

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

5-2023

May 2023 news releases

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "May 2023 news releases" (2023).
University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present. 32021.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/32021>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

UM / News / UM Students Named to Spring Semester Dean's List, 4.0 List



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM STUDENTS NAMED TO SPRING SEMESTER DEAN'S LIST, 4.0 LIST

31 MAY 2023

MISSOULA – At the University of Montana, nearly 2,600 undergraduate students made the spring semester 2023 Dean's List or President's 4.0 List.

To qualify, students must be undergraduates, earn a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher and receive grades of A or B in at least nine credits. Students who receive any grade of C+ or below or no credit (NC/NCR) in a course are not eligible.

The students on the linked lists below made UM's spring semester 2023 Dean's List or the

President's 4.0 List. Double asterisks after a name indicate the student earned a 4.0 GPA. A single asterisk indicates a GPA greater than 3.5 but less than 4.0. This information is grouped by hometowns or alphabetically by first name.

[View the Dean's List and President's 4.0 List for Montana students.](#)

[View the Dean's List and President's 4.0 List for out-of-state students.](#)

[View a full alphabetical list of all students who made the Dean's List and President's 4.0 List.](#)

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

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / A Montana First: UM's Indian Law Program to Host National Competition

SCHOOL OF LAW

A MONTANA FIRST:
UM'S INDIAN LAW
PROGRAM TO HOST
NATIONAL
COMPETITION

26 MAY 2023

MISSOULA – The Native American Law Student Association recently won the bid to

Sapphire Carter

host the 32nd annual National NALSA Moot Court competition, a first for Montana. The competition will

take place in February 2024 at the **Alexander Blewett III School of Law** at the University of Montana.

The competition will feature over 40 teams from law schools around the country. In this two-day event, participants will compete by filing briefs and giving oral arguments in front of volunteer judges from the Montana legal community. The event allows students to showcase their skills in a courtroom setting, while networking with other future lawyers from around the country.



Two Montana law students have been elected to the 2023-24 National NALSA executive board. Sapphire Carter (Juris Doctorate candidate '25, **Rocky Boy**) holds the position of treasurer and TaNeel Filesteel (Juris Doctorate candidate '24, **Fort Belknap**) is the moot court administrator. Students will lead and administer this competition.

“We are very excited to be able to hold this prestigious competition

TaNeel Filesteel

at our school,” said Carter, a Chippewa-Cree tribal citizen. “It is a great opportunity to show our program to the rest of the country.”

Filesteel, an Aaniiih tribal citizen, said she is happy to be part of the national leadership.

“There is a lot to plan, but there is plenty of support from faculty and staff,” said Filesteel. “We want to make this a memorable event.”

The UM law school has built a nationally recognized Indian Law program. It is home to the Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic, the oldest Indian Law clinic in the country. Established in 1980, the



clinic provides students with practical experience regarding Indian law issues. Students in the clinic work on a variety of projects promoting tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, access to justice and economic development in Indian Country. It is because of this quality program that the Blewett School of Law has been chosen to host this high-profile competition.

For more information regarding the National NALSA Moot Court Competition and to volunteer as judges, email Filesteel at MootCourt@Nationalnalsa.org.

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



© 2023 University of Montana. [Privacy Policy](#)

UM / News / UM Alum to Lead Campus Repatriation Effort



Courtney Little Axe is UM's new NAGPRA repatriation coordinator and collections manager.

MISSOULA – After a nationwide search, the University of Montana has hired alum Courtney Little Axe to lead its on-campus effort to repatriate Native American Indigenous ancestral remains and cultural items.

Little Axe will serve in the newly created position of Native American Graves Protection and

Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) repatriation coordinator and collections manager. In this role, Little Axe will work with tribal preservation officers and University employees to repatriate artifacts and other items back to respective Native American Tribes.

“I have dedicated much of my adult life to repatriation and Indigenizing heritage collection care,” Little Axe said. “I am thrilled to be back in Montana to help lay the foundation of the repatriation program to carry UM into the future.”

Little Axe grew up on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and in Little Axe/Tecumseh, Oklahoma. She is Northern Cheyenne, Absentee Shawnee and Seminole, and has degrees from Haskell Indian Nations University and UM.

Prior to returning to Missoula, Little Axe worked as an intern in the UM Anthropological Curation Facility and was selected as a Native American fellow at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

Her career also includes serving as the repatriation assistant to the NAGPRA Coordinator for the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, California.

Little Axe brings extensive experience to the position that includes creating procedures to work directly with tribes and assisting institutions with protocols for handling cultural materials.

NAGPRA was signed into law in 1990 and requires public institutions to repatriate Native American remains, objects and artifacts to origin tribes. UM has been working closely with regional tribal preservation officers to comply with NAGPRA and work through the repatriation process.

In April, UM hosted a Heritage Collections Board meeting on campus. This regularly scheduled meeting brings together tribal preservation officers from across the region and officials from UM to work through the repatriation process.

###

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

Launch UM virtual tour.



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



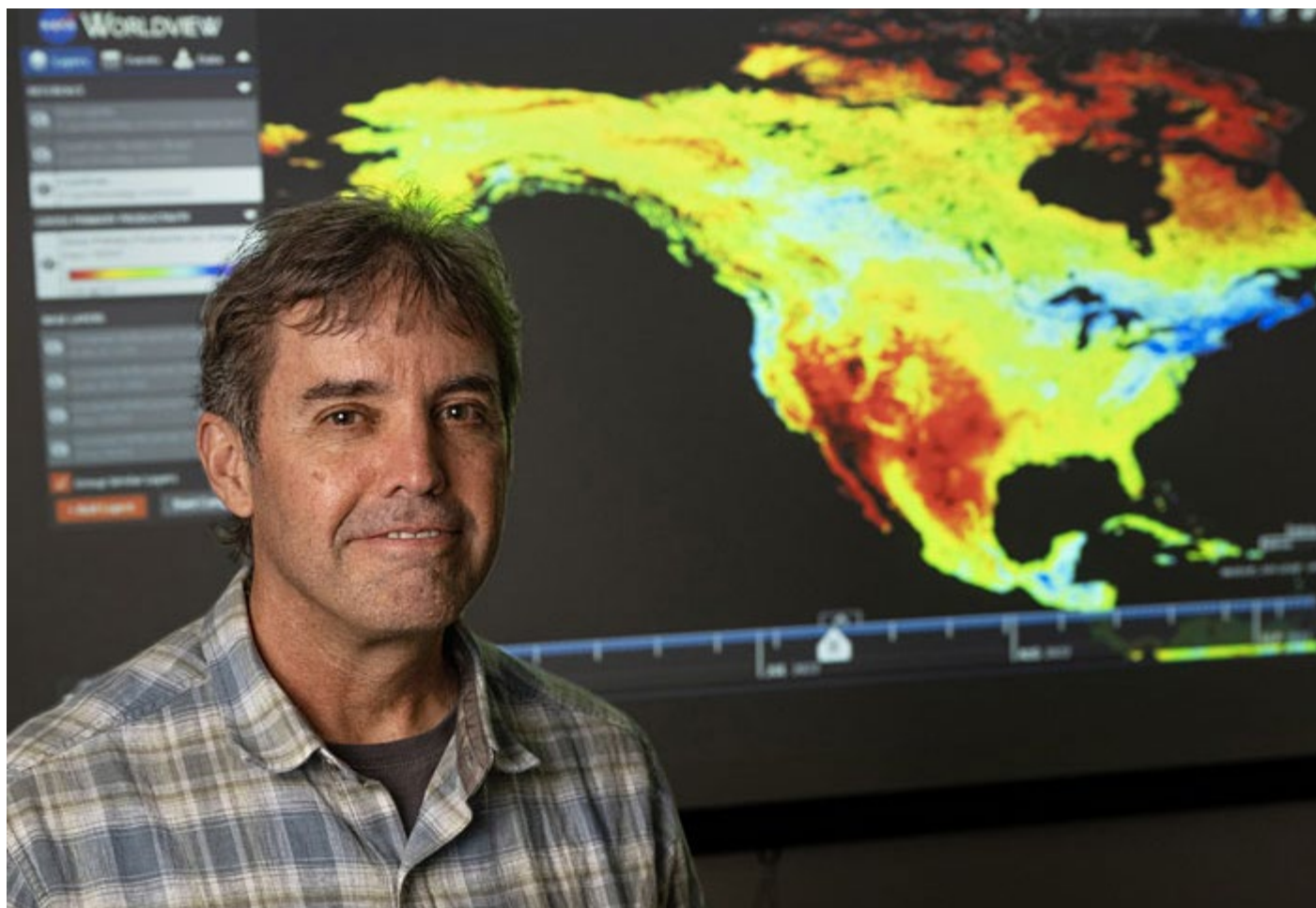
UM / News / UM Forms Partnership With Naval Undersea Warfare Center

RESEARCH, COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

UM FORMS PARTNERSHIP WITH NAVAL UNDERSEA WARFARE CENTER

22 MAY 2023

*John
Kimball
is a
forestry*



professor and researcher who directs UM's Numerical Terradynamic Simulation Group. (UM photo by Ryan Brennecke)

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has forged a new cooperative research agreement with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center based in Keyport, Washington.

The agreement will make possible U.S. Department of Defense funding opportunities ranging from \$500,000 to \$10 million. Initial areas identified for collaboration include:

- Improving monitoring and modeling of coastal dynamics and land-ocean-atmosphere interactions in the Arctic.
- Developing new remote-sensing applications for environmental monitoring.
- Developing new artificial intelligence and machine-learning applications for rapid environmental assessments.

“As far as I’m aware, this is the first formal cooperative agreement ever established between UM and the Navy,” said John Kimball, a forestry professor and researcher who directs UM’s **Numerical Terradynamic Simulation Group**. “The agreement was initiated by the Naval

Undersea Warfare Center and is a testament to UM's growing reputation as a national leader in environmental research and education."

He said the research arrangement will provide UM researchers access to the Navy's state-of-the-art chemistry and sensor laboratories and test facilities. It also will give UM students new research opportunities involving advanced data science, cyber research and computer science development that support DoD and Navy research and development objectives.

"Students will benefit in a variety of ways," Kimball said. "These include new research and funding opportunities and advanced training in the development and use of environmental sensors, remote sensing, AI and machine-learning methods for data processing."

He said the agreement demonstrates that UM's research expertise and educational resources are well aligned to meet the needs of the Navy and other federal agencies.

"UM researchers will have access to multiyear project awards ranging up to tens of millions of dollars annually," Kimball said. "This agreement is expected to further enhance growth in UM research productivity and innovation and solidify our University's **R1 university ranking**."

Kimball directs the NTSG, which operates as a UM Research Center of Excellence aligned with the **W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation**. The center is a nexus for research and technology development in satellite remote sensing and Earth system science. NTSG will serve as the point-of-contact and coordinating center for UM research activities conducted under the agreement. The University may also recruit additional participation from other experts across the globe to assemble the most qualified and effective research teams for different projects.

###

Contact: John Kimball, UM Numerical Terradynamic Simulation Group director, W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation professor, 406-243-4922, john.kimball@umontana.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





Paul Lewing at work painting the “Clay Tools” series for “The Artist’s Tool Belt.” (Photograph courtesy of the artist.)

MISSOULA – Noted artist Paul Lewing, a graduate of the **University of Montana’s College of the Arts and Media**, will install a ceramic tile mural this month on the exterior of the new Montana Museum of Art and Culture.

Titled “The Artist’s Tool Belt,” the vividly colored mural is composed of individual tiles with

images of over 70 tools used by different cultures across time. The tools form abstract patterns in the tiles that are arranged as a decorative band installed on the west entrance of UM's new museum, opening Homecoming Weekend 2023.

