



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: October 18, 2023
TO: Board of Regents
FROM: Michael Reid, Chancellor
RE: Campus Report for the November Board of Regents' Meeting

- **UMW Professor Publishes Research on Glacier Retreat in the Pioneer Mountains**

Dr. Spruce W. Schoenemann from the University of Montana Western's Environmental Sciences Department recently published his work in the journal of Quaternary Science Reviews on glacier retreat in the Pioneer Mountains. The research paper titled "A cosmogenic ^{10}Be (Beryllium 10) moraine chronology of arid, alpine Late Pleistocene glaciation in the Pioneer Mountains of Montana, USA" is a peer-reviewed publication authored by Schoenemann and others that explores when glaciers in the Pioneer Mountains reached their maximum size during the Late Pleistocene period and why they retreated. The project involved extensive research methods that were conducted by UMW students guided by Dr. Schoenemann.

"This project really was the epitome of authentic practice in the discipline of glacial geology for our students. Their work has contributed new knowledge and insight to the paleoglacier science community in the western U.S.," said Schoenemann.

- **UMW Faculty Members Receive National Recognition**

The University of Montana Western is proud to recognize several faculty members, Dr. Rob Thomas, Dr. Mitchell Stephenson, and Dr. Steve Mock, for their recent accomplishments and awards from national organizations and universities across the country.

Dr. Thomas received the Distinguished Achievement in the Earth Sciences Award from the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Dr. Stephenson was awarded Northern

Michigan University's Outstanding Young Alumni Award, and Dr. Mock was granted the NPS Outstanding Volunteer Service Award and Manchester University's Alumni Honor Award.

"I am continually impressed by the high caliber and passion for experiential learning and volunteer service demonstrated by members of our university community, and I'm proud to congratulate them on their accomplishments," said Montana Western Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Johnny MacLean.

- **Montana Western Ranked Among Best Colleges by U.S. News and World Report**

The University of Montana Western has been ranked #7 in Top Public Schools, #8 in Best Value Schools, #23 in Best Regional Colleges, and #46 in Top Performers on Social Mobility in the Western region by U.S. News & World Report in their 2023-24 rankings.

The rankings evaluate more than 1500 colleges and universities on up to 19 measures of academic quality. U.S. News calculates each ranking based on a specific methodology, using factors including overall graduation rates, academic quality, Pell grant graduation rates and social mobility, first generation graduation rates, student support services, financial support, and academic resources for faculty.

- **UMW Appoints Liane Forrester as Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance**

The University of Montana Western recently announced that Liane Forrester will serve as Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. Forrester earned an undergraduate degree in Business Management from Montana State University and an MBA from the University of Montana. She started working at UMW in 1999 and served in several roles including: Director of Career Services, Director of Center for Service Learning, Business Instructor, Accountant Budget Analyst, Director of Business & Campus Services, Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer, Title IX Co-Coordinator, and Controller.

"We are excited to welcome Liane to this role on campus. Her years of experience at UMW in many roles, including Director of Business Services/Controller, make her well-suited to step into this position while the search for the next Vice Chancellor takes place," said Michael Reid, Chancellor of the University of Montana Western. "I am grateful for her continuing support of UMW and willingness to assist us during this transition."

- **UMW Appoints Dr. Katrina Kennett as Division Chair of Education**

The University of Montana Western recently welcomed Dr. Katrina Kennett as Division Chair of Education.

Dr. Kennett earned a B.A. in Secondary English Education from Connecticut College in 2008, a M.A.T. in K-12 Language Arts & Literacy from San Diego State University in 2013, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction, Language & Literacy with a concentration in Writing Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2017.

Starting at UMW in 2018, Dr. Kennett currently serves in the Education Division at Montana Western as an Associate Professor of Education, Rural Fridays Coordinator, and the UMW Manager of Online Programs. She has taught courses in literacy and technology education as well as supervised student teachers in the field.

“We look forward to Dr. Kennett serving in this new role and are excited for the high level of energy and community collaboration that she will bring to the position,” said UMW Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Johnny MacLean.

