

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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CAMPUS REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | May 15-16, 2024



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Great Falls College's [enrollment](#) continued to climb with a fourth straight semester of growth. The college had 1,396 students this semester at census compared to 1,362 students a year ago. The number of full-time equivalent students also increased 3.6 percent this spring compared to last spring semester, going from 800 full-time equivalent students to 829. "We are really proud of our efforts to retain and recruit students, and it is great to see those efforts show up with increased enrollments," said Dr. Stephanie Erdmann, CEO/dean of Great Falls College.

Annie Bryan started in March as the veterinary technician program director in preparation for the college's first cohort in fall 2024. There is a list of about 100 students from all over the state interested in the program that will allow students to remain in their home communities while taking the classroom portion online and working with veterinary partners for the hands-on portion of the curriculum. Thirty students will be accepted in the fall to get their certificate of technical studies in Veterinary Office as the program allows them to earn three stackable credentials, including a certificate of applied science and associate of applied science.

The college's annual fundraiser, [Night Out For Science](#), set another record as Great Falls College raised \$23,000 for students studying in the STEAM fields. The event also allowed the college to showcase its students and faculties to hundreds of people with hands-on demonstrations and science-related talks from Great Falls College faculty and partners McLaughlin Research Institute and Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Great Falls College continues to build momentum and brand recognition around its River Otter mascot as it started a campaign to name the River Otter this spring. The Associated Students of Great Falls College threw a launch party for campus and then the college opened it up to the community for name suggestions. About 500 suggestions poured in. There will be a couple more rounds of voting before the winning name will be announced at graduation on May 4.

Graduation also will see the first graduates from the Office Management and Supervision complete their associate of applied science degree. The first 10 students from the Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling program also will get their associate of applied science degree. More than 40 students are in the program. The first cohort will in the Early Childhood Education program will get their certificate in technical studies enroute to getting their associate of applied science.

Phillips 66 surprised the welding program with a [\\$20,000 grant](#) to go toward equipment such as new welding machines. Phillips 66, which operates three pipelines and a fuel terminal in the area, also provides students with field trips, approached the college about applying for a grant from the company and helped the college through the application process. Felix Belmontez from Phillips 66 also serves as an active part of the advisory board.

The college's non-credit commercial driver's license program continues to thrive as the college was able to purchase its own tractor and trailer and hire a full-time instructor to expand the services thanks to Cascade County ARPA funds. Originally, the college took care of the classroom portion of the class and then matched students with prospective employers who did the behind-the-wheel training. That is still an option, but the college also now is able to do the behind-the-wheel instruction as well as the classroom instruction.