

THE UNIVERSITY *of* MONTANA WESTERN

DATE: Wednesday, December 20, 2017
TO: Montana Board of Regents
FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor
SUBJECT: Campus Report for the January 2018 Board of Regents Meeting

Montana Western Celebrates National First-Generation College Student Day

On Nov. 8, 2017, the Council for Opportunity in Education asked universities around the country to participate in the very first annual First-Generation College Student Celebration.

The federal TRIO program has been active for years in assisting first-generation students at the University of Montana Western. "First-generation" refers to students whose parents haven't obtained a four-year college degree, and the TRIO program provides them with a support system to help navigate the landscape of higher education.

Biology Class Restores Native Plants during Service-learning Experience

Montana Western students removed invasive weeds and then applied a native seed mix to disturbed areas adjacent to the "M" trail in Dillon, Mont.

The native plant seed mix was selected based on plant sampling conducted by Assistant Professor Wendy Ridenour's Plant Systematics classes over the last two years, and contains native plants including grasses and flowering forbs. The project was the culmination of over two years of work by three Montana Western Biology classes.

The students in the course were excited to help the community by restoring the native plants around the trail system in disturbed areas.

Montana Western Ranked in Best of the Western Region College List

The University of Montana Western was ranked among the "25 Best Western Regional Colleges for 2017" by College Choice, an online education resource.

The ranking is based on factors including institutional excellence, student satisfaction, and return on investment.

The other Montana colleges in the listing are Carroll College, Montana Tech, Rocky Mountain College, and the University of Providence.

Living History Event Takes Place at Birch Creek

The University of Montana Western's Environmental Sciences department held their annual "Birch Creek Civilian Conservation Corps Camp: A Living History" on Oct. 15, 2017 at the Birch Creek Center.

This event featured students from Montana Western's Environmental Interpretation course re-creating a working Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp based on those that operated from 1933-1942 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

The Birch Creek Center is one of the best preserved CCC camps in the nation, and served as an authentic environment for the students to present their research.

Diane Rewerts Inducted into Montana Western Education Hall of Fame

Rewerts graduated from Montana Western in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education, and in 2015, she received her master's in educational leadership from the University of Montana.

Rewerts began her career in 1979 teaching second grade in Noxon, Mont. In 1981, she moved to Libby, Mont. and spent the next 32 years teaching at elementary schools while serving in several leadership positions within the community.

She was also a candidate for the Montana Elementary Science Teacher of the Year and National Science Foundation Better Elementary Science Teacher award.

Student Lorrie Ann Smith to Compete in Miss Rodeo America

The current Miss Rodeo Hawaii grew up in Laie, Hawaii but moved to Dillon, Mont. to attend the University of Montana Western as a double natural horsemanship and business administration major.

Smith grew up participating in 4-H and has been successful in many rodeo organizations. She regularly competes at the national level, including the 2017 College National Finals Rodeo. She also served as the 2015 National High School Rodeo Association Student Secretary.

The Miss Rodeo America Pageant, which started in the mid-1950's, involves several scored factors, including interviews, written tests, and the demonstration of horsemanship skills by each contestant. Participants come from all over the United States to compete in the over week-long event to be held in December in Las Vegas, Nev.

Faculty Artists Present Their Creative Methods

On October 12, 2017, the University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery event featured faculty artists Joe Hadden, Suzy Kitman and Aja Mujinga Sherrard, who is also the Fine Arts Gallery coordinator, discussing their creative process.

The three artists each presented examples of their work and described their methods with an audience of art students and community members.

On her work, Sherrard said, "Ideas come to me relatively whole, and I find the visual elements to frame it."

Montana Western Ranked Among the "Seven Best Online Colleges in Montana for 2017"

The ranking is based on factors including student satisfaction, return on investment, and school quality.

The other Montana colleges in the listing are Montana Tech, Montana State University, the University of Montana, the University of Providence, Montana State University-Billings, and Montana State University-Northern.

The University of Montana Western offers multiple career advancement and certification courses online through the School of Outreach along with professional development credits for teachers and healthcare workers.

These offerings provide flexibility for rural Montanans and extend Montana Western's unique experiential learning model, called Experience One, through its online degree programming by requiring students to "practice what they learn" in their respective environments.

Professor Christian Gilde Presents at the 2017 Salzburg Seminar

The symposium is part of Salzburg Global Seminar, an independent non-profit institution founded in 1947 with "a distinguished track record of convening emerging and established leaders to address issues of global concern."

The theme of this year's symposium focused on the history and the evolution of the "American Dream." The term was first popularized by writer James Truslow Adams, and has constantly evolved over time, meaning something different to nearly every generation of Americans.

The shifting of the Dream also has global implications, as it can influence political and social structure and attitudes.

Professor Rob Thomas Published in "Lithosphere"

Dr. Rob Thomas, Professor of Geology and Regents' Professor at Montana Western, was recently published in the journal, "Lithosphere", a publication of the Geological Society of America, the largest professional organization of geoscientists in the world.

The paper was co-authored with Paul Link, Mary Todt and David Pearson from the Department of Geosciences at Idaho State University, and is titled "500-490 Ma detrital zircons in Upper Cambrian Worm Creek and correlative sandstones, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming: Magmatism and tectonics within the passive margin."

The article focuses on the geological history of the Rocky Mountains, suggesting that the region was once actively volcanic.

Beth Huhtala Exhibits Work at the University of Montana Western

Artist Beth Huhtala creates vibrantly colored mixed media pieces that investigate how animal symbols affect human psychology.

The artist gave a presentation to an audience of students, faculty, and community members before the opening celebration of her exhibit in the University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery where she described her art and the intentions behind it.

In her talk, Huhtala said, "We can experience more honest representations of how we interact with each other by exploring representations of what the symbolism of certain animals means to us."

Yellowstone Winter Studies Course to be Offered in Block Five

The University of Montana Western's Outreach office, in partnership with Yellowstone Forever, will once again offer their Yellowstone Winter Studies course.

Taught by full-time Yellowstone Forever instructor Joshua Theurer, the class will take place entirely in Yellowstone National Park from Jan. 21- Feb. 1, 2018 in Gardiner, Mont.

During the course, students will conduct field observations and study the evolutionary adaptations plants and animals have made to survive the harsh Yellowstone winters.