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SCHOOL OF LAW, MILITARY AND VETERANS

STUDENT COMMITS TO SERVING COUNTRY AS MILITARY LAWYER

20 DECEMBER 2022

UM law student Paul Hutton (second from left) completed an internship with the U.S. Army JAG Corps in Germany.

*Hutton fires an
M240 machine
gun.*

By Lily
Soper, UM
News

Service

MISSOULA

– University of Montana law student Paul Hutton grew up with two primary goals: to become a lawyer and to serve his



country. When offered a 2022 summer internship in Germany with the U.S. Army JAG Corps, it was beyond a no-brainer.

“The opportunity to fulfill two lifelong aspirations of mine – serving my country and becoming a legal professional – has been a dream come true,” said Hutton, a third-year law student and president of UM’s Student Bar Association. “They truly treat you like a captain, the rank you commission as.”

The Judge Advocate General’s Corps defends the Army and its soldiers in all legal matters. Although the JAG Corps internship primarily focuses on law, interns also are officers in the military and encouraged to immerse themselves in the culture and opportunities offered, Hutton said.

That means the ability to attend 6:30 a.m. jump school with the 82nd Airborne Division or even Ranger School. Additionally, Hutton and other interns shot M240 machine guns, rode in Humvees, toured a NATO training facility, watched a court-marshal hearing and witnessed a “massive live fire training” in which 19 countries participated, including 1,500 American troops.

The internship wasn't all big guns and big cars, however. The JAG Corps offers a highly competitive internship with a rigorous program and highly variable fields of focus. As legal advisers to soldiers, JAGs are expected to maintain expertise in a myriad of legal fields and pivot from one field to the next as needed by their advisees.

“As a JAG (and intern), you are expected to become an expert in every area that JAG Corps practices. And as the world's largest law firm, there are a lot of areas,” said Hutton, who helped advise clients on topics ranging from divorce to military flight regulations to reporting sexual assault.

Hutton credits his success navigating such a wide array of legal fields to the educational foundation provided by UM's Alexander Blewett III School of Law.

“Because I touched so many different practice areas, I felt incredibly fortunate to have received such a well-rounded education from [the Blewett School of Law] and was able to feel somewhat competent while being thrust into military law,” Hutton said.

After his internship, Hutton is “100% sold” on becoming a JAG.

“I am not sure there is another legal internship that would send you to Germany for the summer, where you are also able to gain valuable legal experience,” he said. “This is truly the best summer internship I could ask for.”

###

Contact: Phil Stempin, director of events, marketing and communications, UM Blewett III School of Law, 406-243-6509, phil.stempin@mso.umt.edu.

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UM will hold Fall Commencement on Saturday, Dec. 17.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has nearly 800 students who are degree candidates for fall semester 2022.

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 designation of graduation with honors or graduation with high honors 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.](#) (Listed by hometown.)
- [View a full list of out-of-state candidates for graduation.](#) (Listed by state or country.)
- [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](#).

###

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

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UM / News / UM Men's Basketball Team to Raise Awareness at Coaches vs. Racism

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, ATHLETICS

UM MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM TO RAISE AWARENESS AT COACHES VS. RACISM

14 DECEMBER 2022

UM will continue its support of social justice and equity when the men's basketball team plays in the Coaches vs. Racism Roundball Classic.

By Kyle Spurr, UM News Service

MISSOULA – The University of Montana will continue its support of social justice and equity when the men's basketball team plays in a tournament this weekend presented by Coaches vs. Racism, a national nonprofit organization that brings awareness to systemic racism, social injustice and reform.

The **Coaches vs. Racism Roundball Classic**, held in Houston, features several teams playing against Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Montana will face Prairie View A&M at 10:50 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 17. Other games include the University of Houston vs. North Carolina A&M and Texas Tech University vs. Jackson State. The games will air online at hbcugo.tv.

"It's an opportunity for coaches, universities and programs to make a statement that they are fighting the fight against racism," said Travis DeCuire, UM's men's basketball coach. "It starts a conversation."

Last year was the inaugural Coaches vs. Racism tournament and it featured national powers Duke University and University of Michigan against Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Since college basketball fans don't often see those matchups, especially on a neutral court in the middle of the season, it raised the questions of why and how it came about. That is the same goal this year, DeCuire said.

"It presents a conversation similar to Coaches vs. Cancer, when everyone wants to know why you have on pink shoes or why you are wearing tennis shoes with a suit," DeCuire said. "The answer is its coaches making a stand against cancer and really bringing awareness to the situation. It's the same thing with Coaches vs. Racism."

Following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was murder by a white Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck in May 2020, DeCuire spoke about his experience as a Black man in a predominantly white community and the importance of people with different backgrounds and ethnicities communicating and having positive experiences.

"The positive interaction you have with one another creates a feeling of comfort that later counters the racial tension we all think takes place so often. And it does take place very often. But I think the positive interactions are what get you through it," DeCuire said.

The Montana men's basketball team took a leadership role on camp

The UM men's basketball team last year unveiled the Diversity Education Library.

us last year when it created and filled a **Diversity Education Library**. The team stocked the free library with anti-racism and minority-themed literature, either purchased by the team or donated from their personal collections.

“The library is a big deal for us,” DeCuire said. “We wanted to make a stand against racism. But we wanted to do that in a way that would be accepted and would be long lasting and that’s where the library came in.”

DeCuire said he feels the support from the University and athletic department when making these efforts against systemic racism and inequality. When the Diversity Education Library was unveiled, UM President Seth Bodnar placed a book inside.

