



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: Wednesday, December 14, 2022

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Michael Reid, Chancellor

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

- **Montana Western Reports Increase in Enrollment for Fall 2022**

Officials at the University of Montana Western said current headcount for the fall semester shows the university's total fall semester enrollment is 1,347 students, with this year's incoming class the largest since fall 2017. The number of full-time equivalent students is 1,170.

Montana Western Director of Institutional Research, Charity Walters, said this year's incoming class increased by 7% in comparison with last fall and increased 18% from two years ago. Fall 2022's incoming class includes 267 new freshmen, 136 transfer students and 26 readmits.

UMW is the only U.S. public four-year institution offering Experience One where students take a single course at a time. This innovative program of teaching and learning has realized great success and stability over the past two decades in several student outcomes including retention and graduation rates, career placement, and graduate school acceptance.

- **MCH and UMW Announce Horsemanship Conference and Film Festival**

The Montana Center for Horsemanship, in partnership with the University of Montana Western and Equus International Film Festival, are pleased to announce the theme and dates for next year's international equine education conference, co-hosted by MCH and UMW. "The Trail Forward in Horsemanship Education" will be held at the Montana Center for Horsemanship in Dillon, Montana, September 7-9, 2023.

Leading trainers, educators, equestrians, ranchers, clinicians, filmmakers, equine scientists, and researchers will be among the presenters. The annual conference is open to all interested in attending, including members of the public and students of all ages.

- **Speridian Technologies Renews New Wave Accelerator Program for UMW Graduates**

Speridian Technologies, parent of Helix Business Solutions, is renewing its paid accelerator program, New Wave. The program is designed for current students and recent graduates from the University of Montana Western interested in pursuing a career in technology. After a successful pilot program in 2022, Speridian is renewing New Wave for another cohort slated to start in January 2023.

“UMW is grateful to partner with Speridian to offer experiential learning opportunities that give our students real-world insight into business and technology that they can carry forward into their future careers,” said Kevin Engellant, Professor of Business at Montana Western.

- **Mesa King Honored with Montana Athletes in Service Award**

Montana Western Senior Mesa King, a Forward on the Women’s Basketball team, has been named a 2022 Montana Athletes in Service award winner. This is the second time that King has earned this award during her collegiate career.

King, a senior majoring in Physical Education and Elementary Education, has been involved as a volunteer for a fifth and sixth grade youth travel basketball team in Dillon as a coach and is the president of the UMW Association of Student-Athletes. Mesa is also currently a student teacher at Parkview Elementary School in Dillon and serves as the Frontier Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Social Media Coordinator.

- **UMW Names Rebecca Knotts as Director of Campus Events & Conference Services**

Knotts completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, including language immersion classes at the University of College Cork in Ireland, and a bachelor’s degree in English from Boise State University.

“I am very excited that Rebecca Knotts is joining the Montana Western team. Her relationship building and talent will serve our campus well,” said Mike Piazzola, Senior Director of Auxiliary Services.

Knotts will begin her duties at the University of Montana Western on January 2, 2023.

- **UMW Foundation Established Bill and Gerta Mular Scholarship**

In honor of their parents, the family of Bill and Gerta Mular have established a \$1,000 annual scholarship to be awarded to a student-athlete from Montana attending the University of Montana Western.

Bill completed a B.S. and M.S. from Western Montana College (now Montana Western) and began his teaching career in 1958 at Beaverhead County High School in Dillon where he taught science and was greatly respected by his students and colleagues.

Gerta Mular taught at the Bagley School, Beaverhead County High School, Dillon Middle School, the University of Montana Western and at schools in Ely, Nevada. Throughout her career, she taught several subjects including P.E., Biology, Business, and Spanish.

- **UMW's Lucy Carson Library Receives World History Book Collection**

The University of Montana Western Lucy Carson Library has received a collection of books donated from Northern Idaho College Professor of History, Paul Brasil. The donation features over 350 scholarly publications on World History topics including books on African, Middle Eastern, European, and Latin American history.

