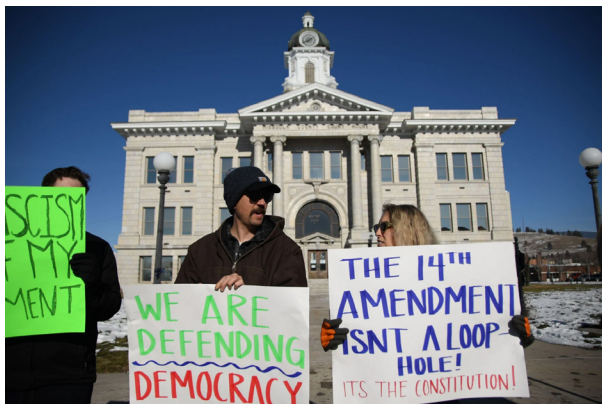


MONTANA KAIMIN

Under the new

Story by Elle Daniel



President Trump has issued over 60 executive orders since taking office. Here's how UM students and faculty are reacting.

administration



6 College restructure changes

12 Campus caffeine

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The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message" or "paper that brings news."

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DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 2 EP 10

It's time for UM to address student's fears

On Friday, the U.S. Forest Service fired 3,400 employees, 360 of which were from Montana, as a direct response to President Donald Trump's cuts to federal spending and bureaucracy. With the Univeristy of Montana's robust College of Forestry and Conservation, this will directly impact many graduates' career paths, which will likely be in the Forest Service, National Park Service or other public service sectors.

Since Trump took office for his second term, the federal government has been in chaos with a flurry of executive orders, resulting in a palpable sense of anxiety among the University of Montana's student body.

While many students are worried about financial aid, job prospects, research funds, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and disability programs, the University's administration has largely stayed quiet on these issues.

In an email sent Feb. 7 to UM employees and students, President Seth Bodnar stated "our dedication to education, our belief in the power of knowledge and our commitment to an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment" will remain "constant," but failed to give specifics as to what that will actually look like. The email also included a link to a website with updates and information. Similarly, the website is vague and provides little concrete answers to the questions anxious students are likely to have. Another page of UM's website, its' Inclusive Access and Success Plan, is also no longer available online.

To truly address students' uncertainty, the University needs to answer specific student concerns, so it's clear it cares about them. Instead of dancing around the issues with diplomatic language, UM needs to inform students exactly which executive orders might impact them and provide resources or solutions.

In an earlier email on Jan. 29 from Drew Riley, the chief enrollment officer, UM clearly communicated with students that the Trump administration's pause on

federal funding would not affect financial aid, loans or work-study funds. University correspondence can, and should be, this specific and direct all the time.

Correspondence to students from University administration should also highlight specific offices available to students, including counseling with the Curry Health Center, the Student Advocacy Resource Center and the Office of Disability Equity, among others. Additionally, several student groups for minorities, such as American Indian Student Services, the Black Student Union and the Latiné Student Union are not only great resources, but places students can find a community of people similar to them.

Similarly, UM's administration should equip its offices, including the Financial Aid Office, Diversity Advisory Council and Office of Creative Scholarship, to answer students' questions or point them in the direction of answers. Instead, UM seems complacent in letting the federal government take away students' opportunities.

It is abundantly clear that these changes are already here and impacting students' current lives and futures. Instead of hiding behind an email or letting professors answer the difficult questions by themselves, UM's administration needs to set an example of what it always claims to be: a place that supports each of its students and doesn't sit idly by when a student's right to an education, career or funding is taken away.

President Bodnar needs to step away from the computer and on to the Oval, where students have held multiple protests since Election Day. There, he could hear from students themselves and understand their concerns. The administration needs to emphatically reassure all students that UM will stand up for them and the programs they value. Even if UM doesn't have solutions, it can do something better: Listen.

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at claire.bernard@umontana.edu

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

2	8		4	3				
				2		3	1	
	5		1		8			
		8			6	2		
9					2			
4		5			3	8		9
						1	7	
		3		5	4			6
		6						

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Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

4	9	5	2	1	3	6	8	7
1	8	7	9	6	4	3	5	2
2	6	3	8	5	7	1	9	4
6	7	4	5	3	9	2	1	8
9	5	8	6	2	1	4	7	3
3	2	1	7	4	8	9	6	5
5	3	2	1	7	6	8	4	9
8	4	6	3	9	5	7	2	1
7	1	9	4	8	2	5	3	6

Snowed in



Calette Horris brushes over 6 inches of snow off her car in one of the only cleared parking spaces outside of Pantzer Hall on Feb. 17. **DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

In this week's briefs...

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UM REMAINS R1

The University of Montana has renewed its Research 1 designation despite changing qualifications that could impact smaller universities.

On Feb. 13, The Carnegie Foundation bestowed UM with the designation which recognizes universities with a high volume of research output and students graduating with doctorates.

"This is certainly good news for the University," Scott Whittenburg, vice president for research and creative scholarship, said to UM News. "This helps us recruit students – particularly graduate students – and also helps recruit top faculty who want to work at an R1 institution."