“Anyone on this campus is going to walk right by that library every day,” DeCuire said. “It never hurts when the president of the University shows up and puts a book in that library along with us.”

The University also is making strides with its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, which aims to identify any equity gaps in the institution and flag policies and practices that contribute to those gaps.

All of these efforts are important when recruiting minority students academically and athletically to the University, DeCuire said. And participating in the Coaches vs. Racism Roundball Classic is another step in showing that support.

“For the University of Montana, participating in something like this and being supported by administrators and leaders on this campus is going to be beneficial not only for the minority student athlete on the campus but also for anyone considering going to the University,” DeCuire said.



###

Contact: Dave Kuntz, UM director of strategic communications, 406-243-5659,
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The Coaches vs. Racism tournament is similar to Coaches vs. Cancer in its effort to raise awareness.

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

BITTERROOT COLLEGE, BITTERROOT HEALTH PARTNER ON HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

14 DECEMBER 2022

A student works in a health lab on the UM campus.

HAMILTON – Health care is Montana’s largest industry and is projected to experience more job growth than any other industry in the state over the next eight years. However, with the State employment rate hovering around 2.6%, health care facilities are facing extreme workforce shortages.

Because of this high demand for health care workers, Bitterroot Health and Bitterroot College are partnering to address these workforce issues through innovation and collaboration.

This partnership also is supported by Missoula College and the University of Montana Office of Health Research & Partnership, so students in Ravalli County have access to a wide range of health profession educational opportunities and student support services.

“Workforce in health care was already a difficult issue before COVID,” said Rebecca Bargfrede, chief transformational and corporate compliance officer for Bitterroot Health. “Now after COVID, we’re having an even tougher time getting the talent we need into Hamilton to fill these critical positions and care for our patients. The beauty of partnering with Bitterroot College is that we’ll offer amazing opportunities to people who already live in the valley, and who already love the valley.”

One way the partnership is innovatively tackling the health care workforce issues in Ravalli County is by increasing access to post-secondary health profession educational opportunities for high school students.

This fall Bitterroot College was awarded Montana’s Future at Work funding to increase awareness about health care careers – particularly certified nurse aides (CNA). This funding also will support Ravalli County high school students pursuing a CNA certification through the dual enrollment program or early college options.

The Future at Work funding has catalyzed the expansion of health profession offerings in Ravalli County. Bitterroot College and Bitterroot Health are exploring ways to create a streamlined pathway for students to start as CNAs and pursue a career as a nurse without having to leave Ravalli County to complete the educational requirements.

“We have an array of health care offerings at Bitterroot College designed to meet the education needs of our students and the workforce needs of our industry partner,” said Angela McLean, interim director of Bitterroot College. “Bitterroot College stands ready to help our health care partners across the street and across the valley in training the health care professionals that

they need now and into the future.”

Bitterroot Health has recognized the importance of “growing their own” by mapping out career pathways within the organization. A high school student can start working at Bitterroot Health and advance their career while working and living in the community. For example, a student can start as a certified nurse aide, advance into the certified medical assistant role and eventually become a licensed practical nurse; all while receiving pay and benefits such as health insurance, retirement and tuition assistance.

“All a person needs is an interest in health care,” said Bargfrede. “That’s really all it takes. We will get you the rest of the tools you need to be successful.”

###

Contact: Angela McLean, interim director, Bitterroot College, 406-375-0100; Rebecca Bargfrede, chief transformational and corporate compliance officer for Bitterroot Health, 406-375-4623.

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First-year students gather on the Oval during the fall 2022 new student orientation.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana launched the **Grizzly Promise** initiative this week to tear down financial barriers and make college more affordable for Montana students.

The Grizzly Promise initiative is funded through a combination of scholarships, grants, waivers and other financial aid packaged together specifically for Montana students who attend UM.

“With the cost of living quickly rising in our state, we are fully committed to taking aggressive action to ensure every Montana student can access the world-class education at UM,” said Mary Kreta, UM vice president for enrollment management and strategic initiatives. “The Grizzly Promise initiative is aimed specifically at ensuring not a single Montanan doesn’t choose to go to college because of financial reasons. We encourage every Montana student and family who meets our simple qualifications to apply for admission.”

Students who receive support through the Grizzly Promise initiative can renew their financial support each year while they attend UM, for up to four years, as long as they maintain a full 12-credit course load.

The Grizzly Promise initiative is only available to in-state Montana students whose families have incomes of less than \$50,000 annually.

Compared to regional peers, UM continues to offer among the lowest in-state tuition in the American West. For example, **Montana students pay tuition at UM that is 28% lower than neighboring states like North Dakota.**

Montana students interested in participating in the Grizzly Promise initiative can do so by simply applying for admission to the University of Montana and completing a 2023-24 FAFSA, using code 002536. To learn more about this initiative, visit the **Grizzly Promise webpage**.

Generous alumni and friends of the University give to the UM Foundation to support scholarships that are offered as part of the Grizzly Promise financial aid packages.

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

GRIZ CHAT: UM DIRECTOR FOR DISABILITY EQUITY CHAMPIONS POTENTIAL IN EVERY STUDENT

13 DECEMBER 2022

Amy Capolupo, director of UM's Office for Disability Equity, will lend her personal and professional insights on student success as speaker at the Fall 2022 Commencement Ceremony.

MISSOULA – Amy Capolupo and her staff at the University of Montana’s **Office for Disability Equity** believe their mission comes down to a simple but powerful formula: Identify the specific needs of each student sitting before them and then relentlessly remove any barrier standing in the way of their success.

