



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: August 23, 2023
TO: Board of Regents
FROM: Michael Reid, Chancellor
RE: Campus Report for the September Board of Regents' Meeting

- **Canvas Early Learning Center Opens New Location at UMW**

Canvas Early Learning Center (ELC) opened a new location on August 10, 2023, on the Montana Western campus that will expand licensed infant and childcare in Beaverhead County. Funded by Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services through a Childcare Innovations Grant, project partners Canvas ELC, UMW, and the Early Childhood Coalition aim to increase childcare availability for families while supporting the local economy. The new location at UMW has the expanded classroom capacity for 34 children ages 2-5, with an infant and toddler classroom planned to open on UMW's campus in September 2024. The new location will also allow UMW Early Education students to enhance their skillsets through real-world teaching experiences at the Center. As a trusted mentor, Canvas will offer guidance and demonstrate best practices in working with young children, providing additional opportunities for UMW students to actively engage in their field of study.

- **UMW Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Sports & Activities Complex**

The University of Montana Western hosted a Groundbreaking Ceremony on August 16, 2023, to kick-off construction of its highly anticipated Sports & Activities Complex with the goal to begin using the new facility in fall 2024. The event brought together community members, donors, students, and guests at the complex's construction site on the UMW football practice field and symbolized a significant step toward creating a modern facility for athletics, recreation, and community events.

"We believe that the Sports & Activities Complex will be transformative for the campus, our students, and the community," said Montana Western Chancellor, Michael Reid. "The University extends its gratitude to all the individuals, organizations, and community members who have shown their unwavering support."

- **UMW Vice Chancellor Tricia Fiscus to Start new Role at Flathead Valley Community College**

The University of Montana Western has announced that current Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Tricia Fiscus, will be stepping down from her role at UMW to serve as Vice President/CFO at Flathead Valley Community College.

Before coming to Montana Western in 2021, Fiscus worked at Washington State University for 21 years, then at Klamath Community College (KCC) where she went on to become the Vice President of Administrative Services and CFO for KCC for two and a half years. She will begin her new role at FVCC in mid-September.

"I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the contributions Tricia has made at Montana Western. Her dedication, passion, and hard work have left a lasting impact, and she will be missed. We greatly appreciate the incredible resource she has been for our campus during her time here, and wish Tricia and her family the very best in their future endeavors," said Montana Western Chancellor, Michael Reid.

- **UMW Appoints Dr. Estee Aiken as Dean of Strategic Initiatives**

The University of Montana Western is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Estee Aiken as the next Dean of Strategic Initiatives. Aiken earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Macalester College, in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2001, followed by a Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary School from Colorado College in 2002. She earned her Doctor of Education in Education Studies from the University of Northern Colorado in 2012.

Aiken currently serves as the Division Chair of Education at Montana Western, where she has also served as a professor since 2011 and has taught over 25 different education courses. She has also been actively involved at the state level in several roles including Montana Council of Deans of Education, Montana University System Teacher Scholar 2022-23, current campus lead for the Teacher Residency Demonstration Project, and President of the Montana Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. She will start the duties of her new position at Montana Western on August 28, 2023.

- **UMW Ranks in Top 200 Colleges for Indigenous Students**

Montana Western has earned a place in the 2023-24 American Indian Science and Engineering Society's (AISES) "Top 200 Colleges for Indigenous Students." The list will be featured in the "Winds of Change" 30th annual Special College Issue to be published in November. The Special College Issue is a highly anticipated reference for high school students, teachers, and counselors and is the only resource of its kind for the growing number of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians who are concentrating on STEM disciplines in higher education.

- **Montana Western Presents “David Korty: Work on Paper”**

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery is proud to present “Work on Paper” by renowned artist David Korty. The gallery will host an opening reception on Friday, September 8, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Fine Arts Gallery located in Main Hall.

In this new group of work, the artist has chosen his experience as an avid fly tyer and fisherman as a springboard from which to draw and paint, all from his own unique perspective. Korty was born in San Francisco in 1971 and has been living and working as an artist in Los Angeles since 1996. Korty’s work has been shown extensively in Los Angeles, in solo exhibitions at Night Gallery, China Art Objects, Kohn Gallery and LAXART; at Derek Eller Gallery and Greene Naftali in New York; and at Sadie Coles HQ in London.

“I am excited to open the academic year with this stunning exhibition by artist David Korty. It is my hope that this exhibition resonates strongly with Southwest Montana,” said Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery Coordinator and Adjunct Instructor, Jennifer Boysen.

