December 2018 news releases

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UM Dance Program Offers Creative Movement Classes for Kids

December 31, 2018

MISSOULA – Every fall and spring, the University of Montana Dance Program offers children's dance classes for kids ages 3½ to 10.

The classes take place on UM's main campus in the Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center. Spring Session begins Jan. 17 and ends April 11, with March 22 off for Spring Break.

The classes run Thursdays and are broken up by age: 3:30 to 4
p.m. (ages 3½-4), 4:15-5 p.m. (ages 5-6) and 5:15-6 p.m. (ages 7-10).

Creative movement provides opportunities for children to express their inherent creativity through their bodies. Based on the premise that children love to move, creative movement capitalizes on children’s natural jumping, twisting, spinning and leaping. Children also are exposed to the elements of dance and basic movement patterns.

“These dance programs serve as an excellent introduction to dance for all children,” said Laurel Sears, a UM adjunct assistant professor of dance. “For the 7- to 10-year-olds, dancers are introduced to dance technique and create their own original choreography.”

All classes are accompanied by live piano and drums. As a part of the School of Theatre & Dance’s offerings, UM students earn credit for participating as student teachers. With the addition of the student teachers in each class, children get personal attention and the opportunity to learn from various teaching styles.

“Children – even those who may never have danced formally before – benefit from the course in multiple ways,” Sears said. “Parents tell me all the time how much their kids re-enact what they learned in the class at home.”


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**Contact:** Laurel Sears, UM adjunct assistant professor of dance, 406-369-2806, laurel.sears@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The Montana Public Radio weekly legislative news and analysis program “Capitol Talk” will return in 2019 with a new voice. Lee Enterprises’ Capitol reporter Holly Michels will join MTPR host Sally Mauk and University of Montana political science Professor Rob Saldin each Friday during the 2019 legislative session.

“It’s great to have Holly join the ‘Capitol Talk’ team,” said Mauk,
who has covered the Montana Legislature for more than 40 years. “I think listeners will love hearing her analysis on what’s happening at the Legislature.”

Michels replaces veteran Capitol reporter Chuck Johnson, who was on “Capitol Talk” since its inception and retired this year. Michels has worked as a reporter and editor for Lee Enterprises for more than a decade at newspapers in Hamilton, Butte, Billings and Helena.

“I’m excited to be joining Sally and Rob during this legislative session and look forward to helping listeners stay on top of everything their representatives are up to in Helena,” Michels said.

Beginning Jan. 11, “Capitol Talk” airs Fridays at 6:35 p.m. on MTPR while the Montana Legislature is in session. It repeats on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. and is online at http://www.mtpr.org/ or can be downloaded as a podcast.

Montana Public Radio is a public service of UM and broadcasts on 89.1 Missoula (KUFM); 91.5 Missoula city (K218AI); 91.9 Hamilton (KUFN); 89.5 Polson (KPJH); 90.1 Kalispell, Whitefish, North Valley (KUKL); 90.5 Libby (KUFL); 91.7 Kalispell, city (K219BN); 101.3 Swan Lake (K267BJ); 91.3 Butte (KAPC); 91.7 Helena (KUHM); 91.7 Dillon (K219DN); 89.9 Great Falls (KGPR); and 98.3 White Sulphur Springs (K252AD).

Learn more at http://www.mtpr.org.

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**Contact:** Sally Mauk, Montana Public Radio host, sally.mauk@umontana.edu.
UM to Hold January Orientation for New Undergraduates

December 19, 2018

MISSOULA – The University of Montana will hold its Spring New Student Orientation Tuesday through Wednesday, Jan. 8-9, for new undergraduates starting in the spring.

All new students admitted to UM for spring semester are welcome to attend.

During Orientation, students can meet with faculty members and advisers in their academic departments, register for classes, meet peers in their incoming class and current student leaders, and learn about the student services, opportunities and resources available at UM.

Parents and family members are encouraged to attend a concurrent but separate program. Missoula College students can attend their orientation on Tuesday, Jan. 8.

For more information about Spring New Student Orientation or to register, visit http://admissions.umt.edu/orientation or call the UM Undergraduate Admissions Office at 406-243-6266 or 800-462-8636.
Contact: Devin Carpenter, assistant director of new student and family programs, UM Undergraduate Admissions Office, 406-243-2332, devin.carpenter@mso.umt.edu.
UM Counselor Education Professor Earns Outstanding Teaching Award

December 18, 2018

MISSOULA – Dr. Veronica Johnson, associate professor in the Department of Counselor Education at the University of Montana, recently was named the 2018 recipient of the Rocky Mountain Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Outstanding Teaching Award.

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision is a national organization for counselors, supervisors, graduate students and faculty members focused on promoting the education and supervision of counselors in training and in practice. The Outstanding Teaching Award embodies this goal through the recognition of a counselor educator who exemplifies excellence and innovation as an instructor in the higher education classroom.

The Department of Counselor Education, located in UM’s Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences, offers educational programs at the master’s and...
doctoral levels for counseling professionals. Its high-quality programs are nationally accredited, and graduates from the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling have a 100-percent job placement rate.

Johnson is in her fifth year as a faculty member at UM and also chairs the Department of Counselor Education.

In nominating Johnson for the Outstanding Teaching Award Nomination, Dr. Sara Polanchek wrote, “I have the pleasure to work amongst many stellar colleagues. However, I can’t think of another who so consistently goes the extra mile for their students, who maintains the highest standards of professionalism and who juggles way more than her share with equanimity, poise and humor."

