

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | March 12, 2026



## MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS

MSU Billings celebrated record retention for spring 2026. Retention of the fall '25 cohort is up to 82.8% from spring '25 retention of 78%. Fall-to-spring retention has increased over 13% since 2020. Yellowjacket Excellence Scholarship recipients persisted at an especially high rate of 88.1%, demonstrating that MSUB's intentional efforts to remove financial barriers are making a measurable difference in supporting student success.

Under the leadership of instructor Steve Wodrich, ten students in the [Automobile Collision Repair and Refinishing Technology](#) program applied their skills to a [community service project](#) repairing and restoring a 2006 Chevy Express passenger van used by the Special K Ranch in Columbus. Special K provides family-oriented homes and teaches vocational skills on a working ranch for adults with disabilities. Administrators and residents of the ranch gathered at City College on December 12 for the restored van's unveiling.

College, high school, and middle school jazz ensembles joined world-class musicians on stage February 6 for the annual [MSU Billings Jazz Festival](#). The concert featured the MSU Billings Jazz Orchestra, student ensembles, and culminated with a guest performance by Sunshine Special of New Orleans.

Eleven faculty members were recognized by their peers with [Faculty Excellence Awards](#) on February 24. Honored faculty members were Dr. Madison Collins, microbiology; David Butler, molecular biology and genetics; Dr. Rachael De La Cruz, history; Dr. Jessie Perius, management; Kat Pfau, auto technology; Dr. Wendy Felese, American Indian and indigenous studies; Dr. Anna Talafuse, marketing; Dr. Suzette Nynas, athletic training; Keeara Rhoades, new media and photography; Heather Slezak, instrumentation and electrical; and Aundrea Gee, rehabilitation and human services.

MSU Billings welcomed community members for a [day of remembrance and service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) on Monday, January 19. The annual event began with the Bell Ringing Ceremony at the university's Peaks to Plains Park, followed by remarks from university leadership and keynote speaker Andrew Konkel from United Way of Yellowstone County. Attendees were invited to participate in a community service project, part of a weeklong series of events in the theme "The Power of Getting Involved: Leave Your Legacy."

Rebecca Bunn, controller in the financial services and payroll department, was honored in early February as a 2026 recipient of The Billings Gazette's "40 Under Forty" awards. The annual awards recognize young professionals from across the region for the impact they make in the community.

Dr. Lynn George, associate professor of molecular biology, recently applied for a three-year NIH grant and scored in the top 3%. In previous years, applications scoring at the top 15% and above were ultimately funded. Dr. George studies the underlying causes of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.