the big

industries in Missoula—shut down and several hundred people were out of a job sort of overnight, and it turns out that quite a few of those people enrolled in something at Missoula College. Some of them it was—for some of them it was a one semester course in welding. For some of them it was an entire program—and a number of them came to the main campus as well. So that's one of the important roles of higher education and probably two-year education more so to provide an alternative path for people to retool and move toward a different kind of job than what they might have had before. So I think that's exactly what Missoula College should do and so therefore it is going to fluctuate I think relative to other aspects of higher education.

DM: Thank you. Would you be willing to talk a little bit about fundraising? That kind of plays into Missoula College—it plays into a lot of other things that happened on this campus and if I remember correctly at one point the Foundation raised the most money that it's every raised during your term here.

RE: Yeah. Actually fundraising is a [laughs] really good story for the University of Montana for these past several years. When I got here as provost we were just finishing up that Capital Campaign and over a period of six or seven years—I don't remember exactly—that Capital Campaign had been successful. They raised \$135 million which at the time was pretty good money. But in the years—the several years following that Capital Campaign—sort of like the research portfolio—we had plateaued, and we were kind of going along raising about \$20 million a year for several years there. Again very significant, important money but not at a level that I felt this university was capable of. And so we really launched then an effort to significantly increase that. And so last year they raised \$85 million—so a fourfold increase over those previous years and once we got started I think every year was a little bit better than the year before. We had \$350+ million years in a row and then now this \$85 million year that the most recent one reported. And so I'm very pleased to see that we have taken fundraising for the university to quite a new level, and I think there are several reasons for that. One—the deans of the various colleges and schools are in some ways sort of the principal leaders in fundraising activity, and that's something that has changed in the role of a dean over this past decade or so. Deans, you know, used to be the principal academic officers of their unit, and they still are. But in addition now deans have the responsibility to raise funds in recognition that are sort of traditional sources of funding for universities aren't enough. And to do the special things that we want to do for our students and our faculty and staff we need other kind of money and so private fundraising/philanthropy has taken on a very, very important role for every university and certainly for this one. So as the deans, you know, evolved naturally in terms of new deans coming in we I think set a different kind of standard for where they focused their activity, and fundraising was an important part of that. So I think—this is my personal opinion—I think the deans collectively in these past several years have represented among the most cohesive group of deans that we have had and among the most effective fundraisers that we have seen. And so the deans represent one cog in the wheel of improved fundraising. The foundation and its staff I think has risen to a new level of activity as well and in particular the interaction between the university administration and the foundation administration which

frankly was a little strained I think before. That has taken on a dramatically more positive constructive team tone to it and one indicator of that is the way that we set priorities for fundraising. So over the period of really a year or year and a half we had a group of people setting fundraising priorities for the university, and that was a very collaborative effort between the foundation staff and its lay—its volunteer leadership and the university administration—dean level—central administration on up. And that was a series of very intense discussions over the course of that good, strong year putting in place fundraising goals that we all agreed to work toward. So that was a second piece of the puzzle. A third piece was the very hard work on the part of many, many people—myself included—to reach out to our donor base to expand that base in terms of numbers of donors but also to intensify that base in terms of the commitment of particular donors. And so not only is the dollar amount that is being raised much larger, but the donor base is much larger than it was too. So we have many, many more people who are now giving to the university at some level. So you can look at, you know, some of the names that have been with the university for such a long time and clearly the Washington name comes to the fore—the Davidsons come to the fore in terms of the Honors College and so on and so many others. I don't want to start naming people cause you inevitably will leave people out, but I just want to say kind of on record how much I appreciate the determination—the dedication of that donor base to making the University of Montana an even better place. So that's an area that I think we have come together very well in terms of improving the philanthropy of the university. Now unfortunately we can't raise money for everything and so there are some activities that just, you know, aren't particularly strong targets for philanthropy and those tend to be some of the more routine maintenance sides of the university. Donors aren't interested as much in donating to those kinds of things, and that's unfortunate. But, you know, we just have to look at the whole picture and say, "Okay here are the resources we have available for this university. Some of those are enhanced by philanthropy—some aren't." I do want to tell the story of the Frankes during this conversation because—and I mentioned them earlier in the context of the GLI—but they have made the largest single donation to this university in its history. Not necessarily the cumulative but the largest single donation of \$24 million, and that's playing out as we speak. And their dedication has been focused on the GLI which we talked about earlier but also on the College of Forestry and Conservation which is now the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. And this is in my mind an amazing story about philanthropy because the Frankes had no direct connection to the University of Montana. They own a second home up in Big Fork, and Bill Franke—the patriarch of the family—would once a year bring his business associates there for a retreat in this beautiful place. And as part of that retreat he wanted a speaker. And so really through Kate Jennings and the foundation we started arranging on an annual basis a speaker to go up to this retreat. Well it wasn't very long before, Kate really is the person that got this started—really approached Bill Franke about a donation. And so over the period of really six years we—and I mean the deans of the Forestry College, the foundation, myself—worked with the Franke Family to help them become intimately attached to the University of Montana and see it as a place of opportunity—see it as a place that they wanted to invest in. So it is an amazing story that in the end they came forward with a \$24 million donation to a university none of them had attended, but I think they have grown very, very close to this university. And they are just one

