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SEPTEMBER

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MISSOULA – More than 94% of law graduates from the University of Montana’s Alexander Blewett III School of Law passed the Montana Bar Exam on their first attempt in July, a rate that’s 19% higher than the national first-time passage rate cited by the American Bar
By comparison, the overall pass rate for all candidates taking the July exam in Montana was 85%.

“We are delighted that so many of our graduates can immediately begin serving their communities and pursuing their career goals,” said law Dean Paul Kirgis. “Especially this year, with the disruptions caused by COVID-19, it’s gratifying to see these results. They are a testament to the quality and dedication of both our students and our faculty.”

Kirgis credits the high pass rate to the law school’s comprehensive academic success program, which begins with a student’s first year and continues through graduation and bar exam passage. This program includes individualized support provided to students by Associate Dean of Students Sally Weaver and Director of the Law Firm Program Beth Brennan, who together lead the School of Law’s bar preparation efforts.

“Without compromising on our promise to deliver the best practical legal education available, we are making sure we give our students the tools and knowledge they need to pass the bar,” Weaver said.

“This successful effort by the law school really did take a village, and this success is shared by all of us,” she said. “We have outstanding students and engaged and focused faculty who ensure our students get the knowledge and skills they need not only to pass the bar exam but also to be successful in the practice of law.”

Faculty review the curriculum as a whole and individual courses to ensure coverage of the topics most frequently tested on the Uniform Bar Exam. In addition, the law school offers a Preparing for the Bar course for third-year students and provides individual coaching to recent graduates leading up to the exam.

“When it all came together, what our students achieved was phenomenal – in the most stressful, chaotic environment for anyone taking a bar exam in many years,” Weaver said.

Contact: Paul Kirgis, dean, UM Alexander Blewett III School of Law, 406-243-5291,
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paul.kirgis@umontana.edu.
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COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA,

UM TO PRESENT ‘SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION’ IN OCTOBER

29 SEPTEMBER 2020 •

A scene from UM’s virtual “Six Degrees of Separation.”

MISSOULA – The School of Theatre and Dance at the University of Montana will present the
UM to Present ‘Six Degrees of Separation’ in October

Pulitzer- and Tony-nominated “Six Degrees of Separation” in October. This production is the first installment of the school’s 2020-21 Studio Series, which incorporates inventive staging and minimal design to tighten focus on the performers and the text.

“Six Degrees of Separation” is directed by guest director Charlie Oates. The production runs at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 14-17 and 21-24, as well as at 2 p.m. Oct 18 and 25. Each of these performances will be streamed to audiences.

General admission tickets cost $12, while senior and student tickets cost $8. Admission for UM employees is $10. Tickets are available by visiting https://www.umt.edu/umarts/boxoffice/.

The original stage version of “Six Degrees of Separation” premiered in 1990, and many are familiar with the 1993 film adaptation starring Will Smith. This touching play, inspired by actual events, explores the essential human similarities that we all have, despite race and social class. The idea that we actually live in a small world – and that we are all driven by the same desires for comfort, status, stability and connection – is teased out in Guare’s signature biting wit.

“‘Six Degrees of Separation,’ John Guare’s modern classic, didn’t just popularize the notion in a single expression that everyone on the globe is connected,” Oates said. “His play explores race, class, the generational divide, the nature of imagination, experience and, ultimately, the delicacy of the relationships we crave. The play is funny, tragic, sophisticated, thought-provoking and current – especially in light of the racial reckoning our country is facing. It also provides great opportunities for a large cast of actors – meaty characters, lively writing and plenty of plot-driven conflict.”

The University’s School of Theatre and Dance is thrilled to have found a path forward to continue to create and share the work of students, faculty, staff and guest artists during these strange new times. The mainstage season and Studio Series for Fall 2020 will be presented virtually, beaming onto patrons’ favorite content-consuming device in safe and innovative ways with the help of online ticketing platform ShowTixs4U. Shows will be recorded, and purchased tickets will grant online access to each production on specific dates and at specific curtain times.

For more information, call Oates at 760-473-6079 or email him at charlieoates@gmail.com. To see more information about the entire fall 2020 Theatre and Dance mainstage and studio season, visit https://www.umt.edu/umarts/boxoffice/.
UM to Present ‘Six Degrees of Separation’ in October

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The Valley Complex fire burned on the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana in 2000. When this photo was taken 17 years later, almost no ponderosa pine or Douglas-fir regeneration had occurred. (Photo: Kimberley Davis)
MISSOULA – New University of Montana research highlights how climate change and wildfires could profoundly alter forests across the Rocky Mountains.

UM scientists examined where high-severity wildfires – combined with hot, dry conditions following fire – are likely to cause shifts from ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests to different types of vegetation across the species' range from Montana to New Mexico. They predict 16% of ponderosa pine and 10% of Douglas-fir forests in the Rocky Mountains could be lost by roughly 2050 due to the combination of high-severity fire and climate change.

Their new study, “Fire-catalyzed Vegetation Shifts in Ponderosa Pine and Douglas-fir Forests of the Western United States,” was published Sept. 18 in the academic journal Environmental Research Letters.

“Forests in the West are increasingly affected by wildfire and climate change, and there is concern that this combination may lead to the loss of forests,” said Kimberley Davis, a research scientist in UM’s W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation and the study’s lead author. “Forests may not return after wildfires if two things occur. First, there needs to be a high severity fire that kills adult trees. Second, there needs to be a failure of tree regeneration following the fire.”

If this combination occurs, and trees don’t regenerate, land cover will shift from ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests to shrubland, grassland or other forest types.

To predict where such shifts are most likely, the authors compared projections of areas most likely to burn at high severity with projections of where the climate may be too hot and dry for trees to regenerate after fires.

“We know that ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir regeneration after wildfires is sensitive to seasonal climate conditions and that conditions are already too hot and dry for regeneration at some of our study sites,” Davis said. “We did not know how widespread these limiting climate conditions were and how that may change in the future.”

The researchers found that the area that can support tree regeneration has declined significantly since the 1980s, and they expect that trend to continue in the near-term future.
They also found that southern ecoregions had considerably higher vulnerability to fire-catalyzed vegetation shifts than northern ecoregions.

Overall, the study suggests that even under current climate conditions, a significant percent of the low-elevation forests within the Rockies may shift to other vegetation types due to the combination of high-severity fire and climate conditions that are too hot and dry for tree regeneration.

“Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir are two of the most dominant tree species in the Rockies,” Davis said “They are important to the timber and outdoor recreation industries and also provide important ecosystem services such as carbon storage and water regulation and supply. More area is burning every year, and other types of vegetation that may replace these forests following fire will likely provide different ecosystem services or economic opportunities. It will be important for managers and other stakeholders to know where we might expect these transitions so they can plan accordingly.”

UM co-authors include Philip Higuera and Solomon Dobrowski. Additional co-authors include researchers from the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute; the University of California, Merced; the University of Colorado, Boulder; and the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

This study is available online at https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abb9df

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The University of Montana announces the creation of the American Indian Governance and Policy Institute. The independent, nonpartisan research center will pull from expertise across the Montana University System, to produce evidence-based information so that tribes can make informed decisions for a variety of governing decisions.
MISSOULA – Montana’s tribal nations now have a dedicated institute for all things policy, governance and research when it comes to the overall health of Indian country.

The Montana Board of Regents recently approved the creation of the American Indian Governance and Policy Institute at the University of Montana. The institute was created and is currently directed by Heather Cahoon, assistant professor in UM’s Department of Native American Studies.

The independent, nonpartisan research center will pull from expertise across the Montana University System, including expert scholars, researchers and students, to produce evidence-
based information so that tribes can make informed decisions for a variety of governing decisions. The ultimate goal of the new institute, Cahoon said, is to address the core causes of poor socioeconomic health on Montana’s Indian reservations.

“Most government policymakers on the federal and state levels have readily available research and data provided from research service divisions,” Cahoon said. “That same, necessary service currently is not provided to tribes, and this new center will be instrumental in providing Montana tribal governments expert in-depth research and policy support.”

Cahoon said the AIGPI will complement and support the work already being done in tribal communities to address cornerstones of health, which include education, the criminal justice system, access to healthcare and economic development. Ideally, Cahoon said the AIGPI will match university system expertise with the ongoing efforts of tribal leaders to address the social determinants driving poor health outcomes in their communities with “tribes driving the research agenda.”

“Up until this point, no one has been able to crack the code of eradicating health disparities on reservations,” Cahoon said. “But if we can provide research at the tribal government level and support the work they’re already doing, I believe we can find the answers that are already in these communities.”

Housed within UM’s Department of Native American Studies, the AIGPI also is affiliated with the Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic within UM’s Alexander Blewett School of Law III and the Department of Public Administration and Policy — that will provide support to inform the development of legal documents such as tribal codes, ordinances and intergovernmental agreements, among other items. Additionally, any material or research produced from AIGPI will be free and publicly available on a database.

Cahoon said the joint nature of AIGPI will allow the institute to take “a deep dive into a social or economic issues particular to one tribe.”

Cahoon, who is Upper Kalispel, grew up in St. Ignatius on the Flathead Indian Reservation and is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Spending three years developing close relationships with Montana tribal councils as the former state tribal policy analyst with the Montana Budget and Policy Center, Cahoon worked with tribal governments across the state. She said most Montana tribes are concerned about growing their economy and the physical and mental health of their communities.
Gerald Gray, chairman of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Cree Indians and chairman of the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, said AIGPI is long overdue for the 12 tribes in Montana.

“Tribal governments are pulled in so many directions that they often don’t have the time or expertise to collect background data and research for a particular decision,” Gray said. “This data from the center will be able to provide tribes an incredibly important resource for decision making and policy creation for all tribes – each with individual challenges and needs.”

Gray added that tribal overall health across the state varies and is largely dependent on location, resources and amenities.

