



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN

Northern Network News

The Official Newsletter of MSU-Northern - October 24, 2025

Faculty Honored for Tenure and Promotions



Provost Dr. Jennifer Brown hosted a dinner at the Chancellor's house on Tuesday, October 14, to recognize seven MSU-Northern faculty members for achieving tenure or promotion.

Earning tenure marks a significant milestone in an educator's career, signifying a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service. Tenured faculty can only be dismissed for justifiable cause or under exceptional circumstances, such as program closures or financial hardship.

Those honored at the celebration included:

- Anna Bowker – Tenure
- Dr. Chad Spangler – Promoted to Professor
- Grant Bowker – Promoted to Associate Professor
- Dr. Jaime Duke – Tenure
- Dr. Joseph Todd – Promoted to Professor
- Josh Meyer – Promoted to Professor

- Dr. Valerie Guyant – Promoted to Professor

The evening celebrated their dedication to MSU-Northern's mission and their continued impact on students and the university community. Congratulations, you make Northern proud.

Chi Alpha Students Gather for Statewide Fall Retreat



About 140 Chi Alpha students from across Montana came together for this year's Fall Retreat at Glacier Bible Camp in Hungry Horse. The weekend featured hiking, worship, and messages from guest speaker Scott Barnett, former State Director of Chi Alpha. MSU-Northern's Chi Alpha chapter was well represented, with 16 students attending.

Glacier Bible Camp, located on 49 timbered acres along the scenic Flathead River and near Glacier National Park, provided a perfect mix of rustic charm and modern comfort for the retreat experience.

The Harvest Heads to New York – Born and Raised on the Hi-Line



The Montana Actors Theatre (MAT) is making history this fall with *The Harvest*, the first locally written and produced MAT play to be performed in New York City. Written and directed by Jay Pyette, the production is currently running in Havre October 22–25 before heading to New York in November. ([Click here for Tickets](#))

Dr. Grant Olson, MSU-Northern faculty member and MAT Artistic Director, says the show reflects the deep roots between MAT, Northern, and the Hi-Line community. “Every one of us in this show has called Havre home,” Olson said. “It’s truly a community production that grew out of Northern.”

Four Northern alumni star in *The Harvest*, along with other actors who have studied or plan to study at MSU-Northern. MSU-Northern is developing a new Community Arts Production degree, designed to prepare students for the hands-on, collaborative world of community theater.

“This project shows what’s possible when education, art, and community come together,” Olson said. “It’s an opportunity to celebrate what Northern and Havre have built—and share it on a national stage.”

[Read more...](#)

Lights Take on Legends in Annual Wrestling Alumni Dual



Past met present on October 18 as MSU-Northern hosted its annual Lights vs. Alumni Wrestling Dual, one of the most respected and anticipated traditions on campus. Each year, just weeks before the regular season begins, Northern fans pack the gym to watch current wrestlers test their skills against some of the program's legendary alumni. The dual is always fast-paced, competitive, and full of Northern pride, giving fans a first glimpse of the new season while celebrating the lasting legacy of Lights wrestling.

25th Annual Pheasant Jamboree



The Northern Lights Athletic Scholarship Foundation (NLASF) celebrated a milestone this year with the 25th Annual Pheasant Jamboree, held October 10–12. The event brought together 17 teams, 10 Legends, and nearly 190 participants for a weekend of competition and camaraderie. Friday featured a

lively trap shoot with 14 teams and help from the student-athletes, followed by dinner and a spirited live auction. In honor of the anniversary, a live band performed on Saturday night for participants. The weekend continued with two full days of hunting and concluded Sunday evening with an awards dinner honoring the participants and supporters who make this long-standing Northern tradition such a success. The overall winning team was Diesel Doctor/Double R Inc. The 25th anniversary event not only stood as the largest fall fundraiser in NLASF history, but it also marked a milestone achievement - surpassing \$3 million raised in support of student-athletes over the past 25 years. Photo of Pheasant Banquet.

