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UM Names 2020 Presidential Leadership Scholarship Winners

31 AUGUST 2020 •
Twenty-six students have been named 2020 Presidential Leadership Scholars.

MISSOULA – The resumes of students awarded Montana’s top scholarship include working
two jobs while building theater sets, an alpine skier who speaks three languages, a pow-wow fancy dancer, two SCUBA-certified divers, a county fair superintendent, a member of the national Tanzanian swim team, a zoo guide with more than 500 volunteer hours and a drum major who interned for four years at the San Francisco public defender’s office.

Despite their differences, a common thread binds them: Each was named a recipient of the University of Montana’s most prestigious scholarship, the UM Presidential Leadership Scholarship.

This 2020 class holds a 3.9 average GPA and an average ACT score of 30 and includes representation of Native, Latino, Asian American and Black communities. They major in disciplines that span the breadth of UM’s academic portfolio — wildlife biology, chemistry, neuroscience, journalism, political science, music, education, history and more.

“The Davidson Honors College is thrilled to welcome one of the biggest and strongest classes in its history,” said Tim Nichols, dean of the Davidson Honors College. “They shine academically, but also as artists, scientists, athletes, leaders and servants in their communities. We look forward to their personal and professional development as leaders, as well as to empowering their unique paths and future achievements at UM and beyond.”

Selected from a pool of more than 300, UM chose 26 applicants for their merits in excellent academic performance, exemplary public service, demonstrated leadership, unique personal qualities and potential for future impact. The scholarship award significantly defrays the cost of attendance at UM, and all UM Presidential Leadership Scholars are enrolled in UM’s Davidson’s Honors College.

The 2020 scholars represent 10 states and one U.S. territory and include15 students from across Montana. The 2020 UM Presidential Leadership Scholarship recipients are:

**MONTANA**

**Bigfork**
Julia Wynne loves to write and plans to major in either English or journalism. She intends to apply to law school and hopes to use her love of writing to advocate for others. She’s already done this with underprivileged youth in the Flathead Valley and for the Flathead County Animal Shelter. At Flathead High School, Wynne was an All-American speaker and debater and a member of French Club. She’s worked at Eagle Bend Golf Club and Show Thyme restaurant and as a personal chef. Wynne said she is looking forward to being in an environment that encourages meaningful discussion with students who are excited to learn and challenge themselves.

Bozeman

At Bozeman High School, Francie Beadle was a member of
National Honor Society while also competing in hockey, skiing and baking. Beadle volunteered for a local nursing home and will study pre-medicine at UM. She is excited about college life and looks forward to becoming a part of the Missoula and UM community.

**Sam Galindo** will be a neuroscience major and pursue pre-
medicine studies at UM. A swimmer, a sailor and a self-described ‘huge nerd’, Galindo always has loved space and the ocean “because both have yet to be truly explored,” he said. At Bozeman High School, Galindo was on the varsity swim team and in the jazz choir. He also was on cast and crew for four school musicals, volunteered at a local hospital and was a swim instructor for youth with disabilities. Additionally, Galindo is a Star Scout with the Boy Scouts of America and a National Hispanic Scholar.

Grace Andromeda “Andi” Tallman is pursuing journalism at UM. She is a National Merit Finalist and has mentored youth at Camp Equinox, helping children discover the joys of theater. She also has been active in two high school musical productions. An accomplished artist, Tallman additionally worked with her school paper as a reporter, copy editor and ultimately editor-in-chief.

Gardiner

Kersey Blackford will study political science at UM. She was part of a state champion Academic World Quest team, served as co-captain of her volleyball team and was named Academic All-State. She was also secretary and president of the local National Honor Society, class president and yearbook editor. Additionally, Blackford traveled to Japan with the Kakehashi project to learn about Japanese culture, economics and societal
Andi Newbrough will study biochemistry and pre-medicine at UM. She has danced since she was 4 years old and looks forward to being a member of UM’s Dance Team. While at C.M. Russell High School, she was a DECA state officer, a leader in student government and in the National Honor Society. Newbrough also was an Academic All-State athlete and a three-time state qualifier in track and field.
Quin Pray is pursuing history and political science at UM. He is a past participant in the Hugh O’Brien Leadership Program and Montana Boys State. Quin also was a member of the National Honor Society and captain of the football team. He also earned recognition for debate, choir and track while working two jobs throughout high school.

Kalispell

Drew Engellant is a biology major, and he graduated with a 4.0 grade-point average from Glacier High School. Engellant has competed in math competitions, is a multisport athlete and an avid mountain biker. He has been a member of National Honor Society and has volunteered with Red Cross blood drives and the Special Olympics. He is an aspiring physician and completed the EMT training course at Flathead Valley Community College.
John Shelton is a state champion speaker and debater (impromptu speaking), and an all-conference track-and-field athlete (high jump). He has worked summers at Glacier National Park and aspires to a career in business management. Shelton enjoys watching movies and loves the UM campus.

Liv Wilson is a fourth-generation Grizzly from Glacier High
School. She plans to major in accounting or business management and entrepreneurship. Wilson’s high school involvement included serving as a DECA state officer, student body treasurer, a public forum debater and an Academic All-State tennis player. She’s a longtime 4-Her who has shown livestock and participated in photography, cooking and leadership projects. Additionally, Wilson volunteers at Kalispell’s historic Conrad Mansion and is an ice cream scooper at Sweet Peaks. Inspired by UM icon Jeanette Rankin, Wilson is passionate about women’s leadership in Montana and global politics. She looks forward to making new friends, going to concerts and Griz games and exploring Missoula.

Manhattan

Kolter Stevenson is a citizen of the world. He speaks Russian, Norwegian and Spanish and has lived both in Norway and Moldova. An alpine ski racer, Stevenson was a two-term class president and a member of the National Honor Society. He was named a National Ambassador by the Business Professionals of America. Stevenson will major in international business at UM. He looks forward to becoming a part of an engaging academic community at the DHC.
Miles City

Adelynne Walley will study prepharmacy at UM. Walley was valedictorian of Custer County District High School, a member of National Honors Society and senior class president. She loves to ski and play lacrosse and enjoys reading and mathematics. Walley said she’s looking forward to becoming involved in the DHC community and to exploring Missoula’s mountains.

Missoula

Jackman Mitchell-Robohm will major in wildlife biology at UM
and also is interested in climate change studies. He already has been involved in several field-based experiences, including the Wyoming Migration Initiative, and is eager to engage in undergraduate research. Mitchell also has studied backcountry medicine. At Hellgate High School, Mitchell-Robohm was Academic All-State, in the National Honor Society and participated in track, cross-country and hockey teams.

Sandee Sepulveda completed the Global Innovation Institute program. She also was Academic All-State and earned all-conference recognition in track. She was a member of the National Honor Society and has volunteered at the Missoula Food Bank and served as a YMCA camp counselor.

Polson
Violet Anderson will pursue a theater major at UM. In high school, she was Theater Club president, Choir Council secretary and an award-winning speaker and debater. Anderson was on the 4.0 honor roll and competed in the Miss Montana Outstanding Teen scholarship program. Recently, she has learned how to play the accordion, and she looks forward to the many cultural opportunities in Missoula.

ALABAMA

Abigail League is from Madison, Alabama, and she will study wildlife biology at UM. A 4.0 student, she was a member of the soccer team and Youth Conservation Corps. League also has served as a math tutor and a camp counselor. She is an experienced SCUBA diver, a national Advanced Placement scholar and a Spanish National Honor Society member.

CALIFORNIA
Kylie Crist will study wildlife biology and neuroscience at UM. Her love for animals is reflected in her experiences as a wrangler for Timberline Ranch, serving as a teen guide with more than 500 volunteer hours at the Oakland Zoo, working at the Elephant Home Conservation in Thailand and conducting primate, turtle and bat research in Costa Rica. Crist is SCUBA-certified, loves listening to music and is an avid reader, hiker and watcher of wildlife documentaries. She also enjoys spending time with friends and family.

Adam Kolokotrones is from Daly City, California. He will major in business and is considering a minor in political science with aspirations of attending
Kolokotrones is passionate about the criminal justice system and has interned for four years at the San Francisco public defender's office. A National Hispanic Scholar at Archbishop Riordan High School, he was a drum major for the marching band, captain of the football team, president of the National Honor Society and a student government leader. He enjoys historical novels and looks forward to meeting other honors students and participating in the Knowles Hall Living and Learning Community.