“No tribe is the same, but in many ways all Indians under the reservation system have not been set up to succeed, and many are not thriving,” he said. “A center like this at UM allows tribes to work with evidence and data to address the answers and opportunities that are critical for the future.”

AIGPI originally was supported by a $26,500 planning grant from the Headwaters Foundation and Clearwater Credit Union has given the first $5,000 toward establishing a student scholarship fund for the institute.

Currently, Cahoon is working to develop a comprehensive public policy needs assessment to identify the existing tribal policy voids and needs of each of Montana’s eight tribal governments. This effort was made possible by a $99,956 grant from the Montana Health Care Foundation.

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$450.9 Million ‘Campaign Montana’ Concludes With State Higher Education Giving Record
The UM community celebrates the single largest gift in UM history at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This gift is one example of donors making transformational contributions during Campaign Montana that will have impact for generations.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has concluded the most ambitious and successful higher education fundraising campaign in state history.

Over seven years, the comprehensive “Campaign Montana – Think Big. Be Bold.” inspired $450.9 million in giving from more than 34,000 donors to elevate every UM student, college, school and program. The campaign exceeded every goal, including the initial $320 million goal set during the quiet phase that began in July 2013, the $400 million goal announced when the campaign launched publicly in October 2018 and the aspirational goal of 110% ($440 million) established during the campaign’s final year.

The philanthropic support Campaign Montana inspired is vital to achieving the UM mission. Private gifts from individuals, families, businesses and foundations augment state support, student tuition and fees, research grants and other operating revenue. Donor giving translates into scholarships and investments in learning environments and academic programs, providing resources that enhance access to higher education, deliver critical applied learning and career preparation experiences, and transform lives.

From its inception, Campaign Montana focused on inspiring support for student success. When the campaign launched publicly just after President Seth Bodnar joined UM in 2018, he issued an aspirational call to action for the UM family, asking its members to think big and be
bold while striving to shape a university that places student success at the center of all it does, and drives excellence and innovation in our teaching, research and learning.

“The record-setting gifts received during Campaign Montana already have had big impacts for UM and our students and will continue to impact them for decades to come,” Bodnar said. “Supporters from across the globe responded to the aspirations reflected in Campaign Montana, and their generous contributions have provided critical momentum toward our trajectory to be a Flagship for the Future.”

In addition to University-wide leadership fundraising priorities and goals, each UM college and school, as well as Grizzly Athletics, the Flathead Lake Biological Station, the Montana Museum of Art and Culture and other programs, established fundraising objectives for the campaign. Together, each donor and every gift – no matter the size – made a difference in the campaign. Highlights include:

- Donors represented all 50 states and gave nearly 100,000 gifts.
- More than 16,000 donors were inspired to support UM for the first time during the campaign.
- Donors committed more than $110 million through planned gifts that will provide critical support to UM in the future.
- Donors gave more than $58 million through annual giving efforts such as Giving Tuesday and the UM Phonathon.

While the final months of Campaign Montana took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, donors found new meaning in supporting students during unprecedented times. Generous alumni and friends donated more than $108,000 to the Emergency Student Support Fund for students struggling to meet basic needs due to the pandemic. Through the state’s Montana Access Scholarship program, donors gave more than $436,000 to support need-based scholarships, and their gifts were matched dollar-for-dollar by the state. Such support is more important now than ever as students encounter unexpected financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Campaign Montana inspired private giving that will have a transformative effect on thousands of students and the entire UM community for years to come. Many of their gifts were directed to the following areas.
Scholarships and Student Support

With more than $126 million donated for student scholarships and support, Campaign Montana gifts are enhancing access to higher education, strengthening professional academic advising services and allowing UM colleges, schools and other programs to deliver critical services and resources students need to persist and succeed toward graduation.

Donors supported student scholarships more than any other area during the campaign. With over $97 million contributed, UM provided more than 14,000 students with privately funded scholarships over the campaign’s seven years.

While an $11 million gift in 2014 represented the largest pledge for scholarships in UM history, gifts for scholarships that support undergraduate students and fellowships that support graduate students came in all sizes. The 514 new undergraduate scholarships and fellowships established during the campaign represented a variety of forms as well.

Numerous scholarships honor the memory of a donor’s loved one. Many donors chose to establish an endowed scholarship or fellowship by requesting their gift be invested in perpetuity and a portion of investment earnings made available to support scholarships each year. Some scholarships support students meeting certain criteria, such as pursuing a particular field of study, re-entering the workforce or having served in the military. Need-based scholarships provide access to higher education for students who couldn’t afford it otherwise.

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In the field of health care, donors helped expand the reach of UM’s Neural Injury Center in serving our state’s veterans and their families, and **a private grant** is allowing the University to expand neuroscience education across multiple disciplines. A gift to **UM Health and Medicine** is helping expand UM’s commitment to educating health care practitioners for communities across Montana, and donors are supporting student training programs that prepare graduates for rural medical careers.

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Such a successful campaign could only be completed with the support of dedicated donors and volunteers. Alumni and donors Betsy Ross Wilcox and A. Warren Wilcox served as co-chairs of Campaign Montana’s quiet phase, while alumni and donors Mark and Cheryl Burnham served as co-chairs of its public phase. Volunteers serving on an executive committee guided the campaign, and a steering committee worked alongside deans, the director of athletics and other UM leaders to serve as ambassadors and invite support of program-specific priorities.

UM supporters have made a transformational impact for the students of today and have planned carefully to ensure their giving benefits future generations. Their inspirational support remains critical, said Cindy Williams, president and CEO of the UM Foundation.
“The University of Montana is positioned to serve its mission and deliver on its promise because of Campaign Montana donors,” Williams said. “Our donors’ passion for preparing students to lead, to uplift our communities and to make our world a better place is an inspiration. As the UM Foundation continues to support the mission-critical work happening at UM, continued partnership with our donors is as critical as ever.”

Campaign Montana was a joint endeavor of UM and UM Foundation, an independent nonprofit organization that has inspired philanthropic support to enhance excellence and opportunity at UM since 1950.

In June 2020, the UM Foundation earned an Educational Fundraising Award for Overall Improvement from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. The award recognizes “colleges, universities and affiliated foundations that demonstrate significant fundraising program growth.” The UM Foundation’s work was similarly recognized by CASE in 2015. The organization also earned a 2019 CASE Education Fundraising Award for Overall Performance, which recognizes overall fundraising program growth, breadth in the base of support and other indications of a mature, well-maintained program.

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25 September 2020
The UM community celebrates the single largest gift in UM history at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This gift is one example of donors making transformational contributions during Campaign Montana that will have impact for generations.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has concluded the most ambitious and successful higher education fundraising campaign in state history.

Over seven years, the comprehensive “Campaign Montana – Think Big. Be Bold.” inspired $450.9 million in giving from more than 34,000 donors to elevate every UM student, college, school and program. The campaign exceeded every goal, including the initial $320 million goal set during the quiet phase that began in July 2013, the $400 million goal announced when the campaign launched publicly in October 2018 and the aspirational goal of 110% ($440 million) established during the campaign’s final year.

The philanthropic support Campaign Montana inspired is vital to achieving the UM mission. Private gifts from individuals, families, businesses and foundations augment state support, student tuition and fees, research grants and other operating revenue. Donor giving translates into scholarships and investments in learning environments and academic programs, providing resources that enhance access to higher education, deliver critical applied learning and career preparation experiences, and transform lives.

From its inception, Campaign Montana focused on inspiring support for student success. When the campaign launched publicly just after President Seth Bodnar joined UM in 2018, he issued an aspirational call to action for the UM family, asking its members to think big and be
bold while striving to shape a university that places student success at the center of all it does, and drives excellence and innovation in our teaching, research and learning.

“The record-setting gifts received during Campaign Montana already have had big impacts for UM and our students and will continue to impact them for decades to come,” Bodnar said. “Supporters from across the globe responded to the aspirations reflected in Campaign Montana, and their generous contributions have provided critical momentum toward our trajectory to be a Flagship for the Future.”

In addition to University-wide leadership fundraising priorities and goals, each UM college and school, as well as Grizzly Athletics, the Flathead Lake Biological Station, the Montana Museum of Art and Culture and other programs, established fundraising objectives for the campaign. Together, each donor and every gift – no matter the size – made a difference in the campaign. Highlights include:

- Donors represented all 50 states and gave nearly 100,000 gifts.
- More than 16,000 donors were inspired to support UM for the first time during the campaign.
- Donors committed more than $110 million through planned gifts that will provide critical support to UM in the future.
- Donors gave more than $58 million through annual giving efforts such as Giving Tuesday and the UM Phonathon.

While the final months of Campaign Montana took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, donors found new meaning in supporting students during unprecedented times. Generous alumni and friends donated more than $108,000 to the Emergency Student Support Fund for students struggling to meet basic needs due to the pandemic. Through the state’s Montana Access Scholarship program, donors gave more than $436,000 to support need-based scholarships, and their gifts were matched dollar-for-dollar by the state. Such support is more important now than ever as students encounter unexpected financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Campaign Montana inspired private giving that will have a transformative effect on thousands of students and the entire UM community for years to come. Many of their gifts were directed to the following areas.
Scholarships and Student Support

With more than $126 million donated for student scholarships and support, Campaign Montana gifts are enhancing access to higher education, strengthening professional academic advising services and allowing UM colleges, schools and other programs to deliver critical services and resources students need to persist and succeed toward graduation.

Donors supported student scholarships more than any other area during the campaign. With over $97 million contributed, UM provided more than 14,000 students with privately funded scholarships over the campaign’s seven years.

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The award, named for former UM President Bucklew who served from 1981 to 1986, recognizes individuals for their extraordinary effort to deepen Montana’s understanding of UM’s needs and strengths. It has been given annually by the UM Foundation since 1988.