of the most remarkable families I've ever met. So it's a great story, and it just shows you the power of teamwork and the power of dedication on the part of people with resources and how that can help change a university for the better. So it's a story—it's probably I will view it as one of the highlights of my entire career in higher education—the opportunity to work with the Frankes and bring them to the level of trust and so on that resulted in that gift.

DM: You've mentioned a couple times now the teamwork of the deans, and I'm wondering if you would want—and I'm assuming that you also mean cabinet and other individuals. Would you care to take any time to elaborate on that? Or how you—you mentioned a little bit about your leadership style—but how you build a team or how you cultivate an effective team whether it's a team working, you know, a foundation team or a team of deans working towards a specific goal?

RE: Yeah, sure. I'll be happy to comment on that, recognizing that sort of the ideal behind that and the reality aren't always exactly the same thing. But has always been my approach to try to bring those team members together and help them see that they are the leadership of the institution and that they are the people who have the opportunity to move things forward. And so I've always tried to be as inclusive as possible in that regard and operating as much as a set of peers interested in the same long-term goal as opposed to, you know, sort of me being the boss saying, "Here go do this." That—it isn't my style. I don't believe it works well. So it's a little bit intangible in my mind but sort of the level of respect that I tried to show to all of the academic officers—all of the central administrative officers—and so on, and it's not to be honest that different than what I feel you need to do in a classroom. Try to give those students the notion that they are respected, and that they are contributors as much as they are students. So I think that's always been my philosophy is to be as collaborative as possible and again most of the time that works. I think it works when the people in those positions are self-starters, and they are receptive to being challenged like that and receptive to being part of the team. It doesn't work so well if one of those individuals—one or more of those individuals—isn't a self-starter or needs more direction. And so without going into names, and I'm sure every president would say this at one point or another there, you know, were a couple of instances within that whole administrative group where I probably should have made decisions earlier in terms of finding somebody more suited for that kind of leadership style and for the opportunities and challenges of the university at the moment.

DM: This is probably a good then time to talk about some of those opportunities and challenges. Certainly there's the enrollment challenge that we're currently continuing to face that started during your term—

RE: Yes.

DM: —here. The decline in enrollment has led to a pretty radical decline in the funding for the university, and that's had campus wide impacts. And so kind of in your own way would you please talk about those issues and what you feel your role might have been or whether in

retrospect there's anything that you think could have or should have been done differently—or if this is just a fact of the times?

RE: Yeah. Well some of both actually. And so let me start by giving you my take on the factors that have challenged our enrollment—some of which are external factors that to a certain extent may have been beyond our control. But certainly some of which were internal factors and were in our control. So I think there were several things at play that contributed to our enrollment challenge here in these recent years, and I've talked about these in various public forums and so on. And so let me list them off and I want to make sure that I do this in a way that isn't taken to be excuses, but I do want to identify the factors that were at play. So one factor at play is and has been the declining population of college going students in the state of Montana. And that's factual information that you can see over a period of these last six/eight years—maybe a little longer even—a decline in the number—a significant decline in the number of high school graduates in the state of Montana. And so that has presented a challenge that has been felt systemwide—not just at the University of Montana. So that's one factor that was at play. A second factor at play was or has been the economy and sort of the aftermath of the economy, and I think that has played out in a couple of different ways. One—at the height of the recession kind of going back to our conversation about Missoula College—because of the scarcity of jobs and things like that that did drive people to higher education—and so we probably had a bit of an inflation in enrollment in those years that was maybe a bit of an artifact of the economy. And then when the economy began to improve some of those students who were in college or might have come to college got jobs instead. So we had a boom in enrollment that I think was the result of the bad economy and then sort of a downturn in enrollment as a result of the improving economy. So that was a factor and a significant factor as well.

