



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

Northern Network News

The Official Newsletter of MSU-Northern - April 11, 2025

Three Students Attend First Generation Conference



Gaylene Jones, Lisa LaTray-Bigby, and Emily Matamoros represented Montana State University-Northern at the 5th Annual First-Generation Student Career and Leadership Conference April 4th -6th in Miami, Florida. They are bachelor degree seeking students, members of Student Support Services, and majoring in Education, Liberal Studies, and Criminal Justice.

The 2025 First Generation Student Career Leadership Experience was created to provide First Generation Students with a career leadership experience that is specifically geared towards helping these students position themselves for career leadership success in college and beyond!

First Generation Students from across the country networked with other First-Generation Students, they heard from dynamic guest speakers who were First-Generation Students, and learned from highly successful First-Generation Professionals from top tier organizations who have thrived and succeeded within their careers as First-Generation Professionals.

Every program throughout the conference was specifically designed to meet the career awareness, readiness, and development needs of First-Generation Students in an engaging, fresh, inspirational, and fun way. Lisa La-Tray-Bigby was also the recipient of a scholarship.

Students Participated in All N Day Events



On Tuesday, April 1st, MSU-Northern hosted its annual All N Day, bringing together students, faculty, and community members for a fun-filled day of academic support, exciting demonstrations, spirited competitions, automotive showcases, and delicious food.

The day began with Academic Advising sessions in the SUB Ballroom, where students registered for upcoming Summer and Fall classes and received helpful guidance for their academic planning.

In the afternoon, energy levels rose with the ASMSUN IOC Hot Dog Eating Contest, where Philip Haynes emerged as the winner. Immediately following was registration for the MSUN Car Show at the SUB entrance.

The day concluded with a vibrant car show in the SUB parking lot, featuring more than a dozen vehicles ranging from classic to modern models, offering a visual celebration of automotive culture.



Chris Faber Selected as 2025 Commencement Speaker



MSU-Northern is pleased to announce Chris Faber has been chosen as the commencement speaker for MSU-Northern's 2025 graduation ceremony that will take place on May 10th in the Armory Gymnasium. Chris Faber was born and raised on the family ranch twenty-five miles southeast of Big Sandy, Montana. Chris attended public schools in Big Sandy and graduated from Big Sandy High School in 1985. Chris was a two-time State Wrestling Champion and two-time All-State Football Player.

Chris attended North Idaho College and then Northern Montana College, graduating with a Business Degree in 1992. He also received the Northern Excellence Award in 1992.

Chris was a three-time All-American Wrestler in 1990, 1991, and 1992. He was also a Captain of the 1991 and 1992 Northern Championship Wrestling Teams. Chris was a team member of the 1990 USA Wrestling Team, competing in the U.S.S.R. (Russia) and Finland. Chris was inducted into the 2004 MSU Northern Hall of Fame as a wrestler and, later, the 2022 MSU Northern Hall of Fame as a member of the 1991 and 1992 Northern Wrestling National Champions.

Chris is married to Janna Dritshulas Faber who is a 1994 graduate of Northern Montana College. They reside in Havre, Montana, where they raised two children, Jonathan and Sarah. They continue their support of Montana State University-Northern. Chris still operates the Faber Ranch and also owns the Pinwheel J Ranch and Montana Outfitting Company.

Spring Fling Raises Funds for Student Athletes



On Friday, April 4th, the Northern Lights Athletic Scholarship Foundation (NLASF) hosted the 20th annual Spring Fling dinner and auction in the Armory Gymnasium. One of the highlights of the evening was Coach Chris Mouat being presented with his 20-year maroon jacket (congratulations Coach).