With more than 1,500 students in their charge, that may mean alerting students to a broken elevator undergoing repairs to arranging alternate test accommodations for a single mom struggling with depression.

The work is not easy, Capolupo said, but it is always fulfilling.

“Helping students for us has to be a very thoughtful and interactive process,” she said. “Disabilities add a layer of complexity to each student’s study, so we have to meet them where they are and then map out what they need to achieve their goals.”

This commitment to student success will be a key theme of Capolupo’s address as **UM’s Fall 2022 Commencement** speaker on Dec. 17.

Despite serving in leadership roles on campus for the better part of 20 years, and having earned her undergraduate degree in psychology and master’s degree in social work from UM, Capolupo said she was still surprised when a call came from university leaders asking her to be Commencement speaker.

“It’s definitely an honor, but I thought “why me?”” Capolupo said obviously bemused.

She goes on to offer an explanation: This year’s ceremony will recognize Emma Lommasson, who died in 2019 at age 107, with a posthumous Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters for her decades-long commitment to UM and its students. And it’s that commitment that is very much mirrored in the work of the Office for Disability Equity.

“I never had the opportunity to meet Emma, but the people who learned directly from her helped and supported me as a student, and that important connection is definitely part of my comments,” said Capolupo, a native of Rockland County, New York, who moved to Missoula in 1998.

“I would not be where I am today without that support, and I am eternally grateful and privileged

to assist today's students," she added.

While still polishing the draft of her Commencement speech, Capolupo took time to talk with UM News about the work of the Office for Disability Equity and the students they mentor.

UM News: You've worked in disability services for a number of years. What have been some of the more significant changes you have seen both in the student population affiliated with your office and with society's overall attitudes toward disabilities?

The biggest change is in the type of students we work with and their expectations. When I started, the largest group of students we served identified as having learning disabilities. That has now changed to students who have disabilities that impact their mental health.

In previous years students were more comfortable with requesting accommodations and now they expect that access is simply built-in to all parts of the institution and that they should not have to request an accommodation for an event or class assignment.

This change is evident in societal attitudes as well. As an example, employers who are inclusive now ask questions like "how can we improve or change our environment so that we can best support you in your employment," rather than this is "our culture" and how do you fit into it?

UM News: Has a greater understanding of mental health challenges in society made it easier for your office to get needed help for students with depression and other issues? Has it helped students with these challenges seek out additional services?

In most cases, yes, UM employees are much more aware of the impacts of mental health on academic performance and campus engagement. When something like attendance is required in a course, faculty are increasingly spending time with students explaining why it is essential to the course and informing students about what is reasonable should they need to miss classes. This gives our staff a greater ability to work with students on what could be possible in terms of accommodation.

Additionally, clinical and non-clinical mental health supports and training are now widely available on campus.

UM News: What do you see as next steps to broaden our support of students with disabilities?

Training on, and a full-scale adoption of, inclusive design practices in all we do, as well as a firm commitment to improving physical access.

It is no longer acceptable to consider a student's ability to navigate logistical processes as an essential part of obtaining their degree. We need to simplify processes and continually ask ourselves if a policy or practice is truly serving students well.

UM News: If you had one piece of insight or advice for students and staff to support our disabilities community what would it be? What should they know?

I would love for everyone to think with an accessibility or inclusive mindset. Designing courses, buildings, programs and events with access in mind makes those activities better for everyone. If someone isn't sure what a disability-related mindset is, they are welcome to contact our office for national and campus resources.

UM News: What advice would you give students needing support for their disabilities?

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides legal protections and to access those protections students must engage with us. We want things to be accessible without having to request accommodations, too. However, the reality is that even in the most well planned out environments, accommodations may always need to be made.

Letting us know what you are experiencing is the best way for us to enact change.

UM News: What message would you give to students with disabilities who might be considering enrolling in UM?

UM is a supportive environment. Our faculty and staff care just as much about the students we serve as we do about the content we teach and the services we provide.

At UM you matter, and we will do all we can to support you in obtaining your degree or credential and in becoming the best version of yourself. We do this so that we can best position you to attain your career and personal goals.

###

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

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM STUDENT ADDS TO ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP HAUL WITH PRESTIGIOUS MARSHALL

12 DECEMBER 2022

UM senior and Polson native Beatrix Frissell recently added a prestigious Marshall Scholarship to the long list of academic and athletic accolades she's garnered during her academic career.

MISSOULA – If academic scholarships came with trophies University of Montana senior Beatrix Frissell would need a case.

Selected as a Truman Scholar, Demmer Scholar, Montana University System Honors Scholar and UM Presidential Leadership Scholar, Frissell recently learned she's been selected as one of just 40 students out of 951 applicants in the country to receive a 2023 Marshall Scholarship.

This highly competitive, merit-based scholarship provides funding for graduate study in the U.K. Frissell will spend the next two years studying first at the University of Edinburgh and then King's College London.

"When I applied, I didn't really expect to win, so this is a bit of a shock but also very exciting," said Frissell, who happens to have a fair share of actual medals and trophies as a leader of UM's cross-country and track and field teams.

Double majoring in political science in UM's College of Humanities and Sciences and environmental science and sustainability in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Frissell is passionate about environmental justice and policy. In the U.K. she will continue studying issues surrounding land and water rights and their impacts on local communities. While at the University of Edinburgh, she plans to earn a Master of Science in global environment, politics and society.

"You see many of the same issues in the U.K. as you see in the U.S. and in Montana," said Frissell, a native of **Polson**. "In South Wales, for example, there is a mining component to environmental justice just as there is in Montana."