A second aspect of the economy played out here in Montana as a microcosm of what was playing out across the country, and I think was amplified here in Montana. And that was sort of this notion of higher education being focused on a job and so a bit of a corollary of that that was playing out nationwide still is playing out was sort of this very shortsighted notion that the liberal arts don't lead to jobs. And so you see nationwide the liberal arts being challenged and that's played out in enrollment in some sense, and it certainly has played out in choice of major and other senses and so on. So the University of Montana really regardless of what we might say has the brand as the liberal arts university in the state of Montana, and that is a brand of which we should be very proud. It has served this university extremely well. It has served the graduates of this university extremely well. But in recent years it has not worked to our [laughs] enrollment advantage, and I think that in sort of the choice of institutions that students have seen—or that had before them in these last several years in the wake of the economy—they don't—they have not viewed the University of Montana as sort of the jobs institution. Montana State with its emphasis on engineering, and that has been the big growth area over there so in sort of that environment in which we found ourselves the last several years. Students have tended to migrate in the direction of the institution that I think has signaled more about jobs than the University of Montana has. So that has been at play and again a significant factor. No

one of these factors is the dominant factor, but they all have contributed I think. So the economy has played a role.

The third factor that clearly played a role was our issues around sexual assault. And so we had some serious issues around sexual assault that came—that surfaced sort of in that first year that I was president. And we in hindsight can see those issues surfacing all around the nation. Our issues were serious and the timing of our issues was a serious issue coming on the heels of the Penn State scandal. So our first issues around sexual assault surfaced a matter of months after sort of the Penn State issue. And so I think not downplaying the seriousness of our issues at all—I don't want to do that—but I do think that sort of the timing amplified the seriousness—amplified the situation here at the University of Montana in sort of a public sense. And I think you saw that play out in terms of the coverage in the local press, the coverage in the national press, and certainly in the writing of the book by Jon Krakauer. I'm not sure that any other institution in the country had quite that same level of intensity focused on it to the point where a book was written about Missoula and so on—and certainly that hurt our enrollment. I'm not saying that the book didn't need to be written. Again the—and I want to come back to the topic of sexual assault and explore in a little bit more detail, but the book certainly did present a challenge for us in enrollment. Okay then a fourth aspect of our enrollment challenge was our own approach, and this is where I certainly take on responsibility. I think that we had a recruiting/enrollment/management sector that was working [laughs] pretty well in the what we'll call “the easy times.” But that frankly hadn't kept up with state-of-the-art recruiting, state-of-the-art enrollment management efforts. And so it wasn't up to the task of meeting these other areas of challenge. So and this is an area that, you know, in retrospect I certainly wish I would have identified that earlier and taken more decisive action earlier. Not that we wouldn't have continued to be challenged by those other things but, you know, perhaps not to the extent that it played out.

DM: Right. Would you like to—I mean thinking again that your audience is 5 years, 20 years, 50 years in the future—would you want to elaborate on anything that you've just said a little bit further for that audience to better understand?

RE: Well, yeah. I'm not gonna elaborate in terms of individuals or anything like that by name or by position, but I will just say that our recruiting/enrollment/management apparatus needed to be upgraded. We needed to invest more heavily in it. We needed to invest in the right areas, and I should have been asking harder questions of our enrollment management people along the way. And again going back to sort of my earlier comments about holding people's feet to the fire, you know, this is an area that I should have done a better job in that regard. So just the entire apparatus—the entire structure—needed to be resourced better in terms of dollars, in terms of people, in terms of expected outcomes, and in terms of accountability.

DM: Are there other areas on campus where looking back you feel that if you had resourced them better or invested—even in really difficult times—if you had invested more heavily in those areas that outcomes would have been different or better?

RE: Well I think that the enrollment [laughs] piece is the key piece there because that's what ultimately drives the resources that you have to invest in the other areas. And so in a time of retrenchment it makes it extremely difficult to concentrate resources in other areas. So it starts with investment in that area and then that is what allows investment in other areas. I mean I think the areas that we talked about earlier that did go well were the result of investment—if not specific dollars—investment in the people that could make things happen and make resources come in those areas. And so for the most part I think that we invested energy resources to the extent we had them and sort of emotional energy in the right areas with the exception of enrollment management.

