Many times I am asked, “What is the Division of Student Affairs?” From Enrollment Services to Career Services, the University Center to Curry Health Center, the eleven departments of the Division facilitate student learning by providing high quality programs, services, and developmental opportunities. We foster an inclusive campus community so that students can pursue their diverse academic, career, and personal goals. Currently, our Advisory Board is stepping up fundraising efforts. Our biannual newsletter will bring you highlights of our activities. We invite you to join us as we ensure that all students have the chance to succeed.

Teresa S. Branch

MPACT Makes an Impact

Sadly, only 40% of Montana’s high school graduates enter college. Many families don’t know, or maybe don’t believe, that obtaining a college degree increases one’s earning power dramatically. In fact, on a national level, those with a college degree will earn about $1 million more over their working careers than their counterparts with high school diplomas.

Montana Partnering for Affordable College Tuition (MPACT) is UM’s new initiative to educate Montana families about the value of higher education and increase the number of high school graduates who choose to attend college. MPACT offers a need-based financial aid package to in-state academically prepared students. President Dennison, Vice President Branch, representatives from Enrollment Services, other UM administrators and staff, and UM faculty have been touring the state to promote this opportunity.

The first students to receive MPACT financial aid packages will attend The University of Montana beginning fall semester 2006. Visit www.umt.edu/mpact or call (800) 462-8636 to learn more.

IN THIS ISSUE

MPACT Makes an Impact 1
Funding Priorities for Student Affairs 2
Ask-an-Alum Program Expands Student Opportunities 3
Faculty Honored for Collaboration 4
Valuable E-text Technology Provides Access 4
Student Wins UM and State Employee Awards 5
Student Affairs Advisory Board List 5
Lewis and Clark Village Opens 6
Thank You to Our Donors 6
On October 1, 2005, The University of Montana and UM Foundation announced the largest campaign in the institution’s history, a $100 million comprehensive effort to assure UM’s continued achievement in teaching, research, and public service. The Campaign’s theme is Invest in Discovery – Connecting People, Programs and Place. Private funds are sought for:

- Student support and services
- Endowed faculty positions
- Academic program support
- New and renovated facilities

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS FUNDING PRIORITIES

Merit and Montana University System Honors Scholarships  
Goal $2 million

Scholarships are a high priority at The University of Montana. General merit scholarships and targeted scholarship programs allow the University to maintain high academic standards, keep more top students in the state, and preserve Montana’s future leadership. The MUS Scholarship provides four years of paid tuition and registration fees to at least one outstanding student from every high school in Montana.

Need-based Scholarships  
Goal $1 million

UM is dedicated to providing all students who have a desire to earn a degree the opportunity to do so. As government funding for higher education decreases, need-based scholarship support is more important than ever. During the 2004 academic year, over 77% of UM students received some sort of financial aid, and insufficient financial aid was the primary reason students left the University.

International Student Employment Incentive Program  
Goal $25,000

Visiting international scholars enrich our campus and expose students of limited experience to today’s global society. Unfortunately, UM is restricted by visa regulations from allowing foreign students to obtain work study jobs. The Foreign Student Employment Incentive program allows UM departments to offer part-time positions to international students, providing similar financial and educational benefits as work study programs.

Multicultural Alliance  
Goal $25,000

Montana frequently receives low marks in its efforts to promote and celebrate diversity. The Multicultural Alliance at UM strives to help counter that situation by sponsoring educational and entertaining cultural events. Under the Multicultural Alliance, the campus affiliate of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) educates students about discrimination based on nationality, race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, job, or life circumstance and encourages students to explore solutions to tough social issues.
“Alumni can really help students see the benefit of a university education, providing motivation and advice on how to make it through successfully,” says Ask-an-Alum coordinator Sarah Raymond. The Ask-an-Alum program, begun in 1994 by UM students, is now run by Career Services in partnership with the Alumni Association. The program helps students focus on their educational and career goals by introducing them to UM alumni employed in their field of interest. Alumni contacts are particularly useful to students, as they often provide an insider’s perspective of a specific company or employment area.

A new on-line component engineered by UM’s Information Technology office enables students to search a database of more than 2,800 diverse alumni. Searches may be sorted by major, location, company name, job title, or job responsibilities. Personal contact information is kept secure, and alumni may choose whether a student can contact them. Although the service is not to be used for job referrals, students may request informational interviews, career mentoring, or job shadowing.

For face-to-face interaction, the Ask-an-Alum program hosts informational luncheons throughout the year, where alumni speak about their careers and answer student questions.

Alumni may contact Career Services at (406) 243-2022 for information on how to participate in the Ask-an-Alum program.

Funding Priorities (cont.)

**The Center for Leadership Development**

Goal $25,000

The Center for Leadership Development offers programs and resources to help students gain the skills and experiences they need to become engaged and ethical leaders of tomorrow. The Center builds self-confidence, increases self-awareness, and helps talented students envision and implement their goals.

**Career Services**

Goal $25,000

The travel and screening required to find qualified, motivated workers for entry-level professional and managerial positions can strain corporate recruitment budgets. Similarly, job-hunting can be a daunting task for the new college graduate hoping to land a challenging position in his or her chosen field without going through an extensive travel and application process. UM’s Career Services annually serves thousands of students and hundreds of employers by providing: career planning and counseling; national standardized testing and assessment; workshops and outreach presentations; resume, interview and job-search assistance; on-campus interviews; career fairs; alumni mentoring; and job posting services.

