



June 21, 2023

Greetings from Montana Technological University,

The 2022-23 academic year has been one of extraordinary accomplishments and success. I couldn't be happier with the incredible achievements of our faculty, staff, and students. In early fall, we celebrated 100 years of metallurgical and materials engineering and capped off the week by announcing a \$2 million gift from NUCOR. We signed a historic research agreement with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport in early November, and our Oredigger volleyball team won the Frontier Conference Championship.

The momentum continued into spring with the announcement of two Goldwater Scholars, men's basketball going to the round of eight in the NAIA National Tournament, and the donation of a transformational \$31 million gift from Ryan and Lisa Lance. The semester concluded with the legislature passing and the governor approving the largest state appropriation in the history of Montana Tech for \$43 million committed to capital projects, including a complete renovation of both Main and Engineering Halls.

These are some of the many good things happening at Montana Tech but do not include all of the research awards, recognition of faculty or our students and staff. There are hundreds of points of pride for our university, and many contribute to illuminating them.

It has been a year to remember at Montana Tech, and I hope you will join me in celebrating all of these moments along with reflecting on the excellent work we accomplish as a Montana Tech family. This is possible because of our faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and all those who contribute to the university. Our goal is to provide our students with a transformative experience grounded in science, technology, engineering, and math that prepares them to be leaders in

their careers and community while meeting the changing needs of society. What we do matters, and it's never been more critical than it is today.

Thank you for your support, for being part of our incredible year, and for celebrating and sharing the success of our university.

Warmly,

Les

Les P. Cook, Ed.D
Chancellor



Montana Tech received a **\$31 million gift from Ryan and Lisa Lance** recently. The transformative gift to the Montana Tech Foundation will benefit future students, educational programs, research, entrepreneurship, and is a pivotal investment in shaping tomorrow's energy workforce. A Great Falls, Montana native, Ryan earned a bachelor of science in petroleum engineering at Montana Technological University in 1984. Lance credits his success with starting literally from the ground up. Lance put himself through college by working on oil rigs in Wyoming.



Longtime Montana Tech champion and partner Nucor announced a [\\$2 million Endowed Distinguished Professorship](#) in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering. The announcement was made during the university's centennial anniversary events for its Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Department. The Centennial Event—Celebrating our Past and Securing our Future—included technical sessions, student poster sessions, workshops, and social events.



The Frontier Conference announced that Montana Tech is the winner of the 2022-23 Bandy Memorial All-Sports Trophy. The award is the fifth for the Orediggers and first since 1992-93.

The Bandy Memorial award is presented each year to the conference institution that has accumulated the most points based on its regular season league finish in football, men and women's basketball, men and women's cross country, women's volleyball, men and women's golf, and men and women's outdoor track & field.



The Orediggers have not had a competitive opportunity for the Bandy Award until the recent additions of cross country and track & field. Tech topped Carroll College for the top spot with the smallest margin of victory in the history of the award with 130 points to 129.8.

Montana Tech won regular season titles in men's basketball, volleyball, and men's and women's track & field. The recent track & field championships from last week sealed the Bandy for the Orediggers this year.

Rocky Mountain College finished third with 112 points followed by the University of Providence with 76.8 points, Montana Western, 72.5 points, MSU-Northern 68.3 points, College of Idaho 14.5 points, Southern Oregon seven points and Eastern Oregon with six points.

Tech finished third in football and both men's and women's cross country this fall. The men's and women's golf teams took second and the women's basketball team finished fifth.

Men's track & field earned their first conference championship this year and the women's team won their second straight with just two years as a program. The volleyball team won their third regular season title and first since 2019 under head coach Brian Solomon who just finished his 11th season. Men's basketball went back-to-back winning their second conference title in the last two years under seventh-year head coach Adam Hiatt. Last season's title broke a 19-year drought going back to the 1992-93 season for men's basketball.



Montana Tech and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport, entered into a [historic cooperative research and development agreement \(CRADA\)](#). The project builds from, and leverages, over ten years of research at Montana Tech in materials and manufacturing for defense applications, enabled through the support of U.S. Senator Jon Tester.



ATHLETICS YEAR IN REVIEW

Men's and women's cross country teams finished third at the conference championship and sent runners to the NAIA National Championships for the third straight year. Head football coach Kyle Samson wrapped up his second season at the helm with a 7-3 record.

Volleyball won the Frontier Conference regular season title and played in the NAIA National Tournament for the fourth time under head coach Brian Solomon.

Men's basketball had their best season in school history, winning their second straight Frontier Conference regular season and tournament title. The Orediggers reached the quarterfinals of the NAIA national championship. First-year head **women's basketball** coach Jeff Graham finished with a 7-19 record and just released his first recruiting class.

Men's and women's golf finished second at the Frontier Conference Championship, placing five student-athletes on the all-conference teams, including a Freshman of the Year.

