

CHANCELLOR CHECK-IN

MONTANA
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY



March 13, 2024

[Athletics](#) | [Giving](#)

Greetings,

I attended the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) meetings in Seattle this week and will end the week at the Board of Regents meeting in Dillon. While these meetings are dramatically different in size and scope, both are focused on student success and preparing graduates to meet the needs and demands of society today. In this edition of the Chancellor Check-in, you'll see numerous examples of how this occurs at Montana Tech.

Last Friday, the HPER was bursting with energy from prospective students and their guests, who were on campus for our spring Tech Day. This week, we will pack the HPER as our three-time defending Frontier Conference Champion Orediggers host the NAIA National Championship First and Second Rounds. The following week, we will host the Intercollegiate/International Mining Competition.

While a lot is happening on campus and there is so much to be proud of, it is easy to understand why we may feel a bit tired. The good news is that next week is spring break. I hope you are able to enjoy some downtime, take a break, and return ready to finish the year strong.

Enjoy the break, be safe, and Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Les



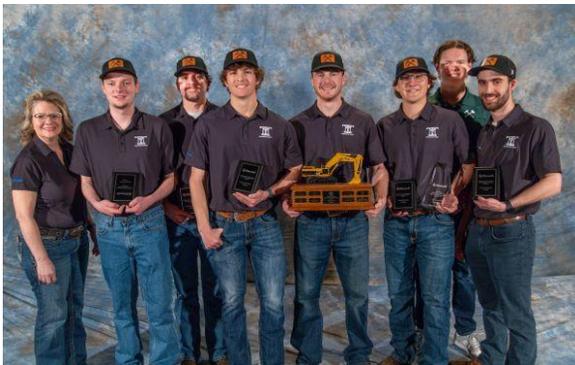


MONTANA TECH WINS 2024 SAFETY OLYMPICS

Montana Tech brought home the top prize at the 2024 Safety Olympics held at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma. This is Montana Tech's first time competing in the annual event requiring participants to exhibit their skills in occupational health, safety, and industrial hygiene through a series of challenges. This year's competitors include Collin College, College of the

University of Central Missouri, Mainland, Pittsburg State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and the University of Central Missouri.

"We came down from Montana, so it's our first time participating in the event and we had a blast," Associate Professor of Safety, Health, and Industrial Hygiene and team coach Lorri Birkenbuel said. "We did not have a clue what the outcome was going to be, but at the end we ended up winning, which was amazing. All of the participants were great, all the competitions were great, and we had a great time." [Read more >>](#)



MONTANA TECH TEAM BRINGS HOME AWARDS FROM ASC BIDDING COMPETITION

Three teams and three alternates competed in the 2024 Associated Schools of Construction Region 6/7 annual construction bidding competition in Sparks, Nevada. Montana Tech entered a team in the following categories Alternate, Commercial, Heavy Civil, and

Project Management.

The University's Heavy Civil team placed 1st in the Region 6 competition. The team was comprised of six seniors studying civil engineering. The team trained through the fall semester, focusing on learning various methods to construct heavy civil projects. The team had no prior competition experience. The Heavy Civil team members have a variety of construction experience through summer internships and work. The competition included 15 teams from universities in the Rocky Mountain region, including Montana State, Colorado State, Northern University of Arizona, Brigham Young University, and the University of Alaska. The Montana Tech team included Jared Griffith, Gavin Dolechek, Bryce Hasquet, James Huckaby, Koby Martin, and Gabriel Roberts. Alternates were Will Wagner and Sean Mehling. [Read more >>](#)



PROVOST SEARCH UPDATE

The search committee for our next provost met on March 6 to select a list of semifinalist candidates. These candidates will do Zoom interviews with the committee on March 13 and 14. The committee plans to have finalists on campus March 25–April 5.



YOU + SPRING 2024 TECH DAY = SUCCESS

The Admissions Office extends appreciation to the campus community for welcoming prospective students and their guests to campus on Friday, March 8 for our Spring Tech Day. Approximately 130 students were on campus with their guests for a total of nearly 250 visitors. In total visitors hailed from 24 different counties in Montana and six different



states. Their interests were as varied as their locations with student attendees noting 22 different intended majors. Student attendees ranged from freshman to seniors in high school, with about half the attendees having already applied and been accepted to Montana Tech for Fall 2024.