Woohyun “Owen” Lee from Walnut Creek, California, will study wildlife biology with a concentration in aquatics. Owen enjoys fishing, camping, weightlifting and kayaking, and he is an avid outdoorsman who wants to explore the great Montana wilderness while meeting individuals with varied interests and perspectives. Lee also likes to grow vegetables and can cook the best scrambled eggs.
Kyle Wonders is from Newbury Park, California. He has volunteered at the Ojai Raptor Center, a wildlife rehabilitation hospital, and he will study wildlife biology at UM. Wonders is looking forward to being surrounded by the natural world at UM and meeting people from across the country. In high school, he served as a tutor, was a leader in the National Honor Society and volunteered with Special Olympics. He was a flag runner for varsity football games and competes in both pentathlon and decathlon events. In his free time, Wonders enjoys hammocking and bird-watching.

NEVADA

Mia Johns graduated from a performing arts high school in
Las Vegas, where she served as National Honor Society president. At UM, she will pursue molecular neuroscience with a minor in dance. She plans to participate in neuroscience research when she comes to campus. Johns enjoys choreography, lifeguarding, synchronized swimming coaching, skiing, piano and travel.

NORTH DAKOTA

Aleeya Lonefight is an enrolled tribal member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota. She has participated in student council and Girls State. Lonefight also is a fancy shawl and traditional dancer and has interned making traditional pottery. A Hidatsa Language and Culture Youth Champion, she hopes to explore UM’s creative writing program and to one day become a practicing attorney or judge.

OREGON
Ben Volinski from Scapoose, Oregon, will be a chemistry major at UM. He plans to pursue the premedical sciences and is interested in becoming an anesthesiologist. Volinski has spent many summers with his family in Glacier National Park and the stunning natural environment throughout the state. In high school, he was a member of the National Honor Society, played football and was a member of jazz, concert and wind ensemble bands, as well as the jazz and chamber choirs. He also tutored math and was superintendent for Oregon’s Columbia County Fair and Rodeo. Volinski enjoys all snow sports (he was on the Oregon Interscholastic Snowboarding team), fishing, hiking, backpacking and kayaking.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Diego Zakers is from St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Zakers
will study business management and entrepreneurship at UM. At Peter Gruber International Academy, Zakers completed a capstone project on cybersecurity, won a business plan competition and spent time as an exchange student in Mauritius, Africa and in Bigfork, where he played tennis. Back in the Virgin Islands, Zakers volunteered with cleanup efforts after hurricanes Irma and Maria. He also loves soccer, manages a local gym and enjoys playing acoustic guitar.

WISCONSIN

Meredith Boos is from Waukesha, Wisconsin. She will study
wildlife biology at UM and play on the Montana Grizzlies Women’s Golf Team. At Catholic Memorial High School, Boos was an all-state swimmer and golfer. She’s also passionate about human rights, presented at an international human rights conference and is on the board for Zeru Zeru, an international human rights organization. Additionally, Boos has traveled to 12 different countries, lived in Tanzania and was on the Tanzanian international swim team. Her hero is Dr. Jane Goodall, and she’s studied at the Jane Goodall Institute in Gombe.

WYOMING

Gus Kauffman is a National Merit Scholar from Laramie,
Wyoming. At UM, he will major in geography, with minors in mathematics and climate change studies. Kauffman was a member of the National Honor Society and is an accomplished Nordic skier and ski coach. A curious lover of science, Kauffman has already been involved in University field-based research projects and participated in a mountaineering course through the National Outdoor Leadership School in the Wind River mountains. Gus is eager to spend time in the mountains around Missoula and is looking forward to taking advantage of experiential learning opportunities in the DHC.

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Contact: Tim Nichols, UM Davidson Honors College dean, 406-243-2534, timothy.nichols@umontana.edu.
UM Names Presidential Leadership Scholars, Montana’s Most Prestigious Scholarship
MUSEUM AT UM TO OPEN EXHIBITION OF ART BOOKS

31 AUGUST 2020 •


On Tuesday, Sept. 11, the Montana Museum of Art and Culture at the University of Montana will open a new exhibition of art books from the Dan Weinburg Collection, a recent donation to the museum’s Permanent Collection.
“Bookish: Selections from the Dan Weinburg Collection” will run from Sept. 11 through Dec. 12 in the Meloy Gallery of UM’s Performing Arts and Radio Television Center. There is no opening reception due to the coronavirus pandemic, but MMAC will offer virtual tours and programming, including a series of book reveals and interviews with scholars.

The books, donated by Montana State Sen. Dan Weinburg in 2018, were published by the New York-based Vincent FitzGerald & Co. Since 1980, that company has been recognized for bringing visual artists and writers together in creative collaboration to produce limited-edition books in the French tradition of the “livre d’artiste.” This exhibition gathers fine examples of artists’ books, prompting viewers to consider ways in which the book can evolve beyond conventional formats into other art forms.

Weinberg’s gift honors the lifelong work of his friend Vincent FitzGerald, an economics graduate of Fordham University and cousin of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. They first met while training for the Peace Corps in Bismarck, North Dakota, in 1968. In 1970, FitzGerald returned to New York to make handmade art books, which he continued to do until his retirement in 2018.

Weinberg, a clinical psychologist from Whitefish, won election to the Montana State Senate in 2004. In 2008, he founded the Montana Innocence Project, an organization that works to exonerate the innocent and prevent wrongful convictions.

For information on the exhibition’s programming, call Rafael Chacón at 406-243-2019 or email hrafael.chacon@umontana.edu. To schedule a guided tour, call Jill Johns at 406-243-4970 or jill.johns@mso.umt.edu.

Contact: H. Rafael Chacón, Suzanne and Bruce Crocker director of MMAC, UM professor of art history and criticism, 406-243-2019, hrafael.chacon@umontana.edu.
Museum at UM to Open Exhibition of Art Books
UM College of Business Professor Earns National Recognition for Sustainability Reporting Course

28 AUGUST 2020
Kent Swift, professor of accounting and finance in UM’s College of Business, recently earned honorable mention for this year’s Dr. Alfred N. and Lynn Manos Page Prize for Sustainability Issues in Business, from the Darla Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina for his Sustainability Reporting course at UM.

MISSOULA – A University of Montana accounting professor has been nationally recognized for his course that teaches students how to measure the social and environmental performance of businesses.

Kent Swift, professor of accounting in UM’s College of Business, recently earned honorable mention for this year’s Dr. Alfred N. and Lynn Manos Page Prize for Sustainability Issues in Business, from the Darla Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina for his Sustainability Reporting course at UM.

Swift said he created his reporting course because companies are increasingly tasked with presenting their social and environmental performance through annual sustainability or corporate social responsibility reports. In addition to reviewing sustainability reports, the course provides business students a set of tools to analyze the quality of such reporting.

“The sustainability reporting course provides students with the skills needed to understand and analyze the metrics used for measuring a company’s environmental and social performance,” Swift said.

Award winners were recognized for their efforts to introduce, or substantially upgrade, sustainability into national and international business school curricula. Swift’s course is part of the Sustainable Business Certificate program offered at UM through the College of Business.

The Page Prize committee evaluated the pool of submissions based on course content, originality and ability to replicate across other universities and programs. While innovative approaches to relevant sustainability issues set some courses apart from others, overall course design, new approaches for conceptualizing sustainability, new sets of reading, thought-provoking questions accompanying the reading and clear descriptions of assignments were valued.

UM College of Business Interim Dean Suzanne Tilleman said Swift’s award speaks directly to the cutting-edge business education UM students receive.
“We’re delighted to celebrate Dr. Swift’s accolade from peers and the Page Prize award for his leading work in infusing sustainability reporting into the College of Business and UM curriculum,” Tilleman said. “The impact of measuring and reporting on these efforts cannot be understated, as companies continue to improve their impact on the environment and society, sustainability reporting is a priority for many businesses. Thanks to courses like Swift’s, UM students are fully prepared to enter the workforce with an in-demand skillset.”

