

The University of Montana Western
November 2012 Campus Report to the Board of Regents

In October, we sent a letter to students, copied to faculty and staff, encouraging them to review the PETSA program and tutorial videos on the UM website.

While we are not allowed to announce details yet, we can report that we have another success with the CASE professor of the year award. This will be our fourth in row – one national, then three state winners.

Nathan Boll, a mathematics major at The University of Montana Western, took part in a special live viewing of the Mars Science Laboratory landing video feed in Pasadena, CA this fall. Mr. Boll is currently finishing an internship with the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) Jet Propulsion Lab. The internship is sponsored by the Montana Space Grant Consortium. When finished, he will have spent 10 weeks working in the Mars Exploration Program performing research on Martian geology based on data collected from the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. “It was a profound honor to be made a part of this historic event,” Mr. Boll said. “My perspective has changed in that I have a much stronger connection with this kind of work. I feel this could be the direction my career goes. This work could allow me to make a contribution to the country and society as a whole.”

Our enrollment has increased again this fall. This will mark the 6th consecutive year of steady growth. The Fall 2012 headcount is 1,447 and the FTE is 1,376. The headcount is up 71 students from last fall while the new FTE is up 51. Both numbers represent modern day enrollment records for Montana Western. Retention and graduation rates are also up.

We are engaged in the process of developing a new strategic plan for the campus. The plan will be based on the core themes submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The effort is chaired by Provost Ulrich and we hope to have it fully developed, approved and in place by July, 2013.

The University of Montana Western again climbed in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings, jumping from 21st in 2011 to 17th in 2012 in the Best Regional Colleges West category.

U.S. News defines regional colleges according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education and states “these schools focus almost entirely on the undergraduate experience and offer a broad range of programs in the liberal arts.”

Montana Western maintained its position as fourth in the Top Public Regional Colleges West. We remain one of the best and unique values in American higher education.

According to U.S. News, Montana Western improved upon last year’s ranking, boasting a 72 percent average freshman retention rate, and a 17:1 student-to-professor ratio. U.S. News also ranked Montana Western with the second highest percentage in the entire region of faculty who are full time at 92 percent and tied for fourth in the region with an average annual alumni giving rate of 11 percent.