



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, February 10, 2021

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the March 2021 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **Fund for Experience One Receives \$250,000 Gift**

Inspired by their commitment to higher education, Steve and Gretchen Burke have provided a generous gift to the University of Montana Western in support of the Fund for Experience One. This fund was established in 2015 by Chancellor Beth Weatherby and her husband, Dr. Steve Kramer, in celebration of Montana Western's ten-year anniversary of the implementation of Experience One.

"We were inspired to provide a gift in support of Experience One. We are true believers that education makes opportunities possible. Support of an innovative educational model such as Experience One is an exciting investment," said Gretchen Burke.

- **Montana Western Named Most Innovative Among "Best Colleges in Montana" Ranking**

UMW has been awarded top ranking and most innovative status for "Best Colleges in Montana" by Intelligent.com, an online educational resource. Each university is evaluated based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation, and post-graduate employment.

The 2021 rankings are calculated through a unique scoring system which includes student engagement, potential return on investment and leading third party evaluations. The top picks for the best colleges in Montana are affordable, respected, and provide flexibility for students.

- **UMW Fine Arts Gallery Showcases First Exhibit in Spring 2021 Series**

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery was proud to host “Que Van a Dar a la Muerte - That Run Empty Into Death” from January 28 to February 10.

“Que Van a Dar a la Muerte – That Run Empty Into Death”, is a sound concept piece by composer Kenneth L. Field, presented with sound and space design by UMW Fine Arts Professor Nathaniel H. Freeman. The work incorporates the Spanish-language poetry of Ernesto Cardenal (with English translations by Thomas Merton), and additional poetry by Barbara Kingsolver, all set against a soundscape of found-object recordings and prepared piano.

- **Montana Center for Horsemanship Receives \$50,000 Gift for Education and Expansion**

The Montana Center for Horsemanship announced it has received a large grant to continue the expansion of the education and event facility. The Center, whose focus is education and helping horses and people to make the most of their respective lives, says the grant will support the expansion of state-of-the-art classrooms including a veterinary/research laboratory.

This spring, the Center will host and present the annual Colt Sale, in collaboration with the University of Montana Western – a Sales Prep class and Natural Horsemanship training program culminating in an auction of some of the best-bred colts in the country, donated to UMW and the Center, that will generate funds for student scholarships and program support.

- **Montana Western Alumna Named AQHA Corporate Partner Manager**

UMW alumna, Meagan Nahrgang, joined the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) as the new Corporate Partner Manager.

Nahrgang graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. As Corporate Partner Manager, Nahrgang will be managing all programs relating to AQHA's existing corporate partner program and will work closely with marketing and business development teams to enhance existing partnerships and creatively cultivate new opportunities.

AQHA Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer, Patty Tiberg, said "We are very excited to welcome Meagan to our team. Her background in the industry will allow her to connect with members and partners alike."

- **UMW Football Player Reflects on Donating Bone Marrow**

University of Montana Western football player Dylan Pope recently donated stem cells derived from bone marrow to an anonymous recipient in December 2020.

"It was a pretty tough year but having this to look forward to and reflect on has been something pretty big for me," Pope said in an interview with Montana Sports.

"I think that's a really courageous thing for Dylan to do," head football coach Ryan Nourse said. "I think that selflessness will shine through to the other guys on the team knowing that maybe they could help somebody in a similar position someday."

- **The University of Montana Western Provides Asymptomatic COVID-19 Testing for Students**

The University of Montana Western has been providing free, voluntary COVID-19 testing to asymptomatic students since the beginning of the spring semester on January 11.

“We have been working since November to find ways to expand asymptomatic testing specifically targeted at our students living in on-campus residence halls across the campuses of the Montana University System,” said Brock Tessman, Deputy Commissioner of Academic, Research and Student Affairs with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in Helena.

The testing is being offered first to students living in on-campus residence halls, and then to all UMW students as supplies allow.

- **Montana Campus Compact Honors Student-Athlete Volunteer**

Each year Montana Campus Compact (MTCC) recognizes one student-athlete from each MTCC affiliate campus across the state who have dedicated their efforts to serving the community while also pursuing their college degrees and certificates while participating in college sports. Representing the University of Montana Western this year is Mesa King from the UMW Women’s Basketball team.

King’s service activities include serving as the UMW Association of Student-Athletes President, participating in Champions of Character assemblies, and volunteering for the Bannack State Park Clean Up event.

- **Montana Western Professor Emerita Leads Project on Invasive Plants**

Botanist Dr. Delena Norris-Tull, a Professor Emerita of Science Education at the University of Montana Western, has published a website detailing the management of invasive plants in the western United States.

The focus of the project according to Norris-Tull’s website “is an investigation of the policies and practices used in the western United States to limit the spread of invasive plant species in rangelands, farms, forests, urban and suburban areas, natural areas and public land, in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.”

The entire project can be found on invasiveplantswesternusa.org.

- **UMW Professor Publishes Paper in the Centennial Volume on Montana Geology**

Dr. Rob Thomas, from the University of Montana Western's Environmental Sciences Department, was recently published in the Centennial Geology Volume of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology for his work on the influence of the Yellowstone Hotspot on Montana geology over the last 17 million years of Earth's history.

The paper is titled: "Middle Miocene Through Pliocene Sedimentation and Tectonics in Montana: A Record of the Outbreak and Passage of the Yellowstone Hotspot." Thomas said, "it was a great honor to be selected to summarize this very important period of time in the evolution of the Montana landscape."

- **UMW Names Students to 2020 Fall Semester Dean's List**

The University of Montana Western named 572 students to the 2020 fall semester Dean's List. To achieve this honor, students must be enrolled full-time or for 12 semester credits and carry a minimum 3.33 grade point average.