A member of the **Davidson Honors College**, Frissell has been active in many campus organizations, completing UM's Global Leadership Initiative 12-credit certificate program, serving on the Associated Students of UM Elections and Relations and Affairs committees, and participating in UM's first SEA Change Cohort (Safe, Empowered, Accelerated) to advance gender equity and combat stereotypes.

Between her sophomore and junior year, Frissell completed an internship at the U.S. Department of Interior, working in the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance. She followed that up with an internship between junior and senior year interning for the United State's Forest Service in Lolo National Forest.

"I have definitely learned a lot about leadership the past few years," Frissell said. "That includes being willing to speak out about causes you believe in."

Her mentor Kylla Benes, director of UM's **Office of External Scholarships and Fellowships**, has watched Frissell's passion for her studies and engagement grow, noting that she represents the very best of what it means to be a Griz.

"Bea's intellectual commitment and drive, not only to succeed, but to make the world a better place is really what we aim to foster at UM," said Benes. "It's why Bea has garnered so much recognition throughout her collegiate career."

In addition to winning the Marshall, Frissell also was a finalist for a Rhodes Scholarship this fall, and the application for both was particularly harrowing, she added.

"I had my appendix removed 24 hours before I had to submit the Rhodes scholarship, and I still had some editing to do on my personal statement at that point," she said. "I stayed up late that night and submitted it, but whew, the timing was bad!"

Although it's early in the process, Frissell has investigated possible modules to take in the U.K – that's the term for classes, said Frissell, already picking up the lingo – and what she should consider packing for Scottish weather.

She admits to being a bit nervous about traveling overseas for the first time. But as she knows from her academic and athletic successes, growth only comes from embracing new experiences and challenges.

That includes her summer plans to potentially complete an internship through her Truman Scholarship working for Earth Justice in Washington, D.C.

Frissell ultimately wants to start a nonprofit specializing in environmental issues and politics. A true Montanan, she plans to return to the Big Sky State when her studies are done.

And yes, as she noted when winning the Truman Scholarship last spring, she still might one day run for governor.

"I can't wait to see what she accomplishes," Benes said.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary, the Marshall Scholarships were created by an Act of British

Parliament in 1953 as a thank you to former U.S. Secretary of State General George Marshall and the U.S. for assistance under the Marshall Plan. Since that time, the British government has provided scholarships for over 2,200 Americans, many of whom have gone on to play leading roles addressing global challenges facing society.

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UM / News / Karla Bird Named UM Tribal Outreach Specialist

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

KARLA BIRD NAMED UM TRIBAL OUTREACH SPECIALIST

09 DECEMBER 2022

Dr. Karla Bird will join UM as tribal outreach specialist in January 2023. (Credit: Blackfeet Community College)

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has selected Dr. Karla Bird as its tribal outreach specialist in the Office of



the President. She will begin Jan. 3, 2023.

A member of the Amskapi Piikani Nation (Blackfeet), Bird will play a pivotal role in helping UM create and sustain meaningful relationships with tribal communities while building bridges for Native students to pursue higher education and realize their dreams.

“This role is vital for the University of Montana,” UM President Seth Bodnar said. “Dr. Bird comes to UM with a wealth of experience that will benefit all of us. I look forward to learning from and partnering with her as we continually work to ensure UM prioritizes excellence in Native American education.”

Most recently having served as the president of Blackfeet Community College, Bird holds a UM doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis in higher education. She also received an M.A. in counselor education, as well as a B.A. in psychology with a research emphasis/minor in Native American studies.

Bird will serve as a UM liaison to tribal communities in the region, as a key adviser and partner to the campus community, and as a resource and support to prospective and current Native students. Bringing expertise in educational persistence among Native American graduate students, Bird will work to bolster the strength and resiliency of Native students in the UM community.

At UM, she will build upon the impressive contributions of a talented community of Native faculty and staff, elevate Indigenous scholarship and help sustain recent UM success in recruiting and retaining Native students, including a 24% increase in Native American undergraduate enrollment and a 13% increase in retention since 2018.

Bodnar created the tribal outreach specialist position in 2018 at the recommendation of Montana's tribal college presidents during their annual meeting. The on-campus President's Native American Advisory Council then crafted the position as a key component of UM's focus on inclusive prosperity and student success.

Bird will be a member of the President's Office staff and will report to Chief of Staff Kelly Webster.

"The Griz community could not be more excited about Dr. Bird's decision to join our team," Webster said "She is a deeply respected expert across Montana, a national leader in tribal education and a champion for higher education as an inclusive, transformative vehicle for all. The UM community will be better because of Dr. Bird's partnership."