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**Contact:** Garrett Finke, UM College of Business marketing and communications director, 406-243-4436, garrett.finke@umontana.edu; Kent Swift, professor of accounting, kenton.swift@umontana.edu.
UM College of Business Professor Earns National Recognition for Sustainability Reporting Course
UM RESEARCH: SONGBIRDS REDUCE REPRODUCTION TO HELP SURVIVE DROUGHT

26 AUGUST 2020 •

An indigo flycatcher visits its nest in Malaysia. (Photo by Thomas Martin)
MISSOULA – With climate change heating the globe, drought more frequently impacts the reproduction and survival of many animal species.
New research from the University of Montana suggests tropical songbirds in both the Old and New Worlds reduce reproduction during severe droughts, and this – somewhat surprisingly – may actually increase their survival rates.

The work was published Aug. 24 in the journal Nature Climate Change by UM research scientist Thomas Martin and doctoral student James Mouton.

“We were extremely surprised to find that not only did reductions in breeding activity mitigate costs to survival, many long-lived species actually experienced higher survival rates during the drought year than during non-drought years,” said Martin, assistant unit leader of UM’s Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. “In contrast, shorter-lived species that kept breeding during droughts faced strong reductions in survival.”

Martin has spent his career venturing into remote jungles and living there for months to study the lives of birds. For this work, he and Mouton studied 38 different bird species in Venezuela and Malaysia over multiple years. There was one drought year for each field site, and the authors modeled future population results for the birds using three different climate change scenarios.

They knew behavioral responses to drought might determine the relative impacts on survival and reproduction. At the jungle study sites, researchers located and monitored nests of all species over many years to examine reproductive activity prior to and during the droughts. They also banded birds with colored material and used intensive re-sighting of these birds to obtain rigorous estimates of survival.

The researchers found drought reduced reproduction an average of 36% in the 20 Malaysian species and 52% in the 18 Venezuelan species.

“The negative impacts of drought on survival are well documented,” Martin said. “We therefore also expected the droughts to reduce survival, but thought that the reduced breeding activity might limit the decrease in survival.”

He said they found the population impacts of droughts were largely nullified by the reproductive behavioral shifts in longer-lived species, but shorter-lived species saw less of a benefit.

“Overall, our results have several major implications,” Martin said. “First, we show that
understanding behavioral responses to drought are critical for predicting population responses. Behavioral responses to environmental conditions can help buffer the most sensitive vital rates for a given species and mitigate the overall effect on fitness.

“Second, our results provide unique support to the idea that reproduction can negatively affect survival,” he said. “This idea of a ‘cost of reproduction’ is central to life history theory but only rarely documented in wild populations.”

Finally, long-lived species are argued to be most sensitive to climate change, but the UM research suggests that many longer-lived species actually may be more resilient to drought impacts of climate change than previously expected.

“Ultimately, we hope our study can help motivate future studies into behavioral and demographic responses to shifting patterns of rainfall in more species so we can better anticipate the different impacts of climate change among species,” Martin said.

This work was funded by the National Science Foundation. The Nature Climate Change paper is online at https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0864-3. Mouton finished his Ph.D. at UM and is now a postdoctoral researcher at Colorado State University.

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**Contact**: Thomas Martin, UM research scientist and assistant unit leader, Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, 406-243-5372, tom.martin@umontana.edu.
The University of Montana has announced a new bachelor's degree in public health, the only one in Montana.
MISSOULA – The Montana Board of Regents has approved a new bachelor's program in public health at the University of Montana – just in time, as the world grapples with a global pandemic and a new generation of students are drawn to health care. The new degree is the only undergraduate track of its kind in Montana and is accredited by the Council of Education for Public Health.

Offered through UM’s School of Public and Community Health Sciences, the degree has four concentrations: generalist public health, community health, population health and global public health.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), employment of health care occupations is projected to grow 14 % from 2018 to 2028 – much faster than the average for all occupations – and will add about 1.9 million new jobs. Health care occupations are projected to add more jobs than any of the other occupational groups.

Currently, about 40 undergraduate students have enrolled in the new Bachelor of Science in Public Health program. Stephanie Domitrovich, UM’s School of Public and Community Health Sciences undergraduate advising director, said many students arriving at UM don’t know they want to concentrate on public health until later in their college career, but she thinks the
COVID-19 pandemic has boosted student interest.

“The pandemic has definitely increased the visibility of this major, and I think that we're going to see an influx of students into this program in the near future,” Domitrovich said. “It has also demonstrated a critical need for these professionals in the workforce, and I believe that this will be a strength of the degree. Students now have an idea of how this type of education can translate into careers in the field of health.”

Some of these careers include epidemiologists, medical doctors, health educators and public health officials. Public health graduates can work at local, state or tribal health departments and for health care entities, as well as internationally in developing countries.

Tony Ward, chair of UM’s School of Public and Community Health Sciences, said the school is thrilled to add this latest undergraduate degree offering to its programs.

“In addition to the generalist track, having topic-specific tracks in community health, population health and global health will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the different career paths related to public health,” Ward said. “Having this new degree is critically important to UM and our region, as there has rarely been a greater need for public health professionals to keep our communities safe.”

Learn more about UM’s Bachelor of Public Health program at http://health.umt.edu/publichealth/undergraduate/bachelors.php.

With 11 core faculty members, 21 staff members, 10 program faculty and 18 practitioners, UM’s School of Public and Community Health Sciences offers bachelor’s, certificate, master’s and doctoral tracks in public health. The school’s online master’s in public health program consistently ranks among the top nationally for affordability and value.

Last fall, the school partnered with the Missoula City-County Health Department to create an Academic Health Department, the first in Montana. This April, the school also formed the Center for Population Health Research with funding from the National Institutes of Health. Read more online at http://health.umt.edu/publichealth/.

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UM Announces New Bachelor’s Degree in Public Health

Contact: Tony Ward, chair and professor, UM School of Public and Community Health Sciences, 406-243-4092, tony.ward@umontana.edu; Stephanie Domitrovich, director of undergraduate advising, UM School of Public and Community Health Sciences, 406-243-6284, stephanie.domitrovich@umontana.edu.
UM researchers and partner institutions will use computer modeling to study the impact of climate change on Alaska’s Malaspina Glacier.

(Photo credit: Martin Truffer, University of Alaska Fairbanks)
MISSOULA – The National Science Foundation has awarded researchers at the University of Montana and partner institutions a $1.3 million grant to study the melting of one of Alaska’s most iconic glaciers.

UM Department of Computer Science researchers, along with collaborators at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Arizona and the National Park Service, will use the grant to conduct computer modeling of changes now taking place to Malaspina Glacier, the world’s largest piedmont glacier. This type of glacier starts in the mountains and spills out onto the coastal plain. The Malaspina Glacier is larger than Rhode Island, according the NPS.

Doug Brinkerhoff, assistant professor in UM’s Department of Computer Science, said Malaspina already is thinning and retreating. As this process accelerates due to global warming, the coastline will change, impacting both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

“This has the potential in the next several decades to be the largest loss of ice in Alaska from one glacier,” Brinkerhoff said. “It also will constitute the largest single change in terrestrial land cover in the national park system in recent history.”

The primary goal of the study, Brinkerhoff said, is to use computer modeling to estimate what the future of the Malaspina Glacier and surrounding area will look like as the massive melt continues.

Measurements collected on and around the glacier will provide a comprehensive data set for modeling glacier melting, ice velocity, ice thickness, glacier bed conditions, surface debris extent and thickness and other developments. The modeling will explore a large range of possible future scenarios for the evolution of Malaspina Glacier, accounting for different climate trajectories, as well as the normal freeze and thaw common to coastal glaciers.

“Much of Malaspina’s extensive surface area lies at very low elevation, and as such, the glacier is a sitting duck for climate change,” Brinkerhoff said. “Our work will lead to a better understanding of how climate change interacts with fundamental instabilities that glaciers have independent of climate, like the glacier coming afloat and breaking up, for example.”

Brinkerhoff said a graphic artist will convert the model results into visuals. When combined with interactive exhibits, the model will educate visitors to Malaspina Glacier and the surrounding Wrangell-St. Elias National Park about the glacier’s ongoing and anticipated changes due to climate change.
In addition, the project, which is slated to be completed by August 2023, will train three graduate students in relevant geophysical techniques, modern ice sheet modeling approaches and collaborative research. The project outcomes will be published in peer-reviewed literature and presented at professional meetings.