The **men's and women's track & field** teams both won conference championships which was a second for the women and first for the men in just their second full year as a program.



2023 BARRY GOLDWATER SCHOLARS



Congratulations to undergraduate students Alyssa Plant and Koby Martin on receiving the [2023 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship](#). The award is the most prestigious undergraduate scholarship awarded in America's natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Four hundred thirteen college students from across the United

States were awarded the 2023-2024 Goldwater Scholarship. With the 2023 awards, the

number of scholarships awarded since 1989 by the Goldwater Foundation is at 10,283. Plant, a junior from Helena, Montana, majoring in Environmental Engineering. Her research is focused on the applications of drone-based imagery in water quality, aquatic species health, and mine waste reuse. After completing her degree programs, Alyssa plans to pursue a doctorate in Environmental Engineering. Martin, a junior majoring in Civil Engineering, is focused on developing sustainable building materials, particularly concrete, using widely available biomaterials. This research is aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of building practices worldwide.



LEGISLATIVE & LRBP UPDATE

During the recently ended 2023 session, the Montana legislature allocated a historic \$43 million to Montana Tech, primarily for capital projects. The largest portion of these funds (\$38M) will be used for the renovation of Main and Engineering Halls. Additionally, all full-time faculty/staff will receive a 4% pay increase this year as well as next July resulting in an 8% raise over the next two years. All faculty and staff will also receive a one-time bonus of \$1,040. Read more [here](#).



REVITALIZING CERA



Montana Tech is renewing its commitment to conduct environmental remediation, restoration, and reuse research with the reimagination of its [Center for Environmental Remediation and Assessment \(CERA\)](#). The Center focuses on research and education that develops sustainable and reliable waste management technologies that are innovative, scalable and effective, in support of communities, industry, and government. Dr. Robin Bullock, professor in the Environmental Engineering

Department at Montana Tech, has been appointed the interim Director of CERA on campus. Under Bullock's leadership, CERA will broaden its charge creating greater value around waste management, and beneficial reuse of waste materials and reclaimed lands. The collaborative research program focuses on physical and societal aspects of environmental impact and restoration/reuse. The linked research projects will evaluate opportunities for resilient, effective, and value-added remediation and restoration of impacted lands— thereby reducing the nation's protracted site clean-up and underutilization of remediated properties.



CRITICAL RESOURCE SUMMIT

The Critical Resource Summit was recently held across Montana with day three on the Montana Tech campus. The Summit was an active collaboration between academic, industry, and government partners focused on highlighting the United States' growing leadership in strategic competition across an interconnected set of critical resources essential for sustained global growth and security: water, food, energy, minerals, and human systems.



RANKINGS & ACCOLADES

Montana Tech researchers received **\$700,804** from the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science to investigate the recovery of valuable metals from waste slags generated by mining and metallurgical industries.

Dr. Hilary Smith Risser was honored with the 2022 Dean Preble Memorial Award by the Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) for her leadership in mathematics.

Montana Tech alumnus and retired international mining executive Arthur H. "Art" Ditto established a **\$1 million endowment** funding scholarships for students studying in fields that support the mining extraction industry.

Four Montana Tech students, **Brie Birkenbuel, Jenna Maroney, Sadiq Inuwa, and Allison Wasley**, were honored with national awards at the American Industrial Hygiene Association conference in Phoenix, AZ. The students received a combined scholarship amount of \$15,500.

The National Science Foundation awarded Montana Tech **\$1 million to purchase and maintain a multifunctional electron microscope** to significantly expand opportunities for research and discovery for the campus and the state of Montana.

The National Science Foundation awarded **\$4.5 million in collaborative grants** to Salish Kootenai College, the University of Montana, and Montana Tech to fund scholarships for high-achieving, low-income students pursuing STEM degrees.

Montana Governor Greg Gianforte appointed **Tamara Harp** to a three-year term on the Montana State Board of Radiologic Technologists.

Montana Tech raised over \$82,390 during **#GivingTuesday!** The university added \$10,300 to the Kasperick Emergency Fund, \$22,884 for the Tech Vision Student Aid Fund, \$10,200 to the Food Pantry, \$25,067 to the Butte Endowed Scholarship, and \$13,939 for programs, departments, and scholarships.

Alumni Nick and Kari Olds donated \$150,000 to enhance the **Olds Family Endowed Scholarship**. The scholarship supports students who graduate from a Montana high school pursuing a four-year degree and demonstrate financial need.

Montana Tech received a donation from Petroleum Experts for educational licenses for their geological and petroleum engineering software. The state-of-the-art software, valued at **\$6,564,992.43**, will be licensed exclusively for teaching, tutorials, and non-commercial research.

The Montana Society of Engineers awarded **Baylie Phillips** the 2023 Gold Medal Award.

Graduate student **Bailey Tasker** presented her graduate work developing a fall forecast model for snow geese migration at the 2022 North American Arctic Goose Conference.

