TIME, PLACE AND MANNER

UM’s opaque speech rules and how they might change

NEWS Weed-free police blotter

ARTS ‘Trauma Drama’ at UC Gallery

EDITORIAL Give our graduation ceremonies back
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Listen to the students: Give us back our graduation

Cutting departmental graduation ceremonies in favor of a revamped central ceremony is a disservice to students, parents and faculty and will hurt our ailing University. It conflicts with the rhetoric and goals of our new president, and it adds to the list of decisions made in secret with little to no input from the campus community.

President Seth Bodnar has stressed the importance of keeping students at the forefront of decisions made on campus as well as the need to celebrate student achievement. Moving away from deeply personal departmental ceremonies to a generic assembly, surely rife with vague references to leadership and “jobs that don’t yet exist,” seems antithetical to Bodnar’s heartfelt mission.

News of the changes came in the form of a link within a link in an email sent on former Interim President Sheila Stearns’ last afternoon in office. The email, with the subject line of “A Message from Sheila Stearns,” mentioned her hometown of Glendive, her freshman year of college, and a goodbye to the campus she oversaw for a year. At the end, the email mentions recommendations she was making to incoming President Bodnar, but only related those to APASP — a botched process so mired in bureaucratic language that few students likely ventured down the rabbit hole of the link.

Now, a month and a half since those “recommendations” were put forth, we have been told they have become actuality. Despite faculty petitions and student outcry, the changes appear final.

Had people found the recommendations in Stearns’ email, there was yet another roadblock to voicing disapproval. The Commencement Committee, which moved Stearns’ directive to reality, hasn’t updated its website since December 2016. Notices for the committee meetings and agendas for the meetings were never posted, which not only appears to be a violation of Montana’s open meeting laws, but also prevented the campus and public from weighing in on the changes.

The committee chairs argue that the new central ceremony will bring together the University of Montana family, and renew a sense of pride in UM. They tout the importance of each student shaking hands with the president as they cross the stage, as if that could replace the personalized remarks, congratulations and celebration from the faculty and peers who have become family.

Co-chair registrar Joe Hickman said usually about 1,000 students skipped the central ceremony in years past, but attended their department’s ceremony. This seems like a clear indicator that students would oppose the decision to cut the ceremonies they actually go to.

The changes are slated to save a small percentage of the average $90,000 price tag of graduation. The committee chairs said the savings come from eliminating the cost of setting up chairs and sound systems at departmental ceremonies. But as departments realize what is being lost, some are taking matters into their own hands.

Departmental leaders considering carrying on their own ceremonies will now have to do so on their own dime, using money that would otherwise go toward current students’ academic enrichment.

The Kaimin calls on President Bodnar to reconsider the changes that so many people have come out against. We also call on students, faculty, staff and alumni against the changes to make their voices heard. UM exists for the students — we shouldn’t be an afterthought.
KAIMIN COLUMN

Queeries: Allyship isn’t about you, actually

I consider myself an ally to the LGBTQ community. Isn’t that enough?

I always wonder what people mean when they identify themselves as allies at the beginning of a sentence. Do you have a token gay or trans friend who you haul out when it’s convenient? Did you change your profile picture to a rainbow after the Pulse nightclub shooting? Do you get upset when people use “gay” as a pejorative but ignore your homophobic relatives at holiday dinners?

There are many ways to be an ally, but calling yourself one isn’t one of them. When you go out of your way with the, “But I’m an ally,” schtick, all I hear is, “I want to be immune from your criticism!”

Real allyship is about listening, not talking. If you want to actively work to support the LGBTQ community, or any marginalized community, you need to start by really hearing them. Ask about the issues that affect them. Leave space for them to vent if needed, but it’s just as important to leave space for them to not answer if they don’t feel comfortable. Try to understand what they’re saying and recognize that you are a part of the systems that oppress them. Do your own research and listen to as many gay and trans people’s stories as you can because we have different opinions. You can do all of this without actually saying anything, which is good because the last thing an ally should do is talk over a gay or trans person about gay and trans issues.

Listening is hard. I get it. Sometimes you just want to take action, and there’s a place for that in allyship as well. Communication is just as important here, though. You may think that your mom needs a lesson about trans identities, but that doesn’t mean you can out your trans friends without their permission to use them as an example. You might want to organize an event for gay folks in the community, but you should check with your gay friends first to see if they even want you to. You might have done or said something transphobic and gotten called on it, but that doesn’t mean you have to get defensive and start an argument.

I’m not saying this because I hate the sound of your cis voice or because I think I’m better than straight people. I’m saying it because I think too many people are forgetting the point of allyship. In fact, I’m not even exclusively talking to straight, cisgender people here. Gay people can be better allies to trans people and vice versa. The fact that we’re all crammed together into the same crowded acronym doesn’t mean we’re all experts on one another’s experiences. If you want to be a better ally to someone else within the community, be the ally you wish you had.

For all you performative allies out there, please remember you’re supposed to be supporting the people you care about, not claiming an identity for show. I’m sick of half-assed disclaimers saying things are “trans-friendly” or “inclusive” when they’re actually not. Saying you love trans people won’t make you forget all the times you equated vaginas and boobs with womanhood, and saying you have gay friends won’t make me more comfortable with you calling them “fags.”

You don’t get to put an allyship stamp on your Facebook profile just because it makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside.

Don’t ever tell me you’re my ally. Be one.

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.

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KAIMIN COLUMN

The Film Fest: an outsider’s inside look

Every year, the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival graces our city with its presence, inviting filmmakers from all over the world to share their work. And for the last two years, I have volunteered at the fest, gracing the organizers with my presence.

