November 2019 news releases

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Workshop Provides Professional Development to Teachers in the Flathead Watershed

November 27, 2019

POLSON
exciting new training opportunity available to K-12 teachers in the Flathead Watershed – a workshop titled “Flathead Watershed through the Seasons” (FWTTS).

The workshop was
made possible by the Glacier National Park Conservancy, with additional support from the University of Montana’s Flathead Lake Biological Station and in-kind contributions from numerous local agencies and organizations that include the U.S. Forest Service, Glacier National Park and Lone Pine State Park.

“The aim of the workshop is to produce and provide a high-quality educational experience and development training for our teachers,” said Teresa Wenum, a conservation education specialist for the Forest Service and one of the driving forces behind FWTTS. “We wanted to give teachers the opportunity to engage in place-based learning and start building connections with experts and professionals in their local communities.”

The FWTTS was workshop planned and organized by a steering committee comprising Flathead Community of Resource Educators (CORE) members. Flathead CORE is a broad network of individuals, educators and organizations that increase awareness and understanding about the natural, historical and cultural resources of the Flathead region.

The workshop offers four independent sessions to a group of teachers. Each session provides place-based learning through ongoing field experiences and takes place at a different geographic location within the Flathead.
Workshop Provides Professional Development to Teachers in the Flathead Watershed - UM News - University Of Montana

Watershed during a different time of year. Only 8 to 12 teachers are accepted into the workshop to ensure an engaging and hands-on experience. The Flathead Watershed spans from southeastern British Columbia and Glacier National Park in the north to the Clark Fork drainage in the south.

For the FWTTS steering committee, connecting teachers with place and experts and professionals from all over the Flathead Watershed is a vital piece of the workshop experience.

The workshop engages a diverse cast of natural resource land management agencies, businesses, nonprofits and schools within the watershed. These experts and professionals are involved in the programming of each session, providing engaging activities and discussions to help teachers learn more about the place they live.

Wenum said that in addition to connecting teachers with local experts, the workshop also offers tools and support to help participants integrate more place-based learning into their own classrooms.

“We made a point not to give the teachers any specific curriculum to use,” Wenum said. “These teachers know their students, and they know what’s best for their classrooms. We wanted to give them some tools for their toolbox, but we really want to allow them to think creatively and collaborate with other teachers to develop curriculum that would work best for them.”

Teachers who complete all four sessions in the year-long workshop can receive 40 Pupil Instruction Related hours or Office of Public Instruction renewal units. They also receive continued support from FWTTS organizers after the workshop is over, along with the opportunity to apply for mini-grants of up to $200 to help with classroom lesson implementation.

The yearlong workshop is modeled after the highly successful Forest for Every Classroom professional development program, which has a proven track record of success and has been offered by the Forest Service for two decades. But while the Forest for Every Classroom program engages teachers with local forests, FWTTS expands the scope
Workshop Provides Professional Development to Teachers in the Flathead Watershed - UM News - University Of Montana

to create a place-based learning program focused on the entire Flathead Watershed. This means that teachers not only learn about their area forests, but also the streams, rivers and lakes that support them.

“There was a lot about the Forest for Every Classroom program that we really liked, but we decided to focus on the Flathead Watershed because it encompasses everything,” said Melissa Sladek, science communication specialist for Glacier National Park and a member of the FWTTS steering committee. “It’s such an important piece of our landscape, economy and culture. To be able to connect teachers with our watershed and the ways that it is changing and being threatened has been a neat experience – not to mention extremely important for this area’s future sustainability.”

Planning for the FWTTS workshop first began in March 2017, when the workshop steering committee held a community meeting to gauge interest and received an overwhelming response.

Now in the midst of its pilot year, a group of eight teachers who represent K-12 classrooms from all over the Flathead Watershed already have participated in two of the four FWTTS sessions. The first session involved a four-day, three-night retreat at the Glacier Institute’s Big Creek Outdoor Education Center during the summer. In September, the group spent Friday evening and all day Saturday at the Flathead Lake Biological Station in Yellow Bay.

“I felt like the entire workshop was an exquisitely curated experience,” one teacher submitted in a post-session survey. “I loved the passion and knowledge of all the presenters and how their unique perspectives created greater understanding of the issues facing the watershed. I also loved being able to collaborate across grade levels and schools – this is a rare experience.”

Next on the agenda, the FWTTS teachers will spend a winter session at the Izaak Walton Inn in Essex outside of Glacier National Park before closing out the program at Lone Pine State Park in the spring.

Outside of travel to and from the workshop locations, all aspects of the workshop are provided free of charge to the teachers, thanks to the financial support of the Glacier National Park Conservancy. The Flathead Lake Biological Station also provides support to the workshop, covering the room and board for participants during the fall workshop session at the station facilities in Yellow Bay.

For members of FWTTS steering committee, the inaugural year of the workshop has been an incredible experience.

“It’s been really rewarding,” said Sladek. “I’m so glad to be a part of it. The fact that we have teachers who are so dedicated and innovative and interested in making this a better place for our kids … I’m continually amazed by our Montana educators.”

With momentum behind the workshop at full steam, the steering committee is already making preparations for 2020.

Teachers interested in participating in the next FWTTS workshop can expect the application period to open either in January or February of 2020. Any K-12 educator currently teaching at a school in the Flathead Watershed region is eligible to apply. A maximum of 12 teachers will be accepted into the program.

For more information about the Flathead Watershed through the Seasons workshop, visit the Glacier Institute’s
Flathead CORE members include Glacier National Park, Flathead National Forest, Glacier Institute, FLBS, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Lone Pine State Park, the Northwest Montana Educational Cooperative, Forest for Every Classroom graduates and the Whitefish Center for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship.