“Loved, loved, loved this class," a student recently wrote in evaluating a course taught by Johnson. “Veronica rocks and is an amazing professor. Roni is why I want to become a counselor."

Johnson picked up her award at the 2018 Rocky Mountain Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference held in Park City, Utah, in October.

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Contact: Adrea Lawrence, interim dean, UM Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences, 406-243-5054, adrea.lawrence@mso.umt.edu; Veronica Johnson, associate professor and chair, Department of Counselor Education, 406-243-4205, veronica.johnson@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – The Missoula Human Trafficking Task Force and Soroptimist International of Whitefish will organize two human trafficking awareness trainings Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the University of Montana.

The trainings will focus on commercial sexual exploitation, or CSE, a practice of gender-based violence. CSE requires a thoughtful, strategic and coordinated community response that considers and addresses all aspects of the problem.

In two separate training sessions, Seattle-based expert Peter Qualliotine will share insight and lessons from more than three decades in the field about how to work together to create and sustain efforts to end CSE. The workshops are designed to equip those who attend with the foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary to engage others in ending CSE through coordinated community responses.

The first training will take place from 1 to 5 p.m. in the University Center Theater, and all law enforcement, medical and social service professionals are invited to attend the free workshop. Continuing education credits are available. Register online at https://doodle.com/poll/zypkzdqt95vznhd. Limited spots are available.
A second training, open discussion and Q&A will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the UC Theater. This event is open to the public.

Both workshops will train participants to understand CSE as a practice of gender-based exploitation and violence; recognize the importance of robust, survivor-centered, survivor-led exit services; advocate for locating accountability for the harms of CSE with sex buyers; use a spectrum of prevention framework in considering activities and programming; and develop strategies for engaging multiple sectors in shifting the social and cultural norms that drive CSE.

For more information call Katharina Werner in UM’s School of Social Work at 406-243-5589 or email katharina.werner@mso.umt.edu.

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**Contact:** Katharina Werner, assistant director of field education, UM School of Social Work, 406-243-5589, katharina.werner@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, protects people with disabilities against discrimination in employment settings, state and local government services, and public-serving businesses.

As vacation rental properties such as Airbnb and VRBO grow in demand and straddle the line between private residences and public business, how or if ADA applies was – until recently – somewhat unclear. Law students at the University of Montana set out to provide some answers to this and other ADA questions.

Joshua Thornton, a Juris Doctor candidate for 2020 in UM’s Alexander Blewett III School of Law from Bismarck, North Dakota, conducted research to examine the applicability of the
ADA to vacation rental properties. He found vacation rental properties are subject to ADA, but only if they have more than five rooms for rent.

This project, like several before it, provides UM law students opportunities to make a positive contribution to the understanding of disability policy and legal understanding in the U.S.

“It’s important to note that the research results are not legal opinions, but summaries of legal cases and legal discussion forums,” said Martin Blair, executive director of UM’s Rural Institute. “Our students compiled and summarized information that is often spread out and sometimes contradictory. Better understanding of disability policy results from compiling current information from reliable sources into a user-friendly resource.”

Lillian Alvernaz, a recent UM law school graduate from Glasgow, and Abbey Eckstein, a Juris Doctor candidate for 2019 from Crawford, Colorado, also worked on ADA-related research projects.

Alvernaz took on the task of summarizing so-called “drive-by” ADA lawsuits in the Rocky Mountain region (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming), finding that only Utah and Colorado have seen this type of legal activity. “Drive-by” lawsuits occur when lawyers and plaintiffs sue businesses to acquire rapid settlements for what are often argued as minor access barriers.

Eckstein compiled and summarized a list of all disability-related law resources in the region, which is currently used by staff at the
Rocky Mountain ADA Center to help people with disabilities and community advocates connect with legal resources in six states.

The research projects were funded through a partnership between the UM Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities and the Rocky Mountain ADA Technical Assistance Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This collaboration focuses on improving knowledge about how the ADA assures equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

UM’s Rural Institute engages in research, provides education and interdisciplinary training, and develops model services that improve the skills, abilities and quality of life of people with disabilities in rural communities, including their families and those who support and partner with them.

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**Contact:** Martin Blair, executive director, UM Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities, 406-243-4779, martin.blair@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana has 799 students who are degree candidates for fall semester 2018. Many of those will participate in UM's first-ever Fall Commencement Ceremony at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 15, in the Dennison Theatre.

The students listed below are UM degree candidates or have been awarded their degrees for fall semester 2018.
Graduates with "cum laude" after their name indicate a GPA of 3.40 to 3.69. "Magna laude" indicates a 3.70 to 3.89 GPA, and "summa laude" is 3.90 and above.

Official awarding of a degree and any official graduation with honors or graduation with high honors designation is not made until degree candidates have completed their final term of enrollment and have met all specific requirements.

The full list of in-state graduates is here: http://bit.ly/2EtZv7


Please note that the University is prohibited from publishing graduation and Dean’s List information about students who signed the Student Request to Restrict Release of Directory Information form through the Registrar’s Office. If your name is not included on either list and you believe it should be, email the Registrar’s Office at graduation@umontana.edu or call 406-243-5600.

