THE UNIVERSITY of MONTANA WESTERN

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CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | November 19–20, 2026

- Montana Western's revised Mission and Purpose Statements, Values, and Goals, the elements that form the foundation of the university's new strategic plan, *Montana Ready*, were approved at the Board of Regents Meeting hosted at MSU-Billings on September 24.

- Montana Western will celebrate Chancellor Dr. Estee Aiken's leadership and the completed renovation of Block Hall during its October 22 Chancellor's Convocation centered around the theme "*Inspired by Our Past. Ready for Our Future.*" The event includes a campus open house, ribbon-cutting ceremony, remarks from Chancellor Aiken, and a community reception.

- Effective beginning October 19, Montana Western named Roxanne Engellant as Interim Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance and Stacie Watkins as Interim Executive Director of the Montana Western Foundation. Engellant previously led the Foundation and Alumni Office for more than 15 years.

- Montana Western named Matt Raffety as Chief of Staff and Director of Communications effective as of October 6. In addition to overseeing communications, marketing, and accreditation efforts, Raffety will also lead the establishment of the university's first Staff Senate and coordinate with Institutional Research.

- The Montana Western Foundation announced the establishment of the Terry Rae Hazelbaker Scholarship, created by her son, Jay Mattfeldt, in honor of her lifelong dedication to education and community service. The $1,000 annual scholarship will support Montana resident education majors beginning in the 2027–2028 academic year.

- UMW alumna Rachel Howard will present as part of the On the Rocks lecture series, discussing Utah water rights and the intersection of geology, hydrology, and law on October 28.

- Montana Youth Challenge Academy, the Montana National Guard, and Montana Western will host a statewide Educator Airlift on October 21, bringing educators from across Montana to learn about the MYCA program, student success pathways, and UMW's Experience One program.

- Dr. John R. Henris will be featured in Montana Western's Fick Faculty Speaker Series, presenting on the history of fisheries and conservation in Dillon and southwest Montana during the Progressive Era (1898–1920) on November 4.

- Montana Western earned a tie for No. 4 among top public regional colleges in the West in U.S. News & World Report's 2027 Best Colleges rankings.

- The Dillon Community Story Stroll was named a 2026 Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program Emerging Strategies Honoree. The partnership between Montana Western, Dillon Public Schools, and the Dillon Public Library received a $5,000 award supporting its innovative approach to youth literacy and community reading.

- UMW celebrated its 2026 Homecoming Week with the theme "*Defend the Frontier*," October 12 through 17.