I know very little about filmmaking, but after two years of BSDFF fun, I know a lot about filmmakers. The fashion highlight of this year so far was a man who must have been 6 feet 9 inches tall wearing a trenchcoat that went from his toes to his chin—daring, artistic, brave. So many dark beige beanies. So many cuffed jeans.

The movies themselves are, in all sincerity, amazing. I have used up my quota of tears for the whole year, and that’s from just one audio documentary about the redemption and rehabilitation of Michael Vick’s dog-fighting pups. Every film I’ve watched this year has been incredibly inspirational. Coming out of this year’s fest, I am now dedicating my life to: getting VA benefits to Micronesian soldiers in the U.S. Army, destroying the MPAA and cinematic ratings system, funding independent wrestlers in Spokane, saving the Kodiac Alutiq language, restorative justice for underprivileged youths and, of course, rescuing abused dogs.

The fest also inevitably included some wacky moments. During the audio documentary shorts block — which, to be clear, is basically just podcasts and music, but it is a documentary film festival so they call them “audio documentaries” — a girl just danced for, like, five minutes. It was good, and cool, but I was watching this woman just doing a contemporary dance to a freaky song about bones and I thought to myself, “Wow, this is a weird film festival.” I still cried at the end, though, which arguably speaks volumes.

I have moved up in the volunteering world as of late, shifting from the plebian realm of ushering and selling merch into the bougie projecting sphere, where I press not one, but several buttons and get to watch the movies from the projection booth. It’s objectively the best volunteering job, but you have to have an in with the organizers to get the secret projection password because it’s for “experienced volunteers only.”

Would I describe myself as experienced? Kind of. Would I describe myself as capable of doing the job and also very charming, which helps in climbing up the volunteer ladder in a situation like this? Absolutely.

If you missed out on seeing something at this year's film fest, I genuinely pity you. The movies kicked ass, and the opportunity to ask the filmmakers stuff at Q&As after their showings is a totally unique experience. Next year, you should maybe even volunteer. It’s literally getting paid in free movie passes to have fun and hang out with cool people while occasionally taking tickets or counting people coming into a theater. A massive bonus is that all of the people involved, from the organizers to the filmmakers, are lovely, talented and very friendly. Not to be sappy, but I love you, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival. Can’t wait for next year.

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The University of Montana’s campus should be deserted at 1:40 a.m., but on Feb. 2, crowds of students stood outside entrances to the adjoining Craig, Duniway and Elrod residence halls. Minutes earlier, the fire alarm had gone off and sent them packing.

It was 30 degrees and snowing outside, though it felt colder in pajamas. Lasting about 10 minutes, this was the second nighttime fire alarm at the residence halls this winter.

[Full disclosure: I was among the students put out twice.]

Area Coordinator Kayla Jackson said the fire alarm was “due to a policy violation.” When asked for details, Residence Life Assistant Director Kelly Magnuson said the conduct case is confidential and was not deemed to involve an actual fire. It could have been smoke from cigarettes, vaping, candles or burned food, Magnuson said.

Regarding the first Craig, Duniway and Elrod fire alarm experienced earlier this winter, Jackson said a fire alarm in Craig Hall had been pulled, but there was no sign of smoke or fire.

According to UM’s fire log, the chief cause of fire alarms is — surprise — students. Last fall, a fire alarm in Jesse Hall was set off by burning fries in the kitchen. Aber Hall had a room smoke alarm activated by a combination of Febreze and candle smoke. In Panzer Hall, a room sprinkler was set off by charcoal artwork. The art was sealed with hairspray, and when a student lit a lighter nearby, the artwork went up in flames.

The fire log only records instances of open flames or burning when they’re not allowed or uncontrolled. It does not include fire alarms triggered for other reasons, or the occasional sprinkler set off from hanging a clothes hanger on it.

On Feb. 2, UM Police released the 2017 Annual Campus Security and Fire Safety Report. The report said candles and cooking with oils are prohibited in the residence halls, and “all decorations must be nonflammable.” It also said there were “several incidents of students hanging clothing items from sprinkler heads,” setting off the sprinklers.

UM Police Captain Ben Gladwin announced the report’s release in an email and encouraged students to look it over.

“The information it contains will assist you in making choices for your safety,” Gladwin said.

It might also reduce the number of late night fire alarms.

BUDGET CUTS

University IT centralizes amid budget and personnel reductions

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After several staff members took buyouts last year, the University of Montana’s information technology staff is working on the OneIT initiative to shore up inefficiencies amid budget cuts.

Chief Information Officer Matt Riley and former President Sheila Stearns launched OneIT in April 2017, and the OneIT team released its final report in October. On Oct. 17, the University announced a staff buyout offer to reduce costs. The staff who took the offer have left, and IT is now dealing with those losses as it implements OneIT.

Riley said IT lost 10 or 11 employees, depending on who counts as IT staff. They include the head of accessible technology and three people on the web team.

Kayla Pierson is the only remaining web team staff member. She said the most obvious impact of the buyouts will be response times.

“If bugs are reported or things need to be fixed, it’s going to take a little longer for me to manage those requests,” she said, though she intends to keep the noticeable effects to a minimum.

Riley said some web professionals would return in FY19. IT is also working on stabilizing its budget. At the IT Senate meeting on Jan. 23, Riley announced IT will suspend upgrades for classroom technology, like projectors and WiFi, for nearly three years due to a one-time funding reduction.

