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Montana Kaimin, November 1, 2017

Students of the University of Montana, Missoula

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FACING THE UNKNOWN:

UM STAFF FACE UNCERTAINTY AS CAMPUS BRACES FOR MORE CUTS

NEWS Marching band fundraises a trip to... Bozeman
ARTS Even Lil Pump couldn’t save ‘Lit Party’
SPORTS Lady Griz regroup after injury
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LOST OR FOUND

Lost slides of Africa in old Kodak carousel box. Last had in the Chemistry Building or McGill Hall, two weeks ago. If found please call John at 406-251-2337. There is a reward for returned items.

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HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week’s Sudoku:

Helping you navigate college life one article at a time.

WELCOME TO THE WEEKLY CROSSWORD!

Copyright 2017 by The Puzzle Syndicate
Hello to our dedicated, sometimes adoring and often justifiably critical Kaimin readers! You may have noticed that once a week, your trusted source for all things campus news and student debauchery dedicates an entire page to something called an “editorial.” Editorials typically consist of the Kaimin’s thoughts on topics like why we ought to abolish the university presidency, why NCAA players should unionize or our general thoughts on how to fix the problems at the University of Montana. However, it has recently become clear to us that not everyone knows exactly what the hell an editorial is. Why is there no byline? Who writes these? How much money did George Soros funnel into the Kaimin last year? (Editor’s note: Not nearly enough.)

Every Wednesday, the print edition of the Kaimin publishes two pages of opinion pieces. One page features an op-ed from the sage and sassy Cal Reynolds on the intersection of student life and queer politics, and an op-ed from Cayley Boyd on topics like the benefits of hugging nontraditional students and how the economy is controlled by ghosts.

The other Opinion page features a consistently adorable and affirming cartoon by Rene Sanchez. Above that sits the Kaimin Editorial. Contrary to popular belief, the editorial is not the brainchild of our benevolent dictator, editor-in-chief Michael Siebert, but instead a collaborative process undertaken by the entire editorial staff. In fact, Michael hasn’t written one in a while and the rest of us are starting to get a bit tired of picking up her slack.

Editorials were once ubiquitous among practically all newspapers. Some of them were even fun to read, like Francis P. Church’s “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus,” published in The New York Sun in 1897. This editorial answered an 8-year-old’s reasonable and straightforward question about the presence of good ole’ St. Nick with the sentence, “He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.”

Today, newspapers, both collegiate and not, continue utilizing the editorial as an opportunity for the paper to take a unified stance on an issue affecting its readership. Unlike the regular opinion column, which is the product of a single writer, often on the narrow set of topics that columnist is qualified to write about, the editorial is collaborative and wide-ranging in the issues it addresses.

The editorial writing process at the Kaimin goes as follows: Every week, we editors discuss prominent issues affecting our university that we think are underexplored or deserve consideration from a student perspective. We often argue about what stance the Kaimin should take on these issues, and we don’t approve of the editorial topic until the entire room is in agreement. Then, whichever editor feels most passionately, or is most informed, about the topic that week takes the writing reins, with the rest of the editorial staff providing writing and editing assistance. Then we refuse to reveal who wrote the editorial, so that when someone inevitably gets upset about it, they direct all their ire at the editor-in-chief. It works out remarkably well for everyone involved.

LIKE IT? HATE IT? WISH WE WERE DEAD?
Email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com
OPINION

KAIMIN COLUMN

Queeries: Having gay friends doesn’t mean you get to be an asshole

My sister is a lesbian and she said it’s still OK for me to make gay jokes. Is she right?

My dude, if this is such a huge deal for you, please buy a “Mr. Bean” DVD and a joke book. If lesbian humor is the cornerstone of your comedy, you should probably do some serious self-reflection.

The first thing that I’d like to point out is that your sister — or any gay or trans person in your life, for that matter — doesn’t speak for all LGBTQ people. If a particular comment doesn’t offend her specifically, that doesn’t mean that every other lesbian would also be OK with it. Furthermore, your sister doesn’t have the lived experience of a gay man or a nonbinary person, for example. She doesn’t get to make a determination on all LGBTQ-related humor just because she occupies a small portion of that group.

This concept applies to more than just jokes. LGBTQ people can’t really give a cisgender or straight person permission to use slurs or other homophobic and transphobic language. Slurs have a history of being used to dehumanize a particular group, and saying them to make a point or as a joke can be extremely hurtful to a gay or trans person.

Basically, slurs should only be used by someone within a community trying to reclaim that language. For example, the word “queer” has been used as a slur for hundreds of years, but I use it to describe myself because I’m reclaiming it and because I am queer. Some people still feel that it’s too offensive to use, and that’s OK. I don’t call them queer. It’s as simple as that.

If you’re worried about offending people, maybe just don’t say anything at all. Your reputation doesn’t live or die on your hilarious trans joke. What is it about being gay or trans that’s so funny? What is it about slurs that makes you want to use them? What does it say about you that you actively sought out permission to be homophobic? You don’t get to be rude just because you have a token gay friend who can stand hanging out with you.

Even phrases like, “Not to be homophobic, but,” indicate that you know what you’re about to say is homophobic. It doesn’t cease to be homophobic because you added a lazy disclaimer. It’s like saying, “No offense,” or, “With all due respect.”

You’re not actually being respectful, you’re just trying to cover your ass. Stop using your gay friends to cover your ass.

