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Date: Tue, 08 Feb 2005 11:43:45 -0700

To: "Representative Margie Campbell" <mcampbellhd31@yahoo.com>

From: "vince smith" <vsmith@montana.edu> Add to Address Book

Subject: statement of support

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Dear Margie,

Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to share information with the Montana Legislature about the truly wonderful successes that resulted from the extensive collaborations between Fort Peck Community and the College of Agriculture at Montana State University over the five years.

Instructors and key administrators Fort Peck Community College faculty from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics have been proactive in collaborating to develop nationally recognized agricultural outreach, and agricultural research programs. These programs have been designed explicitly to serve the needs of American Indian students at Fort Peck Community College, and farmers and ranchers on the Peck and other Tribal Reservations, as well as meeting the needs of non-Native American students and agricultural producers in Montana.

Recognizing that resources throughout the Montana Higher Education System are limited, Fort Peck administrators and MSU College of Agriculture faculty have aggressively pursued federal grant funding. Substantial grants, on average in excess of \$250,000 per year, have been

to sustain this collaboration. These grants have enabled Fort Peck Community College and the MSU College of Agriculture to offer new programs on international agribusiness issues to their students. They have funded innovative collaborative research on markets and marketing strategies for alternative crops, the economic viability of malting barley in Peck agricultural producers' rotations, and optimal beef marketing strategies. Fort Peck Community College and MSU College of Agriculture faculty have also used these resources to develop essential agricultural outreach programs on risk management, grain and beef cattle management, and, most recently, land transfer options.

Several of these programs have involved productive partnerships with state wide agricultural organizations such as the Montana Grain Growers Association. These outreach programs have also served the needs of five other tribal reservation communities in Montana as well as tribal reservation communities in Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. They have also been widely utilized by non-Native American farmers and ranchers.

All of these programs have enhanced educational opportunities for American Indian students and undergraduate and graduate students in MSU College of Agriculture programs. They have enabled Fort Peck Community College to become recognized as one of the leading innovators among Tribal Colleges in agricultural outreach education and research. They have enhanced the capacity of MSU College of Agriculture faculty to address American Indian issues in culturally relevant and effective ways. Most important, the close collaboration between Fort Peck Community College and MSU College of Agriculture has been invaluable in enabling both institutions to meet the genuine needs of American Indian communities. They have enhanced MSU's capacity to serve the entire Montana community. Continued collaboration between the Tribal Colleges and Montana's public and graduate institutions will extend and enhance the benefits that Montana's investments in education bring to American Indian communities from the State's investments in higher education.

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