

Academic Affairs

Newsletter



Keep It Moving

Across Academic Affairs, important work continues to take shape through action, input, and collaboration. This week's updates include key deadlines, Faculty Senate highlights, leadership news, and upcoming events that support teaching, learning, and student success.



Action Needed: Fall 2026 Course Materials Due April 15

Summer course material adoptions are now overdue, with 58 courses still needing submissions. For Fall 2026, materials are still needed for 3,682 courses ahead of the April 15 deadline.

Submitting your course materials now directly supports students' ability to succeed. When materials are identified early, students have time to plan, budget, and access what they need before the first day of class. This is especially critical for students who rely on financial aid, as delays can prevent them from obtaining required materials when courses begin.

Early submissions also help ensure that affordable options, including used, rental, and digital formats, are available to students.

If no materials are required, please indicate this clearly so students know nothing is needed. When adoption information is not submitted by the deadline,

the most recently used materials will be assigned, which may not reflect your current course needs.

Submit your adoption through Canvas by following the instructions below, in the Bookstore, or by email at 2340txt@follett.com.

Course Materials Canvas Adoption Instructions

Survey: Election Day as a Non-Instructional Day

Election Day plays an important role in civic participation across Montana, where many elections are decided by narrow margins. However, students, faculty, and staff may face barriers to voting due to work and class schedules.

Forward Montana Student Group is working to promote civic engagement at UM and has identified access to voting as a key concern. As part of this effort, they are gathering input from instructional faculty and staff on the possibility of designating Election Day as a non-instructional day, beginning in Fall 2026.

Faculty and staff are invited to complete the short poll linked below **by April 25**.

For questions or more information, contact Sid Boyer, Campus Organizer, at sid@forwardmontana.org.

Election Day Survey

Faculty Senate Recap | April 2, 2026

The Faculty Senate met on April 2, 2026, to review policies, receive administrative updates, and consider several curriculum proposals.

Public comment highlighted upcoming federal financial aid changes and raised concerns regarding shared governance and clarity in recent program proposals.

The Senate reviewed policies regarding Data Governance and Digital Accessibility, with feedback to be shared as part of the ongoing review process.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on program proposals. Following discussion, the Senate voted to not recommend moratorium or termination for the Minor in Irish Studies, Minor in Chinese, MA in Economics, MA in English with concentration in Literature, and MA in English with concentration in Ecocriticism.

Administrative leaders acknowledged concerns raised during discussion and noted that refinements to review processes and coordination are being considered for future reviews. Next steps include submitting proposals, voting results, and materials to OCHE for review and, following that process, notifying departments and students of OCHE's final decision.

Additional updates included Faculty Senate elections, committee volunteer opportunities, and upcoming Senate reorganization activities.

[Faculty Senate Website](#)



Missoula College Interim Dean Announced

The Office of the Provost announces that Lauren Fern has been appointed Interim Dean of Missoula College, effective July 1, 2026.

Fern brings 23 years of experience at the University of Montana, with service across both the Mountain Campus and Missoula College. She has held roles including Math Lecturer, Associate Professor and Math Discipline Lead, Department Chair of Applied Arts and Sciences, Interim Associate Dean, Faculty Senate Chair, and Student Success Coordinator in General Education Mathematics. Her work has consistently focused on improving student success, including leading the development of co-requisite mathematics courses and redesigning UM's math placement system, efforts that have been recognized nationally.

At the state level, Fern chairs multiple Montana University System initiatives focused on math pathways, placement, and developmental education, contributing to systemwide policy changes and alignment efforts that support student success. She also brings national experience through consulting with institutions and systems on developmental math reform and co-requisite implementation.

Of her appointment, Professor Fern shared:

"I am grateful to Dean Gallagher for his stewardship of Missoula College and look forward to bringing my experience, relationships, and commitment to this role. I care deeply about two-year education, the students we serve, and the people who serve them."

Fern will work closely with current Dean Tom Gallagher through the remainder of the academic year to support a thoughtful and collaborative transition ahead of her July 1 start, and we thank Dean Gallagher for his many years of leadership and service to the University of Montana.



EVENTS



[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

Democracy Summit

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 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.



[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

LEAD: Creating Accessible PowerPoints

10:00 to 10:10 a.m., Tuesday, April 14, Virtually

Join Learning Experience and Design (LEAD) for a quick, practical session on creating clear and accessible PowerPoint presentations. This 10-minute training will highlight common accessibility issues and simple strategies to improve your slides. An optional Q&A will follow the session. A recording will be available in the Teams channel for those unable to attend live.



[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.



SUBMISSIONS

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](#)