Career Services seeks funds to meet the needs of an ever-increasing number of students and employers. Naming opportunities allow a sponsoring business or corporation to reach students through Career Services—one of the most visible and widely-used offices at UM.
Faculty Honored for Collaboration with Student Affairs

Collaboration with faculty is crucial to the success of Student Affairs. Every year, dedicated faculty provide outstanding service to students by supporting and participating in Student Affairs programs. Last month, Vice President Branch honored ninety-nine faculty at the third annual faculty recognition reception.

Steve Gaskill, associate professor of applied exercise physiology in the Department of Health and Human Performance, earned special recognition for his generous and effective support of students. To illustrate Steve’s extraordinary dedication, Jim Marks, director of Disability Services for Students, said, “Steve has managed to balance academic standards with accessibility. When Steve had a student in his class who asked for unreasonable modifications, he interacted with the student in a humane and supportive manner. Steve found the student tutors and encouraged him to succeed with reasonable accommodations. Now, that student is graduating.”

Steve’s activities with Student Affairs include participation in orientation, collaboration with Campus Recreation, and involvement in the Retention Task Force.

Student Affairs directors nominate faculty each year.

Valuable E-Text Technology Provides Access

Almost 900 students with disabilities are currently enrolled at The University of Montana. Those who are blind, those with sight impairments or dyslexia, or those who have ADD or ADHD often find reading printed text a substantial barrier to academic success. Luckily, Disability Services for Students (DSS) is a national leader in print to e-text conversion in higher education. Used by print disabled students, e-text is an electronic format that provides “spoken” text.

A $20,000 grant from the Gallagher Western Charitable Foundation has just made DSS’s job easier. The funds enabled the purchase of a high-speed duplex scanner, conversion software, and additional handheld Book Port reading machines. These items streamline the e-text conversion process and provide convenient delivery, ensuring that students with print disabilities have access to classroom texts.

Ed Milburn, 81-year-old text conversion expert, oversees the process. Here’s how it works: After a student requests text conversion, DSS makes sure the book isn’t already available in electronic format through online services such as Bookshare. Then DSS sends a letter to the publisher and proceeds to convert the book. The book’s binding is removed and the loose pages are sent through automatic scanning machines. Under Ed’s direction, student employees meticulously format the text so that it can be easily and accurately read by the reader software. Lastly, the hard copy is rebound with a spiral binding and returned to the

(Continued on page 8)
For the past four years, the winner of the UM Student Employee of the Year has won the State of Montana Student Employee award. Perhaps that’s because the University values and nurtures its student employees, offering them real work responsibilities. Most students take advantage of these opportunities for growth and really flourish, developing career skills and enthusiastically tackling challenges.

This year’s winner of both awards is Tom Fite, portal developer in the UM Information Technology office. Through his upbeat energy, creativity, and professionalism, Tom has enhanced The University of Montana’s reputation and increased its technological capacity. He has been instrumental in helping UM emerge as an innovative leader in the national portal consortium. Due to Tom’s contributions, more grant funding has been awarded to UM for collaborative software development and support of consortium members.

“I know of no other department at UM, and no other university in the portal consortium, that places so much trust and responsibility on a student employee,” says director of applications and media development Gordy Pace. As for how he has profited from his work with IT, Tom says, “Looking back on my college career, I keep coming back to one simple statement: you can only learn so much in a classroom. More than anything else, the time I have spent working in the Information Technology office has prepared me for a professional career once I graduate. I have benefited enormously. I also know that the University has benefited because of my work on the UM portal. It is such a win-win situation for everyone.”

UM departments annually nominate employees for the Student Employee of the Year award. The winner is chosen based on criteria established by the National Association of Student Employment Administrators. Winners from the state campuses are then entered into the statewide competition.

Tom received a $500 scholarship from Career Services and a $50 check from the State.
Lewis and Clark Village, UM's first apartment-style housing for single, upper division and graduate students, opened fall 2004. The thirteen-building, 462-bed residence is located on South Higgins Avenue near Dornblaser, about one mile from campus. It offers a variety of furnished apartment styles, high speed internet, a state-of-the-art security surveillance system, keyless entry, free shuttle service to campus, free storage, and a community center. Cable TV and all utilities are included in the competitive rental rates. The village is ADA compliant.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

This listing contains the names of donors who have contributed $100 or more to any designation within the Division of Student Affairs from January 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006. We make every attempt to accurately list our donors. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, mistakes happen. If such is the case, please contact Kathy Schaub at the UM Foundation to allow us to apologize and correct our mistake. (800) 443-2593 or (406) 243-4568.

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(Continued on page 7)
E-technology (cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

student along with a Book Port containing the downloaded e-text.

Surprisingly, the vast majority of students who request text conversion have not used the technology before. In fact, many students are unaware of the service until they speak with DSS’s assistant director Dan Burke. Dan says that because disability stigmas still exist, some students are reluctant to use the accommodation. However, e-text is gaining in popularity. Students who have utilized the technology are very pleased with the results.

You can make a donation to Student Affairs through the UM Foundation by visiting www.umt.edu/sa and clicking on the secure link “Giving to Student Affairs.”

Thank you for your support!