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APRIL

RECENT NEWS



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

‘We Still Sing’:
Blackfeet Rawhide
Singers Carry On
Commencement
Tradition

30 APRIL 2021



SCIENCES

UM Political Science Graduate Makes Lasting Mark on Campus Diversity

29 APRIL 2021



COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

UM Forestry Senior Finds His Path at UM

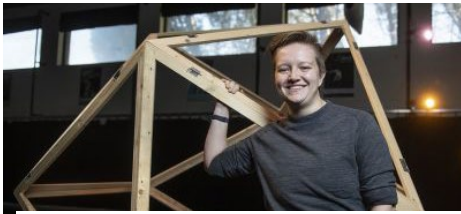
28 APRIL 2021



RESEARCH

SpectrUM to Reopen at New Missoula Public Library May 3

28 APRIL 2021



**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND
SCIENCES**

UM Graduate Finds Math and Theater Majors Equal Perfect Career Equation

27 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Announces Spring 2021 Graduates

27 APRIL 2021



COLLEGE OF HEALTH

Student Earns UM's First Doctorate in Public Health

26 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Spring Rodeo Set for Weekend

26 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Yields Trio of Montana-Native Truman Scholarship Finalists

23 APRIL 2021



MISSOULA COLLEGE

UM Sustainable Construction Program Produces Skills Built to Last

20 APRIL 2021



DAVIDSON HONORS COLLEGE

Amigos: UM Friends Land Fulbright Fellowships in Spain

16 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Montana Public Radio Concludes 2021 Spring Pledge Week

15 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Shines a Light on Sexual Assault Awareness Month

14 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

In-Person UM Commencement Set for May 1

13 APRIL 2021



COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA

UM Journalism School Welcomes Fall Pollner Professor

12 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Alumni Association Announces Grizzly of the Last Decade Winners

12 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Seeking Partners for Second Annual Big Sky Experience

09 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM Student-Organized Kyiyo Pow Wow to Be Virtual April 12-18

09 APRIL 2021



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Griz Chat: UM Education Professors Discuss COVID-19 Lessons Learned

07 APRIL 2021



**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS,
RESEARCH**

Montana World Trade Center Survey Reveals Importance of International Trade

07 APRIL 2021



**STUDENTS, UNIVERSITY OF
MONTANA**

UM Student Advocate Demonstrates Leadership at Orientation Conference

06 APRIL 2021



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

The Big Give Yields Record-Breaking Fundraising for UM

05 APRIL 2021



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UM Master of Public Administration
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01 APRIL 2021

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Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment

Refer A Griz





UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

'WE STILL SING':
BLACKFEET
RAWHIDE SINGERS
CARRY ON
COMMENCEMENT



The late Kenneth Old Person, left, sings with Chief Earl Old Person. Kenneth died in August, leaving the historic Rawhide Singers of the Blackfeet Nation down to two members. The Rawhide Singers have been a special staple at UM's annual commencement ceremonies for more than 20 years.

MISSOULA — For about the past 26 years, Chief Earl Old Person and the Rawhide Singers of the Blackfeet Nation have been making the four-hour trip down from Browning to the University of Montana campus every spring.

The 200-mile drive from the Blackfeet Indian Reservation to Missoula, just as western Montana finally awakes from winter slumber, is an annual journey for the Blackfeet elders. They arrive at UM's graduation ceremonies with buffalo skin drums and eagle feather headdress and sing sacred tribal songs that are far older than any of us.

At 92 years old, Old Person is one of the country's most decorated and respected Native leaders. He holds a UM honorary doctorate and is a lifetime honorary chief of the Blackfeet Nation. He knows his history.

And when he shares why it's important for UM students, families and administration to hear those tribal songs on graduation day, we listen.

"We don't sing only for our Native students, we do it for all of the graduates," Old Person said. "It really means something for our young people to hear the songs. It means they have achieved something."

The Rawhide Singers used to be four. Now they are two.

Kenneth Old Person died in August at age 83 and Victor Sure Chief died from cancer in 2010. Old Person and Paul Old Chief remain, though Old Person has folded in Joshua Horn,

Kenneth's great-grandson, as a next-generation Rawhide Singer.

"My dad loved singing, I grew up with him singing everywhere," said Debbie Homegun, daughter of Kenneth. "He loved singing at the University, especially special tribal songs. It was one of his favorite things to do."

Time is running short for elders who speak fluent Blackfeet and intimately know the songs, which can only really be learned by listening, Old Person said.

"The best teacher is hearing," he said.

"One day all of the elders will be gone.

I tell my people, I

tell our young people that the best time to learn is when they are young. Knowing our language, our songs is way to carry us forward."



Rawhide Singers, left to right: Chief Earl Old Person, Paul Old Chief and Kenneth Old Person. UM President Seth Bodnar looks on as the Rawhide Singers sing.

In the early '90s, former UM President George Dennison asked Old Person if the Rawhide Singers might sing at Commencement. The president, who was given an Indian name from Old Person and enjoyed a long friendship with him, wanted to find a special way to honor UM's Native graduates, many of them of the Blackfeet Nation, but represent all of Montana's Indigenous peoples. Dennison also thought it was particularly important for UM non-Native students and their families to hear the songs.

"We did an opening song and then an opening prayer and this is how this all got started," Old Person said. "I guess they liked our songs."

For the next two decades, the Rawhide Singers would become — and still remain — a staple of UM's annual Commencement ceremonies.

For a university that sits on the historical grounds of the Salish and Kalispel people, there's a special Montanan reverence when the ancestral songs are laid on top of the drum beat rhythm, at the same moment when thousands of people in attendance suddenly go pin-dropping quiet.

UM's Washington-Grizzly Stadium, where Commencement will be held this year, sits at the mouth of Hellgate Canyon. UM graduates sit in the same place where the Blackfeet maintained a skirmish line for defense of their hunting grounds and home country, hence the name "Hell's Gate."

Their words have been here longer than any notion of conferring academic degrees.

"These are society songs," Old Person said. "Our people had societies within the reservation that resembled clans and each area would organize a society and compose a song," he said. "We have a lot of honor songs. We've lost our societies, but we still have the songs. And we still sing."

One song is particularly special, the Flag Song, that Old Person said is comparable to the Blackfeet national anthem, reserved only for moments of celebration.

"We sing the Flag song when our boys and girls become ladies and men, or when they join the armed forces," he said. "We honor our veterans with this song and use this song for celebration to open graduation. It's one of the main songs we sing."

Because melodies carry memories, Old Person said the songs are a way to link the past of Indian culture to the futures of UM students.

"Our language, our songs, our traditions are the foundation of being Natives and it's important for everyone to hear them," he said. "We have to keep it going as long as we can."

UM President Seth Bodnar said hosting the Rawhide Singers for Commencement continues to be an important tradition for the University.

"We understand what a significant honor it is to have the Rawhide Singers with us, not only to mark a distinct moment for our graduates, but also to reflect the important ways our community has been and continues to be shaped by our Indigenous colleagues and friends."

Old Person said he wants to continue singing as long as he can, though he knows that won't be forever.

"It's an honor for us to be able to help out in this way," he said. "Missoula is a special place for me."

With the Rawhide Singers here, it is a special place for all of us.

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Jenny Lavey, UM News Service

Contact: Dave Kuntz, UM strategic communications director, 406-243-5659, dave.kuntz@umontana.edu.

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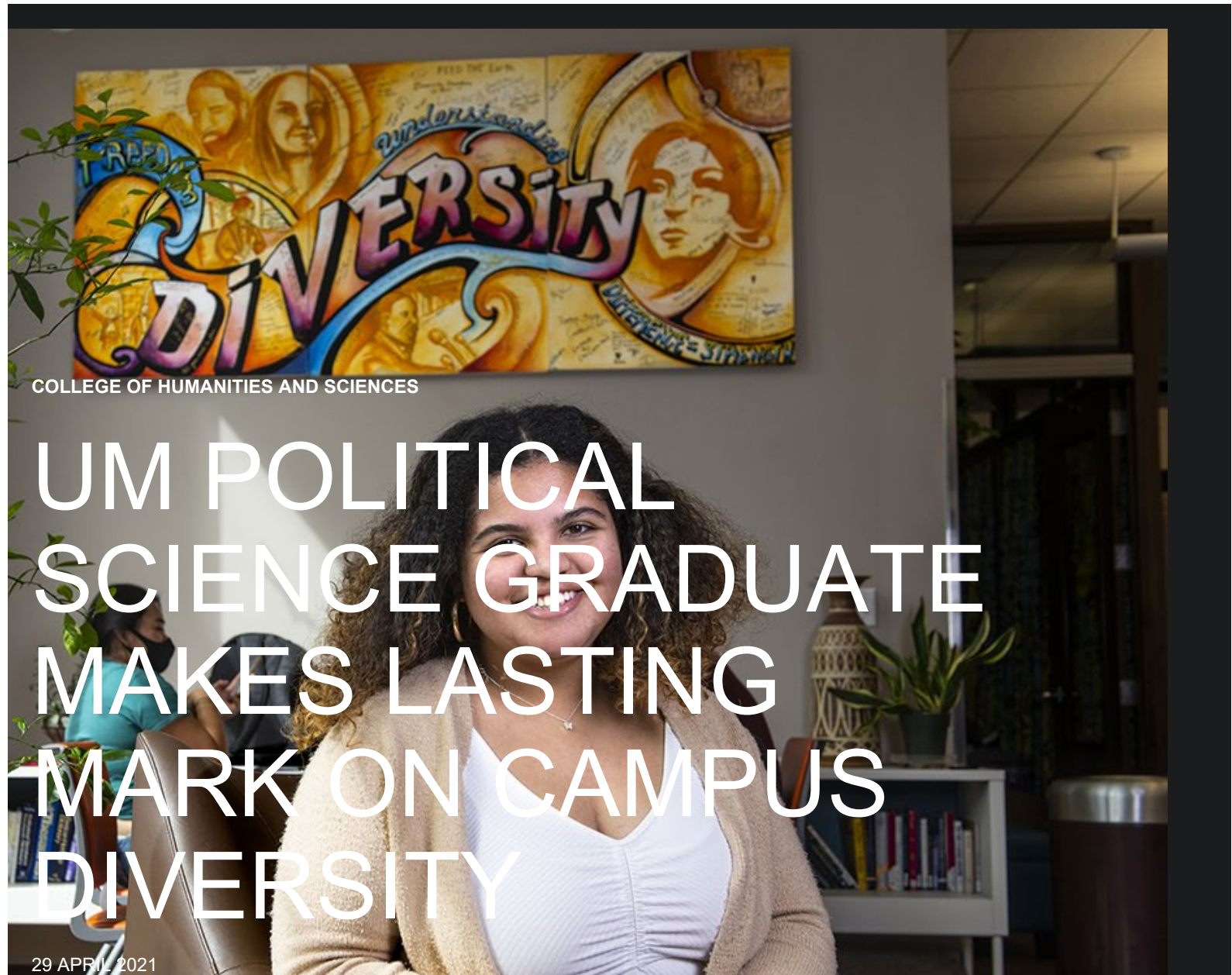
Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment



UM POLITICAL
SCIENCE GRADUATE
MAKES LASTING
MARK ON CAMPUS
DIVERSITY

29 APRIL 2021



UM political science graduate Valeria Miranda has played an integral role in promoting diversity on campus. She served as a co-chair on the University's Diversity Advisory Council and is the co-founder of the Latinx Student Union.

MISSOULA – As a biracial student in a predominantly white school, University of Montana graduate Valeria Miranda has had her fair share of difficult conversations about race with fellow students and faculty.

She could have left it at mere talk, but Miranda is more about action and in the midst of her rigorous academic studies – she's made the Dean's List multiple times and graduates cum laude this spring – she immersed herself in diversity initiatives across campus. Her volunteer resume includes serving as a student co-chair on UM's Diversity Advisory Council and co-founder of the Latinx Student Union. She also served on the Associated Students of UM Senate.

Miranda's work synced perfectly with her major in political science and minor in African American Studies, but it's also deeply personal she said.

"Being biracial I am interested in my cultures and issues related to race," said Miranda, who grew up in southern California before moving to **Billings** her senior year of high school. "Spanish is my first language and it was super weird at first in Billings only being able to talk with mother. But once I started hanging out with other students at UM who spoke Spanish, it made me feel more empowered."

She credits, too, her coursework at UM for expanding her horizons including an honors class called Race, Inequality and Education, taught by Teaching, Research and Mentoring Fellow Eliot Graham, and Black: From Africa to Hip-Hop taught by Tobin Shearer, professor of history and director of UM's African-American Studies program.

It was in Shearer's course that Miranda met a fellow student who is Cuban American, and while

hanging out together at the UC, they launched the Latinx Student Union in 2019.

“We drew names to see who would be president,” recalls Miranda, who won the title.

“I appreciate her letting me be a part of it,” Miranda added.

The group now has several members, hosts a vibrant Facebook page and has sponsored a number of events including a gathering to play Loteria, a Spanish game of chance, and an educational program on Day of the Dead. It also has partnered with the Pacific Islanders Club and Black Student Union, which Miranda was also involved with last year. She was the co-coordinator of the third annual Black Solidarity Summit in 2020.

“Valeria’s work on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion here at UM has been noteworthy and needed,” said Wilena Old Person, program coordinator for the College of Health and DAC co-chair. “As a co-founder of the Latinx Student Union, she saw the need of representation and stepped up to be that representation. I admire her strength.”

Miranda eventually wants to attend law school and study immigration law, but for now is looking at immediate work, either teaching English in Madrid later this year or working for a nonprofit involved in racial equity.

She credits UM and the support she received from the University’s administration and faculty for making her feel safe, empowered and capable of achieving her goal of helping people of color.

Twila Old Coyote, director of S.E.A. Change in UM’s Office of the President, has worked closely with Miranda and sees huge potential in her future.

“Valeria is such a natural leader and uses her voice to advocate for marginalized populations, especially women of color,” Old Coyote said. “I know she will go on to do great things, as she is such a rock star and has so many gifts to offer.