The tools in the mural range from Neolithic stone hammers to digital paintbrush icons and include items such as a Laotian loom comb, a Makah adze and Victorian jewelry tools. They also include representations of prominent tools that are a part of the museum's permanent collection, including modernist Henry Meloy's brushes and ceramicist Rudy Autio's trowel.

"When visitors come to our new museum, they will be greeted by Paul's homage to the instruments artists have used since time immemorial," said MMAC Director Rafael Chacón. "We are fortunate to count dedicated and trailblazing artists among our alumni and pleased to represent their achievements in the MMAC's permanent collection."

Lewing, born in Middletown, Ohio, moved in 1965 to Missoula with his family, where his father oversaw the campus mail service until 1971. He completed his B.F.A. in 1969 and his M.F.A. in 1972, studying with artist professors Aden Arnold, Maxine Blackmer, Don Bunse, Walter Hook and Autio – creator of UM's iconic Grizzly Bear statue

Lewing initially wanted to be a landscape painter but ultimately settled on ceramics as the focus of his work.

Over a long career as a production potter, Lewing set up a studio in Seattle and mastered the medium of china paint. He expanded this traditional medium to include wildly new designs and modern ways of working. In addition to his commercial and fine art work, he also taught part time, conducted hundreds of workshops in all 50 states and is the author of the popular text "China Paint and Overglaze."

Following the lead of his UM professors and mentors, Lewing characterizes the use of tools and his approach to making art as "down-to-earth" and "blue-collar":

"Images and concepts often sit in your brain for decades and sometimes recombine and emerge as something rich and new," Lewing said in describing his inspiration for the MMAC mural. "Art has always been in my hands, not in my mind."

His mural for the new museum, Lewing added, is a tribute to his beloved alma mater.

“It’s the best thing I’ve ever made, and my time at UM was one of the best times of my life,” he said. “UM gave me a complete life: my medium, my mentors and my wife.”

###

Contact: H. Rafael Chacón, director, UM Montana Museum of Art and Culture, 406-2432019, hrafael.chacon@umontana.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

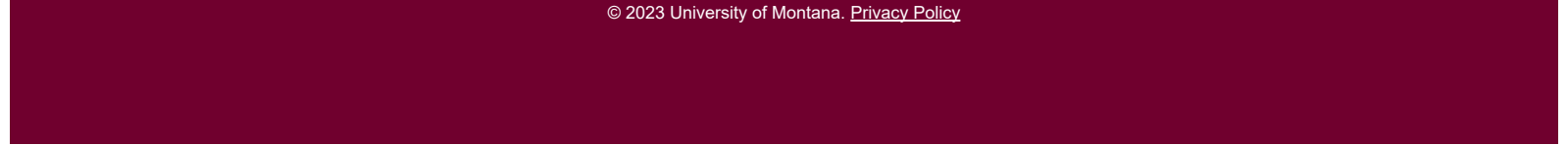
Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM / News / UM Environmental History Students Bring Order to Massive Photo Collection

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

UM ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY STUDENTS BRING ORDER TO MASSIVE PHOTO COLLECTION

18 MAY 2023

Students enrolled in UM's spring U.S. Environmental History Class helped the Montana Natural History Center categorize some 75,000 slides donated by the estate of nature enthusiast and photographer Dr. Herman William "Bill" Gabriel.

MISSOULA – Chalk it up to pure chance.

Last winter, Professor Eric Zimmer, a visiting scholar of the American West in the University of Montana's History Department, was looking for a chunky project that students in his spring **U.S. Environmental History Class** could tackle.

The Montana Natural History Center meanwhile had been sitting for two years on a collection of around 75,000 slides – 86 boxes worth – donated by the estate of nature enthusiast and photographer Dr. Herman William “Bill” Gabriel, which the MNHC, despite a strong desire, didn't have the staff to catalog.

“I reached out the center,” Zimmer recalls, “and told them about this class and just asked if there was something we could do to help them out and support their mission. They said, ‘Yeah, we have these boxes of materials, and we'd like to get a handle on what's all there and figure out what to do with it.’”

“It was perfect,” MNHC Collections Manager Alyssa Cornell said of Zimmer's timing. “We brainstormed ideas, and when I brought up the Gabriel collection Eric's eyes lit up. We both got very excited.”

UM Visiting Professor Eric Zimmer and his students approached the collection as valuable snapshots of the natural environment from several decades ago.

Zimmer and Cornell knew from a natural history perspective there would be gems filed away in the hundreds of sleeves assembled by Gabriel, an alumnus of UM's **College of Forestry** and longtime MNHC supporter. Determining what was worth keeping and what was out of scope for the MNHC – and its focus on the natural wonders of the West – would be the challenge.



“Natural history is more than specimens. It’s writing, it’s science, it’s photography,” said Cornell, who provided the students with a background on the MNHC and Gabriel before the inventory began. “We knew most of it would be in scope for us and potentially put on display or used in student lectures. And, as much as we’d like to keep everything, Bill traveled to Thailand and Kenya, and it just wouldn’t quite fit with what we do.

“We hope to eventually find homes in other collections for those that aren’t in scope,” she added.

From his perspective, Zimmer and his students approached the collection as valuable snapshots of the natural environment from several decades ago.

“One of the things we’ve talked about as a class is that, although some images were going to be visually stunning, the value is not necessarily artistic but in what they document,” Zimmer said. “The value is in the fact that, 50 or 100 years from now, environmental historians will have a better understanding about what these landscapes and wildlife populations looked like and how issues like climate change are affecting them.”

To give the project structure, Zimmer designed the class to simulate a historical consultancy project. The students acted as a consulting firm, MNHC their client and Zimmer the project manager. Professor Donna McCrea and Professor Erin Baucom, archivists from the [UM Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections](#), acted as advisers.

Professor Kyle Volk, chair of UM’s History Department, said the class format exemplifies a focus of the public history program, which bridges classroom and experiential learning to prepare students for the job market and graduate school.

“An essential goal of our program,” Volk notes, “is to connect history students to public institutions and to immerse them deeply in projects that they can refer to in applications and job interviews. This project with the Natural History Center certainly fit the bill, and students are already reaping the benefits.”

Lauren Kimzey, a history major from **Hamilton**, said the class was an invaluable experience for her because she hopes to be a professional archivist when she graduates. Having the class on her resume will be an important step toward that ambition, whether going to work after graduation or graduate school, she said.

Lauren Kimzey, a history major from Hamilton, said the class was an invaluable experience because she hopes to be a professional archivist when she graduates.

During the class, Kimzey explained, students split into groups assigned to 10 to 15 boxes each.

“My project was some of the more ambiguous boxes that maybe weren’t in scope,” said Kimzey, who works at the Mansfield Library as a student

employee in the archives department and will intern this summer at Fort Missoula. “He (Gabriel) was definitely a windmill enthusiast, which was fun to look at but probably won’t fit in scope.

“And there were a lot from Yellowstone National Park from the ’70s, which were cool,” she added.

In addition to the inventory work, a group of students also wrote a biography on Gabriel to accompany the collection and be used in future exhibitions. Another group made recommendations on how MNHC could enhance the accessibility of its existing exhibits – a piece of the project that emerged from an accommodation for a visually-impaired student.

The project concluded with a presentation to MNHC staff on the student’s conclusions, which came wrapped in a massive and detailed spreadsheet that staff can use when making final decisions on the collection.

“I was so impressed with the engagement students had with the project,” said Thurston Elfstrom, MNHC executive director. “This class was much more like an intensive internship, really, and Eric is a remarkable professor who’s inspiring future historians.”

The project, Elfstrom added, builds on the close partnership between UM and MNHC. UM faculty frequently lend their expertise to center exhibits, and some of the wildlife on display is on loan from UM’s [Dr. Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum](#).



“The class was really about preparing students to continue in this field, but an important second piece is that UM believes it has a public service role as part of its mission,” Zimmer said. “That means reaching out and supporting nonprofits and facilitating relationships. It makes all the sense in the world to be talking and collaborating.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Accounting Professor Earns Outstanding Educator Award

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UM ACCOUNTING PROFESSOR EARNS OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

18 MAY 2023

Terri Herron is an accounting professor with the UM College of Business.

MISSOULA – Terri Herron, an accounting professor at the University of Montana **College of Business**, has been awarded the Jack Kempner Outstanding Educator Award by the Montana Society for CPAs (MTCPA).

Dr. Herron is the business college's Paul & Betty Haack Distinguished Faculty Fellow. She

earned the award for her excellence in classroom teaching, motivating students, educational innovation and contributions to the accounting profession through active involvement in professional activities.

A nomination for Herron stated: "Terri teaches auditing at the University of Montana. She was my professor years ago, and I credit her solely on passing the auditing section of the (Certified Public Accountant exam). She works with the community to showcase her students with a (Continuing Professional Education) event every December. I always learn so much! I also happen to have a staff member who is taking classes from Terri right now and finds her to be one of the best professors at UM."

The Jack Kempner Outstanding Educator Award is a prestigious honor given to educators who have made significant contributions to the accounting profession. Herron's commitment to her students and her profession has earned her this recognition. Her approach to teaching has inspired her students to learn and succeed in their careers.

During her time at UM, Herron has served as the Master of Accountancy director, associate dean of the College of Business and chair of the Department of Accounting & Finance – all while teaching auditing and financial accounting. This is also the second time Herron has won the Jack Kempner award, being named the recipient in 2002.

"I am thrilled to receive the Jack Kempner Outstanding Educator Award for a second time," Herron said. "Teaching has always been my passion, and it is important to me to continue to bring the best to the classroom, which includes being engaged with the profession."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such bright and talented students and to be part of the University of Montana accounting faculty, who amaze me every day with their drive for excellence and care for students."

Herron will be presented this award at the 110th annual [MTCPA Conference](#) in Missoula June 8-9.

Founded in 1913, MTCPA is the professional association for certified public accountants, with about 1,600 members throughout the state, nation and world. Members include students, graduates working towards their CPAs and staff working with and around CPAs. [More information on MTCPA can be found on its website.](#)

###

Contact: Garrett Finke, UM College of Business director of marketing and communications, 406-243-4436, garrett.finke@umontana.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



RESEARCH

UM TO LEAD PRECISION FORESTRY AND RANGELAND INNOVATION ENGINE

17 MAY 2023

MISSOULA – The University of Montana recently was selected to lead one of the first-ever Regional Innovation Engine awards from the National Science Foundation. UM's project is designed to advance precision forestry and rangeland technologies.

As with the 43 other awardees selected across the country, UM will receive an initial \$1 million

over two years. This will support and develop a team that will create an implantation proposal, which could lead to as much as \$160 million in additional regional economic investment over 10 years.

UM has 18 partners on the project all working in forest and rangeland management. They include regional research universities and tribal colleges, national nonprofits, federal and state agencies, industry associations and venture capital firms.

“This innovation engine is designed to create a new economic driver for the rural states in the Upper Missouri River Basin,” said Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, who is the principal investigator on the project. “The expertise developed by our team will deliver ecological and economic solutions to other regions of the country and world, where forest and rangeland management – along with fires, droughts and floods – are regional problems of great consequence.”

He said the regional project is intended to become a national model for the use of precision forestry and rangeland management. An important partner in managing these lands is the timber industry.

Julia Altemus, director the Montana Wood Products Association, said a plan developed by the Montana Forest Action Advisory Council has identified 3.4 million acres in the wildland urban interface as high priority acres in need of restoration.