The Baldridges received the award on Thursday, Sept. 24, at the UM Foundation’s President’s Club Virtual Campaign Montana Celebration. Recent honorees of the Bucklew award include Eric Sprunk and Dennis and Gretchen Eck in 2019, Mickey Sogard in 2018, Michael McDonough in 2017 and Nelson S. Weller in 2016.

Both Baldridges are Montana natives with deep roots in both UM and the state. Two of their daughters, Maryl and Shelby, also are UM alumnae, and Summerfield’s father, William Gregory Baldridge, graduated from UM in 1950.

The Baldridges operate Kootenai Resource Corp., a Montana-based natural resource company. Summerfield spent many years as an investment executive. Throughout their careers, Summerfield and Julie have continued their engagement with UM, chairing the College of Humanities & Sciences’ Campaign Montana steering committee. In addition, Julie recently completed her second term of service as a member of the UM Foundation Board of Trustees.

Summerfield and Julie Baldridge also give generously to counseling, Irish Studies, clinical psychology, athletics, the humanities and art at UM. The Baldridges are lead donors to the renovation of the Clinical Psychology Center, making a gift last fall in response to the Terry and Patt Payne Family match challenge to facilitate improvements that will allow the center to serve up to four times more clients.

Additionally, the Baldridges supported the David M. Emmons Visiting Professorship in Irish Studies, provide foundational funding for the healthy relationships program in UM’s counseling department and are lead supporters of the Neural Injury Center in the College of Health. They also support other areas of UM, such as Grizzly Athletics and the College of the Arts and Media.

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“As we have become involved as alumni, we have seen UM grow in many ways, including student success, program advancement, research milestones and teaching distinction – all while meeting challenges,” Julie said.

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The Baldridges were recognized with UM’s Community Service Award in 2017.

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UM Alumni Receive Bucklew Service Award
NIH Renewed UM Grant for Work in Nationwide Pediatric Clinical Trial Network

24 September 2020 •

UM’s Montana Pediatric Clinical Trials Site research members are (left to right) Curtis Noonan, site faculty development leader; Sara McClure Cox, research nurse coordinator; Paul Smith, site principal investigator; Erin Semmens, site co-investigator; and Jennifer Faiella, research nurse.
MISSOULA – The National Institutes of Health has renewed a grant to the University of Montana to continue its participation in a nationwide pediatric clinical trials network for the next five years.

This network is one component of the NIH-funded Environmental Influences on Childhood Health Outcomes (ECHO) program, whose mission is to provide children in rural states such as Montana access to health-related and prospective clinical research.

UM’s Montana Pediatric Clinical Trials Site (MPCTS) is a member of a component of ECHO, called the IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials (ISPCTN) and is the first such program in Montana centered solely on clinical research for children.

“This renewal is a clear indication of our success during our initial four years in the network,” said MPCTS Director Dr. Paul Smith. “This is an exciting opportunity to serve the children of Montana in a truly unique fashion.”

Smith, a pediatric pulmonologist at Community Medical Center who serves as a research faculty member within the UM School of Public and Community Health Sciences and UM Center for Population Health Research, said the program already has exceeded network expectations for study participation and engagement with rural and Native American communities.

“We built this program from the ground up with outstanding guidance from the public health faculty,” he said. “Our clinical research capacity also provides complementary infrastructure for the newly established Center for Population Health Research here at UM.”

MPCTS has been engaged in several network projects, including neonatal opioid exposure, use of vitamin D in asthmatic children and the pharmacokinetics of understudied drugs in children, all of which are important areas of need for rural children.

In the process, the trials site engaged with hospitals, practices and researchers outside Missoula. In addition to providing opportunities for Montana children to participate in cutting-edge clinical trials, MPCTS provides clinical research professional development opportunities for UM faculty, as well as graduate students and research nursing staff.
“I had been a registered nurse working in newborn and pediatric intensive care units for 15 years before serving as research nurse coordinator for MPCTS,” said Sara McClure Cox, a registered nurse. “The MPCTS program is an exciting opportunity to improve infant, child and adolescent health across Montana and nationwide through clinical trials research.”

In addition to its existing studies, MPCTS has applied to participate in studies of the impact of COVID-19 on children. Only a few sites within ISPCTN will be chosen, and the site’s track record, resources and community relationships make it an ideal site for such work.

They also are leading efforts to organize a study of ways to prevent development of asthma in children by targeting indoor air pollution with air purifiers. Ultimately, MPCTS seeks to improve the health of all children and bring issues that impact Montana children to the forefront of pediatric research.

Dr. Erin Semmens, associate professor of epidemiology in the SPCHS and an MPCTS investigator, said the new funding will allow them to build on the valuable capacity established over the past four years.

“We are enthusiastic about the opportunity to continue to grow and provide training opportunities for students and clinicians and, most importantly, to increase the access of rural and underserved populations to state-of-the-art clinical trials aimed at improving health,” she said.

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This year’s UM Distinguished Alumni: Lynette Stein-Chandler, Meg Oliver, Katie Grove, Mike Halligan, Roger Barber, Nancy Kaser-Boyd and Leslie Halligan.

**MISSOULA** – In honor of Homecoming Week, the University of Montana Alumni Association has announced seven recipients of this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award for their service, leadership and distinction in their fields.

The 2020 Distinguished Alumni include an award-winning journalist, a former senator, a
district court judge, an expert in clinical psychology, a previous academic deputy commissioner, an American Indian educator and one of the first female athletic trainers. They are:

- Roger Barber ’67, J.D. ’71, M.B.A. ’83, of Whitefish, who has used his UM education to give back to his home state. He worked for the historic 1972 Montana Constitutional Convention and, after a brief hiatus in Washington, D.C., he returned to Montana and served as a faculty member at UM’s business school before moving to MSU-Northern.

There, he became the first faculty member hired for the college’s new bachelor’s degree in business, was promoted to full professor and served in several leadership roles. In 2003, Barber was asked to serve as deputy commissioner for academic and student affairs in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for the Montana University System. Under his leadership, the university system improved credit transferability between its campuses and made changes benefiting all Montana students.

- Katie Grove ’73, of St. Paul, Minnesota, who has advanced women in athletic training for more than 40 years. One of the first female athletic trainers in the Midwest, she developed the Women in Athletic Training Task Force and the Women in Athletic Training Committee to help promote women and educate members on pay equity, honors and awards, sexual harassment and women’s exclusion in job opportunities. She also founded the Women in Leadership program in 2018.

Grove has been entered into numerous halls of fame, including the National Athletic Trainers’ Association Hall of Fame in 2015, and she has garnered several national industry awards for her service as an athletic trainer, mentor, teacher and scholar. Just this year she received NATA’s Gail Weldon Award of Excellence.

- Mike Halligan ’75, M.P.A. ’77, J.D. ’85, of Missoula, who is a Vietnam vet and a former senator in the Montana Legislature. He has worked as a Missoula deputy county attorney, supervising attorney for the Montana Department of Justice’s Child Protection Unit and owner of a private family law practice. Since 2002, Mike has directed UM’s philanthropic Dennis and Phyllis J. Washington Foundation, and he remains connected to the community through volunteer work.

- Leslie Halligan ’83, J.D. ’86, of Missoula has served as district court judge for the Fourth Judicial Court since her appointment in 2015 by Gov. Steve Bullock. She is chair of the Missoula Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and previously worked as a Missoula deputy
city attorney and Missoula deputy county attorney. She was elected president of the State Bar of Montana in 2017.

- Nancy Kaser-Boyd, M.A. ’79, Ph.D. ’80, of Studio City, California, who is a recognized expert in the field of clinical psychology. In addition to serving as a clinical professor at University of California, Los Angeles, she trains psychology graduate students, medical students and psychiatry residents in psychological assessment and consults with University of Southern California’s law school on prison inmates filing appeals.

A member of Los Angeles County Superior Court Panels of Psychiatrists and Psychologists, Kaser-Boyd is a consultant on criminal cases throughout California and the western U.S. – primarily focused on cases where battered women kill abusive spouses.

She has authored numerous book chapters and journal articles and is active in various professional organizations. Twice she has received the Outstanding Superior Court Panel Expert Award from the Juvenile Courts Bar Association of Los Angeles County.

- Meg Oliver ’93, of Montclair, New Jersey, who is an award-winning CBS News correspondent with more than two decades of journalism experience. She joined CBS News in 2006 as overnight anchor of “Up to the Minute” and correspondent for “The Early Show” and today reports for all CBS programs and platforms.

She has covered breaking news stories around the county and world, such as the London Bridge terrorist attack and Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Other major stories she has reported include a Florida teenager who ran away with her soccer coach, the number of unreported deaths at trampoline parks and the opioid epidemic, as well as the current pandemic.

Oliver has earned several Society of Professional Journalist honors and Associated Press Awards for breaking news and continuing coverage.

- Although Lynette Stein-Chandler, Ed.D. ’10, died in 2017, she left behind a legacy in American Indian education.

A member of the Aaniiih and of Nakoda descent, Stein-Chandler, known as Dancing Woman, and her husband were the first graduates of Montana State University’s Native American Studies master's program. In 2003, Stein-Chandler founded the private K-8 White Clay Language Immersion School and revitalized the language through increasing fluent speakers
on Montana's Fort Belknap Reservation. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Peru and Guatemala and received a Doctor of Education from UM in 2010.

Stein-Chandler earned the 2011 Unsung Hero Award, 2012 Montana Indian Educator of the Year and UM's 2013 Educational Leadership Excellence Award. The Fort Belknap Indian Community declared May 7, 2012, Dr. Lynette Chandler Day in her honor.

Although the Homecoming Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony is canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, the recipients will be honored in a future ceremony. Read more about this year's Distinguished Alumni on the Office of Alumni Relations website.

###

**Contact:** Jodi Moreau, engagement/board relations, UM Office of Alumni Relations, 406-243-6124, jodi.moreau@umontana.edu.
MISSOULA – In honor of Homecoming Week, the University of Montana Alumni Association has announced seven recipients of this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award for their service, leadership and distinction in their fields.