“Watch out world, here she comes!”

###

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Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM / News / UM Forestry Senior Finds His Path at UM



COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

UM FORESTRY SENIOR FINDS HIS PATH AT UM

28 APRIL 2021

UM senior Jake Reller found a personal and professional path at UM in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and

Conservation. Reller will graduate from UM on Saturday.

MISSOULA — After trying on five or six majors as an undergraduate in Indiana, Jake Reller knew, deep down, that elementary education, biology and economics didn't feel quite right. No point in bouncing around between classes and spending money on tuition when the passion wasn't there.

Reller knew it was time to take a step back from college, reorient and try again in the future. In search of the next step, he did what most 20-somethings do in moments of transition: Google.

"Outdoor jobs in the West" was the search term he punched in. [Montana Conservation Corps](#) bubbled to the top, advertising trail work in Montana's expansive backcountry.

"It sounded amazing," Reller said. "My plan was to work outside for a year, kind of get my bearings and then go back to school."

Reller never did make it back to Indiana.

Instead, he spent one year as a trail crew member for MCC and then two more as a crew leader, doing the grunt work of trail construction and repair that Reller calls "super fun, hard stuff." He found a passion in caring for public lands, making a difference each time he swung his Pulaski, and watching the seasons change from the forest floor. He also crossed paths with his now-wife, meeting her through MCC.

Reller's penchant for leadership in the outdoors took him to another trail post in Washington. Then, it was back to Montana, working for the Forest Service in Lincoln as a trail liaison with MCC and other Forest Service partners in the Scapegoat Wilderness.

It turns out, for the six years Reller spent outside in the West, his professional compass was ultimately pointing to the University of Montana.

"I realized I had found my passion working outdoors, caring for and stewarding the land, and I knew UM had a great forestry school," he said. "It was a natural transition at that time for me. I knew I wanted to get back and finish my degree."

Taking advantage of the education stipend as an AmeriCorps volunteer through MCC, Reller enrolled in UM's **W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation**.

Three years later, Reller will graduate this Saturday as one of 12 of the college's Mortar Board seniors, an American national honor society for college seniors. Reller will graduate with a **bachelor's degree in forestry**, a minor in **fire sciences and management** and a **certificate in GIS sciences and technologies**.

Looking back at his time as a nontraditional student at UM, he said what most drew him into the forestry college was how every class seemed to complement each other.

"I became fully immersed in the forestry program," he said. "With the combination of all the classes together, taught by excellent faculty, I knew I was ready to take a deep dive and really commit to doing well and to try to make a career of this."

Immersed in hands-on classes and fieldwork in forestry classes, Reller said he most enjoyed the real-world application of forestry he had a front-row seat to, calling every class "an opportunity to add a new set of skills into my forestry toolbox."

In particular, he enjoyed writing a forest stand project proposal for a private landowner in Missoula and analyzing the spatial relationship between wildfire risk and vulnerable populations. Reller took advantage of a work-study opportunity at UM's **Lubrecht Experimental Forest** and completed a Pathways internship with the U.S. Forest Service, part of a federal career development program for students and recent graduates.

David Affleck, professor, chair of the Department of Forest Management and director of the forest program, said Reller's focused drive as a student will propel him to success in his career.

"I wish I could point to a course or some element of our program, but I believe it's what Jake brought with him — a professionalism, a work ethic — and applied to everything he did here that's going to continue to bring him success," Affleck said.

After graduation, Reller will continue working out of Missoula for the Forest Service's Region 1 Timber Strike Team in all phases of timber sale preparation and silviculture work in Montana and northern Idaho.

Reflecting on his journey that will take him across the graduation podium on Saturday, Reller said he's glad he took the time needed to craft what he most wanted out of an education.

"It's never too late to transition to something if you're feeling stuck in a rut," Reller said. "It's worth it to go back to school and study something you're more passionate about."

As he closes this chapter in his life, Reller said he's leaving UM with friends, memories and a seasoned mission to steward public lands.

"These lands were here long before we ever were, and they will be here for long after," Reller said. "If I can do even just a little bit to make sure they're staying healthy and we're finding ways to sustainably use their resources, that's the goal for me."

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Contact: Dave Kuntz, UM strategic communications director, 406-243-5659, dave.kuntz@umontana.edu.

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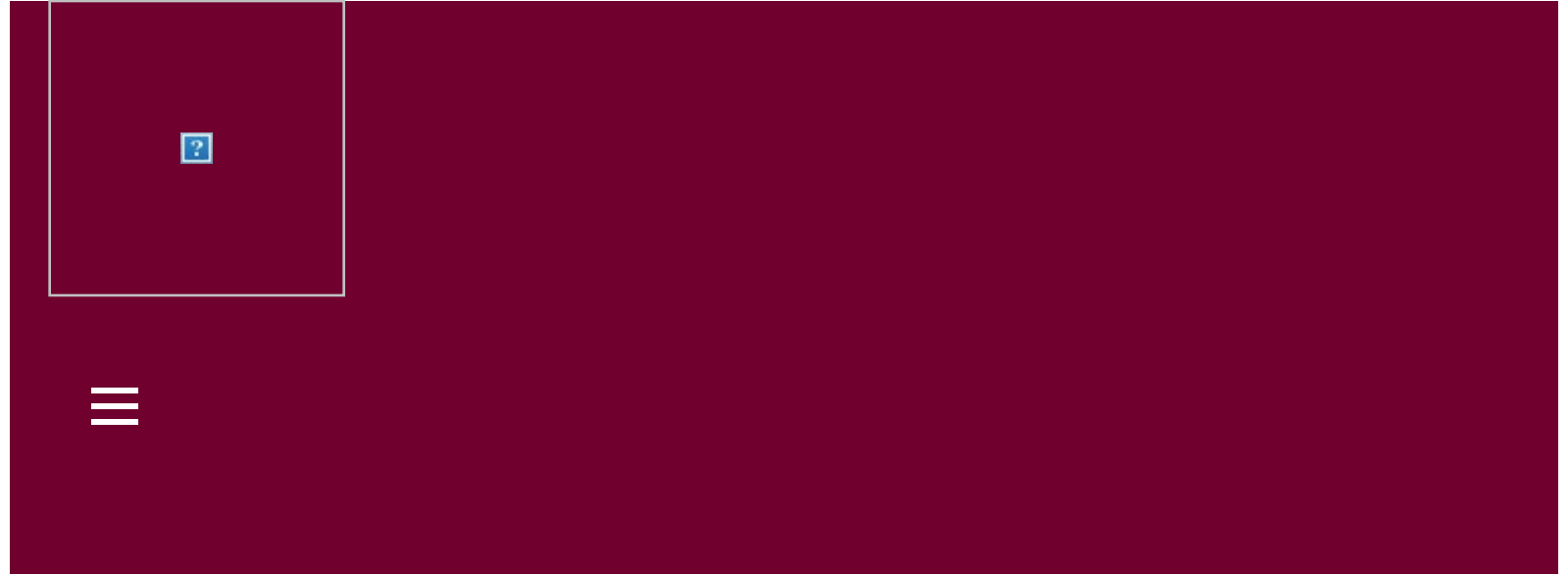
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A to Z





SpectrUM Director Jessie Herbert-Meny (right) and AmericCorp leader Brooke Carey reveal part of the discovery area's new digs within the Missoula Public Library building, which opens to the public with limited hours May 3.



SpectrUM learning areas within the new Missoula Public Library building.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana spectrUM Discovery Area will reopen to the public on Monday, May 3, at the new Missoula Public Library building. Admission to spectrUM will be free to all at the new location.

SpectrUM's dedicated spaces within the building include its second-floor Discovery Area, with its signature Discovery Bench and rotating exhibits, and its ground-floor classroom for hosting field trips, camps and special programs. SpectrUM's move to the library brings it under one roof with the library, Families First Learning Lab, the UM Living Lab and Missoula Community Access Television.

In addition to its dedicated spaces within the library, spectrUM collaboratively operates a makerspace with the library on the ground floor. A water room jointly operated with Families First Learning Lab features both a new and an upgraded water table, as well as signage inviting visitors to explore Missoula's local river ecosystem.

As UM's hands-on science center, spectrUM promotes a culture of learning and discovery for all, with the goal of inspiring Montana K-12 students to pursue STEM fields, higher education and career pathways.

"We couldn't be more excited to welcome the public into our new home at the library," said Jessie Herbert-Meny, spectrUM's director. "For years, we've planned and fundraised to make this move possible. With the support of our community, we are now here in this beautiful facility with our partners and are offering totally free admission for everyone."

Beginning May 3, the library building will be open for limited hours Monday through Saturday. **Please check online for exact hours.** Per Missoula County health regulations, visitors will be required to wear a face covering and maintain physical distance from others. SpectrUM will feature low-touch exhibits and activities that can be checked out by visitors and sanitized after each use. Expanded hours, as well as a grand opening celebration date, will be announced at a later time.

Support for spectrUM's relocation to the library, as well as for new and upgraded exhibits, came from Montana National Science Foundation EPSCoR, the Jane S. Heman Foundation, UM Health and Medicine, Clearwater Credit Union, Missoula Water, Missoula Storm Water Utility, the Sunderland Foundation, the WestSlope Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundation and many community donors.

For more information, call spectrUM at 406-243-4828 or visit <http://spectrum.umd.edu/>.

###

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Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM / News / UM Graduate Finds Math and Theater Majors Equal Perfect Career Equation

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

UM GRADUATE FINDS MATH AND THEATER MAJORS EQUAL PERFECT CAREER EQUATION

27 APRIL 2021



UM math and theater graduate Ryan Longdon found critical analysis and creativity key to his fields of study. He used both disciplines to build human-sized icosahedrons for UM dance students.

MISSOULA – A week before graduation, University of Montana senior Ryan Longdon was busy studying for his math final in partial differential equations. For the mathematically challenged, that would strike terror, but not for Longdon – his final projects in theater was causing greater consternation.

“Math comes more naturally for me, it’s been the entirety of my education,” Longdon said. “Theater requires more thought and planning.”

Longdon, a native of **East Helena**, has had an affinity for math since the second grade, crediting a teacher for making the subject “a lot of fun.” But while taking Advanced Placement courses at Helena High School, where he passed college-level calculus exams, Longdon became involved in the school’s theater and discovered a new love: the stage.

After enrolling at Montana State University in civil engineering, Longdon learned from a friend about the theater program at UM. Feeling unfilled in his studies at MSU, the pitch was too good and the theater bug too strong for Longdon to ignore. He moved to Missoula in 2018 and enrolled in math and theater as double majors

“It was the best decision I ever made,” he said.

While these two areas of study may seem diametrically opposed, Longdon said critical analysis and creativity play into both math and theater, and that he is constantly drawing from skills needed in both fields.

Associate Professor Matt Roscoe saw Longdon’s ability to marry both disciplines while teaching Euclidean and Non-Euclidean Geometry in the fall of 2020.

“He was excellent at building dynamic models of geometry settings using technology,” Roscoe said. “His models were among the best in the course.”

Longdon’s true skills came to the fore last fall when the UM theater shop was asked to build a set of “human-sized icosahedrons” for use in dance courses taught by Visiting Assistant Professor Brooklyn Draper. After building a proof-of-concept model, Longdon constructed the two, 20-sided figures out of 20 identically constructed equilateral triangles. Pine, a lot of glue and plenty of geometrical equations went into the construction and Draper’s students went on to dance inside the figures to learn about body connectivity, spatial awareness and creativity.

“Students had very different reactions to the icosahedron,” Draper said. “Some found the structure freeing and an exciting avenue for creativity and body connectivity. Others found it limiting and challenging to stand inside of the structures. I always find these drastic reactions fascinating. There is value in both of these reactions and a lot to be learned within their complexities.”

The project, and its success in helping other students in their studies, makes Longdon unique among UM mathematics majors, Roscoe said.

“Our students regularly apply mathematics to the world, but few actually use mathematics to create a new physical object in the world,” he added. “Ryan’s work at UM is indicative of the kinds of opportunities that are available to students here to unite two seemingly disparate interests, math and theater, in the creation of something awe-inspiring and wonderful.”

While still contemplating his future, Longdon credits UM for giving him confidence in his ability to succeed whether crunching numbers or building a new set design.

“It is nice to be somewhere where people are excited about what you are excited about,” he says. “That you aren’t alone in your excitement.”

###

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UM / News / UM Announces Spring 2021 Graduates



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM ANNOUNCES SPRING 2021 GRADUATES

27 APRIL 2021



MISSOULA – The University of Montana has more than 1,700 students who are degree candidates for spring semester 2021. Many will participate in Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 1, in UM’s Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

The students listed in the links below are UM degree candidates or have been awarded their degrees.

Students with “cum laude” after their name indicate a GPA of 3.40 to 3.69. “Magna laude” indicates a 3.70 to 3.89 GPA, and “summa laude” is 3.90 and above.

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

[View a full list of Montana in-state candidates for graduation.](#)

[View a full list of out-of-state candidates for graduation.](#)

[View a full list of all candidates for graduation alphabetized by first name.](#)

All lists also are available online on the [UM Dean’s List and Degree Candidates page](#).

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Contact: UM Registrar's Office, graduation@umontana.edu.

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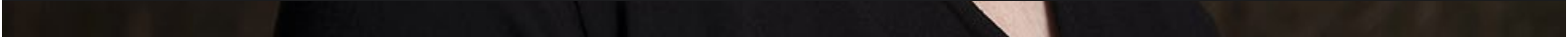




COLLEGE OF HEALTH

STUDENT EARN'S UM'S FIRST DOCTORATE IN PUBLIC HEALTH

26 APRIL 2021



Maja Pedersen is UM's first doctoral graduate in public health. Her research focuses on social connection, physical activity and health.

Maja Pedersen's favorite symbol of social connectedness is a soccer team. Having played soccer in Alaska, Norway and Missoula, she knows firsthand how connecting with others on a team builds self-worth and health.

Now, she will continue her research revolving around social connectedness, health and physical activity as the University of Montana's first Ph.D. graduate in public health, off to Stanford on a prestigious National Cancer Institute fellowship.

