



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the January 2020 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **NSF Grant to Establish Partnership at UMW for Micro-Credentialing Research**

A National Science Foundation Convergence Accelerator award will position the University at Buffalo with partner institution Montana Western as national leaders in micro-credentialing research.

Micro-credentialing is a digital system used by universities, businesses and other organizations to recognize knowledge, skills, and accomplishments in ways that can be easily shared by recipients online.

Research will focus on the processes, procedures and resources necessary to implement micro-credentials. Educators will also study the best ways the “multi-stakeholder” design teams operate, then use this research to develop theory and operational findings on how micro-credentials can be designed to “ensure quality, sustainability and stakeholder acceptance.”

- **UMW Professor Published in the Ukrainian Journal of Physics**

Dr. Craig Zaspel of the UMW Environmental Sciences Department was recently featured in The Ukrainian Journal of Physics as lead author in an article about his collaborative work with a team of international researchers.

Titled “Magnetic Chiral Solutions Stabilized by Oersted Field at a Thin-Film Nanocontact with Electric Current,” Zaspel started working on the project three

years ago. The article was published on Nov. 1, 2019, as part of a special edition related to magnetization dynamics.

The team will continue working on the project with the goal of the development of higher frequency nanoscale microwave generators based on magnetic solutions.

- **UMW 2020 Regents Teaching Scholars Announced**

Montana Western professors, Dr. Bethany Blankenship and Dr. Rob Thomas, have been selected by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) as Regents Teaching Scholars. They will lead faculty learning communities during spring 2020.

To highlight the centrality of teaching excellence to student success, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has launched the Regents Teaching Scholars, an annual program recognizing teachers who have made exemplary contributions to teaching and learning at Montana University System campuses.

The Regents Teaching Scholars program will recognize and support the advancement of teaching and learning to make early coursework, and general education in particular, exciting, engaging, relevant, and impactful for students. The theme for this year's program will focus on George Kuh's ten "High Impact Practices."

- **Montana Western Ranked Among the Best Online Teaching Degrees**

The University of Montana Western was recently ranked among the top 50 "Best Online Teaching Degree Programs in the Country" by Study.com.

When choosing universities, Study.com looks at several data points from Department of Education data, including graduation rates and tuition costs. Other factors are also considered, including the types of support offered to online students.

They evaluated hundreds of schools that offer online teaching degrees for this list and selected the University of Montana Western based on the quality of academic and career resources for online students pursuing a teaching degree.

- **Montana Campus Compact Honors Student-Athlete Volunteers**

Montana Campus Compact recently honored fourteen student-athletes from across the state, including Montana Western redshirt sophomore Tanner Haverfield, for their outstanding community service work.

As an active supporter in the Dillon community, Haverfield has coached high school basketball camps, volunteered at the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, and joined the Dillon JayCee's Park Project.

For 25 years, Montana Campus Compact, through its campus affiliates, has supported students, faculty and communities across Montana with programs that encourage and recognize community service. Haverfield was honored at the UMW men's basketball game on Saturday, Dec. 7.

- **Civically Engaged College Students Recognized with Volunteer Award**

The Montana Student Volunteer Award is awarded in partnership between the Governor's Office of Community Service and Montana Campus Compact campuses to college students across the state who have demonstrated service to their communities while pursuing a college degree or certificate.

Brock Doty, the recipient from the University of Montana Western, was presented with his award certificate during halftime of the Bulldog home football game on Nov. 16.

"This incredible group of students is certainly deserving of our recognition as they take the time and commitment to be a force of good in their communities," said Governor Steve Bullock.

- **Montana Students Attend Newman Civic Fellows Conference**

Adrianna Pittman from the University of Montana Western, Jerico Cummings from Montana State University, McKenna Savage from Montana Technological University, Julius Scott from Great Falls College MSU, and Daisy Ward from the University of Montana recently represented Montana at the national gathering of Newman Civic Fellows, hosted by the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate in Boston, MA.