The 2020 Distinguished Alumni include an award-winning journalist, a former senator, a
district court judge, an expert in clinical psychology, a previous academic deputy commissioner, an American Indian educator and one of the first female athletic trainers. They are:

- Roger Barber '67, J.D. '71, M.B.A. '83, of Whitefish, who has used his UM education to give back to his home state. He worked for the historic 1972 Montana Constitutional Convention and, after a brief hiatus in Washington, D.C., he returned to Montana and served as a faculty member at UM's business school before moving to MSU-Northern.

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UM is offering a winter session to provide students the opportunity to continue their studies during the long winter break.

MISSOULA – With fall semester beginning and ending earlier this year because of the
UM Announces Winter Session for Students to Continue Academic Progress

pandemic, the University of Montana is offering a winter session to help students make the most of their break. The public also is invited to enroll in classes.

More than 50 courses, from anthropology to history to planetary astronomy, will be offered during the three-week session, with almost all of the classes offered entirely online and remotely. The winter session will run Nov. 30-Dec. 18.

“We are very excited to see the broad range of courses that were developed by faculty for the winter session,” said Nathan Lindsay, UM vice provost for Academic Affairs. “Many of these are general education courses that will appeal to a wide range of students, but it’s also great to see that a good number of upper division and graduate classes will be available. For students who want to continue their studies during this longer winter break, this is a wonderful opportunity.”

Before opting to host a winter session, UM polled students, staff and faculty to gauge their interest, and there was a high level of enthusiasm across the Griz community, said Becka Simons, associate director of UM Summer.

“One student said this session would be very helpful for graduating early and reducing stress during the fall and spring semesters,” she said. “Another student said the session would give them more flexibility, which is critical – especially as students are working hard to stay in school during the pandemic.”

Advising for Winter Session 2020 and spring 2021 will begin the first week of October, and registration will open the week of Oct. 26. Summer Session 2021 registration opens the week of Nov. 9.

For more information about Winter Session, including frequently asked questions for students, faculty and instructors, visit www.umt.edu/winter or email UMWinter@mso.umt.edu.

###

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UM Announces Winter Session for Students to Continue Academic Progress

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MISSOULA – The University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy will hold a 14-day public comment period on the creation of the new L.S. Skaggs Institute for Health Innovation.

The Skaggs School of Pharmacy – the only pharmacy school in Montana – with support from The ALSAM Foundation, intends to establish the new L.S. Skaggs Institute for Health...
Innovation. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in the public comment process that will run through Oct. 5.

People can digitally provide public comment online. (https://bit.ly/2G0hwDa) The Skaggs School of Pharmacy will hold three virtual public listening sessions:

- UM students can participate from 3-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 23
- UM faculty and staff can participate from 3-4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 25
- The general public can participate from 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29

In addition to UM students, faculty and staff, members of the public can participate in these virtual listening sessions. (https://umontana.zoom.us/j/97637361355#success)

“Montana is a large, rural state that constantly battles a shortage of health care providers and limited access to cutting-edge health innovations,” said Dr. Hayley Blackburn, assistant professor in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy.

“The new L.S. Skaggs Institute for Health Innovation will not only better prepare the next generation of health care professionals, but it will also ensure that families across Montana can access emerging innovations like telehealth and precision medicine,” said Dr. Erica Woodahl, a professor in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy.

Advances in precision medicine, like pharmacogenetics, use a patient’s genetic profile to choose the safest and most effective medications. Yet pharmacogenetic innovations to tailor medications have left Montanans almost entirely behind. Pharmacogenetics will be integrated into clinical services in the institute, and consultations will be offered statewide to healthcare professionals via telehealth and virtual access.

Woodahl is a leader in studying pharmacogenetics among rural and tribal populations, and the institute is poised to be the first in the country to deliver widespread adoption of pharmacogenetics in rural settings.

“The institute provides an exciting opportunity to expand access to pharmacogenetics for patients across the state and to train health professionals in this rapidly growing field,” she
While Montanans have previously recognized the value of telehealth to improve healthcare access, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of this healthcare delivery modality and the need for telehealth training for health professionals. The institute will provide interprofessional telehealth services across the state, while simultaneously providing hands-on training opportunities for pharmacy students and other students in the health professions.

“The institute will provide opportunities for interprofessional team-based care that would otherwise be inaccessible for many Montanans,” Blackburn said.

For more information and regular updates from the Skaggs School of Pharmacy, visit http://health.umt.edu/pharmacy/.

###

**Contact:** Erica Woodahl, professor, UM Skaggs School of Pharmacy, 406-243-4129, erica.woodahl@umontana.edu; Hayley Blackburn, assistant professor, UM Skaggs School of Pharmacy, 406-243-6796, hayley.blackburn@umontana.edu.
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As with last year's American Indian Heritage Day, the 2020 celebration is open to all members of the campus community, but with masks and social distancing required.
MISSOULA – The University of Montana will celebrate American Indian Heritage Day, Friday, Sept. 25, with a host of activities that recognize the people, cultures and contributions American Indians have made to the University.

This is the 23rd year that UM has hosted American Indian Heritage Day celebrations, held on the fourth Friday of September.

“American Indian Heritage Day makes explicit the depth and breadth of the contributions Native Americans have made and continue to make to our country,” said UM President Seth Bodnar. “We’re committed to honoring these contributions, in part, by delivering on our promise to provide an education that recognizes the rich history and culture of our Native American friends and colleagues.”

The days leading up to American Indian Heritage Day will have themes for UM students, faculty, staff and Missoula community members to show their Native Griz pride. Themes for each day are:

- Tuesday, Sept. 22 – “Indigenized Mask” Day
- Wednesday, Sept. 23 – “Rock Your Mocs” Day
- Thursday, Sept. 24 – Ribbon Shirt/Skirt Day
- Friday, Sept. 25 – “Native Griz” Day (participants are encouraged to wear their “Indigenized Mask,” “Rock Your Mocs,” and ribbon shirt/skirt.)

Friday’s events will include a number of activities:

- 7:30 a.m. – Sunrise Ceremony with Arlene Adams, sponsored by All Nations Health Center, at the Payne Family Native American Center Fire Pit.
- 8 a.m. – Coffee and Tea, sponsored by Health Careers Opportunity Program, in the Payne Family Native American Center Rotunda.
- 8:30 a.m. – Tribal flag raising at the Payne Family Native American Center.
9:00 a.m. – “Legal Grind: Breakfast and Info on Alexander Blewett III School of Law,” Native American Law Student Association, Garlington Plaza (School of Law).

10 a.m. – American Indian Student Services lodge raising on the Oval.

11 a.m. – Branch Center “Smudge Space” opening, University Center Branch Center.

11 a.m.–1 p.m. – Tabling on the Oval, Kyiyo, AIBL, Native American Natural Resources Program, All Nations Health Center and more.

11:45 a.m. – Procession of tribal flags sponsored by the Department of Native American Studies, the Office of the President and All Nations Health Center, starting at the Payne Family Native American Center and ending in front of University Hall.

Noon – Presentation in front of University Hall and online.
  › Introductions | master of ceremonies Zachary Wagner (Cheyenne/Blackfeet, Junior, Native American Studies)
  › Honor Song
  ›
  › Presidential Address: President Seth Bodnar
  › Special Guest Speaker: Arlene Adams, Two River Eagle School
  › Dancers/Singers Showcase
  › Closing remarks

12:45 p.m. – American Indian Heritage Day meal sponsored by the Health Careers Opportunity Program and Native Children’s Trauma Center, on the Oval.

4-8 p.m. – Indigenous Meal sponsored by UM Campus Dining in the Food Zoo Presentation: 6 p.m., Mariah Gladstone, Indigikitchen.

Brad Hall, UM’s tribal outreach specialist, emphasized that all events will adhere to COVID-19 protocols, including a requirement to wear masks and practice social distancing.
“Because we will have a limited number of chairs, I encourage everyone to reserve them for elders and those who are unable to stand for long periods of time,” Hall said.

The costs to attend is $12.25 (general public), $9.80 (UM Bear Bucks) and $3.75 (UM students with residential dining plan).

All events are made possible thanks to a community volunteer effort made up of UM students, faculty, staff and Missoula community members, as well as both campus-based and Missoula community sponsors.

###

**Contact:** Bradford Hall, tribal outreach specialist, Office of the President, 406-243-5840, bradford.hall@mso.umt.edu
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UM Receives Largest Single Research Award in Its History

MISSOULA – The National Institutes of Health has awarded the University of Montana a five-year, $33.4 million award for the development and clinical trials of opioid vaccines. It is the largest such award in University history.
The award was funded through the NIH HEAL Initiative, a national effort to speed scientific solutions to the national opioid health crisis. It includes funding for two Phase One clinical trials of opioid vaccines developed by UM’s Center for Translational Medicine in collaboration with Inimmune Corp. (Dr. Kendal Ryter and Dr. David Burkhart) and the University of Minnesota (Dr. Marco Pravetoni).

The UM vaccine research team has spent more than two decades working to improve vaccines through the use of adjuvants – components added to vaccines to improve the immune response – and novel delivery systems to ensure vaccines are safely and efficiently delivered to the right cells.

Dr. Jay Evans, principal investigator on this award and director of UM’s Center for Translational Medicine, said this is a great opportunity for UM and Missoula to make an impact on a local and global health crisis.

“This funding is an enormous boost to the research we’ve already done on the development of an opioid vaccine and is validation of our world-class research team at UM,” Evans said. “It will allow us to advance lead opioid vaccine candidates to Phase I human clinical trials and better understand the safety and efficacy of our vaccine adjuvants, which early research have shown will be needed to increase the quantity and quality of the anti-drug antibody response in people with opioid addictions.”

Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, said the award demonstrates UM’s continued commitment to using its research faculty and facilities to address problems of concern to the country and Montana.