NLASF hosts the event every year to raise money for MSU-Northern's athletics program. Student athletes worked the game stations, tended to tables, and others escorted attendees to their tables. All student athletes and coaches played a big part in this fundraiser. This year's "Shining Light" awards were presented to an outstanding player from each team. The recipients were:

- Oskar Pula – Men’s Basketball Team
- Shyan Krass – Women’s Basketball Team
- Jessalyn Chvilicek – Volleyball Team
- Devin Crawford – Wrestling Team
- Cannan Smith – Football Team

Professor Receives the Japan Studies Institute Fellowship



Dr. Barbara Zuck, Professor of Business, was selected as a recipient of the Japan Studies Institute (JSI) Fellowship on behalf of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Nippon Foundation. The Japan Studies Institute (JSI) is a unique multidisciplinary program designed to equip educators with tools and knowledge to incorporate Japanese studies into course curriculum and inspire student learning about Japan and global awareness. The program is guided by faculty experts in historical and contemporary Japanese subjects. Zuck is headed to San Diego State University in June

for immersive learning and collaboration.

MSU-Northern Students Excel at Montana SkillsUSA Competition



MSU-Northern proudly sent ten students to compete at the 2025 Montana SkillsUSA competition, held at the Pacific Steel and Recycling building at the Great Falls Fairgrounds. The university's SkillsUSA club, led by President Jordan Ketcham and advised by Dr. Jack Bieger (Criminal Justice) and Jason Geer (Photography), represented Northern with distinction, bringing home numerous medals in both individual and team events. The following students earned several top honors across a range of categories:

- Jordan Ketcham – Bronze, Photography
- Max Morrey – Silver, Power Equipment
- Shelton Sterling – Gold, Automotive Service Technology
- Tithen Fitzgerald – Gold, Technical Drafting; Silver, Job Interview
- Carter Marquardt – Gold, Power Equipment

Additionally, MSU-Northern's Quiz Bowl team secured Gold in the team event. Team members included Max Morrey, Shelton Sterling, Hunter Velk, Tithen Fitzgerald, Loren Lane, Carter Marquardt, and Braxton Berg.

The competition featured participants from MSU-Northern, MSU Billings, and Gallatin College, alongside close to 30 Montana high schools. The club's impressive performance is a testament to the dedication and talent of Northern's students and faculty.

Softball Showdown: Plumbers vs. Electricians Ends in a Tie Series



This year marked the 4th annual softball showdown between MSU-Northern's Plumbing and Electrical programs. Heading into the game, the series stood at 1–2, with the Plumbers looking to even the score.

Tuesday's game (April 8th) was a back-and-forth battle from the first pitch. In the end, the Plumbers came out on top with an 11–6 victory. The game was

moved up from the traditional All N Day slot due to weather concerns—which, ironically, turned out better than expected yesterday. With the win, the all-time series is now tied 2–2.

Dr. Jaime Duke Leads Life-Saving CPR Training for Boys & Girls Club Staff



Last night, April 10th, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Dr. Jaime Duke and Jennifer Pula, taught the American Heart Association “First Aid, CPR & AED” course for staff members of the Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line. This course equips the staff with the essential life-saving skills need to care for the children attending the club. The hands-on class covered critical techniques such as first aid, adult, child and infant CPR, how to respond to choking emergencies, and the proper use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

The training emphasized the importance of quick response times during cardiac emergencies and the crucial role CPR can play in saving lives before emergency medical services arrive.

Dr. Duke and Assistant Professor Pula stressed how vital it is for individuals who work with children and the public to be confident and prepared in emergency situations. The Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line staff left the session better prepared to protect the health and safety of the youth they serve every day.

Students Led Staff Appreciation Celebration



On March 28th, MSU-Northern business students led an event to appreciate and honor the Havre-Hill County Library Staff. The students interviewed each staff member to learn about their roles and responsibilities within the library, gaining insight into the dedication and effort required to serve the community.

The event's theme was 'Favorite Things'. It featured each student giving a presentation about a staff member, sharing insights into their unique roles, daily responsibilities, and their favorite things about working at the library. Kerrie Melle, a part time worker at the library told students, "My favorite thing about working here is the staff. They are my second family". These presentations showcased the dedication of the library staff and highlighted how their efforts contribute to lifelong learning and community enrichment.

