UM Employment Lawsuit Fact Sheet

Montanans want and deserve the truth. Here are the facts.

The lawsuit focused primarily on workplace decisions — hiring, promotions, contract renewals, and departmental restructuring. Nearly all of these workplace decisions did not involve Bodnar at all, and the lawsuit contained no alleged incidents of individual misconduct by Bodnar.

OF THE 18 NAMED PLAINTIFFS

- 17 did not report to Bodnar and most did not interact with him at all.
- 6 raised allegations from before Bodnar worked at the University of Montana.
- 2 women brought claims against Montana University System-level leadership in Helena unrelated to the University of Montana campus and to Bodnar.
- 3 plaintiffs made claims involving staffing decisions made by academic units, over which a university president has limited authority and typically no visibility.
- 1 plaintiff reported to Bodnar, and she filed no grievance and raised no formal concerns while employed by the University of Montana. She was hired in 2018 specifically to reverse UM's enrollment decline. Enrollment continued to fall during her tenure. The plaintiff's successor in the role was a woman who grew enrollment and who has publicly stated both her strong support of Bodnar and her appreciation for the way he led as president and as her supervisor at the University.

WHAT THE CLAIMS WERE ACTUALLY ABOUT

EXPERT WITNESS FINDING

Most claims did not actually allege gender discrimination in employment decisions. An HR expert witness who reviewed each plaintiff's claims found many of the claims — though filed by women — were actually centered on disagreements over management decisions, including working relationships with other women, and were ultimately unrelated to sex discrimination.

RESOLUTION

The case was settled for a nominal amount and no wrongdoing was found. The Montana University System settled the case for $350,000 (almost all of which went directly to the lawyers who brought the lawsuit) rather than spend additional taxpayer money defending claims the University believed had no merit.

The final settlement came to just over $1,800 per claimant after legal costs.

COURT RULING

The court denied the plaintiffs' request for class-action status, finding no basis for class-wide Title IX violations, and dismissed several individual claims outright.