###

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

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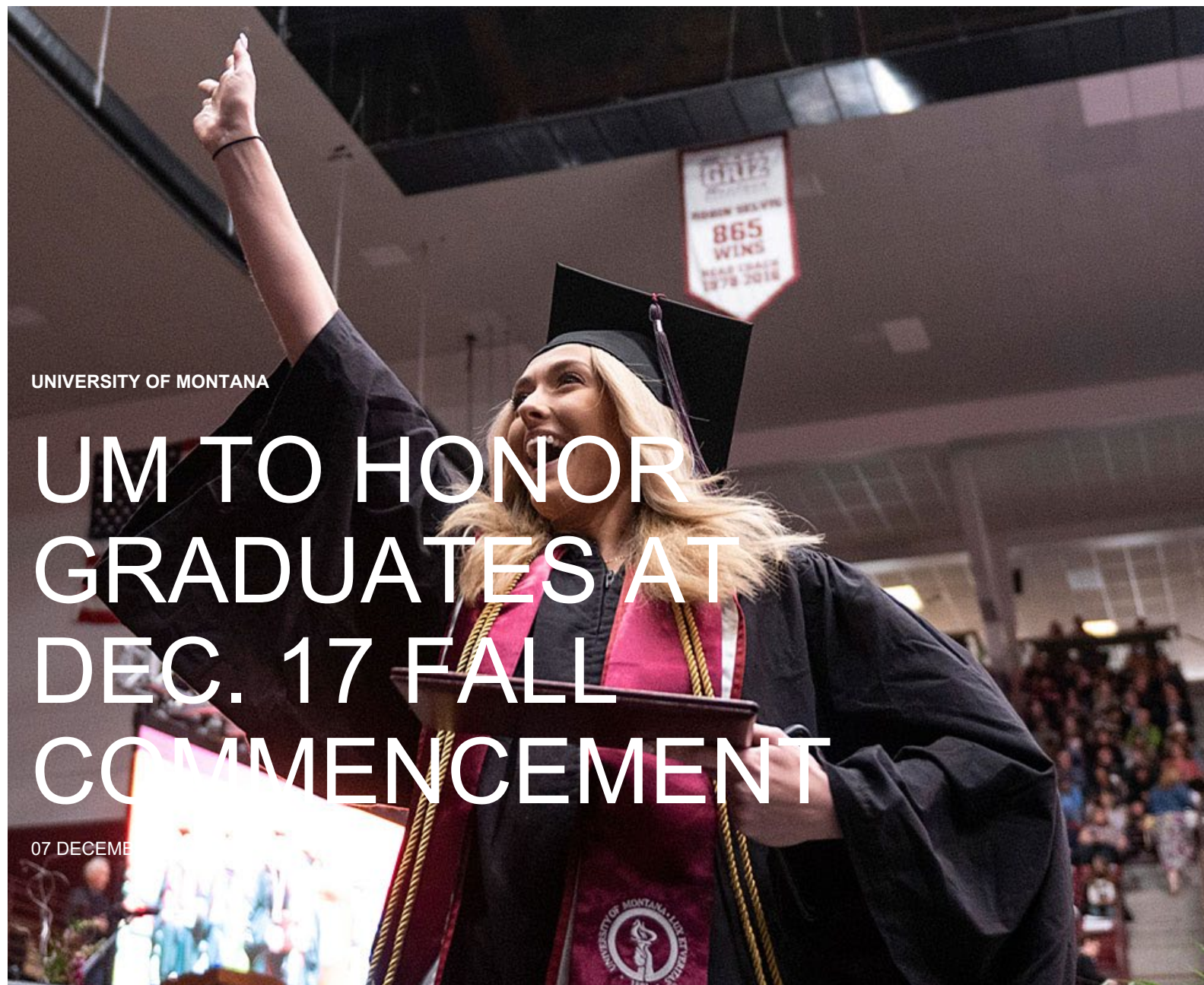
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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM TO HONOR GRADUATES AT DEC. 17 FALL COMMENCEMENT

07 DECEMBER

UM will celebrate Fall Commencement Saturday, Dec. 17, in the Adams Center.

MISSOULA – A new cohort of Griz graduates will gather at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, in the Adams Center for the University of Montana’s Fall Commencement Ceremony.

More than 1,190 students across all UM departments are eligible as fall and summer 2022-degree candidates, up 100 from last year. Those students persevered through the uncertainty

of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing academic environments to arrive at the graduation stage.

“Commencement celebrates students’ achievements and their transition to becoming proud members of the Griz alumni family,” UM Registrar Maria Mangold said. “UM’s graduating class overcame numerous and historically unique challenges. Their resilience and fortitude will serve them well in their future endeavors.”

Office for Disability Equity Director Amy Capolupo, who herself received a Master of Social Work degree from UM, will address degree candidates and their loved ones as Fall Commencement’s featured speaker.

“The opportunity to celebrate our student successes and speak on behalf of all of the staff and faculty who have educated, supported and nurtured our students is truly an honor,” Capolupo said. “Students, please know that even if you don’t realize it, your presence here made a positive impact, you are appreciated and we are optimistic about all you will achieve.”

The ceremony also will include a special posthumous Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters presentation to iconic alumna Emma Lommasson, who served 58 years as a UM student, teacher, staff member and the University’s first female interim registrar. After retiring in 1977, Lommasson continued volunteering with the University and maintained lifelong friendships until her death in 2019 at age 107.

Commencement guests do not need tickets to attend the ceremony. Parking will be free, and all stalls marked reserved are open to attendees.

This year’s Fall Commencement is the first to employ audio descriptions. Guests in need of other accessibility accommodations can email Brandon Kress in the Adams Center at brandon.kress@mso.umt.edu or call 406-243-5357. Visit the [Accessibility and Special Accommodations](#) page for more information.

Loved ones who are unable to attend commencement in person can livestream the event on the [Fall 2022 Commencement](#) website.

For more information about Fall Commencement, visit: <https://bit.ly/UMfallGrad22> or email questions to commencement@umontana.edu.

###

Contact: Maria Mangold, UM registrar, 406-243-2412, maria.mangold@mso.umt.edu; Sarah Corbin, UM budget and events coordinator, 406-243-2939, sarah.corbin@umontana.edu.