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Contact: UM Registrar’s Office, 406-243-5600, graduation@umontana.edu.
UM Accounting Students Wrap Up Semester with Presentations, Local CPAs Attend

December 13, 2018

MISSOULA – Jesse Mueller graduated from the University of Montana’s nationally ranked Master of Accountancy program in 2017, but he found himself back in the classroom this week. The Wipfli accountant joined more than 54 certified professional accountants from 23 employers who attended presentations given by current master’s graduate students during finals week.

The end-of-semester presentations for students in UM’s Advanced Auditing and Accounting Theory courses doubled as free continuing professional education for the CPAs. Like Mueller, many of the attendees were UM grads.

“I had to do this when I was here for my master’s, so it’s fun and interesting listening to these presentations from the other side,” Mueller said, adding that the no-cost CPE credits toward state accounting board requirements enticed him as well.
While the presentations are an annual event, MAcct Director Terri Herron said the response to this year’s invitation topped previous years. Topics included cryptocurrency, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and ethics.

“These presentations are so well received by the local CPA community,” Herron said. “The students knock it out of the park. They provide leading-edge content, and the free CPE is a bonus for the attendees. This is a great example of outreach that really has a positive impact on everyone.”

Master’s student Dan Fouts was part of a group that presented a case study about a Denver company that failed an ethics inspection. Originally from Butte, Fouts hopes to practice in western Montana after he graduates next summer. He said the presentations provided an ideal chance to network.

“It’s a great opportunity to network with people who are already working,” Fouts said. “The more we get our faces in front of them, the better chance we’ll get hired if we want to stay local.”

The UM Accounting Program has a longstanding reputation for preparing top accounting graduates, and its alumni are in high demand. About 50 firms actively recruit potential accounting hires from the College of Business each year. The 10-year average is 94.7 percent for UM master’s accountancy alumni who have jobs within three months of graduation.

UM accounting grads are in demand for their excellence. In 2017, UM students and graduates passed the certified public accountant exam at a rate higher than any other four-year public school in the West. Also that year, Public Accounting Report’s 36th Annual Professors Survey ranked UM’s master of accountancy program 16th in the country for master’s programs of similar size.

UM’s accounting programs are the only programs in Montana that are separately accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Accounting is one of the original bachelor degrees offered by the College of Business, and its master of accountancy program was founded in 1993.

For more about the UM master’s in accountancy program, visit https://www.business.umt.edu/macct.

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**Contact:** Elizabeth Willy, director of marketing and communications, UM College of Business, 406-243-4436, elizabeth.willy@mso.umt.edu.
Headwaters Foundation Launches Zero to Five, a Strategic Initiative for Montana’s Children

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December 13, 2018

$16.7 million multiyear collaboration with $5.2 million investment anchored at UM

MISSOULA – Missoula-based Headwaters Foundation today announced Zero to Five, a $16.7 million, multiyear strategic initiative focused on building resiliency for Montana’s youngest children. This six-year initiative will invest $5.2 million to establish a program office anchored at the University of Montana.

“Headwaters is honored to launch Zero to Five on behalf Montana’s children,” said Headwaters Foundation CEO Brenda Solorzano. “When we asked the communities we serve how we could best allocate our resources, they told us without hesitation to focus on the children. They also told us to let communities lead the process. We’re proud to say we’ve done both.”

Anchored at UM, the Zero to Five program office will bring together the expertise of three organizations: the UM
Headwaters Foundation Launches Zero to Five, a Strategic Initiative for Montana’s Children - UM News - University Of Montana

Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development; Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies; and the Childwise Institute. UM will administer the grant for the program office, which will serve as a go-to resource to community collaboratives and key stakeholders working to strengthen Montana’s programs serving children and families.

“As a research university, UM is poised to address the emerging and complex issues of our time,” said Reed Humphrey, dean of UM’s College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences. “Zero to Five aligns with our growing expertise in health and medicine, and we’re delighted to be a partner.”

For the past year, Headwaters has been on a mission: to work side-by-side with western Montana residents to improve the health of local communities.

Headwaters started at the source. They met with community leaders in the 15 counties the foundation serves. They met with American Indian leaders on the Flathead Indian Reservation and across the region. They met with those doing the everyday work to improve the lives of children in Montana.

In 2018, Zero to Five was born.

The initiative is community driven, allowing local partner organizations to determine their own unique needs. Funded programs will address one of three specific areas related to children from age 0 to 5: resilient parenting, healthy pregnancy and school readiness.

To start, Zero to Five will include 16 community collaboratives – one in each of the counties Headwaters serves, plus one collaborative focused on American Indians. Headwaters long-term vision is to leverage funds from other foundations and investors and one day have these collaboratives across Montana.

Headwaters will fund four $200,000 implementation grants in 2018, one each in Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, Flathead and Missoula counties, to begin work in those communities.

Lincoln and Mineral counties each will receive planning grants of $50,000 in 2018 to prepare for implementation grants in 2019. Other communities will come online gradually until all 16 are up and running.

“We start from a place of trust,” said Solorzano. “We wholly trust our partners, our communities and the people of Montana to create in Zero to Five transformational impact in the lives of Montana’s children.”

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About Headwaters Foundation

With more than $100 million in assets, Headwaters Foundation works side-by-side with western Montanans to improve the health of our communities. Our vision is a western Montana where all people, especially the most vulnerable among us, are healthy and thriving. Visit [https://www.headwatersmt.org/](https://www.headwatersmt.org/) to learn more about our work.