Less than 4% of colleges in the U.S. get the designation. UM first earned R1 in 2022, but spent over 20 years before that as R2. Montana State University first earned the designation in 2006.

"Earning R1, again, validates what is central to UM's very mission as a successful and vibrant public research University," President Seth Bodnar said to UM News.

The original qualifications to earn the title measured total amount of funding spent on research, total doctorates granted and then factored in the amount of faculty supporting research. This helped smaller universities, including UM, because the amount spent on research was divided by the faculty, meaning the more faculty the smaller the number.

In 2022, the Carnegie foundation streamlined its process. Now, universities only have to put out \$50 million or more toward research and graduate 70 doctorates. The foundation also increased how often universities are reevaluated from every five years to three.

According to previous Kaimin reporting, the University had no problem meeting the money spent on research, but the doctorates granted was harder to meet. In 2023, an article released by the Chronicle of Higher Education mentioned UM as a university that would lose its status, with only 50 doctorates granted per year.

Whittenburg told the Kaimin at the time

that it was still possible to meet R1, as it took the average number of doctorates over three years.

"We can do [it], but the data shows we're close," he said. "Therefore we have to at least be aware of it."

In fiscal year 2023, UM spent \$134 million on research and granted 71 doctorates. UM also spent 14% more the next year with nearly \$144 million spent for research.

"We still have some work to do as a campus to ensure we maintain our R1 status," Whittenburg said to UM News. "But at this time, we have cause for celebration."

STUDENTS HELP COMMUNITY MEMBERS FILE TAXES

Accounting majors at the University of Montana are helping low-income members of Missoula's community file their taxes this year.

"In the past, we've averaged close to a half a million dollars in returns back to the community," Leah Diehl, assistant professor of accounting at UM said to KPAX News.

Through the VITA Tax Return Program at the University, accounting students can help people who make \$58,000 a year or less file their tax returns. People who meet that qualification can set up a free appointment to meet with students on every Saturday from Feb. 4 through March 11.

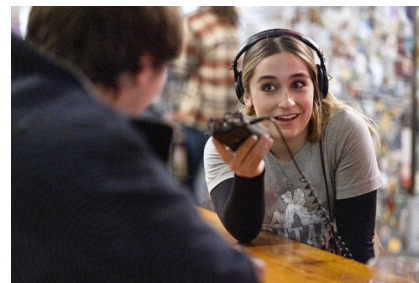
"It's great to give back. It's great to help provide these people with the best tax return that they can get, because that money can mean a lot to these people," Will Larson, an accounting major, said to KPAX News.

According to Diehl, these appointments not only help people get higher tax returns, as students can help get the maximum refund possible, but also help educate the students.

"For them to actually get to work with taxpayers locally, face-to-face, start to work on that client relationship skill along with the technical skills, it's so valuable for our students," Diehl said to KPAX News.

The program currently has a waitlist, but people can sign up for it on the University of Montana's College of Business website at <https://www.umd.edu/business/stories/121924vita.php>.

Confessions of a college town: Pie Hole



Montana Kaimin audio editor Bayliss Flynn interviews a Pie Hole patron after a 2 a.m. rush on Saturday, Feb. 8.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Listen to this week's Kaimin Cast where Bayliss Flynn and company take you through the confessions of a college town. Like the podcast episode "24 Hours at the Golden Apple," where "This American Life" reporters and producers completed shifts interviewing patrons and employees at a Chicago diner, the Montana Kaimin was inspired to find the "Golden Apple" of our college town. Pie Hole is a pizza place that has been open for about a decade. Seven days a week, it operates from 11 a.m. to 3 a.m. It's become the go-to spot for the frenzied and famished. We took shifts to cover the 14 hours of daily operation on a bustling Friday in downtown Missoula. "I feel like in a really incredibly divisive time in our history, it's nice to see people coming together over food," National Geographic photographer Ami Vitale said.



POLICE BLOTTER

ABBY WILLIAMS
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It seems like everybody and their sister were doing some drugs and picking fights this week. A guy with weed in Turner Hall, two fights and some drunk driving? C'mon guys. Go outside and build a snowman, and touch some frozen grass while you're at it.

FEB. 3 – EXTRA, EXTRA!

A student got a minor in possession charge at Turner Hall when they were caught with five counts of weed. Five counts? How much perfume will you need to get the smell out? At least it's not dirty socks and unwashed shirts. Watch out Missoula, looks like we're getting our 100th dispensary.

FEB. 9 – UNSERIOUS FIGHT

There was a fight and assault in Duniway Hall with the aggressor being referred for conduct. I wouldn't be able to take anyone seriously if I was having a fight in the dorms. That's the most unserious place to have an argument. To be fair, the walls may be easy to punch through. Say hey to your new roomies!