###
UM Researchers Receive Major Grant to Study Melting of Famous Glacier
MISSOULA – Respecting the 2020 reality of coronavirus, University of Montana President Seth Bodnar has decided to make the University of Montana’s 2020 State of the University Address a virtual event.
Seth Bodnar will present an online version of his annual State of the University Address at 4 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27.

UM employees, students and members of the general public are invited to watch the virtual event at https://www.umt.edu/president/.

This annual address is a time-honored tradition that helps launch the academic year at UM. Members of the campus community hear directly from the president about the state of UM. The president also highlights successes and challenges, new employees are welcomed, and tenure and promotions are announced.

“There is no doubt we will have to continuously overcome COVID-19 challenges this semester, but our top priority is ensuring our students can continue their education,” Bodnar said.

Other speakers during the event will include campus leaders such as Acting Provost Reed Humphrey, Faculty Senate Chair Chris Palmer, Staff Senate Chair Charity Atteberry and Associated Students of UM President Taylor Gregory.

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**Contact:** Dave Kuntz, UM director of strategic communications, 406-243-5659, dave.kuntz@mso.umt.edu.
UM Plans Virtual State of the University Address for Aug. 27
Research activity at UM has grown substantially in recent years. This fiscal year, UM reported $104.7 million in research expenditures to the National Science Foundation’s Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey. This is a 16% increase over the
previous high of $90.6 million in FY2018 and a 90% increase from FY2014.

“This continued rise in the amount of funded research at UM is a testament to the hard work of our faculty, staff and students,” said Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship and dean of the Graduate School. “These numbers indicate that UM continues on the path to achieve a Carnegie Research Very-High Activity or R1 ranking. The funding also underscore how research at UM provides an economic engine for the community and state.”

The research funding comes from a broad portfolio of sources, Whittenburg noted, including federal research grants and contracts. For example, $28.1 million came from the National Institutes of Health, $10.5 million from the National Science Foundation, $6.5 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, $2.5 million from NASA, $2.3 million from the U.S. Department of Defense and about $6 million from other agencies.

The broad and diverse set of disciplines spanning life science research at UM accounted for $40 million of the overall amount, including cutting-edge multidisciplinary research in health sciences, biological and biomedical sciences and natural resources and conservation. Other research areas with significant federal funding were mathematical and physical sciences (including psychology) at $6.8 million; geosciences, earth and marine sciences and oceanography with $3 million; social sciences with $2 million; and computer sciences and engineering with $1 million.

“We continue to see our faculty ranked among the top research institutions in the country,” Whittenburg said. “With a record amount of grants and contracts awarded to UM in the past year, these researchers will continue to grow UM’s reputation as a world-class research university with thriving graduate and professional programs.”

###
Mary Kreta will start her new duties at UM Sept. 23.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has hired an experienced recruiter from Alaska as
its new associate vice president for enrollment management.

Mary Kreta is currently associate vice chancellor of enrollment management at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She will start her new duties Sept. 23 at UM, where she will oversee the University’s admissions, financial aid and alumni outreach offices.

“Mary brings impressive experience leading university-wide strategic enrollment planning processes, a strong commitment to partnership with deans and campus directors, and a serious love of the Intermountain West,” UM President Seth Bodnar said. “We are excited to put Mary’s experience and skillset to work for us here in Montana.”

Kreta has served in her current role since 2018. She was UAF director of admission from 2014 to 2018 and that university’s director of recruitment from 2013 to 2014. Before that she was a UAF admissions counselor who was promoted to senior admissions counselor for international and transfer recruitment.

She also taught writing in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. She holds a master’s degree in English from Portland State University.

“This will be an exciting new challenge, and I’m thrilled to work in Missoula and help students find their place at the University of Montana,” Kreta said.

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**Contact:** Paula Short, UM spokesperson, 406-243-5806, paula.short@umontana.edu.
A new statewide advisory board will promote enhanced communication between MUS health care educational programs and Montana's health care providers.
MISSOULA – The Montana University System Institute for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice has formed a new statewide advisory board to promote enhanced communication and cooperation between MUS health care educational programs and Montana’s health care providers.

In a rural state like Montana, said acting University of Montana Provost Reed Humphrey, it is vital for health professionals to practice in a collaborative environment to ensure patients have greater access to high-quality, team-based care services and specialty care.

Reed, former dean of UM’s College of Health, and Sarah Shannon, dean of the Montana State University College of Nursing, conceptualized the MUS IPE Institute to promote collaboration outside of the traditional barriers that exist between health care educators and providers.

“When we are able to break down these silos, we create rich educational and clinical experiences that will prepare our students to enter the workforce at a time when team-based care is not only best practice but necessary as we face issues of access in our rural communities,” Humphrey said.

The institute, which received MUS Board of Regents approval in 2019, also aspires to create a homegrown workforce that is prepared to enter team-based care environments across the state.

The 15 members of the new advisory board represent many health professions and bring a diverse set of experiences to interprofessional education and collaborative practice. Board members will work with institute staff to identify educational opportunities for working health care providers, faculty and, most importantly, students across the MUS. Its strategic priorities include supporting efforts for statewide impact by building a coordinated system to promote IPE and collaborative practices, to serve as a clearinghouse for IPE resources and to invest in the sustainability of the MUS IPE interprofessional education initiatives.

Shannon said IPE is the wave of the future in the education of health professionals.

“I have had the opportunity to lead efforts to create IPE learning opportunities, and it is exciting for both students and faculty,” she said. “Future health professionals want to learn
how to practice collaboratively because they understand it benefits patient outcomes."

MUS has over 60 health professional programs, including physical therapy, medical residency, nursing, speech therapy, social work, pharmacy, surgical tech, respiratory tech, athletic training, public health and more.

For more information about the MUS IPE Institute, visit montanaipe.org and follow it on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For all inquiries contact the institute at montanaipe@gmail.com.

###
MISSOULA – In 2019, nonresident travelers spent $3.77 billion throughout Montana, a 5.4% increase from the previous year. Over 12.6 million nonresidents visited in 2019.
Research by the University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research reveals a different story in 2020. Nearly all of the second quarter was shut down to travelers this year due to the pandemic, creating a jolt to that yearly injection of money and visitors into Montana’s economy. The second quarter generally accounts for a bit more than 20% of annual traveler spending in the state.

Additionally, the latest available statistics by the National Park Service show big visitation declines in June in Montana’s Glacier and Yellowstone national park. Glacier was down 62% during June 2020, and Yellowstone was down 32% in June compared to that month a year ago. July figures are not yet available for Glacier, but Yellowstone actually experienced a 2% increase in visitors when compared to July 2019.

In general, when the two national parks do well, Montana’s tourism does well. As travelers drive to the parks, they spend extra time in Montana just to get there.

“What we expect to see, however, is a change in nonresident spending patterns for 2020,” said Jeremy Sage, ITRR associate director. “For example, with nervousness about dining in, we expect higher spending in the grocery and snack categories and less in restaurants and bars.”

Fuel always has been a high expenditure by nonresidents visiting Montana, but this year gasoline prices are lower than they have been in the past 20 years.

“The conundrum for fuel spending is that the pandemic actually encourages people to drive around more for sight-seeing while on vacation and spend less time stopping at museums and other attractions because they are either closed or people are uncomfortable being in indoor settings,” Sage said. “So fuel spending could be on par with other years in terms of average daily spending in that category.”

Accommodations, as well as restaurants and bars, are taking a big hit in 2020, ITRR Director Norma Nickerson said.

“A recent survey of tourism-related business – the fourth in a series of surveys – is showing that accommodation owners are still seeing cancellations and fewer reservations compared to the same months last year,” she said.

Seventy-eight percent (121 respondents) of the accommodations owners in the survey
reported decreased reservations for August, with an average decrease of 52% compared to August last year.

Similarly, declines in September reservations average 61%, and winter reservations are down 66% compared to the same time last year.

“In general, however, visitors are waiting to make last-minute decisions on travel as they watch the number of COVID-19 cases go up or down and their comfort level of traveling changes based on those numbers,” Nickerson said.

Campgrounds are an exception to the general decrease in accommodation business. Nationally, there are reported spikes in recreational vehicle sales and rentals. Campground respondents in the ITRR tourism business survey basically agree. Twelve of the 14 campground owners (85%) said inquiries are up or have stayed the same.