These students joined almost 200 of their peers from across the country to engage in deliberative dialogue, leadership workshops and opportunities to meet and be inspired by their peers in community engagement.

- **Two Montana Western Professors Earn Title of Professor Emeritus**

Dr. Delena Norris-Tull and Dr. Mark Krank were conferred upon by the Montana University System Board of Regents for the title of Professor Emeritus. Dr. Norris-Tull and Dr. Krank served Montana Western with dedication and valued service for many years.

Dr. Norris-Tull earned her Ph.D. at the University of Texas, and joined the Education Department at Montana Western in 2004 after serving at institutions across the country. She served as chair of the Department from 2009-2011 and Spring of 2016, and later served as co-chair during 2016-2017. In addition to serving on several committees at UMW, she was also named as the CASE/Carnegie Foundation 2010 Montana Professor of the Year. This award recognized Dr. Norris-Tull's exceptional contributions to the Education Department, Montana Western, the state of Montana, and beyond.

Dr. Mark Krank earned his Ph.D. in psychological foundations of learning at the University of Wyoming. Prior to his time at the University of Montana Western, Dr. Krank served as an elementary and middle school principal in Wyoming and acting superintendent and elementary principal at the Omaha Indian Reservation in Nebraska. Dr. Krank's greatest achievement at Montana Western was being in the forefront of bringing Experience One – one course at a time block scheduling to the campus. As a teacher, Dr. Krank challenged students with rigorous classes and required that they think critically and communicate as scholars.

- **Montana Western Appoints Matt Peterson as Assistant Athletic Director**

“We are excited to have Matt Peterson join the Bulldog athletic department. Matt took advantage of many opportunities to gain experience in Athletics Administration during his undergraduate and graduate education. We look forward to him sharing those experiences at Montana Western,” University of Montana Western Athletic Director Bill Wilson said.

A native of Pullman, Washington, Matt earned his Master's Degree in athletic administration from Gonzaga University as well as his undergraduate degree in sports management and public relations. Peterson also has experience working in the National Football League, serving as an intern in the Football Operations Department with the Washington Redskins during the 2016, 2017, and 2018 Training Camps in Richmond, Virginia, as well as a recently completed internship with the Seattle Seahawks.

- **UMW Fine Arts Gallery Hosts “Radical Subjectivity”**

The UMW Fine Arts Gallery exhibition “Radical Subjectivity” featured an innovative, experimental and dauntless selection of works from the Missoula Art Museum's Contemporary American Indian Art Collection.

The collection included the distinct voices of artists including Corwin Clairmont, Jason Elliott Clark, Molly Murphy-Adams, Ernie Pepion, Fritz Scholder, Sara Siestreem, Emmi Whitehorse and Melanie Yazzie.

Assistant Professor of Art and Art History and Gallery Coordinator Aja Mujinga Sherrard introduced the exhibition with a lecture on contemporary Indigenous art.

- **UMW Celebrates First Generation Student Day**

On Nov. 8, the University of Montana Western celebrated the third annual First-Generation College Student Day.

“First-generation” refers to students whose parents have not obtained a four-year college degree. The TRIO program provides students with a support system to help them navigate the landscape of higher education.

The day recognized first-generation college students by celebrating the accomplishments they have made and the barriers they have broken. Montana Western and the TRIO Student Support Services staff focus on making a college degree attainable for everyone.

- **UMW’s Learning Center Sees Increase in Student Participation**

Montana Western’s Learning Center saw a 26.3 percent increase in students utilizing center services compared to last fall, serving nearly 1,000 students in Block 1 alone.

Learning Center manager Susan White was excited to see the increase in student involvement.

“It’s great to see so many students using the Learning Center’s services. I think the reason is that more people know about the free benefits we are offering. Between the Bulldog Bound presentations, the new TRIO Bridge program, and the classroom visits by the tutors, students are more familiar with the Learning Center,” said White.