“Drug addiction is an on-going concern to the state, where roughly half of all deaths from drug overdoses are due to opioids,” Whittenburg said. “The development of an adjuvant vaccine for treatment of opioid addiction is key to overcoming a major health issue for the state.”

UM received one of only two awards granted from this NIH Request for Applications. UM collaborators at Boston Children’s Hospital were the other recipient. Both institutions are working in partnership with Missoula’s Inimmune Corp., a start-up company located in UM’s business incubator, MonTEC.

“The public/private partnership between UM and Inimmune provides a critical mechanism to
advance multiple vaccine research programs to human clinical trials for the benefit of patients,” said Burkhart, COO at Inimmune Corp. and co-investigator on the award.

Other collaborators on the UM Opioid Vaccine award include Pravetoni and Dr. Sandy Comer from Columbia University. Both are experts in opioid addiction and drug-addiction vaccine clinical trials.

“The growing success of the Center for Translational Medicine and its business partner, Inimmune Corp, demonstrates the value of a tightly coupled public/private partnership that provides economic growth for the community while working to solve issues critical to the state,” said Whittenburg.

This new award comes on the heels of growing national recognition of UM’s work in vaccine development and funding for development and trials. The center is currently in the middle of a five-year, $17.2 million contract to develop a universal flu vaccine. This spring, the NIH also awarded the center $3.7 million to advance a COVID-19 vaccine candidate. UM’s COVID work garnered UM a ranking in Successful Student’s Top 10 list for “Best Universities Solving the Coronavirus Pandemic,” joining schools like Harvard and Oxford.

UM President Seth Bodnar said the University’s prominence in medical research mirrors its overall reputation for innovation.

“When our nation’s healthcare, environmental, and business leaders are looking to invest in world-class research, they are turning to UM,” Bodnar said. “That is one of the reasons we have seen UM’s research expenditures grow by more than 90% in the past six years. This award will further strengthen the efforts of our vaccine research team to develop life-saving solutions to some of our world’s biggest problems.”

###

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UM Receives Largest Single Research Award in Its History

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These University of Montana researchers have earned the largest single research award in UM history.

MISSOULA – The National Institutes of Health has awarded the University of Montana a five-year, $33.4 million award for the development and clinical trials of opioid vaccines. It is the largest such award in University history.
The award was funded through the NIH HEAL Initiative, a national effort to speed scientific solutions to the national opioid health crisis. It includes funding for two Phase One clinical trials of opioid vaccines developed by UM’s Center for Translational Medicine in collaboration with Inimmune Corp. (Dr. Kendal Ryter and Dr. David Burkhart) and the University of Minnesota (Dr. Marco Pravetoni).

The UM vaccine research team has spent more than two decades working to improve vaccines through the use of adjuvants – components added to vaccines to improve the immune response – and novel delivery systems to ensure vaccines are safely and efficiently delivered to the right cells.

Dr. Jay Evans, principal investigator on this award and director of UM’s Center for Translational Medicine, said this is a great opportunity for UM and Missoula to make an impact on a local and global health crisis.

“This funding is an enormous boost to the research we’ve already done on the development of an opioid vaccine and is validation of our world-class research team at UM,” Evans said. “It will allow us to advance lead opioid vaccine candidates to Phase I human clinical trials and better understand the safety and efficacy of our vaccine adjuvants, which early research have shown will be needed to increase the quantity and quality of the anti-drug antibody response in people with opioid addictions.”

Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, said the award demonstrates UM’s continued commitment to using its research faculty and facilities to address problems of concern to the country and Montana.

“Drug addiction is an on-going concern to the state, where roughly half of all deaths from drug overdoses are due to opioids,” Whittenburg said. “The development of an adjuvant vaccine for treatment of opioid addiction is key to overcoming a major health issue for the state.”

UM received one of only two awards granted from this NIH Request for Applications. UM collaborators at Boston Children’s Hospital were the other recipient. Both institutions are working in partnership with Missoula’s Inimmune Corp., a start-up company located in UM’s business incubator, MonTEC.

“The public/private partnership between UM and Inimmune provides a critical mechanism to
advance multiple vaccine research programs to human clinical trials for the benefit of patients,” said Burkhart, COO at Inimmune Corp. and co-investigator on the award.

Other collaborators on the UM Opioid Vaccine award include Pravetoni and Dr. Sandy Comer from Columbia University. Both are experts in opioid addiction and drug-addiction vaccine clinical trials.

“The growing success of the Center for Translational Medicine and its business partner, Inimmune Corp, demonstrates the value of a tightly coupled public/private partnership that provides economic growth for the community while working to solve issues critical to the state,” said Whittenburg.

This new award comes on the heels of growing national recognition of UM’s work in vaccine development and funding for development and trials. The center is currently in the middle of a five-year, $17.2 million contract to develop a universal flu vaccine. This spring, the NIH also awarded the center $3.7 million to advance a COVID-19 vaccine candidate. UM’s COVID work garnered UM a ranking in Successful Student’s Top 10 list for “Best Universities Solving the Coronavirus Pandemic,” joining schools like Harvard and Oxford.

UM President Seth Bodnar said the University’s prominence in medical research mirrors its overall reputation for innovation.

“When our nation’s healthcare, environmental, and business leaders are looking to invest in world-class research, they are turning to UM,” Bodnar said. “That is one of the reasons we have seen UM’s research expenditures grow by more than 90% in the past six years. This award will further strengthen the efforts of our vaccine research team to develop life-saving solutions to some of our world’s biggest problems.”

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Contact: Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, 406-243-6670, scott.whittenburg@umontana.edu; Jay Evans, UM Center for Translational Medicine director, 406-381-0573, jay.evans@umontana.edu
UM College of Business Names New Dean

18 SEPTEMBER 2020 •
MISSOULA – Dr. Suzanne Tilleman, who previously served as a business professor, department chair and interim dean at the University of Montana, has been named the Sprunk and Burnham Endowed Dean of the UM College of Business.

Tilleman, who has been interim dean at the business college since May 2019, will begin her duties immediately. She is the first woman to serve as permanent dean of the college.

“I look forward to continuing working with our faculty, alumni and partners as we evolve a curriculum that leverages data, analytics, value-added business and human processes,” Tilleman said. “In addition to serving our students with exceptional undergraduate and graduate programs, the college will continue developing more distance-enabled stand-alone certificates and micro-credentials to provide educational value to the citizens and employers
in our great state.”

Born and raised in Havre, Tilleman has been a faculty member teaching management at UM since 2010. She has earned Outstanding Management Faculty honors multiple times and served as the management department chair from 2017 to 2019 before serving as interim dean following the departure of Dean Chris Shook.

Tilleman holds a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, a Master of Business Administration in management from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in strategy and entrepreneurship from the University of Oregon.

Prior to pursuing her doctorate, Tilleman spent seven years working in industry and another four years teaching at Montana State University-Northern, where she discovered her love of teaching and developing students. Her industry experience includes working for some of the largest players in the natural resources arena: General Electric, Exxon and Monsanto.

“I care deeply about our state,” Tilleman said. “The UM College of Business provides transformative learning experiences that help our students achieve better lives. Through the efforts of faculty, staff and our alumni, we foster economic development in the entire state and region.”

In 2016, alumni Mark and Cheryl Burnham ’84 and Eric and Blair Sprunk ’86 – together with their families – made contributions to create the College of Business Sprunk and Burnham Endowed Dean’s Chair, the first of its kind in the State of Montana. The endowment guarantees funds in perpetuity to support the dean’s vision and strategic initiatives.

“Dean Tilleman has been an invaluable colleague among the deans since she stepped in as interim dean of the college,” said UM Acting Provost Reed Humphrey. “We are grateful she is committed to growing the College of Business through her continued leadership.”

The UM College of Business is nationally renowned and has been named the top business school in the Big Sky Conference by U.S. News and World Report for five consecutive years. With nearly 20,000 alumni, UM’s business college continues to facilitate economic development across the state of Montana and beyond.

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UM Develops Program for Incarcerated Men to Connect With Their Children

Jeramie Carr, right, and Jesse Harrison are participants in UM’s CAMPP program designed to connect incarcerated fathers with their children. (Credit: Thom Bridge, Independent Record)
MISSOULA – The Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development at the University of Montana’s School of Social Work has developed an innovative program connecting incarcerated fathers with their children. It is one of the first of its kind in Montana and nationwide.

CAMPP (Connecting Adults and Minors through Positive Parenting), is being piloted in the Deer Lodge State Prison. CAMPP provides fathers with opportunities to strengthen relationships with their children and build parenting skills and resilience so that men can be reunified with their children after release.

Looking to reduce the number of children in Montana’s foster care system, the program prioritizes fathers within five years of release with one or more children in foster care.

The center’s executive director, Ryan Tolleson-Knee, said research consistently has identified the many emotional and social stressors that children encounter when they have an incarcerated parent.

“When the idea for this program came about, we partnered with Montana State Prison to develop a wide array of educational videos, toolkits and other resources so these fathers could begin rebuilding their relationships with their children,” Tolleson-Knee said.

One of the resources used in the CAMPP’s curriculum is a video series on how to support children in foster care. The series was created by center staff member Haley Eakin, who compiled the videos through interviews with former foster youth and parents around Montana.

“When trying to learn how to better support young people in foster care, there is no better group to ask than the people who experienced the system firsthand,” Eakin said. “I am thrilled that the advice and wisdom of Montana’s former foster youth are part of the CAMPP program’s curriculum to help parents learn how to best support their children in foster care, which is a challenging and tumultuous environment for any young person.”

Learn more about the CAMPP program by reading the Helena Independent Record’s coverage about the Deer Lodge State Prison.

Contact: Ryan Tolleson-Knee, executive director of UM’s Center for Children, Families and
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Workforce Development, 406-529-6499, ryan.tollesonknee@mso.umt.edu.
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UM Enrollment Figures Reveal Commitment to Meeting Student Needs During Pandemic
Students chat on the first day of fall semester classes at the University of Montana.