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MONTANA MODEL UN ANNOUNCES HIGH SCHOOL WINNERS

06 DECEMBER 2022

Clara Bentler, a UM student and secretary-general internal, speaks at the recent Montana Model United Nations Conference at the University of Montana in Missoula.

MISSOULA – More than 250 students from 12 Montana and Idaho high schools participated in the 57th annual Montana Model United Nations Conference, hosted in November at the University of Montana.

UM Provost Dr. Pardis Mahdavi welcomed students and their advisers to campus and shared

her own personal experiences growing up in Iran. Joanna Shelton, a UM economics faculty affiliate and nonresident senior associate in economics for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, gave a keynote speech titled “Global Cooperation in a Fragmented World.”

The top five high school seniors were Melina LaPlante, Eden Maxwell and Ashley Kim of Hellgate High School in **Missoula**, as well as Aiden Rohn and Eddie Chisholm of Columbia Falls High School in **Columbia Falls**. Each will be offered a \$1,000 scholarship to attend UM.

Schools also won awards at the conclusion of the conference. Participating schools were divided into small and large delegations based on the number of students attending and were judged on the overall preparedness, participation and excellence of their delegates. The three school award categories include Outstanding School for the top 10%, Distinguished School for the top 20% and Honorable School for the top 30%.

The small-delegation school winner was Bozeman High School in **Bozeman**, advised by Jason Nagel and Amy Wallner-Drake. The large delegation winner was Hellgate High School in **Missoula**, advised by Courtney Christopher and Jeff Waniata.

Fritz Bieler, the school adviser from Jefferson High School in **Boulder**, celebrated his 30th anniversary as a Model UN adviser. He was awarded a plaque celebrating his achievement and commitment to Montana Model United Nations. The top 20% of teams representing countries and students who attended the conference also received awards, as did UM students who planned and staffed the conference.

For more information, visit the Montana Model UN website at <https://hs.umt.edu/mun/>. The 2023 Montana Model United Nations conference is planned for Nov. 20-21, 2023.

Delegate Awards

General Assembly First Committee

Honorable Delegates (Top 20%)

From

Representing

Delegate

Bozeman High School	USA	Calvin Andrews
Glacier High School	Jamaica	Ethan Wood
Hellgate High School	Armenia	Devyn Deschamps
Glacier High School	Indonesia	Calvin Schmidt
Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy	Iran	Sam Lambert
Glacier High School	Ireland	Kevin Fortin

Distinguished Delegates (Top 10%) – Certificate

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Big Sky High School	China	Madelyn McInnis

Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Israel	Jayden LaVecchia
Hellgate High School	Ecuador	Ryan Heng
Flathead High School	Albania	Derek McDonough

Outstanding Delegates (Top 1-2%) – Medals

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Ashley Kim
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Aiden Rohn

General Assembly Second Committee

Honorable Delegates (Top 20%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
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Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy	France	Darby Puckett
Hellgate High School	Nigeria	Ruben Marrow
Bozeman High School	Belgium	Will Carraway
Hellgate High School	Honduras	Ariana Roberts
Flathead High School	Australia	Aereck Haroldson

Distinguished Delegates (Top 10%) – Certificate

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Sentinel High School	Japan	Jesse McCormick
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Eddie Chisholm

Bozeman High School	Greece	Graham Hodgson
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Mila McKay

Outstanding Delegates (Top 1-2%) – Medals

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Hellgate High School	Italy	Melina LaPlante
Bozeman High School	United States of America	Myeongmin Choi

United Nations Environment Agency

Honorable Delegates (Top 20%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Flathead High School	Albania	Rachel Ottman

Big Sky High School	China	Tennyson Smith
Big Sky High School	Senegal	Emmy Newhouse
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Brayden Crawford
Jefferson	Costa Rica	Flora Tanaka
Columbia Falls High School	Canada	Colton Little

Distinguished Delegates (Top 10%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Flathead High School	Australia	Emmary Faerber
Flathead High School	Portugal	Kenna Anderson

Hellgate High School	Ecuador	Julian Alvier
Hellgate High School	Netherlands	Laine Banziger

Outstanding Delegates (Top 1-2%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Sentinel High School	Japan	Josie Moretti
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Faith You

United Nations Human Right Council

Honorable Delegates (Top 20%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Big Sky High School	China	Max Carter

Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Gabon	Mira Crawford
Hellgate High School	New Zealand	Keira Skovlin
Glacier High School	Indonesia	Blake Lindemann

Distinguished Delegates (Top 10%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Flathead High School	India	Gabe Reddish
Glacier High School	Eritrea	Cadence Murcra
Sentinel High School	Japan	Izzy Watson

Outstanding Delegates (Top 1-2%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
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Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Eden Maxwell

Security Council

Honorable Delegate (Top 20%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Flathead High School	India	Rylin Wilde

Distinguished Delegate (Top 10%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>
Bozeman High School	Ghana	Cameron Taylor

Outstanding Delegate (Top 1-2%)

<i>From</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Delegate</i>

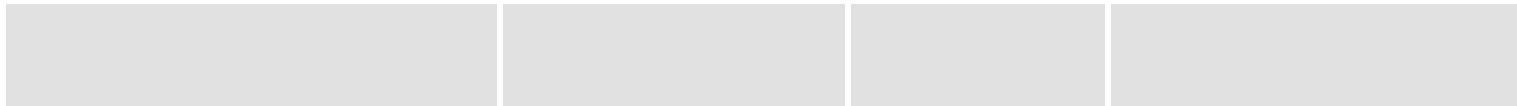
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	France	Julian Conigliaro
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Position Paper Awards

Honorable Position Papers (Top 20%)