“Therefore, we are at a critical forest health juncture,” Altemus said. “This project will develop a national model for use of precision forestry and rangeland management to maximize the economic benefit of federal, tribal and private forests and rangelands, while minimizing ecological impacts such as fire and flood. We are looking forward to working with the University of Montana and partners on this important project.”

Each Regional Innovation Engine was required to define a region of service. The area for the UM-led project is U.S. Forest Service Northern Region, which manages 25 million acres of public land across five states. The region’s 12 national forests are spread across northern Idaho, Montana and a sliver of northeastern Washington. The four national grasslands are in North Dakota and South Dakota.

Whittenburg said the region’s economy depends in part on natural resources. The forestry and rangeland sectors are important economic engines for these states.

Another important project partner is The Nature Conservancy, which works in partnership with communities to restore and improve management of working lands and supports the leadership of Indigenous peoples.

Tourism also is a large economic driver for this region, and devastation from wildfires and flooding can have major negative impact for this industry. Whittenburg said ensuring the economic importance of these industries requires better monitoring and forecasting, and solutions that integrate that data into decision-making that sustain both social and ecological systems.

The partners on the innovation engine project are UM, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Cobell Institute of Land and Culture, the Aaniiih College Nic?-Mni Center, the Rocky Mountain Research Station, the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region, the Montana/Dakotas Bureau of Land Management, the Montana Innovation Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota State University, the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Boise State University, Idaho State University, the University of Wyoming, North Dakota State University, the NRNP Mesonet/State Climate Offices, the UM FireCenter, the Montana Wood Products Association and Next Frontier Capital.

###

Contact: Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship, 406-243-6670, vpr@umontana.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo

University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





Dr. Bharath Sriraman is internationally recognized for his research in the interdisciplinary aspects of mathematics.

MISSOULA – Bharath Sriraman, a University of Montana math professor, was invited to chair a plenary panel titled “What counts as evidence in mathematics education?” at ICME-15 in Sydney in 2024.

The **International Congress of Mathematics Education** is held once every four years and draws

participants from all over the world working in different areas of mathematics education.

Dr. Sriraman is internationally recognized for his research in the interdisciplinary aspects of mathematics in areas such as the arts and sciences, cognition, creativity, history and philosophy of mathematics, and mathematics education.

In 2016, he was named the UM Distinguished Scholar. Sriraman has published more than 300 journal articles, book chapters, proceedings papers and reference work entries. He also has served as the editor of 31 volumes.

The invitation letter from the Convenor of ICME-15, Professor Kim Beswick, noted: “This invitation recognizes your significant contributions to the field of Mathematics Education. This panel will raise and consider important issues and will be a stimulating contribution to the professional sharing and discourse that the organizers of ICME-15 wish to foster.”

In addition to his personal scholarship, Sriraman is the founder and editor-in-chief of The Mathematics Enthusiast, an independent, peer-reviewed, open-access international journal, now in its 20th year of existence and available through [UM ScholarWorks](#). Additionally, he is the co-founder and co-series editor of Advances in Mathematics Education and Creativity Theory and Action in Education, both of which are published by Springer.

Sriraman’s contributions were acknowledged by his department chair, John Bardsley.

“Dr. Sriraman is an exceptional member of our department and has been for over 20 years,” Bardsley said. “His research accomplishments and productivity are extraordinary and have a global reach. He is also a devoted teacher, who teaches a range of courses in our department, including those at the 100-level for elementary education majors. Thus, his impact as a mathematics educator is diverse and ranges from the local to the global.”

###

Contact: Bharath Sriraman, professor, UM Department of Mathematics, 406-243-6741, sriramanb@mso.umt.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / Trailhead as Art: UM Student Researchers Create Signs With Impact



COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

TRAILHEAD AS ART: UM STUDENT RESEARCHERS CREATE SIGNS WITH IMPACT

15 MAY 2023

UM students Jazzelle Elias, left, and Grace Walhus were members of research team, led by Assistant Professor Will Rice, that studied park signage at the Sunlight Trailhead in Missoula.

MISSOULA – It's a well-known truism in the world of park management: Hikers rarely read trailhead signs.

And in their zeal to enjoy the wilderness – now – they miss important messages posted to protect parks, wildlife and the hikers themselves.

“Since the 1960s, we’ve been doing studies on how we message to visitors and change people’s behaviors,” said Will Rice, an assistant professor of outdoor recreation and wildland management at the University of Montana. “That’s more than five decades we’ve been thinking about the words, but we’ve done little to date to test the graphic design of the signs.”

Figuring there must be a better way to grab attention, Rice reached out last year to University of Kansas Associate Professor of Design Jeremy Shellhorn, who founded the **Design Outside Studio**, a summer class for design students to tackle projects that benefit the public.

Shellhorn also created a type font called National Park Typeface, which is becoming, as Rice puts, “insanely popular.”

The designs that garnered the most interest, according to the data gathered by students, were those that featured something called “typography as image,” a visual treatment intertwining images with the messaging.

After a brainstorming session or two, Rice and Shellhorn assembled a team of undergraduate student researchers to determine what it takes – visually and verbally – to reach even the most single-minded hikers. Through their coursework, KU’s students designed the graphics based on messaging crafted by UM’s students, who also conducted field research to determine if their efforts resonated with the hiking-boots crowd.

For funding and help with the project, Rice turned to Missoula Parks & Recreation representatives, who asked students to address two very real management needs: keeping dogs on leash 200 meters from trailheads, and stopping the spread of invasive plant species by using boot brushes at trailheads.

“Parks & Recreation told the students they wanted positive messaging that invoked



stewardship of this place,” Rice said. “We wanted to see if different graphic treatments would not only capture people’s attention but also influence their behaviors and get them to buy into what we are trying to do.”

The students collaborated for weeks over the design, meeting online and sharing opinions on typefaces and colors through a messaging platform.

“It was interesting the way we interacted over Zoom,” said Jazzelle Elias, who graduated this spring with a degree in **parks, tourism and recreation management** at UM. “The KU students talked in media arts, we talked in social science. They were cool.”

Grace Walhus, another senior in PTRM, said working with the Kansas students was a unique experience, as was conducting field research once the signs were completed in the summer of 2022. The lab for their experiments was the Sunlight Trailhead in Missoula.

“It was the first time for me to do research out in the field,” said Walhus, who also graduated in May and is working in Missoula taking care of campgrounds and trailheads for the U.S. Forest Service. “It was interesting to see how extensive it was.”

Walhus and Elias said the big challenge was trying to remain as unobtrusive as possible as hikers interacted – or not – with the signs, while recording which signs drew the most attention and how much time hikers invested in reading the messaging. Sitting in camp chairs, pretending to picnic, was involved.

“Will told us we would be collecting data using the ‘lurking method,’ which everyone was super stoked about,” said Elias, who will work this summer “clearing trails and running chainsaws” for the U.S. Forest Service in the Lincoln Ranger District.

“The most memorable reaction I saw was a hiker who not only wiped his boots on the boot brush, he wiped his dog’s paws too,” she added.

The designs that garnered the most interest, according to the data gathered by students, were those that featured something called “typography as image,” a visual treatment intertwining images with the messaging. In one case, it was plants blooming in

the North Hills of Missoula intertwined with typeface. In another, it was a dog leash, with collar.

“All the signs were way more enticing than a white sheet of paper stabled to tree,” Rice said. “They were really beautiful.”



They were also effective, said Walhus.

“Our research showed that messages and graphics really do influence people” she said.

Missoula Parks & Recreation will use the results of the study as it develops new signage, Rice said. Meanwhile he’ll conduct a similar study this summer in the Grand Canyon, testing signage to stop people from peering too far over the canyon’s crumbling rim.

“The wording does depend on the audience,” Rice said. “The Grand Canyon has a much more diverse audience than hikers in Montana. So that will be an interesting challenge.”

The results of the first study will be published in June’s issue of the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*. It’s also been posted online since earlier this year.

All of the students in the study were listed as authors – a rarity in academia, Rice said.

“In the past it was unheard of for undergraduate students to be listed as authors even though they often put in a ton of the work,” he said. “But in recent years there has been a really big push to recognize their efforts, and it’s awesome that their names are there.”

Sharing authorship is definitely a lasting legacy for students in the class, Elias said.

“I remember thinking, wow, I’m published now,” she said. “My partner and his family were so excited they made me a cake to celebrate.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





SCHOOL OF LAW

UM STUDENT CHASES AMERICAN DREAM THROUGH LAW SCHOOL

12 MAY 2023

As a child, UM law student Tom Kovari moved with family from Hungary to the United States to escape Communist rule. Earning his law degree, he said, proves the American Dream is alive.

MISSOULA – As a child, University of Montana law student Tom Kovari and his family moved from Hungary to the United States to escape communist rule. Growing up he lived in New York and Washington, D.C., and as a young adult all over the East Coast, chasing the American Dream.

Shaped back then by the Western novels of German author Karl May, Kovari knew even as a youngster that the American West, and its spirit of rugged individualism, would one day be his future.

“Once you visit the Mountain West, the East Coast feels like a sardine can,” said Kovari. “I wanted to move somewhere with open spaces.”

His opportunity came with the oil fracking boom in the Bakken fields of North Dakota, which drew workers from all over the country.

For Kovari, though the best way to get a job in the Bakken as a white-collar guy was to become a truck driver. He signed up for driving school, and within a few months he had his commercial license, quit his job at a bank in Falls Church, Virginia, and moved to Sidney, Montana, and started to earn money in the oil field.

Kovari spent long hours driving back and forth hauling supplies to oil wells. Money was great, and he was making a good living. However, things can change quickly in the boom-and-bust cycle of oilfield work. The price of oil dropped, and it was time to take his savings and move farther west.

Kovari ended up purchasing some property near the entrance of the Bob Marshall Wilderness area in Augusta, Montana, when he realized the eastern side of the Rocky Mountain front was, and still very much is, a frontier.

“In the area stretching from Wolf Creek to the Canadian border, outside of tourist season, you were more likely to encounter an elk or a bear than a person,” he said. “This is Russel Country, one of the last remnants of the Old West.

“I purchased an open field near town,” he added. “Then I started to build my house in the frontier tradition. I was living the pioneer dream I had read so much about.”

Needing to support himself, Kovari found work hauling fertilizer across Big Sky Country. As he traversed Montana meeting farmers, he felt a connection to the people and the challenges that come with living from the land. Kovari started to wonder if there was something more he could do for this tightly knit community.

“I took the LSAT just to see how I would do,” said Kovari. “My scores were high enough that I could get in to law school.”

Kovari enrolled in the **Alexander Blewett III School of Law** at the University of Montana. With a background in oil, gas and agriculture, his perspectives were welcomed in the classroom. This is where his new path started to emerge.

“Truck driving was great, but I wanted something more cerebral,” said Kovari. “I had great interest in learning about agriculture law. I dove into administrative rules and learned everything I could to best serve the ag community.”

Law school students are required to work within a supervised clinic setting to get hands-on training before they graduate. For Kovari, that meant an opportunity to work for the Montana Department of Agriculture in Helena.

“Three years ago, I was sitting in the cab of my truck driving down the highway with a load of fertilizer,” he said. “Now I’m working across from the Capitol Building in Helena, helping with policy issues that affect farmers and ranchers throughout Montana.”

Kovari attributes his background as an asset to working in the legal space. His experience gives him more perspective on the challenges facing the agriculture industry.

“I’m fascinated by the way different federal laws around agriculture affect farmers and ranchers in the state,” he said. “These are people in my community. Everyone in farming and ranching is connected.”

Kovari credits the analytical skills he acquired in law school with helping him work with various stakeholders.

“There are a lot more than two sides to an issue,” he said. “You have to look at multiple perspectives when solving complex problems.”

