Terminology Commonly Used and Generally Understood at the Montana Board of Investments
(And most typical context used at BOI)

Active management (typically with respect to stocks)
Investment method which involves hiring a manager to research securities and actively make investment decisions to buy and sell securities in an effort to outperform an assigned index, rather than purchasing a portfolio of securities that would simply replicate the index holdings (*'passive'* investing).

Actuarial assumed rate (pension concept)
The investment return rate used by actuaries that enables them to project the investment growth of retirement system assets into the future (typically perpetual).

Actuarial funding status (pension concept)
A measurement made by actuaries to measure a pension system's financial soundness (ratio of actuarial liabilities to the actuarial value of the assets available to pay the liabilities).

Alpha (investment term)
Return on an investment portfolio in excess of the market return or benchmark return; generally used in the context of *'active'* management (as passive management, by definition, does not seek excess returns, or 'alpha').

Alternative Investments
A wide range of investments, other than traditional assets such as publically traded stocks and bonds. The most common nontraditional or alternative investments are private equity, real estate, commodities, and hedge funds.

Arbitrage (bond program)
A structural or systematic difference between investment types which may allow profiting from the 'difference,' i.e., arbitrage. The most common context for the use of 'arbitrage' at the BOI is the federal law that prevents 'arbitrage,' i.e., the profiting of investing tax-exempt securities (e.g. INTERCAP) into taxable yields investments (such as U.S. Treasuries).

Asset Allocation and Asset Allocation Range (general investment principle)
The Board's invested assets are divided or allocated into various asset classes such as stocks and bonds, each with its own characteristics, with the objective of attaining an optimal mix of risk and return. The total expected return of a portfolio is primarily determined by the mix or allocation to its underlying assets classes. Given the importance of 'asset allocation,' the BOI Board sets the asset allocation 'range' for each broad investment type or asset class.

Average life (fixed income, particularly bonds)
The average time period the debt is expected to be outstanding. This is typically the maturity date for a traditional bond structure, however it will be shorter for bonds having a sinking fund or amortizing payment structure.

Barclay's Aggregate Index (fixed income)
A composite of outstanding bond issues, including corporate, structured, and government bonds whose overall investment features such as return and investment type are tracked over many years. This is the most common benchmark used for comparing the performance of a portfolio that invests in U.S. investment grade fixed income securities. Formerly known as the Lehman Aggregate bond index.

Basis points (investment jargon)
A basis point is 1 100^{th} of a percentage. Ten basis points is one tenth of a percent, typically written as 10 bps.

Benchmark (standard investment concept)
The concept of employing a particular independent or market investment return as a measurement to judge an investment portfolio's return; typically chosen investment benchmarks have the following attributes: they are investible, quantifiable, chosen in advance, easily understandable, and have a long history; common examples are the S & P 500 Index and the Barclay's Aggregate Index.

Beta (investment jargon)
A measure of the risk (or volatility) of a security or a portfolio in comparison to the market as a whole. If the stock or portfolio moves identically to that market, its beta value is 1; if its price volatility (or movement) is greater than that market's price volatility, it is said to have beta greater than 1.

Cap, as in large 'cap' (generally for stocks, i.e., public equities)
'Cap' is short for capitalization, as a reference to the market value of a publically-traded company. The current stock price times the total shares outstanding of the company equals its market capitalization or market 'cap'; often used contextually such as 'large-cap,' 'mid-cap,' and 'small-cap' for different sized public companies.

Clawback (private equity)
A clause in the agreement between the general partner and the limited partners of a private equity fund. The clawback gives limited partners the right to reclaim a portion of distributions to a general partner for profitable investments based on significant losses from later investments in a portfolio which ultimately resulted in the general partner receiving more distributions than it was legally entitled to.

Core (context varies for equity, fixed income, real estate)
In equity and fixed income, 'core' refers to investments that are generally always found in the portfolio and normally expect to hold for a very long time e.g. 'core' holdings of the largest U.S. companies, or U.S. treasuries; in real estate, 'core' generally refers to the best quality of real estate holdings such as prime commercial property in major metropolitan cities that have low leverage and low levels of vacancy.

