

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

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Montana State University conferred degrees on more than 900 students during MSU's 123rd [fall commencement](#) on Saturday, Dec. 12. In addition, Michael McFaul, a Montanan who served as the former U.S. ambassador to Russia and is recognized as one of the top experts on that country, received an honorary doctorate degree.

MSU held a daylong series of trainings to increase student retention led by national expert Omid Fotuhi.

The Didactic Program in Nutrition and Dietetics in the College of Education, Health and Human Development and the Montana Dietetic Internship at MSU recently received full accreditation by the [Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics](#). Both programs were accredited for seven years.

An [online service](#) that helps more than 30 million students a year with college planning recently ranked the MSU College of Agriculture as one of the top four colleges of agriculture in the country for students wanting to pursue a career in agriculture.

Two MSU faculty earned prestigious recognitions as fellows in their respective fields. Bern Kohler has been [elected a fellow](#) of the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#). Tim Minton, a professor in MSU's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, was named a fellow of the American Physical Society.

MSU [architecture students won second prize](#) in the National Park Service's Charles E. Peterson Prize for drawings of the Damon Gabriel homestead, established in the Gallatin Valley in 1889. One of the students and the professor attended ceremonies in Washington DC to receive the award and the winning drawings are now archived in the Library of Congress.

A team of MSU students took home a [first-place win in a regional contest](#) that challenged competitors to develop a mathematical model to solve a real-world problem in just 24 hours.

Teams of MSU business students turned \$25 into more than \$5,500 in just three weeks, and the students then donated those funds to three local non-profit organizations. The students were participating in the "Entrepreneurship Challenge," part of an upper-division class on entrepreneurship in the [MSU Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship](#)

A previously undiscovered dinosaur species, first uncovered and documented by a doctoral student and adjunct professor at MSU, showcases an evolutionary transition from an earlier duckbilled species to that group's descendants, according to a paper published in the journal PLOS ONE.

Research by MSU associate professor Mark Skidmore and assistant professor Eric Boyd and others appeared in the [November issue of Nature Geoscience](#). [The researchers](#) found that the grinding action of glaciers and ice sheets against silicate rocks, when combined with water, releases enough hydrogen gas to sustain methanogenic archaea, or microorganisms that produce methane. Nature Geoscience is the number one-ranked multidisciplinary geoscience journal.

A Gallatin College MSU workforce program that trains students to operate computer numerically controlled machines saw success last year in the hiring rates of its first graduating class. Now in its second year, enrollment in the program has increased by nearly 50 percent.

Top stem cell scientists at MSU and Stanford University, led by MSU Vice President for Research and Economic Development Renee Reijo Pera, have shown that certain noncoding RNA molecules, which are genetic remnants of an ancient virus, play a critical role in balancing decisions in early human development. The findings were detailed in a paper published in the journal Nature Genetics.