

# Academic Affairs

Newsletter



## Countdown to Commencement

As the semester winds down, we are approaching commencement and celebrating the achievements of our students. This week's updates, news, and events highlight ways to support our graduates and stay engaged as we close out the academic year.



### Join LEAD Training Opportunities

The Learning Experience and Design team invites faculty and staff to join their Teams channel for training updates, resources, and events.

New 10-minute Teaching and Tech Tips sessions will be held Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m., with recordings available. April and May topics include AI and digital accessibility.

The first session, *AI at UM, Tools and Support*, is Tuesday, April 7 at 10:00 a.m.

[Join the LEAD Teams Channel](#)

### Last Chance to Order Faculty Regalia!

Faculty are invited to participate in UM's Spring Commencement on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at the Adams Center. Additional details about faculty participation will be shared closer to the ceremony.

Faculty who need to rent regalia should place orders **by April 10, 2026**, through the [Faculty Cap and Gown Ordering](#) site using:

**Customer Number:** 25000519000

**Order Number:** 5466059

Orders will be shipped to UC Room 170 for pickup.

**Regalia pickup and return, UC Room 225:**

Thursday, May 7, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Friday, May 8, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Saturday, May 9, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Final return deadline is 5:00 pm.

For regalia questions, contact Tim McClughen at [trmcclughen@herffjones.com](mailto:trmcclughen@herffjones.com). For general Commencement information, visit the Commencement website linked below or email [commencement@umontana.edu](mailto:commencement@umontana.edu).

*Note: Student regalia orders follow a different process—please do not share this ordering information with students.*

**Spring 2026 Commencement Ceremony Details**

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**Student Honor Cord FAQs**

With Commencement quickly approaching, please see Honor Cord FAQs below.

**Q:** What are the University of Montana's current honor cords?

**A:** Current honor cords are listed on the [Commencement Regalia webpage](#).

**Q:** How does a student or program apply to create a new honor cord?

**A:** The deadline has passed for this semester. More information can be found on the [Guidelines for Honor Cord Eligibility webpage](#).

**Q:** How does a student get their honor cord?

**A:** Many cords are purchased through a UM department or national organization. Some cords are self-selected by the student, and students may purchase them at

the Go Griz Store or another choice vendor.

**Q:** Tell me more about this student employee cord...how do I know if our program should give them out?

**A:** What makes them eligible is up to your program rubric that is developed internally.

### Commencement Regalia Webpage

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### Encourage Students to Complete the UM Graduation Survey

Graduating students are being asked to complete the UM Graduation Survey. Faculty support is key to strong response rates and meaningful outcomes data.

Please encourage participation by sharing a brief announcement in class or through department communications. Setting aside five minutes of class time can significantly increase completion rates.

Survey data helps programs understand graduate outcomes, including employment, salaries, and career pathways, and supports recruitment, advising, and program improvement.

### UM Student Career Outcomes Website

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### Faculty Senate Reminder: Survey and Elections

Faculty are encouraged to participate in two important shared governance activities currently underway. Complete the annual [University Committee Volunteer Survey](#) and cast your vote in Faculty Senate elections. Both help ensure strong faculty representation in university decision-making.

The survey and elections both close on **Friday, April 10, 2026**. Check your email for your ballot link and take a few minutes to complete both.

Questions or did not receive your ballot? Contact the [Faculty Senate Office](#).

## University Committee Volunteer Survey

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### **Apply to Be a Beckman Scholars Program Mentor**

The Office of External Scholarship and Fellowships and the Office of Undergraduate Research invite assistant professors, associate professors, and professors to apply as mentors for the Beckman Scholars Program institutional proposal.

The Beckman Scholars Program is a three-year award that supports undergraduate research training in biology, chemistry, biological and medical sciences, or interdisciplinary fields. Selected mentors will work closely with undergraduate researchers and receive support for research, mentoring activities, and student stipends, travel, and research expenses.

Faculty interested in mentoring undergraduate researchers and contributing to a competitive institutional proposal are encouraged to apply via the link provided below.

**Applications are due April 19.**

Questions? Contact Kylla Benes at [kylla.benes@umontana.edu](mailto:kylla.benes@umontana.edu).

## Beckman Scholars Program Mentor Application

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### **NAGPRA Regional Training Comes to Montana**

The University of Montana will host a NAGPRA Regional Training May 12 to 14 in collaboration with the Association on American Indian Affairs and Your Neighborhood Museum.

This will be the first training of its kind in Montana and will bring together participants for learning and collaboration around NAGPRA practices and implementation.

Registration is encouraged as space may be limited.

## NAGPRA Regional Training Registration

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### Fall 2026 Course Materials Deadline Approaching

Summer course material adoptions are now overdue. Fall adoptions are due April 15.

Timely submissions allow the campus store to source used and rental inventory, research digital and rental options, and ensure materials are available before the first day of class. Students who rely on federal and local financial aid programs must access funding through the campus store, making early adoption information especially important for our most financially vulnerable students.