Got a queery? Send any questions you have to calreynolds.queeries@gmail.com. Ask me what you’ve been afraid to ask or what you’ve always wanted to know. Your name and any other personal information will not be published.

KAIMIN COLUMN

Involvement, not attendance, is the key to educational success

In my many storied years here at the University of Montana, I have taken a variety of classes that have mandatory attendance policies as a significant part of semester grades. The punishments for missing class usually are as follows (or similar): After one week’s worth of missed classes, for every additional class you miss your final grade decreases by some percentage. Can we, uh, not do that anymore?

It should be acknowledged first and foremost that there are some classes in which discussion is facilitated most effectively when everybody shows up. My Russian class, for example, relies heavily on group discussion in order to practice conversational Russian. Incidentally, my favorite Russian proverb? “Life is misery.” It makes sense that you should encourage students in whatever way possible to come to class so the classroom experience is as fulfilling as possible.

That being said, having mandatory attendance policies doesn’t necessarily enforce active participation in class. There are better ways to let kids know that you like it when they show up.

I am an individual who gets sick every four months on the dot. When I get sick, I get really sick. It’s noticeable and annoying to everyone I come within three feet of. Mandatory attendance policies make sick individuals sicker and make their classmates sick as well. I have had to do massive cost benefit analysis to assess whether or not skipping an extra day of class is worth 2.5 percent off my final grade. And yeah, I’m a try-hard, so it’s pretty much never worth it. Class commences, and I sit there sweaty as hell, unable to swallow and popping Ricolas in my mouth every five minutes. You can bet your bottom dollar that my attendance is not representative of enthusiastic participation in any way, shape or form.

So what’s the point? Is my phlegm-ridden corpse’s 100 percent attendance rate really more valuable to the classroom than some kid who misses six classes over the course of a semester but really makes an effort every other day? Why is there such an emphasis on mandatory attendance, when a far superior metric of engagement is participation?

Furthermore, the most compelling reason for students to come to class is when those classes are valuable to them in terms of content. I understand that there are those who think undergrads have trouble with self-direction, and that might be true to a certain extent, but since when is some punitive policy designed to get their asses in seats going to fix that?

There’s a massively easy fix to this, my friends. Abolish mandatory attendance, make students want to come to class, grade for participation, rinse and repeat.

CAYLEY BOYD

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I realized recently that my phone hasn't actually been turned off in months. It's always on, and always near me. Like many other people my age, my phone is the last thing I look at before bed and the first thing I look at in the morning. I have a routine: check texts, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, the news, student email, personal email. Sometimes my thumb just hovers over the home screen looking for a square I haven't clicked on yet. By the time I reach the end of the cycle, there's new information on each platform, and I could refresh endlessly.

Sometimes I do, and it feels like I'm throwing time away. I would be horrified to learn how much time I've spent aimlessly scrolling through information I don't actually absorb, watching cat videos or those sped up food-preparing videos that automatically play when I scroll past them. But I feel that it's too much time, and it's starting to bug the shit out of me. A 2016 Nielsen company audience report found that Americans spend an average of 10 hours and 39 minutes a day looking at screens. If I'm within that average, I'm concerned about it.

Now I'm not saying we shouldn't be looking at screens at all. I use my laptop in class to take notes and to write papers, and I'm glad we are moving in a paperless direction as a university and society. I follow people on social media who inspire me and teach me new things every day, and I value being connected to a global community like that. It's the amount of time I spend scrolling through apps on my phone that feels, well, like an addiction. And I see it in my peers, too. Like when I'm having a conversation with someone and they get a text mid-sentence. It's like a switch goes off in their brain and they go somewhere else.

"Did I tell you about the bzzz -- "
Their attention immediately shifts to their phone, and I look at them, waiting for them to continue their sentence. Instead they read the text, answer it, and then look up at me like they're surprised I'm there.

"What was I saying?"

It feels to me like we're all controlled by it. Maybe I'm old fashioned. Real life and technology used to be more clearly separated. As a kid, I only watched TV at designated times, and it was always with company: “Seinfeld” with my family every week, plus the occasional movie. If I wanted to use the computer, it was for a specific reason — to write an email or a paper for class, to do research. Then I’d shut it off and resume my life. But now, with a mini computer in my pocket at all times, it demands my attention, and I'm weak to ignore it.

There are plenty of studies about the health effects of too much screen time: sleep deprivation, anxiety, a reduced ability to recognize emotions in other people, depression from comparing your own life to the expertly cultivated social media lives of others. For me, the most frustrating thing is noticing how strong my impulse is to check my phone and get sucked into bottomless scrolling throughout the day. Despite my ability to recognize that feeling, I haven't been successful at regularly resisting it.

Some of my friends have begun creating rules for themselves. To combat early morning scrolling while lying in bed next to her partner, my friend Georgia made a no-phones-in-bed rule. It helps the two of them end the day engaging with each other, and begin it the same way.

Over the years, I've learned that I have a very non-addictive personality, but in this case, I think I'm ready for some rules. With technology, I feel less in control. I've noticed my attention span become shorter, and my need for instant gratification, which technology easily provides, grow larger. I sometimes feel anxious if I accidentally leave my phone at home. What if someone needs me? What if there's an emergency and I can't be reached? What if someone gets annoyed at me for not responding to them within the hour? These days, we're expected to get back to people instantly, lest we be rude.