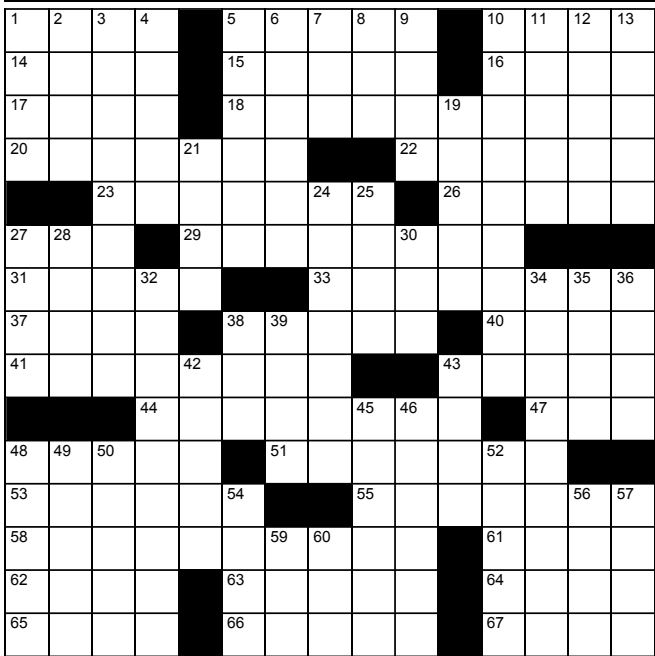
FEB. 11 – TAKE A HIKE

A student was arrested for driving under the influence while in the Lewis and Clark parking lot. Look, I get that it's cold, it's snowy, it's icy. But drinking in your car? I mean, just slide your way over to the villages and drink there. This is why planning ahead of time is such a useful skill. Use Google Calendar or whatnot. Here, I'll do it for you: 9:30 p.m., get drunk in my car. 11 p.m., get arrested. 1 a.m., post bail.

FEB. 12 – GO TO THERAPY

Damn, it seems a lot of people had pent up anger that came out way too harshly. First a fight in Duniway Hall and now a verbal one in the Sisson apartments? Go to a therapist, please. Or cry into some chocolate, or a pillow. Literally anything but yelling at another person. This aggressor got a warning, but still. If the police are coming to knock on your door because you woke up some neighbors that are trying to sleep, maybe pool together \$20 and go get some gas station snacks.

The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke



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- ACROSS**
- 1 Up to it
 - 5 Mover's challenge
 - 10 Task for Perry Mason
 - 14 USPS concern
 - 15 Key
 - 16 Enthusiastic
 - 17 Facts, briefly
 - 18 Sparkling
 - 20 Kind of diver
 - 22 Geriatrics focus
 - 23 Dieter's no-no
 - 26 Like notebook paper
 - 27 Triumphant cry
 - 29 Male hormone
 - 31 Rock Hudson flick, "___ Come Back"
 - 33 Willing to go along
 - 37 Haiku, e.g.
 - 38 Long suit
 - 40 Molten rock
 - 41 Toothed wheel
 - 43 Up and about
 - 44 Producing tears
 - 47 Bit of advice
 - 48 Use an SOS pad
 - 51 College life
 - 53 Carl Sagan series
 - 55 "Thinking Out Loud" singer Ed
 - 58 Pick up speed
 - 61 Jazz singer Simone
 - 62 Pained sound
 - 63 Zealous
 - 64 Places for props
 - 65 Component
 - 66 Bodega, for one
 - 67 Qatar's continent
- DOWN**
- 1 In the thick of
 - 2 Thorn in one's side
 - 3 Candy in a roll
 - 4 Wed secretly
 - 5 Urban bird
 - 6 Cuba, e.g.
 - 7 Rope-a-dope boxer
 - 8 Surfing site
 - 9 Palindromic emperor
 - 10 Busch Stadium team
 - 11 Flu variety
 - 12 Barely burn
 - 13 Sharp-___
 - 19 Corby of "The Waltons"
 - 21 Capone trademark
 - 24 Severe
 - 25 1959 film, "___ Like it Hot"
 - 27 Mont Blanc's range
 - 28 Kind of skirt
 - 30 "Scram!"
 - 32 Compensation
 - 34 AA and AAA
 - 35 57, to Caesar
 - 36 Tombstone lawman
 - 38 Dog registry org.
 - 39 Red Cross supply
 - 42 Actress Channing
 - 43 On the calm side
 - 45 Tony, to Jeannie
 - 46 Cleave
 - 48 Rascal
 - 49 Winter drink
 - 50 Acting award
 - 52 Brainy bunch
 - 54 Matches, as a wager
 - 56 Pro's opposite
 - 57 "Hidden Figures" org.
 - 59 Squeal (on)
 - 60 Long ___
- Answers to Previous Crossword:**
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| B | A | R | E | A | T | L | A | S | S | L | A | M |
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| D | A | S | T | A | R | D | E | N | T | R | A | P |
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| C | A | T | H | E | D | R | A | L | L | I | S | T |
| O | S | H | A | C | O | B | A | L | T | B | L | U |
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| E | Y | E | D | P | A | R | T | S | E | W | E | R |