DM: I know and I would really like for you to talk more about the Krakauer book and the sexual assault issues on campus. I also would like for you to talk about the decision to initiate layoffs on campus in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016. And kind of how that seems to have been delay—like there were some other decisions that were made about budget cuts and ultimately we wound up with layoffs. And I know in our first interview you talked about the impact of having to lay people off. And so I want to give you the opportunity to talk more about doing a layoff or that kind of layoff here on campus as well. And I'll let you take either one of those that you'd like to if you prefer to talk about the sexual assaults first or just address your decisions as things kind of got more clearly bad at the end of 2015 and early 2016.

RE: Yeah, okay. So regardless of the causes of enrollment decline we certainly found ourselves in the position of being a smaller institution than we had staffed for. So during the growth years we built the staffing of the university to a level that was commensurate with the number of students we had whether that was faculty or staff or administration. We certainly were never overstaffed in those years, but we did put our increasing resources during those growth years into staffing and whether you see that as numbers of faculty, numbers of support staff, sort of academic support staff, advising center, things like that. You know, we had ramped those up in accordance with our enrollment. As we started to drop in enrollment a couple of considerations I would say came into play. One—in those early couple of years—early two or three years of enrollment decline—we didn't really anticipate that that was going to be a continuing trend for as long as it was. And so in the first couple of years you kind of say, "All right. Let's redouble our efforts to get that enrollment back." And so see this as a short-term problem to deal with. So that was one thing. Secondly I was committed to protecting the academic side of the house. And so if you look at the adjustments we did make in those early days they tended to come on the non-academic side [laughs] quite a bit more than on the academic side. And so the number of faculty and the number of academic support staff in those early years of the enrollment decline didn't go down. And, you know, right or wrong the people listening to this recording will determine whether that was the right thing to do or not, but we were determined to protect the academic mission of the institution. And so we didn't whack away at academic personnel in particular. But there came a point where it was obvious that the enrollment decline was longer-lasting than what we all had hoped or anticipated and more severe than we hoped or anticipated. And so after a few years we found ourselves quite out of balance in terms of the

number of employees for the student body that we had at the university. And as much as we might have desired to rectify that by increasing enrollment, you know, that wasn't happening. So the alternative was then to start downsizing in terms of the employee base. And so we put into motion that downsizing and that infamous talk that I gave called for the reduction of 200 positions. Well we came close to that, but we did it in terms of 200—not entirely—but mostly vacant positions. So we did trim the budget by quite a bit, but we didn't actually end up changing the number of people employed here by an amplitude that we, you know, that we anticipated I guess. So we continue to struggle with that to this day then. And so the recent actions of Interim President Stearns and now President Bodnar are more oriented toward the actual decrease in the number of people employed at the University of Montana. And so the recent buyouts and things like that reflect the mechanisms that they have chosen to decrease that employment base. So, you know, in retrospect I can say that we took our actions with the best of intentions of trying to protect the academic side as much as we could. That worked for a little while but in the end we couldn't escape I think the notion that everything needed to be downsized or reflect the size of an institution that we are today.

DM: When you look back now with a couple of years of hindsight do you think that you missed some signals that there would continue to be a decline?

RE: Well I think yes. I think that one signal that we didn't grasp as closely as we needed to was the demographic trend in Montana residents. I think if you look back now you can see that that trend—that trajectory—had started a number of years ago but was somewhat masked by the total number of students coming to the university because of the recession and so on. So even though in those—even in those peak years of enrollment looking back now—you can see that the demographics of Montana graduates was already at play, and that that was going to come and affect us. And yeah we didn't see that as clearly as we needed to for example. I certainly did not see the kind of this notion of the liberal arts being challenged the way that they have turned out to be challenged and how strongly that notion was tied to the University of Montana. In fact when our enrollment was going up I remember some people asking me, "Well what's gonna happen after the recession?" And I said, "Well I think enrollment will be stable after the recession because people, you know, the nature of the jobs have changed and, you know, people are gonna have to have a college education now and to an extent that they hadn't before." And, you know, I think that's probably in the long-term still the case but in the short-term I think they have turned out to be a number of jobs that people could get without the college education. So, yeah. I think that I missed that to some extent, and I think also in retrospect we needed to put in place a more massive and more professional effort at recruiting than we had.

DM: Good. Let's do then turn to the 2012 and even earlier the issues that was in January of 2012 that the Department of Justice called attention to UM's problem saying that we had a problem with sexual assault here at UM. Jon Krakauer's book didn't come out until April of 2015, and there was a lot in between there that happened. And you have insight that other people don't have into this topic and this part of UM's history. So appreciate you elaborating.