- **UMW Celebrates Rob Micken’s Career and Names Michael Bartch Interim Director of TRIO Program**

Rob Micken recently stepped down from the TRIO Director position at Montana Western after serving at the university for more than 11 years.

“It has been an absolute pleasure working with Rob, and we wish him and his family the very best in their next endeavors. His work as Director of the UMW TRIO program has been exemplary, and we will miss seeing him on campus,” said Montana Western Director of Student Success, Randy Johnson.

Dr. Michael Bartch is currently serving as Interim Director of the UMW TRIO Program.

“While we are sad to see Rob leave UMW, we are fortunate to have someone so experienced on the TRIO team to serve as Interim Director. Michael’s dedication to supporting students in the program at Montana Western is inspiring, and we are excited to welcome him to this new role,” said Johnson.

- **TRIO Accelerator Program Welcomes New Students to Montana Western**

TRIO Student Support Services welcomed 30 incoming first-year students to campus for the annual Accelerator Program to kick off the start of the fall semester.

TRIO programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for eligible students. Students qualify for the TRIO program if they are first-generation college students, have a disability, or fall below a certain income level. TRIO helps students overcome economic, social, and academic boundaries to higher education by assisting with basic college requirements and providing students with needed support.

The fifth annual Accelerator Program allowed new TRIO students to move in two days earlier than most freshmen, giving these students the chance to learn about the expectations of the TRIO program, meet their TRIO advisors and mentors, and locate their classrooms.

- **UMW Named Hidden Gem College of the Rockies**

The University of Montana Western has been selected as a 2024 Hidden Gem College in a recent announcement by College Raptor, a leading college planning platform.

This selection recognizes UMW as one of the best colleges in the country, based on a combination of factors, including retention rates, graduation rates, student-to-faculty ratio, endowment per student, selectivity, and other key metrics as reported via the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the most recently available enrollment year.

“For students seeking the enriching experience of a smaller college with exceptional programs, institutions like UMW emerge as prime options, and we are honored to spotlight them with the recognition they genuinely deserve,” said co-founder and CEO of College Raptor, William Staib.

- **Montana Western Fine Arts Department Presents “River Trip” by Artist Tandy Miles Riddle**

UMW’s Fine Arts Gallery is honored to present the exhibition “River Trip” by award-winning plein air artist, Tandy Miles Riddle, from October 27 - December 8, 2023. An opening reception will be held on October 27 at 5:00 p.m. in the UMW Fine Arts Gallery.

Throughout the past several decades, Riddle has been pushing the boundaries of form and scale within the genre of plein air painting, creating a cohesive style and body of work. Motivated by the land, water, and wind that is inescapable in Montana, she hopes her art will reflect the essence of this place, reminding people of its power, beauty, and integrity.

Riddle has won several awards at plein air events and has works in collections throughout the United States. Her work can also be viewed at Medicine Bird Gallery in Livingston, Montana.

- **UMW Early Childhood Course Partners with Montana Artist David Williams**

Students in Dr. Nanci Red Bird's class, Social Emotional Growth and Development in Early Childhood, recently worked with Plains, Montana artist and veteran, David Williams, to highlight the role of artistic expression in emotion regulation. Mr. Williams, who used art to heal from a service-related injury, teaches students how to support children by emphasizing teaching the use of art tools, not how to be an artist. This allows children and adults alike to express themselves through art experiences that are open ended and engaging, providing a powerful modality for communication.

Through this collaboration, UMW education students were able to grow their own identity, change their views of themselves as artists, and gain direct experience working with young children from the Canvas Early Learning Center.

- **Montana Western Theatre Department Hosts Ten Minute Play Festival**

The University of Montana Western's Theatre Department is excited to announce the 21st Annual Ten Minute Play Festival to be held October 16-18 as part of the Bank of Commerce (BOC) Performing Arts Series.

The Ten Minute Play Festival is a popular and exciting event that shines a spotlight on students, faculty, staff, and community members. This year's theme will be "Lights, Camera, Action!" and will feature student-produced short films.

The production will be facilitated by UMW Adjunct Assistant Professor of Theatre, Stephen Seder, and the students from two theatre courses: "Introduction to Acting" and "Play Production and Introduction to Directing."