Now that he is graduating, Kovari’s plans are taking shape.

“I want to hang my shingle in Augusta,” said Kovari. “This way I can live on my property and

still help farmers and ranchers.”

Kovari says he is practicing law to help families who may not have the resources of major companies. “I want to help protect the rural way of life,” he said. “There is nothing more rewarding to me than helping underserved farming communities.”

“I’m grateful to have this opportunity,” Kovari added. “The American Dream is very much alive in the last vestiges of the American Frontier. Here you do what you want, you can be what you want to be.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / Deep Dive Into Journalism Hones Writing Chops of Graduating UM Senior



COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA, DAVIDSON HONORS COLLEGE

DEEP DIVE INTO JOURNALISM HONES WRITING CHOPS OF GRADUATING UM SENIOR

11 MAY 2023

During her time at UM, graduating senior Mariah Thomas wrote more than a few cover stories for the Montana Kaimin, the University's student newspaper. (Photo by Ridley Hudson)

By Cary Shimek, UM News Service

MISSOULA – When Mariah Thomas was little, her elementary school buried a time capsule. Each student wrote a note that included their future plans. That capsule was cracked open when Thomas was a senior at Capital High School in **Helena**, and her younger version had written:

“I want to go to the University of Montana to study writing.”

Well, that’s exactly what she did. But there’s A LOT more to the story.

You see, few people have wrung as much living and learning from their college experience as Thomas. To say she stayed busy is like saying grizzlies like huckleberries.

When Thomas graduates May 13 with nearly 1,800 other UM students, she will have earned a major in journalism, a major in political science, a minor in history and a certificate from the University’s **Franke Global Leadership Initiative**. And that’s while working three years as a reporter and editor for the **Montana Kaimin**, UM’s student newspaper.

She also was a learning assistant for the honors college and an international research affairs intern for the **Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center**. During the summers, she interned with her hometown paper, the Independent Record, and the Montana State News Bureau. She helped with the Forward Montana Foundation and its census-completion and get-out-the-vote efforts. Additionally, she was selected for UM’s law school-housed **Baucus Leaders DC** program, which landed her in the office of U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine.

Feeling tired yet?

“It’s been a busy four years for sure, but really fun,” Thomas said with a laugh. “I feel like I have a whole crew of people who have supported me during my time here at UM. And it matters.”

She came to UM as a Presidential Leadership Scholar, which provides full tuition for four years, and immediately found a home with the University’s **Davidson Honors College**. Then, as she was getting her bearings at UM during her freshman year, COVID-19 hit. This is when Thomas’ energy and engagement jumped to another gear.

“It’s kind of a cliché line that I hear a lot, but I think the pandemic just made it really easy to be more productive,” she said.

She started in fall 2020 as a Kaimin sports reporter. Then she became a straight news reporter and last year was the Kaimin features editor. This year she served as the newspaper's copy chief.

Thomas covered all manner of stories – from the UM volleyball team (even when COVID had canceled most sports) to University budgets and lawsuits. When transgender Rep. Zooey Zephyr, D-Missoula, recently was blocked from the floor at the Montana Legislature, Thomas wrote the Kaimin story about it. She wrote many cover stories for the student newspaper.

Thomas joined the Davidson Honors College just as Tim Nichols took over as dean, and was in his first Intro to Honors class. Nichols became an important mentor to Thomas, and she became a learning assistant in his class the past three years. She also joined the Honors Student Association – which builds community among students in the college with events like documentary nights and Trick or Treat So Missoula Eats – and she became president of that organization this past year.

“The Davidson Honors College is just a space that feels really welcoming and comfortable. It's a home away from home,” Thomas said. “The Kaimin office and the DHC are definitely where you would find me on this campus. I joke if you gave me a blanket and a pillow, I would sleep at the Kaimin office.”

Thomas also found many faculty mentors in the journalism school – Joe Eaton, Jule Banville, Dennis Swibold, the list goes on. She said Lee Banville, the journalism school director, has become “very much a character in my life” and taught many of her favorite classes.

Banville remembers Thomas visiting the journalism school for the first time while she was still in high school. She had spent the previous day shadowing UM student Shaylee Ragar, who was covering the Legislature.

“She talked about how amazing it was for students to be able to ask government officials hard questions and get answers, and she seemed to be hooked already,” Banville said. “She seemed like someone who was going to be all in at UM.”

It was Thomas' political science classes that connected her with the Baucus Leaders program that led to her internship with the office of Sen. Susan Collins. Thomas isn't totally certain how her skills got paired with the moderate Republican, but she wrote her application essay about

the importance of bipartisanship in politics today.

“I think the best things we’ve accomplished in American politics has always involved bringing people together and bridging divides,” she said. “I’m a very strong believer in the importance of that.”

During her internship in Washington, D.C., Thomas spent a lot of time answering the phone and talking to Collins’ Maine constituents. She said it was always fascinating to learn what they wanted to speak to their senator about. The Collins office also had her draft up a few news releases once they discovered her UM writing skills. She also was able to get a balcony view of the U.S. Senate voting on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Unbeknownst to Thomas, Collins staffers also reached out to both U.S. senators from Montana and set up personal meetings for her. So she got to meet individually with Steve Daines and Jon Tester.

“Sen. Daines was very kind to me,” Thomas said. “With Tester, we talked about Montana politics and journalism’s importance in covering local politics. And he ended up telling me something like I was wise beyond my years, which was a crazy thing to hear from a senator.

“I feel like those are the kinds of experiences you hold onto for a lifetime.”

During her time at UM, Thomas was named one of the Forward Montana Foundation's 25 Under 25 in 2020, won the Brown Scholarship for Ethics in Public Affairs from the Mansfield Center, was a UM Alumni Association Legacy Scholarship recipient and was nominated by the UM for the Truman, Mitchell and Marshall scholarships. She also earned several journalism school scholarships.

With Commencement looming, Thomas is ready to step out into the world. And she already has a job lined up: She took a **Report for America** position with the Ashland Source, an online independent newsroom located in a town between Columbus, Ohio, and Cleveland.

“I think the Report for America mission is super noble, and the importance of local news has been really drilled into us here at the J-school,” she said. “But it’s going to be weird watching the University move along without me being in it every single day.”

In five years, Thomas would be perfectly content if she was somewhere writing about politics. She also could see herself going to law school or earning a master’s degree. And it started all those years ago with her younger self wanting to attend UM to study writing.

“But I was never sure it was going to work out that way,” she said. “There were many moments that I questioned that as I went along my journey. But that is exactly what I ended up doing, and I wouldn’t change it for the world.

“It feels really scary to be stepping into new dreams, but I also know that the University has really prepared me to do that, and I’m grateful for it.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





Spring Commencement ceremonies are set for May 13 at the University of Montana.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana has over 2,000 students who are degree candidates for spring semester 2023.

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 complete their final term of enrollment and meet 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](#).

The [UM spring Commencement ceremonies](#) will be held at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, May 13, in the Adams Center.

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / Hawaiian Graduate Finds Community 3,000 Miles from Home at UM

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

HAWAIIAN GRADUATE FINDS COMMUNITY 3,000 MILES FROM HOME AT UM

10 MAY 2023

Lexi Smith moved over 3,000 miles to attend school at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation.

MISSOULA – Never in a million years – that’s what ran through Lexi Smith’s mind when she came across University of Montana during an internet college search from her home in **Kealahou, Hawaii**. Never in a million years could she see herself moving over 3,000 miles

away for school.

But then Smith discovered UM's **W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation**.

"I looked at the experiential learning opportunities and thought, 'holy smokes, this is the place!'" says Smith, who will graduate with a bachelor's in forestry and minor in ecological restoration.

Smith grew up in a family with strong ties to the land and always knew she wanted to build a career where she could be immersed in nature. Her father is a "paniolo," meaning "cowboy" in Hawaiian and her mother's family were coffee farmers who emigrated from the Philippines.

When Smith received her UM acceptance letter, she was over the moon. But her mom wasn't so sure about her daughter attending college so far away from home. Smith convinced her to at least go for a visit, and the two boarded a flight for their first visit to Big Sky Country.

Smith had only traveled to the continental United States twice – once to Washington, D.C., and once to California. Despite the erratic spring weather ("We got off the plane and it was nice and sunny, then we had thunderstorms, and then it snowed!"), it didn't take long for the two to fall in love with UM.

They found the campus community to be welcoming and kind. Prior to their visit, Smith had reached out to UM Professor of Biometrics David Affleck, who met them on campus and gave them a personalized tour.

"By the end of the tour, she was like, 'I'm so excited for you to come here.'" Smith said of her mom's sudden change of heart.

Smith recalls learning basic forestry skills in her first class, Forestry Skills 101, and feeling absolutely stoked to be there.

During her sophomore year, Affleck helped Smith solidify a minor in ecological restoration after Smith realized her love of native plants and ecosystems.

"We've been very fortunate to have her here – she's an engaged student and at the top of her class academically," Affleck said. "But more than that, she's made a real impact on campus through her leadership in the Pacific Islanders Club and complete revitalization of our Society

of American Foresters' Student Chapter.”

Smith's enthusiasm is infectious, but her journey hasn't been without its challenges. She often found herself in classes with students who grew up in the West or students from logging families with forestry in their blood. She had never heard of a feller buncher (a type of harvester used in logging) and struggled understanding timber harvesting and pulley systems.

But she stuck with it, and her eyes were opened to how broad the field of forestry is and how much daily lives depend on forest products.

Smith became interested in the Montana chapter of the Society of American Foresters, which had taken a big hit after the pandemic. She became a member, even though there were only two students in the club, and she didn't know either of them.

She started holding chapter meetings over Zoom in the fall of 2020 and in the spring, she sought help from the Associated Students of the University of Montana to get the club back up and running. She recruited one student to be treasurer and the two attended the Montana SAF meeting the following fall. By the next year, the club had grown to over 20 members. LAST year, Smith attended the national conference in Baltimore, where she met other student chapters and made professional connections.

Smith didn't stop at SAF. During her time at UM, she was an active member of the Forestry Club, firewood boss for the Woodsmen Team, president of the Mortar Board senior honor society, and vice president of the Pacific Islanders Club.

After graduation, Smith is heading to the Montana Department of Natural Resources to work as a forestry technician for the Clearwater unit until December. She hopes to land a permanent job with the Forest Service in Montana. Eventually, she wants to return to school and pursue a Ph.D.

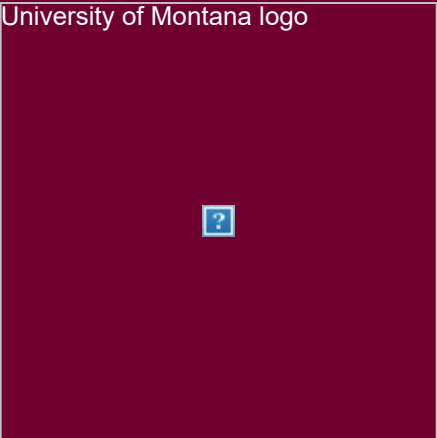
“Wherever I end up, I want to be enjoying myself,” she said.

New students heading to UM this fall should take some time to figure out their passions, Smith added, because “you might as well do what you love.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Graduate Leaves Legacy of Inclusion

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

UM GRADUATE LEAVES LEGACY OF INCLUSION

09 MAY 2023

By Kyle Spurr, UM News Service

Jessica Ponce graduates from UM, having left a legacy of supporting inclusion on campus.

MISSOULA – When she first arrived at the University of Montana in fall 2019, Jessica Ponce admits she would not have recognized the woman she has become four years later.