New High-Volume Copier Installed in Library Copy Center



The Copy Center in the Vande Bogart Library has a new Sharp MX-7081 high-volume color copier, replacing a 10-year-old unit. The new copier delivers faster, higher-quality printing at 70 color pages per minute and scanning at up to 240 images per minute. While using advanced color consistency and 1,200 dpi resolution. It features cloud connectivity, voice control via Amazon Alexa, and enhanced data security. With an 8,500-sheet capacity and robust paper handling, the new system provides commercial-grade performance to meet campus printing needs efficiently and reliably.

[Click here for more information on the Copy Center:](#)

Northern Students and Faculty Attend Statewide Undergraduate Research Retreat



Two MSU-Northern students—Jalia Haley-Giard and Ashlyn Schmidt—joined faculty and staff members Kyra Kaercher and Robin Parks at the first annual Montana University System Undergraduate Research Student Leadership Retreat, held October 10–11 at Birch Creek Center near Dillon.

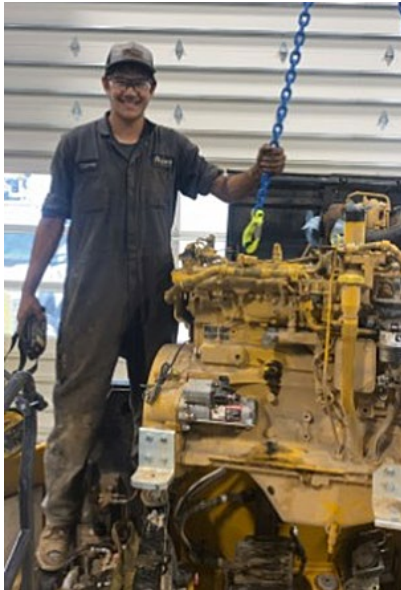
The retreat brought together about 40 students, faculty, and staff from nine campuses to share ideas and strengthen undergraduate research across Montana. Hosted by UM- Western and MSU, and supported by Montana INBRE, sessions explored community engagement, ethics in research, and graduate school preparation.

Northern's team will meet with faculty in the coming weeks to apply what they learned and develop ways to expand undergraduate research opportunities on campus.

Photo credit: Anna Tuttle, MSU Director of Undergraduate Research.

[Read more...](#)

Student Spotlight – Dante Otsuka



When Dante Otsuka first searched online for diesel programs with a four-year degree, one school stood out: Montana State University-Northern. Originally from Walnut Creek, California, Dante packed his bags and headed north, eager to work with his hands and start a new chapter away from home.

“I did almost no research before coming here,” he said with a laugh. “All I knew was Northern had a diesel program and I wanted to learn how to fix trucks.”

That decision proved to be the right one. Now a junior majoring in Diesel Technology Field Maintenance, Dante says his experience at Northern has far exceeded expectations. He credits the program’s hands-on approach and

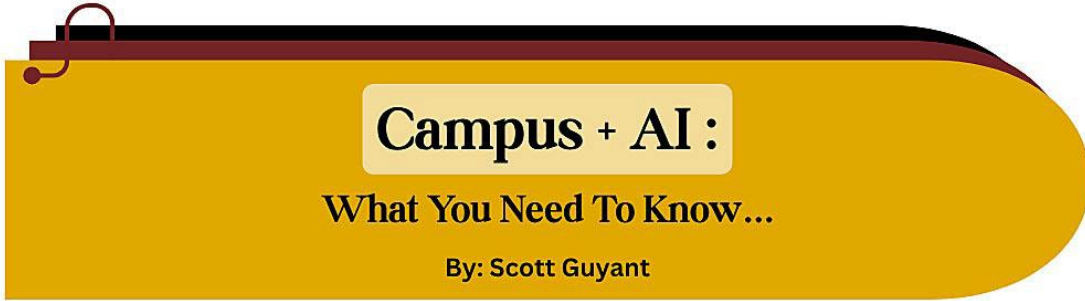
small class sizes for helping him grow from a student with little experience to a confident, skilled mechanic.