Focused on community-based approaches to disease prevention and health promotion, Pedersen's research is especially important for underserved and aging populations, said UM Professor Kari Harris in the [School of Public and Community Health Sciences](#).

"As the U.S. population ages, Maja's innovative work is becoming even more significant in promoting health, especially among our most vulnerable populations," Harris said.

Pedersen, from **Fairbanks, Alaska**, came to UM in 2010 as a community health master's student. Before UM, she studied obesity prevention in both Norway and the U.S. on a Fulbright scholarship and worked as a clinical exercise physiologist in cardiac rehabilitation and diabetes education settings in Alaska and Arizona.

Her doctoral research builds on her experience working with Alaska Native, American Indian and rural communities through centering on older adults and their exercise behavior.

Pedersen said many environmental factors prevent people from exercising, such as weather, access, geographic isolation and even historical oppression. But social norms and support especially help dictate how much older adults may exercise.

"They don't see other people who look like them out and about walking or doing exercise, so that kind of creates this sense of social isolation or a lack of normalcy for doing physical activity," Pedersen said.

Pedersen identifies strong connections between grandparents, a friend or a spouse, especially in Indigenous communities where family ties are strong, as a positive facilitator of physical activity.

“Social connectedness is a known factor to recruit specifically older adults but people across all populations in physical activity, so there is already an evidence-base of physical activity interventions that focus on social activities for older adults,” she said.

Pedersen said team sports also are a great way to stay physically active and socially connected, and she finds her own motivation and support through soccer.

“I love team sports, but particularly soccer as a metaphor for how specifically women can really

uplift one another and provide a platform for one another to grow and become strong leaders and stand up for whatever we believe in – whatever that might be,” Pedersen said.

In Missoula, Pedersen worked as an assistant coach at Big Sky and Hellgate high schools. Through **UM's Mansfield Center Sports Diplomacy exchange**, she also coached soccer for young Peruvian women as part of a program to help reduce violence against women.

“Soccer is this global phenomenon as a sport where we have these really awesome icons for strong women who break these barriers,” she said. “I’ve gained a lot from soccer and I always hope to bring that back to other women across the world, but also the communities I live in.”



Pedersen (bottom, left) traveled with previous and current Griz women's soccer team members Payton Agnew and Zoe Transtrum to Peru in 2019 on UM's Mansfield Center's Sports Diplomacy exchange to coach soccer and empower young women.

As UM's first Ph.D. student in public health, Pedersen credits the University for providing her with opportunities to expand her research. With help from Harris, her dissertation chair, she was able to refine her ideas, apply for grants and fellowships and partner with communities.

"As a doctoral student with a clear and ambitious vision for my research agenda and career trajectory, I am especially grateful for the constant support from Dr. Harris, for her time and dedication to my journey," she said. "Kari was just this really awesome person who was always there for me, as well as others within UM. I think it was a learning experience for all of us, and I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't have that knowledge and support."

Pedersen's fellowship will allow her to develop new public health programs or add to existing ones focused on social connectedness. She will work with American Indians in Western Montana through tribal partnerships, and her postdoctoral research will be supported at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, which investigates ways to prevent disease and promote health.

"It has been my pleasure to walk alongside Maja on her journey to her doctorate," Harris said. "I join all the faculty in the School of Public and Community Health Sciences in congratulating Maja on her outstanding accomplishments."

###

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UM / News / UM Spring Rodeo Set for Weekend



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM SPRING RODEO SET FOR WEEKEND

26 APRIL 2021

Cheyanne Carl, a member of the UM Rodeo Team, practices barrel racing on Sept. 23, 2020.

The University of Montana Spring Rodeo is set for Friday and Saturday, April 30 and May 1, at the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

An annual event for the UM Rodeo Team, the rodeo will feature eight UM athletes competing in events including bareback, bull and saddle bronc riding, team, tie-down and breakaway roping, barrel racing, goat tying and steer wrestling.

The event is the Big Sky Region finals for college rodeo and includes teams from UM, Montana State University, Montana State-Northern in Havre, Montana Western in Dillon and teams from Miles City, Glendive, Great Falls and Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming.

UM Rodeo Head Coach Kory Mytty said he encourages Griz Nation to fill the stands in support of Grizzly rodeo athletes.

“We’re excited to welcome Griz alumni, students and families to come out and support their rodeo team,” Mytty said. “Rodeo is one of the few sports we were able to continue this year despite the pandemic, and we’ve had a great season.”

UM Rodeo athletes still practiced, kept their horses in shape and attended statewide and regional rodeos during the pandemic.

UM Rodeo athlete Tyler Turco from **Franktown**, Colorado, is in contention for making it to the College Nationals Finals Rodeo in saddle bronc riding and is currently winning the category for the region. UM barrel racer Cheyanne Carl, from **Ballantine**, also may matriculate to the national competition in barrel racing.

The CNFR will be held June 11 to 19 in Casper, Wyoming.

UM Spring Rodeo performances include:

- Friday, April 30 at 7 p.m.
- Saturday Slack, May 1 at 9 a.m.
- Saturday, May 1 at 7 p.m.

Tickets must be purchased in advance of the event. General admission tickets are \$10 and will only be sold in blocks of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 seats. Restrictions for COVID-19 will be in place during the event and will include social distancing, required face masks and encouraging those displaying symptoms not to attend.

Concessions will be available on-site courtesy of the Mullan Trail Mustangs Four-H Club.

For questions regarding tickets, call the Missoula County Fairgrounds at 406-721-3247 or email fairgrounds@missoulacounty.us.

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Contact: Kory Mytty, UM Rodeo head coach, 406-544-8071, ksmytty@windermere.com.

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UM / News / UM Yields Trio of Montana-Native Truman Scholarship Finalists

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM YIELDS TRIO OF MONTANA-NATIVE TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP FINALISTS

23 APRIL 2021



Left to right: University of Montana rising seniors Gold Moua, Augusta Reinhart and Lindsey Roosa were named finalists for the prestigious Truman Scholarship.

MISSOULA — Three University of Montana rising seniors were named as national finalists for the prestigious Truman Scholarship, the nation’s premier graduate fellowship for those pursuing careers as public service leaders.

UM undergraduate students Gold Moua, from **Frenchtown**, Lindsey Roosa, from **Missoula**, and Augusta Reinhart from **Bozeman** are among a small percentage of U.S. students who were selected as Truman Scholarship finalists.

Each found a distinct academic path at UM and all share a robust and dedicated passion for civic service, international diplomacy and social equity.

Kylla Benes, UM director of prestigious scholarships and fellowships, said being named a Truman finalist is an impressive and significant mark in a young life.

“Gold, Augusta and Lindsey should each feel extremely proud of being named a Truman finalist, more so for their impressive academic careers at UM and their dedication to change the world for the better,” Benes said. “Each represent the best of UM and each of these young women will contribute a meaningful and needed impact on improving lives across the world.”

Awarding up to three years of graduate education and an award of \$30,000, the Truman Scholarship is a highly competitive national scholarship. The Truman Foundation receives more than 600 applications for about 55 to 65 scholarships annually. Institutions can nominate four applicants each year.

Named after President Harry Truman, the scholarship is a living memorial to Truman’s values of service, according to the Truman Foundation. The scholarship “nurtures and supports future generations who answer the call to public service leadership.”

Gold Moua

Moua enrolled at UM as a transfer student from the University of Portland in 2019 and quickly immersed herself in the campus and Missoula community. As a minority in UM's pre-medicine undergraduate program and majoring in human biology, Moua sought outside opportunities for professional development. Moua, who is Hmong, represents less than 1% of Montana's largely white population.

She enrolled at the University of Washington's Summer Health Professions Education Program and shortly thereafter was offered a position on the organization's board. While in the program, Moua developed a keen understanding of the positive impacts robust pre-health programs can have on minority students as they progress to and through medical school.



Gold Moua

Moua later developed the first UM chapter of the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students at UM, or MAPS, creating professional development and mentoring opportunities for UM health science students. UM's Diversity Council awarded Moua with a student diversity award this year for her efforts with MAPS.

As the pandemic took hold at UM, Moua joined the Griz COVID-19 response team and supported campus efforts to mitigate the pandemic.

After gaining more clinical experience, Moua plans to pursue medical school and hopes to improve health care and health policy for underserved communities.

“I am thrilled to be a Truman finalist,” Moua said. “Not only did the application process enable me to clarify my career goals, but it also challenged me to think in different ways about health policies, medicine and the changes I aim to make. Fortunately, my mentors at UM provided me guidance as I worked through these areas.”

Lindsey Roosa

Double majoring in political science and Japanese, Roosa plans to work as a foreign service officer for the U.S. Department of State. A Presidential Leadership Scholar, Roosa developed a passion for cultures and foreign languages at UM and won scholarships to study abroad in Tokyo and spend a summer in Amman, Jordan for an intensive study abroad course in Arabic. In four out of six semesters at UM, Roosa participated in either national or international study exchanges crafting language skills and cultural comprehension.

Developing a proficiency in both Arabic and Japanese, Roosa has deeply explored conflicts in the Middle East as a significant driver for a surge of refugees while researching Japan’s strict immigrant and refugee policies. She hopes one day to serve in posts in both regions to understand and craft policy and programs that can address root causes of resettlement and displacement support.



Lindsey Roosa

Roosa has canvassed for the Montana Public Interest Research Group, volunteered for the Lifelong Learning Center in Missoula and enjoyed rock-climbing at UM’s gym and around

Montana. She also has been an international program coordinator and served on the advisory council for the UM Mansfield Center. To help students build international connections despite the pandemic, she developed and led a Japanese-English conversation club at the University.

"Applying for the Truman Scholarship was an incredible opportunity," Roosa said. "Not only have I been able to reflect on my own experiences and goals, but I have met incredible people along the way. I truly appreciate all the support and encouragement I have received throughout the application process and I look forward to continuing to grow as a student and friend."

Augusta Reinhart

Reinhart plans to one day pursue a career with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, particularly within a capacity that supports global refugees and international policy. She developed a passion for supporting refugees while volunteering for Missoula's International Rescue Committee, working closely alongside a Congolese family and aiding their transition to life in Missoula.

Double majoring in political science and French, Reinhart has participated in UM's Franke Global Leadership Initiative and served on the board for the Mike and Maureen Mansfield Center to direct and support international exchange. Her passion for international exchange and commitment to racial and social justice has taken her to the far corners of the world, in addition to local grassroots organizations working for social and racial equity.



Augusta Reinhart

At UM, she received the University's most prestigious political science award, the Kain-McKay Scholarship and the premier honors award, the Presidential Leadership Scholarship. She was granted a Killam Fellowship, Fulbright Canada's undergraduate award, to study in Montréal, Canada in fall 2019. She was also awarded the 2020 Baucus Institute China Summer Program Scholarship for climate policy studies at Hangzhou Wanxiang Polytechnic University and was accepted for a year abroad of study at the Université Jean Moulin in Lyon, France.

"It is a true honor to be named as a Truman finalist and I'm proud to be able to represent the state where I have been born, raised and educated with two other powerful women by my side," Reinhart said. "This was a challenging yet fruitful opportunity to think so deeply about my own experiences and aspirations, and I especially appreciate all of the guidance that Kylla and many other faculty members so kindly provided me. I am looking forward to using this process as a jumping off point for future endeavors at UM and beyond, especially in a world that is in desperate need of service leadership."

###

Contact: Kylla Benes, UM director of prestigious scholarships, 406-243-5241
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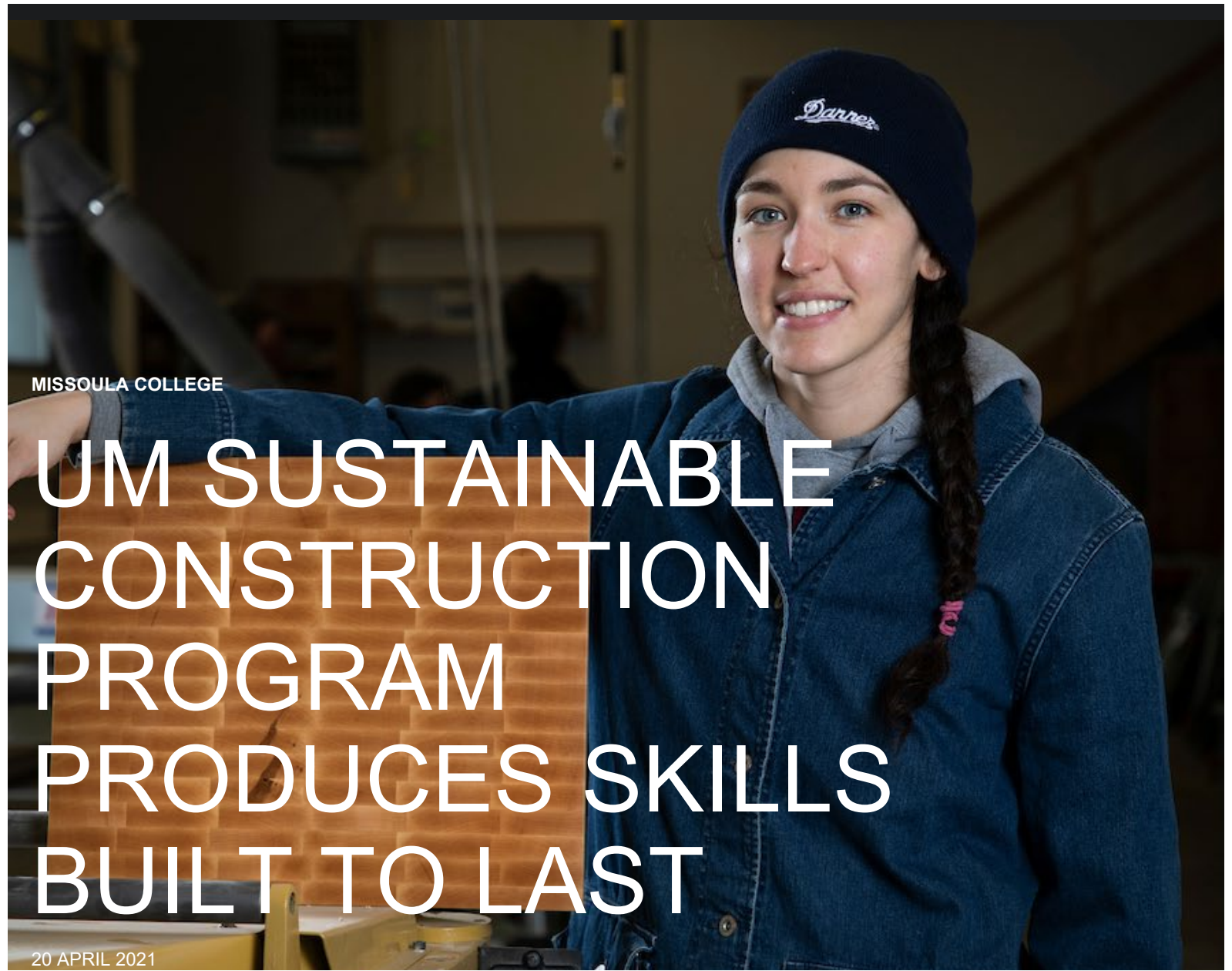
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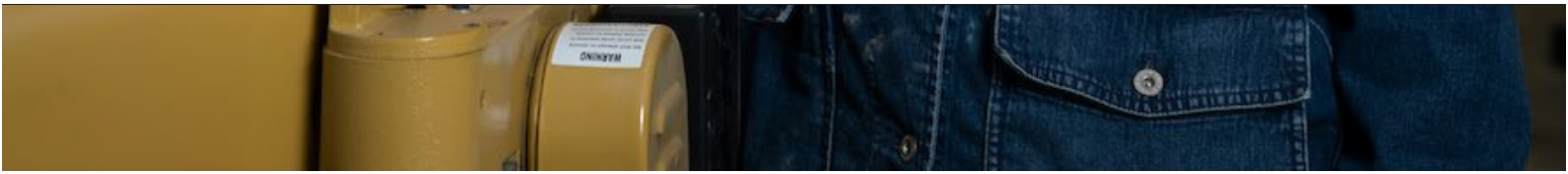
UM / News / UM Sustainable Construction Program Produces Skills Built to Last