Ponce kept to herself as a freshman and focused

solely on training as a member of the Griz golf team, studying and staying in her residence hall. It didn't help that the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the golf season and many social events on the University campus.

But during that time, the nation also was embracing a social justice and equity movement and Ponce took notice. Ponce, who is Filipino and Vietnamese, felt motivated to get involved and support people of different backgrounds at UM.

She first joined UM's Pacific Islanders Club, where she connected with her culture and helped organize campus events as an executive member. She then became a part of the UM's Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Committee and served as a student ambassador for the College of Humanities and Sciences.

"My interest shifted toward taking on those roles and getting out of my shell," she said.

Ponce, an honors student at UM, will graduate this weekend with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in international development studies, having left a legacy of supporting inclusion on campus.

Salena Beaumont Hill, UM director of **Inclusive Excellence for Student Success**, experienced first-hand Ponce's impact. She didn't hesitate to hire Ponce earlier this year as a student coordinator in her office, housed in UM's Branch Center.

"She's just one of those people that you want to be around," Beaumont Hill said. "I knew she had really good connections with all the students in our center."



Beaumont Hill admired how Ponce brought people together and connected all of her roles on different committees and clubs with UM administrators. She tasked Ponce with developing a handbook for the Inclusive Excellence for Student Success office. The handbook would create clear expectations and be a referral for students seeking support.

Ponce led discussions and work groups in the Branch Center, a student space focused on diversity and inclusion, and developed the handbook for future generations. She did the work with help from other student leaders in the Branch Center.

“Her leadership is so gentle, and she can really relate to people,” Beaumont Hill said. “I loved watching her go through that process. I’m really grateful for her work on that.”

Outside of her work in the Branch Center, Ponce also found a passion for inclusive efforts through **UM’s International Development Studies program**. After graduation Ponce hopes to eventually take her passion overseas. She will graduate with two Peace Corps Prep certificates in health and youth in development. She also applied for a summer internship with LEAP Emerge, an organization focused on Asian and Pacific Islander leadership in Asian communities.

Ponce was inspired to pursue overseas opportunities after taking a class from Dr. Phyllis Ngai, clinical associate professor of social work and director of UM’s International Development Studies and Migration Studies.

“She showed me all these opportunities. I got so interested in her class and what she taught and her as a professor,” Ponce said. “She was a crucial part of my interest in international work.”

Ngai said the International Development Studies minor is for students interested in developing a global mindset, exploring the world and serving the under-represented. And Ponce is passionate in all three areas, Ngai said.

“IDS is an interdisciplinary program that aims to introduce students to different perspectives on sustainable development issues,” Ngai said. “Students of diverse backgrounds like Jessica are important parts of the program as different perspectives enrich learning for all.”

Following her summer internship with LEAP Emerge, Ponce plans to apply for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program which would allow her to teach English in Japan next year.

But before she embarks, Ponce is focused on graduation and finishing one last project. She is planning a large diversity and inclusion event Tuesday, May 9, at the Roxy Theater in Missoula to bring the campus and local community together. The Roxy Theater will have a **free showing of the film, “The Fabulous Filipino Brothers,”** followed by a discussion with three of the filmmakers from Los Angeles. Ponce connected the UM Office of Inclusive Excellence for Student Success with the Roxy Theater to put on the event.

She sees the event as a culmination of her time in Montana, and a way to honor Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

“It would be the perfect end to my college career,” Ponce said.

Ponce has taken the past few weeks to soak in all she has achieved in college. She is a first-generation college student, and her family will come from her hometown of **Beaverton, Oregon** to support her at graduation.

Ponce usually prefers to look ahead at her next goals and aspirations, but she’s allowed herself to look back and appreciate her achievements at UM.

“I actually accomplished a lot and there are a lot of things I didn’t think I would do, so I have to give myself credit,” she said. “But there’s still more I want to do.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM First: Female Student Targets Army Infantry After Graduation

MILITARY AND VETERANS, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UM FIRST: FEMALE STUDENT TARGETS ARMY INFANTRY AFTER GRADUATION

08 MAY 2023

Hannah



Schuler, a University of Montana ROTC student, will become UM's first female student to commission into the Army infantry after graduation. (UM photo by Tommy Martino)

By Cary Shimek, UM News Service

MISSOULA – Hannah Schuler, an ROTC student majoring in accounting at the University of Montana, didn't realize she made history last fall. That was when the **Twin Falls, Idaho**, native decided she had what it takes to serve in the U.S. Army infantry upon graduation.

She later learned she will become the first woman ever to commission into the infantry from UM. Her ROTC commissioning ceremony will be held May 12, and the next day she will graduate from UM during Commencement in the Adams Center.

Her decision makes her a pioneer for Griz Nation. The ban on women serving in the infantry and armor branches of the Army only ended in 2016, and females still make up less than 2% of such combat forces, according to the Army News Service.

"I think this trail has been blazed for me already by women who had the courage to take that first step," Schuler said. "A lot of other women before me have done the hard part, and now I

need to carry that momentum forward. And I'm going to do what I can for those who come after.

Schuler grew up recreating outdoors and comes from a military family. Her father was in the Army, and the men in her family served going all the way back to World War I.

"So it has been kind of cool to carry that on as a female in my family," she said, "and I will become one of the first officers."

Her outdoor interests led her to choose UM for college, with its proximity to Montana wilderness areas, and she quickly gravitated toward accounting in the **College of Business**.

Worried about taking on too much debt, she opted to join UM's **Reserve Officers' Training Corps** to pay for college. Many Army ROTC students earn a minor in military studies, have 100% of their tuition and fees provided, and receive a monthly stipend. In return they agree to a full-time or part-time service obligation in the U.S. Army, commissioning as a second lieutenant when they graduate. Service obligations can vary for those who want a lesser commitment, but Schuler was all in for the full four years. And it didn't hurt that UM's Grizzly Battalion is **ranked among the top 20% of ROTC programs nationally**.

The accounting major admits she will graduate with some minimal debt, but that was purposeful.

"I want some installment payments as a strategy to build my credit rating," she laughs.

ROTC added a dynamic layer to Schuler's university experience. Her activities included three-day FTXes, which are field training exercises in the wilds of Montana. ("It's really fun," she said. "We go into the field and run missions.") As a first-year student, she joined a pistol team. ("My dad laughed about that because I wouldn't touch a gun when I was a kid. And then I got a pistol for my 21st birthday.") She also got to serve on the ROTC Boom Crew and help fire the sideline cannon when the football team scored in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. ("I got to meet some great people over four years – the closeness becomes like family.")

When other students would return to their residence halls or apartments to study or binge Netflix, Schuler could be flying above the mountains of western Montana in a Chinook or Black Hawk helicopter. Then she and her fellow cadets would land to work on their navigation skills or deploy battalion tactics across a rugged landscape. Many a morning, she found herself

running with her Grizzly Battalion along the Clark Fork in the pre-dawn dark.

At 5 feet, 3 inches tall, Schuler has a small frame, but she describes herself as “type A” with a tenacious streak. Over spring break, she was part of a team that hiked the Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands, New Mexico. Described as 26 miles of high desert and pure perseverance, participants are invited to “embrace the suck ... the situation is bad, but deal with it.”

“We did the walk with 25 to 35 pounds on our back,” she said. “As a team we didn’t think it was so bad, except the part that actually crossed sand. It was a great experience to see all the people who turned out to show their support.”

Schuler said ROTC was instrumental in helping her discover her own style of leadership. Last summer, an influential cadre – who ensures cadets are properly trained – pulled her aside to assure her she has much to offer as any of her male counterparts.

“Just knowing that and accepting that made me so much more comfortable,” she said. “I realized I have a unique opportunity as a woman to be in this. To me, being in leadership is a chance to influence just one person and make their life better. If I can be that positive push in somebody’s life, then that’s what is going to keep me going.”

Schuler’s positive ROTC experience offers just one example of why UM again this year earned a Gold ranking for being a **Military Friendly School** from MilitaryFriendly.com. More than 1,400 military-affiliated students attend UM, and two key administrators – President Seth Bodnar and Patrick Beckwith, director of the **Military and Veteran Services Office** – both graduated from West Point and currently serve in the Montana Army National Guard.

“We are trying to create an exceptional learning environment for our military and veteran students,” Beckwith said. “Students like Hannah are a core component of our UM identity, and we will go the extra mile to ensure they have the best chance to learn, grow and succeed. We wish Hannah all the best as she becomes the first female Griz to enter the Army infantry.”

Schuler said excitement is building as she closes in on her goal to graduate from UM.

“It’s been wild watching my friends in the business college get all these great job offers, but I know I have my service to my country to add on,” she said. “And it will be nice to have very low

debt when I graduate. And I definitely have a job lined up!”

After graduation, she will have eight weeks before reporting for active duty in Fort Benning, Georgia, where she will complete infantry and basic officer leadership courses before transitioning on to different schools. She will go where the Army needs her, but her top two preferences include stationing in Italy or Germany.

After her four-year commitment, Schuler will evaluate her options depending on where she is in her life. That could include law school, an accounting career or a career military, and she wants a family at some point. But first she needs to put a graduation cap on her time at UM.

“I just learned so much about myself,” she said of her ROTC experience. “I learned so much about accountability and discipline. It was waking up for PT before class, leaving my peers to work out and then sitting in an accounting class like 40 minutes later.

“It taught me about cooperation, and how vital that is. I definitely feel set up for my future.”

###

Contact: Dave Kuntz, UM strategic communications director, 406-243-5659, dave.kuntz@umontana.edu; Hannah Schuler, UM accounting and ROTC student, hannah.schuler@umconnect.umt.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator

406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





Christie Farmer, 44, stands in front of a mural at Browning's Glenn Heavy Runner Pool. Farmer's work in community activism highlighting the dangers of opioid addiction have ignited her passion for public health. Farmer will graduate from the University of Montana next week with a bachelor's degree in social work. Photo courtesy of April Espinoza, Blackfeet Community College.

MISSOULA – On Saturday, May 13, Christie Farmer will walk across the University of Montana graduation stage.

It is the end of one path and the beginning of another in her winding journey through drug addiction, motherhood, prison, treatment, faith, community and recovery.

At seven years sober and 44 years old, Farmer stands firmly planted and confident, despite a life of telling herself that education would never be an option.

“I wanted something better for myself,” Farmer said. “And I remember walking through the doors of Blackfeet Community College thinking, ‘I’m a felon, I don’t belong here.’ But I kept walking. Never in a million years did I think I would get to where I am now.”

Christie Farmer, 44, is among the University of Montana's 2023 graduating class. Farmer will graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work, complementing a future filled with purpose for herself and her community. Photo courtesy of April Espinoza, Blackfeet Community College.

From **Browning**, Farmer is a student in UM's **School of Social Work**, housed in the **College of Health**. For the last two years as a student at BCC, she's completed UM classes through the University's **2+2 Bachelor of Social Work** program.

The 2+2 program caters to students who have completed or are enrolled in an associate's degree program at **partnering colleges across Montana**. Students can take classes remotely through UM and ultimately earn a bachelor's degree – without having to leave their home community.

In her time as a UM remote student, Farmer has conducted research, studied and honed a skillset around critical issues facing both the nation and her own reservation.

Among them: opioid awareness, addiction counseling and a critical need for recovery programs and policies that support a vulnerable and rural population.

“There's a level of education that this community needs, especially in those positions where you're dealing with huge public health issues and problems,” Farmer said. “The more education



we have, the more we can begin to address the issues at a systems level.”

At BCC, Farmer’s passion for addiction education began with an internship with the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, which led to a grant internship on drug prevention and opioid awareness in the Browning community.