Thanks to our campus partners, visitors were able to get the full Oredigger experience by exploring majors through hands-on laboratory activities hosted by several academic programs and connection with academic departments, enrollment services, and student clubs during the academic fair. Visitors also had lunch in the dining hall and could participate in optional tours of north and south campus and the residence halls. Thank you to everyone involved with Tech Day—both for supporting and hosting the day's activities and showing visitors the elevated experience students can have by selecting Montana Tech! Thanks to you the day was a success! Stay tuned for more information about Registration Rallies taking place this spring for the incoming class of Fall 2024 Orediggers.





This week, the It Starts With Us Montana Tech Faculty Staff Giving Drive launches. As a Montana Technological University campus community member, you are one of our greatest resources. You create our community every day by investing your time and talent in the university and our students.

When we join together the results can be transformational. Faculty & Staff giving allows us to amplify our impact and provides an easy and automated option to give back.

During the It Starts With Us Montana Tech Faculty Staff Giving Drive, now thorough April 12, the Montana Tech Foundation, has fun opportunities to win prizes for the first department to meet full participation and most participants in a department including gift cards for Dig City and lunch for your department.

Payroll deduction is an easy way to make your annual donation through installments. You can use the form [HERE](#) to let us know the amount you would like automatically deducted from each paycheck, the start date, and where your support should be designated. Deductions can be ongoing, or one-time. Payroll deduction can be a great way to spread out payments and ensure a certain total for the year.

Tell us where to direct your support—the choice is yours. You can give to any fund, including student scholarships, departments and programs, student clubs, athletics, and initiatives. You can even split your gift to benefit multiple areas.

If you would like more information, you can contact Shannon Sullivan Panisko at spanisko@mtech.edu.



MINING COMPETITION COMING TO CAMPUS

Montana Tech, the only university to compete in all 46 competitions since its inception, is hosting the Intercollegiate/International Mining Competition from March 21-24. The competition will be located on campus just west of the HPER. The competition consists of seven events demonstrating traditional mining skills: survey, gold pan, swede saw, track stand, mucking, hand steel, and jackleg drilling. Teams consist of six members, and each event includes 2-5 of those students competing. Generally, events are judged on time, so the fastest team gets the lowest points. There are deductions or penalties, and the team with the lower points wins.



This year, Montana Tech is hosting teams from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and across the USA. There will be around 250 competitors in the men's, women's, co-ed, and alumni categories. The events are open to the public for viewing. [Read more >>](#)



PROFESSOR JACK SKINNER SELECTED TO CHAIR PREMIER NANOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Department Head of Mechanical Engineering and Founding Director of the Montana Tech Nanotechnology Laboratory (MTNL) Dr. Jack Skinner has been chosen by a group of top scientists, engineers, faculty, and industry leaders to serve a five-year term on the ten-person

Steering Committee for the International Conference of Electron, Ion and Photon Beam Technology and Nanofabrication (EIPBN or 3-Beams). The EIPBN is the premier meeting for scientists and engineers dedicated to nanoscale fabrication and characterization and related technologies and applications across the broad technical community. Dr. Skinner's career in nanotechnology spans over 20 years where he has amassed over 60 publications, 100 presentations, 11 granted patents, a best journal article award, cover features, and national media recognition. [Read more >>](#)





AISES TEAM PREPARES HIGH-POWERED ROCKET FOR FIRST NATIONS LAUNCH COMPETITION

Every time the Space Race has gained momentum over the past 70 years, Orediggers have answered the call to push the boundaries of their engineering skills to higher altitudes.

In April 1958, just weeks after the Jupiter-C, a modified Redstone missile, propelled America's first satellite, Explorer 1, into space, Montana Tech students launched "Fystp," a two-stage solid-fueled rocket that traveled 962 feet into the air.

In 1967, Professor Charles Herndon spent a summer working with the engineering team at NASA's Huntsville, Alabama campus to determine the reliability of a hydraulic unit used to start the Saturn V, the rocket that carried crewed flights to the Moon. [Read more >>](#)



ROBOTICS CLUB LOOKING FOR NEW CHALLENGES AFTER RISING TO THE TOP

Drones that deliver packages and food. Driverless cars. The Odysseus lunar lander. Robots are becoming increasingly more important to humankind, and at Montana Tech, there's a club where students from various backgrounds come together to share their enthusiasm for the field.

