



The University of Montana Western Campus Report

DATE: April 17, 2024

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Michael Reid, Chancellor

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

- **Montana Western Announces Commencement Speaker Dr. Steve Mock**

The University of Montana Western's 127th Annual Commencement Ceremony to be held on May 4, 2024, will feature speaker Dr. Steve Mock, retired Professor of Chemistry Emeritus and Climbing Instructor in the Environmental Sciences Department at Montana Western.

Graduating from Manchester College in 1977, Steve and his wife, Jan, pursued their love for the wilderness, eventually settling in Missoula in 1978. Steve's academic pursuits led him to earn a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Montana State University in 1989, later joining the faculty at the University of Montana Western in 1991 where he taught a variety of courses and would go on to serve as the Dean of Arts and Sciences in 2001 and direct the Experience One pilot project from 2001-2005.

Outside academia, Dr. Mock's passion for climbing led him to significant involvement with the Khumbu Climbing Center (KCC), a project of the Bozeman based Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation and Denali Rescue Volunteers (DRV). Serving as Co-Director of KCC for ten years, he played a vital role in training Nepali citizens in climbing and guiding. He also participated in Denali Ranger patrols, earning him the President's role at DRV in 2018, and is an active member of the local Beaverhead Search and Rescue team.

- **Professor Dr. Laura Straus to Receive Education Faculty Award**

The University of Montana Western will honor Education Professor Dr. Laura Straus with the William C. Bagley Education Faculty Award at the 11th Annual Night of Stars on April 20, 2024. As the inaugural recipient of this award, Dr. Straus is celebrated for her outstanding service, leadership, teaching, mentorship, and scholarship.

The award, named after Dr. William Chandler Bagley, esteemed education theorist and Vice

President and Director of Training at Montana State Normal School (now UMW) in the early 1900s, recognizes Straus's commitment to experiential learning, echoing Bagley's principles from the early 20th Century. Bagley's work at UMW, especially related to the development of modern student teaching practices, had a lasting impact on education across the country.

For nearly two decades, Dr. Straus has been a pillar of the Education Division at UMW, serving in various leadership roles while remaining dedicated to her passion for literacy education. As she prepares for her next chapter, Dr. Straus hopes to be remembered as a passionate and caring educator who left a positive impact on her students and the world.

- **UMW Colt Sale Raises over \$208,000 for Natural Horsemanship Program**

The Natural Horsemanship Program, which educates students to work with horses as part of a broad range of equine and academic studies, is a joint program of the University of Montana Western and the Montana Center for Horsemanship. Every year, as part of the Colt Sale course, UMW students work with young horses to be trained and sold at live auction the following spring.

Montana Western student, CJ Benoit, placed first in the Colt Challenge riding Weavers Perk N Black from Weaver Quarter Horses and went on to be the highest selling colt for a final sale price of \$21,000. This year's sale generated \$208,124, averaging \$12,000 per colt. The highly anticipated event brings in buyers from around the country and the proceeds are donated back to the Natural Horsemanship program for scholarships, facility updates, and other program needs.

- **UMW Student Brigid Reedy Performs at Carnegie Hall**

Brigid Reedy, a Montana Western student and talented singer, songwriter, and artist who has toured the country performing on some of the nation's biggest stages had the opportunity to perform at historic Carnegie Hall in New York City on March 22, 2024, as part of the "Roll On, Cowboys with Andy Hedges & Friends" show presented by the National Ranching Heritage Center.

Reedy is a current fourth-year student from Waterloo, Montana pursuing a BS in Natural Horsemanship and BA in English. Since a young age, she has had a passion for performing and has developed into one of the most renowned young voices in Western Americana music and poetry. The block schedule at UMW provides Brigid the flexibility to pursue her education and expand her career in music. Her musicianship on the 2023 album "Roll on, Cowboys" also led to her performance at the iconic Grand Ole Opry with Andy Hedges in Nashville, Tennessee, last summer.

"The type of experience Montana Western has afforded me is unlike anything I could've imagined getting at any other university," said Reedy.

- **Sharon Anderson to Receive UMW Alumni Distinguished Service Award**

Sharon Anderson, a dedicated educator, administrator, and coach with deep roots in Dillon, Montana, will be honored with the University of Montana Western's Alumni Distinguished Service Award at the upcoming 127th Annual Commencement Ceremony.

"Montana Western is proud to honor Sharon Anderson with the Alumni Distinguished Service Award. Through her commitment to education and community service, Sharon has left a lasting and meaningful impact on those around her," said Montana Western Foundation and Alumni Director, Roxanne Engellant.

Anderson's career spans 36 years in teaching, covering all grade levels from first to eighth grade, in addition to coaching track and cross country and serving as a principal in several schools. The Montana Western Alumni Office will host a luncheon on May 3, 2024, to celebrate Anderson and the Classes of 1999 and 1974.