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UM Health Center Nurses Receive International Recognition

November 25, 2019

MISSOULA – Two University of Montana nurses are the only ones in the state to be awarded a prestigious Certificate in Travel Health from the International Society of Travel Medicine.

Registered nurses Dionne Peterson and Deb Lassila, who has a Bachelor of Science in nursing, work at UM's
Curry Health Center.
The certificate recognizes individual excellence in the knowledge of travel medicine with tests administered annually at locations around the world.

“It brings excellence to our clinic because we have access to providers worldwide as a medical resource,” Peterson said. “It truly is an international society.”

The broad level of knowledge needed to pass the certificate exam includes knowing World Health Organization standards for international care. Certified travel health professionals also are required to accrue continuing education credits and renew their certification every 10 years.

“It demonstrates both of our commitment to travel medicine,” Lassila said.

Both women have worked as nurses for over 14 years and were in the first graduating class of the Montana State University nursing program at UM in Missoula. Peterson has spent the past 13 at Curry Health Center, while Lassila has practiced at UM for three years.

Both UM nurses enjoy specializing in travel medicine within the International Travel Clinic at Curry Health Center. The clinic offers pre- and post-travel consultations to UM students and employees planning to travel abroad. Appointments are available by calling 406-243-4330.

“It’s our commitment to our students, faculty and staff here at the University,” said Peterson of the importance of the certification. “It’s a stamp of excellence.”

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UM News

UM Campus One of Eight Nationally Selected for VISTA Recruiter

November 25, 2019

MISSOULA – Montana Campus Compact at the University of Montana, an organization that educates students for civic and social responsibility, recently was awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA recruiter position as part of a new pilot program. UM was one of only eight universities nationally to receive the new half-time position.

The new Corporation for National and Community Service Program is designed to encourage participation in national service opportunities. Each of the universities selected will use the new recruiter in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA to increase awareness of service opportunities on campus and in surrounding areas.

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members work with organizations to combat poverty. Members earn a living allowance, health benefits, training, access to the MTCC network and an end-of-service benefit.

“Just like going to college, a year of service can be a life-changing experience,” said Josh Vanek, the MTCC associate director. “It’s an honor to be selected for this new pilot program, which will allow us to explore the combined power of higher education and national service.”
Other schools chosen for this pilot project include the Rochester Institute of Technology, Tufts University, the University of Hawaii, the University of Rochester, the University of Virginia, Utah State University and Wake Forest University.

Participation in this AmeriCorps VISTA partnership provides an opportunity for colleges to strengthen the civic engagement of students and promote the transformative experience of national service, all while addressing poverty in the surrounding community. Each school will conduct their own search for a part-time campus recruiter this fall to implement this work. The ideal campus recruiter is a graduate student who has served as an AmeriCorps VISTA member or completed a term of service through another AmeriCorps program.

AmeriCorps VISTA provides a pathway to employment, further advancing the hiring potential of the schools' graduates. AmeriCorps VISTA members develop leadership skills and gain professional experience while supporting nonprofit organizations and public agencies to grow their capacity.

With more than 600 employers, the Employers of National Service program recognizes the valuable skills gained by more than 1 million Americans who have participated in AmeriCorps since 1994 and increases employment opportunities for those who join national service. About two-thirds of AmeriCorps VISTA members have a four-year degree or higher, making colleges and universities key strategic recruitment partners.

For more information visit http://bit.ly/2pMrwrQ.

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Contact: Josh Vanek, Montana Campus Compact associate director, 406-243-5175, vanek@mtcompact.org.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana School of Theatre & Dance will hold an evening of diverse, unique and original choreography during its 2019-20 production of “Dance in Concert” this December.

“Dance in Concert,” produced by dance Associate Professor Heidi Jones Eggert and visiting Assistant Professor Brooklyn Draper, runs at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 5-7, as well as at 2 p.m. Dec. 7. All performances take place in the Montana Theatre in UM’s Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center.

Tickets cost $12 for students, $16 for seniors, $20 for general admission and $10 for children 12 and under. Purchase tickets by calling the UMArts Box Office at 406-
243-4581 from noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday or ordering online at http://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/.

The evening promises intriguing choreographic works by faculty, students and guest artists, bringing vastly different dances to UM's beautiful Montana Theatre in eight works.

This year's “Dance in Concert” features guest artist Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner, a renowned choreographer and dance educator committed to inclusion, representation and social consciousness. Gutierrez-Garner restaged her work “Camino Real” with 12 dance majors and costumes designed by theatre Professor Alessia Carpoca. “Camino Real” is a modern group work inspired by the human vulnerability and fragility at the center of the border crisis. This piece examines the complex and often divisive issue through an abstract lens, maintaining focus on the compassion necessary for resolution.

Eggert, head of UM's dance program, makes a tongue-in-cheek comment on the evolution of courtship and grandeur, as seen through the dance trends from the 17th through the 21st century, in “Livin’ Vivaldi Loca.” “Dance in Concert” also premieres Draper's newest work.

The night also is a special opportunity for three students graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance. Alyssa Enright, Tiki Preston and Kyle Robinson will present their creative projects as the culmination of four years of hard work and dedication to their craft. Additionally, local professional company Bare Bait Dance will make a special appearance with an excerpt from their most recent production, “Here Be Dragons.” By popular demand, Logan Prichard, a Missoula favorite and recent UM B.F.A. graduate, along with Preston, will perform “Biovular Associates,” a duet they premiered in the spring.

