



Greetings,

It's hard to believe the semester is drawing to a close already. In some ways, it feels like we just started; in others, it feels as though this semester has been an eternity. Despite the uncertainty and challenges faced, we made it. We all should be both proud and grateful.

Speaking of grateful, I'm happy to share this edition of the Chancellor Check-in, which includes some of the things we all should be grateful for. We hosted our first national "Make a Difference Day," we were named the best small college in Montana; staff and faculty received significant honors for their work; we have a new gateway to the Big Butte Trails; our Cross Country team finished a fantastic inaugural first season, and we are immersed in a strategic planning process to position Montana Tech for the future.

There is much to be proud of and grateful for. Thank you for making Montana Tech a place that provides an education, experience, and environment like no other.



With new leadership, designation as Montana's "Special Focus" institution, new academic programs, impressive rankings, ABET accreditation for civil and mechanical engineering, and a relatively new name, Montana Tech embarks on a new strategic plan to position the university for the future.

Over the year ahead, the strategic planning team will draft a plan that includes a refined vision, mission, and goals for the next ten years. The team has met several times this fall and will continue to meet over the spring semester to have a draft completed by May 1. A strategic planning website will go live January 1.

We look forward to engaging the campus community in this process as the plan proceeds.

Members of the strategic planning team include: Dawn Atkinson, Amanda Badovinac, Carleen Cassidy, Stella Capoccia, Janet Coe, Derrius Collins, Les Cook, Phil Curtiss, Kile Denny, Leslie Dickerson, Charie Faught, Janet Friesz, Steve Gammon, Kylie Godfrey, Linda Granger, Katie Hailer, Julie Hart, Bev Hartline, Todd Hoffman, Melissa Kump, Peter Lucon, Joe McClafferty, John Metesh, Marissa Morgan, Raja Nagisetty, Akua Oppong-Anane, Robert Pal, Dario Prieto, Kaleb Scarberry, Layne Sessions, Glenn Shaw, Jennifer Simon, Patricia Southergill, Matt Stepan, Kate Sutton, Kramer Ungaretti, Michael Van Alstyne, Casey Vanatta, Karen VanDaveer, and Carrie Vath.



Please welcome our new Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Michael Van Alstyne. Michael serves as a trusted partner to key stakeholders and decision-makers as an insightful, adaptive and operationally focused senior financial executive. Michael has more than 20 years of experience in both the public and private sectors developing financial plans and budgets, driving strategic decisions and implementing process improvements. Michael has managed finance teams and processes at Microsoft Corporation, T-Mobile USA and at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation with the University of Washington. He earned his MBA degree with a dual focus in corporate finance and operations management from the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California and has a Bachelor's degree from Stanford University in Economics.

We are thrilled to have Michael on campus and in Butte and look forward to his wife joining him.

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The Big Butte Trail has a new arch to welcome bikers, hikers, frisbee golf enthusiasts, or those just looking to explore our backyard. Three additional miles of trails have been established for everyone to enjoy. Thanks to the Butte Parks and Trails Foundation, Butte-Silver Bow, and all those who volunteered to clean up this space.

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Montana Tech was named the best small college in Montana. The list is based on data collected from the U.S Department of Education and published by Stacker's analytical news site. Four-year colleges under 3,000 undergraduate students were considered in Stacker's rankings. Acceptance rate, quality of professors, average loan amount, quality of campus food and housing, student body diversity, local area rating, and other similar factors were used in determining the best small college from each state.

This is an excellent ranking for Montana Tech, and we are in good company alongside Cal Tech, Rose Hulman, New Mexico Tech, Milwaukee School of Engineering, Reed, and Whitman. This, along with other rankings, helps us tell the story and can be used to recruit future Orediggers. A big state school with packed lecture halls is not the ideal college experience for everyone. We are a great fit for so many students.

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Montana Tech's Sarah Raymond, Dr. Carrie Vath, and Dr. Courtney Young have recently received awards. Raymond was named one of the Continental Divide Chapter 2020 HR Leader of the Year awardees and nominated for the Montana SHRM State Council 2020 Montana HR Leader of the Year. Dr. Young was named the 2020 recipient of the Antoine M Gaudin Award, which is for scientific or engineering contributions that further understand mineral processing technology. The Montana Standard named Dr. Vath to the 2020 class of 20 under 40 outstanding community members. The annual list recognizes 20 individuals in southwest Montana who have attained professional success and also give back to the community.



The Montana Tech men's and women's cross country teams recently ran in their first Frontier Conference Championship meeting. The No. 20 Montana Tech men's cross country team finished in fifth place in the final meet of the season, and the Oredigger

women took fourth at Prairie Farms Golf Course. Congratulations to Coach Kughn and the first class of Oredigger runners.

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Faculty and students at Highlands College have been busy this semester making locomotive shaped smokers. This hands-on project saw 12 students develop their own version of a train. The project was led by Dennis Noel, Welding Technology Instructor III. The train is an offset smoker that uses propane for the fire and a chip pan with hardwood chips above the flames to make the smoke.

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# OREDIGGER<sub>Rx</sub>

WASH UP.  BACK UP.  MASK UP. 

It's what we do to protect our Oredigger family.

Thank you for your commitment to our OrediggerRx plan this fall and for taking the necessary steps to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. I know this has been a stressful time. As we near the end of the semester and have the holidays in sight, I wanted

to share some resources from the CDC on holiday celebrations, small gatherings, and travel.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

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Congratulations to all who competed in our first-ever online 3-Minute Thesis Challenge (3-MT). The challenge saw eight graduate students compete for cash prizes and entry into the regional 3-Minute Thesis Challenge competition in March 2021. The 3-MT competition challenges graduate students to communicate their thesis project to non-experts in 3 minutes or less, using at most one slide. It is a national event, held on many university campuses, with campus winners proceeding to regional competitions and then a national competition.

This year's competitors were Carson Bechtel, Prakash Gautam, Paul Helfrich, Sydney Jennings, Amanda Marinovich, Marshall Metcalf, David Rathgeber, and MD Salah Uddin. Congratulations to David Rathgeber, a Materials Science doctoral student, who took home the top honor his project titled, CFD Modeling of Large Diameter Horizontal Wellbores to Study the Effects of Drill Pipe Rotation on Cuttings Transport Efficiency. He will compete in the Western Association of Graduate Schools 3-MT Competition to take place March 24, 2021 virtually.

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