The Montana Tech Robotics Club has a history of excelling on the national stage. In 2022, the team bested 38 universities to take home the top mining award at the NASA Lunabotics Competition at the Kennedy Space Center. The field included major top-tier institutions, including the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University. The challenge required the teams to build a robot that mined realistic mock lunar surface material in a contained environment. [Read more >>](#)



COLLEGE OF LETTERS, SCIENCES & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES UPDATE

MONTANA INBRE GRANT

Montana Tech has a long-standing Undergraduate Research Program (URP) that funds undergraduate research during the academic year and in the summer months. Dr. Katie Hailer has been awarded a \$78,000 grant from Montana INBRE to continue support for URP for research projects that fall into the general areas of environmental health, public health, food security, infectious diseases, or rural or American Indian health disparities. Research in the areas of biomedical and health sciences are emerging higher profile programs at Montana Tech, and funding from Montana INBRE will stimulate this type of research on a campus and complement programs in mining and engineering research. Students will have the opportunity to interact with graduate level students at Tech as well as undergraduate and graduate level INBRE researchers at other institutions in the state. The goal in making these cross-campus connections is to encourage outreach across institutions in the state and to promote graduate education to students participating in undergraduate research. This is the second year the Dr. Hailer has been funded by this program.



JOURNAL ARTICLE RECOGNIZES IMPACT OF MONTANA, K-12 PARTNERSHIP THAT BRINGS STEM TO THOUSANDS OF MONTANA STUDENTS

Journal article recognizes impact of Montana Tech, K-12 partnership that brings STEM to thousands of Montana students

A new article published in the February 2024 edition of the Journal of STEM Research highlights the success of a multiyear project that allows rural K-12 teachers and students to conduct bacteriophage research with scientists at Montana Technological University. [Read more >>](#)



HIGHLANDS COLLEGE UPDATE

ACCELERATE MONTANA

Accelerate Montana has agreed to financially support the curriculum updates to the pre-apprentice line program. The faculty will conduct these updates over the summer. Accelerate Montana has been a big supporter of Highlands College's rapid training programs over the past two years. In addition to supporting the Line Program, Accelerate Montana has supported our CDL Training Course, high school CNA Program, and Operation Next.

REQUESTS TO PLAN

During the Board of Regents meeting in Dillon on March 13-15, Highlands College will introduce Requests to Plan for two new certificate of associate of science programs in smart manufacturing technology and broadband technology.

Smart Manufacturing Technology C.A.S.

The Smart Manufacturing Technology CAS is the result of a multi-agency collaboration with Montana Smart Manufacturing. The agencies were assembled to develop and provide training to help manufacturers accelerate the implementation of smart manufacturing technologies in their operations. Program development will begin in early April with the hiring of a faculty member devoted to working with manufacturing companies throughout Montana to identify specific smart manufacturing technology training needs.

Broadband Technology CAS

The Broadband Technology CAS will fulfill skilled workforce gaps in broadband expansion through an accelerated workforce training program. The one-semester, 30-credit program will cover broadband/telecommunication issues and procedures, delivered in a hybrid format utilizing online instruction and evening/weekend scheduling. The degree program will increase the number of broadband technicians and help bring high-speed internet access to rural communities across Montana.





ALUMNUS SAYS HIGHLANDS COLLEGE PREPARED HIM FOR IN-DEMAND CAREER

When Alex Jones walks around the world, he sees things most people don't take notice of: the subtle slope of a sidewalk, drainage systems tucked quietly into the landscape, boundary markers put in place decades before.

"Surveying is an invisible craft," Jones said. "Everyone lives on some type of property, but how did those lines get established? A surveyor did that. It isn't crazy, high-concept calculus, it's real-world stuff. Surveyors carved out a grid across Montana with basic instruments in the late 1800s with some amazing accuracy, and our current land is basically just subdivided from there. It truly is an underappreciated profession, especially considering the impact it has had on the shaping of our country." [Read more >>](#)



LIBERTY ENERGY FOUNDER, CEO TO DELIVER COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Chris Wright, founder and chief executive officer of Liberty Energy, will be Montana Tech's commencement speaker on Saturday, May 4, 2024. Wright will speak at both commencement ceremonies in the HPER. The first will be at 10:00 am for Highlands College and College of Letters, Sciences, & Professional Studies graduates. The second ceremony will begin at 1:00 pm for Lance College of Mines & Engineering and Graduate School graduates.



Line Rodeo
Friday, May 3
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Highlands Pole Yard

**Chancellor's Reception
for Graduates**
Friday, May 3
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Student Success Center

Order of the Engineer
Friday, May 3
5:00 pm | Auditorium

Nurse Pinning Ceremony
Saturday, May 4
8:00 am | Auditorium

Highlands College/CLSPS
Saturday, May 4, 2024
10:00 am | HPER

Lance College of Mines & Engineering/Graduate School
Saturday, May 4, 2024
1:00 pm | HPER



SCULPTING SUCCESS

Taking a block of solid ice that weighs more than 100 pounds and turning it into a work of art in a mere six hours, using only hand tools, probably sounds like a daunting task for most people, but for Business and Information Technology seniors Clayton and Connor Heggem, the process is incredibly fun and worthwhile. Their entry of a mountain goat took home the top prize in the Uptown Butte Ice Carving Contest. They then entered an adult penguin with its chick in the Anaconda Festival of the Winter Moon in late January, and carved an extra trout for the festival for fun.