People do great things when they dedicate their time and attention to something. Einstein's theory of relativity required hours and hours of undivided attention. Had he been part of a group text that buzzed every couple minutes, I'm not sure he could have kept his focus. I don't need to be the next Einstein, but I do have to wonder: By shrinking my attention span, am I losing something that's vital for in-depth inquiry and learning?

I recently watched “The End of the Tour,” a movie about writer David Foster Wallace and former Rolling Stone journalist David Lipsky, who spent a few days with Wallace during his “Infinite Jest” book tour. Wallace had a TV addiction, which he dealt with by not owning a TV. He also wrote a lot about the dangers of technology and easy pleasure. During the movie, Wallace and Lipsky have a conversation that struck me as frighteningly true (albeit dystopian) using a racy but effective metaphor.

Wallace: I'm not saying watching TV is bad, or a waste of your time any more than, like, masturbation is bad or a waste of your time. It's a pleasant little way to spend a few minutes. But if you're doing it 20 times a day, if your primary sexual relationship is with your hand, something is wrong.

Lipsky: Yeah, except with masturbation at least some action is being performed, right? Isn't that better?

Wallace: Yes, you're performing muscular movements with your hand as you're jerking off. But what you're really doing, I think, is you're running a movie in your head. You're having a fantasy relationship with somebody who is not real, strictly to stimulate a neurological response. So as the internet grows in the next 10, 15 years, and virtual reality pornography becomes a reality, we're gonna have to develop some real machinery inside our guts to turn off pure, unalloyed pleasure. Or, I don't know about you, I'm going to have to leave the planet. Cause the technology is just gonna get better and better. And it's gonna get easier and easier, and more and more convenient, and more and more pleasurable, to sit alone with images on a screen, given to us by people who do not love us but want our money. And that's fine in low doses, but if it's the basic staple of your diet, you're gonna die.

Lipsky: Well, come on.

Wallace: In a meaningful way, you're gonna die.
CAMPUS LIFE
As UM’s infrastructure grows, open spaces shrink

RODIE COSTAIN
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A patched together water main and heavy equipment fill the
dug-out, fenced-off area behind the Phyllis J. Washington Educa-
tion Center, a space previously claimed by a red oak, Douglas fir
and large lawn.

According to Kevin Krebsbach, director of planning and con-
struction, the site is the future home of a 500-seat auditorium
and more classroom and program space. But it’s also another loss
of green space at UM, which as the state arboretum, always has to
take the trees.

Since 2007, UM added the Gilkey Executive Education Build-
ing, the Payne Family Native American Center and Don An-
derson Hall, all marking reductions in the amount of open space
on campus.

On sunny days, open spaces like the Oval are filled with stu-
dents playing frisbee and doing homework. Professors often teach
classes on the grass between Jeannette Rankin Hall and Don An-
derson Hall or under the trees in front of the Liberal Arts building.

“I know [students], our faculty, staff, myself and our planners
all value the green space,” Krebsbach said. “But we do see a need
to expand campus in an intelligent, thoughtful manner.”

In order to control the University’s expansion, the 2002 Master
Plan for UM’s main campus outlined all spaces that could be built
on, most of which have been used. The education building site had
some extra room, and Krebsbach said the current expansion was
planned two years ago.

Before any construction begins, UM policy requires the con-
struction department notify the University’s Arboretum Com-
mittee of its plans. The committee must give approval for all tree
removals.

John Goodburn, chair of the Arboretum Committee, said
when a tree is removed, its determined value is added to construc-
tion costs, allowing it to be replaced in the future. But some value
is inevitably lost because a 16-inch diameter oak cannot be bought
to replace the one that was cut down, he said.

While not perfect, guidelines like these help to maintain UM’s
valued green spaces, Krebsbach said.

The Master Plan states the campus landscape can have “life-
long impacts on individuals and can promote the University to
prospective students.” And some green spaces are actually ex-
panding, like the native plant garden by the Natural Sciences
Building.

According to Jeremy Sage, the associate director for the In-
stitute for Tourism and Recreation Research, based at UM, open
spaces on campus are expected, and a part of why students come
to UM.

“Every time people come here, they’re here for the outdoors,”
Sage said. “These open spaces on campus reflect that.”

According to Destination Missoula, in 2009, Rolling Stone
Magazine named UM the most beautiful campus in the U.S. In
2016, in a list from Great Value Colleges, UM ranked eighth as a
beautiful campus at a great value.
The Griz Marching Band will be in the stands and on the field at Griz-Cat in Bozeman, even though UM Athletics isn’t funding their trip. Over $17,000 in donations from family and community members will be footing that bill.

“People have really shown that they value what the band does and they don’t want to see them stay home,” said Dr. Kevin Griggs, the director of the marching band. “The community support has been incredible.”

The band’s travel fund usually comes from UM Athletics, according to Dr. Griggs. He estimated that the band has been travelling to Griz-Cat for over 30 years, but could definitively say they had been making the trip for the 14 years he’s been director.

The underfunded marching band has been playing their shows this season in the shadow of the recently finished Washington-Grizzly Champions Center. The construction of the new training facility cost $14 million in donor money and includes leather couches, a 60-yard turf sprint track and a nutrition bar. In contrast, the marching band eats Costco sandwiches or Domino’s pizza on game days.