For more information, email heidi.eggert@umontana.edu or brooklyn.draper@umontana.edu. A complete schedule of UM School of Theatre & Dance productions for the academic year is available at http://bit.ly/2KEB9zM.
Contact: Heidi Jones Eggert, UM associate professor of dance, 406-529-5401, heidi.eggert@umontana.edu; Brooklyn Draper, UM visiting assistant professor of dance, 208-670-0593, brooklyn.draper@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The second-ever Fall Commencement at the University of Montana will take place at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, in the Adams Center. Distinguished UM scholar Dr. Albert Borgmann, Regents Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, will be the featured speaker.

More than 200 students from all UM departments and
programs are expected to participate. Adams Center doors will open at 8 a.m., and candidates for graduation will line up in the West Auxiliary Gymnasium.

Tickets are not required for Fall Commencement, and seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Campus parking will be free in most lots that day. The ceremony will last about two hours and feature individual recognition of every student as they cross the stage, as well as the hooding of doctoral students by their advisers.

The speaker, Borgmann, taught at UM for decades starting in 1970. In 1996, he was named UM’s second Regents Professor, which is the highest faculty member rank in the Montana University System. A specialist in the philosophy of society and culture, Borgmann is the author of five books, including “Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life” and “Real American Ethics: Taking Responsibility for Our Country.”

Now retired, Borgmann created and managed UM’s Philosophy Forum for more than 30 years, a place where anyone from campus the wider community could present their scholarly work each week. Described by his colleagues as a kind human being who is often generous with praise, Borgmann also is a forceful critic of sloppy intellectual work and bad ideas.

For more information on Fall Commencement visit http://bit.ly/2QsV6NN.

UM’s first Fall Commencement was held in December 2018 with Montana Attorney General Tim Fox as the featured speaker. Fall Commencement is designed to be smaller, more intimate and less formal than the traditional Spring Commencement. It celebrates those students who may not be able to attend in the spring.

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MISSOULA – On a typical June day in Yellowstone, it’s not unusual to see hundreds of bison grazing in the Lamar Valley. The herds appear to aimlessly move back and forth through meadows threaded by a winding river, just passive figures in an idyllic scene. But as it turns out, that’s far from the
A team of researchers including University of Montana Professor Mark Hebblewhite and alumnus Dan Eacker discovered that with every blade of grass the bison ingest, they fundamentally manipulate the landscape to maintain the best forage for themselves. The research was published this week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a leading journal for new discoveries across disciplines.

The study found that bison even change the way spring green-up occurs in Yellowstone’s vast grasslands. Without bison moving freely on the landscape, the springtime season of plant growth in Yellowstone would be shorter, the habitat would not be as green and the grasses would not be as nutritious.

Remarkably, that allows bison to migrate differently than other species.

When bison move to higher elevation by mid-to-late summer, the herd’s small army of hooves and hungry mouths cause grasslands to revert to earlier stages of plant growth. In effect, the bison graze with such intensity they turn back the clock on forage green-up, hitting reset on springtime.

The effect of bison on Yellowstone’s plant growth is so strong that sensors on NASA satellites can detect from outer space how grassland dynamics differ between areas that are lightly or heavily grazed. Where Yellowstone bison congregate, plant green-up is different, and it’s not some fluke of local weather – the bison and their intense grazing are the cause.

The discovery, published in PNAS as “Migrating Bison Engineer the Green Wave,” arose through research by a team led by Yellowstone National Park scientists Chris Geremia and Rick Wallen. They worked in partnership with biologists at UM, the University of Wyoming and the U.S. Geological Survey.

“We’ve been studying bison in Yellowstone for over a century, but this idea that bison set the terms of springtime through their movements and grazing was something that’s never been confirmed before in Yellowstone – or anywhere else,” said Geremia, lead bison biologist for Yellowstone National Park.
For many years, ecologists around the globe have recognized that species like bison and wildebeest aggregate in large groups and intensely graze, which creates “grazing lawns” – essentially areas where heavy grazing along with fertilization from urine and dung deposition stimulates near-continual new plant growth.

Repeatedly grazing an area keeps it growing, like a mower clipping a golf course. But most prior studies only had quantified this effect at relatively small scales.

The findings are a result of years of research on Yellowstone bison by Geremia and his YNP colleague Wallen, who deployed GPS collars to track the bison migration and did field experiments to evaluate grazing intensity. For 13 years, the team tracked migrating bison across the park and quantified their foraging habits, taking detailed measurements on plants as the experiments played out. They also collected and analyzed many samples of bison dung.

“The data showed that grasses heavily grazed by bison were more productive compared to exclosures where bison were not allowed to graze,” said Matthew Kauffman, unit leader of the USGS Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Wyoming. “The mowed-down forage had higher ratios of nitrogen to carbon, a standard measure of nutritional quality. And the green-up was earlier, faster, more intense and lasted longer.”

One of the key findings of the study is that all of this intense grazing by bison actually shapes how they migrate in spring across the Yellowstone landscape.

With the ability of wildlife researchers to closely track migratory movements, evidence has grown steadily over the past decade to support the notion that migrating ungulates (hooved mammals) “surf the green wave” of sprouting plants. Mule deer and elk, for example, have been shown to closely choreograph their spring movements so they are always in sync with spring green-up, allowing them to continuously access the most nutritious, newly emerging plants.

A key objective of the study was to evaluate how well bison surfed the green wave. The researchers found that they didn’t do it very well.

Instead of following spring up to higher elevations, bison stopped about two-thirds of the way along their migration and let the wave of spring green-up pass them by. But remarkably, because their stopping allowed them to create profitable grazing lawns as an alternative, they maintained high-quality diets despite being mismatched with the broader patterns of green-up.