MISSOULA COLLEGE

UM SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM PRODUCES SKILLS BUILT TO LAST

20 APRIL 2021



UM Sustainable Construction Technology student Amanda Parker is learning valuable career skills needed to build houses, including woodworking. She hopes to work for a firm that shares the values taught in her classes and maybe build her own house someday.

MISSOULA –Few courses at the University of Montana require mastering a circular saw to graduate, but for Sustainable Construction Technology student Amanda Parker, it's all part of the classroom experience.

Parker, a first-year student in this popular Missoula College program, is learning from the foundation up – literally – what it takes to successfully construct buildings engineered to last. Her studies include site preparation, woodworking and how to expertly wield drills and other pieces of equipment.

“Some people have family experience working with tools but I didn’t,” said Parker, a northern California native who moved to Missoula when her boyfriend enrolled in UM’s wildlife biology program. “What I like about this program is how hands-on it is. We do new things every day.”

For the 30 students now enrolled in the program, the combination of classroom and site training – each class constructs a house – gives them the skills needed to successfully step into a job market facing severe worker and skilled labor shortages.

According to the 2020 Construction Outlook Survey by the Associated General Contractors of America, 81% of construction firms have trouble filling both salaried and hourly craft positions, and 72% anticipate labor shortages to be the biggest hurdle in the next year. A shortage of qualified workers and high material costs have contributed to housing shortages in many areas of the county, including Missoula.

“This program is an incredible opportunity to prepare for a lifelong career,” said program director John Freer. “And we try to make sure our students know that there is so much more to this than just pounding nails all day. If they have the desire and the aptitude, there is no limit to where they can go – from opportunities in dozens of specialty trades, management or even owning their own company.”

Missoula College has offered Sustainable Construction Technology for about four years. In addition to an Associate of Applied Science degree, the program offers certificates and micro credentials in carpentry, green building and other areas, which can be taken individually or while pursuing an associate's degree. Students go on to work in any number of vocational trades, and some take the courses to augment hobbies and others to build their own house.

For now, a limited number of students are admitted to the program to keep the student-to-instructor ratio small, said Walt Wilson, an adjunct faculty member.

"The tools we use are not without danger, but the small student-to-instructor ratio keeps the students safe while teaching them to perform at an industry level," Wilson said, adding that students also learn soft skills such as how to effectively interview for jobs.

"We teach students as if we were looking to hire them," Wilson said. "That is as important in construction as it is with any other job."

Steve Kinzel, a graduate of the carpentry program, worked for a number of years in the construction trade before joining trailer manufacturer Alcom eight years ago. He worked his way up from the shop and today is the Bonner location's production manager. He credits his instructors with giving him the confidence to excel beyond his ability to work in wood.

"You learn the trade, yes, but you also take math classes and computer classes and you learn how to give a presentation," he said. "It teaches you discipline and accountability."

Alcom, he adds, works closely with Missoula College and has hired a number of its graduates.

While it may seem intuitive that all buildings would be built to last, that isn't necessarily the case, Freer said. There are innumerable areas for waste in construction techniques, and students in the program learn the importance of not cutting corners.

"We're teaching students to not only be efficient in the process of building but also the materials used," he said. "Sustainable materials don't have to be fancy. Where they come from, how they are made, how long they last, and what happens to them at the end of their life is more important."

Parker, who also has an Associate of Arts degree in horticulture and has worked as a landscaper in Missoula, is particularly interested in using sustainable plant materials, namely hemp, in building construction. Although hemp's use is limited for now, she sees great potential in the product.

"It's mold resistant and fire resistant; it's benefits go on and on," said Parker, who will be interning this summer with a company that uses bio-based materials for wall systems.

While she isn't sure where she'll end up after graduation – maybe carpentry – she wants to build her own home and looks to land at a company that offers work/life balance and syncs with the culture and values now taught by her instructors.

"I want to work for a company that is conscientious and focused on safety," she said. "Someplace careful with sourcing their materials, and concerned about longevity. And, of course, sustainability."

###

Contact: John Freer, program director, Missoula College's Sustainable Building Technology, 406-243-7668, john.freer@mso.umt.edu.

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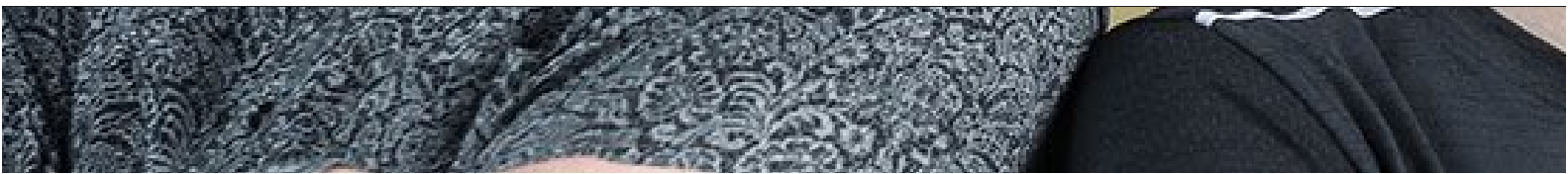
UM / News / Amigos: UM Friends Land Fulbright Fellowships in Spain



DAVIDSON HONORS COLLEGE

AMIGOS: UM FRIENDS LAND FULBRIGHT FELLOWSHIPS IN SPAIN

16 APRIL 2021



Noah Grabe, a UM senior from Portland and Taylor Gregory, a UM senior from Lolo, have both received a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship to serve as English teaching assistants next year in Madrid. The two met freshman year in UM's Davidson Honors College and developed a friendship as undergraduates.

MISSOULA – Noah Grabe and Taylor Gregory met on the second floor of Knowles Hall at the University of Montana their freshman year.

They made a connection over a shared passion for the outdoors, international diplomacy and an interest in the humanities. Both had enrolled in UM's **Davidson Honors College**.

Fast forward four years, with a global pandemic in between, and the two friends are preparing to embark on an adventure they never imagined: serving for eight months as Fulbright Fellows in Madrid through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program beginning in September 2021.

Receiving a Fulbright fellowship is a prestigious distinction alone. Grabe and Gregory each individually receiving a Fulbright award – from the same institution to the same country to the same city – is rarer. Their awards bring UM's total Fulbright Fellows to 107. On any given year, there are about 2,000 Fulbright scholarships awarded to U.S. students, with an acceptance rate of about 23%, all depending on the number of applicants for a certain country.

"It's very uncommon for two students from the same university to be placed in the same country, in the same city, for the same award," said Kylla Benes, UM **director of prestigious scholarships and fellowships**. "Noah and Taylor will have a wonderful opportunity to support each other as they work as English teaching assistants and explore Madrid. I am proud to have them represent the University and the state of Montana as Fulbrighters abroad."

Grabe, from **Portland** and Gregory, from **Lolo**, will graduate from UM in May. Having both majored in political science and international relations and serving as officers in Montana Model United Nations, the friends created individual academic paths that converged throughout their time as Grizzlies.

“I’m still kind of bewildered about it all,” Grabe said. “There are so few placements in each country, and to have two placements in the same place, both from UM, is amazing. If you told me my college experience would culminate with an experience like this, I never would have believed it.”

Grabe and Gregory both interned at UM’s **Education Abroad** office, studied overseas opposite semesters (Gregory in Brussels and Grabe in Barcelona, though his time was cut short by the pandemic last year) and visited New York together for a Model UN competition. Both also found themselves spending years in UM Spanish language and Latin American history classes. Grabe describes former UM Spanish instructor Caroline Lonski as “one of the absolute best language teachers I’ve ever had, with really high expectations.”

Gregory leaned into advocating for students, eventually becoming president of the Associated Students of UM. He minored in European studies, completed UM’s **Franke Global Leadership Initiative** and focused on increasing internationalization at UM.

“There are so many incredible paths to take at UM,” Gregory said. “For me, I didn’t know I would fall in love with higher education and develop a passion for understanding how to make education more accessible and affordable. I know the Fulbright in Spain will provide a deeper opportunity to understand another country’s education system. And it’s even better that I get to share that experience with my friend.”

Grabe developed an appreciation and curiosity of foreign cultures after taking UM communication Professor Stephen Yoshimura’s faculty-led study abroad class on human strength and virtue, which took the class across central Europe. The popular class is housed in the **Department of Communication Studies** in UM’s **College of Humanities & Sciences**. Grabe said he eventually wants to work for UNESCO helping craft international policy.

Gregory and Grabe – without knowing it – even shared similar sentiments in their individual application essays for the Fulbright, informed by the rich experiences UM offered, they said.

“It’s true what everyone says,” said Grabe. “A UM education is exactly what you make of it. You get back what you put into it, and I’m thrilled about this next step.”

The Fulbright Program provides U.S. students an opportunity to study, conduct research or teach English abroad. The legacy of the Fulbright includes a mission to fund the promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture and

science.

That goal is particularly meaningful for both Grabe and Gregory, who plan to fully absorb the Spanish language and culture through a lens of collaboration.

“I’m most interested in embracing the role of teaching assistant after being a UM student, so that I can understand education from that point of view,” Gregory said.

Grabe said he wants to embody a positive representation of an American abroad.

Another shared value between the friends is a deep sense of gratitude for UM faculty “who were too many to name” for their expertise and guidance that both say is a cornerstone to their academic success and personal growth.

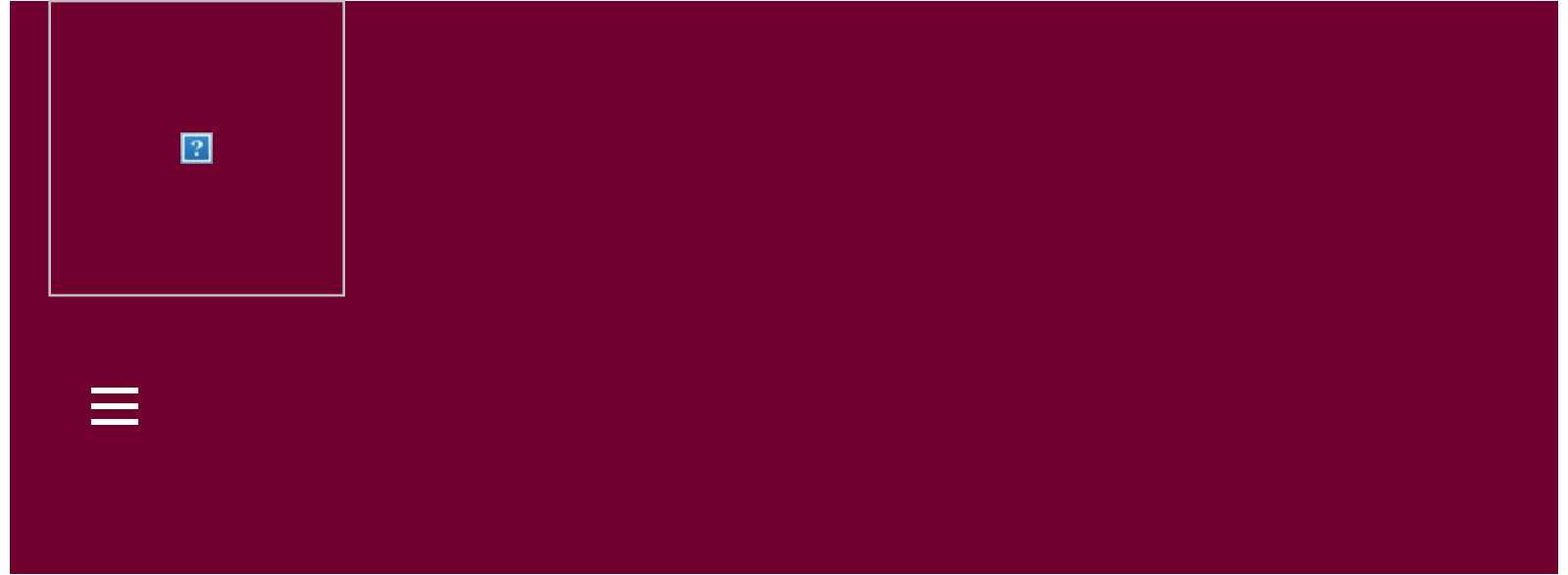
In particular, both wish to thank Eva-Maria Maggi, visiting assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, and Karen Adams, professor of political science, for their “incredible amount of mentorship and support.” Both students also wish to thank Tim Nichols, dean of the UM Davidson Honors College, for being “one of the most caring and energizing people I’ve met,” Grabe said. Finally, both students wish to thank UM Education Abroad Coordinator Marja Unkuri-Chaudhry for inspiring their journey in international education.