<i>From (school)</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Student</i>	
Hellgate High School	Netherlands	Rya	Nichols
Hellgate High School	Nigeria	Maxime	Diaz
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Poland	Ellen	Midgley
Hellgate High School	Italy	Thalia	Lambros
Hellgate High School	Armenia	Kaitlyn	Skinner
Hellgate High School	New Zealand	Keira	Skovlin

Bozeman High School	USA	Anna	Curtis
Hellgate High School	Netherlands	Lucia	Johnstone
Sentinel High School	Japan	Jesse	McCormick
Hellgate High School	Italy	Melina	LaPlante
Hellgate High School	Armenia	Rori	Ojala
Columbia Falls High School	Canada	Colton	Little
Bozeman High School	USA	Benjamin	Wilson
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Faith	You
Hellgate High School	Sudan	Gerik	Manger



**Distinguished Position Papers (Top 10 %)
Certificate**

<i>From (school)</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Student</i>	
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Ashley	Kim
Hellgate High School	Uzbekistan	Maizy	Miller
Flathead High School	Bolivia	Tayen	Lackey
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Namibia	Emilia	Delaune
Hellgate High School	Netherlands	Claire	Kinderwater
Flathead High School	Albania	Neila	Lyngholm

Bozeman High School	Belgium	Will	Carraway
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Mila	McKay
Hellgate High School	Viet Nam	Ryall	Pham
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Israel	Sebastian	Baker
Hellgate High School	Armenia	Beatrice	Shimanek
Big Sky High School	Finland	Hayden	Bosshardt
Hellgate High School	New Zealand	Rose	Wiltse

Outstanding Position Papers (Top 1-2%) Medals

<i>From (school)</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Student</i>	

Hellgate High School	Ukraine	Lucy	Pino
Flathead High School	India	Gabe	Reddish

Flathead High School	India	Rylin	Wilde
Bozeman High School	Greece	Graham	Hodgson
Flathead High School	Portugal	Kenna	Anderson

Top 25 Seniors all medals

Top 5 (Scholarship Recipients)

<i>From (school)</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Committee</i>
Hellgate High School	Italy	Melina LaPlante	GA2

Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Eden Maxwell	HRC
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Ashley Kim	GA1
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Aiden Rohn	GA1
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Eddie Chisholm	GA2

Remaining Top Seniors (Reserve Scholarship Recipients)

<i>From (school)</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Committee</i>
Sentinel High School	Japan	Josie Moretti	UNEA
Hellgate High School	United Kingdom	Mila McKay	GA2
Flathead High	Portugal	Kenna Anderson	UNEA

School			
Flathead High School	India	Gabe Reddish	HRC
Glacier High School	Eritrea	Cadence Murcray	HRC
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Israel	Jayden LaVecchia	GA1
Flathead High School	Australia	Luke Leech	GA1
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	Gabon	Josie Golebiewski	GA2
Glacier High School	Jamaica	Ethan Wood	GA1
Bozeman High School	United States of America	Anna Curtis	Security Council

Bozeman High School	United States of America	Benjamin Wilson	UNEA
Columbia Falls High School	Venezuela	Celestine Young	HRC
Darby High School	Paraguay	Kadence Fisher	GA1
Glacier High School	Ireland	Aidan Walker	Security Council
Columbia Falls High School	Canada	Braeden Fairchild	GA1
Glacier High School	Indonesia	Calvin Schmidt	GA1
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	France	Lauren Holecek	HRC
Flathead High School	India	Thomas Konopka	GA1

Flathead High School	India	Connor Adcox	GA2
Jefferson	Germany	Rylee Baird	HRC

Country Awards

Honorable Country Delegations (top 20%) – Verbal commendation

<i>Country</i>	<i>Represented by (school)</i>
India	Flathead High School
Gabon	Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy
Armenia	Hellgate High School
New Zealand	Hellgate High School

Canada	Columbia Falls High School
Honduras	Hellgate High School
Uzbekistan	Hellgate High School

Distinguished Country Delegations (top 10%) - Certificate

<i>Country</i>	<i>Represented by (school)</i>
Netherlands	Hellgate High School
Albania	Flathead High School
Australia	Flathead High School
Ecuador	Hellgate High School

Outstanding Country Delegations (top 5%) – Plaque

Country	Represented by (school)	
United Kingdom	Hellgate High School	
Japan	Sentinel High School	
Venezuela	Columbia Falls High School	

School Awards

Honorable Schools (top 30%)

School (s)

Adviser(s)

Small Delegation:

Glacier High School

Beau Wright

Large Delegations:

Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy

Sandy Midgley

Distinguished Schools (top 20%)

	<i>School</i>	<i>Adviser(s)</i>
<i>Small Delegation:</i>	Heritage Academy	Susan Wagner
<i>Large Delegation:</i>	Flathead High School	Sean O'Donnell

Outstanding Schools (top 10%)

	<i>School</i>	<i>Adviser(s)</i>
<i>Small Delegation:</i> Drake	Bozeman High School	Jason Nagel & Amy Wallner-
<i>Large Delegation:</i> Christopher	Hellgate High School	Jeff Waniata & Courtney

Staff Awards

<u>Vice Chair</u>	<u>UM Student Name</u>	<u>Committee</u>
Honorable mention	Ian Radoff	GA 1
Best Vice- Chair	Sean Kunau	GA 2

<u>Chair</u>	<u>UM Student Name</u>	<u>Committee</u>
Honorable mention	Anabella Salyard	GA 2
Best Chair	Alysa Curry	UNEA

###

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COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

STUDENT RESEARCH: PARASITE MAY CREATE RISK-TAKING WOLVES IN YELLOWSTONE

02 DECEMBER 2022

UM
doctoral
student
Connor

Meyer,
shown
here
with a
wolf
skull in
the



Zoological Museum, studies the effects of a parasite on wolves in Yellowstone National Park.