That finding sets bison apart from other North American ungulates like mule deer, pronghorn or even elk that must closely time their migrations up to higher elevations at the whim of the green wave, which is dictated by temperature, precipitation and snow melt.

For a species like mule deer, where forage quality is determined solely by the progress of spring, they are “slaves to the green wave.” They must follow it closely to gain the full foraging benefit of migration. This helps explain why mule deer have epic migrations in the American West, topping out at more than 200 miles one way.
Put another way, following the wave of green-up is really important to mule deer, but their grazing is not important to the wave itself. That changes when you have 1,000 bison all grazing across the same grassland. As the title of the paper suggests, bison grazing in large aggregations engineer the green wave.

“We knew that bison migrated, we figured they followed the green wave, but we didn’t know that their influence on the landscape could affect the entire way that spring moves through the mountains and valleys of Yellowstone,” said Jerod Merkle, the Knobloch Professor in Migration Ecology at UW.

“They are not just moving to find the best food, they are creating the best food,” Merkle said. “This happens because bison are aggregate grazers that graze in groups of hundreds or more than a thousand animals.”

The findings raise the question of what these dynamics might have looked like in the past, before European settlement, when tens of millions of bison roamed North America. Grassland productivity and the very dynamics of the grasslands, when occupied by countless bison, would have been radically different than in the grasslands of today.

“Today there is growing effort to restore bison to habitats they once roamed,” said Geremia. “As we seek to reestablish bison, this study shows us what large bison herds are capable of when they are allowed to seek out the best forage and move freely across large landscapes.”

In addition to Geremia and Wallen, who led the fieldwork and analysis, contributors included Kaufmann and Merkle in Wyoming, UM’s Hebblewhite, and Eacker.

“A real strength of our work was the pairing of on-the-ground grassland plots with remote sensing data, as well as GPS collar data from bison,” said Hebblewhite, professor of ungulate habitat ecology at UM. “The fact that we could see the effects of bison on grasslands from space and interpret these effects with a long-term, carefully designed grassland experiments highlights the team’s skillset. Our work shows that bison are capable ecosystem engineers, able to modify grasslands in a way that enhances their own grazing.”

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Students in UM’s Pre-Law Program Earn 91% Acceptance Rate to Law School

November 18, 2019

UM News Service

MISSOULA – Students who participate in the University of Montana’s Pre-Law Program have a 91% acceptance rate to law school, a rate much higher than the national average.

UM’s Pre-Law Program is an advising option that provides students the chance to work closely with an advisor to ensure the student takes the courses needed to successfully apply to law school. These curricular
choices also can help students succeed in law school and in the field. Currently, nearly 100 UM students from majors all across campus participate in the Pre-Law Program.

The acceptance rate to law school for UM students in the pre-law program has averaged 91% over the past six years. The national average acceptance rate to law school is around 75%.

“The Pre-Law Program at UM was created and developed with the goal of helping high-achieving students decide on whether a law career is the right fit for them, prepare for their application to law school during their undergraduate career, and be admitted to the law school that best fits their personal interests and goals,” said Soazig Le Bihan, program director. “It is always a pleasure and honor to bring our students’ potential to fruition.”

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Students in UM’s Pre-Law Program Earn 91% Acceptance Rate to Law School - UM News - University Of Montana

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MISSOULA – This spring the University of Montana College of Education will offer a new course titled The Art and Science of Happiness, helping students learn about myths and truths of well-lived lives so they can develop a better map for finding happiness.

Counseling Professor John Sommers-Flanagan and Professor Emerita Rita Sommers-Flanagan developed the course, which is modeled loosely after other successful happiness classes offered at Yale, Harvard, Duke and other universities. The UM class takes into account the unique challenges to well-being and happiness that Montanans face.

At Yale, a similar course quickly became the most popular class on campus, with over 1,200 students enrolled.

“Along with life and liberty, the Declaration of Independence endorses the right to pursue happiness, but this right doesn’t come with a map or even a definition,” said John Sommers-Flanagan. “It’s not like we can program our
phone’s GPS to lead us to happiness. In fact, if we focus too much on happiness, we can end up feeling sad.

“As odd as it may sound, from a psychological perspective, the Declaration of Independence may contribute to people feeling they’ve failed at achieving happiness. That's partly because the roads to happiness aren't necessarily solo adventures. Many factors come into play, including genetics, social relationships, economic status, culture and meaning.”

Each week, the course will focus on core research studies and how students can apply that insight to real life.

“This class won’t just be lecture after lecture,” said Rita Sommers-Flanagan. “On most Thursdays students break into small ‘Happiness Labs’ where they can engage in activities designed to stimulate happiness, well-being and positive mental health.”

“As is true with the Declaration of Independence and life itself, the University of Montana happiness course offers no guarantees for a happier life,” John Sommers-Flanagan said. “However, full engagement in the curriculum will provide intellectual stimulation, as well as information on distinctions between happiness, joy, fulfillment and psychological well-being.”

He said he hopes there will be some side effects associated with the course, including increased laughter, more time spent savoring the good things in life and a greater awareness of how to define and pursue a well-lived life.

The three-credit course will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. during spring semester 2020. The course number is COUN195, and registration is open on CyberBear at https://cyberbear.umt.edu/.

For more information on the class, call Sommers-Flanagan at 406-243-5252 or email john.sommers-flanagan@umontana.edu.

###

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UM News

UM President and Corporate Partners to Present at National Dreamforce Conference

November 15, 2019

MISSOULA – University of Montana President Seth Bodnar will speak Wednesday, Nov. 20, as part of the massive Dreamforce conference in San Francisco.

