What's Next?

Past, Present and Future come full circle at H&S

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SPRING 2015

College of Humanities & Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
Psychology Department Chair Christine Fiore (left) and H&S Associate Dean Jenny McNulty (right) represent H&S on a recent trip to the University of Gondar in Ethiopia. Recently, the African university agreed to facilitate a mutual partnership with the University of Montana in the hopes of enhancing academic research and engaging in educational cooperation. The University of Gondar is the oldest medical school in Ethiopia.
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Greetings from Dean Comer

Spring is always a time of examination at H&S: another academic year is culminating in a flurry of blue books, lab reports, and yes, even a few freshly-sharpened No. 2 pencils. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the experiences that brought us here, the challenges and the achievements, and to look ahead at the endless possibilities to come.

The College took advantage of such an opportunity at the 3rd annual H&S Dialogue in the Humanities and Sciences. Moderated by Regents Professor of Philosophy Albert Borgmann, it featured Davidson Honors College Interim Dean Elizabeth Putnam, classics Professor Linda Gillison and mathematical sciences Professor Mark Kayll. Together, the team provided a focused consideration of the history and current state of general education programming at the university level, engaging audience members and reaffirming the spirited commitment of our faculty to creating an academic environment that best supports the goals and aspirations of our students.

The ability to connect past, present and future is a fundamental aspect of our College, and a big reason why H&S remains the Heart & Soul of UM. In the following pages, you will meet equally impressive students, staff, faculty and alumni who continue to rise to the challenges of our global century while maintaining a context of deep appreciation for our past. I invite you to read and enjoy their stories, and hope you find them all as inspirational as I did.

As always, we want you to stay connected and share your story as well. Please visit our website www.hs.umt.edu for up-to-date information regarding College news and events. You can also like us on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/HandSNews. Congratulations to the Class of 2015, and thank you for your continued support of H&S.

H&S Director of Advising Melanie Hoell is the recipient of the 2015 University of Montana Outstanding Service to Students Award. The award recognizes exemplary service by staff, including academic and personal advising, to the student body. Congratulations to Melanie for this well-deserved honor!
Historian David Emmons conducted groundbreaking research on the history of the Irish experience in Montana. Now thanks to a private gift, his work will be honored and continued far into the future.

H&S alum Sam Baldridge and his wife, Julie, have established a visiting professorship in Emmons’ name. Each year, a Dr. David Emmons Visiting Scholar in Irish Studies will come to campus to teach various courses on Irish and Irish-American history.

Establishing the professorship is a way for Baldridge to honor Emmons’ scholarship and ensure that UM continues to be a center for research and education in Irish studies.

“This gift solidifies the foundations of the Irish Studies Program,” said Traolach O’Riordain, the program’s director. “It provides the resources to develop UM into a nationally recognized center of Irish and Irish Gaelic studies.”

In addition to his or her teaching duties, the visiting scholar also will conduct public lectures around Montana and, O’Riordain hopes, delve into unexplored areas of the state’s social, political or economic history.

The University’s Irish Studies Program is the largest such program west of the Mississippi. Scholarship and coursework focus on the role of Irish language and Gaelic heritage in Ireland’s history, as well as the Irish-American diaspora in the American West.
After 24 years at UM, popular Chemistry Professor Garon Smith hangs up his cloak

In 24 years at UM, Professor Garon “G. Wiz” Smith has instructed some 20,000 students in introductory chemistry, and has entertained and educated more than 100,000 young students. Ever since he took over UM’s chemistry course for applied science majors in 1994, the class enrollment has expanded exponentially, from about 400 to 700 students each fall semester, and from 180 to nearly 300 students each spring.

“What a lot of tests to grade,” Smith said, who will retire at the end of the Spring 2015 semester, “but what a privilege.”

Smith has also won multiple local and national awards for his teaching and outreach, including the 2014 Best UM Professor in the Missoulian’s readership poll; 2008 Montana Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Most Inspirational UM Teacher in 2004; and a 2004 Innovative Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Technology Award at the International Conference on College Teaching and Learning.

