



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, October 21, 2020

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the November 2020 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **Montana Western Named “Hidden Gem College” in the Rocky Mountains**

Montana Western has been selected as a 2021 "hidden gem college" for the Rocky Mountain region by Collegeraptor.com.

The University of Montana Western ranked in the top three for hidden gem colleges in Montana. States included in the Rocky Mountain region are Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming. Montana Western is unique because of its Experience One program, block scheduling model and small class sizes. With Experience One, students at Montana Western take one course at a time for 18 days, take a short break and then move on to their next course.

- **UMW Glass Student Showcases Neon Design and Runs His Own Business**

Montana Western student and glass major, Ben Kenealey, recently installed his custom neon glass installation at the Emerick Art Studio on the Montana Western campus.

Kenealey started bending glass tubing for neon signage in 2007 for Lights in the Night Neon, a neon business in Sacramento, CA. He quickly became the primary glass bender and in 2012 bought the business. In 2019, Ben moved his business, along with his wife, Shannon, and their four children, to Dillon to pursue a B.A. in Glass at the University of Montana Western. Kenealey is currently a senior focusing on scientific glassblowing.

- **Farm and Ranch Operations Minor Featured in Prairie Star**

UMW's Farm and Ranch Operations Business Minor was featured in the Prairie Star newspaper in an article outlining the recent addition of the minor to UMW's many degree offerings.

"We have been talking about offering some sort of farm and ranch degree for years. About a year and a half ago we ended up putting together a program we feel will be very beneficial to students who either want to return to the family operation or work in agriculture in general," explained Kurt Steadman, Associate Professor of Business at Montana Western.

- **MCH and UMW Host Packing and Outfitting Mini-Symposium**

The Montana Center for Horsemanship, along with the University of Montana Western, presented a one-day Packing and Outfitting Mini-Symposium earlier this fall. The program featured presenters from the U.S. Forest Service and the renowned Nine-mile Pack String, Backcountry Horsemen, an emergency medicine equine veterinarian and a presentation on bear safety in the backcountry, along with Natural Horsemanship educators, trainers and students.

Presentations and demonstrations with horses and mules focused on the rich history, skills, practice and hands-on experiential learning and training that have made packing and outfitting in America's backcountry and wilderness possible for recreation and the professional industry.

- **UMW Professor Publishes Research on Snowpack Reconstruction for the Northern Rockies**

Dr. Spruce W. Schoenemann from the University of Montana Western's Environmental Sciences Department recently published his work in the Journal of Quaternary Science Advances for research on snowpack in the northern Rocky Mountains.

The publication details Schoenemann's work to extend records of April 1 Snow Water Equivalence (the amount of water contained within the snowpack) for the northern Rocky Mountains to evaluate the magnitude of recent snow drought over the last few decades.

- **UMW Ranked Among Top 50 Universities for Teaching and Education Degrees Nationwide**

To help potential educators find the best education and teaching programs in the United States, Learn.org gathered data and conducted research to identify some of the best schools for education and teaching degrees nationwide.

The result was a list of schools that offer a range of degrees for both those looking to prepare for a teaching career as well as for those looking to add a specialty area, advance their career or move into education administration. UMW ranked 18th on the list and was the only university from Montana to be featured.

- **UMW Professor Releases Biography on Montana Author Thomas Savage**

Dr. Alan Weltzien is a Professor of English Emeritus and a recently retired English professor from the University of Montana Western. His new book, "Savage West: The Life and Fiction of Thomas Savage," was published at the end of September. Savage is a novelist from Montana who published 13 books over a 44-year period.

"This is a literary biography of one of the best and most neglected writers from Montana. Savage never had the audience he should have, and I hope this book will help return him to the reputation he deserves," Weltzien said.

- **2020 MUS Teaching Scholars Announced**

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education announced it has selected 14 faculty members and instructors for the Montana University System's Teaching Scholars program, including Montana Western Assistant Professor Nanci L. Red Bird.

Each year, the MUS Teaching Scholars program focuses on a selected theme that speaks to innovative approaches to teaching and that aligns with MUS teaching and learning priorities. As the nation grapples with social and racial

injustices and the MUS seeks to continue to address the ways that these injustices show up in the classroom, this year's program is focused on "Equity-Minded Pedagogies."

- **UMW Hires COVID-19 Testing and Communications Coordinators**

The University of Montana Western announced the hiring of two temporary staff positions to assist UMW in its COVID-19 mitigation efforts: COVID-19 Testing Coordinator Sadie Caltrider and COVID-19 Communications Coordinator Baylee Rawson.

These positions are funded by the federal COVID-19 testing and mitigation funds UMW was awarded by Governor Bullock in support of the Montana University System. UMW received \$1,175,720.00 to be used for staffing, testing, and logistics related to COVID-19 mitigation.