This year’s Dreamforce speaker lineup includes former President
Barack Obama, Apple CEO Tim Cook, World Cup soccer player Megan Rapinoe and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, among many others. A sell-out crowd of 170,000 will attend Dreamforce, which will include 2,700 information sessions.

Since 2003, Dreamforce has gathered together worldwide users of Salesforce, a cloud computing service that helps businesses connect with customers, partners and potential customers.

Bodnar will present a session titled “How to Build Your Salesforce Army” with LeeAnne Rimel of Salesforce and Sonia Flamm of Advanced Technology Group, a Cognizant Company. They will highlight collaborative education programs created in Missoula to grow Salesforce expertise for local corporate partners.

UM, ATG and Salesforce developed a course for UM’s College of Business – Information Infrastructures: A Strategic Perspective – as well as a 12-week training program titled “All In Missoula (AIM),” which was offered through Missoula College. Both will serve as case studies for the Dreamforce presentation.

Peter Coffee, vice president for strategic research with Salesforce, will introduce the Dreamforce session. He has assisted UM’s College of Business program for several years and consults frequently with ATG, and he praised of UM’s agility and strength in developing the programs.

“The speed and intensity of innovation – in every economic sector and institution of society – require students to master current technology, to engage with new material, to work in diverse teams and to adapt quickly to demands for future-ready skills,” Coffee said. “Public/private partnerships between universities and business and technology sectors will be vital for delivering an education that meets this accelerating challenge.”

Last month, UM launched its Tech Skills for Tomorrow Initiative, an effort aimed at providing education and training to address the high-tech workforce needs of Montana businesses.

“Our collaboration with ATG Cognizant and Salesforce is one embodiment of Tech Skills for Tomorrow,” said Bodnar. “Universities have an important role to play in addressing workforce demands and preparing students for
success. We call it a 'tomorrow-proof' education – one that empowers students to reinvent themselves and adapt their skills in an ever-changing world. I'm eager to share our experience and learn about new possibilities to expand and build upon our success.”

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**Contact:** Paula Short, UM communications director, 406-243-5806, paula.short@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – Renowned mountaineer, alpine athlete and author Conrad Anker was at the University of Montana this week as a guest of the National Museum of Forest Service History. He presented a lecture about the relationship between America’s national forests and the outdoor recreation industry.

The leader of The North Face climbing team for 26 years, Anker advocates for positive climate action with the outdoor sports community. He and his wife, Missoula native Jennifer Lowe-Anker, provide social and economic assistance to remote Himalayan communities through the Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation and the American Himalayan Foundation. Anker also is active in the national advocacy organization the Access Fund, which keeps U.S. climbing areas open and works to conserve the climbing environment.

After his lecture, Anker sat down with UM News for a Griz Chat about climate change, the pressures of social media on young athletes and the irreplaceable connection humans have
with the outdoors.

**UM News:** You’re at UM this week to give a presentation on our national forests. What got you interested in this topic?

**Anker:** Alex Philp, he’s a friend of mine. He got his Ph.D. in Geographic Information Systems from UM, and he’s part of that connection to the history museum. The climbers are sort of the charismatic megafauna of the outdoor industry. They come up with great ideas, they start businesses, and it’s in that capacity that Alex invited me over here.

You're known for your achievements as a climber and explorer, but you're also very active in advocating for environmental preservation and other causes. Why use your influence this way?

**Anker:** I was introduced to advocacy by my parents. My father attended the March on Washington with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in responsibility as a citizen of the United States.

My mother was an immigrant from East Germany and had seen the ravages of the Second World War. We had it good here, and she didn’t want me to forget that. She helped my family develop a responsibility to ensure that people everywhere have as good a quality of life as we have here in this day and age.

**What are today’s causes that you're most concerned with?**

**Anker:** The most pressing issue is climate change. If I get another 20 or 30 years out of my life, I’ll be able to go prism of how you base your decisions is sort of the key thing.

The U.S. represents 3% of the world’s population, but we consume somewhere between 14 and 20% of the world’s resources and produce a corresponding amount of pollution. We are the go-to nation for cultural ideas. The rest of the world is looking to us, so we need to be leaders on this and in the past few years we haven't.
Young people spend increasing time indoors looking at screens. What are we losing when we stop going outside?

Anker: Live interaction with someone. There are nuances in the unwritten word. You can pick some of that up in broadcast, but you don’t have that same level of communication. Humans evolved to where we are by understanding in-person communication. If a child starts out with a handheld computer, it’s really different.

As for not going outdoors, if you want to sit in a building and run on a treadmill yeah, you’re getting your exercise in, but you could go run up Rattlesnake and you could smell the leaves decomposing and maybe be concerned that a bear is around the corner. Or you could interact with another hiker. Participatory and experiential outdoor activities help us become better people in this super-heavy-duty crazy society we’re in. It’s a good antidote. A lot of people are better off if they can get out and recreate.

Speaking of screens, today’s young athletes are expected to be influencers and role models on social media in a way that wasn’t expected of previous generations. What do you make of that pressure?

Anker: It is new. I mean Facebook’s only what, a dozen years old? It only started to get traction in 2008 or so, and then Instagram happened in 2011, and now we’re understanding that social media is depressing. Everyone’s going presenting perfect vacations with perfect dogs in a very curated lifestyle.

Then you have these “influencers” who are serving as economic models for things like yoga mats. But the reality is they’re mining your data and they’re selling you advertisements. When people post, the platform automatically triggers a certain neural pathways, which may be an unintended outcome of the formula. Still, people keep going to back to look at likes, comments and following.