“We can support what we have with a good plan,” Riley said, referring to the 122 classrooms IT has equipped. “Where it gets a little dicey is if we went into a fourth year.”

By then, he said, IT will need to replace a lot of the equipment.

“The budget situation is not helpful to OneIT,” Riley said.

Stearns’ recommendations, informed by the Academic Programs and Administrative Services task force, said, “IT should continue to refine and operationalize” the OneIT plan. President Seth Bodnar’s office did not respond to requests for comment by the time of publication.

At IT Senate, however, Riley said, “[Bodnar] wants to see us move on these recommendations from OneIT.”

Jesse Neidigh in Student Affairs IT co-led the OneIT team, and IT Senate nominated him to head up implementation. He said the OneIT team will form smaller groups to put recommendations into action, which began on Feb. 6. They do not have a timeline yet.

Neidigh said the UM Solutions Center is an example of what OneIT could do. The website launched on Jan. 17, creating a hub for IT support and self-help across campus.

“That’s been in the works for a few years, so we can’t totally claim that was a OneIT initiative,” Neidigh said. “But it’s in the vein of OneIT.”

Moving forward, Pierson said she hopes OneIT is “embraced as an opportunity.” Riley said the buyouts will probably enhance the OneIT initiative.

“We’re pretty darn efficient, and this is making us even more efficient.”
BOOKSTORE STRUGGLES

UM Bookstore still struggling after Market sale

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The UM Bookstore, a non-profit organization, has suffered financially due to falling sales, forcing it to reduce its staff and sell the University Center Market to UM Dining.

“We didn’t want to sell the Market,” said Matt LaPalm, the Bookstore’s marketing director. “That was very hard for us.”

LaPalm said the sale brought in $328,000.

“That’s helped us live another day,” said Eamon Fahey, the chief operating officer of the store. “We’re also not losing money by continuing to operate that business.”

The Missoulian reported that tax forms show the Bookstore experienced a loss of $289,000 in 2014. Fahey said the Bookstore is running at about a similar loss today, and there’s a one-to-one correlation between lower student enrollment and lower sales. LaPalm said every student not enrolled represents about $500-$600 in lost revenue. Fahey placed the impact of lower student enrollment even higher, arguing the revenue lost is about $600-$650 per every non-enrolled student.

Fahey also said that number was around $800 five years ago. “Students these days don’t buy as much stuff as students, say, 10 years ago did,” Fahey said.

Part of that decline is in Griz merchandise, which Fahey said is the second-largest source of revenue after textbooks. “That is tied largely to the football team, for good and for bad,” Fahey said.

Sales have also fallen drastically in trade books (books other than textbooks). Fahey said sales have been falling for at least 10 years, especially the last five years. “On campus, students just don’t buy books like they used to,” he said. Trade books have fallen from a high of $400,000-$500,000 in annual sales on campus to around $50,000, accounting for less than 1 percent of total sales on campus last fiscal year.

In response, the Bookstore has moved most of its trade books to its Fact and Fiction location downtown, beginning last December. Griz merchandise has largely replaced the Fact and Fiction books section in the Bookstore.

To cut costs, the Bookstore reduced its staff by four people in 2013, and another five with early retirement incentives in 2016, according to Fahey. He said the Bookstore has not hired replacements for people who have left, which helped to absorb former Market employees.

Stuart Landers, a Bookstore employee, said employees are doing more work with fewer people.

The Bookstore still tries to make textbooks affordable, including a fee-based model. Students pay for course materials through a fee when they enroll in the class. Landers said the fee is usually around $50-$75 cheaper than buying the books, depending on the class.

Fahey said around fifteen classes use the fee model — mostly large introductory courses. “We certainly have been pushing that model because it helps, not only with keeping costs low, but also with student success,” he said. “We’re a not-for-profit,” Fahey said. “And we exist to serve students.”

POLICE BLOTTER

UM students totally no longer smoke marijuana, ever.

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Feb. 15 Breakin’ the law

A pickup truck’s window was shattered in Lot H, behind Panzter Hall. UM Police reviewed video of the lot, but did not see the incident on tape. The owner of the vehicle’s backpack and laptop were found nearby. The laptop was damaged.

Feb. 15 My future’s so bright I have to wear ... uh-oh

A pair of Rayban sunglasses were stolen from a car outside of Lewis and Clark Villages. Everyone wearing sunglasses is a suspect. Not really. Police have no leads.

Feb. 16 Right place, right time

A UMPD officer at Missoula College witnessed two cars collide. Under the officer’s scrutinizing gaze, the drivers exchanged insurance information.

Feb. 17 I’ll take the stairs

An elevator in the Interdisciplinary Science Building broke down. A technician was called. No one was inside the elevator and the idea that someone had broken through the roof the compartment, shimmied up the cable and exited through a vent “didn’t appear to be” the case, said UM Police Chief Marty Ludemann.

An elevator in Grizzly Stadium also became stuck with an individual inside. A technician was called to get the person out.

Feb. 17 No more gnar pow

A pair of ski boots were taken from the bus stop outside of Pazner Hall on Arthur Street. Ludemann said the individual may have run back inside for something and upon return the boots were no longer there. Police have no leads.

Feb. 18 Weapons of Moist Destruction

UM Police were notified about students having a snowball fight outside of Miller Hall. The students were throwing snowballs at each other and the building. “It was probably one of the RAs that called,” said Ludemann.