Before both friends depart UM and begin to close this chapter in their lives, they plan to hike the M Trail once more, visit Big Dipper Ice Cream and pick up authentic Montana huckleberry gifts for their host families in Madrid.

“I’m really glad that I focused on my journey at UM, not just the destination,” Gregory said. “If you focus too much on the end-result, you miss the beauty of the process.”

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Contact: Kylla Benes, UM director of prestigious scholarships, 406-243-5241, kylla.benes@umontana.edu.



UM / News / Montana Public Radio Concludes 2021 Spring Pledge Week



MISSOULA – Montana Public Radio’s annual spring fundraiser concluded this week with over \$560,000 in listener pledges.

At the end of the pledge drive at 9 a.m. Monday morning, the tally reached \$566,540 for the six-day event, nearly 81% of the \$700,000 goal. There was a total of 3,832 listener pledges during the on-air fundraiser, which ran April 5-12.

“Thanks again for supporting your local, listener-powered Montana Public Radio,” said Anne Hosler, MTPR’s interim development director. “We’re so grateful for your contributions.”

“The work of producing outstanding news, music, information and children’s programming continues thanks to donations from our listeners,” said Ray Ekness, director of the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center. “Our entire staff is truly humbled by the support of our MTPR listeners.”

The drive included the popular “Pet Wars,” where dogs continued their reign at the top by outnumbering cats 594 to 486. The friendly pet competition also included many pledges for chickens, parakeets, guinea pigs, horses, goats and more.

“These funds will help us continue production of so many Montana-made programs,” said Michael Marsolek, MTPR program director. “We will continue to make great radio for our listeners.”

MTPR needs to raise \$2.1 million – 75% of the station’s total operating budget – from listeners, sponsors and events during its fundraising year. Listeners can continue to contribute online or via the mail if they missed making their pledge of support last week.

MTPR is a public service of UM and broadcasts on 89.1 Missoula (KUFM); 91.5 Missoula, city (K218AI); 91.9 Hamilton (KUFN); 89.5 Polson (KPJH); 90.1 Kalispell, Whitefish, North Valley (KUKL); 90.5 Libby (KUFL); 91.7 Kalispell, city (K219BN); 101.3 Swan Lake (K267BJ); 91.3 Butte (KAPC); 91.7 Helena (KUHM); 90.9 and 91.7 Dillon (KDWG and K219DN); and 89.9 Great Falls (KGPR).

Learn more at <http://mtpr.org>.

###

Contact: Anne Hosler, MTPR interim development director, 406-243-4214, anne.hosler@umontana.edu; Michael Marsolek, MTPR program director, 406-243-4096, michael.marsolek@umontana.edu; Ray Ekness, Broadcast Media Center director and MTPR general manager, 406-243-4154, ray.ekness@umontana.edu.

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UM / News / UM Shines a Light on Sexual Assault Awareness Month

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM SHINES A LIGHT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

14 APRIL 2021



The University of Montana's Main Hall lights up in teal April 1 to honor Sexual Assault Awareness month.

University of Montana and Missoula community members are invited to attend remaining events for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, which began April 1 with teal lights cast on UM's Main Hall to symbolize support for sexual assault survivors.

The theme for April is "Strong Alone, Fearless Together," showcasing the ways UM and the community provide advocacy, prevention and support for victims. All month long, UM's Student Advocacy Resource Center and other local organizations are sharing resources on how community members can intervene in sexual assault and help victims heal from trauma. Events explore societal bias, intervention techniques, workplace harassment, myths about rape and more.

Remaining events this month include:

- **2 p.m. Thursday, April 15** – Indigenous SAAM Panel: "Healing Sisters Through Resiliency" and SAAM "Indigenous Sister" Virtual Campaign Premiere.
- **5:30 p.m. April 15** – Movie and Discussion: "The Mask You Live In."
- **Noon-1 p.m. Friday, April 16** – "Improve Your Flirting": Workplace Harassment Prevention Series Part 2.
- **Noon-1 p.m. Monday, April 19** – Panel: "Societal Bias and Acceptance of Harm."
- **Noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, April 20** – "Sex Ed is Sexual Violence Prevention."
- **2-3 p.m. Wednesday, April 21** – "Bar Intervention."
- **6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, April 22** – Movie and Discussion: "Indigenous Women Keep Going Missing in MT."
- **Noon-1 p.m. Monday, April 26** – Panel: "Prosecution Against Rape Myths."
- **7 p.m. Tuesday, April 27** – "Advance Your Career": Workplace Harassment Prevention

Series Part 3.

- **6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 29** – Movie and Discussion: “When They Were Here.”

Ali Pepper, prevention education coordinator at SARC, said the month serves as a community call to action.

“For bystanders, each of us has a responsibility to take action and help combat sex-based harm,” Pepper said. “We would never recommend someone put

themselves in harm’s way to prevent an assault, but there are opportunities to combat the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that enable higher-level, sex-based violence. A call to action includes fostering a culture of respect within our communities.”

SARC, Missoula Project Beacon, Make Your Move and the Graduate and Professional Student Association at UM have collaborated to coordinate the events.

Brenna Merrill, who runs Make Your Move, a campaign that engages allies to prevent sexual violence in the greater Missoula area through messaging, said the virtual and social media events make it easy for anyone to participate.

“In addition to showcasing workshops that we do – like the Make Your Move! Bar Workshop and SARC’s Bystander training – these events highlight so many key players who are doing their part to prevent and respond to sexual violence,” Merrill said. “There are collaborations with Indigenous leaders, victim service agencies, filmmakers, Instagrammers and even the



The events highlighting Sexual Assault Awareness Month are a collaboration among UM and local organizations.

pets at Western Montana Humane Society.”

Missoula Project Beacon sponsored an Indigenous Art Market and an All Nations Virtual Wellness Fair earlier this month. The project, housed within Missoula’s All Nations Health Center, aims to create a network of trauma-informed providers, services and culturally relevant care for Indigenous survivors of human trafficking.

Lauren Small Rodriguez, who directs Missoula Project Beacon alongside case manager Shayla Beaumont, said their goal is to increase Indigenous-led victim advocacy programs and services and work within Native communities on reservations and in urban areas. This month’s events are helping highlight that work.

“Our program understands how to connect with Indigenous survivors more than most agencies, who do not have enough Indigenous-staffed advocates or the training in culturally relevant care practices to provide services to our people,” Small Rodriguez said.

Merrill said as she works on Make Your Move, she often encounters other Missoula community members and businesses that are engaged in preventing sexual assault and who are dedicated to making the area vibrant and safe.

“SAAM provides an opportunity for everyone to get to experience what I already know is happening in our town on a day-to-day basis,” she said. “My hope for this month is that it continues to energize all of us to build deep connections and stronger relationships.”

For the full list of events, visit [UM’s Student Advocacy Resource Center page](#).

###

Contact: Alison Pepper, coordinator of prevention education, UM Student Advocacy Resource Center, 406-243-4556, alison.pepper@mso.umt.edu.



UM / News / In-Person UM Commencement Set for May 1



MISSOULA – The University of Montana will celebrate the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021 with two in-person, socially distanced Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 1, in Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

UM will hold two Commencement ceremonies. The 9 a.m. ceremony will be for students in the:

- College of Humanities & Sciences
- College of Business
- W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation

The 2 p.m. ceremony will be for students in the:

- Phyllis J. Washington College of Education
- College of Health
- College of the Arts and Media
- Missoula College
- Master of Public Administration program.

Students and faculty members participating in the 9 a.m. ceremony should line up on the Oval at 8 a.m. Those participating in the 2 p.m. ceremony should line up on the Oval at 1 p.m.

Guest Tickets

Because of COVID-19 mitigation efforts, only students who RSVP'd and their invited guests are allowed to attend Commencement ceremonies this year. Each graduating student is limited to eight guests. All attendees will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Students must log into their personal account on MarchingOrder to claim their guest tickets. Students may print their guest tickets, receive them electronically and/or send them to their invited guests. Seating is general assignment and groups of up to eight guests will be able

to sit together if they wish to do so.

Parking and Shuttles

Parking on campus is free on Commencement Day. Reserved parking spots are open to all Commencement guests. Please do not park in Handicap Parking unless authorized to do so. Quick Stop Parking spots are for 20 minutes or less.

ASUM Transportation will provide free shuttles between South Campus and the Music Building from 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Saturday, May 1. Shuttles run every 30 minutes. [Find a shuttle schedule and map here.](#)

After the Ceremony

At the conclusion of each ceremony, graduates will recess out of the stadium the same way they came in. Graduates and guests should make a plan to meet outside the stadium and please remain mindful of social distancing between groups.

Livestream Available

A livestream of UM Commencement will be available at <http://bit.ly/UMcommencement>.

Honorary Doctorates

William “Bill” Franke will receive an Honorary Doctorate of Business. He will be the Commencement speaker for the 9 a.m. ceremony.

The late Bonnie HeavyRunner, a tribal court judge and staunch advocate for Native American causes, will receive a posthumous Honorary Doctorate of Law. Aislinn Roux, a three-time UM graduate and daughter of Bonnie HeavyRunner, will be the speaker for the 2 p.m. ceremony.

For more information, visit the about [spring 2021 Commencement website](#). Email any questions to graduation@umontana.edu.

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Contact: Maria Mangold, UM registrar, 406-243-2412, graduation@umontana.edu.

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UM / News / UM Journalism School Welcomes Fall Pollner Professor

COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA

UM JOURNALISM SCHOOL WELCOMES FALL POLLNER PROFESSOR

12 APRIL 2021



Award-winning journalist and editor Jan Winburn has been named the fall 2021 T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor at UM's School of Journalism.

MISSOULA – Award-winning journalist and editor Jan Winburn has been named the fall 2021 T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor at the University of Montana's School of Journalism.

Winburn has edited stories that won the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing, the Edward R. Murrow Award and the Livingston Award, among many other national honors.

While in residence at the School of Journalism this fall, she will lead a hands-on curriculum for young journalists about how to interact with victims of violence, survivors and their families. Her course also will consider how journalists themselves are affected by exposure to trauma and tragedy. In 2009, Winburn received the DART Society award for editors "who understand how to navigate the emotional landscape of assignments on tragedy and trauma."

In applying for the position, Winburn said of her course proposal, "Even before graduation, student journalists grapple with stories of everyday trauma – car accidents, rapes, suicides, drownings. How do we do justice to these stories without doing harm? What skills do we need to cover the inevitable losses that mark a human lifetime?"

In addition to teaching a course, Pollner professors work closely with the staff of the Montana Kaimin, UM's independent student newspaper. T. Anthony Pollner, a 1999 School of Journalism alumnus who died in a motorcycle accident, was an engaged member of the Kaimin staff during his time as a journalism student from 1995 to 1999. In endowing the Pollner professorship in 2001, Pollner's parents, family and friends wanted to bring working journalists to the school to invigorate the scholarship and reporting of students and faculty members.

Winburn is currently a mentor in the University of Georgia's Master of Fine Arts program in narrative media. Previously she worked at CNN Digital, where she led a team of longform enterprise reporters and was an editor in the investigation unit. She also has worked as an editor at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Baltimore Sun, The Hartford Courant's Northeast Magazine, The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Columbia (Missouri) Tribune.

“The School of Journalism is proud to welcome Winburn as the 28th T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor,” said Denise Dowling, director of the school. “She follows in a long line of outstanding journalists who have taught courses that complement and enhance the journalism curriculum at UM.”

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Contact: Denise Dowling, director, UM School of Journalism, 406-243-5250, denise.dowling@mso.umt.edu.

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A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment

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WINNERS

12 APRIL 2021

MISSOULA – The University of Montana Alumni Association board of directors has announced the winners of its prestigious 2021 Grizzly of the Last Decade Awards.

These awards honor outstanding UM alumni who have graduated within the past decade, excelled early in their career and shown potential for continued success. Eight exceptional alumni won the award this year.

Brooke Andrus is a 2010 UM graduate with a bachelor's degree in journalism. After beginning her career in community news and media relations, she took a mighty leap of faith in 2013 when she joined the marketing team at the Phoenix-based **WebPT**, the nation's leading software provider for outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapists. Under her leadership, WebPT's content team has been honored with numerous awards – most recently as the gold winner at the 2020 CEO World Awards for Communications or PR Campaign of the Year, COVID-19-Related Information. Shortly after celebrating her eight-year anniversary with WebPT this spring, she was promoted to senior manager of content marketing.



Brooke Andrus

Andrus is a third-generation Grizzly, joining her grandfather, father, mother and brother as a UM alum.

During her UM years, she was a member of the varsity cross-country team and competed in indoor and outdoor track and field. She currently is a life member of the Alumni Association and served as a Griz-Cat satellite party coordinator.



Kevin Brockbank

Kevin Brockbank earned three degrees at UM: a bachelor's degree in education in 1995, a master's degree in education in 2005 and a doctorate in educational leadership in 2017.

He spent the first 16 years of his career in higher education at Helena College and Missoula College as a tenured faculty member and administrator. His emphasis during that time was on workforce program development through partnerships with Montana businesses and community organizations.

From 2013 to 2015, Brockbank was a dean at Salt Lake Community College, where he was recognized as a national leader in the advancement of competency-based education.