About our partners:

- The Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development in UM’s School of Social work focuses on research, data and policy work in the zero-to-five space.
• **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies** is a key bridge-builder, involved in a number of coalitions in the state, and brings expertise in the healthy pregnancy space.

• **Childwise Institute** has deep expertise in ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences Study) work and is a highly respected advocacy organization in the state.

• **UM** brings the expertise and infrastructure to administer a large, complex grant, as well as a deep commitment to improving early childhood in the state.

**This release is online at:**

**Contact:** Reed Humphrey, dean, UM College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, 406-243-4341, reed.humphrey@mso.umt.edu; Jennifer Savage, communications officer, Headwaters Foundation, 406-240-8977, jennifers@headwatersmt.org.
MISSOULA – All members of the community are invited to help University of Montana Franke Global Leadership Initiative students celebrate four local nonprofits with a special awards ceremony from 9 to 9:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 14, in the Davidson Honors College.
student lounge.

During the ceremony, students from a first-year course – Can Giving Change the World? – will present the organizations with a total of $13,000 in grant money from the Learning by Giving Foundation and the College of Humanities and Sciences. UM is one of a handful of select universities that receives annual funding from the foundation.

Throughout the semester, the GLI students have learned about the history and inner workings of philanthropy, specifically the worldwide effects of nonprofit organizations. The hands-on approach began when students were assigned to engage in a communitywide needs assessment, which involved researching topics and issues revolving around the environment, homelessness, hunger, youth and health to determine which needs were not being met in Missoula.

After presenting these assessments to fellow peers, the class decided which needs were the greatest and requested project proposals from nonprofits in Missoula and the surrounding area.

The students decided that the two greatest needs in the community were mental health, with a focus in suicide prevention, and healthy lifestyle, with a focus on active, hands-on learning.

After receiving 14 proposals, conducting site visits and spending several sessions locked in passionate deliberation, the GLI students selected four proposals to receive funding: The Learning Center at Red Willow, Mountain Home Montana, Missoula Aging Services and Soft Landing Missoula. Students said these organizations embody the ideals of philanthropy, and each offers a unique service that will positively impact and empower the community.

Part of the money awarded by Living by Giving was because the students won a blog contest. Katjana Stutzer, graduate instructor in the Department of Communication Studies, coordinated the class’ participation. To read the GLI student blog on the philanthropy class, visit https://learningbygiving.wixsite.com/umtgl.ii.

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Contact: Gregory Larson, professor and chair, UM Department of Communication Studies, College of Humanities and Sciences, 406-243-4161, greg.larson@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – University of Montana business students didn’t just learn web design this semester, they used their new skills to benefit a local nonprofit.

Student teams in the UM College of Business Systems Analysis and Design course competed to have their website selected by the Missoula Nonprofit.
Business Students Compete to Design Website for Local Nonprofit - UM News - University Of Montana

Center, which serves as a communications hub for local nonprofits. The project is another example of the experiential learning opportunities that UM and its business curriculum are known for.

“It is absolutely critical to our students that they work on real projects with real consequences, and that’s exactly what these types of projects provide,” said course instructor Clayton Looney, professor and chair of the Management Information Systems Department.

The project also highlights the strong, mutually beneficial relationships that exist between the business school and the community. Sponsored by United Way of Missoula County, an impressive panel of judges helped select which team-designed website the Missoula Nonprofit Center will use to support operations. Each of the five student teams presented their design to the judges on Dec. 7.

United Way of Missoula County panelists included CEO Susan Hay Patrick, as well as Eric Legvold and Leidy Wagner. Community members included Wil Anderson of Blackfoot Communications, Liz Moore from the Montana Nonprofit Association, Kaila Warren from Tobacco Free Missoula County with Missoula City-County Health Department, Robert Giblin with the Downtown Missoula Partnership, and Andrea Vernon and Colleen Kane with the UM Office for Civic Engagement.

“We were so impressed by the quality of the students’ work and the professionalism of their presentations,” Hay Patrick said. “Having a great website is always a major priority for nonprofits, but website design is usually also a major headache – and a major expense.

“It was such a gift to have several great options to choose from, and to have the students work so hard to respond to the nonprofit community’s needs,” she said. “We are grateful to be part of a new way to strengthen the strong ties between the University and the community.”

For Matthew Sedgwick, a senior in management information systems from Outlook, the project represented an opportunity to practice meeting client needs. Earning a certificate in cybersecurity, he’s already accepted a
cybersecurity position with KPMG in Seattle after graduation in May.

“This was a great project,” he said. “This class is going to help me and the other students with consulting with people. That’s really what MIS is all about – fulfilling requirements and knowing what the client needs are so we can meet their demands in the real world with technology.”

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**Contact:** Elizabeth Willy, director of marketing and communications, UM College of Business, 406-243-4436, elizabeth.willy@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – Two University of Montana faculty members recently won a $999,942 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a project that will use social science and marketing tools to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the largest on the Atlantic Coast.

The project is a joint effort between Alex Metcalf, an assistant professor in UM’s W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation, and Justin Angle, associate professor of marketing and the Warren & Betsy Wilcox Faculty Fellow in UM’s College of Business.