Through classes like Advanced Fuel Systems and live work around Havre, Dante has gained real-world experience diagnosing and repairing heavy equipment, including a Komatsu dozer at the fairgrounds and a city school bus. He’s also spent his summers interning with RDO Equipment, where he’s worked his way from the parts department to performing complex repairs like replacing engines, transmissions, and welding excavator components. “Northern really builds your skills step by step,” Dante said. “Now I can diagnose just about any issue on a machine.”

Outside the classroom, Dante is an active member of the Postsecondary Agricultural Students (PAS) Club, where he’s helped local farmers and ranchers, cut firewood for fundraisers, and gained a deep appreciation for Montana’s rural lifestyle. He also volunteers at the Bear Paw Ski Hill, maintaining the chair lift and clearing runs before ski season.

Looking ahead, Dante plans to continue working for RDO Equipment as a logging mechanic after graduating in May 2026. His goal is to run his own service truck and serve as a professional role model for future mechanics.

“Northern is unique,” he said. “It’s a small, tight-knit community where you get to know your classmates, professors, and even the locals. I’m really glad I chose to come here — I don’t think I’d have had these same experiences anywhere else.”



Campus + AI :

What You Need To Know...

By: Scott Guyant

AI, IRL: Campus Edition

By Scott Guyant — assisted by ChatGPT

Walk across Northern and you're already using AI—often without noticing. Google Maps predicts your ETA around Havre; Siri, Alexa, and Gemini answer quick questions; streaming apps queue up your next playlist; and social platforms sort what you see.

Even campus systems—like the new key-fob access—may flag unusual swipe patterns to keep buildings safe. In study spaces and classrooms, AI shows up as grammar and style suggestions in Grammarly, paraphrasing and citation help in QuillBot, and note-organizing support in Google NotebookLM. Library catalogs and some databases now have AI embedded in them to recommend related articles, quietly bringing forward resources that match your topic.

If you do turn to chatbots, pick the right tool for the job. ChatGPT is the “jack of all trades” for brainstorming, outlining, plain-language explanations, email drafts, quizzing, and practice problems. Claude (Anthropic) shines with long readings—paste big chunks or upload documents to get summaries, side-by-side comparisons, and gentle, step-by-step explanations (great for lit reviews and unit plans). Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini are productivity specialists: Copilot works inside Word, PowerPoint, and OneNote to draft slides or reorganize documents; Gemini pairs naturally with Docs and Slides to structure decks, rewrite for clarity, or suggest visuals and talking points. For research-style questions, Perplexity acts like an “answer engine,” returning concise responses with source links—handy for scoping a topic (but always click through and evaluate the sources yourself).

There are some smart ways to use these tools in courses or teaching:
Process help: “Create a search strategy and list keywords for this research question.”

Structure: outlines, study guides, and rubrics.

Translation: turn dense text into bullet points, flowcharts, or plain language.

In writing, always ask the model/AI to *explain* its suggestions (don't just accept rewrites) and also revise it into your own voice with proper citations. In STEM or data-heavy classes, have AI generate examples or pseudocode—then verify the math or code yourself.

Treat AI outputs as starting points, not finish lines: verify facts, click sources, and cite both original materials and the AI you used.

Avoid sharing sensitive student information or proprietary content, and follow your instructor's syllabus rules. **If you're unsure whether AI is allowed on an assignment, ask first and document how you used it.**

AI isn't replacing learning—it's becoming part of everyday academic life at Northern and campuses nationwide. Recent surveys suggest that a large majority of students have tried generative AI for coursework in the past year; what matters is *how* we use it: thoughtfully, ethically, and with academic integrity. Used **well**, these tools save time, spark ideas, and make complex material more approachable—for students, faculty, and staff alike.