- **UMW Alumna Travels to Thailand to Work with Elephants**

University of Montana Western alumna, Halle Broughton, participated in a two-week program in Thailand through Loop Abroad, a pre-veterinary study abroad organization. Broughton worked with veterinarians to care for rescued elephants at the Elephant Nature Park and provided medical support at the Dog Rescue Clinic. A UMW biology graduate, Broughton was selected for the program based on her academic achievements.

“Going to Thailand has been a dream of mine for many years, so when I found out I got accepted into this program I was over the moon with excitement. I have always had a passion for travel and culture, as well as a love and passion for animals and this trip combined both in the most magical way imaginable,” said Broughton.

- **DegreeWorks Software Now Available for UMW Students**

The University of Montana Western is excited to introduce DegreeWorks, a web-based tool that students can use to track their academic progress toward degree completion that is used by other colleges and universities across the country. DegreeWorks helps students plan future coursework with their advisor and keeps them on track for graduation by providing an easy to use platform to map out future courses before they register.

- **Spring TEDx Event to be held at the University of Montana Western**

In March 2024, Montana Western will be hosting its first-ever TEDx event that will feature speeches and presentations by faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and students in front of a live recorded audience.

Made possible by the UMW Foundation's Fund for Experience One and facilitated by the Montana Western Theatre Program, all presentations will have the opportunity to be featured on the TED global network. Currently accepting applications and nominations, the selection committee will finalize the speaker list in December that will highlight individuals with novel ideas, unique approaches, and experiential research projects.

- **UMW Student Rachel Marchant Honored as Newman Civic Fellow**

Rachel Marchant, a psychology major at the University of Montana Western, has been chosen as one of 154 Newman Civic Fellows nationwide by Campus Compact for their 2023-24 cohort. The fellowship recognizes student leaders who are committed to making a positive impact in their communities. Through the fellowship, Campus Compact provides students with a year of learning and networking opportunities that emphasize personal, professional, and civic growth. The cornerstone of the fellowship is the Annual Convening of Fellows, which offers intensive in-person skill-building and networking over the course of two days. The fellowship also provides pathways for exclusive scholarship and post-graduate opportunities.

"During my college career, I have supported my community through my work on campus as a mentor for TRIO Student Support Services, a program that facilitates student success on campus. I also work for Safe Ride, a university-funded service that helps students get home safely. I am passionate about strengthening my leadership skills and improving my community," said Marchant.

- **Montana Western Names Britt Cooper as Head Women's Basketball Coach**

UMW alumna, Britt Cooper, has recently been named as Head Women's Basketball Coach at the University of Montana Western. A native of Harrison, Montana, Cooper earned her bachelor's degree in both Mathematics and Health and Human Performance from Montana Western in 2019. She competed on the Bulldog Women's Basketball team and was a key member of the 2019 NAIA National Championship team, earning the NAIA tournament's hustle award. She then became a graduate assistant for the NCAA Division II Angelo State women's basketball program for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons. During this time, she earned her Master's Degree in Coaching, Sport, Recreation, and Fitness Administration.

"I am extremely excited to be the next head coach. This program has meant a lot to me over the last eight years and we have a great group dedicated to the sport, and I am so happy I get to be a part of helping them grow on and off the court," said Cooper.

- **UMW Athletics Hall of Fame and Bulldog Bash Dates Announced**

Montana Western Athletics and the UMW Foundation & Alumni Office have announced dates for the 2023 Bulldog Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and the Bulldog Bash, both part of this year's Fall Alumni Weekend schedule of events.

The Induction Ceremony, held on Friday, October 13, will honor Trent Gibson, Brandon Brown, Wyatt Smith, Paul Snow, and the 1966-67 Men's Track team. The Bulldog Bash, to be held on Saturday, October 14, will feature a cocktail social, dinner, and live auction.

"We wish to extend a heartfelt invitation to all of our alumni, community, and friends to take part in our upcoming events during Alumni Weekend this fall. This year's theme, 'Legacy and Gridiron Glory: 74 years of Bulldog Football at Vigilante Field,' celebrates the legacy of Montana Western Athletics at Vigilante Field. As we recognize the end of an era with the final season of UMW football to be played at Vigilante this year, we also look to the future in eager anticipation of the completion of the new Sports & Activities Complex on the Montana Western campus," said Jolene Robbins, UMW Events and Alumni Coordinator.