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To: Board of Regents

From: Johnny MacLean
Chancellor, Montana Technological University

RE: Campus Report for November 19-20, 2026, Board of Regents Meeting

- **$6 Million NSF Award for Critical Minerals Research:** Montana Tech, in partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and University of Wyoming, received a $6 million National Science Foundation award to advance AI-driven biological processes for recovering critical minerals from domestic resources. The project will develop a Smart Bio-Refinery framework to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign sources of rare earth elements. Environmental Engineering faculty member Robin Bullock serves as Montana Tech's principal investigator for its $1.3 million portion, with Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Professor Courtney Young serving as co-principal investigator.
- **Fourth Consecutive Year of Enrollment Growth:** Montana Tech's Fall 2026 enrollment reached 2,574 students, a 2% increase (58 students) over last year. Undergraduate enrollment in the Lance College of Mines and Engineering has grown 14% since 2023, from 787 to 898 students. Nursing remains the university's largest major, with 237 undergraduate students.
- **Montana's Top-Ranked Nursing School:** For the second consecutive year, Montana Tech's Sherry Lesar School of Nursing was named Montana's top nursing school in Niche.com's *2027 Best Colleges for Nursing in America* rankings.
- **National Recognition in U.S. News Rankings:** Montana Tech earned recognition in the *2027 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges* rankings for Regional Universities in the West, Top Public Schools among Regional Universities in the West, Undergraduate Engineering Programs where a doctorate in engineering is not offered, and Undergraduate Nursing Programs. The university was also recognized for Best Value Schools and Top Performers on Social Mobility, reflecting its commitment to affordability, access, and student success.
- **Business Professor Named President of Montana Society of CPAs:** Tim Kober, CPA, CMA, CFM, professor and head of Montana Tech's Department of Business, was installed as president of the Montana Society of CPAs Board of Directors for 2026–2027. The organization recognized Kober's leadership, commitment to accounting education, and dedication to developing Montana's future accounting professionals.
- **Engineering Students Contribute to Museum of the Rockies Exhibition:** Mechanical engineering students Jadon Bingham and Daniel Topp, working with mechanical engineering assistant professor, Dr. Nathan Huft, 3D-printed a replica of Edmonia Lewis's 1876 marble sculpture, *The Death of Cleopatra*, for the Museum of the Rockies. Using a high-definition lidar model provided by the Smithsonian, the team collaborated with Montana State University art professors Dr. Melissa Ragain and Dr. Regina Gee, who painted and finished the replica. The sculpture is featured in the *Chisel and Razor* exhibition in Bozeman, October 17, 2026, through September 12, 2027.