

Academic Affairs

Newsletter



The Finish Line Is in Sight

The end of the semester has a way of arriving all at once. This week, Academic Affairs is marking the moment with celebration, recognition, and a few important reminders to help everyone close out strong. From Week of Excellence events to Canvas wrap-up tasks, accessibility updates to new research news, there is a lot worth noting as we cross into the home stretch.



Canvas Reminders: Spring Semester Wrap-Up

As the semester wraps up, faculty are encouraged to complete end-of-semester tasks for their Canvas course shells. The [Concluding a Course Tip Sheet](#) outlines the steps to take as you prepare to submit final grades and determine what course content students can access once the term ends.

Summer and Fall 2026 course shells are now available. If a needed course does not appear on your Canvas Dashboard, you may need to [customize your Courses list](#) to manage what is displayed. Faculty planning to import content into a new shell should consult the [Importing Course Content Tip Sheet](#).

Additional support and resources are available on the LEAD Faculty Support website linked below.

[LEAD Faculty Support website](#)

Curriculum Submission Deadline: September 25

The Faculty Senate fall curriculum deadline is **September 25, 2026**. All proposals intended for Fall 2027 implementation must be submitted through CourseLeaf by this date. Those preparing proposals are encouraged to begin early to allow time for timely submission.

This deadline applies to curriculum proposals (new and revised courses and programs), Writing Course and General Education rolling review proposals, and any Level I or Level II proposals. Rolling review categories this cycle include, for Writing Courses (Writing, Literature, and Fine Arts) and for General Education Courses (Expressive Arts, Ethics and Human Values, and Social Sciences).

Units without current representation on the General Education or Writing Committees are encouraged to nominate a colleague. Disciplinary expertise strengthens the review process for everyone.

Instructions and supporting resources are available on the Faculty Senate curriculum website linked below.

[Faculty Senate Curriculum website](#)

Help Students Discover the National Student Exchange

The [National Student Exchange](#) (NSE) allows UM students to study at universities across the U.S., Canada, and U.S. territories while paying in-state tuition, making study away accessible without added financial burden or delays to graduation.

NSE is worth sharing with students seeking academic enrichment, a new environment, or courses not available at UM. The program offers pathways to greater independence, cultural experience, and career or graduate school networks.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to connect students with this opportunity directly or invite Experiential Learning and Career Success (ELCS) to give a brief class or unit presentation.

Questions? Contact Mindy May at mindy.may@mso.umt.edu.

ELCS National Student Exchange website

Digital Accessibility Compliance Deadline Extended to April 2027

Thanks to the efforts of faculty and staff across campus, UM has made meaningful progress in creating more accessible digital content over the past year. The U.S. Department of Justice recently extended the ADA Title II digital accessibility compliance deadline from April 2026 to April 2027, giving institutions like UM additional time to meet the WCAG 2.1 AA standard.

The extension is welcome, but the purpose behind this work remains unchanged. Every accessible document, video, web page, and Canvas course reduces barriers for the students, staff, and community members we serve. Check out the full update on the ADA deadline extension below for details and resources to keep the momentum going.

Learn More about the ADA Deadline Extension

Summer Study Carrel Applications Open for Graduate Students

Mansfield Library is accepting applications for semester-long study carrel checkouts during the summer semester. Any graduate student with an active NetID is eligible to apply. Carrels are available during library open hours and include a chair, overhead light, and desk power outlet.

Applications close May 11. Carrels are assigned by random lottery, and selected students will be notified by email before the first day of class. Visit the [Mansfield Library Study Carrel Policy page](#) for details on the assignment process, or use the summer study carrel application linked below to apply.

Summer Study Carrel Application

Stay Connected with the Office for Disability Equity

The Office for Disability Equity (ODE) wants to hear from you. Whether you are interested in practical accessibility tips, upcoming trainings and resources, or

opportunities to help shape ODE initiatives, there is a place for you to engage.