MISSOULA – Amidst unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19, preliminary enrollment data for the University of Montana for the fall 2020 semester show an improvement in undergraduate student retention and persistence, as well as record graduate student enrollment.

“Faced with the tremendous challenges presented by COVID-19, the entire UM family worked diligently over the spring and summer to ensure students had an array of flexible options to pursue their education this fall,” said UM President Seth Bodnar. “The fact that so many students chose to keep on learning at UM this fall despite the uncertainty and disruption of a global pandemic is a testament to the resolve and determination of our faculty and staff during one of the most difficult periods ever for higher education.”

Continuing a positive trend of the past two years, UM saw an increase in its first-year student retention rate for the second year in a row, improving from 71.5% last fall to 75.1% this fall, a nearly 7% increase since fall 2018.

The first-year retention rate is an important indicator for the University, as students who persist into their second year are much more likely to successfully complete their studies and graduate. In addition, UM set a graduate student enrollment record in the fall 2020 semester, driven by a 4.9% increase in first-time graduate students.

In total, UM reported 10,015 students enrolled for the fall 2020 semester.

“To increase rates of student retention and persistence in the midst of a global pandemic is an incredible achievement,” Bodnar said. “Whether it is our redesigned orientation, bolstered academic advising or investments in classrooms and student learning centers, UM is placing students at the center of all we do, and that is reflected in these results.”

Bodnar emphasized that the driving force of UM’s new, multifaceted retention strategy is a deep commitment to prioritizing student needs above all else. Over the past year, UM has launched a new student orientation program – the Big Sky Experience – along with enhanced individual academic advising, wellness support, peer mentoring, community partnerships for experiential learning and a new, comprehensive career readiness program called ElevateU.
UM also has increased the number of offerings available to students over the summer. This summer, UM saw an enrollment increase for the third year in a row, and summer enrollment this year was 26.7% higher than it was three years ago. This means students are able to complete their degrees faster, and over 450 students earned their degrees this summer and did not need to return to campus for the fall.

“From the moment a student chooses UM to the day they earn their diploma and start in that first job, we provide them with the support and resources they need to succeed – especially during these trying times,” Bodnar added.

Compared to fall 2019, UM saw a smaller freshmen class, as yield rates from an increased applicant pool declined amidst the pandemic.

“Last winter, applicants to UM were on the rise, and out-of-state applicants were the highest volume we have seen in years,” Bodnar said. “Over the course of the spring and summer, we saw a large number of students and families make some different decisions about college in light of COVID-19, with some staying closer to home and others taking some time off. That impact is reflected in the size of this year’s freshmen class.

“We are optimistic that when we are on the other side of COVID-19, our continued efforts to revitalize UM’s student recruitment infrastructure will drive continued growth in applications and higher yield rates of enrolled students.”

After reviewing UM’s preliminary fall semester report, Vice President for Operations and Finance Paul Lasiter said fiscal 2021 revenues appear to be in line with budget forecasts.

“COVID-19 created great uncertainty for students and their families regarding their personal choices for higher education this fall,” Lasiter said. “UM was not exempt from the impacts of this uncertainty. Fortunately, our projections of student enrollment and revenue – combined with prudent budgetary measures – ensured that UM has the financial resources to continue strengthening student services, while also making campuswide improvements that prospective students are seeking.”

In addition to renovating Urey Lecture Hall, improving residence halls and upgrading the Oval for the first time in generations, UM recently was approved to begin the design of a new dining hall on campus and is working on campuswide plans to upgrade student-facing
UM published preliminary enrollment data prior to this week’s Montana Board of Regents meeting. Due to many student hardships created by COVID-19, UM is exercising a Board of Regents procedure that allows Montana universities additional time to work with students to finalize their registration status. The final UM census report will be published during the last week of September.

More information about UM’s 2020 fall census will be published at www.umt.edu/data when finalized.

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UM Enrollment Figures Reveal Commitment to Meeting Student Needs During Pandemic
MISSOULA – The entrepreneurial spirit of college students across Big Sky Country will be on full display Friday, Oct. 2, during the 31st annual John Ruffatto Business Startup Challenge at the University of Montana.
The state’s premier college business challenge competition will run from 4 to 6 p.m. online. The event was scheduled to be held this past spring but was delayed due to the pandemic. All online events are open to the public.

JRBSC is hosted by UM’s College of Business and the Blackstone LaunchPad. It is supported by title sponsors Ontra Marketing Group, First Interstate Bank, First Security Bank and the Missoula Economic Partnership.

This year, the competition received a record 31 applications from student teams across the state to compete for more than $50,000 in prize money.

“Despite the global pandemic, Montana students continue to demonstrate remarkable entrepreneurial spirit,” said Paul Gladen, director of the Blackstone LaunchPad. “We’re excited to see them pitch their ideas and benefit from the tremendous feedback and connections provided by our diverse panel of judges and coaches.”

A panel of judges selected nine teams to compete at this year’s event. The teams will pitch their business to a panel of around 50 judges during the two weeks leading up to the live event in hopes of receiving a portion of the prize money, all of which is generously contributed by businesses, organizations and individuals committed to the future of entrepreneurship in Montana.

JRBSC is the only statewide student business startup competition in Montana. Finalists in the 2020 competition represent UM, Montana State University, Montana Tech and Montana Western.

Student majors include business, microbiology, finance, accounting, management information systems, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, engineering, economics, computer science, natural science, history and filmmaking.

Of these diverse competitors, four finalists will be selected to compete for the top four prizes at the evening’s public event, including the $15,000 first-place cash prize.

The public event begins at 4 p.m., with the winners being announced by 6 p.m. The event will be held on the Whova App, which can be accessed from any computer, tablet or mobile device via Google Play or the Apple App Store.
Notable previous JRBSC winners include Storysquares and Five-on-Black.

This year's finalists are:

**CounterBalance**

Trevor Finney (University of Montana)

CounterBalance is the first-ever carbon offset bracelet, enabling environmentally conscious individuals to take climate action.

**Gallatin Visual Media**

Erinn Hermsen (Montana State University), Nate Kenney (MSU)

Gallatin Visual Media is a science communication production company that helps university professors communicate their research and its impacts to the public through film and photography in a way that creates a personal connection and spurs support and action.

**Guide Time Booking**

Danilo Jankovich (UM), Jason Mathews (UM), Shane St. Onge (UM)

Guide Time Booking seamlessly connects guides and outfitters to those who seek.

**High Morel**

Lily Jane Clarke (UM)

High Morel alleviates costs and accessibility to wastewater treatment for breweries by using mushrooms to remediate brewery wastewater.

**Legitimizer**
Joaquin Monterrosa (MSU), Thor Lancaster (MSU), Silas Scissorman (MSU)

Legitimizier stops illegitimate apps before they fool you.

**Red Patch Outdoors**

Charles Luther (UM)

Red Patch Outdoors provides high-quality, modular outdoor gear that allows you to make your gear fit your needs.

**SporeAttic LLC**

Benjamin Deuling (MSU), Ali Moxley (MSU)

SporeAttic is a commercial gourmet mushroom farm in the process of starting up in Bozeman.

**Will Care**

Kimberly Rogers (UM), Jennifer King (UM), Susan Tangmo (Montana Tech), Vanessa Fiore (Montana Western)

Will Care provides easy-to-understand, step-by-step video instructions that enable the customer to create a legal, dynamic will that tells a story by adding personalized photos or videos around assets.

**Zesty Touch**

Kaitlin Lane (MSU), Norhan Abbas (MSU), Tyler Fleetwood (MSU), Marielle Korringa (MSU)

Zesty Touch is an app that helps reduce the amount of household food waste.
Business Startup Challenge Scheduled for Oct. 2

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UM Makes Historical Literary Journals Available Online

Issues of H. G. Merriam’s literary journals the Frontier and Frontier and Midland are now available online via ScholarWorks at the UM Mansfield Library. (Credit: Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections)

MISSOULA – A century ago, H. G. Merriam, chair of the University of Montana English department, launched a journal he said would “serve as an outlet for the very living literary interest that is on the campus of The State University.” Its editorial board consisted of the
students enrolled in his new undergraduate creative writing course.

By the 1930s, that journal, Frontier and Midland, had gained a national reputation for the quality of its contributions and intentional focus on regional writing. Now, UM’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library has made the entire run of Frontier and Midland available online.

The Frontier was one of the first journals to feature content from and about the Northwest. In a 1963 oral history, Merriam recalled, “I was conscious of the necessity, if possible, of getting the Northwest states – that is, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana – to realize their common culture … It seemed as if the region had no sense of being a unit, and if possible, I hoped that the Frontier might help establish some such unity.”

The Frontier sought out and published not only poems and short stories, but also diaries and memoirs. Contributors included Wallace Stegner, A.B. Guthrie Jr., Frank Bird Linderman, Grace Stone Coates, James Stevens, William Saroyan, Helen Addison Howard, Dorothy M. Johnson, John Mason Brown, Weldon Kees, Thomas McGrath, Helen Maring and many others.

The Frontier changed its name after merging with the Midland out of Iowa City, Iowa in the 1930s. Together, the Frontier and the Frontier and Midland were published until 1939, with Grace Stone Coates serving as assistant editor from 1927 to 1939.

In his editorial for the November 1927 issue of the Frontier, Merriam wrote, “The Northwest is industrially alive and agriculturally alive; it needs to show itself spiritually alive. Culturally it has too long either turned for nourishment toward the East or accepted uncourageous, unindigenous (sic) “literary” expression of writers too spiritually imitative and too uninspired. We in this territory need to realize that literature, and all art, is, if it is worth anything at all, [a] sincere expression of real life. And the roots for literature among us should be in our own rocky ground.”