Horoscope

SNL-o-scope

MACKENNA GLEAVE
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Saturday Night Live — the battle cry of generations. There's no better way to celebrate its 50th anniversary than staying off the shed, singing along to another one of Adam Sandler's songs, hearing about a close alien encounter and rooting for DA BEARS. So, it's time to yeet and skrrt to the stars to find a new niche reference to laugh to yourself about.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): The confidence suits you, Pisces, and that's why Sally O'Malley is the gal for you. The caboose might be a little loose, but you were born to strut. So pull up those red pants, kick, stretch and KICK into this week because you'rreeeee 50 — at least spiritually.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Your ignorance keeps you "OK" and moving through life with no worries, and that's why you're Every Chad Ever. Keep doing you, stay focused on your penis, do the doink-doink, wait — no, come back, you can't walk away mid-sentence. Just remember, *fart noise*, SAFETY.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): We're here to tell you early that you're not going to amount to jack-squat, Taurus, but that's okay, because we hear motivational speaking is the next big thing. Living in a van down by the river is the only logical choice for you, so start eating a steady diet of government cheese, don't be a writer, roll some doobies and go for it.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): We've got a fever, and the only prescription is more cowbell. Your passion doesn't go unnoticed, Gemini, so we — and Bruce Dickenson — encourage you to keep exploring the space. So do us fellas a service and bring more cowbell into everyone's lives.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): It's time for this season's eating and no one can resist your Schweddy balls, Cancer. They're bigger than everyone expected, slightly misshapen and soggy, but we still love you. So, go talk about your balls to anyone that will listen, because it's for everyone's pleasure.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): All right, listen up, it's time you punks got a lesson from our dear friend Lorenzo from the "Scared Straight" program 'cause this here is real. If you're

going to tell a far-fetched tale about what really happened Friday night, maybe don't base your lie off a movie plot. We don't want you to meet the wizard of ass behind the shower curtain.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): You're a total bast — buh bye. But at least everyone knows what you're think — buh bye. You may be bitter about your career choice, but it's never too late to — buh bye. You don't need to wait on anyo — buh bye. Knock knock, buh bye.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Someone needs to be realistic, Libra, and that's why you are Debby Downer (wah wah wahhhh). Mascots would be dead without your warnings of the early stages of heat stroke, so don't let haters keep you quiet. We recommend an excessive use of sunscreen to keep you away from worries of melanoma.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): All of those celebrity voices aren't just in your head, Scorpio. We can hear them too, and that's why we dumbed the game down. Take a few extra seconds to think before you speak and do not show le tits now, no matter the money offered. Perhaps take a commercial break before things get too out of hand and do not get reading lesson from Sean Connery.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): It's your sleeson kojo, and time to report for booty. You're "Guy who just bought a boat," and you might have a small penis, but you do the breast with what you don't have. We recommend a rooftop bar for your next date, a regular bar but hornier, to distract from your terrible dong and to get into her endzone.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): Shizz! Christmas is your season, Capricorn, and there's no better way to celebrate than a good ol' fashion joke swap. It's all fun and games until your career is ruined from the slight racism in the jokes: So be afraid to say it, get your news from somewhere outside of Weekend Update and stop using your "Black voice."

AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18): Hear us out: You're a boss and that's why The Lonely Island is the only way to encapsulate your chaotic energy. We suggest singing after having sex, throwing things on the ground, trying a three-way and perfecting the creep. Perhaps don't put your dick in a box or fuck each other's moms though, #stayhumble.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

College of Education denies plan to restructure

EMILY MESSER

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The University of Montana College of Education has decided to not merge with humanities and social sciences after considering the effect on funding and students.

In October 2024, a proposed college restructure announced its goal to split the College of Humanities and Sciences into a College of Humanities and Social Sciences and a College of Science. The College of Education also planned to merge with the humanities. To form the plan, two task forces were appointed to gather input from the departments along with input from the STEM sciences department to help form the plan.

"But in the end, we were unanimous in that we just couldn't see how this would benefit anyone in a way forward"

— Dan Lee, dean of education

The Phyllis J. Washington College of Education task force, led by Dan Lee, the dean of education, and Matt Semanoff, the dean of humanities and science, planned to write a proposal to establish this merger and present it to the Faculty Senate in Spring 2025, but they soon began questioning the plan.

"We looked at that staffing, looked at financing, we looked at the why. We spent a lot of time on the why," Lee said. "We even had the president and provost come several times to talk to us about the why."

Lee said he was concerned there would be a lack of connection between students, professors and the dean if they created this larger college. This could affect the dean's ability to do faculty evaluations and connect with students, which Lee said is more feasible in a smaller college.

According to the fall 2024 enrollment census, the College of Education had 541 students and the College of Humanities and Sciences had 3,287 students – combining to nearly 59% of the total undergraduate population.

"In the end, it wouldn't have served students very well and that was a main



A photo illustration shows the Skaggs and Eck Liberal Arts buildings standing on a snowy February day. **MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

concern of ours," Lee said. "How does this merger serve students better?" We just couldn't see how that would make things better for students."

