



Greetings, faculty, staff, and students,

I hope you had a restful Thanksgiving and found time to reflect on those things you are grateful for. This past year has been one of abundance for Montana Tech and me personally, and the break provided me space to reflect on many of those things I am grateful for.

This edition of the Chancellor Check-in is filled with many of these stories and one of the many reasons why I am grateful. You'll learn about a new partnership with the University of Camerino, a collaboration with Highlands College and the DEQ, and services available for first-generation students. We also celebrate our Veterans, student-athletes, and more.

As the semester draws to a close, I'm thankful for the opportunities we have to come together as a community to learn from each other, share in our struggles and accomplishments, and celebrate each other. Nearly 200 Orediggers will walk across the stage in the next week or so, and the impact they have had on our campus, as well as that which they will have on our world is extraordinary.

Congratulations to our Montana Tech family and thank you!

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MONTANA TECH PARTICIPATES IN GIVING TUESDAY

Today is #GivingTuesday, a global generosity movement unleashing the power of the impact of many.

GIVING TUESDAY

For Montana Technological University #GivingTuesday is a chance to invest in the work of the Montana Tech Foundation to provide resources to recruit, take care of, and invest in our students and programs. For 2023 we are focusing on the [Impact for Excellence Fund](#), dedicated to providing extraordinary outcomes for all students.

Right now, thanks to a dedicated alumnus and their spouse, [each gift to the Impact for Excellence Fund will be matched 1:1 up to \\$125,000](#), amplifying your gift and providing the resources for the Montana Tech Foundation to continue our work to advance our university.

Together We Give! Every act of generosity counts, and each means more when we give together. Please join us and the work we do to invest in Montana Tech students, their education, their experience, and their well-being during #GivingTuesday.



Montana Tech alumnus Jack Standa will deliver the commencement address at the fall ceremony on Saturday, December 9 at 11:00 am in the HPER. The University will award 205 degrees and certificates to 195 graduates, which will include the first graduates out of the Lance College of Mines & Engineering.

Standa has served as President of Montana Resources in Butte, Montana, since October 2020. Before Montana Resources, he spent over 20 years internationally, primarily in Indonesia and Australia. He is a 1989 graduate of Montana Tech and a 1984 graduate of Granite County High School in Philipsburg. Standa holds a master of science degree in Geotechnical Engineering from UC Berkeley and an

MBA from the University of Chicago. His wife, Nia, is from Indonesia, and they have been married for over 25 years. In 2017, they moved back to the United States when Jack began working for Westmoreland Coal in Colstrip, and their son Jacob entered the

University of Chicago. Jack and Nia enjoy living in Butte and are incredibly grateful to live near Jack's family in Philipsburg.

The fall of 2023 class will also hear from Kylie Godfrey, this year's student speaker. Kylie is a Business & Information Technology student, from Boise, Idaho. She will graduate with her bachelor of science degree at the fall ceremony. During her time on campus, she served as the Associated Students of Montana Tech (ASMT) student body president from 2022-2023, campus director of events from 2021-2022, and an ASMT senator from 2020-2021. Kylie was a member of the 2nd Honors College cohort at Montana Tech.

Order of the Engineer

December 8, 2023
5:00 pm
Library Auditorium

Nurse Pinning

December 9, 2023
9:00 am
Library Auditorium

Fall Commencement

December 9, 2023
11:00 am
HPER



LINE RODEO TO SHOWCASE PRE-APPRENTICE GRADUATES

If you are going to be a line worker, you have to be strong, have the courage to climb to the tops of power lines, the driving skills to maneuver huge commercial vehicles, and the confidence to problem solve on the fly, in all weathers.



Gwen Bjorkman of Columbus exemplifies all of those traits. She's one of 48 graduates from 7 different states in Highlands College's Fall 2023 Pre-Apprentice Line Program.

Bjorkman says the one-semester program prepared her for a career field that fits her personality.

"I like working outside and with my hands, so this seemed like something I would enjoy," Bjorkman said. "I've learned how to change bells, and change cross arms. If you like doing challenging things, I would recommend it."