The identical twin brothers, raised in Butte, have participated in the Uptown Butte Ice Carving Contest every year since they were in middle school. The contest holds a youth category. [Read more >>](#)



BUSINESS GUILD BRINGS TOGETHER OREDIGGERS



DUNGEONS, DRAGONS, AND DIGGERS

The stereotype of a person interested in business might bring to mind images of sharp suits and briefcases, but the Montana Tech Business Guild has a more jovial take on the subject.

“We have fun. It’s not all work, no play,” former Business Guild Vice President Quinn Cassidy said. Cassidy graduated in December and now serves in an advisory position as he works as a residence life coordinator. He was replaced as vice president by Carlie Spear.

In Fall 2023, the Business Guild took a trip to a Montana Ambassadors event where business owners pitched their company to get funding from investors. [Read more >>](#)

Most of Jade Uriarte and Gavin Rahl’s time at Montana Tech is spent delving deep into the world of STEM.

Jade, a cellular and molecular biology junior from Stevensville, has a packed schedule of classes like immunology, genetics, and organic chemistry. Rahl, an environmental engineering senior from Stevensville, is focused on soil and subsurface remediation, air pollution, and wastewater treatment.

But for a short time each semester, the pair escape the humdrum of assignments as they lead one of the most popular clubs on campus, Dungeons, Dragons, and Diggers, and delve into numerous imaginary realms. [Read more >>](#)



RIO TINTO ESTABLISHES SCHOLARSHIP

A new scholarship established by mining multinational Rio Tinto is supporting the next generation of students pursuing mining careers at Montana Tech. The \$84,000 gift provides tuition assistance and opportunities to connect with professionals at Rio Tinto, pursue internships with the company, and visit the company’s mine sites. The first

recipients of the scholarship are Dozick Zablocki of Kittaning, Pennsylvania, and Grant Shedd, of Aptos, California. The pair met with Rio Tinto Kennecott Managing Director Nate Foster (Mining Engineering, '06) last November when Foster came to the Montana Tech campus to participate in awarding the scholarships. [Read more >>](#)





CONNECTING OREDIGGERS WITH OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

Nearly 87% of Montanans self-reported as outdoor recreation enthusiasts in a recent Headwaters Economics poll, and a new club on the Montana Tech campus is hoping to add to that tally, by minting new outdoors people who confidently hike, hunt, fish, and more on public lands.

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) is an organization that advocates for public land access in North America. Many BHA members are like Montana Tech's club president Gavin Rahl and vice president Johannes Chandler, who grew up enjoying the outdoors.

"I prefer to be outdoors, hiking or hunting," Rahl said. "It's where I find my most zen and peace." Chandler prefers fly fishing or antelope hunting. Both are passionate about helping Orediggers connect with the outdoors. [Read more >>](#)



OREDIGGERS STRENGTHEN MONTANA-TAIWAN RELATIONSHIP

Montana Tech students say they learned about culture, language, semiconductor technology, and international relations during a trip to Minghsin University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Taiwan over winter break.

The trip followed a November 2023 visit by Governor Greg Gianforte to MUST, which included a roundtable discussion on the importance of relationships and trade between Montana and Taiwan.

"Semiconductor machinery is our second largest export to Taiwan, totaling \$30 million in sales last year," Gianforte said. "Through Montana Tech's strategic partnership with Minghsin University of Science and Technology, we'll build a stronger Montana workforce, boost our semiconductor industry, and further strengthen our ties with Taiwan." [Read more >>](#)



ATHLETICS UPDATE



HISTORY MADE

The 2023-24 men's basketball team is the second team in school history to win three straight Frontier Conference Tournament titles after defeating Carroll College 93-77 in the championship game. This season was one for the record books. It is a first for a Tech basketball team winning three regular season and tournament titles in a row. The Orediggers are currently ranked No. 8 in the NAIA Coaches' Top 25, the highest ranking ever by a Tech basketball team. The Orediggers host the NAIA National Championship First and Second Round games starting Friday.



COACH OF THE YEAR

After winning their third straight regular season title and tournament championship, Head Coach Adam Hiatt received his second Frontier Conference Coach of the Year. Coach Hiatt led his squad to an impressive 15-1 conference record and the Orediggers are currently 26-4 as they prepare for the NAIA National Championship.