“So it’s business as usual for the camping industry, except, of course, for the extra cleaning, mask-wearing and social distancing,” Nickerson said.

In normal years, Montana’s six travel regions and 16 of the counties with the highest levels of nonresident spending have shown that visitation and spending is widespread throughout the state and that all regions benefit.

In the most recent 2019 figures from ITRR, the Yellowstone and Glacier travel regions received 34% and 31% of all nonresident spending, while Gallatin and Flathead counties, located within those regions, accounted for 25% and 16% respectively of all nonresident spending in the state.

How different will these numbers be in 2020?

The Glacier and Yellowstone regions, home to Montana’s two iconic national parks, receive the majority of nonresident travel spending, according to Kara Grau, the ITRR assistant director of economic analysis.

“In 2019, both those regions received over 30% of traveler spending,” Grau said. “We expect those regions to continue to lead the state in nonresident spending in 2020 but realize that overall traveler spending will take a big hit this year due to pandemic-related travel
restrictions, closures in the parks and consumer hesitancy in travel."

The full report on 2019 estimates of the economic contribution of nonresident travelers in Montana travel regions and counties is available on the ITRR website at https://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr_pubs/411/.

All information and reports published by ITRR are available online at http://www.itrr.umt.edu.

###
Kylla Benes has been named the University's newest director of external scholarships and fellowships, where she will oversee UM’s submission of national and international scholarships such as the Fulbright, Udall, Boren, Rhodes and Knight-Hennessy, in addition to other prestigious fellowships and scholarships.
MISSOULA – Understanding how seaweed responds and adapts to its environment isn’t all that different from providing University of Montana students guidance and support in reaching their full potential, according to Kylla Benes, a marine ecologist and UM’s director of prestigious scholarships.

After all, both UM students and ocean plant life must prepare for ever-changing tides.

Benes, who holds a doctorate in marine ecology from the University of California Irvine and spent years studying biology in marine labs on both coasts, has transitioned to immersing herself in mountains – and UM students’ futures.

The University has named her its newest director of external scholarships and fellowships, where she will oversee UM’s submission of national and international scholarships such as the Fulbright, Udall, Boren, Rhodes and Knight-Hennessy, in addition to other prestigious fellowships and scholarships.

“UM students are immensely curious, driven and fully engaged in their academic and extracurricular pursuits,” Benes said. “This position is a melding of advising and mentoring and I’m thrilled to support students in reaching their full potential.”

Having worked as a postdoctoral teaching, research and mentoring fellow in the Davidson Honors College for the past three years, Benes said the position felt like a natural fit. She even transitioned her academic career as a scientist for the opportunity to bolster UM’s prestigious scholarship profile.

Applying for prestigious scholarships takes a lot of time, dedication and support, Benes said, but UM students are ripe for the competition.

“Most of the big applications are looking for all-around solid applicants both personally and professionally,” she said. “They want students who can talk the talk and walk the walk, who are engaged, community-oriented, global thinkers and have leadership positions. So much of those experiences are inherently weaved into the UM experience.”

UM’s unique academic programs and cornerstone commitment to the liberal arts are sources of strength when it comes applications and candidates, Benes added.
"UM students — from any discipline or background — can have intelligent conversations, because they have a bit of training in a lot of subjects, and that’s something that can set them apart," she said.

Benes herself knows how important external funding can be for students. Having received moderate amounts of funding throughout her time as a graduate student, she said the financial support allowed her to cover research expenses.

"Any bit helps when you’re a student," she said. "As an undergraduate, I didn’t know about these big, renowned scholarship opportunities, but once you receive even the smaller amounts, it’s validating."

While applying for a major scholarship can be a daunting experience and intimidating for some students, Benes sees equal value in the application process – as she does in being selected. She said she supports students the whole way through applications, from big-picture goals, to the line-by-line editing of personal essays.

"There is immense value in thinking critically about your future goals, reflecting on what makes you a unique candidate and just going through the process of honing where you’ve been and where you want to go," she said. "It can be a powerful stepping stone to other avenues."

And, in the end, if a student is a finalist, but not awarded the scholarship, Benes said that should be highlighted on a student’s resume anyway, because the alumni network of prestigious scholarships and fellowships is wide and deep and can “help promote a UM student to their next job, opportunity or network.” Additionally, Benes said the amount of faculty mentorship and engagement UM students receive is something that can help bolster scholarship and fellowship applications.

"Scholarships are competitive and can be intimidating, but that shouldn’t stop anyone from trying,” Benes said. “As long as applicants meet eligibility requirements, there shouldn’t be any hesitation. We’re here to help them every step of the way."

Embedded in the DHC, Benes said her office has an “open door policy” and she hopes to meet and work with as many UM students “who want to think and dream big” as possible.

###
Contact: Kylla Benes, UM director of prestigious scholarships, 406-243-5241, kylla.benes@umontana.edu.
Mikalen Running Fisher, a UM junior majoring in Native American Studies, credits the TRIO program for her academic success.
MISSOULA – The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the University of Montana a federal Student Support Services grant of $485,336 to help disadvantaged students succeed in college.

SSS helps college students who are low income, first generation (those whose parents do not have a four-year college degree) or students with disabilities. The array of services the grant provides are comprehensive and include academic tutoring, financial aid advice, career and college mentoring, help with choosing courses and other forms of assistance.

These services enhance academic success and make it more likely that students will graduate or transfer with the lowest possible debt. UM’s TRIO Student Support Services Program has been a long-standing program at UM for the past 43 years and has supported over 5,000 students.

Browning native Mikalen Running Fisher, a junior majoring in Native American Studies with a minor in communication, credits the TRIO program for her academic success.

“I was really struggling my freshman year and didn’t know where to go. They helped me school wise and introduced me to a lot of valuable services,” said Running Fisher, who wants to return home to her reservation to teach the Blackfeet language and cultural heritage.

Darlene Samson, director of UM’s TRIO Student Support Services Program, said helping students like Running Fisher succeed and graduate is gratifying, but she and others in her field worry about the impact COVID-19 will have on the students they help, many of whom have limited resources at their disposal.

“The funding we get is always needed, but during this pandemic they are needed now more than ever,” she said. “This program is vital to higher education. It can and does make a difference.”

SSS is one of the eight federal TRIO programs authorized by the Higher Education Act to help college students succeed in higher education. It recognizes that students whose parents do not have a college degree have more difficulties navigating the complexity of decisions that college requires for success. It also bolsters students from low-income families who have not had the academic opportunities that their college peers have had, and helps students with disabilities navigate obstacles preventing them from thriving academically.
Many SSS alumni have gone on to great success, among them Emmy, Tony and Academy-Award winning actress Viola Davis, U.S. Rep. Gwendolyn Moore of Wisconsin’s 4th District and Franklin Chang-Diaz, the first Hispanic astronaut.

Contact: Darlene Samson, director, TRO SSS-University of Montana, 406-243-4199, darlene.samson@umontana.edu.
Nora Saks is a reporter for Montana Public Radio and host and producer of the “Richest Hill” podcast. She’s covered Superfund issues in Butte since 2016. (Credit: Clark Grant)
MISSOULA – University of Montana alumna Nora Saks has been awarded the 2019 Daniel Schorr Journalism Prize for her work as reporter, producer and host of Montana Public Radio’s “Richest Hill” podcast.

Saks is a graduate of UM’s Master’s in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism program, and her radio reporting has earned numerous awards from the Associated Press Television and Radio Association, the Society for Professional Journalists, the Alaska Press Club and the Broadcast Education Association.

“Richest Hill” dives deep into the history of Butte to tell the colorful and complicated story of how the city became one of America's largest and most notorious Superfund sites. Saks follows that thread to the present day, reporting on current developments and asking “What comes next?”

“It’s great to see Nora’s hard work and talent recognized,” MTPR News Director Corin Cates-Carney said. “Her work on the ‘Richest Hill’ podcast is an outstanding journalistic service to MTPR listeners and audiences around the country.”
The Schorr Prize is named for the late NPR senior news analyst and veteran Washington journalist Daniel Schorr. Schorr believed in supporting talented young journalists as they rose through the ranks of public radio. The annual prize – sponsored by WBUR and Boston University and funded by Jim and Nancy Bildner – salutes a new generation of public radio journalists under the age of 35, seeking to inspire them to stretch the boundaries of the medium.