Correlation (common statistical concept)
A measure of how two or more investment values or two asset classes move relative to each other during the same time period. A central concept in portfolio construction is to seek investments whose values do not move *together* at the same time, i.e., are uncorrelated. A correlation of 1 means that two or more investments 'move' precisely together.

Custom benchmark (or sometimes custom index)
A way to measure investment performance using a tailor-made measurement versus a generic industry-standard benchmark. At the BOI, total pension performance is measured against the Board's 'custom index' or 'custom benchmark' which is a weighted blend of all the underlying asset class benchmarks used to measure the asset class returns.

Derivatives (investment jargon)
Investment securities whose performance itself depends (or is 'derived') from another underlying investment return. Examples include stock options, puts/calls, and forward currency contracts whose returns are based on the underlying stock or currency.

Developed markets (equity)
Countries having a long period of stable industrialization; or are the most economically developed.

Discount (fixed income, generally)
Used most often with respect to bonds, the price paid that is less than face (or 'par') value. A $1 million face-value of a bond purchased for less than a million is bought at a 'discount.' Described as the difference between a bond's current market price and its face or redemption value.

Diversification (standard investment concept)
The concept of spreading risk by putting assets in several investment categories, each having different attributes with respect to type, expected return, risk, and correlation, to best protect against the risk of loss.

Duration (bonds)
Almost exclusively used when discussing fixed income bonds, a measurement of how sensitive a bonds' change in price is to a change in general market interest rates, expressed in years (specifically calculated as a weighted average term to maturity of the bond's cash flows). The greater the duration of a bond, the greater the volatility of price for changes in market interest rates.

Efficiency (usually when discussing various stock markets)
Used to describe markets where it is very difficult to achieve return in excess of that of the overall market from individual stock selection. When information is widely available on a company and its securities are traded regularly the market is considered 'efficient.'

Emerging Markets (most often for public equities)
Certain international securities markets that are typically small, new, have low turnover, and are located in countries where below-average income prevails and is developing in response to the spread of capitalism.

Enhanced (pertaining to stocks)
Generally linked with 'index' as in enhanced index, an indexed investment management style that has been modified to include the portfolio manager's idea of how to outperform the index by omitting some stocks in the index and overweighting others in a limited manner designed to enhance returns but at minimal risk.

Enhancement (bond program)
At BOI, the term generally refers to credit support or a bond or loan guarantee. For example the Board's INTERCAP bonds are 'enhanced' by the BOI's performance guarantee bringing down the yearly interest rate.

Excess returns (standard investment concept)
Returns are 'excess' if they are more than the market or more than the benchmark they are measured against.

Exempt staff vs. classified staff (specific to Montana state government)
"Exempt" refers to the Board's seven employees who, under state law, do not fall under the state's standard employment rules (the 'classified' staff).

Fiduciary (from the Latin verb, fidere, to trust)
The concept of trust and watchfulness; a fiduciary is charged with the responsibility of investing the money wisely for the beneficiary's benefit. Board members are the ultimate 'fiduciaries' for the Board's assets and are obligated to be a good agent.

FTE (state government jargon)
An acronym in state government: "full time equivalent" as in full time employee. The concept is a slot or position, not the actual individuals. The BOI is currently authorized for 32 FTE's.

Fund of funds (private equity)
A concept used in alternative investments referring to using an investment manager to invest in ***other*** managers or funds, as opposed to making direct investments in funds.

GAAP/GASB (accounting terminology)
GAAP…Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; Montana state law uses GAAP accounting principles unless specifically allowed otherwise. GASB…Government Accounting Standards Board, the board that sets GAAP

standards for U.S. governments (FASB…Financial Accounting Standards Board, the entity for commercial and business accounting standards).