Home to 18.1 million people living in six states and encompassing cities like Baltimore, Norfolk and Washington, D.C., the Chesapeake Bay watershed has incalculable economic impact, environmental importance and historical significance. As the country’s largest estuary, it provides vital habitat for more than 3,600 plant and animal species.

Local conservation groups have long worked to engage farm operations – the largest source of nutrient and sediment pollution in the watershed – to encourage practices that can simultaneously help farmers and reduce pollution.
“Streamside trees and shrubs filter out pollution before it enters waterways and stabilize banks to prevent erosion,” Metcalf said. “Farm operations also can reduce sediment and nutrient pollution by using ‘no-till’ agriculture where crops are planted, grown and harvested without disturbing the soil, or carefully managing manure and poultry litter, which account for nearly 50 percent of nutrient pollutants entering the bay.”

But that’s easier said than done.

“It’s a massive watershed,” Metcalf said. “Encouraging change at that scale is incredibly challenging.”

To help solve the puzzle, Metcalf and Angle will apply social science and marketing concepts to inspire water-quality conservation behaviors on agricultural lands in the watershed.

“Instead of merely selling people things, we’re using modern marketing tools to inspire people to make better choices and move the needle on conservation outcomes,” Angle said.

The ultimate goal is to deliver customized messages to farmers who own pieces of property critical to conservation and who are most open to engaging in conservation behaviors, as predicted by a statistical model rooted in consumer analytics. This process is referred to as microtargeting.

“Tools like data analytics allow us to deliver customized messages to individual farmers across the entire watershed,” Metcalf said. “It’s the same type of technology that businesses use to identify likely customers, but instead we’re using it to deliver individualized conservation appeals and incentives. This approach is exciting because it can help achieve more restoration per dollar invested.”

The project will have three phases laid out over three years. The first phase will focus on collaboration with local conservation and agricultural partners. Phase two will include a pilot study testing different messages and appeals. Phase three will include outreach and assistance to tens of thousands of farmers in the watershed. Metcalf said they hope to learn a lot from the project and then to communicate those lessons to partners in the watershed to help improve outreach efficiency.

Metcalf and Angle will work closely with Stroud Water Research Center, a boots-on-the-ground partner in the watershed, and Farm Journal Media, a trusted source for agricultural information. The researchers will use the Farm Journal’s communications platforms to deliver the messaging, and Farm Journal Media will also serve as project advisers to ensure both messaging and conservation practices help agriculture and farm families in the region.

Metcalf and Angle said they’re also excited to employ interdisciplinary partnerships across the UM campus for maximum effect.

“We live in a time of extraordinary conservation challenges, and we need innovative social science collaborations to help find solutions,” Metcalf said. “We’re excited to combine our marketing and conservation expertise to see how we can help.”

“This collaboration is particularly exciting because it strikes at the core of our motivations as researchers,” Angle said. “Using the tools of our trade to help people make better choices and affect conservation outcomes is a
tremendous opportunity."

The grant was awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, a partnership between NFWF and the EPA's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program. The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is dedicated to protecting the bay by helping local communities clean up and restore their polluted rivers and streams. The fund advances cost-effective and creative solutions with financial and technical assistance.

In early December, they announced more than $13.1 million in grants to support the restoration and conservation of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The grants will generate nearly $21.9 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of nearly $35 million.

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 4,500 organizations and committed more than $4.8 billion to conservation projects.

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Contact: Alex Metcalf, UM assistant professor of human dimensions, 406-243-6673, alex.metcalf@umontana.edu; Justin Angle, UM associate professor of marketing, 206-650-5522, justin.angle@umontana.edu.
UM Prepares for First-Ever Fall Commencement

December 10, 2018

MISSOULA – The University of Montana will hold its first-ever Fall Commencement Ceremony at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 15, in the Dennison Theatre.

Montana Attorney General Tim Fox, who earned three degrees from UM – a Bachelor of Arts degree in geology in 1981, a Juris Doctor in 1987 and a Master in Public Administration in 2018 – will serve as the keynote speaker. Fox has served two terms as attorney general, elected in 2012 and re-elected in 2016.

During the ceremony, graduates will receive their diplomas as their names are read and doctoral candidates will be hooded by their faculty advisers. The event will last about two hours and will livestream at https://bit.ly/2QHSsEv.

Fall Commencement will be a smaller, more intimate and less formal event than the traditional Spring Commencement and is an opportunity to celebrate students who are not able to attend the spring event.

For more information, visit https://www.umt.edu/registrar/Commencement/fall20181/default.php.
Contact: Paula Short, director of communications, UM Office of the President, 406-243-5806, paula.short@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The top six students enrolled in Introduction to Public Speaking at the University of Montana showcased their skills Dec. 6 during the Last Best Speakers Competition on campus.

Grayden Hidalgo of Dacula, Georgia, was named the top speaker in the persuasive category, and Bridger Liston of Missoula was the top informative.
speaker. They each earned $100.

The persuasive runner-up was Katrina Liston of Missoula, and Alex Carey of Bozeman took second place for informative. Both received $25.

The other two Last Best Speakers competitors were Burkleigh Yost of Pocatello, Idaho (informative), and Ava Sweet of Portland, Oregon (persuasive).

Participants in the competition, which takes place each semester, include the top informative and persuasive speakers enrolled in the course during spring semester. The top speakers from each section engage in a preliminary competition, and then six finalists speak during the Last Best Speaker Competition to earn the “Last Best Speaker” honor.