The project, “Blackfeet Opioid Prevention Project through Public Health Workforce Expansion in Indian Country,” was aimed at community education on opioid addiction. And for Farmer, the best way to communicate the dangers of addiction was through public art. The canvas in this case was Browning’s Glenn Heavy Runner Pool, where many local kids hung out on hot summer days. Farmer worked with local artist Jesse Des Rosier to paint a mural on the pool’s main wall.

“In our culture and our community, there are threads of family that begin with mothers and grandmothers,” Farmer said. “So we wanted to show the harm addiction does to families in a painting and show community wellness in art.”

Farmer was among a group that published the results of their work in the **Journal of Indigenous Research**. Later, Farmer and colleagues organized a drive-in movie showing of “Inside Out” with popcorn and shared information and resources on overdoses with the crowd before and after the movie.

Her work continued after being asked to participate in drafting the **Montana Substance Use Disorder Task Force Strategic Plan** with the Department of Health and Human Services, and in 2020 Farmer received Montana’s Student Volunteer Award from former Montana Gov. Steve Bullock.

In between, Farmer made time to complete two associate degrees at BCC and UM while holding down a full-time job at the college and balancing motherhood, a partner and grant work. She even made the President’s List for a 4.0 GPA.

But Farmer said, “It’s not so much the classwork that’s hard, it’s the weight of the larger problem, which is lives ruined by the drug crisis in our community and in our state.”

For Farmer, navigating through drug addiction is real. Having served time in prison for selling, she knows what it takes to recover. She said “being on the other side of it” allows her a deeper appreciation and understanding of what people truly need to get clean and make a life.

“I didn’t have anyone I could relate to when I was getting sober,” she said. “I remember being in a really dark place and wishing the person at the other end could really understand. I want to be that person now. The person that can relate and see it all from a bigger picture.”

In Montana, the opioid overdose death rate for Indigenous people was twice that of white people from 2019 to 2021, according to the Department of Public Health and Human Services. In most of the state’s reservation communities, treatment centers are available, but the wait for one can be long and the centers are often far away and struggle with staffing. Farmer said her bachelor’s degree in social work will allow her a springboard to deepen her work in addiction treatment and education.

“I want to get a wider bird’s-eye view of drug addiction and recovery in Montana, not just here in Browning,” she said. “I want to look at this from a statewide public health angle. There are barriers to success when it comes to all of the agencies and courts and the actual population that’s being served.”

Graduates from the 2+2 program go on to serve as addiction counselors, integrated health care workers, court advocates, child and family services personnel, community organizers, policy workers and more.

When it comes to what’s next, Farmer said she’s not sure, but it’s clear there is more work to accomplish.

“God isn’t done with me yet,” Farmer said. “I’ve got more work to do. Work that contributes to my community and makes a difference in people’s lives. That’s the work I’m called to.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Scholar Blazes Own Trail En Route to Prestigious Udall Award

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM SCHOLAR BLAZES OWN TRAIL EN ROUTE TO PRESTIGIOUS UDALL AWARD

05 MAY 2023

Tess Jarden is a 2023 recipient of the prestigious Udall Scholarship.

MISSOULA – University of Montana student Tessa Jarden first developed a love for the

outdoors while exploring the salt marshes and creeks of her hometown in southeast North Carolina. During her 2017 field season with a Montana Conservation Corps wildlands restoration crew, that love transformed into a calling.

Now, six years after blazing her trail en route to a career in public service, Jarden has earned a prestigious Udall Scholarship.

“We live in a huge country with lots of forests and landscapes that need our care,” Jarden said after being notified of the award. “I want to be in a position to help provide that care.”

Jarden’s journey to being a Udall Scholar was not a traditional one.

She spent the summer of 2017, her first in Montana, sleeping in a child-sized secondhand tent she purchased for \$35 – confessing she had to contort sideways to fit inside. She returned for another season with the Montana Conservation Corps in 2019, this time as a member of their Women’s’ Fire Crew.

In 2020, after her first season fighting wildland fire as an engine crew member in Mesa Verde National Park, she decided to take the next step in her academic journey.

“I moved to Missoula and enrolled at UM so I could pursue a more scientifically informed career in conservation,” Jarden said. “I wanted to dig deeper into the underlying principles and learn more about the various species and ecosystems that I love working with so much.”

Today, even after thousands of hours camping and working in sun, wind, rain, snow and smoke across the Rocky Mountain West, her passion for conservation work only continues to grow stronger.

Since arriving at UM, Jarden has excelled in the classroom as a student in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, pursuing a major ecosystem science and restoration with minors in wildlife biology and climate change studies.

In the summer months between academic commitments, she continued to fight fire as a member of Missoula Helitack, a Forest Service helicopter crew. This upcoming summer, she will be conducting research on forest responses to fire and drought as a Montana Space Grant Consortium intern in UM’s Sala Lab, in addition to spending two weeks in the Yukon Flats of

Alaska conducting fire ecology field research with the Higuera Lab.

Jarden is one of 55 students across the country to be selected as a 2023 Udall Scholar, considered among the most prestigious undergraduate awards in the fields of natural resource conservation. She is the latest UM student to receive the award, reaffirming UM's status as one of the nation's top producers of Udall Scholars since the award's founding in 1992.

As part of her scholarship, Jarden will spend a portion of her summer in Tucson, Arizona, alongside other scholars from across the nation. She also will receive \$7,000 for academic expenses.

Jarden chose to enroll at UM for three specific reasons: Missoula's unique access to the outdoors, the opportunity to learn by doing in the [W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation](#) and the community of acceptance UM offers to students who seek a nontraditional path toward graduation.

"Tess has been one of the most motivated, curious and focused students with whom I have worked," said UM Professor of Fire Ecology Philip Higuera. "She demonstrates an exceptional commitment to environmental issues and potential to positively shape our future."

When asked to reflect on those who helped her unleash her passion for ecology and conservation, Jarden acknowledges the list is long, but then is quick to shout out the Montana Conservation Corps and the Missoula Helitack fire crew for training and supporting her during the early years of her career in public service.

After graduating next spring, Jarden plans to enroll directly in graduate school. Her list includes some of the most prominent ecology programs in the world – including UM.

Her ultimate goal is to launch a career in research ecology to address the unprecedented challenges facing conservation and restoration. She wants to provide the information necessary to ensure the future health and resilience of ecosystems across our public lands.

"As we enter an uncertain new era of ecological crisis and climate change, our nation's land management agencies will need balanced, data-driven guidance as they develop policies to meet unprecedented challenges in conservation and restoration," Jarden added. "In my careers as a research ecologist, I intend to make that guidance my life's work."

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

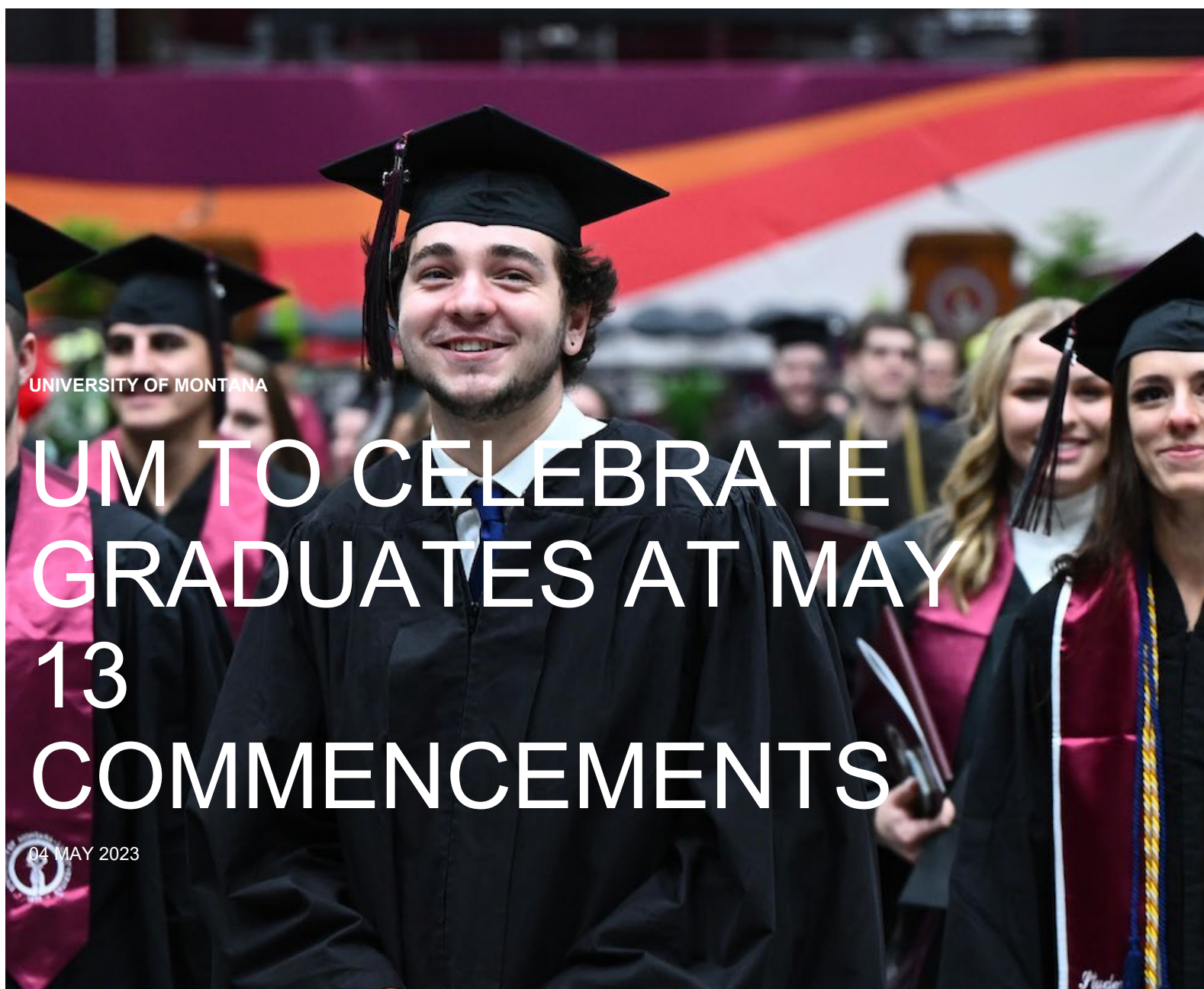
Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM students at the 2022 commencement ceremony.

MISSOULA – The University of Montana will celebrate the over 2,000 graduates who make up the class of 2023 during its spring Commencement celebrations on Saturday, May 13.

The University will host two on-campus ceremonies. The first at 9 a.m. honors graduates from the College of Humanities & Sciences, Phyllis J. Washington College of Education, Missoula

College and the Master's in Public Administration program. The 2 p.m. ceremony includes graduates from the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, College of Health, College of the Arts and Media and College of Business. Both events will take place in the Adams Center.

"The University of Montana is excited to celebrate the class of 2023," said UM President Seth Bodnar. "Each one of our graduates has a unique story and persevered through so much to earn their degree. We are incredibly proud of their accomplishments, and I have no doubt that these graduates will leave their mark on society, just as they have on our University."

UM will present two honorary doctorates during the ceremonies.

During the first ceremony, UM alumna Mandy Smoker Broaddus will receive an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. Smoker Broaddus was born on the Fork Peck Indian Reservation and is a member of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes. She earned a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from UM in 2002 and has published multiple novels. She also served as Montana's first Indian student achievement specialist in the Indian Education Program at the Office of Public Instruction.

John Shaffner, a famed set designer, will receive an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts during the second ceremony. Shaffner is recognized as one of the most celebrated and influential production designers in history. He graduated from UM in 1974 with a degree in drama and went on to serve as a designer for 135 television pilots and 54 series.