"In fact, it might cost more if you were to do it properly with the amount of personnel and staff"

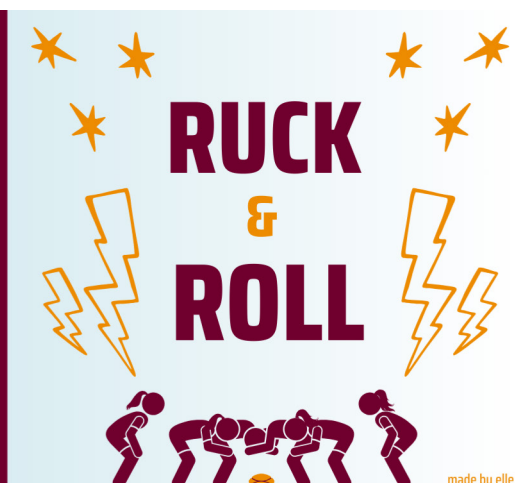
— Dan Lee, Dean of Education

When the task force considered staffing they determined that a dean could not specialize in the department of education, humanities and social sciences. The restructure would require multiple associate deans to support the larger college and each department, ultimately costing more money.

"We didn't see a lot of savings there,

frankly, none. In fact, it might cost more if you were to do it properly with the amount of personnel and staff," Lee said. "The second concern was that we're just not all the same."

Lee said social sciences and the humanities are taught and executed differently. Further concern rose over how to support the humanities and social sciences if they merged. Lee said the goal



was to make the colleges better than they are now, not just adequate.

"We concluded that this move would not bode well for anyone," Lee said. "It was great working with people from another college. But in the end, we were unanimous in that we just couldn't see how this would benefit anyone in a way forward."

This merger would lead to a loss of identity for each college, so the task force recommended not to combine the colleges to the provost and president of UM.

"To their leadership credit, they listened to us and they heard us. I don't think it was the answer they wanted, but they respected our position and were willing to change theirs to go forward," Lee said.

The second task force created aimed to separate the College of Sciences. This would remove the science, technology, engineering and math majors from the College of Humanities and Science.

"We're thinking about the students who are going to be here in 10 years, looking to fill those open science jobs and making sure that we've got a college ready to serve them"

— John DeBoer, vice provost for academic affairs

The College of Science task force recommended the creation of separate college and submitted their level two proposal to the Faculty Senate on Feb. 6. A level two proposal is a significant academic program change that requires prior approval through a request to plan with the Board of Regents. Then the request often goes through a final review with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Following this, another level two proposal will be submitted to change the name of the College of Humanities and Science, according to an email sent by the Office of the Provost on Jan. 31.

"I support that UM needs a greater presence in the sciences. We are kind of seen as a liberalized college, which we are, but we do phenomenal research in science," Lee said.

John DeBoer, vice provost for academic affairs, said over the next 10 years, the number of jobs in the sciences will increase by 22%, according to labor statistics the University obtained, which

is not equal to the current rate of STEM graduates it has right now.

"If we're going to plan for future demand, this is one way to do that. We're thinking about the students who are going to be here in 10 years, looking to fill those open science jobs and making sure that we've got a college ready to serve them," DeBoer said.

Lee also said creating this college would allow the University to build its prominence and recruiting in STEM. Another benefit Bowler said would be to create a more focused curriculum for both colleges, which would emphasize hands-on learning in the STEM labs.

"It's really important in the sciences, since we do a lot of federally funded research, to use these opportunities created by those research dollars in our labs to provide independent research opportunities for undergraduates," said Bruce Bowler, director of the Center for Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics. "That's a really important aspect of what we do in the sciences, and we'll be able to focus more on orienting our resources in the College of Science to that."

Britnie Mamuzich, a sociology major with an emphasis in criminology, said she hadn't heard about the restructure until the provost email on Jan. 31, but thinks it would benefit the education system.

"It could help the ratio of students to professors, and also potentially help with the departments, adding some more specialized upper division classes to those departments as well," Mamuzich said.

She said there are specialized classes such as a human trafficking course she would have loved to take while in the program, but they were never offered. She is excited to see the possibilities and changes this could bring, but said it won't impact her as she graduates this May.

Bowler said this could also improve advising within STEM, due to a vertical curriculum that requires students to stack college courses in a certain order as they go through the program. Both Bowler and Lee agree this split in colleges would benefit students and create more in-depth courses. These courses could be more detailed on one topic instead of wider classes, which Lee thinks students will appreciate.

"There's a lot of things the faculty is really excited about doing. They can do that when they're a smaller unit. It's easier to move smaller groups forward," Lee said.

DeBoer said creating the new college requires a new administrative structure.

This would include hiring a dean for the College of Science, along with administrative staff members within the office of the dean. Based on the College of Education administrative staff this could

"In order to do it, we have to figure out how to do it in a way that has the least impact on our limited budget"

— John DeBoer, vice provost for academic affairs

mean six potential new positions. The College of Humanities and Sciences also has six staff members under the dean and 22 chairs, or directors, of various majors.