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Contact: Betsy Wackernagel Bach, professor, UM Department of Communication Studies, 406-243-6119, betsy.bach@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – High school students from around the region showcased their knowledge of international issues during the 53rd annual Montana Model United Nations Conference held recently at the University of Montana.

More than 300 high schoolers from 21 Montana and Idaho schools represented 110 UN countries at the conference. Debate topics ranged from cybersecurity and religious tolerance to climate migration and terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

Six schools received awards at the conference, with Outstanding School going toward the top 10 percent, Distinguished School for the top 20 percent and Honorable School for the top 30 percent. Participating schools, including the award winners, were:

- Anaconda High School
- Missoula’s Big Sky High School
- Billings Senior High School
- Bozeman High School
High School Students Win Honors at UM Model UN Conference - UM News - University Of Montana

- **Coeur d'Alene** Charter Academy, Large Delegation Distinguished School
- **Columbia Falls** High School
- **Darby** High School
- **Lewistown**’s Fergus High School
- **Kalispell**’s Flathead High School, Large Delegation Outstanding School
- **Kalispell**’s Glacier High School
- **Great Falls** High School, Small Delegation Honorable School
- **Hamilton** Christian Academy, Small Delegation Distinguished School
- **Helena** High School
- **Missoula**’s Hellgate High School, Large Delegation Honorable School
- **Kalispell**’s Heritage Learning, Small Delegation Outstanding School
- **Boulder**’s Jefferson High School
- **Big Sky**’s Lone Peak High School
- **Livingston**’s Park High School
- **Ronan** High School
- **Missoula**’s Sentinel High School
- **Whitefish** High School

Students from eight of the schools earned Top 25 Seniors awards, becoming eligible for scholarships to UM. The top schools and seniors from this year’s Model UN Conference are:

- Big Sky High School: Madi Basile, representing Australia.
- Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy: Merrick Bonar, representing New Zealand; Karson Chrispens, representing New Zealand; Zachary DeLuca, representing Nigeria; Sam Johns, representing Micronesia; Ben Lambert, representing New Zealand; Dana Nicol, representing New Zealand; Nathan Ralston, representing South Korea; and Ben Zepeda, representing Bolivia.
- Flathead High School: Annabelle Pukas, representing Jordan; Melissa Roybal, representing South Africa; and Amy Smith, representing Thailand.
- Great Falls High School: Taylor Curry and Zach Scherneke, representing Poland.
- Hamilton Christian Academy: Dakoda Hanksin, representing the United States.
- Hellgate High School: Somasundaran Arens, representing Finland; Aileen Beaton, representing Uganda; Hanna Huang, representing Canada; Konnor Johnston, representing Angola; Samuel Lund, representing Canada; Sophia Richter, representing Sweden; and Lucy Sirrs, representing Finland.
- Heritage Learning: Elizabeth Buckner, representing China.
- Sentinel High School: Madeline Braun, representing the United Kingdom, and Oliver Chinn, representing Afghanistan.

For their position papers, 26 students earned Honorable Position Papers (top 20 percent), 25 students earned Distinguished Position Papers (top 10 percent) and nine students won Outstanding Position Papers (top 1 to 2 percent).


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**Contact:** Dr. Eva-Maria Maggi, adjunct professor, UM Department of Political Science, 406-243-5202, eva.maggi@umontana.edu.
UM Names New Vice President for Operations and Finance

December 05, 2018

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has hired Paul Lasiter as vice president for operations and finance after a national search. Lasiter will begin his duties in January 2019.

A certified public accountant and chartered management accountant, Lasiter has significant experience in higher education financial management at Pepperdine University, where he served as vice president of finance and debt capital markets and previously as vice president and chief financial officer.

UM President Seth Bodnar expressed enthusiasm for the search committee’s selection.

“I am excited to welcome an experienced and thoughtful leader to campus,” Bodnar said. “Paul’s experience at Pepperdine, his facility in managing the financial operations of complex organizations and his commitment to higher education make him an excellent fit at UM.”

Lasiter oversaw the financial operations of Pepperdine’s five colleges and schools with nearly 8,000 full-time and part-time students. As chief financial officer, he was responsible for a $530 million operating budget for eight
UM Names New Vice President for Operations and Finance - UM News - University Of Montana

campuses across Southern California and in Washington, D.C., and six international campuses around the globe.

“I am honored and delighted to work alongside the students, faculty, staff and administrators at the University of Montana,” Lasiter said. “There is no better place to work or more important mission to serve than here at this very special institution. My wife, Alexis, and I are excited about our move to Missoula and becoming a part of the University of Montana family.”

Lasiter’s responsibilities at UM will include strategic financial planning and analysis of resource use and generation; oversight of institutional budgeting and planning; treasury and internal control; accounting, procurement and business services; facilities planning, construction and operations; campus safety; human resources; and auxiliary operations, including the Adams Center.

“I am impressed by Paul’s long record in building, leading and advising financial operations,” Bodnar said.

Lasiter earned a bachelor of science in accounting from Pepperdine University’s Seaver College in 1988. He also completed the Presidential and Key Executive program at Pepperdine University’s Graziadio School of Business and Management in 2005, earning a Master of Business Administration degree. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the California Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

Contact: Paula Short, director of communications, UM Office of the President, 406-243-2311, paula.short@mso.umt.edu.
UM Researchers Receive NASA Grant to Create Tools for Reforestation

December 04, 2018

MISSOULA – As forest managers increasingly see less natural regeneration of low-elevation tree species and increased mortality in planted seedlings, reforestation needs are outpacing the ability of managers to respond.