Guests attending the ceremonies do not need tickets. Parking will be free, and shuttles will run from Missoula College and the Lewis & Clark Villages.

UM is providing additional ADA parking spaces and seating areas for each ceremony. Other accessible accommodations are available on a first come basis. It is recommended that if accessible accommodations are needed, please arrive early. Attendees 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.

The public also can livestream the event on the [Spring 2023 Commencement website](#).

For more information visit [2023 Spring Commencement](#) or email questions to

commencement@umontana.edu.

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM / News / UM Graduate Fights for the Underdog on Path to Law Degree

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM GRADUATE FIGHTS FOR THE UNDERDOG ON PATH TO LAW DEGREE

04 MAY 2023

UM student Stephen Hayes will graduate in May with double majors in history and philosophy, as well as a minor in African-American Studies. His experience at UM has prepared him for his next step toward becoming a lawyer.

By Abigail Lauten-Scrivner, UM News Service

MISSOULA – The tale of David and Goliath is well known. Simply put, the underdog, against all odds, triumphs against the bigger, bullish opponent. University of Montana senior Stephen Hayes wants to add to the story: He wants to support the Davids of the world as their lawyer.

“I feel compelled to be on the side of David fighting against Goliath. Fighting for the little guy is something that’s important to me,” Hayes said. “Because that’s the case, it naturally lends to wanting to investigate that from an academic standpoint.”

A nontraditional undergraduate and member of the **Davidson Honors College**, Hayes spent the past four years doing just that. While taking on extra legal work and volunteering, he achieved double majors in **history** and **philosophy**, as well as a minor in **African-American Studies**. Facing the bittersweet moment of graduation, the rigors of UM’s programs have brought Hayes one step closer to his goal of representing the underdog in a court of law.

For most of Hayes’ life though, he commanded audiences from a concert stage rather than a courtroom.

His journey into academia began in the early 2000s at his local college, the University of Denver, where he applied his talent as a musician to his major, music. After a few semesters, Hayes realized studying music was stifling his enjoyment of it. Needing a change of scenery, he left for Missoula in 2004, sight unseen, to connect with musician friends who attended UM.

“I wasn’t intending on staying here permanently, but I just enjoyed Missoula,” he said.

Hayes spent the next several years playing local gigs – primarily rock and blues but sometimes funk, while also working day jobs. Eventually, he began feeling unfulfilled at work, giving way to aspirations of law school.

Hayes looked to his new hometown’s college and enrolled in UM in spring 2019, choosing his combination of majors and minors to gain the cultural and historical context needed to represent marginalized groups as a lawyer.

UM’s initial allure was proximity. Hayes submitted multiple transfer applications his first year, but in scrutinizing other opportunities he was pleasantly surprised to find that, this time, his hometown university was the best fit.

“It was a benefit to have the University right here in my backyard, but I wanted to make sure it was the right place for me, and I gave myself other options to make sure of that,” Hayes said. “Ultimately, it was the right place”

Part of what made UM right was the deep connections he forged with faculty. As a nontraditional student, Hayes found community and mentorship through relationships with professors throughout his departments.

“My ability to be as successful as I have been at the University is in no small part due to the amazing faculty and staff that have allowed me to flourish here,” Hayes said. “These are people I know I will continue to be in touch with for the rest of my life.”

They were equally impressed with him, and would go on to lift up Hayes’ academic efforts.

“Immediately, he stood out as a student who was not only uncommonly conscientious, but plain brilliant,” said Dr. Tobin Miller Shearer, who taught Hayes in several courses. “That’s been the case with every class he’s taken with me.”

Shearer, a UM history professor, also serves as director of African-American Studies and director of history graduate studies. What made Hayes stand out from the hundreds of students Shearer has taught, he said, is his creative historical insight.

It was in Shearer’s advanced writing in history course that Hayes wrote a paper demonstrating that novel insight, earning him the **Richard Drake Writing Award** for excellence in writing, imagination in research and force of argument. The paper was written at an unprecedented level that not only described history but interpreted it through an original lens, providing a new way for historians to understand the past, Shearer said. Hayes recently presented it at the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference in Washington.

The paper focused on grassroots activism in Black communities of Chicago during the Civil Rights Movement, asking historians to rethink the assumption that activists resisted within a violent or nonviolent binary. His argument reframed resistance as a continuum where activists frequently traversed to and from ends of the spectrum.

Hayes also gained experience for his career goals by working part time for a local civil litigation law firm. He also volunteers with Court Appointed Special Advocate of Missoula.

CASA advocates speak on behalf of vulnerable abused and neglected children in the court system. The work and the emotional toll it takes can be difficult. But knowing that a child's life is even marginally better gives Hayes a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

"I consider that a win; it doesn't matter how much work or effort," Hayes said. "Any child that ends up there, they're in a difficult situation."

Between his academic and extracurricular pursuits, Hayes also continued to play music for his own enjoyment and for creative assignments. He composed a piano piece in one of Shearer's classes that connected to academic themes explored that semester, leaving him impressed with both Hayes' talent and inventiveness.

After graduation, Hayes will work full time for the law firm and study for the Law School Admission Test. The connections he made at UM also feel bittersweet about Hayes' departure, but excited for his next step and the impact he will go on to make.

"He's going to be the kind of person who gets the attention of those around him just by his sheer excellence, and will bring his intellect to bear on the world's problems in a way that is free of cynicism and full of the highest ethical conduct," Shearer said. "That's going to take him to good places. That's going to make a difference in the world."

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo

University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Student a Finalist for Prestigious Fellowship as Graduation Looms

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

UM STUDENT A FINALIST FOR PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP AS GRADUATION LOOMS

03 MAY 2023

Lucy Portman, a UM master's student prepares for graduation.

MISSOULA – As graduation draws near, University of Montana master’s student Lucy Portman finds herself busier than ever – and in one of the best ways she never expected.

Out of over 10,000 individuals from around the world, Portman is one of 850 finalists for the prestigious Presidential Management Fellows program.

According to Portman, the PMF “is an opportunity through the federal government for the development of leaders who are just graduating with advanced degrees.”

The PMF rewards its finalists with more than just recognition.

“Finalists apply for two-year fellowship positions that not only fast-track you to a federal agency, but provide hands-on training and rotational assignments for a career in public service,” Portman said.

Originally from **Cincinnati**, Portman spent many summers in Montana with her family, which sparked her love for the environment that has only burned brighter with time, leading to her interest in conservation.

After graduating from Whitman College in **Walla Walla, Washington**, where she received her undergraduate degree in biology with a minor in chemistry after doing her thesis in East Africa, Portman spent some time working abroad in Australia conducting wildlife research.

In Australia, Portman’s interests began to turn from the “natural” side of conservation to the human dimensions of natural resource conservation.

This newfound interest in people drew her to take a position with the National Park Service in **Seattle** as an Outdoor Recreation Planning Fellow, where she fell in love with public service.

Public service drove Portman to UM to receive her Master of Science in environmental studies degree.

During her time at UM, Portman did more than work toward her degree. Portman also completed the Natural Resource Conflict Resolution Certificate under the revered tutelage of the program’s director, Professor Shawn Johnson.

In addition, Portman completed a fellowship with the National Forest Foundation.

Portman's appreciation for her advisers, professors and peers at UM runs deep. She noted that UM's small-sized program makes it unique.

"UM is such a supportive place, especially the students," Portman added. "It's just great to have such support from your peers."

As she prepares to walk across her second graduation stage, Portman looks forward to the opportunities with the National Forest Service and National Park Service thanks to her finalist status with the PMF. Because of students like Portman, **UM recently was named America's No. 1 university for community and national service.**

When asked for any words of advice to those who aim to follow in her footsteps, she said, "find balance and say 'yes' to different professional opportunities."

###

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

[Accessibility](#)

[A to Z](#)

[Directory](#)

[Campus Map](#)

[Campus Safety](#)

[Employment](#)

[Refer A Griz](#)





COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

GRADUATE REALIZES MUSICAL THEATER DREAM AT UM

02 MAY 2023

By Kyle Spurr, UM News Service

Emily Albright accomplished a life-long goal by graduating from UM with a bachelor's degree in musical theater.

MISSOULA – Emily Albright was at a crossroads in spring 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic began. She

earned an associate degree in musical theater from a Wyoming college, but had to finish her classes online.

Albright, who grew up in the small mountain town of **Nederland, Colorado**, dreamed of pursuing musical theater but the pandemic kept her from the stage. She decided to take a year off from her studies and in that time took advice from her college voice teacher. The teacher encouraged her to apply to the **University of Montana's School of Theatre and Dance**, where he was an alumnus.



“He suggested I look into this school, and I fell in love with it,” Albright said.

Albright enrolled at UM in fall 2021 and made the most of her time on campus. She performed in shows every season and discovered a passion for choreography and entertainment and theater management.

Two years later, Albright will graduate with her bachelor's degree in musical theater, realizing a life-long goal. Her passion for theater and dance began at a young age when her grandmother took her to a production of “Mama Mia!” From that day on, Albright said, she would dance in her living room, create her own musicals and follow that enthusiasm through high school and college.

“It’s so corny but I’ve dreamed of getting this degree my whole life,” she said. “Coming up to it is very surreal. It’s always what I wanted to do and I did it.”

Before she arrived in Missoula, Albright connected with UM's School of Theatre and Dance faculty. She remembers talking with Erin McDaniel, program coordinator with the School of Theatre and Dance, and immediately felt at home.

"I talked with Erin and she was so welcoming and I could just tell the program itself was like a family," Albright said. "Just hearing about the school from her, it seemed like a perfect fit."

McDaniel was just as impressed. She hired Albright as her "office elf," the endearing name given to student workers who take on the clerical duties of the school.

"I could just tell there was something special about Emily even before she formally interviewed with me for the student-employee position, but that first hour of getting to know her more fully solidified what I hoped to find: Emily is creative, centered, thoughtful, disciplined and a heck of a lot of fun," McDaniel said. "All the things that make her a delight to watch on stage also make her a dynamo in the office."

McDaniel admires how Albright handled balancing a packed academic schedule, and work obligations – all while pursuing her artistic craft.

"She's a young woman with true vision and agency about her future and the myriad paths it can take," McDaniel said.

It's hard for Albright to pick a highlight of studying at UM. There are so many to choose from. She notes the opportunities to be the dance captain for "She Loves Me" and the assistant choreographer for "Cabaret." And she recently finished performing in "Men on Boats." Such performances can take 20 hours a week outside of class time for five to six rehearsal weeks along with the actual shows.

Albright also found time last fall to work as the head of production for a Los Angeles-based podcast, "What Are Friends For Podcast," which allowed her to gain real world experience. Working on the podcast complimented Albright's interest in entertainment management. She will graduate with a postsecondary certificate in entertainment management, along with a dance wellness certificate and dance minor.

"I was interested in the podcast because I'm going down that road of entertainment management and I'm really interested in those kinds of roles," Albright said. "It was one more thing that was added to my plate, but it was such a great opportunity."

Pam Stiehl, an associate professor in UM's School of Theatre and Dance, said she is in awe of Albright's ability to do so much and remain a positive force in the school.

"Given Emily's completion of multiple degrees in theater, dance, media, entertainment management, she exemplifies a template as to what the 21st century performance artist looks like," Stiehl said. "Our school owes her such a depth of gratitude for her contributions, both onstage and in the trenches."

After she walks across the stage at graduation, Albright will have several career options such as casting director or a theater's business administrator. She remembers hearing from naysayers in high school who questioned career opportunities in theater and she even considered becoming a veterinarian or lawyer instead.

