

Campus Report | Board of Regents Meeting | July 9, 2026

- This year marked UMW's Year 7 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness and culminated in a NWCCU Peer Review Team visit to campus in April.
- UMW celebrated its 129th Annual Commencement Ceremony on May 9 in Bulldog Stadium.
- 515 students have been named to the Dean's List for the 2026 spring semester.
- Montana Western was selected as part of the inaugural class of Student Co-Design Teams through Campus Compact. Eight institutions were selected to help develop new models for student voice and shared leadership on campus and within the community.
- Hosted by the UMW Biology Club, the 19th Annual Research Symposium showcased authentic experiential learning through a variety of research presentations and posters highlighting undergraduate research, internships, and artistic work.
- UMW's Peers Advocating Towards Health and the Women's Resource Center co-hosted the annual campus and community Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event to raise awareness about sexual and gender-based violence and the importance of supporting survivors.
- The University of Montana Western's Theatre Program and the Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series presented a community musical production of Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka.
- UMW appointed Dr. Eric Wright as Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dr. Hilary Smith Risser as Interim Dean of Strategic Initiatives effective as of June 1, 2026.
- Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Tia Brown, will be stepping down from her role at UMW to accept a new position as Chief Financial Officer at Montana State University Billings starting August 3, 2026.
- UMW Regents Professor of Geology, Dr. Robert C. Thomas, published Montana Rocks! A Guide to Geological Sites Under the Big Sky, a new book that walks readers through the state's geologic past.
- Alumna Dr. Beth Bennett, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Idaho State University, and Dr. Jessica Schad, Professor of Sociology at Utah State University, presented the results of the Beaverhead County Community Survey.
- Board-certified Health and Wellness Coach, Ashley Kailey, joined the UMW staff as Student Wellness and Recreation Coordinator.
- Longtime campus leader, Nicole Hazelbaker, was honored with the Friends of Education Award during the annual Night of Stars – Education Hall of Fame event. Over the course of her career, she served in several key student support roles at UMW, including Residence Life Director and Dean of Students.
- UMW recognized its recent retirees and years of service of employees who reached their 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 year milestones this year. The Top Dog Award was presented to staff member Sarah Sanderson for her high standard of work and dedication to the campus.