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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Alison Cobb, Continuing Education, (406) 2436431.

KALISPELL EDUCATORS EARN UM GRADUATE DEGREES OFF CAMPUS

MISSOULA--

Come Commencement at The University of Montana on May 13, three cohorts of Montana educators, including a cohort from **Kalispell**, will receive master's degrees they completed in a distance-learning program offered by UM through computer technology.

Starting in 1998, the 33 students in the cohorts have taken two years of classes in their communities -- Kalispell, Arlee and Browning -- using videoconferencing systems VisionNet and METNET. The technology enabled the students to start and end the program together and take the same classes together. Content for many of the courses was tailored to educators living on reservations.

The **Kalispell** cohort comprised the following 10 educators, all of whom live in Kalispell except as noted:

■ Kim Anderson of **Columbia Falls**, a pre-first-grade teacher at Ruder Elementary School in Columbia Falls.

■ Matthew Fawcett, sixth-grade teacher at Elrod School in Kalispell.

■ Heather Hull-Taylor of **Libby**, resource teacher and administrative intern at Libby Middle School.

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■ Jennifer Lovering of **Columbia Falls**, world studies teacher at Columbia Falls High School.

■ Norma MacKenzie of **Whitefish**, English teacher at Whitefish High School.

■ Jackie Ponck of **Whitefish**, city of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department employee.

■ Kathy Shipman, sixth-grade teacher at Whitefish Central School.

■ Trudi Shjeflo, family and consumer science teacher at Columbia Falls High School.

■ Jacqueline Wimett, history teacher at Whitefish High School.

■ Dorothea Wood of **Lakeside**, English teacher at Columbia Falls High School.

"This is a close-knit group of educators who are dedicated to becoming master teachers," said Alison Cobb, coordinator of off-campus degrees at UM's Continuing Education. "Our retention in Kalispell has been 100 percent."

Helena was the location for this graduate-degree program's first cohort during 1995-97. UM's School of Education is now investigating the possibility of delivering the next master's in education program to Great Falls.

Interested teachers should contact Cobb at Continuing Education, (406) 243-6431 or acobb@selway.umt.edu.

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