Ph.D. student **Amirhosein Riahi** placed second in the graduate poster presentation competition at the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration annual conference.

Montana Campus Compact named undergraduate student Nicholas Verlanic as the **2023 George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship recipient**.

Montana Tech awarded the first-ever **Early Impact Alumni Awards** to Johanna Ostrum, Chief Operating Officer at Transitional Energy, and Micaul Querciagrossa, a Family Medicine Physician Assistant at Intermountain Health.

Montana Tech experienced phenomenal growth during this academic year with employer attendance at career fairs. Both fall and spring fairs were **record-breaking**, with 31% growth for fall and a 34% increase in employers attending to meet Montana Tech students! The 2023 spring fair was the largest the university has hosted since its creation in 2009.

The Institute for Educational Opportunities received the **Montana College Attainment Network (MCAN) Champion of College Attainment Award** because of their unwavering support of not only students in K-12 education and those in college but also for their ongoing support and dedication to other professionals across the state including K-12 and post-secondary educators, nonprofits, and student support service providers.

Four Montana Tech alums, Elizabeth Erickson, Mike McGivern, Dan Manson, and Kristen Manson, were recognized as **Distinguished Alumni** during Homecoming Week.

Montana Tech alumnus and retired international mining executive Dan Rovig received the **Chancellor's Award of Distinction**.

Dr. Chris Danielson was selected for a Fulbright award to Hungary during the academic year 2023-2024. The presidentially appointed 12-member board supervises the Fulbright Program worldwide and approves the selection of all Fulbright recipients.

The Next Frontier Advanced Manufacturing Institute (NFAMI) and Highlands College are partnering to bring the **Operation Next** program to Montana, providing students a hybrid program with in-class training and virtual learning.

The Wall Street Journal has named Montana Tech **#7 on its 2023 list of Top 20 Public Colleges for Engineering Salaries**. The rankings consider the salary data of graduates over their first ten years in the workforce following commencement.

RegisteredNursing.org ranked the Sherry Lesar School of Nursing as **Montana's #1 nursing program** in the 2023 Top Ranked Nursing Schools listing.

The December graduates of the **Sherry Lesar School of Nursing** received a 92.31% pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam.

Montana Tech students competed in the **Environmental Challenge** at the 60th annual Pacific Northwest International Section (PNWIS) conference of the Air & Waste Management Association. Montana Tech's team of Grace Mulholland, Jessica Harmon, Ravyn Goodwin, Mayah Lemke, and Benjamin Schreiber took first place. Montana Tech also took home third and fourth places. The teams included Kara Nye, Matthew Ingersol, Gavin Rahl, Nevada Strandberg, Bridget Lee, Raychel Hoerner, Johannes Chandler, and Daniel Leas. In a

separate competition, three undergraduate students and two graduate students gave technical presentations on research projects they had underway. Graduate student James (Mathew) Fronk received first place for best paper. Undergraduate students Ben Schreiber and Gavin Rahl took second and third place for their presentations.

Three teams competed in the **2023 Associated Schools of Construction (ASC)** Region 6/7 annual Construction Bidding Competition in Sparks, Nevada. The university's Heavy Civil team placed 3rd in the competition.

Two teams participated in the **45th International Collegiate Mining Competition** in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. The Orediggers placed second and ninth in the competition out of 15 men's teams. Montana Tech also brought home first place in hand steel and jackleg drilling.

Karen VanDaveer was named the inaugural recipient of the Margie Thompson Distinguished Woman in Business Award at the Butte Chamber of Commerce's 2023 annual dinner.

The **American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Club** competed in the Pacific Northwest ASCE Student Symposium at Montana State University. The Montana Tech team brought home top honors for the timber-strong design-build competition and its Building Information Modeling (BIM) model and 3rd place in concrete canoe for the women's sprint and 3rd in surveying.

Montana Tech's Department of Business sent five students to the **SAP ERPsim International Competition** after snagging one of three spots available through the North American qualifier. The team took home third place amongst 26 teams and more than 100 students from the U.S. and Canada.

The **NASA Robotic Mining Club** brought home numerous awards from the NASA Lunabotics Competition at the University of Alabama. The Orediggers mined 0.35 kg of the regolith, just missing qualifying for the On-site Mining award. The team mined the third-highest regolith behind Iowa State University and the University of Alabama. Montana Tech took home a \$500 prize for fourth place in Autonomy and were also awarded the Smallest Robot award and honorable mentions in Innovation and On-Site Mining.

Janet Richards Coe, MSN, RN, CHSE received the Butte Local Development Corporation's 2023 Educator of the Year Award this spring.

FedEx Freight donated a single-axle tractor and a 28-foot trailer to Highlands College's Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program. This industry partnership will strengthen our students' knowledge and skills while complementing our commitment to providing a stable workforce.