“The total cost [of the trip] is $17,750,” Dr. Griggs said. “We used to stay overnight, but we haven’t done that in many years.”

A former GMB member started a GoFundMe for the band, which has raised over $14,000. This exceeds the fundraiser’s original goal of $10,000.

Josh Hungate, a co-section leader for the low brass in the GMB, said the rival schools have bands that are excited to see each other.

“We both want to show a high level of marching band technique,” Hungate, 21, said. “Many of us are friends in some way or another, and it’s always great to see what each school is doing for music [and] shows.”

Joshua Smith, a snare drummer on the Griz drumline, agreed with Hungate that the bands weren’t rivals.

“We are comrades, and we are there to support each other, create music, and to have a good time,” he said.

Dr. Nathan Stark, the director of MSU’s marching band, Spirit of the West, said his band has been asking what they can do to help out the band from their rival school. He also said the bands getting together is an important part of the season.

“In college marching band, especially if the Griz band ends up not coming down, there’s no time when my band gets to see another college marching band live,” he said. “It builds their sense of value in the activity. When it comes to what we do, we have way more in common than we do apart.”

Jarred Clos, a member and manager of the MSU drumline, said that when he first heard the GMB might not have the money to travel to Bozeman, he and most of his marching band were bummed.

“An overwhelming majority of our band piped up and asked if we would be able to fund it directly via our funding or by raising the funds before Griz-Cat,” Clos said. “We felt that GMB would have attempted to do the same had the roles been reversed.”

Clos said while there was a little bit of friendly rivalry between the bands, it was over marching and music technique, not football.

Ryan Martin, UM’s associate director of athletic business operations, said that the band wasn’t given the money to travel because of a deficit in the scholarships for student athletes. He explained the scholarships with an example: If you’re a Lady Griz basketball player, you get a full ride scholarship. And as most students probably know, tuition is rising.

That means that the university has to use more money to pay for the scholarships for athletes, even though they’re still paying the same percentage of their tuition.

“The scholarships we do have get more expensive,” Martin explained.

All of the “self-generated” money from the football program, like ticket sales and NCAA funding, go into one account, called the designated fund. When the athletic department was budgeting this spring, they saw they “had to cut a lot of things,” according to Martin.

In addition to the marching band’s travel budget, money was cut from the spirit squad and travel for other sports. The athletic department also asked the scholarship association for $300,000 to fill the scholarship deficit and tried to generate more revenue with ticket sales.

As to why some of the money that helped build the $14 million dollar Champions Center couldn’t help the band travel, Martin said where the donated money goes is up to donors.

“The money is specifically earmarked by donors for facilities,” he said. “In a perfect world, we would pay for [the band] to go.”

Griz Football head coach Bob Stitt did not respond for comment by publication time.
Walking through the second floor of the Lommasson Center, there’s a lingering silence that follows through the hallways. The cubicles of Griz Central are bare where desks used to sit, full of personality and papers. On any given weekday, one might think that Griz Central must be closed for the day.

In reality, there’s roughly a handful of people waiting to help the occasional student. In the Financial Aid office one Friday in October, it was brutally clear that what used to be several employees separated only by low dividers is now only two friendly faces. Next door, the office of Global Engagement has an empty waiting room with only a single student employee filling the room with the sounds of their typing.

Across campus, students find spaces like the Office of Civic Engagement gutted. There’s no one waiting for someone to walk in, but eventually, if you need assistance, one of the few staff will come to help with a happy greeting and optimism.

Empty rooms have become more common on campus after losing hundreds of employees over the past several years. While students may immediately recognize when a favorite professor moves on, the academic sector of UM is not alone in feeling the effects of the university’s budgetary struggles.

The pressures of declining enrollment and budgeting shortfalls have left a fog of anxiety and discontent over UM’s campus. For years, students, faculty and staff have been stuck wondering what the next blow will be in the fight to pull the university out of a financial low.

What typically first comes to mind when considering the prospect of budget cuts is the effect it will have on faculty. It’s easy to not consider everyone else who helps students on their respective college journeys. These are the people who take out the trash, help students figure out how to pay for college, connect students to employment after graduation and hundreds of other roles that make the university function.

A significant number of these people who support students will soon be gone. And many of them have already left.

Staff from all corners of campus have been a second priority to academic units since 2011 when enrollment started declining.

Since 2014 alone, UM has decreased its staff by 13.9 percent, leaving 105 positions unfilled, according to data from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. In addition, $3,869,282 less is budgeted for contract administrative, classified and contract professional salaries – not including any benefits or waivers. This is 10 percent less than what it was in 2014.

The damaging effects of reduced staff have been undeniable for Vice President of Enrollment and Student Affairs Tom Crady, who has only been at UM for one year.

Departments such as Native American Student Services, Disability Services for Students, Veteran Services, Career Services and more are dealing with a “barebone staff,” Crady said. He added that some staff in those de-
departments are each tasked with attending to the needs of 400 students or more.

Crady said it took UM more than a month longer to process student financial aid than it has in previous years. The reason is understaffing, he said.

The situation is paralleled in the admissions office, where applications were taking over a month in some cases to process, Crady said, a job that should only take 48 hours.

In addition, there are only five recruiters who travel around the country to bring more students to the university. In contrast, Crady said he had 17 recruiters when he worked at Gustavus Adolphus College, which had only about 2,200 students.

