



## The University of Montana Western Campus Report

**DATE:** June 13, 2023  
**TO:** Board of Regents  
**FROM:** Michael Reid, Chancellor  
**RE:** Campus Report for the July Board of Regents' Meeting

- **Montana Western Announces R.E. Miller as General Contractor for Sports & Activities Complex**

After publicly launching a \$13 million fundraising effort earlier this year to fund scholarships, academic programs, and student wellness and athletics facilities, the University of Montana Western has announced the selection of Jeffrey Contracting/R.E. Miller as the general contractor of the new Sports & Activities Complex, anticipated to break ground this August with the goal of having a game-ready field for fall semester 2024. The civil site plan for the Sports & Activities Complex project is complete and has been reviewed and approved by the City of Dillon and Montana Department of Transportation. The next stage will be working with the project's engineers, architects, and general contractor for design development and cost estimates as the project moves forward.

- **MUS Researchers Announce OpenAI's GPT-4 Matches or Outperforms Humans in Creative Thinking Tests**

A team of interdisciplinary researchers, including Dr. Christian Gilde, Professor of Business at the University of Montana Western, Dr. Erik Guzik, Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Montana, and Dr. Christian Byrge, Professor of Business Creativity at Vilnius University, shared their findings during the University of Southern Oregon's Conference on Creativity from a recent study focused on the creative capabilities of AI. For the first time, OpenAI's GPT-4 scored in the top 1% on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), matching or outperforming humans in the creative abilities of fluency, flexibility, and originality.

"As we began to explore AI, it became clear the benefits for business applications would be significant. The introduction of ChatGPT creates new opportunities in just about every field and industry," said Dr. Gilde. "This development also encourages society to revisit some of the most fundamental questions about the nature of human creativity."

- **Lindsey Branch Selected as Frontier Conference Sports Information Director of the Year**

In her inaugural year, Montana Western Sports Information Director, Lindsey Branch, was selected as the 2022-2023 Frontier Conference Sports Information Director of the Year in a vote by the league's sports information directors. She is the conference's nominee for National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) honors. The award honors an individual who demonstrates excellence in all aspects of athletic communication including social media, press releases, photography, statistical compilation, website updates, coordinating media personnel, graphic design, and promotion of the Frontier Conference and the NAIA.

- **UMW Places First at Road to the Horse & Idaho Horse Expo Colt Starting Competition**

A team of students from the University of Montana Western's Natural Horsemanship program placed first in the Idaho Horse Expo Collegiate Colt Starting Competition held April 7-9, 2023, at the Ford Idaho Horse Park in Napa, Idaho. Road to the Horse partnered with the Idaho Horse Expo to present this year's competition, where three teams competed for a share of the \$6,000 cash prize. Competing teams were from the University of Montana Western, Feather River Community College, and Treasure Valley Community College. Montana Western placed first with a total score of 1183.5.

- **UMW Announces 2023-24 Chancellor's Leadership Scholars**

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 to announce the five following high school seniors as the 2023-24 award recipients: Megan Ehinger, Elizabeth Fulbright, Nicolas Macdonald, Isabella Montalvo, and Allison Sprague.

"Congratulations to the recipients of this scholarship that recognizes leadership, community service, and academic excellence. We are excited to welcome you to campus this fall," said Montana Western Chancellor, Michael Reid.

- **UMW Ranked Nationally in Top 20 Best Online Bachelor's Degree Programs for Early Childhood Education**

The University of Montana Western was recently ranked among the top 20 best online bachelor's degree programs in Early Childhood Education by bestaccreditedcolleges.org. Hundreds of institutions across the country were considered for this ranking and 48 were selected based on their financial aid awards, quality of education, faculty, and available resources for students. Montana Western was the only Montana institution to be featured.

- **Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce and UMW Hold Third Annual Treasure Hunt**

The Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture and the University of Montana Western have partnered for the third year in a row for the Annual Beaverhead Treasure Hunt. One-of-a-kind, beautiful glass art objects, custom made by UMW Glass students, will be hidden at local businesses and historical sites throughout Beaverhead County from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Over 100 works of art, made by the students in the University of Montana Western Glass Arts Program under the instruction of Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Ruth King, and Guest Instructor/Artist Elizabeth Walters, will be hidden in areas including Bannack, Dillon, Lima, Dell, Grant, Jackson, Wisdom, Wise River, Dewey, and Glen.

- **Gerringa Family Scholarship Supports Future Educators at Montana Western**

The University of Montana Western Foundation is honored to share the impact of the Gerringa Family Scholarship and its support of education majors attending Montana Western. Established in 2021 by Randy, Stephanie, and Michelle Gerringa, the scholarship honors their mother, Clara, and their late father, Bob. The award is gifted annually to a Montana Western student majoring in education.

For the upcoming 2023-24 academic year, the scholarship will be awarded to Early Childhood Education major, Jessika Jones. Jones has a passion for teaching and is excited for the opportunities UMW's Education Program and this scholarship will provide.

- **Montana Western Holds 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement**

On May 6, 2023, UMW held its 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement Ceremony. 350 Montana Western graduates were awarded over 400 degrees at the end of the 2022-23 academic year. Of the 350 students, 53 completed two or more degrees, and 70% of the graduates received honors by achieving a GPA of 3.33 or higher. 160 graduates chose to participate in this year's ceremony.

Special guests included Representative Marvin Weatherwax, Jr., and UMW alumnus, Patrick Armstrong, performers of the Blackfeet Honor Song, Distinguished Alumni Service Award recipient, Phil Willett, and Commencement Speaker and UMW alumnus, Taylor Nahrgang.

- **Montana Western Names Students to 2023 Spring Semester Dean's List**

513 UMW students were selected to the 2023 spring 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.