Harold Guy Merriam studied at Oxford as a member of the first class of Rhodes Scholars. He taught at Whitman, Beloit and Reed Colleges before accepting a position at UM in 1919 to teach English literature and chair the UM English department. In the decades that followed, Merriam played an important role in the development of Montana and Northwest literature and in the development of UM’s creative writing program. He hosted writers’ conferences, helped to develop the humanities program at UM, and helped to create and guide the Montana Institute of the Arts.
All issues of **Frontier and Frontier and Midland** are available online via ScholarWorks at the Mansfield Library. ScholarWorks provides access to the research, creative scholarship and unique resources produced and curated by UM faculty, students and staff.
MISSOULA – A century ago, H. G. Merriam, chair of the University of Montana English department, launched a journal he said would “serve as an outlet for the very living literary interest that is on the campus of The State University.” Its editorial board consisted of the
students enrolled in his new undergraduate creative writing course.

By the 1930s, that journal, Frontier and Midland, had gained a national reputation for the quality of its contributions and intentional focus on regional writing. Now, UM’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library has made the entire run of Frontier and Midland available online.

The Frontier was one of the first journals to feature content from and about the Northwest. In a 1963 oral history, Merriam recalled, “I was conscious of the necessity, if possible, of getting the Northwest states – that is, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana – to realize their common culture … It seemed as if the region had no sense of being a unit, and if possible, I hoped that the Frontier might help establish some such unity.”

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UM Makes Historical Literary Journals Available Online
UM Launches Theater Season With “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms”

Students in UM’s School of Theatre and Dance rehearse for their virtual production of “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms.”
MISSOULA – The University of Montana School of Theatre and Dance is pleased to announce it will continue to create and share the work of students, faculty, staff and guest artists during COVID-19 thanks to virtual screenings. The mainstage season and Studio Series for fall 2020 will be presented online through the ticketing platform ShowTixs4U. Shows will be recorded, and purchased tickets will grant online access to each production on specific dates and at specific curtain times.

The school launches its 2020-21 mainstage season later this month with “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms,” a play adapted specifically for a physically distant reality. It will be streamed at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 30-Oct. 3 and Oct. 7-10, as well as 2 p.m. Oct. 4 and 11.

“She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms” is directed by Master of Fine Arts directing candidate Jadd Davis as a part of his final creative project before earning his advanced degree next semester.

This comedic play deals with grief, self-discovery and Dungeons & Dragons. Agnes Evans discovers her recently deceased sister Tilly’s D&D notebook and dives into an intense world that was Tilly’s teenage safe haven. Full of pop-culture references and high fantasy scenarios, this play will take audiences along on a deeply personal and hysterically fantastical journey.

“If the past half-year has shown us anything, it’s the need to be adaptable,” said Davis. “Playwright Qui Nguyen has given us a delightful, heartfelt, Zoom-friendly adaptation of his already widely beloved ‘She Kills Monsters.’”

Davis said it was a unique challenge directing a play while sitting alone in his basement. He credited the cast and creative team for their ability to adapt and bring a can-do attitude to the production.

“The theatrical-improv mantra of ‘Say yes; stay in; make the other person look good’ has never held more truth,” Davis said. “So, fellow adventurers: grab a Mountain Dew, rock that quarantine beard and kick back to enjoy live theatre without having to put on socks!”

General admission tickets to “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms” are $12, while senior and student tickets cost $8. Admission for UM faculty and staff is $10. Tickets are available by visiting https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/39448.
UM Launches Theater Season With “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms”

To see more information about the entire fall 2020 Theatre and Dance mainstage and studio season, visit https://www.showtix4u.com/events/17529 and click “Current Events.”

###

**Contact:** Jadd Davis, UM master’s candidate in directing, 406-243-4481, jadd.davis@umontana.edu
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UM Launches Theater Season With “She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms”
UM EARS GRANT TO BOOST RESEARCH NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

11 SEPTEMBER 2020 •
MISSOULA – The University of Montana recently was awarded $310,000 from the National Science Foundation to build a secure high-speed network dedicated to scientific data transfers. The grant was earned by acting Chief Information Officer Zach Rossmiller and a diverse team of UM researchers and IT professionals.

This specialized network architecture often is referred to as a Science DMZ. Its main purpose is to provide researchers with the ability to quickly send and receive large amounts of data over the internet.

Rossmiller will serve as the principal investigator for the two-year grant.

“The Science DMZ was the next step in UM’s research infrastructure plan and follows the successful launch of UM’s first shared compute cluster,” he said. “While all of the money from this award will be used to cover the cost of the network hardware, it’s the specific needs of some of UM’s brightest researchers that drove our efforts to improve the infrastructure.”

He attributes recent UM success in boosting its research infrastructure to his collaboration with Chuck Harris, director of the Social Science Research Laboratory, and close work with
UM's research community.

The co-principal investigators on this project are Erin Landguth, an associate professor in the School of Public and Community Health Sciences and director of the Computational Ecology Lab; Jeffrey Good, an associate professor in the Division of Biological Sciences; and Tung-Chung Mou, an assistant research professor and core facility manager in the Center for Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics.

Research needs, along with documented limitations from additional projects, helped make the case for a Science DMZ. One of the projects used to demonstrate need came from Tre Blohm, an anthropology doctoral student researching operations for pathogenic screening of ancient DNA.

Due to limited transfer speeds and the large amount of data exchanged with collaborators at Harvard University and the National Center for Biotechnology Information laboratories, Blohm found that storing data files on hard disks and sending them by mail was the only workable solution. This created extra work and caused delays in the research. Upon completion, UM's Science DMZ will provide a much better solution for Blohm and others in big-data and data-intensive science fields.

Although this project was driven by researcher needs, it also provides academic possibilities.

“The Science DMZ project was designed to provide experiential learning opportunities for UM students,” Rossmiller said. “Letters submitted with the proposal indicate that several programs are interested in offering student internships to support the project.”

Dr. Sara Rinfret, director of UM's Master of Public Administration program, wrote in a letter of support: “(The Science DMZ) will provide our students with an opportunity to assist central IT network professionals in the development and drafting of the security and use policies.”

Rossmiller knows this support is critical.

“A successful Science DMZ must have strong network security policies,” he said. “The M.P.A. student involvement is extremely important. Deploying enterprise-level technology, like a Science DMZ, requires special knowledge and skills that are sometimes best learned through experience.”
Dr. Thomas Gallagher, dean of Missoula College, recognized the educational potential of this project from the start.

“This is a great experience for our students,” Gallagher said. “We focus to provide our students the opportunity to receive on-the-job training while they get their degree. Their ability to participate on a project like this will be invaluable for them.”

Gallagher plans to provide IT student internships to help deploy and maintain the new UM Science DMZ.

Rossmiller said he strives to include researchers, educators and students as collaborators on IT projects.

“When I’m able to establish a project where researchers benefit, faculty are involved and excited to participate, and students are learning and gaining experience, I count that as a win,” he said. “These kinds of wins, along with an improved research infrastructure, will help UM attract quality students, educators and researchers who expect access to high-performance computing and high-speed end-to-end data transfers to conduct their work.”

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Contact: Zach Rossmiller, acting chief information officer and UM executive director of cyberinfrastructure, 406-243-6556, zachary.rossmiller@umontana.edu.
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Provost Honors Scholars are enrolled in UM's Davidson Honors College.

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The prestigious award significantly reduces the cost of attendance at UM.

Representing five states and including 11 students from Montana, the scholarship was awarded to students for their merit in excellence academic performance, exemplary public service, demonstrated leadership, unique personal qualities and potential for future impact. Each student is enrolled in UM’s Davidson Honors College.

“We are especially excited to add the Provost Honors Scholarship to the portfolio of premiere merit-based awards for incoming Davidson Honors College students this fall,” said Tim Nichols, DHC dean. “This scholarship allows us to attract and support top students from across the state and nation to pursue their academic and professional aspirations the University of Montana. Our first class of Provost Honors Scholars is extraordinary and certainly delivers on this promise.”

The class of 2020 Provost Honors Scholars are:

MONTANA

Belgrade

Jackie Olexa is a National Merit Scholar and will pursue both wildlife biology and computer science at UM. At Bozeman High School, Olexa played cello in...
the orchestra and was a member of both the National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society while participating in debate and academic olympics. She has worked in a barn since she was 6 years old and has worked as a counselor at Eagle Mount hippotherapy program. Olexa also enjoys embroidery and she said she is looking forward to meeting new friends and to trying new things when she comes to campus.

Billings

Christine Compton will study journalism at UM. She earned a 4.0-grade point average, has served as class president, yearbook editor and has traveled internationally playing her trombone. Compton also is an accomplished soccer player and served as president of the Japanese club at Billings West High School.

Emily Tschetter is majoring in journalism at UM. She’s an award-winning musician and was the principal cellist in the Billings Youth Orchestra. Tschetter was the speech captain of her high school forensics team and is an active volunteer for Planned Parenthood and other community organizations.
Bozeman

Emma Hinds is a communicative sciences and disorders major. She learned sign language for her high school senior project and is planning a career as a future speech pathologist. At Bozeman High School, Hinds was a member of National Honor Society and was active in student government and volleyball. Hinds said she loves the UM campus and the friendly comforting environment of the DHC.

Columbia Falls
Kimberly Peacock graduated from Columbia Falls High School and will explore a pre-nursing major at UM. She is an acclaimed long-distance runner and enjoys jazz band and working with dogs at Columbine Kennels. Peacock, a cancer survivor, said she is looking forward to participating in campus recreation and to the countless opportunities available at UM.

Amelia Hawes will study sociology at UM and is enrolling in
the Franke Global Leadership Initiative. Passionate about travel and learning about other people and cultures, Hawes has already studied in Costa Rica and interned with an activist artist collective in New York City. While at Beaverhead County High School, she earned the global seal of biliteracy in Spanish, and was active in the Montana Youth Legislature. Hawes said she loves learning and is looking forward to her university classes and meeting new people.