Recruiters are away for eight to ten weeks at a time traveling the country without returning to UM, Crady said. This is unusual; they should be taking breaks between every visit for a few days, he said.

One of the biggest consequences of understaffing in departments critical to the success of the university is increased pressure on the individuals who are left, Crady said.

“Pretty much everybody in the office has taken on new responsibilities and in some cases, a whole other job,” Crady said. “It’s lean, no question about it.”

UM has employed a variety of strategies to reduce personnel funding over the past few months. VERIP I and II, the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan, was an effort targeted towards older faculty at UM to offer them buyouts this summer. After VERIP came the temporary announcement that lecturers’ contracts would not be renewed in the spring semester.

Shortly after, near the beginning of the fall semester, there was uncertainty regarding whether lecturers’ contracts would be renewed in the spring.

Now, UM is presenting yet another opportunity for its employees to leave. The next target: Staff.

On Oct. 17, a press release was sent via email announcing voluntary severance packages would be offered to full-time staff at UM. Over 500 staff from across campus have received, and might accept, the opportunity to take a buyout and cut their losses.

Web Services Manager Nick Shontz, 33, said he is already inclined to take the buyout but has not made a final decision.

Shontz said he loves his job and the support he’s received in his position over the years. Despite not intending to leave, the “generous offer” proposed to him, like many others, is almost too good to be true, he said.

Employees who accept the package will receive six months’ salary and a year’s worth of health insurance. They can also opt to take a lump sum of $12,648 instead of the insurance coverage, according to the separation and release agreement.

As the co-founder of local business, GeoFl, a severance package could be the perfect opportunity to work only one job and advance his career.

“People look at me on campus and think it makes sense for me to go,” Shontz said. “And that’s probably true.”

Shontz said that he, like his colleagues, was surprised at the lack of an age component in the severance package offer. He said those around him feel like it’s either a way
to bridge the gap to retirement or take a chance to move on to a new job.

The risk in staying, he said, is the ambiguity surrounding what the consequences will be if a lot of staff members take the offer. He said staff have to ask themselves “Do I want to be here?” when this round of buyouts is over.

Shontz said he is hopeful the buyout strategy is effective in reducing personnel expenditures and that it can help reduce some of the budgetary problems UM has faced. The measure will “force people to become more efficient” in some cases where staff haven’t felt the pressure to, he said.

Outside of work, Shontz plays softball and volunteers with his son’s Boy Scout troop.

Shontz’s wife, Jessica, is also a UM employee – an administrative associate and event coordinator, more specifically. But Jessica was not offered a severance package because she is employed through the University Center, which is an auxiliary unit of UM. Her job allows Nick to stay on her university health insurance as he moves on to GeoFli.

Which employees are eligible to leave is dependent on where they come from. There are those who are employed through UM’s general fund and those who are paid through private contracts and other sources.

One of these exception is UM’s five main auxiliary units, which are not funded in the same way as other parts of campus. These include UM Dining, Curry Health Center, Residence Life, the University Center and Campus Recreation.

Unlike departments like career services and financial aid, auxiliary units operate much more like a business and do not experience UM’s budget problems in the same way.

Steve Thompson, director of Campus Recreation, said his department is “indirectly impacted” by declining enrollment.

“It’s not like we’re just waiting around to see what we get from Helena,” Thompson said. “It does feel better to know that we, in some ways, control our own destiny.”

As a unit that is nearly entirely funded off student fees, Thompson said Campus Recreation has the option to simply not spend the money it doesn’t have.

This, however, doesn’t mean auxiliary units like Thompson’s don’t feel the pressure of declining enrollment, he said. Since 2011, enrollment has decreased by 24.4 percent. And for every one percent decrease in enrollment, Thompson said Campus Recreation’s budget loses nearly $26,000.

Sandy Curtis, Director of Residence Life, said her department relies on the size of incoming classes at UM to fill the residence halls. As occupancy has decreased by approximately 35 percent, Residence Life has been able to compensate by leaving positions vacant instead of rehiring full-time and student staff.

Curtis said she wishes Residence Life could update their facilities, including re-structuring the wireless network and renovating the 11th floors of Jesse and Aber Hall.

Thompson and Curtis both said the biggest challenge the auxiliary units of UM was two years ago when Student Affairs gave $3.2 billion to the general fund to make up for budgeting shortfalls in 2015.
These efforts may have had significant impacts on the university, but the strategic realignments to balance UM’s budget are far from over.

Vice President for Administration and Finance Rosi Keller said UM is “trying to look at all different kinds of options until we align the budget.”

In addition to obvious strategies such as growing enrollment and increasing retention, Keller said reducing the percent of the budget spent on personnel from 89 percent to 75 percent is crucial to the long-term success of the university.

The staff taking the most recent budgeting blow come from all parts of campus from a wide variety of roles. If a staff member is paid exclusively through the general fund, has been working at UM continuously for two years, and is one FTE, they might be leaving.

Andrea Vernon is the director of the Office of Civic Engagement, a program that strives to link educational experiences to the surrounding community. Under this department is the nonprofit administration minor and master’s degree. There are out-of-class service learning opportunities and courses across campus with a service learning component.

Vernon, who sometimes brings her chihuahua to the office, has been the leading the program since 1997.