Since becoming president of Spokane Community College in 2017, Brockbank has maintained a focus on growing local talent by creating new pathways to meaningful careers. Part of that work is transitioning students in Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language classes, as well as adults returning to school, into rewarding career pathways. Brockbank recently was named an inaugural member of the Aspen Institute New Presidents Fellowship.

Brockbank and his wife, Brandi Foster '94, volunteer on local and national boards supporting business, outdoor recreation, veterans and college scholarships, with an emphasis on funding single parents.

Shelbi Dantic is a 2014 UM graduate with a degree in political science. She is a seasoned Democratic strategist with a decade of proven experience. Most recently, she managed the successful congressional campaign of Carolyn Bourdeaux, the only Democrat to flip a Republican-held House seat in 2020. In the 2018 election cycle, she served as deputy campaign manager for Montana Sen. Jon Tester's re-election campaign.



Shelbi Dantic

Prior to managing campaigns, Dantic served in a number of leadership roles at an influential statewide conservation organization, Montana Conservation Voters. She was named the Montana Progressive of the Year in 2018 by the New Leaders Council, serves on the National Women's Caucus for New Leaders Council and was an inaugural fellow of the Blue Leadership Collaborative program in 2019.

During her UM career, Dantic participated in MontPIRG and the Associated Students of UM Senate, and she was the University Center board chair. Since graduation, she has mentored political science students to help them navigate the field through MontPIRG's internship classes.

Dantic's parents and grandfather attended UM. Her father is a law graduate. Both her grandfather (Bob Dantic) and father (Brad Dantic) played Grizzly football.

Dustin Lind is a 2017 graduate of UM with a doctorate in physical therapy. His bachelor's degree is in exercise science. He currently is the assistant major league hitting coach and director of hitting for the San Francisco Giants.

Lind started his career at Hamilton Physical Therapy as an orthopedic physical therapist. He also worked as an independent hitting consultant for minor and major league baseball players. He was hired in 2018 to serve as a quality assurance coach in the Seattle Mariners'



Dustin Lind

minor league system, overseeing implementation of data-driven training methods for hitters and general offensive development. He was promoted to director of hitting development and strategies in 2019 and assigned to work with all levels of Seattle's organization to improve offensive performance.

He was hired by the San Francisco Giants in 2020 in a dual role of major league assistant hitting coach and director of hitting – in addition to new player onboarding and offensive development throughout all levels of the minor leagues. The Giants' offense improved from 28th in offensive output to seventh during the 2020 season.

Lind has been a guest lecturer at UM in sports analytics courses and is involved in various youth baseball programs.

Dan McFarland is a 2008 UM graduate. He holds a bachelor's degree in health and human performance, with an emphasis on pre-dental studies.

While at UM, McFarland played Grizzly football, where he describes his position as wide receiver/water boy/benchwarmer. He balanced the difficult pre-dental curriculum with being a student-athlete to complete his degree. While preparing for admission to dental school, he served as the youth sports director at the Missoula Family YMCA from 2009 to 2011. Upon acceptance to dental school, McFarland attended the



Dan McFarland

well-respected University of Pacific Dental School in San Francisco.

McFarland graduated from dental school with honors and in the top 15% of his class in 2014. He then pursued additional training in cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, oral surgery and endodontics. McFarland has been working in private practice in western Montana for six years. He is a member of the American Dental Association, Montana Dental Association, Three Rivers Study Club and the Missoula Chamber of Commerce.

McFarland is a member of the Grizzly Scholarship Association and provides sponsorships for golf tournaments and sporting events. He previously served in Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Missoula and has been a volunteer dentist at Project Homeless Connect/Project Community Connect.

Dan Shook is a 2012 UM graduate in recreation management. He currently serves as a National Park Service interpretive ranger at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in Deer Lodge.

He started his career as a seasonal ranger with Montana State Parks and continued throughout his senior year of college in the Montana State Parks AmeriCorps program. After graduation he fulfilled a lifelong dream of becoming an interpretive ranger with



Dan Shook

the National Park Service, working at both Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Yellowstone National Park in the Old Faithful District before accepting a full-time, permanent position in 2014 at the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina.

At the Wright Brothers Memorial, he developed a unique storytelling program titled “The Death of Impossibility,” which combined the park’s history with audience-participation problem-solving.

In September 2016, he was the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of Health Connect South in Atlanta. His inspirational speech to nearly 500 health care professionals linked the story of the Wright Brothers and the importance of strategic thinking and collaboration when spearheading innovation, such as finding a cure for cancer.

He transferred back to Montana in 2018 and the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, where he continues bringing history alive and connecting with park visitors while interpreting the values and legacy of the nation’s open-range cattle ranching history.

He has deep roots in the UM community, including his ancestor James V. Burnett, a skilled brick mason who was contracted to lay the bricks for Main Hall.

Shook is a U.S Navy veteran and helped develop Milltown State Park through AmericCorps. He also works to raise awareness for organ donation following his wife’s double-organ transplant in 2019.

Tom Snyder is a 2011 UM graduate with a degree in finance. While at UM, he worked on a business plan to open up a restaurant. As he explored various cuisines and cultures, he fell in love with Brazil and the nation's cooking styles, using simple ingredients to make flavorful and healthy dishes. He is the founder and owner of Five on Black Brazilian restaurant, with locations in Missoula, Billings, Great Falls and Bozeman.

The 2011 winner of the College of Business' annual John Ruffatto Business Startup Challenge, Snyder's Five on Black is one of the UM business competition's top success stories.

Since graduation, Snyder has stayed connected to the College of Business as a judge and adviser of the startup challenge and sponsors its "Feasibility Award." He is a guest speaker at the College of Business and serves as a mentor through the University's BlackStone LaunchPad program.

He is past president and a current board member of the Missoula Downtown Association. He serves on the North Riverside and Parks planning and development committee and sponsors the Feeding Families Fund, set up through Five on Black.

He is a member of the Hellgate Venture Network, a community of Missoula entrepreneurs. Snyder's spouse, Lauren (Dooley), also is a 2011 graduate of the College of Business.



Tom Snyder (and family)

Ashleen Williams is a 2011 UM graduate in political science. She currently is the Senior Barksdale Fellow at the University of Mississippi, working toward her doctorate in history and teaching classes.

Williams was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to Bahrain in 2011 and a Mitchell Scholarship to Northern Ireland in 2013 to study applied peace and conflict



Ashleen Williams

studies. Following her time in Northern Ireland, she moved to Yemen and Qatar for Arabic language studies and work. In 2016, she moved to Oxford, Mississippi, as a fellow of the honors college at the University of Mississippi. Her current teaching schedule includes honors, international studies and public policy. In 2021, she received the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders award from the Association of American Colleges and Universities for her promise as a future leader of higher education, and she was selected as a national Humanities Without Walls Pre-Doctoral Fellow.

During her UM years, Williams participated in ASUM as president and senator, the Mount of Olives Arabic Language and Culture Club, College Democrats and the Alumni Association Community Lecture Series planning committee. She now is a member of the Alumni Association's Montana Emissaries and is a volunteer for the Davidson Honors College.

She is one of several members of her family to have attended UM, including her mother, two uncles, grandfather and grandmother.

For more information on the Grizzly of the Last Decade Award, visit <https://bit.ly/31VfPOY>, call Jodi Moreau, UM alumni office associate director, at 406-243-6124 or email jodi.moreau@umontana.edu.

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Contact: Jodi Moreau, associate director, UM Office of Alumni Relations, 406-243-6124, jodi.moreau@umontana.edu.

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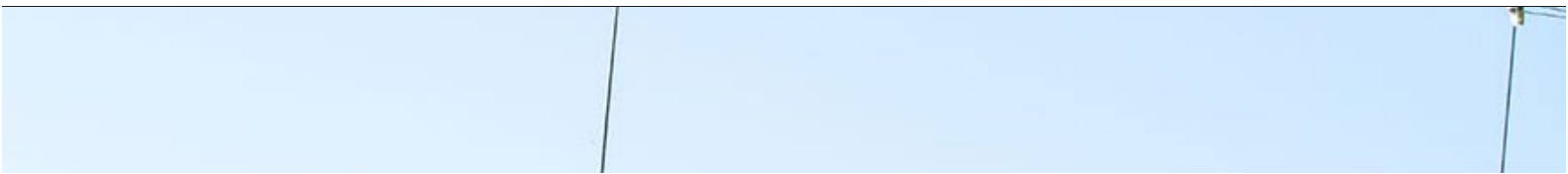
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Employment

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A first-year student walks across a high ropes course hosted by Missoula Parks and Recreation, a community partner for the 2019 Big Sky Experience.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana will hold its second annual Big Sky Experience, a team-based immersion opportunity for new undergraduate students, at the beginning of fall semester 2021 and seeks community partners to help host it.

The Big Sky Experience, part of UM’s New Student Orientation, helps students build connections and friendships with one another, as well as become integrated within the larger Missoula community. The events aim to increase students’ sense of belonging and engagement in their first few days on campus, which has shown to increase retention.

This year’s Big Sky Experience will run Tuesday and Wednesday, Aug. 24-25. Groups of 20 students, led by one UM Advocate student leader, will join their community partner for three hours on each day. Each community partner determines how many groups they can accommodate, as well as what project and activities to complete.

Big Sky Experiences fall within six categories: environment and sustainability; science and technology; communication and artistic expression; business and entrepreneurship; health and human development; and justice, policy and public service.

One of the 2019 inaugural community partners was Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, who said the Big Sky Experience was a great way to showcase their conservation mission and collaborate with UM to immerse students in the local community.

“As an organization that focuses on public land, we led students on a hike in the Pattee Canyon area, taught them how to fly fish on the Clark Fork River and involved them in a trash pickup to demonstrate the importance of stewardship and leave-no-trace ethics,” said Kylie Schumacher, collegiate program coordinator with BHA. “The Big Sky Experience gave us the chance to reach out to a new audience, and many of the students joined our college club and organization after the event and remain engaged today.”

Any community partners interested in hosting a Big Sky Experience can complete a project proposal on the web at <http://bit.ly/BigSkyExperience>. There is no set deadline, but partners should submit their proposal as soon as possible to ensure their participation.

For more information, call Devin Carpenter at 406-243-2332 or email devin.carpenter@mso.umt.edu.

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Contact: Devin Carpenter, director of New Student Success, UM Office of the Vice Provost for Student Success, 406-243-2332, devin.carpenter@mso.umt.edu.

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A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Employment

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UM / News / UM Student-Organized Kyiyo Pow Wow to Be Virtual April 12-18



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM STUDENT-ORGANIZED KYIYO POW WOW TO BE VIRTUAL APRIL 12-18

09 APRIL 2021



UM's Kyiyo student organization, part of the Native American Student Association, announce virtual events for Kyiyo Pow Wow Week held Monday, April 12, through Sunday, April 18.

MISSOULA – One of the nation's oldest annual powwows will be held virtually this year. The University of Montana student-organized Kyiyo Pow Wow will present the 53rd annual week of dancing, singing, story sharing and events held Monday, April 12, through Sunday, April 18.

Unifying Native Americans from across the nation and Montana, the annual celebration preserves the rich heritage of tribes and cultures while renewing old traditions.

"We regret to have to transition an important and powerful week for our cultures, our families and our University to an online version this year," said UM student and Kyiyo President Aislyn Baker. "But out of deep respect for elders and our community, we decided to employ an extra precaution of safety this year."

The weeklong events will be shared on the Kyiyo Pow Wow Facebook page at facebook.com/kiyopowwow.com.

Kyiyo Virtual Week events include:

- **Monday and Tuesday, April 12-13:** Traditional cooking with All Nations Health Center, 4-6 p.m.
- **Wednesday, April 14:** Online auction, 4-8 p.m.
- **Thursday, April 15:** Kyiyo Live, meet-and-greet Kyiyo members, 4-5 p.m.
- **Friday, April 16:** Collegiate and youth specials, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- **Saturday, April 17:** Kyiyo Officer Dance specials, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- **Sunday, April 18:** Winners announced by Ruben Little Head, 5 p.m.

Dance and singing specials require a video submission for the collegiate, teens, juniors, Men's

chicken, family hand drum, switch and mother-daughter dance specials. Participants for specials must register online at <http://bit.ly/kyiyo2021>. Winning contestants will be paid via electronic funds transfer.

To complement powwow events, UM's Alexander Blewett School of Law and the Montana Native American Law Student Association will present the 19th annual **Indian Law Week 2021**, with a host of panels and discussions on federal legislative updates on Indian affairs, Native civic engagement, initiatives addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons and tax policy that promotes tribal sovereignty.

UM Kyiyo student officers include:

- President: Aislyn Baker (Chippewa Cree)
- Vice-President: Valene Talks Different (Gros Ventre)
- Treasurer: Zach Rides At The Door (Blackfeet)
- Secretary: Olivia Perez (Salish)
- UM Staff Advisors: Wilena Old Person (Yakama/Blackfeet) and Gisele Forest (Assiniboine)

For questions about the Kyiyo Pow Wow, email kyiyo@mso.umt.edu or call 406-243-4097.