“As local journalism continues to struggle, the promise demonstrated in the submissions of such young journalists makes me hopeful for the future of public media,” said Lynette Clemetson, director of the Wallace House at the University of Michigan, who served as the finalist judge. “‘Richest Hill’ is consistently excellent, and Nora set a high bar for young reporters and storytellers to aspire to. She hooked me with a story that I didn’t even know I cared about.”

Saks will be presented with the prize at a virtual event for The Edward R. Murrow Society on Tuesday, Sept. 15. Members of WBUR’s Murrow Society preserve the journalistic values of Edward Murrow, an influential figure in American broadcast journalism, and play a crucial role in supporting insightful and responsible journalism.

Montana Public Radio is a service of UM. MTPR FM broadcast stations include 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) and 89.9 Great Falls (KGPR).


###

Contact: Josh Burnham, MTPR digital editor, 406-370-4496, joshua.burnham@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana will distribute Healthy Griz Kits to all students and employees Monday through Friday, Aug. 17-28.

The kits are designed to help members of the campus community avoid illness during the coronavirus pandemic. Each kit contains two cloth masks, hand sanitizer, a micro-cloth for cleaning, a disinfectant spray bottle and a card describing UM’s commitment to the campus community.

The kits will be distributed at the East Auxiliary Gym of the Adams Center. Students and employees are asked to line up outside on the east side of the Adams Center near the Grizzly Pool and Washington-Grizzly Champions Center.

The pickup times are:

- 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday.
- 9:30 a.m.-5:30 Tuesday.
- 9:30 a.m.-5:30 Wednesday.
9:30 a.m.-5:30 Thursday.

9:30 a.m.-5:30 Friday.

Evening pickup times also are available from 5 to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, Aug. 24-28, in the University Center Game Room.

Additionally, pickup now will be offered from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday in the University Center Atrium on the first floor.

Students and employees should bring their Griz Card or 790 number to pick up one kit per person. Face masks are required for those waiting, and individuals must stand 6 feet apart. A separate line will be available for people with disabilities and those in high-risk groups.

Please note the kits only are intended for current UM students or employees. UM retirees, vendors, affiliate groups, student affiliates and faculty affiliates will not receive kits during this distribution. Griz Cards will not work for members of these groups.

UM officials added another week to allow members of the campus community to get their kits.

###

Contact: Shannon Brilz, director, UM Conference and Event Services, 406-243-4115, shannon.brilz@mso.umt.edu.
SpectrUM Awarded $671K for Hands-On STEM Education Across Montana

A family explores a making-and-tinkering activity at spectrUM Discovery Area.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana spectrUM Discovery Area has received a $671,000
SpectrUM Awarded $671K for Hands-On STEM Education Across Montana

National Leadership Grant for Museums from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

During the three-year project, the science education center will develop a mobile making-and-tinkering exhibition, as well as an education program that will travel to rural and tribal Montana communities to engage K-12 students and educators with hands-on problem solving and design.

One of 12 projects selected from a pool of 61 proposals nationwide, the project is titled “Making Across Montana” and addresses a critical need within the museum field for replicable, sustainable approaches to serving rural and tribal communities – particularly in large, sparsely populated states like Montana.

“We’re thankful that spectrUM’s leadership was honored for co-designing innovative, hands-on STEM experiences with Montana communities,” said spectrUM Director Jessie Herbert-Meny. “This award will allow us to develop a replicable model for rural and tribal engagement that will benefit museums and K-12 educators far beyond our state.”

SpectrUM will collaborate with community partners in the Bitterroot Valley and on the Flathead Reservation to co-design the exhibition, which will include exhibits and activities that encourage creativity, collaboration and resilience.

As the exhibition travels to additional rural and tribal Montana communities – including Browning, Anaconda and Frenchtown – spectrUM will offer professional development trainings and leave behind supplies and activity guides designed to help schools build internal capacity to lead making-and-tinkering experiences year-round.

In Missoula, the exhibition will rotate to spectrUM’s soon-to-open location at the new Missoula Public Library and at EmPower Place at the Missoula Food Bank and Community Center.

The project builds on approaches developed through spectrUM’s making and tinkering and teacher professional development initiatives on the Flathead Reservation and in the Bitterroot. These efforts have been funded by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, Cognizant, the Martin Family Foundation and the Jane S. Heman Foundation.

In 2019, the international Association of Science and Technology Centers honored spectrUM...
SpectrUM Awarded $671K for Hands-On STEM Education Across Montana

with a Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for its innovative, inclusive approach to developing visitor experiences.

Inspiring a culture of learning and discovery for all since 2006, spectrUM has brought exhibits and educators to 73 schools and public libraries in 32 Montana counties, including all seven American Indian reservations. SpectrUM is part of UM’s Broader Impacts Group, which works to engage K-12 students and the general public with UM research and scholarship.

IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s libraries and museums. It advances, supports and empowers America’s museums, libraries and related organizations through grantmaking, research and policy development. Its vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

For more information, call spectrUM’s Director Jessie Herbert-Meny at 406-243-4828 or visit http://www.spectrum.umt.edu.

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Contact: Jessie Herbert-Meny, spectrUM Discovery Area director, 406-243-4828, jessie.herbert@umontana.edu.
SpectrUM Awarded $671K for Hands-On STEM Education Across Montana
MISSOULA – For a third consecutive year, summer enrollment increased at the University of Montana. Up 2% from last summer, 3,142 students took summer courses at UM this year. Additionally, more UM summer students will have earned their degrees, certificates and minors this summer – totaling 549 degrees – up from 399 last summer.
Despite the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, students took advantage of online learning and some face-to-face options were offered, which included experimental learning opportunities, law school courses, labs, English Language Institute classes, Missoula College courses and more.

“Many of our students’ personal and academic paths have been interrupted by the pandemic,” said UM Vice Provost Nathan Lindsay. “UM worked creatively and thoughtfully to offer a robust summer semester so that our students can keep on-track to graduation and pursue their careers earlier.”

UM’s summer semester also offered a new program for incoming freshman called Summer Start, which allows first-year incoming students to get a jump start on their academics by starting courses in the summer, rather than the traditional fall start. In its inaugural year of the program, 30 UM freshman elected to enroll.

Ellie Boothe, a UM freshman from Butte and Summer Start participant, said the program allowed her to better-understand college-level coursework before the fall semester begins.

“It was extremely helpful to be able to take a few classes before the fall, just to get the hang of the online platforms and understand how to interact with my professor,” Boothe said. “I feel confident going into the semester now having had experience with online and in-person classes, and I’m already getting to know some classmates.”

Boothe plans to study secondary education at UM.

UM Summer Director Grace Gardner said for many UM students like Boothe, their final year of high school was impacted by the pandemic. That was another reason for UM to offer an opportunity for students to learn at their own pace before the semester begins, so they can begin their time at UM with confidence, she said.

“Most of our Summer Start participants have been physically out-of-school since March, and they were eager to get a jump-start on their college education,” Gardner said. “By doing so, they put themselves on track to graduate early, got to know many campus resources virtually, and connected with faculty, instructors and staff – all before stepping foot on campus this fall.”
Fall semester at the University begins Wednesday, Aug. 19.

###
University of Montana alumna Twila Old Coyote has been named director of the S.E.A. Change Initiative, a new UM program focused on advancing equity for all.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana is pleased to announce that Twila Old Coyote has been named director of the S.E.A. Change Initiative, a new program focused on advancing equity for all. Through this initiative, UM fosters an environment that is safe for women, one that uniquely empowers all women to reach their full potential while accelerating them into careers of impact.

A recent fellow of UM’s Women’s Leadership Initiative, Old Coyote is an enrolled member of the Apsáalooke tribe and a member the White Clay Nation. Her wealth of experience in creating equitable educational practices and in developing pathways into higher education has earned her a reputation as a respected partner to many communities and as a talented builder of relationships.

“Twila Old Coyote brings not only a deep commitment to building a more equitable future for all, but also an admirable ability to connect and inspire people to join her in this work,” said UM President Seth Bodnar. “I am excited about the future she will build for the S.E.A. Change Initiative.”