Feb. 18 Science is a liar, sometimes

UM Police assisted a locked-out teacher into a science building.
Crosswalk near VETS Office poses danger to visually impaired

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Of all the design features on the University of Montana campus, crosswalks may not be the most noticeable — unless you’re visually impaired, in which case the cut-out portion of a sidewalk that marks where a crosswalk starts becomes a vital signal that you can safely cross the street.

The sidewalk near the Veterans Education and Transition Services Office poses a danger to the visually impaired, according to Brian McEvoy, director of the Alliance for Disability and Students at the University of Montana.

McEvoy said the building on the corner where East Beckwith Avenue turns into Campus Drive has been retrofitted to become accessible to those with any disability, but that the project is incomplete.

Currently, unfinished pedestrian improvements on the campus side of the VETS Office have been cut, signaling to those who are visually impaired it’s a safe place to cross the street. McEvoy said this is misleading to the visually impaired because a crosswalk has not been painted and the proper signage has not yet been posted.

“It sends a false message of, ‘This is a good place to cross at’ when it’s not, because everything hasn’t been finished,” McEvoy said.

The VETS Office requested a crosswalk be built. Currently, the only other accessible places to cross the street are the light at Beckwith and Arthur and the bus stop outside the science complex.

McEvoy said the crosswalk has been budgeted for, and the sidewalk near the University has been extended. But the project is only half-done. McEvoy wants to figure out why the crosswalk was not completed and to hold the proper entities accountable, arguing that “the University has created a dangerous situation.”

The curb was initially cut in anticipation of the Facilities Services’ decision to extend the sidewalk around the curve of Campus Drive. Facilities Services director Kevin Krebsbach said the proposed crosswalk will be completed before the start of the fall 2018 semester, but he wants to move it to a straighter part of the road that would allow pedestrians to be seen from a distance.

“What it is now is such a danger. People get speed coming around that corner and all of the sudden someone is in that crosswalk,” Krebsbach said. “Even at 25 mph, it can be hard to stop.”

Another issue is that UM does not own the land on the opposite side of the road. Making changes to the sidewalk on the opposite side would require cooperation from outside the University.

Krebsbach said he wants the new crosswalk to be near the U.S. Forest Service building. He said Facilities Services will be coordinating with the City of Missoula and U.S. Forest Service, as well as working with ADSUM to ensure the best possible solution for students.

In its mission statement, ADSUM says it is “dedicated to advocating for the equal opportunity of students with disabilities,” with a focus on “identifying and eliminating architectural, programmatic and attitudinal barriers on campus.”

Over the years, ADSUM has advocated for assistive hearing devices, web accessibility and accessible buildings, according to its website.
Garret Morrill is impassioned on social media. He’s an active Kaimin reader who regularly engages the paper through Facebook comments.

“I certainly get more aggressive [online],” said Morrill in an interview.

Morrill said not posting anonymously is a conscious decision. “I want to be held accountable,” he said, and wishes others would do the same.

In person, the ASUM senator is restrained. His buttoned-down shirts are tucked in, his hair is swept back. He sits with his arms in his lap and a static smile keeps his glasses high. His face appears placid but his attention seems elsewhere, as if listening to a parent’s lecture for the nth time. But he is absorbing everything. There is a twitch of excitement when his work is mentioned.

For nearly two years, Morrill has been hard at work crafting a new University of Montana free speech policy. His goal is to have a lasting say on how students, staff, faculty and the public express themselves at UM.

At issue are free speech zones: designated public property used for expression. Morrill wants to end the use of such zones on campus, by declaring all outdoor areas on campus free speech areas as long as they’re 40 feet away from an entrance to a building.

Morrill graduates with his MBA this spring; this policy will be his legacy. And leaving his fingerprints on an institution is important to him. He said Great Falls High School’s bison statue was erected a year after he left, due to an initiative he started. He put his hand out to table height, describing the statue of the school’s mascot with pride.

“It’s a vision,” he said about his proposed change to UM’s policy. In terms of the amount of work and people involved, the free speech resolution is the most daunting of his ASUM career.

He began writing the policy in fall 2016. In spring 2017, ASUM passed the resolution. It found its way to UM’s Office of Legal Counsel, where it was modified before a vote was planned. UM legal counsel Lucy France said the proposal was ultimately pulled to allow for further discussion.

Then, on Wednesday, Feb. 21, faculty, staff and the
president of ASUM met for a free speech workshop in the University Center to discuss what Morrill's draft started: a revision to UM free speech policy. Morrill, tranquil on the exterior, was elated.

“The original [policy] is overly restrictive. Of course, I'm biased. I think mine is delightful,” Morrill said.

But figuring out how it works now — and whether or not it is restrictive — is more complicated than it sounds. When UM upped its security at a recent lecture by conservative Townhall.com writer Mike Adams, it led to a discussion about what would and wouldn't happen, and what is and isn’t allowed regarding protests.

At the Feb. 13 talk, titled, “The Death of Liberal Bias in Higher Education,” a handful of disruptions punctuated Adams’ lecture and ticket holders walked by both supporters and protesters, some with bull horns.

No one was arrested. But it raised some questions about what increasingly vocal activism could look like at UM.

UM policy primarily deals with two geographical categories of what it calls “free speech zones.”

The proposed changes would make for a total of 10 zones known as “Mountain Plazas.” Current zones include the rolling mounds of grass between the University Center and Mansfield Library, where last year an evangelical who goes by “Brother Jed” yelled out his anti-LGBTQ/anti-women rhetoric while UM protesters danced around him wearing glitter and rainbow flags. Other sites include the bricks encircling the Grizzly Statue and the amphitheater at the foot of the M, a popular smoking spot.