MISSOULA – New research from a University of Montana student and his partners suggests that a common parasite associated with cats turns Yellowstone National Park wolves into risk takers, who when infected are much more likely to disperse across the landscape and become pack leaders.

The story caught fire with media outlets worldwide, with both **CNN** and **NPR** picking it up. The research **originally was published in the journal Communications Biology**.

“I’ve been blown away by it,” said Connor Meyer, a wildlife biology doctoral student in UM’s **Ungulate Ecology Lab**, part of the **W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation**. “I’m surprised and grateful, but it’s been a bit of a nerve-wracking experience with all the attention.”

Meyer and his team created the story sensation by studying a single-celled creature named *Toxoplasma gondii* – often nicknamed the “mind-control parasite.” It prefers to live in felines, and infected cats spread spore-packed oocysts in their feces. *T. gondii* – which Meyer calls “toxoplasma” for short – is the reason pregnant people aren’t supposed to clean the litterbox. Human immune systems usually keep it in check, but the parasite causes sickness that can be dangerous to fetuses, as well as those who are immunocompromised, such as HIV/AIDS

patients.

T. gondii can infect all warm-blooded mammals, and it's estimated a third of all people are carriers. The parasite settles in muscles and brains, and it's known to boost dopamine and testosterone. This affects behavior: Studies have shown that infected rodents lose their fear of feline urine or cats and move around in the open more, making them more likely to be eaten. Infected captive chimpanzees lose their aversion to leopard urine.

It's almost like they are being biologically controlled so the parasite can return to the comfy insides of its preferred feline host. But do other beasts get affected that aren't part of the regular *T. gondii* life cycle?

Meyer and his fellow lead author, Yellowstone park biologist Kira Cassidy, started a serious study of the prevalence of *T. gondii* among park wolves in spring 2021. They discovered a toxo-positive wolf becomes more of a risk taker – 11 times more likely to disperse from its original pack and 46 times more likely to become a pack leader.

Yellowstone wolves are among the most studied animals in the world. Since they were reintroduced in 1995, park managers have taken blood samples every time a wolf is captured and collared. Meyer and his team wound up testing blood from 243 wolves for toxo antibodies with assistance from a Cornell University diagnostics lab. They also used data from long-term and ongoing **Yellowstone Wolf Project** research. More than 27% of the wolves they looked at – about 74 individuals all told – were infected with *T. gondii*.

The researchers first suspected wolves were getting infected by eating elk, their chief prey. But when they tested more than 100 elk, none were positive for the parasite.

“Eventually we found the most significant predictor of infection with wolves was when their range overlapped areas with high mountain lion density,” Meyer said. “So, with no elk testing positive, we hypothesized they were getting infected directly by cougars.”

Yellowstone wolves can slay and eat mountain lions, but there only have been 10 or so documented cases of that since 1995. Meyer said it's more likely wolves they get toxo infection by nosing around “scrape sites,” where cougars defecate and mark their territory.

“We also have a litter box theory,” he said. “Almost anyone who has a dog and cat at home

knows that, if the dog gets an opportunity, they are going to raid the litter box. We don't have direct evidence of wolves eating mountain lion scat, but we have lots of photos of wolves at mountain lion scrapes. Wolves eat lots of things, so we don't think it's much of a stretch."

Meyer said they want to emphasize they aren't claiming that toxo causes wolves to become leaders.

"Toxo is not the only factor that predicts whether wolves will lead the pack," he said. "It's one of the many things that affect wolf behavior, just like in humans. With our study, being toxo-positive shortened the time it took for individuals to disperse, but toxo-negative individuals would still disperse and still become pack leaders. So we aren't saying that toxo runs the world – we are saying it may accelerate some of these behaviors."

He also said wolf packs generally have two leaders, a male and a female, and both are equally likely to test positive for the parasite.

A native of **Whidbey Island, Washington**, Meyer first became fascinated by the *T. gondii* life cycle as an undergraduate at the University of Washington. He then was hired by Dr. Matthew Metz – who earned his Ph.D. from UM last year – to work for the Yellowstone Wolf Project and soon after also began work with the **Yellowstone Cougar Project**. Over six years he worked on a variety of research efforts, which brought him into the orbit of Professor Mark Hebblewhite, leader of UM's Ungulate Ecology Lab. Meyer started making inquiries about grad school.

"UM is one of the best – if not the best – wildlife biology graduate schools in the nation," Meyer said, "so I definitely had an interest in coming here. Mark said working on the toxo paper could help me get into his program. I started at UM in 2021, working with Mark on an elk migration study in Canada. Doing this paper gave me a little more confidence as I jumped straight into a super-intense Ph.D. program."

Though Meyer believes stories about *T. gondii* may be getting a bit sensationalized, and that too much may be attributed to its supposed mind-bending powers, he said we need to learn more about the parasite. Studies suggest that humans infected with toxo are more likely to like cats, develop schizophrenia or engage in road rage. He said a recent study on a college campus found students infected with toxo generally were rated more attractive.

Is it messing with our minds?

“More work definitely needs to be done,” Meyer said. “Luckily for us with our study, we had all that excellent data, we had all the blood serum and we had the time, interest and encouragement to check it out.”

###

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