Complete the brief Office for Disability Equity Faculty Engagement and Communication Opt-in Form, linked below, to let ODE know how you would like to stay connected, including the opportunity to express interest in joining an ODE Advisory Group.

[ODE Faculty Engagement Form](#)

Week of Excellence Is Here

Week of Excellence, UM's annual celebration of student and employee achievements, is underway. A full schedule of events runs throughout the week, with two highlights coming up on Wednesday, April 29.

The Employee Celebration Breakfast takes place from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the UC Ballroom. The formal program begins at 9 a.m. and will feature remarks from Commissioner Christian and Provost Lawrence, recognition of service milestones, new and upcoming retirees, and this year's [Employee Award winners](#). A livestream will be available for those unable to attend in person.

Later that afternoon, the Share Kindness Fair runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the Oval, hosted by the UM Advocates and featuring activities including Stress Less on the Oval.

Visit the Week of Excellence event page on GrizHub, linked below, to access the Employee Celebration Breakfast livestream.

[Week of Excellence Event Page](#)





Ryckman Lab Awarded NIH Grant to Study Human Cytomegalovirus

The Ryckman Lab, led by Brent Ryckman in the Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, has received a \$147,000 [R03 research grant](#) from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to study the effects of genetic recombination on human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) pathogenesis.

HCMV is the leading infectious cause of congenital birth defects, affecting approximately 1 in 150 births and contributing to hearing loss and developmental delays. It also poses serious risks for immunocompromised individuals. Despite decades of research, no successful vaccine exists and current drug therapies carry significant side-effect risks.

The Ryckman Lab has demonstrated that co-infection of individual cells with multiple HCMV strains is common, producing recombinant viruses with a wide range of complex properties, including how they move between cells and which cell types they target. This grant will allow the lab to more precisely define those properties, advancing the path toward safer, more effective vaccines and treatments.

[Learn More about the Ryckman Lab](#)

Dean Candidate Open Forums, HSS and COS

Faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend open forums for finalists in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and College of Science (COS) dean searches. These sessions offer an opportunity to hear from candidates and provide feedback.

HSS finalists:

- Michael Cripps, Monday, April 27 at 2:30 p.m. in UC Theater
- Michael Lynn, Wednesday, April 29 at 2:30 p.m. in UC Theater
- Lisa Parks, Monday, May 4 at 2:30 p.m. in UC Theater

COS finalists:

- Alistair Smith, Monday, April 27 at 10:30 a.m. in UC Theater
- Leslie Rissler, Monday, May 4 at 10:30 a.m. in UC Theater

View CVs, RSVP, and find additional details on the HSS and COS dean search websites linked below.

[HSS Dean Search Website](#)

[COS Dean Search Website](#)



[More Details on GrizHub](#)

LEAD Training: Creating Accessible Images

10 to 10:10 a.m., Tuesday, April 28, Virtually

Learning Experience and Design (LEAD) is hosting a quick, practical session on writing alternative text for different types of images. This 10-minute training covers clear guidelines and real-world examples applicable to web content, documents,

and presentations. An optional Q&A follows the live session, and a recording will be available in the Teams channel for those unable to attend.



[More Details on GrizHub](#)

Retirement Reception for Tobin Miller Shearer

3 to 5 p.m., Friday, May 1, Davidson Honors College Lounge and Patio

After 17 years at the University of Montana, Tobin Miller Shearer - History Professor and Director of the African American Studies Program - is retiring. The History Department invites all Academic Affairs colleagues to join them in celebrating his contributions to the university and wishing him well on what comes next.

***Mansfield Mural II Unveiling:
The U.S. Senate: Stewardship
and Statesmanship***



[Learn More and RSVP on GrizHub](#)

Mural Unveiling: The Senate Years of Mike Mansfield

5:30 to 7p.m., Tuesday, May 6, Mansfield Center

The Mansfield Center invites the UM community to the unveiling of the second mural in a three-part series on Senator Mike Mansfield's life and legacy, created by Missoula muralist Hadley Ferguson. The event is free and open to the public.



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

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