The proposed policy states, “[i]ndividuals and groups are permitted to use the Mountain Plazas for free speech activities … without obtaining approval from any campus official.” However, it stipulates that notification to Montana Event Services to reserve a space is encouraged.

Currently, reserving a plaza is not required. Anyone can go out to the Grizzly Bear statue and start voicing their opinions. People can elevate themselves on the lumps of the campus mall and proclaim anything they like.

Even reserving a space under the proposal doesn’t mean you get it all to yourself. “Reserving a Plaza,” the proposal continues, “does not grant exclusive authority over that space for the reserved period…” Individuals and groups could engage demonstrators as long as they maintain a 10-foot distance and “do not defeat the demonstrators’ ability to convey their message.”

UM would maintain exclusive control over a plaza if the space has been reserved for University purposes.

In the Feb. 21 meeting, Chief Marty Ludemann of UMPD said groups have attempted to bait UM Police into altercations. “[The Oval] is open to the public. As long as they’re not disrupting the learning environment, I’m not going to ask them to leave because legally, I don’t think I can.”

There is no mechanism in place to punish non-students for violating UM’s conduct policy, said Shannon MAP CATHRYN HABERMAN-FAKE
Brilz, director of Montana Event Services.

Brilz describes her office as a “clearing house for events outside, because we have the software capability” for scheduling. Her department has no control over what groups use the free speech zone. No one does.

Groups would be asked to register through UM Events to use plazas. Many groups already register to use the Oval and free speech area, because it reserves a location, permits amplification and provides for safety concerns and trash receptacles.

Brilz said that in fall 2017, the Oval hosted 131 registered events, while the library mall held six. Reserving an area currently prevents another group from beginning its own demonstration during that time. Brilz said when an unregistered group is using the space at the same time as a registered group, the unregistered group is asked to leave. They can say no. They typically do.

For non-students, this means practically no consequences. They are not breaking a law by simply being in a public area.

For students, staff and faculty who must follow UM Conduct Code, it means they are violating policy. Which means … something.

Rhondie Voorhees, dean of students, told the Kaimin that failure to abide by a policy that is not specified in the code of conduct, but is published elsewhere, still falls under the Student Conduct Code.

Voorhees said any discipline regarding free speech zones is based on behavior, never about the content of the message. She gave the Kaimin a few examples from the student code. UM can pursue disciplinary action under any of the codes.

• Unauthorized use, destruction or damage of University property or the property of others on University premises or at University-sponsored activities. If a student damages UM property, a monetary restitution may be required.
• Unauthorized entry, use or occupancy of University facilities. If a private event is occurring on campus and you are not invited, you are not authorized to be in that building.
• Intentional obstruction or disruption of normal University or University-sponsored activities. Disruption of the learning environment falls here.
• Interfering with the freedom of expression of others on University premises or at University-sponsored activities.

Disciplinary action varies. Voorhees said the process includes due process rights to protect students. A letter describing possible actions the University may take, with an invitation to meet with Voorhees, is sent. Voorhees said that free speech zone violators typically receive warnings, community service, educational programming, monetary restitution charges or probation.

When students break a UM policy, UM Police may be notified. UMPD always responds, but its presence during free speech zone infractions lacks bite.

In an interview with the Kaimin, Chief Ludemann said UMPD does not have legal authority to enforce UM Policy. He said there is confusion among UM’s administration over the limits of UMPD’s authority.

“When the University tries to limit free speech, that’s in direct violation of statute,” said Ludemann.

He said the department exists to uphold the Constitution. He finds it difficult to walk up to a group and tell them, “You can’t be here, you have to go over there.”

Lucy France is UM’s legal counsel. In an interview, she said, “Free speech zones are problematic.”

Other universities with similarly problematic policies have had them challenged in court. Texas Tech University had its free speech area and reservation process declared unconstitutional in 2004 by a district judge.

Some administrators say UM ought to follow the lead of other universities. Adrianne Donald, director of the University Center, organized the Feb. 21 free speech workshop. She offered the University of California Irvine’s policy at the free speech workshop as an example other universities are adopting.

A student protester attempts to yell over a counter-protester as lecture attendees enter the George & Jane Dennison Theatre to hear Mike Adams speak on Feb. 13. PHOTO SARA DIGGINS
UM freshman Marita GrowingThunder, 18, sits alone on the Oval with a dozen empty chairs to bring awareness to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women Feb. 14. GrowingThunder said she’s heard many different statistics regarding the number of missing and murdered indigenous women — statistics she believes have been skewed to be lower than they actually are. The demonstration was organized in part by Western Native Voice, a nonprofit corporation that works across Montana to strengthen Native American communities on reservations and in cities.

PHOTO ELI IMADALI

UCI’s speech policy states:
“Current rulings by the federal courts have found speech codes, as a general matter, too vague or overbroad. Because the University of California is a state entity, it complies with both the U.S. and California Constitutions.”

“We have to protect academic integrity along with Constitutional rights,” Donald said.

Other campus activists agree. Ethan Cole is president of UM’s chapter of the Young Americans for Liberty, a national libertarian student group. Cole, a sophomore studying Russian and political science, is against free speech zones and would like to see UM follow UCI’s lead. Cole believes there are no ethical or legal reasons for free speech zones in public places that use public funds.

Young Americans for Liberty organized a speech ball event last semester. Cole said attendees were provided markers and encouraged to write “whatever came to mind, whatever their heart desired” on an enormous beach ball rolled around campus.