At The North Face, we think critically about the marketing and branding pressure on athletes. We have a lot of conversations about how to protect sponsored athletes from social pressure and depression, but still be authentic and use social channels for a positive force.

You make expeditions into remote parts of the world. What’s on your mind when you’re out there?

Anker: If I’m climbing it’s high consequence, so I have to really focus. For someone that’s hyper-situationally aware, that puts you in the zone. You can’t afford to make a mistake, and you have to really see where you’re going and what you’re doing with. That is my way of rejuvenation. My credit card bills and all the noise of an oversubscribed society are still there. I’m not a monk sitting in a monastery meditating all day long with no stimuli coming in shouting for my attention. When I’m on expedition, I’ll try to immerse myself in the culture that’s there. If I’m climbing in the Himalayas or Antarctica, I’m thinking about the area’s natural environment.

What’s your favorite book you’ve read recently?

Anker: Oddly enough, when I go on expedition is when I read a long-form book. I reread James Clavell’s “Shogun” last year, which is this massive tome of classic storytelling. My day to day is The New York Times, The Economist, The Atlantic and Harpers, and I layer-up National Geographic and long-form journalism. I finished one last night about salmon in this part of the United States. We want preservation of wilderness, and we want economic might, and they used the Columbia River as an example that you can’t have both. It’s a fascinating story.
UM Computer Science Researcher Earns $1.1M Grant for Machine Learning

MISSOULA – University of Montana computer science researcher Travis Wheeler recently was awarded a four-year $1.1 million grant to develop machine learning approaches to improving the accuracy and speed of sequence annotation.

Sequence annotation involves identifying and labeling features in DNA, RNA and protein sequences. It’s a critical step for helping understand the evolution, function and patterns of activity for these biological components.

While this is his first National Institutes of Health Research Project Grant, Wheeler is no stranger to securing funding. He is in his final year of investigator funding from UM’s Center for Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics, and his
research group also is supported by two other NIH grants.

“Modern molecular biology depends on effective methods for annotating biological sequences quickly and accurately,” Dr. Wheeler said. “Mutations and sequencing errors are sort of like misspellings in biological sequences, so our software needs to be able to annotate sequences despite misspellings – while at the same time avoiding incorrect annotations.”

He said the scale of genome sequencing efforts today is breathtaking, and this requires the development of increasingly fast ways to annotate those sequences.

“To reach these goals, students working with me will build on recent advances in a field called deep learning, which is at the heart of modern approaches to text processing and image labeling,” Wheeler said. “I’m excited to get started!”

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UM Computer Science Researcher Earns $1.1M Grant for Machine Learning - UM News - University Of Montana
Can the Cats Food Drive Runs Nov. 9-23

November 07, 2019

MISSOULA – In the lead up to the Griz-Cat football game on Nov. 23, Montana’s two largest universities and the communities of Missoula and Bozeman will compete in a friendly little food drive.

The 20th annual Can the Cats Food Drive kicks off Saturday, Nov. 9, and runs until the Brawl of the Wild game in Bozeman on Nov. 23. Both communities will compete to see who can collect the most donations for area food pantries.
All donations in Missoula will benefit the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center and the University of Montana Food Pantry, which was established this year on the first floor of the University Center.

“This food drive will help us take care of students and others in the community who are experiencing food insecurity,” said Kat Cowley, UM Food Pantry student coordinator. “And, of course, we would love to take down the Cats in something beyond the football field.”

In 2018, the Missoula community raised 404,897 pounds of food, and the 2019 goal is 406,000. Members of the public are encouraged to donate food, host a food drive, donate, spread the word and volunteer. More information is online at [http://bit.ly/2WPcFsu](http://bit.ly/2WPcFsu).

UM drop-off sites are the President’s Office, Provost’s Office, Adams Center, The Corner Store, The Market, McGill Hall, the Alumni Association, the UM Foundation, the Alexander Blewett III School of Law, the College of Business, Curry Health Center, UM fraternities and sororities, the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, the Office for Student Success and the Undergraduate Advising Center.

Additionally, all UM Campus Dining locations are able to accept cash donations of any size.

Donations also will be accepted during the home Griz football game at Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Nov. 16.

The wider Missoula community offers [many more drop-off sites](http://bit.ly/2WPcFsu), including the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center at 1720 Wyoming St.

“This food drive is a fantastic event that harness our Griz-Cat rivalry to do a lot of good in western Montana,”
Can the Cats Food Drive Runs Nov. 9-23 - UM News - University Of Montana

Cowley said. “I hope a lot of folks choose to help us out.”

Learn more about the UM Food Pantry at http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/food-pantry/default.php.

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**Contact:** Kat Cowley, UM Food Pantry student coordinator, 406-243-5125, umpantry@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – Beginning fall 2020, University of Montana students interested in studying business will have a faster route into UM’s College of Business.

Traditionally, students who wish to declare a business major had to be first fully admitted to UM and then formally apply to the College of Business during their sophomore year.

Now, first-year UM students entering the fall semester in 2020 may be invited to the Direct Admit Program within the business college. The new program will allow UM freshmen to declare business as their major rather than can save students time and resources and offer earlier access to required coursework.
“The Direct Admit Program provides students with numerous opportunities to engage more fully with their education through mentorship, networking and leadership development activities,” said Kathleen Tarkalson, director of student success and internships in the College of Business. “For students interested in maximizing their time at UM, this program will jumpstart the process.”

Direct admit business students will still need to complete lower-division course requirements so they will be prepared for upper-division coursework. But they won’t need to apply for admission to the business college.