Mary Stevens played "My Favorite Things" on the piano by Sound of Music. Friends of the Library brought homemade cookies for the event. Pictured left to right: Barbara Zuck, Bonnie Williamson, Aiden Perkins, Ashton Grover, Allison Powell, Rylin Burns, Brant Seewald, Becky Melcher, second row: Jordan Sherman, Kerrie Melle, Ashley Martin, Megan Cartwright.

Dr. Kyra Kaercher Presented Ceramic Research at OTLE Brown Bag Lecture



On Wednesday, April 2nd, Dr. Kyra Kaercher presented her talk, “*Qach Rresh: A Neo-Assyrian (950–600 BCE) Site Full of Post-Assyrian (600–323 BCE) Trash on the Erbil Plain,*” as part of the Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence’s 4th annual Spring Brown Bag Lecture Series.

Dr. Kaercher shared recent findings from the rural site of Qach Rresh, located just 15 kilometers south of modern-day Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. She presented Nate Welch's (MSUN graduate CASE '24) role on the geophysics team, their new findings, the significance of the site, and her research into the ceramics and clays of the region.

Science Saturday Explored the Wonders of Astronomy

On April 4th –5th, local educators gathered for *Science Saturday II: Astronomy*, part of the ongoing “Science Saturday” series designed to support STEM education for grades 5–12 across the Hi-Line.

Hosted at no cost to participants, the session offered 5 hours of Professional Development Units and gave teachers hands-on tools to enhance their science curriculum. Attendees likely explored foundational astronomy topics such as the structure of the solar system, phases of the moon, planetary motion, and how light and telescopes help us understand distant stars and galaxies.

Student Spotlight: Sophia Fliegel

For Sophia Fliegel, finding the right path in higher education was not a straight line, but rather a process of discovery and determination. Originally from North Bend, Washington, Sophia began her college career at Montana State University in Bozeman. However, she quickly realized that it wasn't the right fit. Seeking a more hands-on learning experience, she made the decision to transfer to MSU-Northern, drawn by its renowned welding program.



Welding had already been a part of Sophia's life before college. During her senior year of high school, she took an introductory welding class and excelled so quickly that she bypassed the next level, jumping straight into the advanced course. Her natural talent and enthusiasm for the trade made it clear that welding was more than just a class—it was a career path she wanted to pursue.

Since transferring to Northern, Sophia has found herself immersed in a learning environment that continuously challenges and excites her. Unlike other programs she had considered, Northern's welding curriculum offered a depth of knowledge and practical experience that she hadn't encountered before. Even with her advanced high school training, she found herself learning new techniques, such as switching out welding wire and mastering various cutting and brazing methods.

Sophia is also enrolled in a machining class, an additional skill set that she hopes will open more doors in the fabrication industry. Her goal is to land a job in fabrication, but she is keeping an open mind and is eager to gain as much experience as possible in different aspects of the welding field.

Beyond the technical skills, what Sophia enjoys most about welding is the camaraderie in the shop. She describes the environment as welcoming and supportive, where teamwork and humor go hand in hand with hard work. Being one of the few women in the program has never made her feel out of place—rather, she feels like she has a group of big brothers always ready to lend a hand.

When she graduates, Sophia will leave Northern with both her welding qualifications and an associate degree, well-prepared to enter the workforce. Whether in fabrication or another welding-related field, she is ready to take on whatever opportunities come her way. With her passion, skill, and determination, the future looks bright for Sophia Fliegel as she continues forging her own path in the welding industry.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Enhancing Health & Wellbeing at Northern

By Dr. Tiffany Vickers



Rural Health Matters: How COHS is Making a Difference

Access to quality healthcare remains a challenge across rural America and right here on Montana's Hi-Line, the need is especially urgent. At MSU-Northern's College of Health Sciences (CoHS), we recognize this challenge and are acting. This fall, we are launching a new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program to increase the number of qualified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) serving Hill County and surrounding communities.

