



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2020

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the March 2020 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **UMW Professors Receive National Science Foundation CREWS Grants**

Regents Professor of Geology, Dr. Rob Thomas, and Assistant Professor of Environmental Sustainability, Dr. Arica Crootof, have each received Montana National Science Foundation (NSF) Consortium for Research on Environmental Water Systems (CREWS) Workforce Development Seed Funding Awards.

Both of these \$10,000 grants will be used to support student research beginning in February and concluding in the fall of 2020.

Through both of these grants, students from the University of Montana Western will be engaged in collecting physical and social science data to inform management decisions on local water systems and in the process, gain valuable research experience and professional skills.

- **Montana Western Alumna Receives Gold Star Teaching Award**

Jennifer Ostler was recently awarded the KTVM Gold Star Teaching Award. The award brings public recognition to K-12 educators who have made a significant contribution to education.

Ostler is a graduate from the University of Montana Western and currently teaches Transitional Kindergarten at Parkview Elementary School in Dillon, Mont.

“The biggest payoff in teaching for me is the magic. It’s watching them get excited by learning and becoming lifelong learners. I’m very grateful to be a teacher and I know without my family, my community and my school I wouldn’t be here today,” Ostler said.

- **Montana Western Students Explore Yellowstone Park**

Students from UMW’s Environmental Sciences Department spent a week exploring Yellowstone National Park as part of an environmental interpretation course taught by Assistant Professor of Environmental Sustainability, Dr. Arica Crootof.

In this class, students defined, described and expanded “interpretation” as a communication process that fosters environmental stewardship. They learned to assess the effectiveness of environmental interpretative programs and develop their own practice.

“The fact that students get to go to Yellowstone and not only interact with professionals but also get to practice in the park is huge for learning about the professional side of interpretation,” Crootof said.

- **The University of Montana Western Announces Colt Challenge and Sale**

The University of Montana Western’s Equine Studies Department has scheduled the Fourth Annual Colt Challenge and Sale for March 27-28, 2020 with special guests from the Montana State University Equine Science Program. The event will be held at La Cense Montana, located at 4600 Carrigan Lane in Dillon, Mont.

The Colt Challenge, held on March 27 starting at 9:00 a.m., will showcase both Montana Western and MSU students riding their assigned colts and demonstrating their skills. The Colt Sale, held on March 28, will feature the sale of the colts that competed the previous day with their student. All UMW proceeds from the sale are reinvested into the Natural Horsemanship program to support student scholarships.

- **Montana Western Graduate Lands Internship at NASA**

Baleigh Doyle, a graduate of the University of Montana Western, was recently featured during a higher education special interview during the Montana This Morning news on KBZK/KXLF. During the interview with anchor Chet Layman, Baleigh shared her academic journey, which has included working at NASA as an intern while she was an undergraduate at UMW and also as a PhD student at the University of Montana.

She was able to apply and be selected for the internship experiences due to her dedication to her studies and additional support provided by the Montana Space Grant Consortium.

Doyle says that “working in small, intimate class settings like at the Dillon campus was great preparation for my time with NASA.”

- **Montana Western Offers Premier Glass Education**

The University of Montana Western’s glass program was recently featured in an article by the Missoulian highlighting the unique major and its success at UMW.

“Thanks to the hard work of administrators and professors over the last several years, the University of Montana Western has quietly created one of the best programs in the country,” the article said.

Montana Western offers courses, certificates, and two and four year degrees in both artistic and scientific glass making including glass blowing, hot sculpting, kiln work, fusing, cold work, torch work, neon and plate-glass work.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebrated at the Missoula Art Museum**

Montana Western assistant professor of art history, Aja Mujinga Sherrard, hosted a special day of celebration, offering learning and artmaking at the Missoula Art Museum on January 18.

She led a “Black-out History” family workshop, followed by an adult art class titled “Let us be dissatisfied until...A Look at Black Art and Civil Rights.”

Sherrard gave a lecture about art and protest, featuring a collection of works by Kara Walker, Lorna Simpson and Jacob Lawrence while celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the ongoing struggle for a world without oppression.

- **UMW Students Join International Honor Society**

In January, the English Department of the University of Montana Western inducted three new members into its Alpha Epsilon Iota chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international honor society.

Candidates for membership in Sigma Tau Delta have attained high academic achievement in the field of English studies. This year’s inductees from the University of Montana Western include Emily Engen from Fort Benton, Mont., Destiny Wallace from Kalispell, Mont. and Thérèse Vanisko from Helena, Mont.

- **Natural Horsemanship Instructor Profile: Melanie South**

Melanie South graduated from the University of Montana Western in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Natural Horsemanship and business. In fall 2019, she began her role as an instructor, teaching courses in the Natural Horsemanship program.

"To me, Natural Horsemanship means working with horses in a partnership. It focuses on making the right things easy for the horse, so that those behaviors become natural over time," said South.

According to South, the Natural Horsemanship program is impactful for students due to the combination of many individuals, businesses and organizations in the community who contribute extensive effort and time to ensure student success. The Experience One program, where students take one course at a time for 18 days for three hours each day, allows students to fully focus on their skillsets and building relationships with their horses.

- **Montana Western Students Perform "He Said and She Said"**

The UMW Fine Arts Department presented its fifth show in the 2019-20 Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series on the Montana Western campus. Performances of "He Said and She Said," a one act comedy written in 1921 by Alice Gerstenberg, were held in the Small Auditorium in Main Hall Jan. 30-Feb. 1.

In addition to "He Said and She Said," a variety of other short performances took place each night presented by Montana Western students.

- **Montana Western Names Students to 2019 Fall Semester Dean's List**

The University of Montana Western named 587 students to the 2019 fall semester Dean's List.

To achieve this honor, students must be enrolled full-time or for 12 semester credits and carry a minimum 3.33 grade point average. Several students on the list received Dean's List high honors due to their excellence in academics.