Cole said the first ball was completely filled and the second was nearly so. Comments were typically inspirational quotes, inside jokes and memes, he said. Most were not political.

“A lot of people drew phalluses,” said Cole. “There’s always going to be a few phalluses in the bunch. That’s kind of how it goes.”

Policing what is and isn’t allowed regarding free speech on campus depends on whether what’s happening “disrupts the learning environment.” The Supreme Court ruled in 1969 that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

Universities do place restrictions on students’ free speech through what are called time, place and manner restrictions. UM can regulate a zone’s use if it is not the appropriate time, place or if it’s not used in an appropriate manner.

Anthony Johnstone, a constitutional law professor at UM, said such restrictions are common ways universities regulate free speech. Time, place and manner restrictions are allowable in public forums as long as they are content-neutral, narrowly tailored and leave alternative avenues of expression open.

A week before the free speech workshop at the UC, freshman Marita GrowingThunder set herself up on the Oval, bundling up in frigid temperatures and with a scarf over her mouth, alongside empty chairs that represented missing and murdered indigenous women.

GrowingThunder said she had reserved the Oval two weeks before the demonstration. A reservation is required in order to avoid a Student Conduct Code violation. The Oval request form is available on the Montana Event Service webpage. She said she waited a week for approval, and that the entire process was quick and easy.

GrowingThunder said there is a fine line between free speech and hate speech and “what is hateful to some, may not be hateful to others.”

Afterward, Dean Voorhees said, “I am all for students finding their voice and finding ways to express themselves on issues and hear other voices, too.”

Voorhees also sees the need to take hate speech and harassment into consideration. She said it is hard to design a policy where we “can all play in a sandbox together so no one is hurt.”

Morrill, the ASUM senator, doesn’t believe hate speech should be prevented. “Just because you don’t hear [hate speech],” he said, “doesn’t mean it isn’t occurring. It’s better to have it out there than in dark corners and places of society.”

The free speech workshop wound up in a place uncertain and unclear, a metaphor for the tangled language of the UM Student Conduct Code.

There was agreement that something needed to be mended and communication among campus, students and the community was important. The group tentatively decided to meet again in the summer to discuss resolving free speech issues through UM’s Facility Use Policy.

Morrill said he’s disappointed that he’ll no longer be enrolled to see the result of his proposal, but understands the process and why these things move slowly.

“If, at the end, this University has the best procedures on the books and is able to cultivate the best free speech culture in the state, it’ll be worth it,” he said.
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GALLERY PREVIEW

University alumna turns a painful history into dramatic UC gallery

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Red and orange fill the walls of the University of Montana University Center Gallery, cascading into purples and blues. They form a rainbow that leads the eye into the depths of a dramatic, yet calming, space.

Artist Claire Meyer created this healing environment of color and light for an exhibit titled “Trauma Drama.” Her aim is to bring beauty to the dark subject of trauma.

Meyer was moved to color-code the space after discovering a quote from French artist Paul Cézane “We live in a rainbow world of chaos.”

“That really stuck with me,” she said.

Meyer pulls inspiration from her identity and the ideas of domesticity instilled in her from a young age by her mother and grandmother. She incorporates tactile textile work and uses household materials like bed sheets and cheesecloth.

Her art tackles the difficult subject of processing the traumatic experiences her family endured during childhood in the small town of Livingston, Montana. By using intense colors, forms and lighting in the gallery, her work represents the many ways that trauma can be highlighted internally through a range of emotions, from fear to anger, she said.

But the connection she makes between her art and her tumultuous past is not about dwelling on pain.

“It’s more my way of trying to express myself and sort of heal through these cool processes and colors. I have been able to grow from things and address them,” she said. “It is kind of an oxymoron. I don’t think trauma has to be dramatic.”

Meyer has been painting since her grandmother taught her how to hold a brush as a young girl. She graduated with a B.F.A. in painting at UM in May 2017 and was thrilled to stay in the Missoula art scene as the assistant director at the Dana Gallery downtown. Meyer says her boss understands where her true passion is and gives her extra time off to work on pieces for “Trauma Drama.”

Shifting from canvas paintings to filling entire walls with elaborate fabric sculptures, her work intimately captures the feelings trauma can evoke in a calm, peaceful environment where spectators can absorb, process and even reflect on their own experiences.

“I just kind of wanted to create an open space to let all that out. People can connect to the pieces, or not, as they see fit,” Meyer said.

“Trauma Drama” will be on display starting March 1, with a reception from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. It will be on display for three weeks in the UC Gallery, open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FILM SERIES

Montana Innocence Project uses the power of film to educate and engage public

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Roughly 20 attendees gathered in the Missoula Public Library on Feb. 20 to learn about Ernie Lopez, a man sentenced to 60 years in prison for the abuse and murder of a six-month-old child, a crime he maintains he did not commit. Lopez’s story is part of the Montana Innocence Project’s efforts to highlight sensitive topics through cinema.

Andrew King-Ries, professor of criminal law at the University of Montana and member of the project’s board of directors, believes that film is a powerful way to tell stories.

“Film and literature are non-threatening ways to raise issues so people aren’t as defensive,” he said. “Like the film series as a way to get people to be able to talk about issues important to our society.”

The film series, titled “Wrongful Convictions,” aims to bring awareness to the public about the Montana Innocence Project’s goal to exonerate innocent prisoners.

According to executive director Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson, the films chosen for the series are meant to showcase what lawyers are trying to accomplish here in Montana. In 2012, Lopez’s conviction was overturned after the investigations of ProPublica and NPR revealed that the child didn’t die due to physical abuse, which had been originally assumed.

