



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, April 28, 2021

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the May 2021 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **2021 Colt Sale Raises Over \$200,000 for Natural Horsemanship Program**

The University of Montana Western's Fifth Annual Colt Challenge and Sale, held April 2 and 3 at the Montana Center for Horsemanship, broke previous sale records by generating more than \$200,000 for the UMW Natural Horsemanship program.

The highest-selling colt, RSR Easy Playguns, sold for \$19,000 to Karen Murphy from Old Chatham, NY at the annual Colt Sale held April 3. RSR Easy Playguns was the overall champion in the Colt Challenge held on April 2. Rider and trainer Jacob Christenson was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship for placing first.

- **Montana Western Hosts Feature Film Production: "God's Country"**

Screenwriter Shaye Ogbonna and Director Julian Higgins adapted best-selling Montana author James Lee Burke's short story "Winter Light" into a feature film titled "God's Country." The film is set in western Montana and features scenes filmed on the University of Montana Western campus. The film portrays a grieving college professor who confronts two hunters she catches trespassing on her property and is drawn into an escalating battle of wills with catastrophic consequences.

Filming at UMW took place March 29-April 2. The film headlined Emmy-winning actress Thandie Newton. Newton is an English actress known for starring in HBO's science fiction western series "Westworld," for which she has earned a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series.

- **2021-22 Chancellor's Leadership Scholars Announced**

The Chancellor's Leadership Scholars Award is a four-year, full-tuition scholarship awarded to exceptional students residing in the state of Montana who will be attending the University of Montana Western in the fall. Montana Western is proud announce the five following high school seniors as the 2021-22 award recipients: Claire Nolan, Emma Anderson, Emma Hoover, Morgan Corean, and Toby Veltkamp.

"We look forward to welcoming these high-achieving students to Montana Western," said Chancellor Weatherby. "They are fascinating, talented individuals who will add so much to our community. Congratulations to all five recipients of this well-deserved award that recognizes leadership and scholarship."

- **Campus Compact Announces 2021 Newman Civic Fellows**

Campus Compact, a Boston-based non-profit organization working to advance the public purposes of higher education, has announced the 212 students who made up the organization's 2021-2022 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows.

Savannah Vannett, a student at the University of Montana Western, joined students from 39 states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico to form the 2021 cohort. The Newman Civic Fellowship is a year-long program for students from Campus Compact member institutions. The students selected for the fellowship are leaders on their campuses who demonstrated a commitment to finding solutions for challenges facing communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

- **Montana Western to Hold 124th Annual Commencement Ceremonies**

The University of Montana Western will celebrate its 124th Annual Commencement Ceremony in-person and online on Friday, April 30, and Saturday, May 1, 2021.

346 Montana Western graduates will be awarded at least 388 degrees by the end of the 2020-21 academic year. Of the 346 students, 42 have completed two or more degrees, and 65% of the graduates are receiving honors by achieving a GPA of 3.33 or higher. To ensure the health and safety of the community and guests, this year's Commencement will be divided into three smaller ceremonies.

- **Montana Western Hosts Chancellor Search Finalists**

The Montana Western Chancellor Search Advisory Committee hosted four chancellor search finalists on campus on April 15 and April 21-23. The four finalists included Michael Reid, Jill Thorngren, Debbie Storrs, and Jeff Elwell. Several forums were held on the day of each visit for UMW faculty, staff, students, and the community of Dillon to meet the candidates. The Search Advisory Committee will convene following the visits to proceed with the next steps in the search process.

- **Montana Western Professor Publishes Essay on History of Commercial Whaling**

Professor of European History, Dr. Bill Janus, recently had an essay titled “Songs Whales Sing: The Peculiar History of Commercial Whaling” published in The Revelator, an online news and idea initiative of the Center for Biological Diversity. “Songs Whales Sing” is about the history of commercial whaling and how iconoclastic 1960s figures ultimately were able to put an end to commercial whaling. Commercial whaling had “a bloody history, one emblazoned in many peoples’ minds by the later image of Herman Melville’s tortured Ahab relentlessly hunting the beleaguered Moby Dick,” wrote Janus.

- **Montana Western Performing Arts Series Presents “Mythfest”**

The University of Montana Western and The Bank of Commerce recently held its spring virtual performance festival, Mythfest. This online presentation was a collection of performances of new work featuring the stories and songs of homesteaders, ancestors, troubadours, and mystics.

The festival featured performances by UMW students and faculty under the direction of guest artist Miranda Zent. Students filmed themselves with computers and phones, lit scenes with ring lights and desk lamps, found their own costumes and converted their living spaces into virtual stages for weeks of rehearsals and filming for this event.

- **UMW Fine Arts Gallery Hosts “Old School”**

The Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery recently hosted “Old School,” a photography exhibit presented by UMW alumnus Zach Begler. The gallery reopened this spring, under the theme of “The Work Continues.” The featured artists have spent the past year creating new work, reimagining existing work, and expanding the scope and definition of their practice. The next exhibit presented by the gallery will be a virtual showing of artwork by Montana Western students.

- **UMW Ranked Among Top Universities for Education and Environmental Science**

Montana Western was recently ranked as one of the best universities nationwide delivering bachelor’s degrees in Education, Early Childhood Education, and Environmental Science in Study.com’s 2021 rankings.

UMW ranked second for Best Bachelor’s Degrees in Education, fourth in Best Bachelor’s Degrees in Early Childhood Education, and 37th in Best Bachelor’s Degrees in Environmental Science. Montana Western was the only Montana university to be featured for these degree fields.

- **UMW Ranked Among Best Online Bachelor's Degree Programs in Early Childhood Education**

Montana Western was recently ranked nationwide among the top 25 best online bachelor's degree programs in Early Childhood Education by Study.com. Study.com evaluated hundreds of schools that offer online bachelor's degree programs in early childhood education for this list and selected the University of Montana Western based on academic and career resources for online students pursuing a teaching degree, the quality of education, and faculty engagement. UMW was the only Montana university to be featured on the list.

- **UMW Fine Arts Gallery Presents Virtual Student Art Exhibit**

The UMW Virtual Student Art Show, featuring a wide range of mediums from digital soundscapes to traditional paintings, glass, photography, and much more, was recently hosted by the Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery.

“We acknowledge all of our students for their amazing submissions, and congratulations to the students selected. Your creativity through a difficult year has been incredible to witness,” said Nathaniel Freeman, Assistant Professor of Art and Design and UMW Fine Arts Gallery Director.

The show is available for viewing at the following link:
<https://padlet.com/umwdigitalmedia/ofkz51r8o05havzx>.