



## **The University of Montana Western Campus Report**

**DATE:** September 2024

**TO:** Board of Regents

**FROM:** Michael Reid, Chancellor

**RE:** Campus Report for the September Board of Regents' Meeting

- **UMW and MCH Host Horse to Human Conference and Film Festival**

In partnership with the University of Montana Western and EQUUS International Film Festival, The Montana Center for Horsemanship (MCH) hosted the “Horse to Human: The Next Generation in Horsemanship” conference and film festival from September 5-6, 2024.

The annual conference featured leading trainers, educators, equestrians, ranchers, clinicians, filmmakers, equine scientists, and researchers. Attendees enjoyed a weekend full of rider demonstrations, hands-on experiences with horses, compelling storytellers, and award-winning equine films.

- **Bulldog Stadium Grand Opening**

The University of Montana Western celebrated the grand opening of Bulldog Stadium, marking a significant milestone for both the university and the Dillon

community. The event took place on Friday, September 6th, 2024, bringing together community members, project stakeholders, donors, and special guests.

“The completion of phase one of this facility is a testament to the unwavering dedication, tireless efforts, and boundless support of everyone involved,” said Roxanne Engellant, Director of the UMW Foundation and Alumni Engagement.

The evening featured a no-host social, welcome comments, a special video presentation, and a toast with stadium donors on the 50-yard line. The 2024 football season kicked off on Saturday, September 7th, with the Bulldogs facing Eastern Oregon University.

- **Orientation Kicks off Academic Year at UMW**

The University of Montana Western held its New Student Orientation from Thursday, August 15, to Sunday, August 18. The event welcomed first-year and transfer students, preparing them for the academic year through interactive sessions, icebreaker activities, and team-building exercises.

“By participating in New Student Orientation, students were introduced to Experience One, acquired skills for university success, and developed a sense of belonging,” said Mike Piazzola, Senior Director of Auxiliary Services.

The festivities began on August 15 with Move-In Day, supported by volunteers from the campus and Dillon community. Convocation, marking the ceremonial start of the academic year, took place on Friday, August 16, followed by a Legacy Plaza Ceremony and a Welcome Lunch. The weekend included additional sessions focused on student success and exploration of Dillon and the surrounding areas.

- **Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series Opens 2024-2025 Season**

The Bank of Commerce (BOC) Performing Arts Series provides exceptional, exciting, and thought-provoking theater work to the UMW and Dillon community. It is their mission to provide students and youth a professional space to express themselves, explore the theater arts, and bring laughter and excitement to their lives.

The 2024-2025 season kicked off on August 22 with the uproarious two-man show, "Gutenberg! The Musical!" in UMW's Beier Auditorium.

Montana Western's Theatre Department looks forward to providing more exciting performances throughout the academic year.

- **Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery Features "Where the Deer and Antelope Played"**

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery presented "Where the Deer and Antelope Played," a solo exhibition by artist Danielle O'Malley. The opening reception was held on Thursday, September 5, 2024, in Main Hall. O'Malley's work, influenced by the Western landscape, addressed environmental concerns and the impact of colonization. Her art served as a call for sustainable living and anti-colonialist approaches to the current ecological crisis.

- **UMW Hosts Athletics Hall of Fame**

Montana Western Athletics, in collaboration with the UMW Foundation and Alumni Office, hosted the 2024 Bulldog Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Saturday, September 14th, as part of Alumni Weekend.

The ceremony honored Jim Bob Humphrey (Football), Olie Else (Rodeo), Taylor Nahrgang (Rodeo), and Chuck Molenda (Meritorious Service) as inductees into the Bulldog Athletics Hall of Fame.

Festivities kicked off on Friday, September 13th, with a volleyball game against MSU-Northern, followed by tailgating on Saturday and the Bulldog Football game against the College of Idaho at 1:00 p.m. at the Bulldog Football Stadium.

- **UMW Students Present Research at Geological Society of America Meeting**

University of Montana Western students Samantha Haak and Jonah Lindsey recently presented their research at the Geological Society of America meeting in Spokane, WA. Their poster, titled "Antarctic Aerial Electromagnetic Resistivity (AEM): Understanding Low-Resistivity Anomalies in the McMurdo Dry Valleys and Brine Infiltration in the McMurdo Ice Shelf," offered insights into Antarctic ice

shelf dynamics.

Haak, who graduated in 2024 with a degree in Environmental Science, and Lindsey, a senior Biology major, conducted NSF-funded research under Dr. Neil Foley. Their study revealed up to 17% brine in the McMurdo Ice Shelf, highlighting significant saltwater infiltration. Using electromagnetic resistivity data, they mapped the brine's extent, contributing to the understanding of ice shelf stability and potential impacts on sea level rise.

- **Montana Western Earns Top Rankings by Niche.com**

The University of Montana Western was ranked #4 Best College in Montana and #1 for Best Academics in Montana by Niche.com. These rankings are based on a comprehensive methodology that combines public data with reviews from students, alumni, and parents. UMW also ranked #1 in Best Colleges for Education and #2 for Safest College Campuses in Montana. Nationally, it ranked #55 for Best Colleges for Education in America.

- **UMW Student Madeline Bradbury Presents at American Association for Anatomy Meeting**

Madeline Bradbury, a biology major at the University of Montana Western, presented her research on sea lampreys at the American Association for Anatomy annual meeting in Toronto. Working with Dr. Bradley Wood, she investigated the structure and function of the coelomic wall in sea lampreys, revealing it acts as a hydrostatic organ critical for maintaining pressure during muscle contraction and spawning.

Bradbury's research, which was published in "The Anatomical Record," highlights similarities between sea lampreys and human abdominal walls. She credits Dr. Wood's guidance and UMW's supportive environment for her success.

"UMW has cultivated a community of driven individuals within the Biology Department that provides students with hands-on opportunities and sets a high standard of academic excellence. The skills I learned at UMW will help me manage intense academic standards in medical school," she said.

- **UMW Student Excels in John Ruffatto Startup Challenge**

University of Montana Western student Carson Crary was a finalist and award winner at the 2024 John Ruffatto Startup Challenge, hosted by the University of Montana College of Business. Crary, a sophomore, developed a business model providing specialized food services for individuals with digestive issues, inspired by his experience with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). His idea offers diet-compliant meals for outdoor activities where suitable food is scarce.

Crary won “Best Elevator Pitch” and “Most Passionate Presenter,” earning \$3,000 in prizes.