The work is physical. Students climb power poles 40 feet in the air and install bulky equipment. [Read more >>](#)

Line Rodeo

December 8 | 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Highlands College





RESEARCH ON FOREST REGENERATION DYNAMICS AFTER FIRES IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, CULTURAL SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE PART OF COLLABORATION

Montana Tech and the University of Camerino in Italy launched a collaboration this fall that will provide a cultural and scientific exchange of ideas between the two institutions, including a research proposal to study how lodgepole pine forests are recovering after fire events and how the under canopy changes with maturity in relation to species composition in Yellowstone National Park. [Read more >>](#)



STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO UTILIZE FREE MANTRA HEALTH SERVICES FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

Finals week, the holidays, and the long, cold winter that Montana is known for are on the horizon, and stress levels are understandably high. Montana Tech is encouraging students to log in to Mantra Health to access a wide variety of free services available to help improve mental health, including coaching, counseling, and techniques to build a personalized self-care routine. “We are really excited about our partnership with Mantra Health,” Executive Director of Student Success Sarah North Wolfe said. [Read more >>](#)





HIGHLANDS COLLEGE TO PARTNER WITH DEQ, MMEC ON \$2 MILLION MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE

Recently Montana received a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Energy under the State Manufacturing Leadership Program. DEQ, in partnership with the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) and Highlands College, will launch a Smart

Manufacturing Technologies Outreach Initiative to help Montana manufacturers access and implement advanced technologies to improve facility operations and efficiency. As part of the initiative, Highlands College will offer a certificate program to develop a workforce with skills necessary to continue upgrading manufacturing technologies into the future.

[Read more >>](#)



YEOMAN RECEIVES 2023 MONTANA ATHLETES IN SERVICE AWARD

An Oredigger will be in the spotlight as much of the state attends or tunes in to watch the Brawl of the Wild on Saturday. Business sophomore Kasidy Yeoman of Florence will receive the 2023 Montana Athletes in Service Award.



The Montana Campus Compact gives one award per campus to an outstanding student-athlete who is committed to service.

Yeoman is a guard for the Oredigger women's basketball team. She volunteers at the Knights of Columbus lunch, United Way Dress a Child Initiative, Belmont Senior Center, and the Head Start After School Program. The practice of making time to serve others started in high school, when she volunteered to help younger kids on sports teams.

"My favorite part about service is being able to help people out who need it, and also playing a big part in showing kids how fun sports are," Yeoman said. [Read more >>](#)





OREDIGGER MEN FINISH IN 25TH, MORGAN RUNS TO ALL- AMERICAN HONOR

The men's cross-country team finished 25th at the NAIA National Championships in Vancouver, Washington. Individually, the Orediggers were led by All-American Justin Morgan, who finished 33rd with a time of 25:31.9. The top 40 runners are named to the All-America team. Edwin Kipainoi crossed in 105th, with a time of 26:18.8. Derek Schultz finished strong to cross in 130th, Benjamin Zerr finished at 27:04.6, River Sheppard finished at 267, Jacob Sriraman at 292, and Jon Hansen at 303. [Read more >>](#)



OREDIGGER CROSS COUNTRY FINISH in 23RD PLACE, CARLIN MANNING ALL AMERICAN

The women's cross-country team finished 23rd at the National Championships. The Orediggers were an at-large bid out of the Frontier Conference. The Diggs were paced by Frontier Conference regular season champion Carlin Manning, who placed 26th, finishing in 22:21.1. Carlin was the highest-placing Frontier Conference runner. Kamryn Comba finished 140, Alyssa Jany 167, Alyssa Plant 221, Taleigh Adrian 262, and Lizzy Perry in 275. The Orediggers, the highest-placing Frontier Conference School, finished in 23rd place. [Read more >>](#)