Further reading:

- Freeman, J. (2025). *Student Generative AI Survey 2025* (HEPI Policy Note 61). Higher Education Policy Institute. <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/>
- Contractor, Z., & Reyes, G. (2025). Generative AI in higher education: Evidence from an elite college. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2508.00717>
- Flaherty, C. (2025, August 29). *Survey: College Students' Views on AI*. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/academics/2025/08/29/survey-college-students-views-ai>

Watch for more AI tidbits from Scott Guyant with the help of ChatGPT every other week. Have a topic you want us to cover? Reach out and email me: scott.guyant@msun.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAT Announces 2025 Season

Montana Actors Theatre unveiled an exciting lineup for their 2025 season during their annual fall fundraiser:

- The Harvest – Oct. 22–27 (Havre), Nov. 3–23 (New York)
- The Rocky Horror Picture Show Shadow Cast – Oct. 31 & Nov. 1
- Hill Country Christmas Variety Show – Dec. 5–6, 11–13, & 18–20
- Laurel Canyon Tribute Concert – Feb. 6–7 & 13–14
- Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery – Touring March & April
- The Government Inspector – Apr. 10–11, 16–18, & 23–25
- The Hunchback of Notre Dame – May 14–16 & 21–23
- A Comedy of Errors – June 19–21 (Ren Faire)

[Click here for tickets...](#)

The Harvest – Oct. 22-27

Written and Directed by Jason Pyette

October 22-27 Havre, November 3-23 New York

The Harvest tells the story of a Montana farm family coming to grips with a changing world. Six adult children face the reality of aging parents, the grim economics of a small family wheat farm, and the conflict of their own personalities and histories as they return home to help cut the crop.

NEXT WEEK

Friday, October 24

- MSUN Cross Country @ Glendive Open
- Lights Wrestling @ North Idaho College - 7:00 PM
- Skylights Volleyball vs Bismarck State College - 7:00 PM

Saturday, October 25

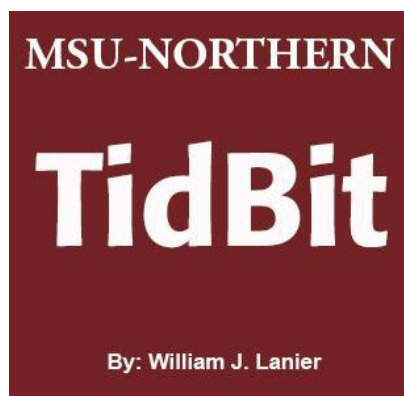
- Lights Football vs Rocky Mountain College - 12:00 PM
- Skylights Volleyball vs Dickinson State University - 5:00 PM

Monday, October 27

- Last day to drop a class and receive a "W" grade

Friday, October 31

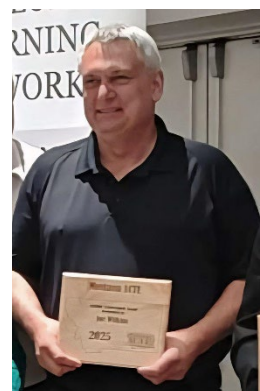
- Registration for Spring 2026 Begins
- Skylights Volleyball @ Bellevue University - 5:00 PM



friends!

(#443) Alumni Update

It's always amazing to see our Alumni be successful in their endeavors after they leave Northern. Here are three Northern Alumni who have made an impact. I am proud of these three not only as a Northern Alumnus, but as



Recently, the Montana Association for Career and Technical Education announced its 2025 award winners. Among the recipients were two Northern Alumni, Joe Wilkins and Denise Bordeleau. It was noted that Joe Wilkins was one of three educators that was "...recognized and thanked for their lifetimes of dedicated service to CTE, Montana ACTE, AND Montana's students.". Denise received the Carl Perkins Service Award.



Former Northern wrestling standout and All-American Rudy James recently competed at the Veteran World Championships in Budapest, Hungary. Rudy left Budapest with a gold medal in Freestyle and a bronze medal in Greco-Roman. This was Rudy's third straight gold medal at Veterans World Championships.

Congratulations, Joe, Denise, and Rudy! You all make Northern proud.

If you have an idea for the NNN TidBit, send me an e-mail at wjlanier1963@yahoo.com

Visit our website

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STAY CONNECTED



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