Three University of Montana researchers recently received a $700,000 NASA grant to
UM Researchers Receive NASA Grant to Create Tools for Reforestation - UM News - University Of Montana

They will develop new tools to combat this problem. They will model the likelihood of tree recruitment declines in Western semi-arid forests – an important precursor to the loss of forest ecosystems.

"Across the West, land managers are charged with stewarding forests, ensuring they continue to grow and thrive," said Solomon Dobrowski, a UM professor of forest landscape ecology in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. "But there are concerns about whether trees in semi-arid regions will regenerate as temperature, drought and wildfires increase."

The project will combine NASA Earth observation data, forest inventory data and a coupled ecohydrologic and plant hydraulics model to simulate drought stress and lethal surface temperatures for conifer seedlings. These indicators are critical drivers of seedling mortality in semi-arid regions globally. The output will highlight areas where natural recruitment is likely to fail or succeed and will help inform U.S. Forest Service restoration plans.

"Forests are the dominant terrestrial ecosystem on the planet and harbor the majority of species on Earth," said Dobrowski, the grant’s principal investigator. "There is real concern that in warmer and drier regions, forests will lose the capacity to naturally regenerate and disappear over time. We need to know where and under what conditions this is likely to happen."

The project team is composed of three researchers at UM – Dobrowski; Marco Maneta, professor of hydrology and hydrologic modeling in the Department of Geosciences; and Zack Holden, affiliate faculty member in the Department of Geography. Partners also include scientists and managers from the Forest Service, including Vince Archer and Shelagh Fox from U.S. Forest Service Region 1 in Missoula.

The project builds on a previous study by these researchers related to water stress in conifer seedlings. The co-authors modeled hydraulic stress and mortality in ponderosa pine seedlings in the Bitterroot watershed of western Montana. They showed that cumulative hydraulic stress, its legacy and consequences for mortality are predictable and can be modeled at various scales.
“Incorporating cumulative effects of drought to better predict tree mortality is at the forefront of ecohydrologic modeling,” Maneta said. “Our previous work demonstrated efficient ways to simulate these time-dependent processes from plot to landscape scales.”

This new project broadens the geographic scope of the previous study to cover the western U.S. by using NASA satellite data to quantify soil moisture across broader regions. The goal is to develop a robust set of tools the USFS and other managers can put into practice to help reforestation efforts succeed across the West.

“Being able to predict the conditions that kill tree seedlings across landscapes requires expertise in biology, ecology, hydrology, climate science and computer science,” Dobrowski said. “Being able to apply this information to inform reforestation efforts requires experience in forest management. No single individual has all of these skills.”

He said a key strength of this project lies in bringing together people from various disciplines and from academia and government agencies to allow for basic science to be translated to tools for decision-making.

Work on the project will begin in January.

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**Contact:** Solomon Dobrowski, UM professor of forest landscape ecology, 406-243-6068, solomon.dobrowski@umontana.edu; Marco Maneta, UM professor of hydrology, 406-243-2454, marco.maneta@umontana.edu.
A Parent's Letter to President Bodnar

December 03, 2018
Hello President Bodnar,

My name is Tonya Robinson, and I briefly met you last year at the (UM Conference on Undergraduate Research) award ceremony. My daughter, Autumn Robinson, received an award for her poster presentation. The reason I am writing you is to acknowledge the incredible opportunities my daughter has had at UM and share my appreciation for Dr. George Stanley, Kallie Moore (I believe she is the UM Paleontology Center collection manager) and Hannah Sheppard.

With the mentorship of Dr. George Stanley, Autumn worked on a project as a senior at Hellgate High School in the Advanced Problems in Science class. Through this mentorship and teamwork, Autumn, Hannah and Dr. Stanley’s research was published by the Journal of Earth Sciences. Autumn was invited to be a speaker at the National (Geological Society of America) Meeting in Indianapolis this week, where she delivered a 15-minute presentation on their research. What an incredible opportunity! She presented to professional geologists, academic geologists and graduate students as a sophomore from the University of Montana.

I also wanted to acknowledge Kallie Moore. Autumn volunteers at the Paleontology Center, and Kallie has helped her in many ways! Autumn has reached out to her with questions and is learning by working side by side with Kallie in the lab. I think this says a lot about the University of Montana and how committed everyone is to the success of the students.

I am motivated to write this to you for many reasons, and being a proud mom is for sure one of them. I also want to make you aware of this accomplishment due to the support Autumn has had at UM. She is currently working on a project with Dr. Secor in his lab with another incredible team of people. I also have a senior in high school that has spent three years working on different projects in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. I will actually be visiting campus with her on Thursday, as she is narrowing down her options on where she will attend school.

Overall, I would like to express appreciation to you and UM on the culture that we have experienced, to Dr. Stanley,
Hannah Shepard and Kallie Moore for their role in the success of my daughter and to bring attention to these individuals for the impact they make.

Thank you for taking time to read this!