OREDIGGER FOOTBALL FALLS TO BLUE HAWKS 35-28

Congratulations to the Montana Tech Oredigger football team on a great season, going 7-4 overall. The Orediggers lost a nail biter in the first round of the NAIA football playoffs, losing to the No. 16 Dickinson State Blue Hawks 35-28. The Orediggers had an opportunity to tie the game in the fourth quarter. After starting on their 25-yard line, Blake Thelen completed a 22-yard pass to Wyatt Alexander, putting the Orediggers at midfield. Thelen completed two passes to Levi Torgerson, and Landers Smith added 10 yards on the ground; the Orediggers were on the 34-yard line. Dickinson dug their heels in bringing Tech to a 4th and 2. Thelen completed his third pass to Torgerson for nine yards, taking Tech to the 23-yard line. Dickinson's Joey DeMarco intercepted two plays later, stopping the drive. [Read more >>](#)



OREDIGGER VOLLEYBALL HEADED TO FINAL SITE

With a sweep of the College of Idaho, the Montana Tech Orediggers (23-5) are headed to the final site of the NAIA Volleyball Championship in Sioux City, Iowa on November 29 to December 5.

Against the Yotes, Montana Tech had 20 kills in the second set hitting for .500 in the frame. The Orediggers finished with a .292 hitting percentage and led the Yotes 41-31 in kills. The Orediggers also led in blocking 10-6. Maureen Jessop led the attack with 12 kills hitting for .321. Olivia Muir had 11 kills and just one error finishing with a .370 hitting percentage. Kinnidi Willmore had eight kills and no errors finishing with a .444 hitting percentage. Willmore also had a pair of aces. Ryhs Layton had 21 assists and Sarah Hopcroft finished with 12 digs. Good luck Orediggers! [Read more>>](#)





RETIRED ARMY STAFF SERGEANT HOPES STUDENT VETERAN ASSOCIATION WILL HELP CONNECT SERVICE MEMBERS, FAMILIES WITH RESOURCES

If you ask Troy Springer how he's doing these days, he will tell you he's the best he's ever been. "I'm at a healthy point, probably the healthiest I've been in my life, even before the Army," the Construction Management senior notes.

Springer is just as quick to note that it was a long journey to get to where he is today. He joined the United States Army in 2003, and rose to the rank of staff sergeant as he operated a tanker. He was deployed twice for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additional overseas deployments included assignments in Kenya, Djibouti, Bahrain, and Kuwait. During that time, Springer received awards for performance, professionalism, and valor. By the time he medically retired in 2019, the 16 years of service had taken its toll. [Read more >>](#)



MONTANA TECH JUNIOR SERVES COUNTRY WHILE EARNING DEGREE

For junior Rylan Signalness, the decision to serve her country was an easy one. "I enlisted before I graduated high school," Signalness said. "I have service members in my family, and the Montana Air National Guard had a job opening for what I want to do in my future career." Signalness, a resident of Fairfield, serves as an E-3 Bioenvironmental Engineer. She has completed two years of a six-year commitment with the 120th Airlift Wing based out of Great Falls. Signalness says her service allows her to make a difference, helps pay for her education, and will help launch her post-graduate career.

Signalness's experience started with basic training, seven weeks of intense exercise meant to hone recruits' physical and mental strength. Much of this time is spent without any contact with the outside world. [Read more >>](#)



COLLEGE OF LETTERS, SCIENCES & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES UPDATE

The department of Business and Information Technology officially opened the [SAP NextGen Lab](#) at the end of October. SAP leads the world in enterprise resource planning systems, serving over 300,000 organizations in 190 countries. 87% of the Forbes Global 2000 companies use [SAP](#) and 75% of the world's transaction revenue touches an SAP system. Students receive true hands-on experience using analytical applications including MS Excel, Power BI, Tableau, SAP Analytics Cloud, Orange, and Minitab, equipping them with valuable skills for the digital age. Students and faculty are partnering with industry and other campus disciplines learning to utilize analytics with real data to assess real world processes and issues. Montana Tech is the only SAP University Alliance in the state, and now has one of only 13 NextGen labs in the nation.



LANCE COLLEGE OF MINES & ENGINEERING UPDATE

The Lance College of Mines & Engineering received a \$160K grant from the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) to initiate a sprint-degree pathway for the construction management program starting in the fall semester 2024. Incoming students with some AP or dual-enrollment college credits can finish the degree in as few as three academic years.