The collection Brasil has donated to the Lucy Carson Library originally comes from renowned historian of Portuguese and Brazilian History, Dr. Francis Dutra, who was a Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara and passed away in March 2021. His scholarly work focused on imperial, political and social history of colonial Brazil and Early Modern Portugal.

- **Seven Bulldog Athletes Compete at NRA Finals in Kalispell**

The Northern Rodeo Association is the premier rodeo organization in the Northwest, providing high quality rodeo events. It is the largest rodeo association in the U.S. and this season there were 31 events leading up to the NRA Rodeo Finals.

UMW's Trevor Kay placed first in Bareback, Mikayala Witter placed second in Breakaway Roping, Matt Goings and Luke Murphy placed third overall in Team Roping, Garrett Yeager placed fifth in Steer Wrestling, and Carson Klingler placed sixth in Saddle Bronc.

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

To celebrate the sixth annual National First-Generation College Student Day, the University of Montana Western recognized its first-generation students, faculty, and staff. November 8th marks the 57th anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which increased funding for universities, scholarships and student loans.

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

- **The Marvelous Wonderettes Off-Broadway Musical Takes the Stage at UMW**

The University of Montana Western's Theatre Department presented "The Marvelous Wonderettes" December 1-4 as part of the Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series.

The smash hit transports the audience to the 1958 Springfield High School prom, where we meet Betty Jean, Cindy Lou, Missy, and Suzy: four girls with hopes and dreams as big as their crinoline skirts!

The production featured the musical talents of four headlining UMW student actresses: Ivory Lynn Terry, Kendel Puccinelli, Abigaile Randolph and Kaleigh Phipps. Breanna Humphrey and Bradie Matt were the Directors with Adeline Michels serving as Stage Manager.

- **UMW Presents “O. Alan Weltzien Writers Series”**

The English Department at the University of Montana Western was pleased to host the return of its popular visiting writers series after a two-year hiatus. UMW Professor Emeritus, Dr. O. Alan Weltzien, created and led the original series, formerly known as “Dances with Words” for many years up until his retirement. The first event of the academic year in the relaunched series, now titled the “O. Alan Weltzien Writers Series” in his honor, was held on Thursday, November 17 at the Bulldog Lounge in the Student Union Building and featured Dr. Weltzien as the inaugural visiting writer.

Dr. Weltzien has published eleven books and four chapbooks over his long career. His recent book “Savage West: The Life and Fiction of Thomas Savage” (U. Nevada Press, 2020), is a biography of the neglected Montana novelist Thomas Savage, whose work has recently been rediscovered thanks to Jane Campion’s film adaptation of Savage’s best novel, “The Power of the Dog” (2021). He has remained busy with writing even in retirement, and in 2022 alone he has published two chapbooks and one book: “Through the Basement of Time,” a poetry chapbook (Finishing Line Press), “When The Smiles Stopped,” a long prose essay (chapbook, FootHills Publishing), and “On The Beach: Poems 2016 – 2021” (Cirque Press). Dr. Weltzien read selections from each of these recent publications at the event.

- **December Fine Arts Events Celebrate the Season at Montana Western**

The University of Montana Western Cantabileers, a select choral group, held their Winter Concert on December 6 in the Beier Auditorium.

“One thing I love about the Cantabileers is the strong sense of community that develops as they try new things. The group started out decades ago as a select choir, but it’s become so much more than that. The semester begins with students selecting pieces that fit the singers’ voices. They have to consider the range of notes, the difficulty of conducting the piece, the complexity of how the parts interact, the language of the piece, and perhaps most importantly, what they will enjoy working on. We’re always excited to share their talents and creativity with the community,” said Dr. Debbie Seacrest, the group’s director.

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Department held their “Holiday Student Art Reception and Sale” December 5-9 in the Fine Arts Gallery in Main Hall and presented original works of photography, painting, drawing, 3-D, calligraphy, glass, textiles, cards, crafts and more. All proceeds went directly to support each of the student artists. An opening reception was held on December 5 to celebrate the works of each of the exhibitors and the wide range of creative talent at the University of Montana Western.