- **UMW Professor Dr. Christian Gilde Selected as 2024 MUS Teaching Scholar**

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is pleased to announce it has selected 15 faculty from around the state to be honored as Montana University System Teaching Scholars, including UMW Professor of Business, Dr. Christian Gilde.

This year, the MUS Teaching Scholars program is focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom. In higher education, AI has and will continue to change how students learn, how faculty teach, and the workforce graduates will enter.

A team of interdisciplinary researchers including Dr. Christian Gilde shared their findings last year focused on the creative capabilities of AI and potential applications in various industries. This research, combined with Dr. Gilde's expertise in business and technology, contributed to his selection as a 2024 MUS Teaching Scholar.

- **Ashley Willett and Chris Mehring Named as Dr. Jane Helm Maddock Service Award Recipients**

The University of Montana Western honored two outstanding community members, Ashley Willett and Chris Mehring, with the 2024 Dr. Jane Helm Maddock Service Award on April 10, 2024, for their extraordinary service to UMW and the Dillon Community.

Dr. Jane Helm Maddock was a Professor of English at the University of Montana Western for 17 years and was recognized as Professor Emeritus of English upon her retirement by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System. During her time at UMW, she established the Helm Honors Scholarship and the Helm Memorial Scholarship in memory of her parents.

The service award is named in her honor and memory and presented to those who have performed extraordinary service to the campus and community.

In addition to honoring the high level of community service of both Willett and Mehring, Montana Western also recognized five inspiring UMW students for their high levels of civic and volunteer engagement: Jonah Lindsey, Campus Compact Student Volunteer Award, Tanner Harrell, Montana Athletes in Service award, Gracie Stanton, Newman Civic Fellowship Award, and Alexis Cannon and Ahna Fox each received the Dr. Jane Helm Maddock Student Service Award.

- **Montana Western Students Receive Western Meadowlark Award**

The Montana Wildlife Society has recognized a UMW Biology student for contributions to the field of wildlife management and conservation for the second year in a row. Joe Lamb, the 2024 recipient of the society's prestigious Western Meadowlark Award, and 2023 recipient, Hunter Bugni, have both been recognized for their leadership and academic achievements in the field of wildlife biology.

The Western Meadowlark Award recognizes a student enrolled at one of the four-year Montana universities, with the exception of the University of Montana and Montana State University, who have made outstanding contributions to the field of wildlife management and conservation.

- **UMW Hosts "Night of Stars" Education Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony**

Montana Western's Education Department and Alumni office, in partnership with Stockman Bank will host the 11th Annual Night of Stars Education Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on April 20, 2024.

The celebration will induct five Montana Western alumni into the Education Hall of Fame in recognition of their phenomenal dedication to education and will honor several current education students as Outstanding Teacher Candidates. This year's class of inductees include: Percy Craddock, Cindy Farmer, Mark Clark, Patricia Haynes Gibson, and Jackie Sproul Taylor. The Outstanding Teacher Candidates are: Alexis Cannon, Kailynn Field, Jordan Sweeney, Pralie Duffin, Riley Henderson, John Gamble, Ruby Stenberg, Leona Colvin, Loran Murphy, Bailey Schuchard, and Garret Yeager.

- **Montana Western Hosts 17th Annual Research Symposium**

Open to the campus and community and organized and funded by the Montana Western Biology Club, the goal of the UMW Annual Research Symposium is to highlight undergraduate research, theses, internships, projects, and other scholarly and artistic work by undergraduates from all academic disciplines and to share examples of authentic experiential learning. This

year's symposium will showcase a variety of research projects during a series of poster and oral presentations to be held April 19-20, 2024, in the STC Great Room.

Keynote guest speaker, Dr. Michelle Osborn, will present "Form, Function, & Failure: Using Whole Body Modelling to Re-examine the Horse" on Friday, April 19. Dr. Osborn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative and Biomedical Sciences at the Louisiana State University School for Veterinary Medicine.

- **Montana Western Celebrates Student Art During Spring Show**

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Gallery showcased the incredible talent of UMW students during the Annual Student Art Show opening reception on April 11, 2024.

This year's show was juried by Montana artist, Tandy Miles Riddle. Riddle recently held an exhibition at Montana Western titled "River Trip" where she displayed her award-winning plein air art inspired by the beauty she finds and explores in Southwest Montana. The student art exhibition will be available for viewing until April 26, 2024.

- **Bulldog Men and Women Shine at MSU Spring Rodeo**

The UMW Men's and Women's Rodeo Teams had an excellent showing at both MSU spring rodeos, finishing second in both with a highly successful short go round on Sunday, April 14.

Bulldog sophomore, Tavy Leno, rounded out the weekend by winning the women's all-around title on Sunday afternoon. She placed third overall in the average of the women's breakaway roping while also finishing in second in women's goat tying in the average. In addition, Laura Haight had an impressive breakout weekend for the Bulldogs. She took home the barrel racing title in the first rodeo on Friday night and finished with four clean runs on the weekend.

"All of our student-athletes competed really hard, and I am very proud of them," said Head UMW Rodeo Coach, JT Robbins.