Old Coyote has extensive experience working with high school and university students to
promote access to higher education, especially for students who come from historically marginalized populations. For the last seven years, she has served as the director of TRIO-Upward Bound, a program that builds a college-going culture among underserved and underrepresented high school students.

“We are thrilled to welcome Twila as the S.E.A. Change Initiative’s inaugural director,” said UM Chief of Staff Kelly Webster. “An impressive UM alumna, she brings to the position a long-standing personal and professional commitment to addressing disparities across gender, and a wholehearted devotion to lifting up all people. We are very lucky to welcome her into this leadership role.”

Made possible by a generous seed gift from Dennis and Gretchen Eck, the S.E.A. Change Initiative prepares students to be change-drivers who champion gender equity. Program participants will develop the skills necessary to understand, navigate and change systemic biases as they seek to become influential professionals and leaders fostering allyship across all gender identities. These students will become part of a cohort of UM students who support gender diversity and who are committed to inspiring positive change for themselves and others.

UM students who participate in the program will have the opportunity to become paid mentors to high school and middle school students and will run a S.E.A. Change summer camp on the UM campus.

**Contact:** Kelly Webster, chief of staff, Office of the President, 406-243-2470, kelly.webster@mso.umt.edu.
UM Names First Director of S.E.A. Change Initiative to Advance Gender Equity
UM’s Urey Lecture Hall Transformation Nears Completion

The new look of UM’s big Urey Lecture Hall.
MISSOULA – Every University of Montana student at some point in their college career attends Orientation and classes in the Urey Lecture Hall. Perhaps it’s no surprise, then, that after several decades of use, the venerable underground hall was due for a makeover.

This summer, the south section of Urey underwent extensive renovations that included carpet to cover the existing concrete floor, new upholstered seats and improvements to the acoustics, energy-efficient lighting and a state-of-the-art audio-video system.

“For us, it was all about uplifting the student experience,” said Kim Nielson, a computer-aided design technician in UM’s Facilities Services–Planning and Construction Department who also serves as campus interior designer. “Now that it’s almost done, nobody recognizes the room.”

The $1.3 million redesign was funded from a University bond sale last year that generated $63 million ear-marked for investments in student-serving infrastructure and capital improvements. The Urey update addressed a number of problems, Nielson said, including noise and poor lighting. The original orange plastic seats, which were uncomfortable and certainly not up to UM brand, were replaced with chairs upholstered in maroon and gray fabric.
“The hall is used a lot for Orientation, so we wanted it to scream Griz,” Nielson said, noting that for extra comfort the number of chairs in the room was reduced from 440 to 400.

The focal point of the new AV system is an LED screen measuring 18 feet by 10 feet.

“It’s pretty awesome,” Nielson said. “I got a chance to try a video game on the screen, and I’m sure our esports team will love it.”

Urey Hall was named after UM alumni and instructor Harold C. Urey, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1934 for his discovery of deuterium, the heavy form of hydrogen. His work was key for the development of the atomic bomb. He also did extensive research in planetary sciences and the origins of Earth, working closely with NASA on lunar missions.

Nielson said upgrades to Urey Hall’s restrooms and corridor are currently in progress and will be done by start of classes. The corridor eventually will be furnished with lounge seating once physical distancing due to COVID-19 is no longer needed. The North Underground Lecture Hall, that shares a common vestibule with Urey Hall, is slated to be updated next summer.

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**Contact:** Kevin Krebsbach, UM director of Facility Services, 406-243-2787, kevin.krebsbach@umontana.edu; Kim Nielson, computer-aided design technician, 406-243-2420, kim.nielson@mso.umt.edu.
A new gravel swim beach at the Flathead Lake Biological Station offers a scenic setting for summer recreation while naturally protecting the shoreline from erosion.
These photos show the progress from the original shoreline (top photo, with original waterline shaded in blue), through snowy construction in the spring (middle photo), to the newly restored gravel beach shoreline.
FLATHEAD LAKE – University of Montana physical lake ecologist Dr. Mark Lorang stood on the shorefront of the Flathead Lake Biological Station enthusiastically taking pictures of the beach. “I wish I could have been down here filming it when it was happening,” he said.

Lorang was referring to a brief, intense storm that had rolled through the previous night. Its waves had rearranged the biological station’s newly completed erosion control beach, and Lorang wanted to see how it had fared. He had meticulously designed this beach to protect a portion of the station’s shoreline, and its completion meant part of a decades-long plan had finally come to fruition.

The beach was constructed in March when things at FLBS were quiet. For the people working at the bio station during beach construction, the sound of heavy machinery and delivery of truckload after truckload of gravel was a change of pace.

Abigail Schmeichel who started working as a K-12 educator at the station in January said it was an interesting process to watch. Over the course of almost two weeks, truckloads of cobble and gravel were transported continuously from Polson and Woods Bay.

“Every day from 8 to 5 p.m. you could hear the trucks going, beeping, backing up and turning around,” Schmeichel said. “It definitely spiced up the week.”

Schmeichel had a front-row view of the beach construction from her FLBS apartment and went to check out the process frequently. She said the addition of the beach is nice from a user standpoint. The slope of the bank into the water is less steep, and the gravel is easier to walk on.

But the beach wasn’t installed for aesthetics and recreational use, although they are a happy byproduct. It has a very functional purpose. It’s called a “dynamic equilibrium beach” – a beach designed to prevent shoreline erosion and help restore habitat.

Lorang, a former FLBS faculty member, has studied Flathead Lake for over 30 years. His research led him to design soft structure beaches made of varying particle sizes (i.e., gravel and cobble) that can absorb and dissipate incoming wave energy, thus preventing damaging erosion.

The bio station beach is made up of varying sizes of rocks that were placed strategically at low water. First, a mix of larger cobbles and gravel was placed lower down on the exposed
shoreline. That was followed by a smaller cobble mix above the previous layer. And finally on top of all that, a large amount of pea-sized gravel was deposited, extending up towards the trees. When the lake’s water levels were brought up in June, only the easy to walk on smaller gravel was left exposed.

When waves break on the gravel, it is pushed around as it absorbs the energy. A big storm at a high water level will create a berm or beach crest built up by the largest waves tossing larger rocks on top of the smaller gravel. The waves dynamically reshape the gravels into a beach that can break the waves and dissipate the erosive energy. It will take subsequent larger storms to rearrange the beach again.

Ultimately, Lorang has installed a soft structure that mimics what natural beaches do.

Flathead Lake water levels are controlled by the Seli’š Ksanka Qlispe’ Dam, formerly known as Kerr Dam, near Polson. Lake levels fluctuate as much as 10 feet throughout the year. In the summer the water is purposefully kept at a high level or “full pool” for recreational purposes.

In a recent report, former FLBS Director Dr. Jack Stanford described how in natural conditions the shores of lakes are protected because they experience wave impact at varying water levels that occur during seasonal fluctuations. Stanford said that erosion at the top of a lake’s shoreline would naturally only occur during the largest floods, and for just a brief period of time.

Artificially keeping the lake at a high level longer accelerates the erosion process during large wind and subsequent wave events.

The UM station has lost 1.6 acres of shoreline property since the regulation of Flathead Lake’s water level began in 1938. Diane Whited, a FLBS researcher and a GIS and remote sensing savant, has helped document the station’s shoreline loss.

Whited, who has worked at FLBS for about 20 years, used to measure shoreline erosion with surveying equipment and erosion pins. Now she uses drones to image the lake shoreline.

Whited said remote sensing is a fast way to collect larger-scale amounts of visual data. Such imagery is useful in that it can quickly and easily communicate what numbers and equations
“We’ve lost 20 meters of land over X amount of years,” she said. “Well, you can say that. But if you can visually show that, it's much more powerful.”

The drones also capture imagery of Lorang’s beach projects. Imagery before and after construction, as well as following big storms or 5 to 10 years down the line, helps determine and document the effectiveness of the design-with-nature approach.

Lorang has designed and helped install about 2.5 miles of dynamic equilibrium beaches on Flathead Lake’s shoreline since 1989.

Traditional and most commonly used methods for preventing erosion are hard structures such as seawalls, large barriers usually made of concrete and riprap – a field of large boulders or objects. Historically, large car bodies have been used along river banks, creating “Detroit riprap.”