“Professor Garon Smith, aka G. Wiz, is among the most engaging and entertaining instructors that the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and the University of Montana have ever seen,” said Christopher Palmer, Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Palmer and UM College of Humanities and Sciences Dean Chris Comer will nominate Smith for Professor Emeritus status this spring.

New planetarium brings the Universe to H&S

The University of Montana Department of Physics and Astronomy is now offering public planetarium shows in the Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute’s Star Gazing Room.

“We are delighted to be opening the doors of the Star Gazing Room to the public at large,” UM Department of Physics and Astronomy outreach coordinator Mark Reiser said. “It’s an exciting time for our department and hopefully the greater Missoula community.”

Each program will take attendees on a tour of the current night skies of Missoula, pointing out noteworthy objects, constellations, planets or upcoming events visible in the night sky. The show then shifts to an engaging topic, or set of topics, chosen by that evening’s presenter.

“Our new digital planetarium is equipped with a cutting-edge, world-class projector,” Reiser said. “It contains a vast amount of real-time data, including positions of real objects throughout the universe. It can easily depict the sky we would see from Missoula 100,000 years in the future and allow us to visit entirely different planets, stars or even galaxies.”

The maximum capacity for public shows is 25 people, and so far events have sold out quickly. For more information visit http://cas.umt.edu/physics/Outreach/default.php.
Phil Day comes to H&S

On April 30, the University of Montana celebrated Philanthropy Day, an annual salute to the University’s many generous donors.

Last year alone, 13,594 donors contributed $53.7 million to the University, supporting scholarships, programmatic enrichment and facilities enhancement in every academic unit on campus.

Department of Computer Sciences hosts first career fair

On Friday, May 1st, the Department of Computer Sciences hosted its first career fair. The fair featured 18 companies, all with Montana offices, and more than 50 students from 15 majors attended.

Undergraduate research takes center stage

H&S student Hannah Fay, center, discusses her molecular biology research at UM’s Conference on Undergraduate Research in the UC South Ballroom on April 17. Hundreds of students presented their research and creative scholarship through oral presentations, posters, performances and exhibits during the annual event.
What first attracted you to this research project?

Last semester, I took a class taught by Tobin Shearer called “Prayer and Civil Rights,” in which we wrote a paper on a topic that analyzed some aspect of prayer in the civil rights movement. I wanted to focus on the leadership of a woman. A lot of times when people think of the civil rights movement, the people that come to mind are Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ed King and all these men. You might hear about Rosa Parks, but that’s about it. As I started my research, I discovered Fannie Lou Hamer. I was immediately drawn to her. From that point, everything just opened up.

How did the project start?

Everything I read was centered on Hamer’s experiences from a public record standpoint. They might start going into her leadership style, but it was always a played down aspect of her history because she was a woman. It occurred to me that there had to be more. I thought that by digging a little deeper into the past I could provide some insight into her leadership motivations and philosophies. Next thing I know, I’m on my way to Jackson, Mississippi.
From Montana to Mississippi...Sounds like an expensive trip.

I ended up winning a couple of scholarships that made it possible to take my research to Jackson, Mississippi. First, I received a scholarship from the Davidson Honors College. I got an additional research grant from the African-American Studies program. I was incredibly fortunate, because together the awards essentially covered all of my travel and hotel costs.

What did you discover about Hamer that made her such an effective leader?

I split her leadership style into two parts: The Pastoral style and the Prophetic style. The Pastoral I defined as centered on her singing. A lot of times when African-Americans were facing violence or stress or at a meeting that needed energy, Hamer would use this community-building style where she would sing. She’d use spirituals that were familiar to the African-American community, but would change the lyrics to fit their situation.

Her Prophetic style came through in her public speaking. She felt that she knew God’s plan for America and that was equality for all Americans. She would equate a lot of biblical stories, mostly those affiliated with the Old Testament Exodus stories, and she’d use them to say this is what God wants. None of us will be free until everyone is free.

Who was your favorite teacher during your time at UM?

