

# MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN | BILLINGS | NORTHERN | GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | November 18-19, 2021



## MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS

- **MSU Billings sees increase in first-time freshmen, transfer, and graduate students.** Fall 2021 enrollment data showed a 10 percent increase in first-time freshmen enrollment from last semester. At its official 15<sup>th</sup> class-day count, 4,112 students were enrolled with 2,375 at University Campus and 1,737 at City College. MSUB also saw a 13 percent increase in new student enrollment from Yellowstone County, a 22 percent increase in American Indian graduate student enrollment, a 7 percent increase in transfer students, and an increase in health program enrollment.
- **Crucial Alzheimer's research continues at MSUB.** Assistant Professor Daniel Willems, Ph.D., has been conducting Alzheimer's disease (AD) research for the past six years at MSUB. His research is funded through an IDeA Network of Biomedical Research (INBRE) pilot grant and involves a strong collaboration with MSU, Emory State University, and the University of Alaska-Anchorage. Willems studies human brain lipid (fat) material focused on identifying differences in lipid content between the brains of AD patients and brain tissue from cognitively normal individuals, as he says that brain lipids are likely to uncover more of the secrets of AD than any other material. Housed in the new Yellowstone Science and Health Building, Willems plans to hire three additional students to assist him with this research.
- **International student semifinalist for Rhodes Scholarship.** MSUB international student and semifinalist for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship Bossan Abdyeva, was discouraged to pursue higher education in her native country of Turkmenistan, as the main purpose of a woman's life is to get married and have a family. At age sixteen, she learned English and was able to join the Prep4Success program, a program that helps young Turkmenistan citizens enter U.S. colleges and universities successfully. Abdyeva graduates from MSUB next spring with a political science degree and plans to pursue a master's degree.
- **MSUB graduate students publish research promoting inclusivity in early childhood education.** Graduate students Jenn Lambert and Elissa Appling recently published articles in the journal Studies in Special Education (Vol. 10, #2), based on their thesis which focuses on the education of children with special needs in Slovakia and abroad. They address the issue of problem behaviors in children and students in school settings and point out the possibilities of eliminating these problems using inclusive education. Lambert, now a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and Intervention Specialist, is inspired to conduct future research in the field of behavior and hopes her thesis will serve a purpose in the community. Appling's future career aspirations are to help families who struggle with mental and behavioral health issues and pursue a Ph.D.
- **MSUB, Montana Tech, and the University of Montana awarded grant to improve graduate student mental health.** MSUB, Montana Tech, and the University of Montana were recently awarded a three-year, \$500K grant by the National Science Foundation to design, pilot, assess, and implement evidence-based, sustainable, and replicable strategies to improve graduate students' mental health in STEM fields. This collaborative project is led by Montana Tech, which has graduate programs predominantly in engineering. MSUB brings special expertise in mental health interventions and the University of Montana provides considerable experience in faculty professional development, along with additional STEM-related graduate programs.
- **Student-athlete awarded Women in Business Scholarship.** MSUB junior Hannah Hashbarger, was recently awarded the Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship from the Zonta Club of Billings. Hashbarger is a double major in business marketing and business management with a GPA of 4.00. She takes a full course load, works two jobs, and coaches youth volleyball. Additionally, she plays for the MSUB's volleyball team and was selected to play on the 2020-21 Great Northwest Athletic Conference Team.
- **MSUB names new chief of police.** Brandon Gatlin has been named the new University Police Chief for MSUB. Gatlin has served as the interim chief of police since September 2020 and has served in various roles at MSUB such as patrol officer, police sergeant, and assistant chief of police. Prior to MSUB, Gatlin worked as a detention officer for Yellowstone County.
- **MSUB awarded grant to support low-income, first-generation students achieve a college education.** The U.S. Department of Education awarded MSUB a federal Talent Search grant of \$1.6 million over five years to support low-income and first-generation students to prepare for and enroll in college. Talent Search identifies and assists middle and high school students who have potential to succeed in higher education. At least two-thirds of the students in each local Talent Search program come from low-income backgrounds and are from families where neither parent has a bachelor's degree.
- **MSUB City College students awarded 9/11 Memorial Scholarship.** City College students Shey Russell, Hunter Olsen, and Chase Williams were awarded the 9/11 Memorial Scholarship during the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony of 9/11 at City College. The scholarship awards three \$500 annual scholarships to City College students majoring in Criminal Justice, Fire Science, or Paramedicine.
- **MSUB trains faculty, staff, and students in mental health awareness.** Student Health Services at MSUB have implemented mental health response training as a result of growing mental health needs. This summer Jerry Girard, MSUB counseling director, started three training courses for the MSUB community which includes recognizing warning signs and the proper response steps for suicide prevention, educating bystanders and individuals experiencing mental health and substance-related crises, and an interactive workshop teaching personal resilience where each participant learns to identify personal qualities that can make them more resilient.