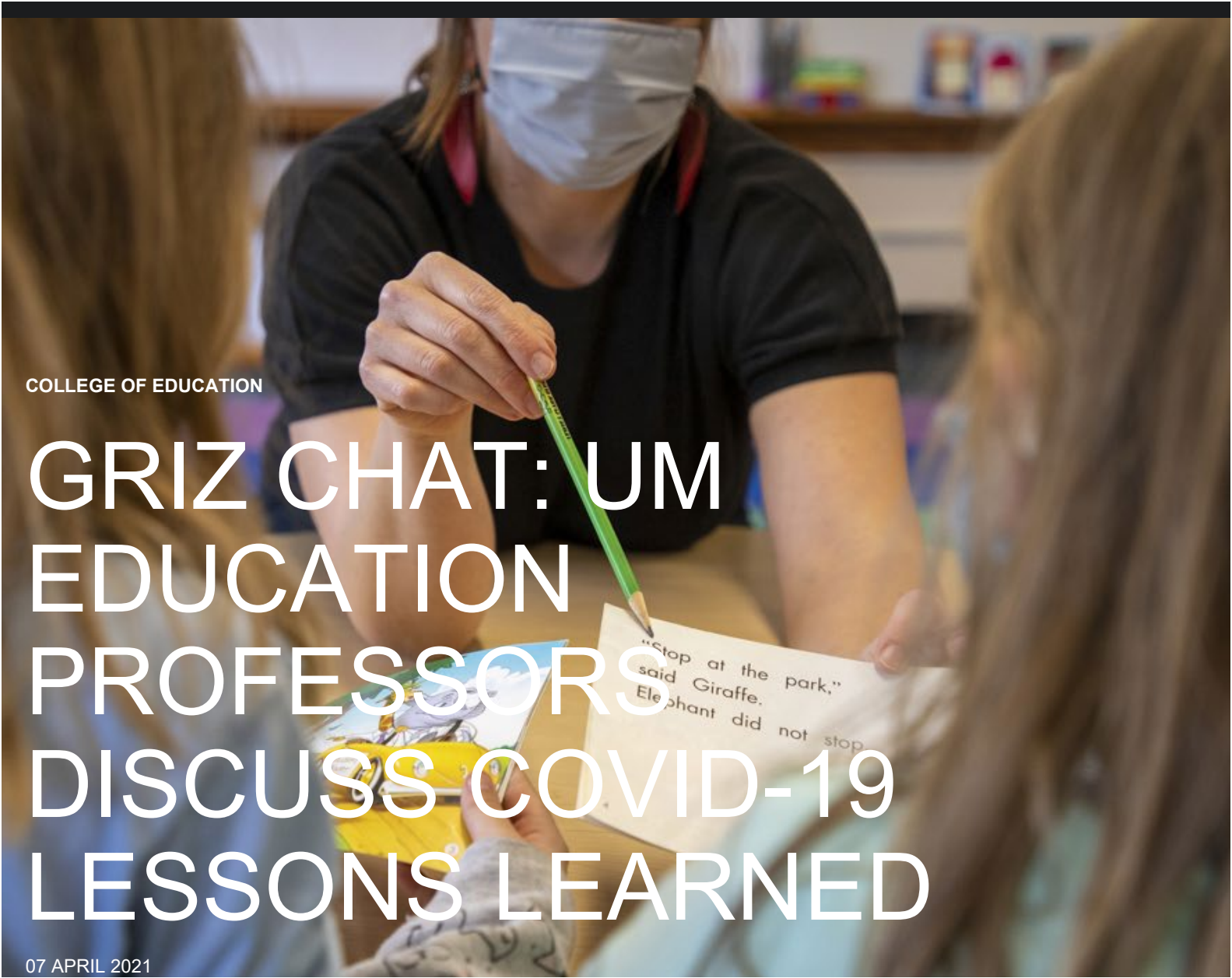
###

Contact: Kyiyo UM Native American Student Association, kyiyo@umontana.edu, 406-243-5834; Wilena Old Person, Kyiyo advisor, wilena.oldperson@umontana.edu, 406-243-4097.



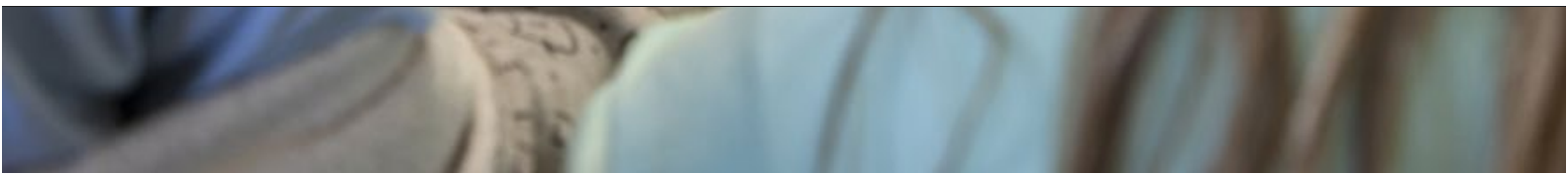
UM / News / Griz Chat: UM Education Professors Discuss COVID-19 Lessons Learned

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

A photograph of a person wearing a white face mask and a black shirt, pointing with a green pencil at a sign. The sign has text on it. In the background, there are shelves with various items. The image is used as a background for the main headline.

GRIZ CHAT: UM EDUCATION PROFESSORS DISCUSS COVID-19 LESSONS LEARNED

07 APRIL 2021



MISSOULA – From canceled band concerts, to empty playgrounds, to classrooms shuttered indefinitely, this past year has upended the education system in ways not seen in generations.

Now, as schools across the country reopen in variations of normal, questions arise as to what lies ahead for the academic and social development of students – answers that may take years for educators to fully understand.

University of Montana faculty members Jingjing Sun and Allison Wilson from the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education have worked extensively in the field of child development and kept close watch on the events of the past year.

Sun, an assistant professor of educational psychology, studies the processes of learning and development, with a current focus on youth's socioemotional development and school engagement, and specifically works with the Native American community in Montana.

Wilson, an assistant professor in early childhood education, has done extensive work looking at the impact of the pandemic on younger students and their families. In December, she wrote an [article for the Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development](#) on supporting early interactions in an era of social distancing.

Sun and Wilson shared some of their thoughts about next steps for educators, students and parents.

UM News: Most public schools decided to switch to remote learning, or some form of it, a little under one year ago. As schools are opening and



UM Assistant Professor Jingjing Sun

children prepare for the transition, what have we learned – or discovered – about students and remote learning this year?

Sun: We learned that teachers and students are so resilient. Look at the kids – they have no issue with wearing their masks for eight hours straight. They roll with it. Yes, we should worry about them, but over the long haul we must remember that every single grade has gone through this pandemic. Families, students and teachers are still going to have anxiety but it's important to know we are not alone. We are going through this together.

Wilson: The first and most important thing we learned is how dynamic and amazing our teachers are and how they achieved what they were asked to do in such a short time. To get on the internet and see the creative Zoom backgrounds they developed and learn about how they've interacted and managed to engage 20 first graders or fifth graders on a Zoom call is incredible. Particularly when students are wanting to show you their dog or their favorite toy or their bedroom. Credit has to be given for their enthusiastic approach and coming out of this in such a positive way. All above and beyond what we could have even imagined of them.

UM News: We've heard a lot about potential learning loss for younger students, though some figures have recently shown gains in grade-level reading and math. Many parents are worried their children have fallen behind where they may be in a traditional school year. Are these pandemic learners worse-off, or, do you think over time, they'll catch up no worse for wear?

Wilson: There is no specific way to answer this question because there are so many complicated variables that impact every single student, every single teacher, every single classroom, school district, and where they were before the pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic our teachers had to be skilled in meeting students within the wide range of a typical developmental continuum. Not all 5-year-olds are at the same point just because they are 5. I feel confident teachers' responsiveness to student differences will continue to be the case with young learners especially going into the fall.



UM Assistant Professor Allison Wilson

UM News: The pandemic upended the way we view traditional K-12 education, and in many cases expanded the access and inclusion with remote options. Do you expect permanent changes in the traditional models of education based on the COVID-19 experience of remote learning? How might remote learning influence future classrooms?

Sun: In the long term, I don't anticipate remote learning to become the new norm. What did come out of the pandemic was an even greater awareness that lots of communities and teachers are under-sourced. I hope that awareness and appreciation for this could continue.

Wilson: Because of my field, I am always thinking about developmentally appropriate practices, and I hope there is no intention of making kindergarten permanently remote. I am really hopeful, on the other hand, that some of the innovative and intentional ways that elementary teachers have worked to engage families will continue to be sustained. For example, teachers have created these absolutely amazing classroom websites that will exist beyond this year, and my hope is that once face-to-face teaching is back that teachers use those platforms to post videos or images in a secured space for families to see what is happening in classroom, along with opportunities for home engagement.

UM News: We know there are many working parents who struggled to balance professional demands with those of remote learning. For many families, this year has strained the parent-child relationship. What advice might you have for parents and teachers for a successful transition back to learning communities?

Sun: An open discussion with students on day one about their experience during the pandemic and continued daily check-in is critical because there may be still be some unresolved fear. "What if my friend has not come back" ... what is implication of that? There are lots of questions teachers can ask or allow students to ask. All feelings are normal, there are no right or wrong ones, but sometimes students may have this perception that certain feelings are allowed while others are dismissed. It is important that families and teachers work together to structure an environment where students can feel safe and comfortable to share about their fear, anxiety and grief, while also celebrating the success they had during the pandemic. Activities that allow such conversations or creative art could be a great way to rebuild relationships and trust.

Last fall, one thing I suggested to teachers in the Arlee Elementary School is setting up classroom norms, or collective principles, with students – like help each other, respect each other, value the time together. Let it be a classroom activity. Of course, the teacher is going to

facilitate the activity, but the more ownership students take, the more they can help set expectations that they're willing to be held accountable, and they do so by allowing families to be part of the conversation. It truly takes a village – schools and communities and families – all united to support children.

UM News: The challenges of this year presented increased rates of mental health challenges for children, particularly for students in low-income and minority demographics. How might teachers, parents and communities be mindful and supportive?

Sun: Even though these issues existed long before COVID-19, the pandemic really made schools much more aware of the importance of students' mental health, and ways that social emotional learning may support students' well-being.

School counselors can be a big resource not just for kids struggling but even as a preventative measure to provide more universal care and instruction for students. They can be great resources for teachers as well, who are also at the frontline of social and emotional learning. And universities like UM can support this effort. For example, my colleagues at the Department of Teaching and Learning have been providing more support to teachers and schools. We also have excellent programs in Counselor Education and School Psychology here that can support local schools.

Even though the pandemic seems to be coming to an end, I hope the resolution and the creativity in finding solutions to address this issue will continue. Supporting youth's mental health is as critical as their academic success in schools.

UM News: This year, remote learning elevated the realities of disparity and equitable access to technology for all families. How does having access to technology, WIFI and the time and training to deliver remote learning speak to equity in school communities?

Wilson: The answer is in the question itself. It has always existed but the move to remote just shone an even brighter light on it.

Sun: And, by exposing it we present a great opportunity to look at how we address such an inequity. More stable internet and WIFI, yes, but it's not just software and hardware. It's training the people who use the technology and addressing how they employ it to amplify learning. So, the need for us as teacher educators is to help teachers critically examine and understand how

to integrate tech into teaching and use it well.

Wilson: The other piece, too, is family engagement. This spotlight on inequities and access to electronics and the internet gave a brighter insight into what teachers can expect from families – including access and familiarity with technology, and even the opportunity to stay connected and respond. Many teachers sent things home through newsletters or via email only. I hope this experience will shine a light on ways to be innovative to make sure families have equitable access to knowledge of what’s happening in classrooms.

Even if we knew for sure that something like this pandemic is never going to happen again, I hope we don’t forget things that we’ve learned from this experience that can benefit our back-to-normal school experience.

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Contact: Jingjing Sun, assistant professor of educational psychology, UM College of Education, 406-243-4285, jingjing.sun@umontana.edu; Allison Wilson, assistant professor in early childhood education, UM College of Education, 406-243-4864, allison.wilson@mso.umt.edu.

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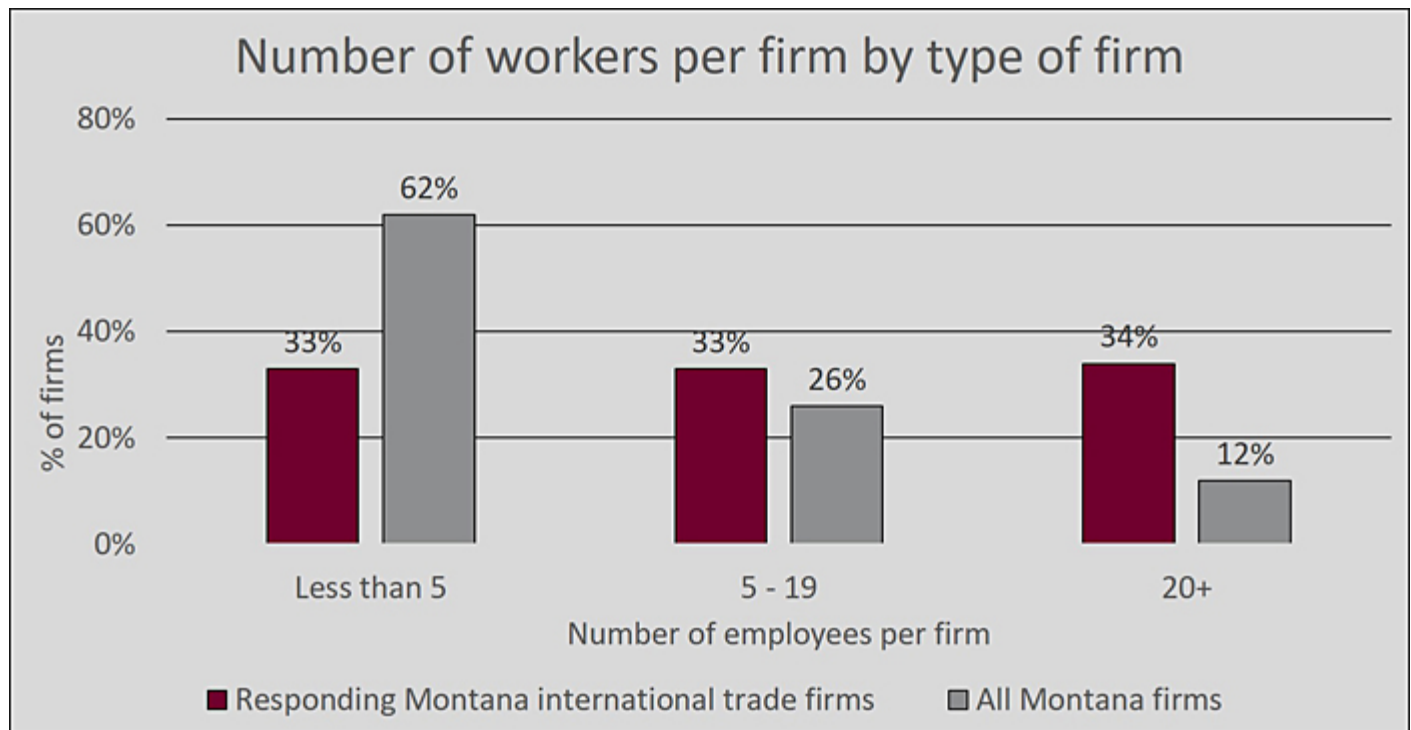
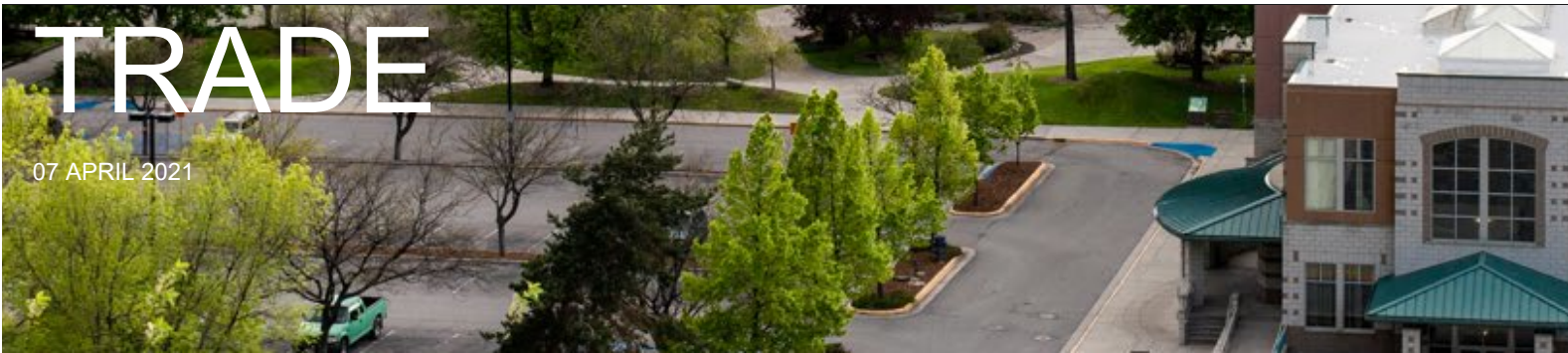
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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, RESEARCH

