

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | July 10, 2025



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[Nick Brailer](#) was one of 441 students from across the United States to be awarded the Goldwater scholarship for the 2025-2026 academic year. Recipients were selected from among 1,350 students nominated by 445 academic institutions across the country. A 31-year old non-traditional student, Nick is the second Goldwater Scholar at MSU Billings in the past four years. His undergraduate research has focused on studying similar rocks that appear in areas formed 25 million years apart.

MSU Billings recently received approval from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to continue to teach through the Prison Education Program (PEP). The program has proven beneficial for students since MSU Billings faculty members began teaching incarcerated students in 2023. In the coming months, Tami Haaland, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, will work with campus constituents to update MSU Billings' application with PEP so that our faculty can continue teaching students in the Montana Women's Prison in Billings and the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge.

The [98th annual Montana State University Billings Commencement](#) ceremony took place Saturday, May 3, at MetraPark's First Interstate Arena. More than 700 students earned the opportunity to participate in the annual ceremony. Student Speaker and Outstanding Student Leadership Award winner, [Vikash Kumar](#), gave the message to the graduates.

On May 2, in two Nurses' Pinning Ceremonies, 47 nurses were honored for earning their degrees. In a ceremony for graduates of the RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, 27 nurses received their pins. In a separate ceremony for graduates of the City College Associate of Science in Nursing program, 20 nurses were honored and received their pins. Nurse's Pinning ceremonies are especially meaningful to graduates as the contemporary ceremony is based on a tradition that began with the legendary nurse Florence Nightingale, but has roots that date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

MSU Billings honored student leaders and celebrated outstanding graduates during the [2025 Student Leadership Recognition Program](#) on April 9. The event serves as a platform to recognize students for their campus leadership, academic performance, and service to both the university and the broader Billings community.

Dr. Mara Pierce, Associate Professor of Art Education, was recently recognized as the 2025 United States Society for Education Through Art (USSEA) [Kenneth Marantz Distinguished Fellows](#) recipient. Dr. Pierce teaches classes on fundamentals of art education and teaching methods, which explore cultural inclusion and different perspectives. Her teaching schedule at various times includes American Indian Art and Native American Studies.

At the close of one of [the best seasons in MSU Billings baseball history](#), the Yellowjackets were tied for the most wins in school history (33) while earning the first-ever NCAA Tournament victory in program history. The 2025 season ranks second in total hits (562), third in runs scored (400), third in RBIs (361), and fourth in batting average (.302). On the mound, they posted the second-best team ERA in school history (5.12), finished with the most innings pitched (451), and ranked third in saves (9). The Jackets also turned 50 double plays, the most ever in a single season.