"It's not as simple as just adding a dean," DeBoer said. "It is one of the reasons why we're having robust conversations about whether this is a good idea, because in order to do it, we have to figure out how to do it in a way that has the least impact on our limited budget."

According to faculty wages in 2023,

the College of Education dean made \$101,000 as a base salary, and the College of Humanities and Sciences dean made \$159,000. This means the University could spend at least \$100,000 to hire the new dean of science, not including the additional funding for administrative staff.

Currently the level two proposal for the College of Sciences is in the Faculty Senate to be evaluated. Lee said he is optimistic the proposal will be passed. If it is, the proposal will move forward to the Board of Regents meeting in May. The plan is to implement this new college at the start of the following school year, according to DeBoer.

"We think that's a good way moving forward so we can have more visibility in humanities and social sciences and dedicated leadership in the STEM fields," DeBoer said.

Emily Messer is a news reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at emily.messer@umontana.edu. For more stories from Messer and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com



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Under the new

Story by Elle Daniel | Photos by Noah Epps

By the end of the first day of his second term as president on Jan. 20, Donald Trump signed 26 executive orders, the most first-day orders in American history.

Throughout the next four weeks, Trump's executive orders totaled more than 60, instating deep structural changes in policy from foreign affairs to transgender rights. Several of these resulted in legal action by states

against the federal government. Judges across multiple states quickly blocked Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship, and another blocked the foreign aid freeze of organizations like the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The flurry of orders, memos and additional directives written and signed by the president have caused confusion on the University of Montana campus among students and

faculty. A memo issued by the Office of Management and Budget on Jan. 27 froze federal grants and loans and initially left University faculty "seeking clarification" on the ramifications to federal Pell Grants, scholarships and additional federal financial aid. It was later rescinded on Jan. 29.

Some executive orders surrounding immigration have caused concerns among the international students on campus and others have prompted

UM faculty to review their research projects, leaving funding up in the air until they can be assessed.

Not every executive order will directly impact UM, but many have the ability to change the lives of students on and off campus.

This week, the Kaimin breaks down the executive orders most likely to impact students and the bounds of Trump's presidential powers.

Constitutional law and executive powers

While judges across multiple states have blocked some of Trump's executive orders, that doesn't mean they're stopped permanently.

For several orders, constitutional lawyer Constance Van Kley thinks the battle between the states and the federal government could lead all the way to the Supreme Court.

Van Kley, an assistant professor of law at UM, worked as a clerk for two federal judges on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and later as a director of litigation for Upper Seven Law.

Van Kley explained the government is made up of three separate branches.

The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court, the executive branch includes the president and the cabinet, and the legislative branch, commonly called Congress, refers to both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each has a role to play in crafting and enforcing laws and they all work to keep the power equal, which is called checks and balances.

Congress creates statutes, or laws, the president then steps in to enforce them and the Supreme Court interprets them.

"The president generally does not have the power to take action that's inconsistent with the law that's been passed by Congress," Van Kley said.

When a president signs an executive order that may be considered unconstitutional, states have the

power to temporarily, and potentially permanently, stop them.

The parties challenging the order can ask for a restraining order and a preliminary injunction through a judge. A restraining order can be placed without an initial response by the government and can not be appealed, but expires after a set amount of time.

A preliminary injunction works a bit differently, preventing an executive order from taking effect until it's removed by a judge or the case is resolved.

A win by the parties challenging the order would result in a permanent injunction, stopping the order from going into effect at all. At the initial preliminary injunction stage, or after a case is resolved, Van Kley said, the federal government can appeal to a higher level court — all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Van Kley said she thinks certain executive orders will end up in the Supreme Court.

Signed on Jan. 20, the order "protecting the meaning and value of American citizenship," attempted to ban birthright citizenship. Birthright citizenship, established in 1868, automatically grants citizenship to anyone born in America, even if their parents are not legal citizens.

Because birthright citizenship is granted under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, state judges from Washington, Maryland, Massachusetts and New Hampshire viewed Trump's executive order as

unconstitutional and blocked it by filing injunctions.

"Everybody that I've heard from expects that birthright citizenship is going to be resolved by the Supreme Court, but there isn't a guarantee of that," Van Kley said.

According to Van Kley, the Supreme Court might not want to hear the case at an early stage and instead wait until it's fully resolved.

Van Kley also believes impoundments will find their way to the Supreme Court. An impoundment occurs when Congress allocates funding for a program that the president then withholds.

Trump issued an executive order on Jan. 20 calling for the end of all federal government programs involved with diversity, equity and inclusion. Additionally, it required the assessment and termination of environmental justice offices and positions, but did not initially specify what was considered an environmental justice office.

According to Van Kley, high-level members within the executive branch issued memos explaining how the order would be executed within different departments. While they're being reviewed, funding for federal programs could be frozen, including money allocated for research projects at universities, including UM.