Anya Jabour, Tobin Shearer and Beth Hubble. As far as I’m concerned, they’re all superheroes. In every one of their classes, not only did we cover topics that I was interested in, but they always made sure we were covering multiple perspectives. Learning these historic stories to bring our current society into context, that’s what most cultivated my passion. Kyle Volk and Sara Hayden also teach this way. They’re also my superheroes. They’re also amazing.

If you could give society one insight that you learned during your time researching Hamer, what would it be?

I think sometimes when you are in a minority community you get tunnel vision. Same thing happens when you’re in a place of privilege. People want to believe their group has it harder than anyone else. When it comes to minorities, you’re like, “My group is the most oppressed.” You want to feel like you’re the most “othered.” When you’re in a place of privilege, you say, “What’s everyone complaining about? It isn’t really that bad.” It’s only when you’re forced to look at these other perspectives you start to realize, oh, maybe this is a humanity problem. Instead of competing for who has it worst, maybe we need to listen and learn from all these different backgrounds. That’s how we really start to solve some of these problems. There are so many ways we can work together to make life better for everyone.
The Wyss Foundation, which supports conservation research in the American West, has awarded one of its prestigious scholarships to Adam Andis, Environmental Studies Program at the College of Humanities and Sciences.

Andis migrated south from Alaska to pursue his master’s degree in Environmental Studies. He has worked in southeast Alaska since 2007 and most recently held the position of communications director for the Sitka Conservation Society. In 2010, he helped found the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and currently serves on its board. He is studying the permeability of wildlife bypass structures within road corridors in relation to surrounding populations.

Andis says his interests "lie at opposite ends of the conservation spectrum—in wilderness management where humans have the least impact, and in road ecology where we have the largest impact on natural systems." He noted, "I am entirely grateful that the Wyss Foundation has chosen to invest in my potential as an environmental leader."

With its scholars program, the Wyss Foundation aims to help create a new generation of leaders in western land conservation. Each year the foundation selects scholars from among the top graduate students at Northern Arizona University, University of Michigan, the University of Montana and Yale University. Scholars receive tuition assistance as well as an award for a summer research project or internship. After learning the latest in conservation science and policy, students apply that knowledge in careers at land management agencies, tribes and nonprofit conservation groups.

Wyss Scholarship awarded to H&S graduate student

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**H&S Winter All-Academic Big Sky Conference Student-Athletes***

**Women’s basketball**
- Hannah Doran (Jr., Biochemistry) - **PICTURED**
- Haley Vining (Jr., Psychology)

**Men’s basketball**
- Jordan Gregory (Sr., Psychology/Sociology)

**Women’s indoor track and field**
- Hana Feilzer (Fr., Sociology)
- Amanda Foley (Jr., Communication Studies)
- Heather Fraley (Sr., Wildlife Biology)
- Megan Franz (Fr., Biology)
- Maggie Hering (So., Political Science)
- Darby Semenza (Fr., Political Science)
- Nicole Stroot (So., Biology)
- Morgan Sulser (Fr., History/POLITICAL SCIENCE Education)

*To be eligible, a student-athlete must have met and/or exceeded the following minimum requirements: 1) Participated in at least half of the team’s competitions; 2) Achieved a 3.2 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) at the conclusion of the most recently completed term; 3) Completed at least one academic term at his/her current Big Sky institution.
Biology and Environmental Studies sophomore Rachel Dickson is the recipient of a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship, the top national award for undergraduate research in science, math and engineering.

“Teachers, classes and mentors at UM have expanded and challenged my personal viewpoints and goals,” Dickson said. “This scholarship will take my research in a new direction that I’m extremely excited about.”

Dickson will use the scholarship to investigate which aspects of floral bloom increase incentive for pollination efforts, thereby increasing the strength of both pollinators and floral communities.

Geosciences team wins regional competition, advances to international event

A team of University of Montana students from the Department of Geosciences won the regional American Association of Petroleum Geologists’ Imperial Barrel Award on Saturday, March 14. The students will advance to the international competition Friday and Saturday, May 29-30, in Denver.