MONTANA WORLD TRADE CENTER SURVEY REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL



MISSOULA – The University of Montana-based Montana World Trade Center and Bureau of Business and Economic Research recently completed an analysis of data from a survey aimed at better understanding the prevalence and importance of international trade and investment engagement for Montana firms.

In addition to surveying firms across Montana engaged in hard goods export and import, the survey gleaned insights from Montana service exporters, as well as Montana-based firms that have received investment from international sources to help capitalize their growth and expansion.

“In our day-to-day work, we recognize how many Montana firms are actively engaged in international trade and how that helps to make them stronger companies overall,” said Brigitta Miranda-Freer, MWTC executive director. “Especially since we’re beginning to see some light

at the end of this COVID-19 tunnel and re-engaging, I hope we can do so even more intentionally when it comes to pursuing international trade and investment.

“Montana may be landlocked, but we’re not isolated from the global community, nor should we want to be,” she said. “A strong international trade portfolio for Montana means more and better-paying jobs for Montana and more pathways to access transformative capital for our homegrown businesses.”

Export.gov reports that exporting enables companies to diversify their portfolios and weather changes in the domestic economy, which helps small companies grow and become more competitive in all their markets.

In addition, Select USA, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, reports that in 2020 over 9,000 jobs were directly supported by majority foreign-owned affiliates in Montana, with Canada, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Germany and Japan listed as the top sources of foreign direct investment in Montana.

A **2015 White House trade analysis** indicated that, “Exporters pay higher wages, and the average industry’s export growth over the past 20 years translated into \$1,300 higher annual earnings for the typical employee. The report also asserted that middle-class Americans gain more than a quarter of their purchasing power from trade. Trade allows U.S. consumers to buy a wider variety of goods at lower prices, raising real wages and helping families purchase more with their current incomes.”

Following are the central findings of the MTWC survey, which included responses from a mix of 100 exporting, importing and foreign direct investment-funded businesses.

- The 100 Montana-based respondents comprised a mix of importing, exporting and FDI-funded businesses. Ninety reported they export a product or service. Sixty-two reported importing products or services for use in Montana operations.
- Responding businesses paid their Montana employees an average annual wage of \$61,000 in 2020 – an average considerably higher than the Montana average annual wage of \$45,370 as reported in July 2020 by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

Responding firms employed a total of 3,358 Montanans in 2020, averaging 34 Montanans per business.

- The average total export sales value per business was \$8.7 million in 2020.
- The average 2020 value of imports per business was \$3.2 million.
- The average anticipated change per firm in annual revenue in 2021 is an increase of 23%.
- The 2021 average estimate per firm for the change in annual wages is an 8% increase.
- The top-five export markets for reporting firms were Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and Japan. These are slightly different from top reported export markets for Montana hard goods (Canada, Korea, China and Japan) as reported by 2020 U.S. Census data.
- A majority of responding businesses (53%) said their firm was negatively impacted by U.S. tariffs over the last three years.
- The most frequently cited impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on responding firms was delayed or prevented incoming transport of components or supplies.

Growing international trade in Montana is central to the MWTC mission. The center is a longstanding UM program and part of the World Trade Centers Association, which includes nearly 300 world trade centers in 100 countries around the globe. MWTC spearheads initiatives statewide that help grow Montana's international trade and investment portfolio. For more information about MWTC initiatives or to view the full survey, please visit <https://www.mwtc.org/>.

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Contact: Brigitta Miranda-Freer, executive director, Montana World Trade Center, 406-243-6982, brigitta@mwtc.org.



UM / News / UM Student Advocate Demonstrates Leadership at Orientation Conference

STUDENTS, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM STUDENT ADVOCATE DEMONSTRATES LEADERSHIP AT ORIENTATION

CONFERENCE

06 APRIL 2021

New UM students take part in activities on campus on the first day of the fall 2020 semester, as part of Orientation. UM's student Advocates help in leading Orientation each year.

A University of Montana freshman won a case-study challenge to solve a fictional scenario involving hurtful messages during a recent regional orientation conference.

UM's Ashley Pepper from **Castle Rock, Colorado** – randomly paired with Scarlett Manning from Loyola Marymount University in California – won the challenge at this year's National Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) Region I-II-III conference.



Ashley Pepper, UM freshman and first-time Advocate, won the case study challenge at this year's National Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) Region I-II-III conference for her orientation leadership skills.

The conference brought together more than 200 undergraduates and almost 100 professionals

virtually from a variety of schools across the Western U.S. and Canada. During the conference, student pairs were presented with the scenario and asked how they would handle it.

Pepper, along with her partner, knew exactly what to do despite never actually leading an Orientation before.

“Fortunately, the student that I was paired with had many of the same ideas that I did for the situation, so it was pretty easy to come up with the ideas and policies that we could implement to prevent a situation like it from occurring again, and how to deal with it,” Pepper said.

Pepper, who studies integrated physiology and athletic training, is a brand-new UM student Advocate. Twenty UM Advocates, along with advisers Devin Carpenter and Liz Stotts, attended the NODA conference.

As campus leaders, UM Advocates provide volunteer tours for visitors through the Undergraduate Admissions Office and are involved in the New Student Orientation process. They also come from a variety of backgrounds and majors.

Carpenter, UM’s director of new student success and region I coordinator for NODA, said Advocates are essential for onboarding new students.

“Peer connections like the ones the Advocates bring to the table are perhaps the most important factor in a student’s decision to attend a college,” Carpenter said. “When a student visits campus for the first time and takes a tour and then attends New Student Orientation and sees those same Advocates they already engaged with on their visit, they get to know them even better through the Orientation program.”

Pepper said she joined the Advocates to meet new people during the pandemic – which can prove challenging for new students.

“I think that the most important thing for new college students to learn about at Orientation is all the resources that are here to help them and how to access them,” Pepper said. “The social aspect is also very important because for many students, this is their first time away from home and they are looking for other people to connect with.”

This fall, new students at UM will experience immersion in the full college experience with the

second year of a newly revamped New Student Orientation, which **won the NODA Region I Innovative Program award last year**. The new model focuses on engaging students in the community with the **Big Sky Experience**, as well as aiding their academic and social transition in Getting Your Bearings.

The Big Sky Experience highlights the outdoors, science, technology, arts, culture, entrepreneurship, diversity, service and leadership. With community partners such as Missoula City Parks and Recreation, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Garden City Harvest, Grizzly Athletics and UM ROTC, a UM Advocate leads each experience for groups of 20 new students.

“We are so lucky to be in Missoula and to have a community that is so readily interested in helping onboard new students and provide an exceptional immersion experience as the very first thing they do as new UM students,” Carpenter said.

According to Carpenter, the first six weeks of a new student’s college experience are most important to their continuation and graduation. With the revamped New Student Orientation implemented by Carpenter in 2019, **new-student retention increased by 1.9%** by spring 2020 – the first positive number since 2016.

“New Student Orientation represents the very first steps a student has on campus as a new student, and it is essential for this program to engage students in meaningful ways, otherwise they begin their college journey with the wrong foot forward and are at an increased risk of stopping or dropping out,” Carpenter said.

This fall, UM will return to the new Orientation model after a hiatus last fall due to COVID, and New Student Orientation will tentatively take place Aug. 23-27

And Advocates like Pepper will help lead the way.

“Without the Advocates, we could not do any of the things we do at New Student Orientation with any success,” Carpenter said. “I may be in charge of planning everything, but the Advocates are truly the ones who make it all come together.”

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MISSOULA – The University of Montana’s second annual day of giving was the most successful fundraising event of its kind in UM history.

The Big Give inspired over 1,300 gifts totaling more than \$280,000, exceeding the event’s fundraising goal of 750 donations and \$100,000 to support UM students. Alumni, donors, parents and friends from 46 states and six countries participated in the online giving event during 24 hours from March 24-25.

Big Give donors gave in support of 24 campus areas of need, including \$6,000 to Student Success Scholarships for students with financial need. They gave more than \$17,500 for the Excellence Fund and \$120,000 for school, college and unit Impact Funds, which provide campus leadership with the ability to direct unrestricted resources where and when they are needed most. These gifts are providing immediate support for UM students, such as emergency aid during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top areas of support include Grizzly Athletics, with almost 400 gifts totaling more than \$120,000 and the College of the Arts and Media, which hosted its annual fundraising event Odyssey of the Stars in conjunction with The Big Give. That event, which celebrates the arts and artists, drew 81 gifts totaling more than \$16,000.

The entire campus community united to celebrate and spread word about The Big Give, encouraging gifts of every size from alumni and friends in all corners of the world.

“The energy generated from such excitement all across campus helped UM reach its historic giving day total,” said Cindy Williams, president and CEO of the UM Foundation.

Big Give donors helped meet two matching gift opportunities during the event. The Journalism Board of Advisers matched every gift to the School of Journalism Impact Fund up to \$3,500, contributing a total of more than \$28,000 for the fund. An anonymous donor matched \$2,500 in gifts to the Wildlife Impact Fund, helping inspire more than \$5,900 for this area. In addition, Missoula College, the College of the Arts and Media, and the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education each received a challenge gift that was “unlocked” when supporters gave a

predetermined number of donations.

Participants also had an opportunity to express their support by writing messages when they made a gift online. When one proud grandmother donated in support of the education college, she wrote, “In honor of my granddaughter, who is graduating in elementary education and will be a teacher like her mother and I are.”

Visit www.SupportUM.org/BigGive to read more inspiring comments from donors.

“The record-breaking success of this year’s Big Give clearly demonstrates our UM family’s collective commitment to support students, not only on this special giving day, but throughout the year,” Williams said. “We are proud to be part of this community that cares so deeply about the value of higher education and UM students as they excel in their academic journeys and beyond.

“To UM’s giving community, thank you so much for your dedication,” she said. “Your generosity makes an immediate impact and inspires hope for current and future Grizzlies.”

UM’s inaugural Big Give took place in April 2020 and focused on raising support for the UM Emergency Student Support Fund to help students facing unexpected financial hardship during the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. The generous UM alumni and friends answered this call with enthusiasm, giving 516 gifts totaling nearly \$100,000 for UM students and programs. The 2021 Big Give surpassed that total and other UM giving days held in the past, including the global Giving Tuesday giving campaigns held annually since 2016.

Donors who missed The Big Give but would still like to contribute to the event’s total can do so by giving at www.SupportUM.org/BigGive before Monday, April 12.

The Big Give is managed by the UM Foundation, an independent nonprofit organization that has inspired philanthropic support to enhance excellence and opportunity at UM since 1950.

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MISSOULA – The University of Montana has the top graduate program for public affairs in Big Sky Country, according to new rankings by U.S. News & World Report.

On the report's 2020 Best Graduate Schools list, UM ranked No. 123 in the nation for **Best Public Affairs Programs**. This rank establishes UM as the top institution for public affairs in Montana and No. 2 in the Big Sky Conference.

UM's Department of Public Administration and Policy is the first of its kind in Montana, offering the only accredited MPA program in the nation within a school of law. A part of the Alexander Blewett III School of Law's Max S. Baucus Institute, the department provides an innovative public service education for pre-career and in-career public and nonprofit administration students.

"The past year has made it clear how much we all depend on our public servants," said Paul Kirgis, dean of UM law school. "This ranking shows the quality of the training our MPA students receive and the value they will contribute to their communities and to our state."

Other institutional rankings place UM's MPA among the top programs in the country. Best Value Schools issued top rankings this year about the MPA program, placing it fourth nationally out of the Best 25 Masters in Public Administration Schools in 2021 and fifth out of the Best Masters in Nonprofit Management Programs.

For more information, visit the Department of Public Administration and Policy website at <https://www.umt.edu/law/mpa>.

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