She credits her mother for always backing her dream of a life in theater. It's support she doesn't take for granted today.

"I went through so many different ideas and paths and then I just came back to it," Albright said. "My mom always told me to do what I love and this is what I love and this is what I wanted to do."

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo

University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz





UM evolutionary biologist Doug Emlen holds an elk antler as part of a documentary about animal weapons.

MISSOULA – Douglas Emlen, a Regents Professor of Evolutionary Biology, got quite the surprise Tuesday at the University of Montana.

Dr. Emlen, a noted researcher and author, was teaching his Genetics and Evolution class to 200 students in Urey Lecture Hall. They were learning about cancer – not the most uplifting

subject – when he was interrupted. His colleague Rich Bridges, another distinguished UM Regents Professor, appeared and marched boldly to the front of the class, handing Emlen a cell phone.

The esteemed scientist on the line (David Hillis of the University of Texas at Austin) informed Emlen he had been selected for induction into the National Academy of Sciences. Emlen becomes only the second person ever chosen for the honor from UM and only the fifth from Montana.

A stunned Emlen forgot to shut off his microphone, so the entire class of students learned the news at the same moment as him. They broke into several rounds of applause and cheers.

“I’m still having a hard time processing it,” Emlen said. “It’s an incredible honor, and I can’t help feeling there are so many others who are more worthy. It was a bit hard to concentrate on my class after receiving that news.

“This honor comes with a great deal of responsibility – to help inform our government and policymakers, and to be an active ambassador for science,” he said. “I love that the National Academy is a real champion for science, and I’m excited to become a part of that.”

The NAS is a private, nonprofit institution that was first established under a congressional charter signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. It recognizes achievements in science by election to membership, and – with the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Medicine – provides science, engineering and health policy advice to the federal government and other organizations.

UM’s **other NAS member is Jim Elser**, director of UM’s Flathead Lake Biological Station, who was elected to the prestigious group in 2019.

“This is an incredible honor for Doug and well deserved,” said Scott Whittenburg, UM vice president for research and creative scholarship. “Membership in the National Academy for many disciplines is only surpassed by a Nobel Prize. For UM to have two active members in the NAS speaks to the world-class research being conducted by our faculty.”

The son of a scientist, Emlen earned his doctorate from Princeton University in 1994 and was a postdoctoral researcher at Duke University before joining the UM faculty in 1994.

Emlen's research has focused on why certain animal species get into evolutionary arms races that result in massive weaponry, like the (relatively) huge horns of many beetles, the antlers of elk, the claws of fiddler crabs or the teeth of saber-toothed tigers.

With one of his first study species, dung beetles, Emlen learned that weaponry like bigger horns usually provide the most access to females, as big-horned males guard tunnels to their mates. Bigger horns usually win beetle battles. However, evolving massive horns eats up resources, and some smaller, faster males of the same species will forgo this cost altogether to reach females via side tunnels and pass on their genes. So bigger is usually better, but evolution makes exceptions.

In 2020, Emlen was named a Regents Professor, the highest professor rank in the Montana University System. In 2016, he became the first researcher from any Montana institution to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He earned a Presidential Early Career Award in 2002, the E.O. Wilson Naturalist Award in 2013 and UM's Distinguished Teaching Award in 2014. He was named the Montana Professor of the Year in 2015 from the Carnegie Foundation and Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Emlen also is an accomplished author. His 2015 book "Animal Weapons: The Evolution of Battle" earned the Phi Beta Kappa science book of the year in 2015. The textbook he coauthored, "Evolution: Making Sense of Life," is used by more than 250 universities and colleges and is in its third edition. He also wrote a book for middle school readers, "Beetle Battles: One Scientist's Journey of Adventure and Discovery," which was released in 2019.

Additionally, a national organization recently ranked Emlen's ecology and evolution program among the top 25 globally, above such universities as Arizona State, Yale, Harvard and Princeton.

Six years ago, NOVA and Britain's BBC partnered to create a documentary about Emlen's work titled "Nature's Wildest Weapons: Horns, Tusks and Antlers." It includes a memorable scene where the horse Emlen is riding near Flathead Lake is bluff-charged by an elk. His research also has been featured in outlets such as The New York Times, National Public Radio's "Fresh Air" and "Science Friday," "SciShow" on YouTube and "MeatEater."

Emlen even has lectured for the U.S. military, which is interested in how naturally occurring arms races in the animal world can shed light on the escalation of human weapon systems, like Minuteman nuclear missiles.

The professor has been published in major scientific journals. Twenty of his articles have been cited over 100 times, and his top eight have been cited more than 300 times, signaling a body of work that is broadly respected and has far-reaching influence around the globe.

###

Contact: Doug Emlen, UM Regents Professor of Evolutionary Biology, 406-243-2535, doug.emlen@mso.umt.edu.

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Student Veteran Shows Opportunity Abounds After Military Service



MILITARY AND VETERANS, COLLEGE OF HEALTH

UM STUDENT VETERAN SHOWS OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS AFTER MILITARY SERVICE

01 MAY 2023

UM student Jacqueline Moore served for 19 years in U.S. Air Force before going on to earn an integrative physiology degree with a concentration in exercise science, making the Dean's List on more than one occasion.

MISSOULA – The road to graduation for University of Montana student Jacqueline Moore was a winding one, to say the least.

For over 19 years the native Californian served in the U.S. Air Force, stationed at bases as far afield as Charleston, South Carolina and Guam. Along the way she got married and had three children before her final duty station at Malmstrom Air Force Base in **Great Falls**.

Of all the family moves, Moore said, the move to the Treasure State was the biggest shock to their systems.

“We were stationed in all warm bases, so we weren’t super thrilled to move to Montana,” she said, “but now we love it here.”

That affection for their adopted state played a role in her decision to enroll in UM’s **College of Health**. She would go on to earn a degree in Integrative Physiology with a concentration in Exercise Science, making the Dean’s List on more than one occasion.

Moore, right, and her family were stationed to multiple bases over the years before her final duty station to Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls.

Moore said her interest in exercise science and physical therapy stemmed from personal experience in the Air Force, when she suffered injuries needing surgery and physical therapy.

“I started thinking, what do I want to do when I leave the military? And integrative physiology and physical therapy are fascinating,” she said. “Your creating customized exercise programs for people who are recovering from injury and illness.”



In addition to providing students with job-ready skills, UM’s undergraduate program in integrative physiology also prepares them for advanced professional studies. Moore will start

this fall in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at UM.

Her daughter, Cadence Moore, will also be joining her as a Griz when she enrolls in Integrative Physiology Pre-Athletic Training program.

“I’ll try not to embarrass her, when we see each other on campus,” Moore joked.

Luke Alford, Moore’s adviser in the **School of Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training**, said her acceptance into the highly competitive graduate program is a testament to her scholastic fortitude. Her journey to get here – serving in the military, raising a family – is, likewise, an inspiration.

This persistence was recognized when Moore won the Thomas Whiddon Award, given by the school’s faculty and chair to students who have demonstrated persistence in overcoming obstacles to their education. Whiddon was a Professor Emeritus of Health and Human Performance at UM.

“It’s always impressive when a student achieves at Jacqueline’s level, but what makes her extraordinary is how she’s found success in the face of countervailing forces,” Alford said. “Perhaps the best part, though, is that anyone who knows Jacqueline knows she’s got a standout personality too. She’s quick with a smile and a big, loud laugh!

“Having her positivity and personality around has been amazing” he added. “Getting to know and work with students like Jacqueline is the best part of the job.”

Professor John Quindry, the school’s chair, says of Moore:

“Jacqueline is a prime example of plucky, the Griz spirit, and a student that has overcome the innumerable challenges presented in the COVID-19 era.”

In additions to her studies, Moore works in UM’s Military and Veteran Services Office providing her insights and assistance to veteran students on campus. Some 1,000 military-affiliated students attend UM, which has garnered national recognition for the programming and support provided to veterans and their families.

Patrick Beckwith, director of UM’s Military and Veteran Services, said Moore’s commitment to

learning new skills and pursuing a different occupation has been a role model for veterans enrolling at UM.

“Jacqueline's commitment to rebranding herself after military service and discovering a new passion is an inspiration to her peers,” Beckwith said. “She overcame the difficulties of a non-traditional student balancing part-time jobs, internships and commitment to raising her children while maintaining a full academic schedule.

Moore admitted switching from military to civilian life can be daunting.

“But I would tell veterans this is totally worth it,” she said. “It’s like getting a second life.”

###

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

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo



University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz



UM / News / UM Partners with Health Care Industry to Develop Apprenticeship Programs

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, COLLEGE OF HEALTH

UM PARTNERS WITH HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

01 MAY 2023

MISSOULA – The University of Montana and Montana Department of Labor & Industry are partnering to become the state's first apprenticeship intermediary.

Through UM's Office of Health Research and Partnership, the University will collaborate with health care and public health-industry partners to create, launch and expand health-related apprenticeship programs.

"Using intermediaries like the University of Montana will help the department leverage resources that expand the apprenticeship program's capacity to fill in-demand and highly skilled positions across Montana," said Montana Registered Apprenticeship Director Glen Disque. "They will become an aggregation point for a number of employers to train the next generation of sorely needed health care professionals. The best part about it: The apprentices will be working full time in hospitals meeting critical workforce shortages while progressing through the program."

Throughout the partnership, UM will handle the administrative requirements of a registered apprenticeship program, provide technical assistance to employers and offer the coursework components. This will allow employers to focus on developing a highly skilled workforce by providing the supervision and on-the-job training components of an apprenticeship program.

"Each and every new apprenticeship added in our state helps build Montana's workforce and fill much needed gaps with highly skilled employees," said Montana Department of Labor & Industry Commissioner Laurie Esau.

To launch the partnership, UM will start with three apprenticeship programs.

"The three programs launching this summer will be in high-need areas in health care and public health and feature an accelerated training model with online instruction to ensure those in rural Montana can participate," said Lily Apedaile, director of the UM Office of Health Research & Partnership.

The first apprenticeship program will be for community health workers and is part of the UM Community Health Workers Training Program being developed by the UM Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development.

"Community Health Workers are trusted front-line public health workers who have a close understanding of the communities they serve. CHWs can serve in direct service, community organizing and community capacity-building roles in a variety of settings across health care, public health, nonprofits and community-based organizations," said Mackenzie Petersen, director of the UM CHW training program. "The CHWs that are trained in this program will work

to address health equity and improve health outcomes for the communities they serve.”

The second apprenticeship program will be part of the Missoula College Medical Assisting program.

“The medical assistant apprenticeship program will increase access to a robust medical assisting program while allowing participants to stay and train in their community,” said Michelle Boller, Missoula College Medical Assisting program director. “This program has been adapted so that it is not only for adult learners but high schoolers as well, to help employers develop a workforce pipeline.”

The third apprenticeship program that will launch this summer is for integrated behavioral health managers. The goal of this program is to develop a behavioral health workforce for primary care settings that tackle the dire need for behavioral health services in the state.

“These three programs are a great starting point for piloting the apprenticeship intermediary model, and we see a lot of potential for expanding this model,” Apedaile said. “We plan to work with other industry partners to identify other health-related apprenticeship program needs, along with supporting high schools to establish health science pre-apprenticeship programs to create a comprehensive health care workforce pipeline.”

###

Contact: Lily Apedaile, director, UM Office of Health Research and Partnership, 406-243-7946, lily.apedaile@mso.umt.edu

[Launch UM virtual tour.](#)

University of Montana logo

University Operator
406-243-0211

Contact Us

32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Accessibility

A to Z

Directory

Campus Map

Campus Safety

Employment

Refer A Griz