These methods have some drawbacks, Lorgan said. The energy of a wave is what causes erosion. That energy doesn’t dissipate when it hits a hard structure like a concrete wall, but is reflected back into the lake where it interacts with other incoming waves.

This interaction causes scour to the lake bed in front of the seawall and to the adjacent shoreline. That process increases the severity of erosion to neighboring property. This usually leads to the construction of more seawall and riprap, resulting in a domino effect of building seawalls and losing natural beaches.

Seawalls in particular cause more scour to lake bed, resulting in unnatural and harsh environments in which plant life can’t grow. This negatively impacts the aquatic food web, as well as the connected terrestrial habitat.

From an aesthetic and recreational standpoint, seawalls and large boulder fields are not as appealing to beach goers and make the shoreline less accessible.

“No one wants to spread their towel on riprap,” Lorang said.

But a challenge for those looking to have an erosion-control beach is the expertise needed to
design and build them. Installing one of Lorang’s beaches is a much more intricate process than simply dumping a pile of gravel.

Lorang has years of knowledge and experience. He carefully calculates in all the variables. Every shoreline is different, and Lorang looks at the characteristics of each individual section of shoreline and the waves affecting it. It isn’t a one-size-fits-all method.

Lorang said beaches moving and being reshaped is a part of natural processes. It’s normal to see these beaches change after storms. That’s the point of a dynamic structure: It can adapt and change to the variable wave and storm conditions, while dissipating the wave energy that causes shoreline erosion.

These beaches have been slow to grow in popularity, and Lorang thinks that people have this perception that a changing or “dynamic” beach means something bad.

But essentially, Lorang is simply providing the right volumes and distributions of gravel material so that the waves can do the work of mimicking what natural beaches do. And natural beaches change over time. Lorang said this method of designing with nature just doesn’t have enough credibility, yet.

“The first thing people do when they buy property out here is stake out their boundaries. Usually that means cutting down trees and building a seawall,” Lorang said.

In total, about 460 feet of FLBS shoreline was transformed, with close to 1,020 cubic yards of cobble and gravel. In weight that’s about 1,020 Toyota Corollas or 510 medium-sized hippos.

The beach was built with money the bio station was awarded in a recent class-action lawsuit for shoreline damages caused by dam-regulated lake levels, according to Tom Bansak, FLBS associate director.

Bansak said the station wants their beach to serve as a model of how Lorang’s beach design works over time.

FBLS officials and Lorang have future plans to protect more of its shoreline with this kind of erosion control, Bansak said. This includes the adjacent Yellow Bay Unit at Flathead Lake State Park, which sits on FLBS property. The park is open to the public and sees a lot of
summer users on its shrinking shoreline. Station personnel want to enhance the visitor experience by helping to restore and protect the park.

“From a recreational standpoint, you can’t use half the state park, right? Because you have to fight through the brush to get to the water,” Bansak said.

Flathead Lake State Park manager Amy Grout has been in talks with the bio station about an erosion control beach. Yellow Bay is one of six units around the lake that make up Flathead Lake State Park. Grout said the idea of Yellow Bay having one of Lorang’s beaches is exciting. She has been park manager for five years, and within the last year she has noticed notable erosion at Yellow Bay.

“A beach would allow for more usable area of the shoreline for the public,” she said.

The challenge for Yellow Bay is finding the funding. While Grout is on board with putting in a beach, the money isn’t there. She said the Flathead parks have many facilities that need repairs and upgrades, and those take priority. Finding funding will be a challenge, but the bio station and partners are looking to philanthropy to help foot the bill.

Standing on the new bio station beach, Lorang commented on how the beach has already changed shape, hypothesizing why a curve was created here or debris was deposited there. He wants Whited to fly a drone over to take aerial photos of the beach to document the changes made before and after the storm.

“I’ve been doing this for 40 years, and I still get excited about beaches,” Lorang said.

_Writer Kelsea Harris-Capuano is a graduate student in the UM Journalism Program and the 2020 FLBS Ted Smith Environmental Storytelling Intern._

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Jay Evans heads UM’s Center for Translational Medicine, which was just recognized for its vital COVID-19 vaccine research.
The University of Montana has ranked among the top 10 universities on Successful Student’s list for “Best Universities Solving the Coronavirus Pandemic,” joining schools like Harvard and Oxford in its commitment to helping defeat the coronavirus.

The schools on the list are developing treatments, testing and diagnostics, contagion mapping, contact tracing, data collection and analyses, and education for the COVID-19 pandemic. UM received the recognition for its vital vaccine research, conducted in the Center for Translational Medicine.

“It’s nice to be recognized in this way,” said Jay Evans, CTM director. “The COVID-19 pandemic has created terrible human and economic costs in 2020. But scientists around the world have mobilized for this fight, and it’s exciting to be working toward a possible solution.”

Forty-five faculty, research staff, postdocs, graduate students and undergraduate interns comprise the center’s vaccine research team. Founded in 2016, this interdisciplinary team includes multi-department translational scientists in chemistry, formulation, molecular biology and immunology. The team is working on novel vaccines for influenza, COVID-19, whooping cough, pseudomonas, tuberculosis, Lyme disease, E. coli and opioid addiction.

Evans’ research team received $2.5 million from the National Institutes of Health to develop a COVID-19 vaccine candidate in February. Evans said the research now is at the pre-clinical vaccine development stage.

“We have identified several promising lead vaccine candidates that are rapidly advancing through safety and efficacy testing in SARS-CoV-2 challenge models,” he said.

UM’s vaccine research is unique in its use of new adjuvants, which help boost the immune system’s response to vaccines and will increase the duration of protection against COVID-19.

Scott Whittenburg, UM’s vice president for research and creative scholarship, said he is not surprised by the University’s ranking for its contributions toward helping solve the pandemic.

“The researchers in the CTM are leaders in the development of adjuvants for many of the vaccine candidates currently under consideration by the NIH,” he said. “These adjuvants will make the vaccines more effective in treating the virus, leading to lower doses and increased
availability both in the U.S. and overseas. UM is having a major impact in the battle against COVID-19.”

UM’s research team also has partnered with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. Follow the UM Center for Translational Medicine’s work online at https://hs.umt.edu/ctm/.

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MISSOULA – A respected international ranking organization recently listed the University of Montana among the most impactful institutions in the U.S. for research.
The CWTS Leiden Ranking 2020 offers insights into the research performance of more than 1,000 major universities worldwide. The organization defines impact as the proportion of publications by university researchers that belong in the top 10% in their field. By that metric, UM landed at No. 48 in the United States for scientific impact.

“This latest ranking confirms what we already knew about our faculty in the sciences and humanities,” said Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship. “Our researchers routinely publish in the top journals in our fields, and those publications are frequently cited by researchers at other universities due to the high caliber of the research and the importance of those results to their disciplines.”

Whittenburg said 14% of UM researchers had publications that ranked in the top 10% of their fields. This nested UM among such prestigious institutions as the University of Wisconsin-Madison (No. 47, with 14.1% of its researchers in the top 10% of publications) and the University of Illinois-Urbana Champagne (No. 54, with 13.6% in the top 10%).

Additionally, Leiden ranked UM at No. 8 in the U.S. for collaboration with other institutions— with collaboration defined as the percentage of publications co-authored with faculty members for other universities.

At UM, 87% of publications were done in collaboration with researchers at other institutions. This puts UM in the company of Caltech (No. 6, with 87.1% collaboration), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (No. 15, with 82.6% collaboration) and Harvard (No. 19, with 85.3% collaboration).

“The CWTS Leiden Ranking highlighted the collaborative nature of our faculty and research as they publish with leading thinkers around the world,” Whittenburg said.

The Leiden Ranking provides information exclusively about the research done at universities. Research is represented in publications, and carefully collected data about these publications forms the basis for the ranking. This basis also ensures the independence of the Leiden Ranking, since there is no reliance on data submitted by the universities themselves.

“Even while facing a global pandemic, UM faculty continue to generate impactful research that expands the boundaries of knowledge,” UM President Seth Bodnar said. “The Leiden Ranking reveals not only the quality of research happening at UM but also reflects our faculty members’ commitment to asking and finding answers to consequential questions. This is UM
at its best.”

The rankings and other information about the CWTS Leiden Ranking are online at https://www.leidenranking.com/.

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