General obligation (municipal finance term)
Used to describe the promise that a government makes to bond holders, backed by taxing and further borrowing power, it is generally considered the highest level of commitment to bondholders. At the local government level, general obligation bonds typically require a vote of the residents.

General partner vs. limited partner (private equity)
In private equity, the general partner is responsible for the operations of the partnership and makes the actual underlying investment decisions; the limited partner is the investor, and therefore has limited liability for investment decisions; the BOI is the 'limited' partner in its private equity fund investments (and real estate funds as well).

Growth (as to style public equities)
An investment style that more heavily invests in companies whose earnings are expected to grow at an above average rate to the market. A growth stock usually does not pay a dividend, as the company would prefer to reinvest retained earnings in capital projects to grow the company (vs. *'value,'* which considers buying established companies they feel are trading at bargain prices to the fundamental analysis of the company's financial statements and internal competitive factors).

Indenture (bond and loan programs)
The central document describing the contract between investors and the borrower or user of the proceeds. The Board's INTERCAP program is structured around a bond indenture.

Hedge fund (as defined by *Investopedia*)
An aggressively managed portfolio of investments that uses advanced investment strategies such as *leverage*, long, short and *derivative* positions in both domestic and international markets with the goal of generating high returns (either in an absolute sense or over a specified market *benchmark*).

Hurdle Rate (private equity)
a minimum return per annum that must be generated for limited partners of a private equity fund before the general partner can begin receiving a percentage of profits from investments.

Index (investment concept)
Typically a single measure of a broadly-based group of investments that can be used to judge, or be compared to the return performance of an individual investment or manager.

Indexing (investment concept)
Typically refers to investing in a portfolio to match a broad range of investments that are set within a pre-determined grouping, such as the S&P 500, so as to match its performance; such investing is generally labeled 'passive' or indexed investing; or buying shares in an Index Fund.

In-state loan program (Montana-specific)
Programs that are funded by the state's coal severance tax monies.

Internal service vs. enterprise fund (state accounting concept)
Within Montana state government: a program whose funding is dependent on ***mandatory participation*** by another state government program is labeled an 'internal' service fund; a program whose funding is dependent on voluntary participation is labeled an enterprise fund. At BOI, the investment program is an internal service fund because participation is not voluntary; the Board's bond and loan programs, because their use is voluntary, are accounted for as an enterprise.

Investment grade (bonds)
Bond ratings from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, and Fitch high enough to be considered secure enough for most investors (bonds rated AAA – BBB). Below investment-grade bonds (below BBB) are generally considered to have a more speculative outlook and carry more risk of default.

IRR (private equity)
A measure of investment performance, short for 'internal rate of return,' expressed as a percentage (the 'internal rate of return' number, or discount rate) that mathematically will equalize the total future cash flows of an investment to the initial cash outflow of the investment; the concept accounts for the time value of money.

Leverage (investment concept)
As an investment concept, a way to increase a return on an investment through a combination of one's own money and also by borrowing additional money to enhance such an investment; high 'leverage' is also associated with high risk.

Mean Variance Optimization Model ('Modern Portfolio Theory')
A theory that it is possible to construct a portfolio to maximize the return for the least amount of risk or volatility. This theory is based on various asset types and their level of expected return, risk (volatility) and their correlation with each other or how the asset values move with each other. The central idea of the model is to blend investments so that in total, they provide both the best expected return and optimal amount of diversification to minimize deep performance swings (volatility); a central tenant is that long term historical returns are indicative of future returns.

Mezzanine finance (private equity)
Subordinated debt with an equity 'kicker' or ability to share in the equity value of the company. It is typically lower quality because it is generally subordinated to debt provided by senior lenders such as banks, thus is considered higher risk.

Multiple (as in "multiple" of invested capital, private equity)
The ratio of total cash returned over the life of the investment plus the investment's residual value over the total cash expended in making the investment. A multiple of 2 means, regardless of the total investment time period, that total cash returned was twice the cash invested.