The order caused the University to pause its ability to "draw down" funding for research, said Scott Whittenburg, the vice president for research and creative scholarship

at UM.

According to Whittenburg, grants and contracts are "cost reimbursable," which means the University can pay its faculty and workers for research, buy equipment and then bill the federal sponsor afterward.

But that order was also blocked by two separate judges for two different cases. Van Kley said she thinks the strongest argument against the order is that it violates the separation of powers, or the checks and balances. "When Congress says, 'We're creating this program, here's the money to implement [it],' the president has to follow through on that," she said.

The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 allows Congress to examine the executive branch's ability to withhold funding. Van Kley said she believes Trump may try to challenge the constitutionality of the act in the Supreme Court.

"The impoundment issue is likely to have the broadest impact on universities across the country and sort of the structure of our government," Van Kley said. "If the president has this power of impoundment, it would allow a president to effectively invalidate any number of laws that have been passed and have been enforced historically."

Van Kley said it's too early to tell the impact of other executive orders Trump has issued, such as ones banning transgender women from competing in sports. "The executive order is essentially the sort

of broad principle," she said. "Then there's all this work that agencies and other decision-makers need to do in order for us to know what that really looks like on the ground."

Though it may be too early to tell the impacts of these orders within local communities, Van Kley said she feels confident whatever specific rules are set will be challenged immediately in court.

According to Van Kley, Trump's orders follow a pattern of the executive branch exerting more power, starting since former President Barack Obama's terms from 2009 to 2017. The difference with this administration, Van Kley said, is that Trump is testing the boundaries of executive powers far more than past presidents.

From Van Kley's perspective, presidents have always tested the boundaries of the Constitution, and now the usage of executive orders has ratcheted up through previous administrations when Congress "stopped playing ball with the executive branch."

But the larger question of whether the federal government has entered a new pattern of exercising executive powers is still yet to be answered. "I think we would need to see willful noncompliance with a court order to really be evaluating that question," Van Kley said.

Despite legal action taken by state judges, campus research projects, programs and jobs could still be on the line. Whittenburg is working to find out just how many.

President Donald Trump has issued over 60 executive orders since taking office on Jan. 20. Here are the ones with the most potential to impact campus.

Administration

ex·ec·u·tive or·der

noun *US·law* /ig'zekyədɪv, eg'zekyədɪv// 'ôrdər/

An executive order is a directive signed by the president to manage the operations of the federal government. However, executive orders can not override laws passed by Congress, called statutes, or acts. An executive order also can not

conflict with the rights given to American citizens by the U.S. Constitution. If a state or federal judge finds an executive order may violate the Constitution, they can file to block the command, requiring the order to go to court.

Research on the line

On Feb. 7, UM President Seth Bodnar sent out a campus-wide message to students vaguely addressing the recent policies from Trump's administration.

"The last few weeks have seen a flurry of activity at the federal level that has created a significant amount of policy uncertainty," Bodnar stated. "As with every administration transition, we are closely monitoring the evolving federal landscape and consulting with colleagues across the country to fully understand the potential impacts for higher education and for UM specifically."

Bodnar stated in the email that UM would have "unwavering commitment" to its students and faculty, but did not elaborate on the impacts of the policies on campus or specific measures the University would be taking to implement or resist them.

The Kaimin reached out twice to UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz for an interview with Bodnar but did not get a response.

Scott Whittenburg, the vice president for research and creative scholarship at the University, recently sent a campus-wide email asking faculty for an estimate of

jobs supported by UM research.

In the email, provided to the Kaimin by School of Journalism professor and Kaimin advisor Jason Begay, Whittenburg stated President Bodnar is "working with state and federal officials to provide an overview of the potential economic impacts to MT."

There are two categories of federal funding: direct and indirect costs. Direct costs cover the money that goes to students and faculty for their work. Indirect costs, also known as the facilities and administration rate, cover paying for additional support staff, equipment and facilities.

The facilities and administration rate, is negotiated between the University and Health and Human Services. The administrative side is fixed at 26%, and that negotiation mainly takes place over facilities. The more the University spends on building out research facilities, the higher the rate, Whittenburg said.

Recent executive guidance from the National Institute of Health capped the facilities rate at 15%, opposed to the University's current rate of 47%. A cap like that, Whittenburg said, would impact the University somewhere between

\$2.1 to \$2.6 million a year in funding.