Along with access to specific scholarships, the Direct Admit Program provides students with early access to the benefits of belonging to the College of Business, including:

- Active engagement with COB faculty, staff, alumni and current students.
- Networking with other high-potential business students.
- Leadership development training.
- Opportunities to explore global business through study abroad immersion trips.
- Invitation to COB special events.
- Priority access to additional COB scholarships.

The College of Business considers a number of factors when making direct admission decisions of applicants, including high school GPA, strength of academic coursework, test scores and a person’s ability to enhance diversity.

UM's College of Business is the only business school in the state and one of the few in the region to offer a Direct Admit Program. More information on applying to UM is online at https://www.umt.edu/admissions/.

The College of Business at UM is nationally renowned and has been named the top business school in the Big Sky Conference by U.S. News and World Report for four consecutive years.

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**Contact:** Kathleen Tarkalson, director of student success and internships, UM College of Business, 406-243-6771, kathleen.tarkalson@umontana.edu.
College of Business Begins Direct Admit Program for Freshmen - UM News - University Of Montana

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MISSOULA – The next installment of the 2019-20 President’s Lecture Series at the University of Montana will feature a scholar who studies the emerging cultural phenomenon of esports and online computer gaming.

T.L. Taylor is a professor of comparative media studies at MIT. She will...
present “Esports in the Age of Networked Broadcast” at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15, in the University Center Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.

As a qualitative sociologist, Dr. Taylor has studied the internet and game studies for over two decades. Her research explores the interrelations between culture and technology in online leisure environments.

“Dr. Taylor is a highly sought-after speaker,” said Robert Saldin, a UM political science professor and co-organizer of the lecture series. “Both the White House and the International Olympics Committee have invited her to special summits focused on gaming.”

Twenty years ago she placed herself at the forefront of research into digital communities, writing in the journal American Behavioral Scientist about the nature of the internet and issues of “plural existence, anonymity/disclosure, online and offline selves/bodies and multiple modes.”

Her 2018 book about game live streaming, “Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming,” is the first of its kind to chronicle the emerging media space of online game broadcasting.

She also wrote “Raising the Stakes: Esports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming,” which explores the rise of esports, as well as “Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture,” a comprehensive study of the massively multiplayer online game “EverQuest.”

In addition, Taylor is the co-founder and director of research at AnyKey, an organization dedicated to supporting and developing fair and inclusive esports. She will host a Q&A to discuss her current project “Inclusion 101” for college campuses, which aims to increase accessibility and inclusivity in gaming programs. This event will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15, in UC Rooms 332-333.

Michael Cassens is a media arts faculty member and director of the fledgling UM esports program.
“Our esports team is delighted that T.L. Taylor is willing to share her experience, research and work with AnyKey on campus, as it closely aligns with our mission to create a new community on campus,” he said.

For more information about Taylor, visit http://tltaylor.com/.

Contact: UM Office of the President, 406-243-2311, thepresident@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana School of Theatre and Dance will perform “Twelfth Night,” William Shakespeare’s most popular comedy, this month.

Directed by UM theatre Professor Bernadette Sweeney, “Twelfth Night” will show at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 13-16, 20-23 and 30, as well as at 2
Popular Shakespeare Comedy to Open at UM Nov. 13 - UM News - University Of Montana

p.m. Nov. 17 and 24 and Dec. 1. All performances take place in the Masquer Theatre in UM's Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center.

General admission tickets cost $20, while senior and student tickets cost $16. Admission for children 12 and under is $10. Call the UMArts Box Office at 406-243-4581 from noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday for tickets, or order online at http://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/.

The play was first performed at London’s Globe Theatre in February 1602 as a tribute to the days between Christmas and Epiphany. The tale celebrates the spirit of the Renaissance Period’s “Feast of Fools” festival that marked the end of the holiday season – a night for revelries and disruption, a time for topsy-turvy celebrations in which servants dressed as their masters, and an evening during which men and women took a walk, quite literally, in one another's shoes. It is the story of twins separated in a shipwreck, of mistaken and manufactured identity, of pranks, costumes, and mischief.

Brimming with some of Shakespeare’s most poetic and beloved language, as well as multiple earnest love stories and musical interludes, “Twelfth Night” is often recognized as the Bard’s most popular comedy.

“‘Twelfth Night’ is a play about love, and how precious it is, wherever and however we find it,” Sweeney said. “In this work, Shakespeare challenges us to live life to the utmost and to find joy.”

For more information, contact Sweeney at 406-241-9113 or bernadette1.sweeney@umontana.edu.

A complete schedule of UM School of Theatre & Dance productions for the academic year is available at http://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/Season/19-20-season.php.

Contact: Bernadette Sweeney, UM professor of theatre, 406-241-9113, bernadette1.sweeney@umontana.edu.
Popular Shakespeare Comedy to Open at UM Nov. 13 - UM News - University Of Montana
UM Exhibition to Explore 120 Years of Printed Imagery

November 04, 2019

MISSOULA – From maps and frontier landscapes to some of the earliest printed images of Native Americans, an upcoming exhibition at the University of Montana will reveal a century of imagery in the United States.

“Manus Festus: Selected Prints from the Meri Jaye Collection” will run Friday, Nov. 15, through Saturday, Dec. 14, in the Paxson Gallery, located in UM’s Performing Arts and Radio-Television Center.

The meaning of the Latin term “manus festus” has evolved over the centuries, but it originally meant “hand-struck.” Dr. Jeremy Canwell,
curator of UM’s Montana Museum of Art and Culture, said the exhibition will draw upon recent gifts of 18th- and 19th-century prints to the University’s Permanent Collection, home to some 12,000 pieces of art.