130/30 Strategy (public equities)
Also called 'partial long short,' this strategy involves the establishment of a short position in select stocks while taking the proceeds of those shorts and buying additional long positions in stocks. The net effect is an overall market position that is 100% long, but the active decisions on individual stock selections are amplified by this ability to short. If the stock selections are successful, the strategy enables the portfolio to profit more than if a stock had simply not been owned, as with traditional long-only portfolios.

Opportunistic (real estate)
In real estate, a euphemism for the most risky real estate investments, typically distressed, raw land, newly developed buildings or other high risk investments in the real estate sector, (versus, *'core,'* which are the best quality fully leased commercial properties).

Overweight or underweight (investment concept)
Generally the level of holdings of a certain type of investment that is above or below either a benchmark's weight (portion of total investment), or the percentage held of a particular asset class compared to the Board's asset allocation policy weight. Also used to describe an external investment manager's decision to have more (or less) of a particular investment than the percentage or weighting found in the benchmark.

Passive management or passive investment (most often in public equities, but not exclusively)
An investment style where a fund's portfolio mirrors a market index, such as the S&P 500, with limited selection decisions by the manager, resulting in market returns. Passive management is the opposite of active management in which a fund's manager attempts to beat the market with various investment strategies and buy/sell decisions of a portfolio of securities to enhance returns.

P/E ratio (equity)
The price of a publically traded stock divided by its estimated or actual earnings is the price/earnings or P/E ratio. This can also be calculated for a stock index or portfolio of stocks. Over the last 100 years, the S&P 500 has had an overall P/E ratio of about 15, or a total index price of about 15 times the annual earnings of its underlying companies.

Pacing study (private equity)
An analysis of the likely timing and amount of the drawdown of committed but yet uninvested monies and the estimated distributions or returns from the funds held in an alternative investment portfolio, generally used to judge the future size of the portfolio and its potential liquidity needs, i.e., cash funding demands.

Par (fixed income)
The initial principal amount designated by the issuer of the bond, or face value of a bond.

Passive
For investments, generally not materially participating in an investment decision, meaning an investment portfolio whose returns follows that of a broad market index, such as an investable stock index, i.e. the S & P 500.

Passive weight (generally equities)
The percentage of a stock held in a particular index portfolio, or percentage of an overall asset class that is held in passive portfolios.

Policy Portfolio
A fixed-target asset allocation, as opposed to asset allocation ranges, which theoretically allows gauging whether deviations from the target portfolio had a positive or negative impact on overall performance.

Portable alpha (public equities)
An investment strategy which involves the active selection of securities while neutralizing overall beta or market risk. This often involves the use of derivative investments such as futures to replicate the market return, either taking a short or long position, while then selecting securities which are expected to add return in an absolute sense or in addition to the market return. As an example, this strategy can be found with certain hedge funds where a market exposure is shorted while individual securities such as specific stocks are purchased that are expected to outperform the general market. The concept of portable applies when the ability to generate positive alpha can be overlaid or ported onto a portfolio. This is not a strategy employed by any of MBOI's existing managers.

Premium (fixed income)
Most often the amount paid over the stated face amount (often called 'par') of a bond, but also used in other contexts, typically paying more (the premium) than a market price (as in a take-over bid for a company).

Proxy (publically traded companies)
An agent legally authorized to act on behalf of another party. Shareholders not attending a company's annual meeting may choose to vote their shares by proxy by allowing someone else to cast votes on their behalf, but the word 'proxy' is used more frequently colloquially as a 'close approximation.'

Prudent expert, prudent person (a central fiduciary concept)
These legal terms have long histories of court-determined standards of care, deriving originally under English common law. The BOI is empowered to operate under the 'prudent expert rule,' which states that the Board shall manage a portfolio:
a) with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence, under the circumstances then prevailing, that a prudent man acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims;
b) diversify the holdings of each fund within the unified investment program to minimize the risk of loss and to maximize the rate of return unless, under the circumstances, it is clearly prudent not to do so; and
(c) discharge the duties solely in the interest of and for the benefit of the funds forming the unified investment program.
At an 'expert' level; there is more room for accepting risk under the prudent expert rule than the prudent person rule.