Vernon’s position as director of civic engagement was cut two years to a half-time position, expanding her job to include a leadership role with campus compact. Other staff members then were forced to compensate for Vernon’s cut, she said.

Vernon said her employees have been faced with significantly larger workloads and higher responsibilities. Despite their willingness and preparedness to take on more difficult jobs, however, civic engagement’s budget didn’t allow for any raises, she said.

“ Asking them to do that (additional work) is one thing,” Vernon said. “But being able to compensate them fairly is a totally different piece of that puzzle that’s absent.”

In addition to FTE reductions, Vernon said Civic Engagement was forced to cut multiple programs that supported students. Pathways, a program designed to help students connect their majors to impactful projects in the community, and service learning classes have been either discontinued or reduced significantly.

The cutting of Civic Leadership, a course that was taught in the honors college by Colleen Kane, was another result of budget cuts to the department. Vernon said students have been expressing their sadness at the loss of the course, also the core piece of curriculum for Pathways.

Vernon said that between cuts to FTE, their programs and courses, the budget cuts created a “perfect storm” against her department. In addition to the concrete losses, Vernon added that there have also been notable cuts to morale as UM employees face the reality of their lack of career development.

“In any job, you want to feel like you have the opportunity to grow,” Vernon said. “That really hasn’t been here in awhile.”

Vernon said she has heard her colleagues voice their frustration: they feel unheard and attacked. Protecting the integrity of UM’s academics is crucial, but the school also relies on its staff to support students in the non-academic aspects of their time here, she said.

“All of those support services that allow students to feel like they can be successful is usually on the backs of staff,” Vernon said. “Nothing can keep going without adequate resources to support it.”

Vernon said staff across campus are waiting anxiously for the APASP recommendations to see if they will continue to “bear the brunt” of budget cuts.

UM President Sheila Stearns said growing enrollment, along with reducing hiring, is one of the university’s top strategies for solving the budget crisis.

Crady said that he feels strongly that buyouts are “better than layoffs.” But if the admissions office becomes any emptier, growing enrollment will become a desperate effort, Crady said.

“There are some areas where we have to be staffed appropriately,” Crady said. “Right now, the way to solve the budget problem is to bring in more students.”

Despite this, students will likely notice many of the faces they are used to seeing every day are no longer there. And with no goal for how many staff will take the severance package, there’s no way to predict how many employees are leaving.

If staff aren’t reduced enough, the severance offers could be extended to part-time employees or those who receive funding both privately and from the general fund.

If staff decide the taking the buyout is a better option than staying, UM could be left understaffed and unprepared.

With the APASP recommendations coming at the end of November, job security could be a prevalent concern across campus.

As Crady said, “the biggest concern is the unknown.”

GLOSSARY

VERIP: Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan, was an effort targeted towards older faculty at UM to offer them buyouts this summer.

FTE: Full-time equivalent based on a 40 hour work week.

AUXILIARY: Units of campus that operate more like a business and don’t rely on the general fund to create their budget.

VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE OFFER: An offer made to all FTE employees paid through the general fund who have been at UM for two continuous years. It includes 6 months’ salary and 1 year of medical and dental insurance.
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ANOTHER LIT STORY

They came for XXXTentacion, they got stuck with Tyga

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The removal of wildly popular domestic abuser and rapper XXXTentacion as the headliner of the Halloween Lit Party had a visible effect on the not-so-lit crowd.

There’s no positive spin on the word “lit” that could accurately describe the show. The most lit part was actually the thousands of audience members rolling, flying and stumbling while donning half-baked costumes.

I hesitate to call the crowd on Oct. 27 “fans” because that would imply they would at least know the words to most songs. Lil Pump’s set lasted 20 minutes and consisted of a vocabulary comprised of, I swear, fewer than 10 words.

But it didn’t need to be this way. I walked onto the floor of the Adams Center with my low expectations already blown out of the water. Famous Dex shined as a performer. He looked comfortable on stage and his set seemed like he actually gave it some thought beforehand. Although I came into the show knowing almost nothing about Dex, the beats and lyrics impressed me and set the tone for what could’ve been a crazy party.

Then the crowd was promised Lil Pump. The Miami rapper’s set was brief, and he gave the audience just what they wanted, nothing more. The hype was intense for the cult rapper. His intro lasted 10 minutes from the moment he signified he was ready by shouting his own name to the minute he actually showed his tattooed face. The songs that had more than three words (or word fragments) in the chorus were lost on the audience. The crowd stood bewildered as he mumbled through his set.

Lil Pump’s 20 minutes in Missoula were done after a third round of “Gucci Gang” chanting, and the party lulled. Rap fans in the crowd painfully displayed Montana versions of the Milly Rock and the Whip through an hour-long DJ set waiting for the new headliner, Tyga.

To keep the crowd awake, the DJs played pop-rap classics, including favorites like Post Malone and Lil Uzi Vert. Although, they probably shouldn’t have cut the sound on Post Malone’s “Congratulations” and trusted that the audience would’ve been able to sing word-for-word today’s most hummable mumble rap.

Tyga delivered the exact mediocre performance I expected. He mobbed the stage after being announced what felt like 10 times. He traded his Gucci for a North Face jacket and tore through songs that people knew but not well enough to get the words right.