“We’re trying to illustrate that people jump to conclusions when they should look at just the facts,” said Mecklenberg Jackson.

The Montana Innocence Project is 10 years old and achieved its first exoneration about 16 months ago. Attorneys and staff work pro bono on the cases, so the project relies heavily on outside donations from the community.

For members of the project, the most important part of the films is the discussion afterward, where anyone who comes to the screening is able to ask members questions they may have. According to Mecklenberg Jackson and King-Ries, the film series gets people talking about the problems we face in society and the criminal justice system.

The films and discussions offer a way for people to get into the conversation with other community members and educate themselves on the problem of wrongful conviction and what’s being done to overturn cases.

The third segment of the “Wrongful Convictions” film series will take place March 20, and both Mecklenberg Jackson and King-Ries encourage community members to come take part in the dialogue. They both hope that people continue to come to film screenings and that the stories continue to reach new audiences.

“There is nothing that better highlights the heartbreak of wrongful convictions than experiencing it through the story of a person who has lived it,” Mecklenberg Jackson said.
Fundraiser honors UM alumna who ‘makes it work’ on reality TV

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This year’s 18th annual “Odyssey of the Stars” fundraiser for the College of Visual and Performing Arts scholarship fund will honor Emmy-winning TV producer, director and University of Montana School of Theatre alumnus Casey Kriley. Kriley is known for producing “Top Chef,” “Top Chef Junior,” “Project Runway,” “Project Greenlight” and “Cold Justice”. Showcasing the accomplishments that can occur after leaving the University and the talent of College of Visual and Performing Arts students, the performance acknowledges and celebrates the importance of art on campus and in the Missoula community. Taking on a “Project Runway” theme and directed by media arts professor Michael Murphy, the show will have a reality TV feel celebrating Kriley’s blossoming reality competition television career, which she largely attributes to her experiences at UM.

MONTANA KAIMIN: YOU GREW UP IN MISSOULA WERE YOU ALWAYS SO INCLINED TOWARD THE PERFORMING ARTS?

Casey Kriley: My father, Jim Kriley, had been hired to be the chairman of the UM drama department. Besides working in the department, he directed a lot of performances, and when my mom needed a break from myself and my sisters, we would often go on weekends and hang out with him. … I loved watching the process of the rehearsals and figuring out the production and figuring out how to put the story on its feet. … Because of all the times I was exposed to theater as a child, I didn’t think there was any choice for me in terms of career path, and ironically, my father would have probably preferred me not going into the arts because it’s often a challenging career financially.

MONTANA KAIMIN: YOU BROKE OUT OF THE SMALL MONTANA ART SCENE INTO A LARGER, MORE COMPETITIVE ONE. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE GRADUATING ART STUDENTS WHO WANT TO DO THE SAME?

Casey Kriley: The success I have had has been because every day I just show up and work. I work really hard and through working really hard, people take notice and people refer you and your career can grow from there. Money has never been a driving force in any of my decisions, and there were many independent films and projects I worked on with 12- to 14-hour days for little to no money. I do think so much of it is because of your passion, your work ethic and the success will come from that.

MONTANA KAIMIN: WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Casey Kriley: I think the reason I have been with Magical Elves [an unscripted production company] for 16 years is because most of our shows are about documenting the creative process. … Most of the shows we do are aspirational and celebrating and documenting creative process, which for me is always why I loved the arts. It was, for me, never about the product. But I always loved the process and working hard every day to achieve that final product.

Interview has been edited for clarity.
SPRING FOOTBALL

Hauck adds transparency to spring practices

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Bobby Hauck may not have held his first practice yet in his return as the Grizzlies’ head football coach, but he’s already changed up the atmosphere. For Hauck, it’s all about getting the public more involved.

Last week, the spring football schedule was released. Hauck decided to hold open practices with one exception, on March 23, this spring. Former head coach Bob Stitt held closed-door practices and gave limited access to the press during spring ball in his time as Montana’s head coach.

“We want to bring in the fans and get them excited for Griz football,” Hauck said. “It’s always good when the fans are interacting with the team.”

Hauck hopes to continue to hold open practices when the fall schedule rolls around. He acknowledged it may not be possible during the season coming off a loss or if other teams start to take advantage of the open practice policy.

Last season, Montana had an issue with attendance, averaging a little more than 23,500 fans per game. It was the lowest average attendance since 2007, when Hauck was still in his first stint at UM and Washington-Grizzly Stadium had a capacity of about 2,000 fewer seats than it does now.

These open practices could get the fans fired up, which could help fill Washington-Grizzly Stadium this fall.

Hauck has only been at Montana for a couple months, and said he feels behind schedule. The Griz started spring ball a week earlier than they did a year ago.

The first game of the season against Northern Iowa on Sept. 1 may feel far off for the fans, but for Hauck it’s right around the corner.

“We want to get down to the X’s and O’s and finally get the guys out there,” Hauck said.

The spring schedule will consist of 14 practices and is set to start on March 5. The Griz will finish off the schedule with the spring game on April 14 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Hauck has 75 players on his roster heading into spring, giving him a lot of players to watch. He still has to decide which position players will be playing and how many he will keep after bringing in new recruits and transfers. He’s unsure if all 75 players will be back when camp starts in the summer.

“We want to hopefully get the depth chart figured out a little bit and see where some players might fit best in what position,” Hauck said.