Why EMTs Matter on the Hi-Line

In rural communities, EMTs are often the first and sometimes only line of emergency care. From stabilizing patients on-site to transporting them safely to care facilities, their role is vital. According to the Montana EMS Annual Report 2023, ground ambulance services responded to over 132,000 calls in 2022, and total EMS requests exceeded 150,000, including more than 8,000 involving children.

COHS's EMS Program: Meeting the Need

The EMS program at CoHS provides hands-on training designed for the unique demands of rural emergency response. It is approved by the Montana Board of Medical Examiners and meets all requirements set by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), making students eligible for certification and licensure upon completion.

Click here to Learn more or apply...

<https://www.msun.edu/academics/chs/nursing/emt.aspx>

Closing the Workforce Gap

Montana's Healthcare Workforce Strategic Plan outlines the need to strengthen the EMS workforce through:

- **Expanded education and training**, especially through regional and distance learning
- **Public awareness efforts** that highlight the value of EMS in rural communities
- **Workforce support** to improve recruitment and retention of EMS professionals

These strategies, supported by the Montana Office of Rural Health and AHEC, are key to addressing rural healthcare disparities.

Job Demand and Career Outlook

There is strong demand for EMTs across Montana. As of March 2025:

- Average EMT wage: \$18.73/hour
- Salary range: \$32,100–\$40,550/year
- Career advancement: Paramedics earn a median of \$53,180/year

Sources: ZipRecruiter, Salary.com, BLS.gov

Looking Ahead

Thank you to our students, faculty, and community partners who continue to support this important work. Together, we are shaping a stronger, more resilient future for healthcare in rural Montana.

Stronger Together!

Tiffany

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

University Day – April 18

No Classes / Offices Open

UPCOMING EVENTS

Student Scholarship Awards Ceremony – Today

Join us this morning at 10 am in the SUB Ballroom for the Scholarship Awards Ceremony. All are invited to celebrate with our scholarship recipients. Students in attendance who are receiving a scholarship will be entered into 6 - \$50 gift card drawings and a chance to win a \$500 We Love Northern Scholarship! The scholarship drawing will be at the end of ceremony and students must be present to win. Refreshments will be provided. Including oatmeal raisin cookies and fruit. Don't miss this special event!

48th Annual Sweetgrass Society Powwow – April 11&12

The Powwow will be held on April 11th and 12th with a grand entry at 6 PM on the 12th, and two grand entries on the 12th – 1 pm and 6 pm. The event is held in the Armory Gym and is free to attend. Each year, to celebrate Native American culture, dance, and music, the Sweetgrass Society hosts a powwow in the Armory Gymnasium at MSUN. This event is student-led, student-organized, and community-supported. Throughout the year, SGS members

work hard to raise funds for this celebratory competition, which is free and open to the public.

MSUN Student Art Show – April 14-25

Join us for the Opening Night Reception of the 2025 Student Art Show in the Vande Bogart Library at 6 PM. In addition to MSUN Student work, this show will feature work from several high school located on the Hi-Line. Including Havre High, Box Elder High and Chinook High. This event is open to all! Good and refreshments will be served. The MSUN Student Art show will be on display April 14-25.

MSU-Northern Retirement Reception – April 22

On Tuesday, April 22nd in the SUB Ballroom we will gather to honor the many years of hard work and dedication to MSU-Northern by Mary Brown (15 years) and Trygve “Spike” Magelssen (19 years) - Congratulations! You make Northern Proud. Enjoy your retirement!