RE: Yeah. Okay. So I guess there are a few general things that I want to say about that time. One—I don't think that we had any substantially different of a situation than many other schools and that our country has now seen going on. So it did hit—it took us very much by surprise as a community—as a university—to find ourselves sort of at the front of that whole thing. Not looking back—we were at the front at the time, you know, when it first happened we kind of felt all alone in that issue as an institution but certainly were not alone. But we were at the front of it and again part of that is the timing where this unfolded at the university. So that's one thing that I think is important to know about that. Secondly I want to say that I think the University of Montana handled the reality of the entire episode with a high degree of proactiveness and a high degree of integrity. The actions that we took as a university were quite aggressive actions. So basically within a matter of days of our sexual assault issue becoming known to me we hired an external investigator to look into this for us in an objective way so that we in reality would have a thorough and objective analysis of our situation. But also so that we could communicate to the public that we wanted to be as open about this as possible. So we did hire Diane Barz—a former Supreme Court Justice of Montana—to come in and do her own independent investigation. She did that and uncovered some significant issues here—a number of cases and an attitude that wasn't consistent with what our standards should be in today's world. So and then a second thing that we did within a matter of days was to go [laughs] downtown and hold a forum with our community on this topic and be as open with our community about it as we possibly could. And that was a very difficult session that we had down at the Holiday Inn. But I again—I feel it was absolutely the right thing to do to communicate as openly and candidly as we could about the issue of sexual assault and the specific problems that we were having. So then shortly after that the Department of Justice came in, and I remember the phone call from Mike Cotter—the U.S. Attorney here in Montana—that alerted me to the fact that this was going to happen. And, you know, we could have resisted that. We could have said, “Oh, we're not so bad,” but we didn't. We said, “We will work with you as closely as we possibly can to identify the problems, identify what could be done to improve our situation.” So we were among the very first institutions in the country to enter into an agreement with the Department of Justice to correct this problem. And now we see some 250 institutions have been involved in that same process, and it is with completely mixed feelings that we were among the first. I mean on the one hand it was a terrible thing for the university to go through but at the same time I take some pride in the University of Montana stepping forward the way it did and saying, “We have a problem. We're gonna fix it.” So we put in place quite a number of specific things in cooperation with the DOJ—and the Department of Education was in on this too—entering into a resolution essentially that called for better training of our police officers, better training of our students, better training of our faculty and staff, a revision of policies, a very extensive revision of policies and practices, and so on. And so we embarked upon a tremendous amount of work and many, many people other than me have played very, very key roles and are still playing key roles. The entire PETA [Personal Empowerment Through Self-Awareness] project where we put in place an online mechanism for every single student coming to the University of Montana to get education and training around this issue of sexual assault—again was among the first in the country, and I

believe represented a—just a humungous effort on the part of many, many good people here at the university and most of whom did that work without any additional compensation. They just said, “This is an issue we have to address,” and they went to work to do it. So I actually while it played a role in our current enrollment and budget issues—the topic of sexual assault did—I’m actually quite proud of the way the university responded to the problems around sexual assault. And again it will be up to the historians to decide whether or not we did that correctly; but I believe that we responded aggressively, we responded with integrity, and we responded with the only the best interests of our students in mind. And I will believe that as [laughs] long as I live that we said—I remember saying we gathered that when we got the report of the first two sexual assaults—we gathered a group in my office, and I remember saying to the group, “No matter what else happens we are going to do right by these people who have suffered sexual assault.” So and I think we did. A lot of missteps along the way I suppose because it was a very complex issue. The one incident that involved an international student, you know, we didn’t have the mechanisms yet in place to make sure that every step of the process worked as well as it should have. Our communication with Missoula PD wasn’t quite where it needed to be and got to be shortly after that. And so that was a high visibility issue that really raised the rancor of the community. So anyhow we—I think we entered a sexual assault era with good intentions and good actions.

DM: Do you care to comment on or reflect on your relationship with Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian?

RE: Sure. Happy to do that. Actually Commissioner Christian and I got along very well. I think we had mutual respect for one another and basically in the end he took the action of asking me to submit my resignation because he felt that that was what was needed to kind of help the university recover in an enrollment sense. We had been through some tough times as a university, and I think in his view rightly or wrongly I probably got to a point where [laughs] we had gone through enough difficult stuff that he felt it would be hard for me to lead the sort of what the recovery of enrollment and financial condition of the university and, you know, that’s the way it goes. I made some of the same kinds of decisions along the way with people who reported to me. And so, you know, I respect his decision and hopefully that will turn out to be the right decision, and the university will prosper in an enrollment and financial sense once again.