“The exhibition documents the astonishing development of the printed image over some 120 years,” Canwell said. “It traces the variety of purposes printed imagery was made to serve.

These selected prints tell the story of a remarkable collection and a generous donor.”

He said the works are more than illustrations of colonialism – they arguably constitute the idea of Manifest Destiny, the philosophy that drove 19th-century territorial expansion in the United States.

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**Contact:** Dr. Jeremy Canwell, curator, UM Montana Museum of Art and Culture, 406-243-2019, jeremy.canwell@mso.umt.edu.
Universities are hotbeds for ideas, creativity and entrepreneurship. The University of Montana has given this energy a focus and a home with the establishment of its new Innovation Factory.

Located on the second floor of the University Center, IF will launch with a monthlong series of events titled “30
Days of Innovation,” which runs from Nov. 8 to Dec. 13. Highlights of the diverse happenings include everything from a media and art “hackathon” and presentations by female entrepreneurs to the joys of vacuum-sealed sous vide cooking.

“With the Innovation Factory, we designed a space that provides creative connections, opportunities and resources for all of campus and the wider Missoula community,” said Elizabeth Dove, a UM art professor and IF co-director. “We didn’t take it easy on ourselves with 30 days of programming for our launch, but we wanted to demonstrate the wide spectrum of possibilities offered by this new campus resource.”

“30 Days of Innovation” kicks off at 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8, in the UC. Attendees are invited to visit the IF creative space on the second floor before an “energetic” grand opening event from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the UC Ballroom. Missoula Mayor John Engen will emcee the event, and an interactive panel of Missoula leaders will answer candid questions that help define innovation.

The full schedule for the entire month of events is online at https://www.umt.edu/innovation-factory/calendar.php.

“We want IF to be a gathering place for innovators, creatives and those with great business ideas,” said Brad Allen, IF co-director and a UM art professor. “We want this place to expand the experiences of our students in any discipline. Here, we plan for the greater community to overlap with our UM research enterprise and what our students have to offer.

“We feel this place can catalyze change.”

IF provides connections, opportunities, equipment, studio space and entrepreneurial mentorship for students and community members as they launch projects, develop new skills, and problem solve. It isn’t organized by field or tradition but rather by people teaming up to address challenges through collaboration, iteration, critical thinking, empathy and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Plans for IF began in 2017, when Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, expressed interest in creating a collaborative space where design, entrepreneurship and campus research could come together. In 2018, Whittenburg rented the old bookstore space on the second floor of the UC and began
hosting meetings to reimagine it as an innovation lab.

Then in June 2019, the Blackstone LaunchPad relocated to IF, bringing the expertise of Director Paul Gladen and Associate Director Morgan Slemberger into partnership with IF’s emerging mission.

“Innovation and entrepreneurship have always been a central part of the culture on campus,” Whittenburg said. “The full impact of the creativity of our wonderful faculty and students has potential for greater connectivity in a shared space. The Innovation Factory provides a place for those innovative and entrepreneurial minds to collaborate on multidisciplinary projects and serves as a trailhead to the other innovation spaces on campus.”

IF projects in 2020 include:

- student “IFterns,” who have researched and created designs for a new esports arena being planned for the UC Game Room.
- hosting “Digital Montana,” an educational workshop exploring the unique role of digital infrastructure in Montana’s economy, environment and culture. This event is a collaboration and partnership with the Global Media Technologies and Cultures Lab at MIT, led by UM alumna and MIT Professor Lisa Parks.
- An IFtern team will partner with spectrUM at the new Missoula Public Library and UM faculty members Diana Six and John McCutcheon to create a new permanent interactive display about symbiosis in nature.

The IF directors both hail from UM’s School of Visual and Media Arts. Dove has taught art and design courses at UM since 2000 and now divides her time between teaching and working as lead designer and overseeing IF curriculum. She is eager to build programming for the creative space that challenges students to use design strategies to solve problems across disciplines. Allen teaches UM sculpture and digital fabrication courses while overseeing the IF facility and operations. He leads the extensive IF maker spaces and will deliver weekly workshops to all.

For more information visit https://www.umt.edu/innovation-factory/ or email Dove and Allen at innovationfactory@umontana.edu. You can follow the factory on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/InnovationFactoryUM/.

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Contact: Elizabeth Dove, UM School of Art professor, 406-243-5723, elizabeth.dove@umontana.edu; Brad Allen, UM School of Art professor, 406-243-5723, bradley.allen@umontana.edu.
New Innovation Factory at UM Launches with 30 Days of Events - UM News - University Of Montana
UM, MSU Face Off to Save Lives in Annual Red Cross Blood Drive Battle

November 01, 2019

UM News Service

MISSOULA – The University of Montana and Montana State University are once again challenging each other in a friendly competition to see which school can collect the most lifesaving blood donations by teaming with the American Red Cross for the annual Griz-Cat Blood Drive Battle.

UM will hold four donation events during the battle:

- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8, in the Bloodmobile parked outside the Payne Family Native American Center
- 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, in the UC Ballroom
- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, in Todd Building Rooms 203-204
- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15, in Skaggs Building Rooms 229-230

Walk-ins are welcome or appointments can be made at https://www.redcrossblood.org/ using sponsor code “gogriz.” A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who
are 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. Participants who donate during the Griz-Cat Blood Drive Battle will receive a Red Cross T-shirt while supplies last.

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Donations of all blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. The winter months can be a challenging time of year for blood donation as inclement weather, seasonal illnesses, holiday activities and travel plans often mean fewer donors give blood. However, for patients requiring lifesaving transfusions, the need is constant.

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