CAPTURE THE BEAST SCAVENGER HUNT – April 30

6:30 pm Gather your team (max 5 students) & Check-In @ SUB Front Desk
7:00 pm “Capture the Beast” Campus Scavenger Hunt begins...
8:00 pm All teams report back to SUB & upload photos/videos
8-10 pm BEARPAW BEAST AFTER PARTY & AWARDS, SUB Lights Lounge

Team members w/ the most points win \$50 Havre Chamber of Commerce gift certificates

Team members w/ the best costumes win \$50 Havre Chamber of Commerce gift certificates

Idle Assets to Active Learning: Revitalizing Campus Resources for Student Engagement - Wednesday, April 23rd

In this Brownbag Lecture, Aaron Riggin will share some of the ways he has retrofitted, updated and revitalized campus equipment to expand and enhance student learning and engagement.

2025 Founders' Excellence Awards – April 25



The MSU-Northern Alumni Foundation is proud to announce the recipients of the 2025 Founders' Excellence Awards: Don Holst, T. Wayne Koepke & Renelle Braaten, and a posthumous awards for Arnold & Joy Hokanson.

The Founders' Excellence Award recognizes individuals whose professional achievements, loyalty, and service have greatly contributed to the advancement of Montana State University–Northern.

Recipients will be honored at a special celebration on Friday, April 25 at the MSU-N Student Union Building. Cocktail hour begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. For tickets or event information, please call 406.265.3711 or email alumni@msun.edu.

[Read more...](#)

Science Saturday Series - May 3

The "Science Saturday" series provides teachers of grades 5-12 with tools to grow STEM opportunities in classrooms across the Hi Line. Participants can earn 5 hours of Professional Development Units each Saturday. This series is offered at no cost to participants.

Science Saturday III: Medicinal Plants of Montana May 3, 2025: 10am 4pm

[Click Here for more information...](#)

Nurses Pinning – May 9

Plan to attend the annual Nurses Pinning at the Prairie Farms on May 9.

Advising and Registration

SOAR (Student Outreach Advising & Registration)

- Sessions will be broken down between virtual and in-person events
- Virtual sessions will have the option of zoom or over-the-phone if zoom is not an option
- Information about all of our support services will be sent to each student that attends virtual (hopefully in the form of short video clips)
- Going forward – SOAR, Housing, & Orientation dates will be selected and open in the fall for students to register for the events

Virtual Session Dates

- Friday, May 16, 2025
- Friday, June 27, 2025
- Friday, July 25, 2025
- Friday, August 1, 2025

In-person Dates

- Friday, April 25, 2025
 - Friday, June 13, 2025
 - Friday, July 11, 2025
 - Monday, August 18, 2025 (During Navigate Northern Orientation)
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NEXT WEEK

Friday, April 11

- MSUN Rodeo @ MSU Bozeman
- Registration for Fall Semester 2025 Begins -Freshmen
- 48th Annual Sweetgrass Society Powwow 6:00 PM

Saturday, April 12

- MSUN Rodeo @ MSU Bozeman
- 48th Annual Sweetgrass Society Powwow - 1:00 PM

Sunday, April 13

- MSUN Rodeo @ MSU Bozeman

Monday, April 14

- Eco-Innovators: Reduce Reuse, Re-Invent Workshop 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- MSUN Student Art Show (Opening Night) - 6 PM Vande Bogart Library

Wednesday, April 16

- Eco-Innovators: Reduce Reuse, Re-Invent Contest - 2 Weeks Remaining

Friday, April 18

- MSUN Rodeo
- University Day (no classes, offices OPEN)

Saturday, April 19

- MSUN Rodeo

MSU-NORTHERN

TidBit

By: William J. Lanier

(#434) Northern Alumni Julie Morelli

Recently Northern Alum Julie Morelli was named Island Mountain Development Group's (IMDG) 2024 Employee of the year. Julie is a Call Center Representative at the Havre Office. Julie Morelli received two Associate of Science Degrees and a Bachelor of Technology Degree from Northern. Following her graduation from Northern she

worked at MSU-Northern for 13 years. Julie has worked at IMDG for the past three years. Congratulations Julie Morelli!

If there is anything that you would like me to highlight, please let me know by e-mailing me at wjlanier1963@yahoo.com Thank you.

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