Tyga did manage to resurrect the energy in the Adams Center that was left by an hour-long wait between sets. His stale rhymes about not being sober and making tons of cash were the most relatable parts to the largely indifferent non-Tyga crowd. He failed to carry the crowd on any of his solo songs, relying on tracks buoyed by features from other rappers. His raps were an example of beat-to-death lyrics combined with beats and hooks that vaguely resembled modern trends in hip-hop.

“Faded” and “Rack City” were definite hits. “Ayo” was on par. But the quickly-dispersing crowd, a third of which left in the middle of Tyga’s set, told the story of what was surely on a lot of people’s minds: “I’ve had about enough.”

EVENT PREVIEW

Identity matters at university’s annual DiverseU

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People don’t often think of Montana as a prime example of a diverse state. But for over a decade now, DiverseU has been highlighting issues of diversity and providing a forum for students to have thoughtful and engaging conversations. In its 12th year, the two-day event, running Wednesday, Nov. 1, to Thursday, Nov. 2, will feature dozens of panel discussions on a variety of topics, from free speech in the age of the alt-right to the opioid crisis.

Cal Reynolds, DiverseU’s student coordinator and Kaimin columnist, is a senior at UM and has been involved with the organization since January 2016.

“It’s great to help give students the opportunity to have conversations about topics they wouldn’t otherwise be able to have,” said Reynolds.

Patrisse Cullors, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, was last year’s keynote speaker and was greeted with both applause and interruptions from protesters. The keynote speaker of DiverseU this year is LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, the leader of Standing Rock who founded the first resistance camps of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest last year. Her speech will address her activism and work in forming the movement aimed at halting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Allard’s speaking event will take place on Thursday, Nov. 2, from 7-9 p.m. in the University Center’s south ballroom.

On Wednesday there will be presentations on the pursuit of well-being in Native American history from 10:45 a.m. and how trauma has manifested in Native American communities from 1-2:20 p.m.

From 4-5:20 p.m. on Wednesday, there will also be a screening of “When They Were Here,” a student-made documentary about missing and murdered indigenous women.

One of the DiverseU events that Reynolds is most excited about is Wednesday’s presentation on HIV. That takes place from 1-2:20 p.m. and will focus on HIV experiences, what the future holds and AIDS activism.

“I think very few people get the chance to talk to someone who has HIV, and it’s really important for people to learn about,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds thinks the notion of Montana not being a diverse place is incorrect.

“I think those people are often just talking about racial diversity when they mention Montana’s diversity and even if they’re right, that doesn’t mean we can’t talk about race,” they said.

The topic of race will be addressed during Thursday’s “Why Don’t We Talk About Race?” session, which runs from 11 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

Reynolds, who uses they/them pronouns, hopes that after they graduate, DiverseU will continue to stay current on social issues.

“I hope we can allow people to ask more difficult questions and have respectful conversations this year,” they said.

DiverseU is free and open to the public. A full schedule of events is available at www.umt.edu/diverseu.
Food, flesh and cultural heritage collide in UC Gallery exhibit

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From expressing identity to provoking emotion, artists create personal works that inspire others and break the rules of convention. This is evident in the work of April Werle and Nick Gilbert, whose art will be featured in the UC Gallery’s new exhibit, “Flesh and Food,” running until Nov. 17.

Werle creates vibrant and colorful collages on wood panels that she builds herself and paints in layers with house paint. She sets out to express her Filipino heritage and explore what it means to be biracial through her collages.

“I hope, from looking at my art, that people will understand how confusing and complex it can be to be biracial through her collages,” Werle said.

Each of the wood panels represents a different letter that will be colorfully painted and given a unique collage. Werle’s focus will be on the food side of the exhibit and all 17 panels in the exhibit will represent Filipino and American heritage through the names of food dishes.

Werle said that her collage style and use of bright color is inspired by social media and pop culture.

“Making art is very therapeutic to me,” Werle said. “I used to plan everything out but now I just have a general idea in my head and just come up with what I want it to look like as I go along.”

Werle graduated from UM last spring with a bachelor’s degree in fine art and transferred from Montana State University as a freshman after studying architecture and realizing she needed a change.

“I had this moment where I immediately realized that architecture wasn’t for me and what I really wanted to pursue was art,” she said.

In stark contrast to Werle’s paint collages, Nick Gilbert creates dark, hyper-realistic photos of people at their most exposed. Gilbert mainly focused on portraiture.

“I like creating very sharp and detailed images that are also subversive and have a dark humor element to them,” Gilbert said.

Gilbert’s photography in this exhibit will highlight aspects of the human body that are often covered up in photos like wrinkles, scars and rolls.

“I hope people will have some kind of emotional response,” Gilbert said. “My work is a reminder of our human physicality and flesh as body language.”

Gilbert said that he likes to have an uncanny and visceral quality to his work and enjoys collaborating with his subjects and pushing them to a degree. He creates his photos using a hybrid method of film and digital photography and plans to have 10-12 pieces for this art exhibit.

Gilbert has been interested in photography his whole life and plans to create photos of a different sort after this exhibit, photos that are perhaps more accessible.

“I want to make pretty photos that people want to buy and are more home-friendly,” Gilbert said.

Werle and Gilbert’s exhibit “Flesh and Food” will open on Thursday, Nov. 2, from 4-6 p.m. at the UC Gallery.
Griz soccer get bye for Big Sky tourney

Despite the game ending in a 1-1 draw, the mood was celebratory at South Campus Stadium the afternoon of Oct. 27. The Grizzly soccer team, with the point earned from the draw against Portland State, clinched the second seed in the conference and a first-round bye at the Big Sky Conference tournament.