MEN'S HONORS

The men's team landed three first team all-conference, an honorable mention, and two player of the year honors this season. Hayden Diekhans was named the Defensive Player of the Year, selected to the Frontier All-Defensive Team, and named on the honorable mention all-conference roster. Camdyn LaRance was picked for the Sixth-Man of the Year. The first team selections were Caleb Bellach, Michael Ure, and Asa Williams.



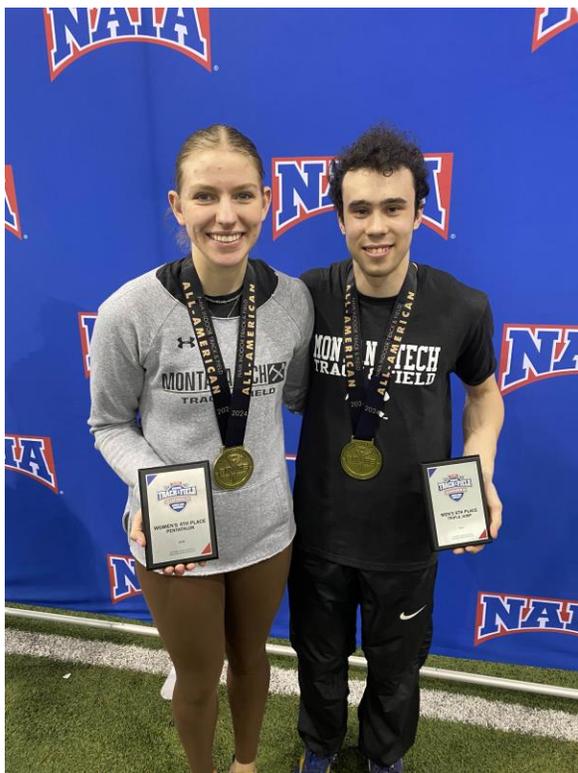
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEES IMPROVEMENT THIS SEASON

Second year head coach Jeff Graham's women's basketball team saw improvement this season. The Orediggers opened the Frontier Conference season with a 51-50 upset over then No. 12 Rocky Mountain College. The team went on to a 3-12 record in conference and an overall record of 12-17. The season ended in the first round of the Frontier Conference Tournament for the Montana Tech Orediggers with a loss to Montana Western 69-47.



RADEMACHER, WANGERIN NAMED HONORABLE MENTION

Aubrie Rademacher and Liv Wangerin were selected to the 2023-24 Frontier Conference honorable mention all-conference team. Rademacher is making her first appearance on the all-conference list. She led the team averaging 10.3 points per game while shooting 37.6% from the field and 76.2% from the free throw line. Wangerin had a breakout season averaging 25 minutes a game. Soda Rice was named the Champions of Character Award Recipient.



TRACK & FIELD IMPROVING IN NUMBERS AND QUALITY

The Montana Tech Oredigger men's and women's track and field teams continue to improve in numbers and quality. The number of Tech athletes hitting the NAIA highest standards more than doubled from last year's NAIA Indoor Track & Field National Championships in Brookings, South Dakota. Six women and five men competed against the top athletes in the NAIA at the Jackrabbit Athletic Complex from February 24-26. Junior Abby Clark earned All-American in the pentathlon for the second straight year finishing in fourth place. Clark won the long jump and placed fourth in the 800m run. Freshman Nicolo Lancini also earned All-American status in the triple jump. Lancini finished in eighth place with a mark of 14.82 meters.



Upcoming Events

- 3/14-15:** Board of Regents (Dillon)
- 3/15:** Men's Basketball vs Wayland Baptist (7:00 pm, HPER)
- 3/16:** NAIA 2nd Round Game (6:00 pm, HPER)
- 3/17:** St. Patrick's Day Parade
- 3/18-22:** Spring Break
- 3/21-23:** International Mining Competition
- 4/4:** Professional Development Lunch & Learn (11:30 am, Copper Lounge)
- 4/11-13:** [SPE Symposium](#)
- 4/12:** SINGO (6:00 pm, Knights of Columbus)
- 4/13:** Digger Auction
- 4/14-16:** Phages Symposium
- 4/15-17:** Accreditation visit

- 4/18:** Book Club: [Essentialism](#) - Discussing I and II (2:00 pm, Chancellor's Lounge)
4/19: Scholars Reception
4/23: Faculty/Staff Awards Ceremony (3:00-5:00 pm, Copper Lounge)
4/25: Techxpo (1:30-5:00 pm, HPER)



[Unsubscribe](#)

Montana Technological University Foundation
1300 W Park St Butte, MT 59701