



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Weatherby, Chancellor

RE: Campus Report for the January 2021 Board of Regents' Meeting

- **UMW Chancellor Beth Weatherby Announces Retirement**

University of Montana Western Chancellor Beth Weatherby has announced that she will retire following the May 1 Commencement after nearly 30 years in higher education.

During Weatherby's tenure as Chancellor of UMW, the university opened new programs including Glass, Farm and Ranch Operations, Outdoor Guide and Wildlife Outfitters Management; developed teacher preparation partnerships with Blackfeet Community College and Little Big Horn College; and expanded partnerships with the Montana Center for Horsemanship, Pima Medical Institute, and the Montana Youth Challenge Academy.

"I believe that the most lasting impact from my work here will result from the Experience One Campaign," Weatherby said. "Working with Executive Director Roxanne Engellant and the Foundation Board, we are gaining momentum in support of scholarships, the Fund for Experience One, and a Sports and Activities Complex that will benefit the entire community."

- **GEER Grant Provides Scholarship Opportunities for Distance Students in Education**

UMW was awarded a short-term Governor's Emergency Education Relief grant from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

The purpose of the one-year, \$140,000 grant is to address teacher shortages in rural areas of Montana by increasing online course sections, investing in new distance delivery technologies, and providing scholarships to distance students pursuing teacher certification and associates degrees in education and early childhood education.

"The University is thrilled to receive support for this important work. Schools represent the heart of rural communities and they often struggle to attract trained educators," said Dr. Anneliese Ripley, Director of Research and Grants.

- **Montana Western Student Tristan Stockton Receives Student Volunteer Award**

The Montana Student Volunteer Award is presented through a partnership between the Governor's Office of Community Service and Montana Campus Compact campuses. Honorees of this annual award are college students across the state who demonstrate dedication to service in their communities while pursuing a college degree or certificate.

"These young Montanans embody the spirit of service that is at the core of our values as a state," Governor Bullock said. "This year, more than ever, we need folks like these students who get out there and work to effect positive change in their communities."

- **Montana Western Foundation Announces New Scholarship in Honor of Larry and Darleen Link**

Larry Link, a longtime employee at Montana Western who passed away in January of this year, served as Director of Financial Aid for 20 years. His son and daughter-in-law, Garry and Linda Link, approached the UMW Foundation and established a scholarship to honor Larry and his wife Darleen and their commitment to helping students fund their education.

The Larry and Darleen Link Memorial Scholarship will be awarded annually in the amount of \$1,000. The recipient must be a Montana high school graduate enrolled at UMW as a full-time student, be in good standing, and have financial need. The first recipient of the scholarship is Elizabeth Simonsen, a sophomore Psychology major. Izzi is a 2019 graduate of Beaverhead County High School and plans to pursue a master's degree in Social Work once she completes her undergraduate degree at Montana Western.

- **UMW Students Selected to International Honor Society**

On December 1, 2020, the English department of the University of Montana Western inducted four new members into its Alpha Epsilon Iota chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international honor society.

Candidates for membership in Sigma Tau Delta have attained high academic achievement in the field of English studies.

This year's inductees include Haley Knapp from Dillon, Mont., Bryce Biskis from Elliston, Mont., Kyrah Jones from Kemmerer, Wyo., and Scarlet Guilbert from Philipsburg, Mont.

- **Montana Western Performing Arts Series Presents "Bad Auditions"**

UMW's Theatre students recently virtually performed "Bad Auditions on Camera – A Stay-At-Home Play," as part of the Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series.

In its first-ever endeavor to produce theatre in a remote environment, Montana Western's drama program made the best of the COVID-19 restrictions on large group gatherings.

"It tested our creative skills," says Director Larry Brazill. "We had students, alumni, professors, and staff members collaborating, each in different locations. Montana Western's students are bright, creative, and hardworking, and this year's group was no exception. They developed a delightful comedy under very unusual conditions."

- **UMW Receives E.B. Craney Award for Wildlife Outfitters Degree Option Commercial**

The Montana Western Communications Department, in partnership with ABC Fox Montana, received the E.B. Craney Award from the Montana Broadcasting Association for its commercial on the Outdoor Guide and Wildlife Outfitters business degree option.

The E.B. Craney Awards are named in memory of Montana broadcast pioneer Ed Craney. The awards recognize excellence in local news, production, promotion and public service.

The Montana Western Outfitting commercial was produced by Frank Palazzi and Brian Mellott from KWYB-TV, Butte, with assistance from Jackie Rawson, UMW faculty, staff and students, and the local outfitter and guide community and won “Television Commercial of the Year.”

- **Biology and Mathematics Faculty Attend “Cultivating Scientific Curiosity” Workshop**

Four faculty from the Biology and Mathematics Departments attended the 2-week virtual “Cultivating Scientific Curiosity” workshop and incorporated methods from the workshop into their fall semester courses.

Sponsored jointly by the national BioQUEST curriculum consortium and QUBES (Quantitative Undergraduate Biology Education and Synthesis) network, the workshop focused on developing innovative undergraduate research experiences (UREs) for students in math and science classes. The workshop continued as a faculty mentoring network through the fall, helping UMW faculty connect with collaborators across the country to plan or implement UREs during the fall semester.

UMW faculty that participated included Dr. Michelle Anderson (Biology), Katie Bjornen (Biology), Dr. Eric Dyreson (Mathematics) and Dr. Joseph Eason (Mathematics).

- **Montana Western Student Profile: Brigid Reedy**

Brigid Reedy is a freshman at UMW double majoring in Natural Horsemanship and English.

Reedy has a passion for music and poetry and has been performing since a young age. Featured at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada for the past seven years, Reedy has become a singular young voice representing her beloved home state of Montana.

Reedy has enjoyed Montana Western's flexible block scheduling program that allows her to take courses and still work on her writing and music. Currently, Reedy is participating in an independent study where she is learning leatherwork from local master saddle-maker, George Holt.

- **Montana Western Celebrates First-Generation Student Day**

This fall, with universities around the country, UMW celebrated the fourth 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 them with a support system to help them navigate the landscape of higher education.

The day recognized first-generation college students; to celebrate the accomplishments they have made and the barriers they have broken. Montana Western and the TRIO Student Support Services staff continue to work hard to make a college degree attainable for everyone.