

10/13/2009

**The University of Montana Western
November 2009 report to the Board of Regents**

ENROLLMENT. We again recorded breaking enrollments this fall. The 15 day count set our fall FTE at 1,171, the highest since we have records of tracking the statistic in 1973 and 6.5 % more than last fall.

The fall semester 15 day headcount was up 5.5 % from last year at 1,255, the highest fall enrollment at Montana Western since 1927. Montana resident enrollment was up 8.5%, but non-resident enrollment was down about 3 %. Transfers were up just over 50% from fall 2008. We also set a high mark since records are available in the number of applications—up just over 17%. Our retention rate for all students Montana Western students (bachelors and associate programs) this fall was up from 66% to 69% and for first-time, fulltime first-year bachelor degree seeking students up to 72%.

We believe Experience One is not only attracting first-time students, and keeping them enrolled here, but is mentioned by a growing number of transfer students as a primary reason they came to UMW.

STUDENT. Undergraduate Kaitlin Ens published five articles over the past six months. Ens, a literature and creative writing major, published articles in three issues of Idaho Magazine, one article in the Rocky Mountain Rider and one in Range magazine, an award-winning publication devoted to issues threatening the environment and lifestyles of the West. Kaitlin says she came to the Montana Western campus at just the right time. “The block enables me to focus on one thing at a time,” she said. “It let’s me dig into the creative veins of writing without the distraction of other classes.” She will graduate in the fall of 2010 and says she is pondering several options for her future.

FACULTY. Professors Craig Zaspel and Eric Wright had a publication accepted in *Physical Review* titled "Frequencies of Radially Symmetric Excitations in Vortex State Disks." Dr. Zaspel was invited to give a Physics Colloquium at the University of Montana this fall.

English professor Alan Weltzien had an article, "Rick Bass's Art-Activism Dialectic and Postmodern Ecofiction: Or, a 'Fiber' Tougher than 'Anything Made of Wood'," selected for *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 286, published by Cengage Learning.

One of our professors will receive a national award for teaching this fall. The awarding foundation has requested confidentiality but by the time the Board meets in November the award will be public.

NWCCU VISIT. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities will conduct a comprehensive visit of The University in April, 2010. This is a regular 10-year visit

that will bring about 10 evaluators as well as a liaison to campus for a thorough review of how well we are accomplishing our mission on campus.

ACADEMICS. The UMW faculty and academic administration continue a discussion about our curriculum and the bachelor's degrees we offer. We believe our current structure is awkward and difficult for students, parents and others to understand because it is so different from other universities. Currently we have only five recognized baccalaureate majors with a B.S major in elementary education, secondary education, business administration and natural horsemanship and a B.A. arts major. Various alternative approaches are being debated on campus and a proposal will likely be submitted to system review in the next few months.

We are exploring cooperative partnerships with UM Missoula and UM Helena on for degree programs now offered here and in Missoula. We also wish to develop additional articulation agreements with UM Helena and other two-year institutions. Finally, we close to an arrangement offering industrial technology education courses on the UM Helena campus.

STUDENT SENATE. The administration has partnered with our student senate to develop a campaign to reduce demand for parking on campus. We will begin a campaign shortly.