Kalispell

Stella Eddy will study biology and Spanish at UM. She loves
meeting new and interesting people and trying out vegan recipes as an accomplished baker. Eddy was active in track and field, soccer and skiing. She also volunteered at the local veterans food pantry and participated in Model United Nations, National Honor Society and Leaders of Tomorrow.

Bohdi Hollman intends to major in computer science and
hopes to eventually become a software engineer. While at Flathead High School, Hollman was an individual state champion in speech and debate and was also active in Model United Nations, cross country and track and field. He holds a passion for long distance running, art and reading. Hollman said he is looking forward “to practically every aspect that the University of Montana has to offer.”

Scott O'Donnell will pursue history at UM. He is a two-time All-
American speech and debater and served as team captain. O’Donnell participated in an immersion program in Peru and was active in Academic WorldQuest and Model United Nations. He’s also been a lifeguard and swim instructor and served as trumpet section leader and a state music festival honoree.

Missoula

Lillian Crews is a 4.0-grade-point-average student who was a two-time Montana All-State and All-Northwest Choir member. She is an active volunteer and will pursue journalism and creative writing at UM.

Seeley Lake

Ella Batchelder will pursue history and political science at UM. At Seeley Swan High School, she earned a 4.0-grade-point average and received the Presidential Award of Excellence. Batchelder was also class representative for student council, was captain of the Seeley Lake
Nordic Club, and a leader for Seeley Lake’s elementary outdoor adventure program.

CALIFORNIA

Noah Vanderkar, from Sacramento, will major in political science at UM, and is also interested in international business and climate change studies. Passionate about civic engagement, Vanderkar has volunteered on six local, state and federal campaigns, has served as a class officer and represented his high school at California Boys State. Additionally, he has volunteered at a local homeless and resource center and is a competitive club swimmer and volleyball player. Vanderkar said he is looking forward meeting new people and to new adventures in Montana.

IDAHO
UM Names Inaugural Class of Provost Honors Student Scholars

McKenna Johnson, from Boise, will study journalism at UM.

She will also be part of the Franke Global Leadership Initiative and hopes to participate in a student exchange. In high school, Johnson was editor of her high school newspaper, Key Club vice president and was a member of National Honor Society and the Studio C competitive dance team. Johnson also was the national youth correspondent for the Washington Journalism Media Conference. She enjoys the outdoors and is looking forward to hiking, skiing and kayaking in Montana.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Renna Al-Haj is from Rapid City, South Dakota, and she will study journalism at UM. Al-Haj participated in and volunteered with the Hugh O’Brien Leadership program. She was a member of All-State orchestra and choir and volunteered with Community Health Center of the Black Hills and the Black Hills Humane Society. A member of the National Honor Society, Al-Haj also served as president of the economics club, worked two jobs and was instrumental in local efforts to integrate social equality.

WASHINGTON
Josiah Anderson, from Tacoma, Washington, will study ecosystems science and restoration at UM, and hopes to minor in both music and climate change studies. In high school, Anderson was principle cellist in the Tacoma Youth Symphony. He’s also a nationally competitive cyclocross racer and is skilled at building and repairing bicycles. Anderson enjoys playing and listening to interesting music, camping in a hammock as often as he can, speaking and reading French and photography. He said he’s looking forward to spending time outside in the wilderness areas around Missoula that are easily accessible by bike.

Dylan Cherullo, from Olympia, Washington, is a second-
generation Grizzly and he will study economics and physics at UM. Cherullo participated in the National Outdoor Leadership School in Alaska and interned with a local clean tech start-up. He has served as a camp counselor, was a member of the National Honor Society, volunteered at a local food bank and played baseball and maintained fields for the Awesome Ford Raptors.

Shasta Hecht is from Olympia, Washington, and she will study English and creative writing at UM. A past participant in the DHC’s Schwanke Summer Honors Institute, Hecht is an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys backcountry skiing and alpine ski racing. She was also captain of her cross-country team and was named hardest worker and most inspirational in her school awards. She volunteered at the Olympia Foodbank and was an Academic All-American.
Allison Peschek, from Renton, Washington, will study wildlife biology and art at UM. She served as a page in the Washington State Legislature and was a member of the National Honor Society. Peschek is also an award-winning Girl Scout, a championship swimmer and a talented musician who plays bassoon, piano and percussion. Peschek said she's looking forward to being part of the Grizzly Marching Band.

###

**Contact:** Timothy Nichols, UM Davidson Honors College Dean, 406-243-2534, timothy.nichols@umontana.edu.
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Dylan Cherullo, from Olympia, Washington, is a second-
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Shasta Hecht is from Olympia, Washington, and she will study English and creative writing at UM. A past participant in the DHC’s Schwanke Summer Honors Institute, Hecht is an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys backcountry skiing and alpine ski racing. She was also captain of her cross-country team and was named hardest worker and most inspirational in her school awards. She volunteered at the Olympia Foodbank and was an Academic All-American.
Allison Peschek, from Renton, Washington, will study wildlife biology and art at UM. She served as a page in the Washington State Legislature and was a member of the National Honor Society. Peschek is also an award-winning Girl Scout, a championship swimmer and a talented musician who plays bassoon, piano and percussion. Peschek said she's looking forward to being part of the Grizzly Marching Band.

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**Contact:** Timothy Nichols, UM Davidson Honors College Dean, 406-243-2534, timothy.nichols@umontana.edu.
UM Names Inaugural Class of Provost Honors Student Scholars
UM Mansfield Center Launches Inaugural Virtual Exchange with Tohoku University

03 SEPTEMBER 2020 •
MISSOULA – The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center at the University of Montana has launched an inaugural virtual exchange program with Tohoku University of Sendai, Japan. The multicultural exchange is designed to foster cross-cultural engagement between Japanese and UM students through global environmental issues.

Interactive sessions will connect 40 UM students from the Japanese department and the Franke Global Leadership Initiative with 20 Japanese students to explore culture and society while developing skills in leadership, intercultural communication and citizen diplomacy.

“Despite the current inability to travel, UM has continued to develop unique opportunities to internationalize communities statewide,” said Mansfield Center Executive Director Deena Mansour. “This program is an exciting demonstration of how technology enables continued cross-cultural education for students at UM and around the world.”

In addition to opportunities for students, the exchange includes interaction with homestay families from the Missoula community and provides an introduction to Montana resources, including Glacier and Yellowstone national parks and the National Bison Range.

The exchange is supported in part by the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle in recognition of the important bilateral relationship between Montana and Japan.

Mike Mansfield served as U.S. ambassador to Japan from 1977 to 1988, promoting close relations between Montanans and the people of Japan. The relationship continues to this day, as evidenced by the location of the sole international Montana trade office in Kumamoto, and the traditionally large numbers of Japanese students at Montana universities.

The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center fosters globally-minded leaders of integrity and sponsors this event within its program for ethical public policy and leadership.

More information is available at www.umt.edu/mansfield.

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UM Mansfield Center Launches Inaugural Virtual Exchange with Tohoku University
Thanks to funding by the National Science Foundation, FLBS scientist Bob Hall (pictured middle) will add three postdoctoral researchers to his team over the next two years to create predictive and explanatory models for the biological sciences.
FLATHEAD LAKE – Dramatic increases in both the scale and availability of data are having a profound impact on the biological sciences. From DNA sequencers to environmental sensors, data acquisition and availability are outpacing the capacity for analysis.

Now, thanks to a $6 million grant from the National Science Foundation, renowned stream ecologist Robert Hall from the University of Montana’s Flathead Lake Biological Station is joining a team of researchers from the University of Wyoming and the University of Nevada, Reno, to address pressing needs for predictive and explanatory modeling in the biological sciences.

“This proposal will create models for the biological sciences based on large data sets in the areas of genomics, community ecology and time series of ecosystem fluxes,” said Hall. “Current models are often either predictive or explanatory. One major question we’ll be working to address is how can we build models that simultaneously find a balance between these two goals.”

Historically, models in ecology were not used to predict future outcomes. With the huge influx of data in recent years, however, researchers now can begin to develop predictive models that can be tested on this wave of new data. Through the duration of the four-year project, the research consortium will develop computational methods for highly dimensional data to create predictive and explanatory models for the biological sciences. The researchers will test and refine these methods and develop critical tools for harnessing the ever-growing influx of data.

“A model that can predict as well as explain is useful because it allows us to begin asking bigger questions,” said Hall. “For example, these models could help us understand the potential future impacts of, say, climate change on a glacial ecosystem or the removal of a dam on the natural conditions of a river.”

Each year, the grant will fund the salaries of 12 postdoctoral researchers who will participate in the project and be trained in cutting-edge modeling techniques that will better prepare them for the workforce in the era of big data.

A portion of the grant will allow the UM biological station to hire two postdoctoral researchers over the first two years of the project. These researchers will work on the time series component of the research, which largely will be based on the long-time series of river productivity data that has been developed for hundreds of rivers in the United States.
“There are many exciting elements to this project,” said Hall. “A particularly exciting piece is that our postdocs will collaborate across disciplines. A discovery made by the genomics team might inspire an approach that our team can use, and vice versa.”

Additionally, Hall looks forward to the prospective models this project aims to produce.

“One approach we can take is to estimate how far back events in the past affect the current rates of a river’s primary production,” he said. “For example, let’s say a flood wipes out all the algae. We can use our newly developed model to predict how severe the impacts might be and how long such a disturbance might persist.”

In addition to Hall, other researchers on the grant include the University of Wyoming’s Alex Buerkle who is principal investigator, as well as Sarah Collins, Daniel Laughlin, Lauren Shoemaker and Christopher Weiss-Lehman from the University of Wyoming. Matt Forister and Joanna Blaszczak, a former FLBS postdoctoral researcher, are involved from the University of Nevada, Reno.

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**Contact:** Robert Hall, research scientist, Flathead Lake Biological Station, 406-872-4512, bob.hall@flbs.umt.edu ; Tom Bansak, associate director, Flathead Lake Biological Station, 406-872-4503, tom.bansak@umontana.edu.
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