



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS

# CAMPUS REPORT

January 2026

James Straw, a UM student, former farm kid and trained Marine sniper, earned a highly prestigious Marshall Scholarship.

The University's **Backcountry Hunters & Anglers club** is boosting campus interest in hunting, fishing, fly-fishing and essential Montana culture.

Julia Galloway, a UM director of ceramics, was named Regents Professor by the Montana Board of Regents. The honor is the highest professor rank in the Montana University System.

UM's new Brain, Ear and Aging Research **(BEAR) Lab** studies the connection between hearing loss and brain function as people age.

More than **800 UM students graduated** after fall semester 2025. **Commencement was held Dec. 12**, and the University presented an honorary doctorate to alumna speaker Lana Batts.

Graduate student Mikaela Balkind created a training to inspire more women to become wildland firefighters.

UM students participated in a **60-second business pitch competition**.

ROTC cadet Buddy Wilson, the University's student body president, was a finalist for the Rhodes Scholarship.

Justin Willis, a world-class mountaineer attending UM, overcame a near-death experience to climb toward graduation.

Brittany Westlund, a UM graduate student in game design, has made some winning moves with a short-form video game, a publication and awards.

UM doctoral students are advancing research in speech language pathology.

UM won the Can the Cats food drive competition with the most successful fundraising effort in the program's history.

Anthropology Regents Professor Anna Prentiss will lead an international \$12 million grant to study pre-farming hunter-gatherer societies.

The University and Missoula County Public Schools created a new partnership to improve early childhood programming for students with disabilities.

UM's law school launched an effort to support veterans via peer mentorship. A new student group also is helping vets transition from combat to the courtroom. Also, law alumnus Alex Butler is finding success as a JAG officer with the U.S. military.