KAIMIN COLUMN

Views from the 406: Hauck doing everything right so far

A packed house of over 7,200 fans waited in long lines and shuffled through the cold Saturday night to watch the Montana men’s basketball team take on rival Montana State. Before the game began, chants rose up from the students section: “FTC, FTC, FTC!” I don’t think I need to translate what that means.

The Griz went on to dominate the Cats, just as the Lady Griz had done earlier in the day. For Griz fans near and far, it was the perfect day. They even got a special treat at halftime of the men’s basketball game: a look at the new Grizzly Football coaching staff.

Bobby Hauck, the notorious and polarizing coach who returned to the University of Montana in December, went to the courtside table and grabbed the microphone. He started by thanking the students for one of his favorite chants. He then asked, nearly begged, the crowd to show support for Griz football, saying the team can’t win without fans packing Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

He may have been delivering a line, but the fans in Dahlberg Arena erupted into cheers. After talking to the crowd, a couple of students came onto the court to shoot half-court shots for a chance at a money prize, a common occurrence at the halftime break. But this time there was a special twist. President Seth Bodnar and Hauck, representing students, both attempted (and missed) shots as well.

Hauck’s appearance at the game was the latest in a run of good moves for the coach. He began his tenure with a good opening press conference, followed that up with a recruiting class loaded with more Montana talent than we’ve seen in recent years and is opening up spring practice to the media and public.

When chatting with reporters on my staff, he has been friendly and open, asking about who they are and where they are from. I realize there will be eye rolls from some who feel this is insincere, with the history between Hauck and the Kaimin so public, but everything he has done has appeared genuine so far.

Perhaps most importantly, he appeared alongside others in the athletic department in a panel hosted by Missoula Rises that “explored the topics and perceptions of sexism, sexual assault, entitlement and cyber-bullying surrounding college athletics.”

Hauck is an incredibly controversial character. When he came back to Montana and I wrote there was no need to continue the bad blood; it was met with backlash. I’m sure this column will be as well. It doesn’t change the fact that he appears to be working hard to prove that he’s a different person, and the fact that he has done everything right so far in his second stint.

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And then there were seven: Last original softballers reflect on their journey

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When Tori Lettus committed to Montana, she didn’t know what to expect. To her, that was a good thing.

“It was one big surprise after another,” she said.

Lettus, from Bothell, Washington, knew she wanted to attend UM, and during her junior year of high school she found out the Griz were starting a softball team. Then she met coach Jamie Pinkerton.

“He had this vision of, ‘This is a new start, but it’s going to be so much more special because you’re a part of something that’s being created. You get to be part of something that’s more special than joining any other random team,’” she said.

Lettus committed to Montana in 2013, making her the first-ever member of the Griz softball program. She was one of 15 freshmen on the first 20-woman roster. Now, just seven players of the original squad remain as they embark on their final season in maroon and silver.

“We’re not trying to figure each other out, or the game, or how we want to do things,” said Ashlyn Lyons, another original member. “We’ve really established what Griz softball is and now we’re just getting to do it every day.”

In a 2013 article from Montana Communications, Lettus said, “When I move to Missoula next fall, it will feel like I’m coming home.”

The University of Montana has always held a special place in Lettus’ heart. Her father, Ray, and sister, Sara, graduated from Montana. Ray eventually moved to the Seattle area, where Lettus attended Woodinville High School. During her freshman and sophomore seasons at UM, her father traveled regularly to Missoula to watch his daughter play and chat to complete strangers about recruiting, pitch counts and curved TVs.

“Sports and family are intertwined in a lot of people’s lives, and he was a very influential part of my softball career. He’s probably the main reason I’m here right now,” Lettus said.

Ray died of cancer in 2016 at 65, a few months before Lettus began her junior season.

“It’s been a very tough year, but it’s helped me grow as an athlete,” she said. “Even though it’s my last year, it means even more to know he was with me through putting it together.

“He put everything he had into giving me the best opportunity to be successful, because this has always been my dream,” she continued. “I owe everything to him. That has always been in the back of my mind when I play, especially this year, so it’s going to be that much more special to finish it out.”

When Lettus and the other grizzlies arrived in 2014, there was no field. There was no equipment. There were no uniforms.

Recruiting a player based on the premise of immediate struggle would be enough to deter any athlete. For Lyons, it was a selling point.

“(Pinkerton) found me, and then I bothered him and bothered him, ‘Let me come here! Let me come here!’” she said. “And it was a good fit.”

Lyons became the third signee of the first wave of recruits dubbed the “Original Six,” which includes Lettus, Delene Colburn, Gabby Martinez, MaKenna McGill and Carli Riordan.

Pinkerton envisioned Riordan, a pitcher, as the centerpiece of the new team, but Riordan retired due to health issues after the 2015 season. She is the only one of the Original Six no longer on the team.

“We try not to talk about, ‘This is our last trip,’ because that becomes such a bigger picture than enjoying the season that’s lying in front of us,” said new head coach Melanie Meuchel, who has been with the team from the beginning as Pinkerton’s assistant. “We’re just trying to enjoy every moment, every practice we can get together ... and then we can enjoy the successes that come along with the rest of the season.”

Outfielder Katie Jo Waletzko and catcher Madison Saacke round out the list of the last remaining members of the first team.

“I couldn’t have dreamt up [a new] field and 500 fans at our games and a conference championship in three years. It’s a really special thing that we’re doing here,” Lyons said.

Then again, it’s not like Lyons and her teammates didn’t see it coming.

“To see it work out on the field and the game where you failed so often, that’s really cool just to be able to experience that,” she said.