

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | September 15-16, 2021



## MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS

- **New MSUB athletics director named.** Michael Bazemore was named the new director for athletics and started his role on July 26. Bazemore was most recently the assistant director of academic and membership affairs for the NCAA national office in Indianapolis, IN. He was previously the chief rules officer and compliance liaison for MSUB's athletic department and served in other various roles between 2012-2016. Bazemore earned his master's degree in sport, recreation and fitness management from MSUB and completed his bachelor's degrees in sociology and interdisciplinary studies in social science from Michigan State University, where he was a four-year letter-winner on the Spartan's football team. Bazemore was selected among a field of 63 applicants and was one of three finalists for the position.
- **Cutting-edge technology elevates virtual learning.** MSUB has been Montana's leading institution in online learning and alternative course delivery for over a decade. This past year, due to COVID-19, MSUB is again at the forefront of implementing advanced technology to take students' online learning experience to the next level. This new technology, called Connected Classrooms, helps online students participate and engage more effectively in an in-person class. Utilizing computers, monitors, Owl cameras (which combine a microphone, speaker, and 360-degree camera into one device), digital document cameras, tablets, and audio systems allows professors to visually share objects with online students while simultaneously maintaining face-to-face interactions with them and the students who are in-person. Connected classrooms provides professors the flexibility to live stream classes or record lectures to accommodate time constraints, which in turn allows students to access lectures when their schedules allow.
- **Professors awarded NIH grant for science program.** MSUB's youth-based science program, the Atomic Circus, has been funded for the next five years through a \$1.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded to professors Queen and Obery. The Atomic Circus will travel through rural eastern Montana with the goal of getting younger students in these areas to recognize and understand the pathways to future biomedical careers by exposure to STEM and biomedical concepts. MSUB has partnered with MT INBRE for a mobile laboratory for the road show and collaborated with the Montana Area Health Education Center who will assist in connecting local healthcare professionals' experience and stories to the program curriculum.
- **MSUB will host NCAA Division II regional basketball tournament.** Between November 5-7, MSUB will host a three-day NCAA Division II women's basketball tournament "Tipoff Classic" for 2021 and 2023. This is the largest women's basketball tournament ever hosted by the Yellowjacket program with ten teams from seven different states and six different conferences.
- **Students' financial burdens eased with debt elimination program.** MSUB has established a debt elimination program for unpaid account balances for students enrolled at the declaration of the national coronavirus pandemic emergency on March 13, 2020, through May 2021. Over \$800K has been wiped from student accounts so far. Funding for this initiative comes from the one-time Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) institutional award from the U.S. Department of Education. Starting fall semester, eligible students will automatically be awarded HEERF funds, rather than having to apply for the funds directly.
- **History professor receives prestigious Prize for research.** Emily Arendt, Ph.D.'s recent published article "Two Dollars a Day, And Roast Beef: Whig Culinary Partisanship and the Election of 1840" in the Journal of the Early Republic (JER), was awarded the prestigious Ralph Gray Article Prize for the best scholarly article of the year. The article was chosen by a committee of scholarly historians selected by the JER.
- **33 student-athletes earn top conference academic award.** 33 Yellowjacket student-athletes received the top academic award from the Great Northwest Athletic Conference for the 2020-21 school year. Twenty-three women and ten men were recognized with this honor, which is reserved for student-athletes who maintain a GPA of 3.85 or higher. Standing out among MSUB's selections was women's soccer senior Rachel Lythgoe, who earned the honor for the fourth time in her career. The Yellowjackets also had four athletes who received the honor for the third time in their careers, including Emily Gaines of the women's soccer team, Tierney Messmer of the women's golf team, Shannon Reny of the women's basketball team, and Sam Elliott of the men's basketball team.
- **MSUB math professor awarded grant for highly successful Math Circle program.** For the third year, Tien Chih, Ph.D., has been awarded a Mathematical Association of America Dolciani Mathematics Enrichment Grant to support his continuing success in running the Math Circle program, where fourth- to eighth-graders in Billings can attend in-person or virtually to explore advanced mathematical concepts and make lasting connections, without the pressure of grades.
- **Students aim to boost active transportation in Billings.** Students taking MSUB's Campaign Planning course (COMX 481) this summer partnered with the Healthy by Design (HBD) Coalition of Billings and RiverStone Health to create a campaign highlighting the positives of active transportation such as walking, biking, and running. Their aim is to reduce negative perceptions of active transportation due to unsafe encounters on some of the Billings' streets, and the students will create a campaign to improve safe practices of automobile drivers, while also increasing the confidence of individuals using active transportation.
- **Four students receive scholarships to study in East Asia.** MSUB students Nathaneal Bundy, Madaline Brown, Willow Peterson, and Danielle Cutler were awarded scholarships through the new Undergraduate International Students and Foreign Languages Program by the U.S. Department of Education. These students plan to study abroad at partner universities in Japan and South Korea to continue their language studies. In preparation, they will undergo a ten-week intensive language course in Japanese and Korean through the Defense Language and Culture Program at the University of Montana.