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To: Board of Regents

From: Les Cook
Chancellor, Montana Technological University

RE: Campus Report for September 18-19, 2024, Board of Regents Meeting

- Dr. Tim Elgren became Montana Tech’s provost and executive vice chancellor on July 15th. Elgren comes to Montana Tech from the University of North Carolina Asheville (UNCA), where he served as the chief research officer and director of corporate and foundation relations. He oversaw three grant-funded centers at the UNCA—the North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness, the National Environmental and Modeling Center, and the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Studio. Elgren has a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from Hamline University, a PhD in Bioinorganic Chemistry from Dartmouth College, and a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the University of Minnesota.
- Dr. Jack Skinner has been appointed as the interim dean of the Lance College of Mines and Engineering, filling the position previously filled by Dr. Ken Lee who left for another opportunity. Skinner has been a dedicated faculty member since 2012. He built the first cleanroom facility at Montana Tech and is the founding director of the Montana Tech Nanotechnology Laboratory.
- Montana Technological University announced the development of a rugged terrain test bed facility for unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned ground vehicles, and other types of robotics that utilize photonic sensor systems at its 150-acre Energy, Environment, & Innovation Field Campus, which is adjacent to the west side of campus. The project will be funded through \$41 million awarded to the Headwaters Hub from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.
- The Montana Tech Department of Mathematical Sciences and the College of Letters, Sciences and Professional Studies (CLSPS) have been awarded a five-year, approximately \$900,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health/[Montana IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence \(INBRE\)](#) to bolster the pipeline for undergraduate students trained in the field of data science at Montana Tech.
- The Montana Tech Nanotechnology Laboratory (MTNL) announced a groundbreaking discovery in nanomanufacturing with potential applications in a wide variety of industries, including biomedical, surgical, defense, and other commercial areas. Through the invention of a new device, the researchers can exhibit control over nanofibers in a way that has not been done before. A patent on the device is pending.
- Liberty Energy partnered with Montana Tech to fund significant upgrades to Bob Green Field at Alumni Coliseum. The \$250,000 gift underscores Liberty’s dedication to the health and safety of Montana Tech’s student- athletes and to providing top-notch facilities.
- Writing instructors Dawn Atkinson and Stacey Corbitt penned their third textbook, *Advanced-Level Writing in the University Classroom and Beyond: Mindful Practices for Technical, Business, and Scientific Communication*. The text is available for download from the [Open Textbook Library](#) and [OER Commons](#).

Atkinson and Corbitt's efforts will save a full cohort of students enrolled in upper-division writing courses nearly \$30,000 per year versus utilizing commercial textbooks.

- Operation Next is a program started at Highlands College in January 2023 that provides a free welding or CNC certification and training to veterans or their immediate family members. The program provides lifelong skills and knowledge that can lead to better paying positions and opportunities. Approximately 63 students have earned certificates so far.