The Electrical Engineering Department will host a regional FIRST Tech Challenge qualifier on December 2 in the HPER. FTC is a competition for high school teams to design, build, and program a robot to compete in an alliance format against other teams. We're expecting around 25 high school teams to compete.

Also, in December, seven undergraduate students and three faculty members will do a short-term exchange study in Taiwan and Japan, where students will immerse themselves in different Asian cultures, take Mandarin classes, and learn about the semiconductor industry.



HIGHLANDS COLLEGE UPDATE

It has been a busy semester at Highlands College. As this semester ends, we have many things to celebrate. This fall, we will graduate our largest cohort of Pre-Apprentice Line students, with 46 students set to walk across the stage on December 9. We continue to see success in grant funding opportunities, having received awards totaling over \$1 million, allowing Highlands College to provide workforce education in a manner that meets students where they are. Our dual enrollment students can gain immediate employability skills through the School-to-Work CDL and CNA programs, the latter of which grew to 30 students this fall, and Highlands College will begin offering an Accelerated "Sprint" Automotive Technology Associate of Applied Science to dual enrollment students this spring that will allow them the ability to earn their full AAS in Automotive Technology in 15 months post-high school graduation. Trucks for the CDL program are on the roads daily for training and as part of the newly established state-approved CDL Testing Center. In September, an updated curriculum for the Civil Engineering Technology (CET) program was approved that aligns the program with the new Construction Management degree. Students entering the CET program in the fall will now be able to earn the AAS and advance into the Construction Management BS program as a true 2+2, which will be the first of the Trades AAS programs to do so. As Highlands College works to improve current program offerings, we constantly seek new program opportunities to support our community and state industries. In January, Highlands College will kick off the development of an Advanced Manufacturing certificate as part of the Smart Manufacturing Technologies Outreach Initiative.



**INTERNSHIP, JOB
OPPORTUNITIES HELP PRE-**

VETERINARY STUDENT BOOST RESUME

For Aubrey Teller, the answer to “What do you want to do when you grow up?” has always been simple. “From a young age, I always knew I wanted to work with animals, especially in the medical field,” Teller remembers. “My favorite animal is horses, and I want to be a large animal and small animal veterinarian.” Teller is a junior majoring in biological sciences. She’s the daughter of a geological engineering alumnus and has lived all over the country. She graduated from high school in North Dakota, after residing in Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and New Mexico. Her parents were from Western Montana, and it’s always been a place to return to. [Read more >>](#)



COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH WITH NAVY ALLOWS STUDENTS TO EXPAND HORIZONS

Collaborative research between Montana Tech and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport officially kicked off this fall, bringing expanded opportunities for talented student researchers to participate in projects for the U.S. Navy. "The Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport team is thrilled about this new Naval Engineering and Education Consortium award to Dr. Lucon and his students. This is exactly the type of research we hoped to accomplish in establishing the Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with Montana Tech last year," said Craig Bleile, a U.S. Navy engineer and scientist. [Read more >>](#)



BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT: MOCK TRIAL CHALLENGES BUSINESS STUDENTS TO MAKE THEIR CASE

The URC was transformed recently into a courtroom, as students conducted a mock trial for the Critical Thinking and Decision Making class. The trial played out not unlike the 1957 classic American film “12 Angry Men,” as a single holdout juror eventually



PHAGES PROGRAM, NEW TEM ELECTRON MICROSCOPE OPENS UP POSSIBILITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS

On a computer screen, the tailed virus appears to be about six inches long. The crisp image may look puzzling to untrained eye, but to the school teachers taught to use Montana Tech’s new state-of-the-art

poked enough holes into the prosecution's case to highlight reasonable doubt, and bring more jurors over to their side one by one. Instead of the full acquittal granted in the film, the jury was hung by the end of the allotted class time dedicated to the trial.