Students Anna Phelps, Brianna Berg, Cody Bomberger, Clayton Schultz and John Zupanic presented their analysis to a panel of industry experts who selected a winner based on technical findings and presentation quality. In their first attempt at the competition, the UM students defeated seven other Rocky Mountain region institutions.

The team of UM students was mentored by UM Geosciences researcher Michael Hofmann. They attribute their success in part to collaboration with UM alumni, especially Dave McGee, who volunteered his time as a project consultant remotely from Denmark.

“The past eight weeks have been an incredible experience,” said Berg, one of the team’s undergraduate members. “I am so glad that I got to compete in the Imperial Barrel Award competition with teammates that I also consider friends. It was stressful, but the hard work paid off and we can now proudly call ourselves the 2015 Rocky Mountain Section IBA winners.”

2015 Richard Drake Writing Award Recipients

**Undergraduate**

Reagan Colyer  
*African American Studies*

**Winning Essay:** Have You Got Good Religion?: The SNCC Freedom Singers and American Civil Rights

**Graduate**

Chelsea Chamberlain  
*History*

**Winning Essay:** Claiming Moral Imbecility: The Promises and Perils of Democratized Knowledge

The Richard Drake Writing Award honors writing excellence in the humanities, and is awarded annually to an undergraduate and graduate student in H&S.
Danny Acton, a graduate student in Sociology, is one of many donors to the Student Foundation. The Student Foundation is a new fundraising initiative on campus that raises funds from students for a scholarship.

“The University has done a lot for me,” he said. “I thought I would do something to give back.”

Specifically, Acton decided to make a gift in honor of his advisor, Dr. Dusten Hollist. A professor in the Department of Sociology, Hollist leads the Criminology Research Group in the Social Sciences Research Lab.

“Dr. Hollist cares about people learning, participating and contributing to what’s going on,” Acton said. “All the professors I’ve worked with are invested in student success. It’s an encouraging environment.”

Acton serves as a research assistant and project lead for the Criminology Research Group, which focuses on projects related to juvenile justice. The group, which consists of three faculty members, eight graduate students and two undergraduate students, has completed 16 grant-funded studies since 2011.

The Criminology program makes a difference — for both students and Montanans. For example, its work has helped probation officers assess whether a juvenile offender might be a public safety or flight risk. The work has also explored what factors determine whether a police officer places a juvenile in detention or releases him to his parents. It’s a decision that can have an especially big impact in rural areas where an unnecessary arrest not only uses valuable time and money, but the nearest juvenile detention center may be hours away.

“We are helping improve the process of how organizations do risk assessments,” Hollist said. “I’m proud of our work. I believe UM has a responsibility to support research in our state and community.”

Acton plans to continue his own research this fall at the University of Florida, where he will pursue a Ph.D. in Sociology.
Stephen Yoshimura  Communication Studies

For the past twelve years, Yoshimura has taught courses that span the full range of Communication Studies curriculum. He engages students from the freshman to the graduate level, approaching each and every one of his courses with intellectual rigor, creativity, and a commitment to student learning and growth.

“Dr. Yoshimura is a model teacher-scholar,” said Sara Hayden, Chair of the Communication Studies department. “As attested to by the many students who wrote letters in support of his nomination, he is the kind of teacher who is remembered long after students leave our campus.”

Yoshimura also serves as the Communication Studies department’s Director of Graduate Studies, and oversees a research program that focuses on the communication of vengeful and jealous emotion.

“He is a wonderful colleague,” Hayden added. “His work helps make the College and our Department excel.”

Lauren Fern  Mathematical Sciences

Lauren Fern is a lecturer in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, educating almost 400 students a semester at the introductory course-level. For Fern, who has taught math for over 13 years, the ultimate goal is to pass on her appreciation for math to as many students as possible. She also finds great value in instructing at the lower-level courses, because she is better able to establish a strong math foundation for the students.

“I’m psyched to wake up every day and go do my job,” Fern said in a recent interview with the Montana Kaimin. “If you find what you love and what you’re passionate about and you live your life thinking, learning and caring, you can make it a beautiful thing.”