Tonya Robinson, Parent of UM Student

Contact: Paula Short, UM director of communications, 406-243-5806, paula.short@umontana.edu.
December 03, 2018

MISSOULA – The musical memoir created by Nashville artist Tim Ryan and recorded at the University of Montana’s Dennison Theatre in June 2017 is now playing on PBS stations nationwide. It will air at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, on MontanaPBS stations.

The live show, “Play Me Montana,” was Ryan’s magnum opus – a symphonic tribute to his life growing up on the Flathead Indian Reservation and playing music with his grandfather Vic Cordier. UM students, faculty and staff helped bring the show to life, and now a 40-minute recorded version called “My Grandpa’s Fiddle” is reaching wider audiences.

It features over 25 musical guests from the Flathead Indian Reservation, the Missoula Symphony Orchestra, three-time Grammy winning artist Lari White and many more musical guests. MontanaPBS stations will feature a full-length, hourlong version of the show.

Ryan has recorded for CBS, RCA and Warner Bros. Records and has written
hit songs for artists such as George Strait, Randy Travis, Trisha Yearwood and others. He studied adaptive physical therapy at UM before following his dreams of musical stardom to Nashville in 1987 with his wife, Peggy, a UM finance graduate.

“This show is the highlight of my career,” Ryan said. “I think everybody deep down would like to tell their own story. It gives you a sense of freedom and accomplishment, and I’m fortunate to be able to do it.”

Ryan estimates that the show – which has aired in cities such as Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, New York City and Minneapolis – has had upward of 100 million views on PBS. When deciding where to record the live show, he wanted “the look and the smell and textures of Montana.” UM was the obvious choice.

“It was important for Peggy and me to reach back to the school,” Ryan said of UM. “There is so much talent, and the students are wonderful. We thought this is hopefully a way to get a few of them on board and so they can say, ‘I worked on a pretty neat project.’”

Planning the show at UM, he met people like College of Business Professor Mike Morelli, director of UM’s Entertainment Management Program. Morelli helped manage event details so Ryan could focus on the music. Ryan also met UM students, who he said “worked tirelessly” to make the event happen.

One of those students was Sadie Framness, a senior from Whitefish who served as the event’s stage manager along with two assistant stage managers from the UMEM program. For Framness, a fine arts major who intends to stage manage musicals in New York City after graduation, working on “Play Me Montana” was an opportunity she couldn’t pass up.

“There were at least 100 performers within that show, and the biggest cast I’ve had previously is a cast of 32,” she said. “I feel very blessed and special to have been chosen to work on this.”
Ryan, whose full name is Tim Ryan Rouillier, plans to take the show on tour nationally and internationally beginning in fall 2019.

“Performing it live in Montana and using people from all over the state was such a brilliant idea,” Framness said. “Tim will have this piece of work for the rest of his life, and so will everyone involved.”

MontanaPBS (KUFM-TV in Missoula, KUSM-TV in Bozeman, KUKL-TV in Kalispell, KBGS-TV in Billings, KUGF-TV in Great Falls and KUHM-TV in Helena) is a service of the University of Montana and Montana State University. For more information, visit http://www.montanapbs.org/.

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Contact: Mike Morelli, UM Entertainment Management director, 406-243-5810, mike.morelli@mso.umt.edu.
MISSOULA – When a community completes noticeable infrastructure changes, do visitors have a better image of that community and spend more money? That was the question the University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research asked about Gardiner in its latest study.

The study assessed image perceptions, spending and activities before and after the Gardiner Gateway Project. The project aimed to restore and enhance the Roosevelt Arch entrance to Yellowstone National Park, create pedestrian-friendly zones, and renovate Park Street with new parking, sidewalks, a visitor center with public restrooms and improved signage. The infrastructure also was designed to ease traffic flow into the park and provide a county park capable of hosting large events.

“Since the infrastructure change was aimed at economic development, this study allowed us to assess visitors’ spending and image before the changes and then afterward,” ITRR Director Norma Nickerson said. “It’s rare to
have an opportunity to survey visitors over two time periods like this. And the results certainly verify that infrastructure change correlates with higher spending and a higher image of the community by visitors.”

Adjusting for inflation, the study results show that spending increased by $69.48 per day, or $112.77 per trip, in Gardiner. In 2018, visitors were more likely to spend extra time in Gardiner visiting attractions and rafting than before the infrastructure changes.

Visitors’ image of Gardiner significantly improved on 15 out of 22 image variables in 2018 after the changes were completed. Many changes made as part of the project showed positive results. Visitors said that the signage, sidewalks, road quality and nice presentation of the town, as well as the storefronts, had significantly improved since 2013.

Not all the changes, however, were improvements. Visitors did not assess parking and summer traffic flow as better in 2018, even though the project aimed to improve both of those issues.

“That may be partly explained by the 22 percent increase in visitation to Yellowstone’s north entrance over that five-year time frame,” Nickerson said.

“The findings assured us, and possibly other communities contemplating infrastructure changes, that it can pay off in terms of economic development,” said Jeff Guengerich, Gardiner Chamber of Commerce president. “Overall, we are pleased with these results.”

Tourism is a $4.7 billion industry for Montana. Rural communities in Montana, such as Gardiner, continue to strive for economic diversity and stability. The study shows infrastructure improvements to a small community to be a viable strategy, since both spending and image improved after development. Other communities may use the study results to show decision-makers that investing in their community can provide economic strength for their future.

The full study is available at https://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr_pubs/375/. All information and reports published by ITRR are online at http://www.itrr.umt.edu.

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