[Read more >>](#)

scanning/transmission electron microscope the image clearly shows a bacteriophage, a virus that can infect and replicate only in bacterial cells. Phages are invisible to the naked eye, but the power of Tech's new electron microscope can magnify its size on the screen to one million times its actual scale. [Read more >>](#)



FRESHMAN SOLIDIFIES PASSION FOR MINING IN UNDERGROUND MINE EDUCATION CENTER

A major cornerstone of a Montana Technological University education is the internship component. The University has built its reputation on hands-on learning that takes place inside and outside of the classroom. Juniors and seniors are known for spending their summers in

exciting locations in the field. But one Montana Tech freshman may have landed a summer internship in record time.

Jordan Niggemyer is a mining and environmental engineering freshman from Grafton, West Virginia, who has impressively secured a summer internship before midterms of her first semester on campus. In her short time at Montana Tech, Niggemyer has laid the groundwork to become an ambassador for the mining industry. [Read more >>](#)



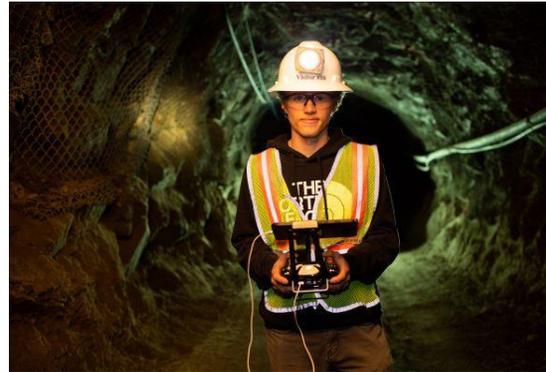
IT'S A GREAT DAY TO BE AN OREDIGGER



CONNECTING YOUTH WITH COMPUTER SCIENCE

Demand for computer scientists is expected to grow 23 percent from 2022 to 2032, and senior Danielle Failor spent her summer making sure the next generation of young people have a solid understanding of coding basics to meet the world's burgeoning technology needs.

Failor interned with ID Tech at a college campus in the Denver, Colorado area. She mainly worked with teenagers, who were enrolled in a coding class. [Read more >>](#)



MONTANA TECH NAMED #1 BEST COLLEGE IN MONTANA

Montana Technological University is ranked #1 on DegreeChoices.com's ["2024 Best Colleges in Montana"](#) list.

The rankings focus on the return on investment, which weighs the total cost of a degree against graduates' earnings 10 years after graduation. The website calculates the median net cost of a Montana Tech degree at \$15,814. Median earnings of all students 10 years after graduation is calculated at \$49,032. [Read more >>](#)



COPPER HILL CHOIR ALLOWS OREDIGGERS TO FIND THEIR VOICE

Environmental engineering sophomore Shelbi Fuller wanted to take music classes in high school, but her education was very STEM-focused and there weren't opportunities.

When she arrived at Montana Tech from Spokane, she was excited to audition for the choir. "I've always wanted to sing, but I never had the chance," Fuller said. "I was a

little nervous at first, but it's a great group of people. I really found my voice. I love it. It's a good stress reliever, especially during test weeks."

The Copper Hill Choir is a hybrid between a club and a class. The group meets on Mondays from 4:30 to 6:30 in the Library Auditorium to practice, and students get credit for MUSI 112 for participating. There also is a small scholarship awarded to choir participants. [Read more >>](#)



COPPER HILL CHOIR WINTER CONCERT

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD
3:00 PM | UMC ALDERSGATE**

General admission tickets are \$15
Students and seniors are \$10





OREDIGGERS FIGHT TO BRING HOCKEY BACK

Petroleum engineering junior Riley Graves loves the competitive nature of hockey. “I see hockey as almost like a battlefield, because you are all fighting for the one puck,” Graves said. “We do 45-second to one-minute shifts, and it’s fast, fast, fast.”

At Montana Tech, the melee for the puck stretches back decades. Archived copies of the Spokesman-Review from winter 1937 tell of spirited matches against the University of Washington Huskies and Gonzaga Bulldogs. The team was so good then that they were in the running for the Pacific Coast college and independent titles. The roster included star Canadian players who had played in junior leagues, and results of games in Butte were printed in newspapers in Alberta. [Read more >>](#)



BIRKENBUEL LANDS 21ST SCHOLARSHIP

If you ask occupational safety and health senior Brie Birkenbuel how many scholarships she’s won since she arrived at Montana Tech, she smiles and expresses gratitude for the incredible opportunity to receive scholarship money to continue her education.