Rebalancing (general investment term)
The process of realigning the weightings of the portfolio of assets. Rebalancing involves periodically buying or selling assets in the portfolio to maintain the original desired level of asset allocation and/or to stay within predetermined asset category range; it is part of a disciplined investment approach within modern portfolio theory.

Resolution (government term)
Generally a formal and written action by a governmental (or corporate) body that has long term significance and requiring a vote of the governing body. BOI uses 'resolutions' generally only for its most significant and long term actions and/or policies.

Securities lending (general investment)
Investments that are temporally borrowed by other investors for a fee; the BOI allows most of its publically traded investments to be loaned for additional marginal income.

Standard deviation (common statistical concept)
A specific statistic that measures the dispersion of returns from the mean over a specific time period to determine the "historical volatility" of returns for a stock, or portfolio, or asset class; more specifically a single unit (i.e., one standard deviation) of dispersion that accounts for approximately 66% of all data around a mean using a 'normal' (or 'uniform' or 'bell-shaped' curve; as opposed to a skewed or asymmetrical) distribution. The standard deviation is used as a gauge for the amount of expected future volatility.

SABHRS (accounting jargon)
Montana state government's State Accounting, Budgeting and Human Resource System; the State's central information management system. BOI investment and other financial data must tie and be reported on this system, which is the official book of record and includes the state's financial statements.

Style drift (often in reference to public equity managers, but applicable to other managers, too)
As the name implies, a divergence from an investor's professed investment bias or style or objective.

Tracking error (statistical concept in investments)
A measurement of the standard deviation of a portfolio's return versus the return of the benchmark it was attempting to outperform. The concept is often used when discussing investment managers. For example some styles are expected to have high 'tracking errors,' (e.g., deep 'value' investors who buy companies that may be dogs for years), versus passive managers, whose stock volatility is expected to be very close to their benchmark. Tracking error can either be intentional or unintentional; it can also be regarded as an accepted deviation or contrary to the management agreement. High *unexpected* tracking error is generally a serious concern to be examined and understood.

Underwriter (bond program)
In investments, the agent who buys investments to be resold to the public; at BOI, the investment firms that buy the Board's bonds to be resold to the public.

Unified Investment Program (Montana Constitution)
The Program in the State's constitution requiring a central investment program which the legislature has assigned to the BOI.

Value (as to style when discussing public equities)
An investment style that focuses on buying established companies that investors believe are undervalued and trading at bargain prices to the fundamental analysis of the company's financial statements and internal competitive factors.

Venture capital (private equity)
A higher-risk/high-return type of investing in startup firms and small businesses with perceived long-term growth potential. Sometimes these are already existing business ventures with limited operating history that need additional management expertise and access to capital. (For start-ups, 'seed capital,' or 'angel investor' are terms differentiating this even higher risk type of investment.)

Volatility (investment jargon)
A statistical measure of the dispersion of returns for a given security or market index. Volatility is typically measured by using the standard deviation of returns from the security or market index. Commonly, the higher the volatility, the riskier the security.

Yield (general investment, but most often within fixed income)
The amount returned to the investor above the original investment generally expressed as a percentage. Yield can be thought of as the expected return from the combination of interest and price accrual or amortization to maturity (in the case of a bond trading at a discount or premium to par).

Yield curve (fixed income)
A line that plots the prevailing interest rates at a given time for bonds ranging in maturity from as short as three months out to 30 years. When plotted across these various maturities (typically 2, 5, 7, 10 and 30 years), the resultant line is shaped like a curve with generally low interest rates (the yield) for shorter maturities and gradually higher interest rates for longer maturities, because generally investors demand higher interest rates for longer term investments. The yield curve for U.S. Treasury debt is the most common when referring to the prevailing level of interest rates.