The Griz jumped out to an early lead but a Viking goal late in the first half leveled the match. Montana dominated the second half and overtime, but couldn’t find a game-winning goal.

“It was a very emotional day for the team with the seniors and everything, and we kind of dropped our level a little bit, gave up the goal which is unfortunate but it was a good goal by them,” head coach Mark Plakorus said. “I thought in the second half, as it went on we fought ourselves back into the game.”

Before the game, Montana honored its 10 seniors. In a gesture to the hard work that they’ve put in over the four years at Montana, Plakorus started many of them. For Ashlee Pedersen, a defender from Mead, Washington, there were some special guests in attendance.

“I was really excited because all of my family came, even my grandma, and she is 90, so it was a really big deal that she got to come out here,” Pedersen said.

Montana knew what it needed to clinch the bye before the match began. A draw in another Big Sky match earlier in the day meant one point was good enough. A loss would have dropped the Grizzlies to No. 4, putting them on the same side of the bracket as top-ranked Eastern Washington.

Still, the Grizzlies were playing to win all the way until the end. “We were trying to win,” Plakorus said. “We play to win, and we wanted to get that second goal to win the game and it just didn’t come.”

As the No. 2 seed, Montana will play the winner of Northern Colorado and Sacramento State. The game will take place on Nov. 3 at 11:05 a.m. in Cheney, Wash. Earlier this year, the Griz played a scoreless draw at Northern Colorado and picked up a 1-0 win against Sacramento State at home.

Plakorus and Montana are prepared. They have outshot their opponents in all but one conference game this year and are the best defensive team in the Big Sky, having allowed just 12 goals. Plakorus said they aren’t worried as much about scouting as getting rest.

“It’s more about we’ve been going for three months and we need to give the team a little bit of a break and let them catch their breath,” Plakorus said. “We have a couple kids we need to get healthy again so we can be at the highest level we can when we head to Cheney next weekend.”
Every season, the goal for a sports team is to progress from last year — to not see the year before as wasted and to accomplish what was previously unaccomplishable.

For the Lady Griz, a reversal of luck was practically promised for 2017. Kayleigh Valley and Alycia (Sims) Harris announced they would each return from season-ending injuries that forced the young 2016 squad into an early maturity. It perhaps would’ve made this season the greatest comeback year in the team’s history.

But tragedy struck again.

“We were doing a one-on-one drill. I drove right and as I went up for a layup and pushed off with my right foot and (my knee) just buckled,” Valley said. “We were kind of hopeful that it was something more minor, but it didn’t turn out that way.”

Valley re-tore her ACL and tore her MCL and meniscus. As fate would have it, Harris’ nagging knee injuries wouldn’t subside. She tore her left ACL her freshman year of high school and her right one last year. She retired from basketball just days later.

“I've been battling knee stuff for a while now,” Harris said. “Coming off an acute ACL injury, I was more worried about that one coming back, and it ended up being the old injury that I could never get to die down. I was in pain every day and it was hindering my ability to play.

“It’s been a long time coming. I was more in denial of hanging them up more than anything. It was kind of one day that set me off, but it was a long time coming,” Harris said.

It was a seemingly cruel recurrence that would lead any underdog to wonder “why us?”

“It was obviously very emotional. It’s still hard to see them sitting there everyday in practice,” head coach Shannon Schweyen said. “It feels like a deja vu moment from last year, every time you look over and see them on the sideline.”

There was no time for the Lady Griz to feel sorry for themselves or to mourn the loss of its two best players. After all, they’ve been here before. Only now, they’re a more-seasoned group of potential stars rather than a ragtag team full of would-be redshirts.

“We’re a little bit familiar with the feeling,” said Schweyen, who will begin her second season as the team’s head coach. “It was extremely tough this time just because everybody had seen those two go through their rehab and that whole year of working hard. Everybody was eager to get the opportunity to play with them.”

The experienced but young group will be tested throughout the season. The Lady Griz will host Kentucky and Gonzaga before they reach December. Leading up to conference play they’ll challenge several mid-major opponents, including an early December stint when they host the Lady Griz Classic.

“We put the schedule together in hopes that we would have these two seniors who were going to be helping along the way, but it’s still exciting for these young kids to get to play these teams and step up against some of the country’s best players and best teams.”

Although not having Valley, a former All-Big Sky Conference selection in 2016, and Harris, a defensive force in the post, will have its disadvantages, the Lady Griz are not without stars of their own.

The team only has two new players this season, freshmen Abby Anderson and Sophia Stiles, compared to seven last year.

“I think everybody’s been feeling like things have been running a lot smoother than last year,” Schweyen said. “With everybody being familiar with the plays and our concepts and what we’re trying to do ... the girls are really doing a nice job with that.”

Sophomores Taylor Goligoski and McKenzie Johnston will come into their own after being in the mix with some of the Big Sky’s offensive leaders last year. Goligoski led the team in points with 10.7 per game. Johnston led in assists with three per game.

For now the focus is to be better than last year.

“We’re going to have some rough bumps along the way. We just want to keep our heads above water,” Schweyen said. “As long as we’re improving, that’s the most important thing. We just want to stay healthy and make strides.”