She has to pull out her laptop and review her resume to find the most recent total. Birkenbuel has earned approximately \$40,000 from 21 different scholarships, including the \$5,000 Women in Safety Scholarship awarded by the National Safety Council in New Orleans in October. To receive that scholarship, Birkenbuel flew to the Big Easy, where she was able to network with professionals in the field. [Read more >>](#)



FIRST-GENERATION OSH SENIOR BLAZES PATHWAY

If you ask senior Jordyn LaPier her motivation behind getting a bachelor's degree in occupational safety and health from Montana Tech, the story starts and ends with family.

LaPier was inspired to pursue a career in safety partly because of her father's experiences.

"Dad thinks he can do everything, and hurt himself a couple of times," she said.

There's also an element of showing those who come after her that they too can obtain a college degree.

"I wanted to be able to show my younger siblings they could do it, too," LaPier said.

LaPier is a first-generation student from Butte. She has participated in TRIO, a federal college readiness program since sixth grade. As part of TRIO's programming for middle and high school students, LaPier visited colleges across the Pacific Northwest. She remembers touring Gonzaga, the University of Montana, and Montana State University. [Read more >>](#)



HELPING FIRST-GEN STUDENTS REACH FOR THEIR GOALS

Starting college can sometimes feel like diving into a bowl of alphabet soup.

FIRST-GENERATION SURVEY

Montana Tech and TRIO Student Support Services are asking all Montana

Everything has an acronym, and for those unfamiliar with the lingo, the process of getting everything filled out to attend can be intimidating. [Read more >>](#)

Tech faculty, staff, and students to complete this [short survey](#) to help us better serve the First-Generation population of Montana Tech.



Upcoming Events

11/28: Giving Tuesday

12/01: Holiday Stroll (10:00 am-2:00 pm) | WBB (3:00 pm) | MBB (5:00 pm)

12/02: SPE Bazaar (9:00 am-4:00 pm, Maroon Activities Center)

12/03: Choir Concert (3:00 pm, UMC Aldersgate)

12/04: Late Night Breakfast

12/07-08: [CFWEP Virtual Auction](#)

12/08: Lineman Rodeo (9:00 am-12:00 pm, Highlands) | Order of the Engineer (5:00 pm, Auditorium) | Chancellor's Reception for Graduates (6:00-7:30 pm, SSC)

12/09: Nurse Pinning (9:00 am, Auditorium) | Commencement (11:00 am, HPER)

12/12: Holiday Brunch (9:00-11:00 am, Marcus Deli)

12/14: Chancellor's Holiday Gathering (5:00-8:00 pm, Chancellor's Residence)

12/15: Elementary School Day at WBB game (12:00 pm, HPER)

12/25: Christmas holiday





3rd Annual Campus Wide Ugly Sweater Contest

HOLIDAY STROLL
DECEMBER 1, 10AM-2PM

**Come see us across from
the SUB Information Desk**



Prizes for the Ugliest Sweaters

One Student, One Staff and One Faculty
winner.

STAFF: Enter a Special Prize Drawing by
going to the Staff Senate Page
<https://www.mtech.edu/facultystaff/staffsenate/>
or by using the QR Code below



MONTANA
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE



JOIN ASMT FOR A

Winter Stroll



STATION MAPS LOCATED AT SUB HELP DESK



December 1st



10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Be on the lookout for Treats,
Crafts, and other Activities around
campus!



MONTANATECH *Holiday Brunch*

Come enjoy brunch and time together!

Tuesday, December 12
9:00 am to 11:00 am | Dining Hall



CHANCELLOR'S HOLIDAY GATHERING

It's been a historic year at Montana Tech. We're grateful for you and wish you good health and joy in every season. Please join us to celebrate!

Thursday, December 14
5:00 pm-8:00 pm | Chancellor's Residence