DM: Okay. I think you’ve touched on this, but I’ll ask. What do you think your long-term legacy or impact will be at UM?

RE: Well I have no illusion that I won’t be connected with the topic of sexual assault. That was such a big issue for us, and I think that, you know, when the later history of the university is written this time period will be talked about in terms of that specific issue. And certainly I will be connected with it. My hope is that I will be connected with that issue in a manner of integrity that we again took aggressive action and dealt with the issue honestly and openly. I have no doubt that part of my legacy will revolve around that issue. I also have little doubt that

my long-term legacy will be connected to the enrollment and budget challenges that we currently face. You know, there's no getting around that and again part of that was due to some things beyond our control. Part of that was due to some things that in hindsight we could have controlled more effectively. I also hope that my legacy is associated in a positive way with those areas that we talked about—that we took the university to some very important places academically, that we took the university to a high level of research and creative scholarship productivity, and that we took the university to a new level of relationship with those individuals who are able to contribute in a financial way to the university. So I guess sort of a complex legacy. Every leader I think has legacy areas that are positive, legacy areas that are not so positive, and, you know, that's I have no doubt that mine will [laughs] play out the same way. I will say it has been a privilege to be associated with the University of Montana and that while we have had issues of challenge along the way—when I did step down—I was bombarded with messages of support, gratitude, and well wishes. And so while I as any leader can't feel good about every single aspect of the job I did I will say that in terms of integrity, in terms of being willing to tackle and immerse myself in difficult issues, and in terms of being able to view the University of Montana as an absolutely outstanding institution—I hope that the long-term history reflects those aspects of my time here.

DM: Is there anything else that you would want people to know about you or your work at UM? Or even future plans? Anything for the record?

RE: The only other area that I would like to speak to is athletics, and I want to speak to it [laughs] because of some of the difficult decisions that I had to make in my early years that involved athletics. I think there were a number of people that came to the conclusion that I somehow was not supportive of athletics or somehow didn't have the respect for athletics that maybe they thought I should have. And nothing could be further from the truth actually, and I think if you look at what we actually have done in the area of athletics, you know, whether it's the beginning of softball and the building out of that facility, the Washington Champion Center that just opened, the Academic Student Center that we built and raised money for all of which were, you know, really the work of other people in the sense of being the point people in those areas—the lights of the stadium and so on and just our engagement. And by our I mean my wife, Mary, and I have been and continue to be to this day very engaged in the [laughs] athletic program. So I think that we feel way more strongly about that whole area than a lot of Griz Nation might give us credit for. So that's one area that I think I'd like to emphasize.

DM: Do you have any advice for our new university president—Seth Bodnar—as he starts his career?

RE: You know, Seth is a very dynamic fellow—great leadership skills, great leadership experience. Maybe not in the area of academics or running a university, but he's a smart guy. He's an energetic guy. He has great instincts and so I think he's gonna do a fantastic job. And my only advice for him is advice that I'm sure I—that he doesn't need—and that is that he just needs to follow his heart—follow his conscience when confronted with challenges that are

inevitable for any university president. I think he's an intriguing and exciting choice for the University of Montana. So I look forward to seeing the university prosper. And, you know, enrollment and budget issues are real today. There's no question about that but every single day whether it's the newspaper, the university website, the local news—there are stories about the great accomplishments of this place—the people here. And some of those are student accomplishments. Some of those are faculty accomplishments. This is an outstanding place, and we just need to continue to make sure that the world including our prospective students but everybody else knows about the dynamic excitement here at the University of Montana and the absolutely key role that it plays in shaping people's lives. It is a wonderful place. I will believe that to my dying days.

DM: Is there anything that I didn't ask you that I should have?

RE: No, but I'll think about that.

DM: Okay.

RE: And if so we can have another—

DM: Can do it again.

RE: —session. I think we covered the areas that I feel are important to have on the record if you will. But I know where to find you.

DM: Okay.

RE: So we can continue the conversation later. And if you, you know, as you think about it if there are follow-up things let me know.

DM: I'll do that. Okay. Then I'll thank you—

RE: Thank you, Donna. Thank you.

DM: —very much for your time.