

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

**CAMPUS REPORT** | Board of Regents Meeting | January 7 - 8, 2019 | Helena



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MSU celebrated the opening of [Norm Asbjornson Hall](#), funded largely by the record \$50 million private gift from alumnus Norm Asbjornson. The building will be the new home of the colleges of engineering and honors, in addition to offering 800 new classroom seats plus laboratory spaces for students. Asbjornson Hall has already received national recognition as [LEED Platinum building](#), one of only 10 buildings in Montana certified at the platinum level for energy efficiency.

More than 1,124 students participated in MSU's [2018 fall commencement](#) on Saturday, Dec. 15. [Lynette Stein-Chandler](#) received a posthumous honorary doctorate for her work pulling the Aaniih language from the brink of extinction.

Montana State University is [keeping students in school](#) and graduating them on time at the highest rates in modern university history, while reducing average student debt. The efforts were highlighted last month during a presentation of MSU's annual Fall Institutional Report to campus leaders.

The [Learning is for Everyone \(LIFE\) program](#) opened this fall for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The three-year program emphasizes academics, career development, and campus engagement. Scholars who complete the program receive a LIFE Scholars certificate and are eligible to participate in commencement.

An international research team spanning five continents and led by Montana State University will study bats in Australia, Bangladesh, Madagascar, and Ghana to unravel the complex causes [of bat-borne viruses](#) that have recently made the jump to humans, causing concern among global health officials.

A pair of MSU researchers who examine [how variations across federally qualified health centers](#) impact efficiency and patient health outcomes – and who are simultaneously working to develop models to better understand the strengths and challenges facing Montana's health care system – have received more than \$120,000 to continue their work.

Sreekala Bajwa, an international leader in precision agriculture, will become MSU's next [vice president of agriculture](#). Bajwa was chosen after a national search and will begin at MSU in January.

MSU leaders voted to approve the university's [new strategic plan, "Choosing Promise."](#) The plan has three focus areas: transformational learning experience; research, creative activity and scholarship that impacts lives and society; and community engagement. The work of hundreds of students, staff, and faculty members over the course of a year, the plan will guide the university's efforts for the next seven years.

Leaders of the [Messengers for Health](#) program received a national award for a longtime collaborative partnership between MSU and members of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation of rural southeastern Montana for their work to promote health equity and social justice.

MSU's 2018 Research Report, published by MSU Extension and the College of Agriculture, highlights 11 studies conducted by MSU faculty throughout Montana on subjects ranging from [beef breeding to optimizing the protein content of pea crops](#).

MSU celebrated 125 '[Extraordinary Ordinary Women](#)' who contributed to university history with a special ceremony, an educational display at the MSU library, and recognition at a Bobcat football game.

MSU released its latest television commercial, highlighting the university's efforts to [increase the number of women](#) in the traditionally male-dominated fields of engineering and computer science.

Sellout, a startup founded by a pair of MSU alumni, [shared a \\$50,000 prize at the inaugural Early Stage Montana showcase](#). The company makes an app for buying or selling event tickets. MSU's Blackstone LaunchPad and 406 Labs accelerator programs helped the company get its start.