Diane Friend  Astronomy

Diane Friend is a lecturer in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, where she teaches introductory Astronomy courses with subjects that range from “The Evolving Universe” to the “Science of Science Fiction.” She plays a pivotal role in teaching students how to gather and analyze astronomical data, and expects every student to be a thinking, questioning, and contributing member of their own academic development.

Friend’s passion for the stars extends beyond the classroom. In the summer, she can often be found hosting open houses at the Blue Mountain Observatory and during the year giving planetarium presentations to local schools.

The H&S Excellence Award for Teaching at the Introductory Level recognizes excellence in teaching by non tenure-track faculty members teaching our introductory courses, and is facilitated by the Helen and Winston Cox Educational Excellence Fund. The H&S Excellence Award for Teaching Across the Curriculum recognizes faculty members for their excellence in teaching at all levels of the curriculum, and is presented by the H&S Advisory Board.
Relaxed in his chair, Dennis Eck looks out a 3rd floor window at a tidal flow of foot traffic streaming through campus below. He smiles faintly, perhaps lost in the memories that are undoubtedly down there walking amidst the students on their way to another class.

“I’ve been lucky,” he says. “Now it’s time to make a difference.”

Funny thing about Eck’s statement, the difference to which he’s referring is already being made. Thanks to a series of gifts from he and his wife, Gretchen, H&S will soon boast some of the most advanced technology on campus.

Their contributions will help create “smart classrooms” in the College’s Liberal Arts Building. With renovations to begin this summer, the current plans for the classroom envision the use of hi-definition projectors; smart screen projectors; an adjustable “sky wall” partition; flexible furniture arrangements; and “idea paint” white board walls. New windows with exterior sun shades will also be installed to increase the opportunity for natural light.

These will be the first of a planned 32 classrooms to offer professors advanced audio/visual resources for their teaching and research.

“This new technology will enhance the kind of teaching, learning and research opportunities we can offer to our students and faculty,” said Dean Christopher Comer. “It is an immensely important step in our goal to renovate the Liberal Arts Building and move the College of Humanities and Sciences forward.”

In his business management career, which has spanned the United States and Australia, Dennis Eck discovered that technology benefited not only his customers and shareholders but also his employees. He especially appreciates the way that technology integrates different ways of doing things and helps distribute information among staff.
“When I came for a visit to campus last year,” he says, “I looked in the Liberal Arts Building and not much had changed since the 1960s. I thought, there is no reason you couldn’t take this building and bring it into a technologically modern era, to keep pace with the great professors you have.”

Graduating from the University of Montana in 1968 with a degree in History and Political Science, Eck attributes his liberal arts education with providing the foundation for critical thinking that has benefited him throughout his life. Now he is grateful to be able to give back.

“So many people think providing the opportunity gives them the credit,” Eck says, the chatter of students now echoing in the nearby halls inside the building. “But it doesn’t. It’s the people taking advantage of those opportunities, the hard workers. They’re the ones who truly deserve the praise.”

The conversation is interrupted by a gentle knock at the door. The time between classes is over. As if proving Eck’s point, the students start pouring in.

Featured Alum

Gifts to H&S enhance the student experience, improve academic programs, further research efforts and enrich the culture and community of UM and Missoula. Contact Senior Director of Development Marci Bozeman at marci.bozeman@mso.umt.edu or (406) 243-2646 to find out how you can contribute in a way that is meaningful to you!

*Visual representations provided by CTA Architects Engineers and are for conceptual purposes only. Actual renovations may deviate from images shown here.
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C/O College of Humanities and Sciences
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If you have any questions about donations, please contact:
Marci Bozeman at marci.bozeman@mso.umt.edu
or by calling 406.243.2646

We are happy to provide you with information about our giving programs including
the Dean’s Opportunity Fund, annual gifts, the President’s Club, setting up a scholarship, endowments,
or including the College of Humanities and Sciences in your will or estate plans.

Coming to Campus?
The College and the University of Montana have various events, lectures, programs and classes going on throughout the year.
Please contact us if you would like to visit the College, get a tour of the new buildings on campus,
attend a class, meet the Dean, or chat about your experience at the University of Montana.