If no materials are required for your course, please indicate that clearly so students know nothing is needed. When adoption information is not provided by the deadline, the store will default to the most recent materials used for that course and section.

Submit adoptions through Canvas, in the store, or by email at [2340txt@follett.com](mailto:2340txt@follett.com).

### Course Materials Canvas Adoption Instructions

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### **Wang Lab Awarded \$1.2M NIH Grant**

The Wang lab in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, College of Science was recently awarded a \$1.2 million R01 research grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) to develop biomimetic and bio-inspired metal catalysts that find many applications in pharmaceutical and energy science. The Wang lab has a long-time research thrust in studying the structures, properties, and functions of metals in biology using synthetic, spectroscopic, and computational approaches. With this 4-year grant, which starts on April 1, 2026, Dr. Wang and his group plan to synthesize unprecedented cobalt and nickel coordination complexes having unusually high oxidation states that can be employed to study fundamental and critical bond breaking and bond forming processes in biocatalysis. This research will provide new and transformative knowledge about these reactivities, ultimately leading to the development of new pharmaceutical and therapeutic agents.

Dr. Wang joined UM in 2015 and is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. He is also the Principal Investigator of another research project funded by NSF in 2025 and has been the co-Director of the Montana Science Fair since 2020. In his spare time, Dr. Wang likes reading, photography, riding motorcycles, and playing billiards with his students.



# EVENTS



[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

## China Town Hall 2026: US-China Relations

**4:30 to 7 p.m. Monday, April 7, Dell Brown Room, Turner Hall**

Join the Mansfield Center for the national China Town Hall livestream featuring former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun and former U.S. Embassy Beijing Deputy Chief of Mission Sarah Beran, followed by an in-person reception and conversation with Goldman Sachs Private Wealth Advisor David Willard on economic and geopolitical crosscurrents in U.S.-China relations. Attendance is available in person or virtually via two separate livestream links.

FROM  
YELLOWSTONE  
TO SOUTHERN  
AFRICA:



*Shared Challenges, Shared  
Solutions Across Continents*

Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 4pm in LA/Eck 011

[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

## From Yellowstone to Southern Africa

**4 to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 8, LA/Eck 011**

Join UM's Jenn Thomsen and visiting Fulbright Scholar Joe Mbaiwa for a discussion on shared challenges in conservation, climate change, and sustainable tourism across Southern Africa and the Yellowstone to Yukon region.



[Aden Arnold Panel Discussion on GrizHub](#)

### **Aden Arnold Panel Discussion**

**5:50 to 7 p.m. Thursday, April 9, MMAC**

Join the Montana Museum of Art and Culture for a panel discussion on the life and work of Aden Arnold, Montana's original "Cubist Cowboy," featuring moderator Valerie Hedquist and panelists Kevin Bell, Dolly Browder, Tom Browder, Rafael Chacon, and Kathryn Kress. The conversation will span personal recollections, Arnold's social context, his contributions to modernism, and his role within academia. Light refreshments will be served.



[Learn More and Register on GrizHub](#)

### **Find Your Audience: Using Social Media to Showcase Your Work**

**10 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, April 10, UC 225**

Explore strategies for using social media to expand the visibility of your research. This session will help you identify audiences, select platforms, and present your work effectively online.



[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

## Third Annual Democracy Summit

**Tuesday, April 14, 2026**

UM's third annual Democracy Summit brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to explore social connection as a cornerstone of democratic life. This free, public event features conversations and sessions on belonging, civic engagement, community health, and the role institutions play in building stronger social bonds.

A promotional poster for a Mansfield Dialogue event. The title is "One Year After 'Liberation Day': Assessing Trump's Trade Policy". It features a photo of two speakers, Kristin Vekasi and Bryce Ward. The text describes the event as a discussion with the Mansfield Chair of Japan &amp; Indo-Pacific Affairs. The event is scheduled for Thursday, April 23 at 7:00 pm MT in the Dell Brown Room at Turner Hall, or virtually via Teams. Reception for in-person participants starts at 6:00 pm MT. The Mansfield Dialogues logo is at the bottom left.

[Register for In-person Attendance](#)

[Register for Virtual Attendance](#)

## Mansfield Dialogue: One Year After "Liberation Day" Tariffs

**6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, April 23, Dell Brown Room, Turner Hall**

Join Mansfield Chair of Japan and Indo-Pacific Affairs Kristin Vekasi and economist Bryce Ward for a discussion on U.S. trade policy one year after the “Liberation Day” tariffs. The speakers will examine strategic goals, economic outcomes, and global implications, including impacts on U.S. industry and consumers, responses from major trading partners, and effects on America’s global standing.



Use the AA Newsletter Submission Form button below to share your content with the Academic Affairs sector. To be considered for next Monday's newsletter, submissions need to be received by Friday at 10:00 AM.

**AA Newsletter Submission Form**

University of Montana, 32 Campus Drive, Missoula, MT 59812

[Manage preferences](#)