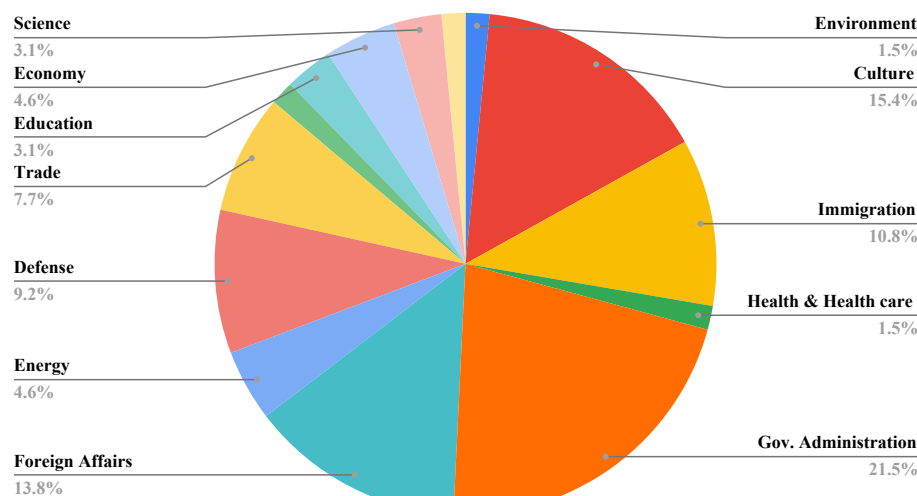
"In reality, we can handle a \$2.1, \$2.6 million reduction in [facilities and administration]," Whittenburg said. "Currently, with the injunction placed, [the federal government] isn't going to do any more reductions, presumably. But we'll just see what the future looks like."

In the meantime, Whittenburg said he and his staff have looked through the various project titles to see which ones may be in trouble given the executive orders targeting diversity, equity and inclusion.

In compliance with the executive order, the University's ability to draw down funding was paused while they reviewed their research projects. "Therefore we are not drawing funds," Whittenburg said. "The University is just increasingly becoming negative in some of those categories."

Going through project titles for climate-related language is one thing, but descriptions about the research is another. "For us to look at statements of work is much more

Executive order catagory breakdown



difficult for us to do," Whittenburg said.

Advocacy from Montana's senators has also helped to mitigate the impacts of the administration's orders, Whittenburg said.

"Senator Daines in particular, but Senator Sheehy as well, has supported putting us in contact with people ... to make the impact on the institution smaller," he said. The awards and projects that may be in line to lose funding are sent to their congressional delegation for review.

The University is trying to free up the ability to draw down funding for the projects risking funding loss.

"The advice we've been providing to people is to look at their statement of work, look at their titles, avoid the keywords that may be problematic," Whittenburg said. "I've been saying this for years, we

don't actually do climate related research here. We do perhaps [research] the impact of climate change, without explicitly referring to it as climate change research. As long as people do that, I think we'll be okay long term."

Whittenburg said some faculty and students impacted by the executive orders have already been given stop-work orders and can not be paid further for their research. Whittenburg did not name who had been affected, but said it included two graduate students who were able to find alternative sources.

"In certain cases we can take care of it, but if it's every funding agency, it will eventually impact students," he said.

While Whittenburg said the University is currently able to manage the changes, other students are still figuring out their next steps.

Transgender rights targeted

As a transgender student hoping to pursue a career in education, there are a number of executive orders on Bell Smith's mind.

Smith, 20, began considering their options when the election results declared Trump as president. Only a freshman in their first semester at UM, Smith made a plan to leave the country if things took a turn for the worse, and it constantly played in the back of their mind.

"I'm definitely worried. I'm definitely scared," Smith said. "I'm hoping that by the time I graduate, none of this stuff will be in place."

Several of Trump's recent executive orders have targeted transgender rights. One order, signed on Jan. 20, defined sex as either male or female and declared the federal government will only recognize those sexes, removing gender and gender identity from federal policies and documents. The order unsettled Smith. "I'm definitely scared as a trans person to exist," they said. "Me and my community are constantly targeted."

Another executive order, signed Feb. 5, pulled all funding from educational programs that allow transgender women to compete in women's sports. Additionally, the order instructs the U.S. to withdraw from international sports programs that allow transgender women and encourages the secretary of state to use "all appropriate and available measures" to force the International Olympic Committee to "adjust" standards on participation in women's sports.

"I plan to stay in America for as long as I am allowed to safely," they said. "If it gets to a point where it's not safe to exist, then I won't be an American."

Smith recently started taking hormones to transition. They are attempting to stockpile estrogen in case they are no longer able to access it. But they're hopeful that the directives from the president won't stick.

"It's trying to be a scare tactic of like, 'Hey, we're doing this stuff. You need to settle down,'" Smith said.

The executive order restricting gender also requires government documents, like passports and visas, to reflect biological sex.

Outside of transgender rights, Smith worries about the future of education. As a history education major with a minor in political science, Smith is keeping a keen eye on Trump's attempts to defund and eliminate the Department of Education.

The Department of Education was created by Congress in May 1979 as part of the Department of Education Organization Act. According to the Washington Post and Time Magazine, Trump would need the support of Congress to dismantle it.

The Department of Education helps distribute federal financial aid, including Pell Grants and Federal Work-Study Programs. Jon Valant, a director for the Brown Center on Education Policy, said in an interview with CNBC Trump's agenda could potentially move to privatize student loans and financial aid.

Smith helps run the social media accounts Stand Up Fight Back, a grassroots activist organization started by their close friend, Cyrus Gertz. The friends recently led a protest on the Oval on Feb. 8.

Smith isn't fully assured the University will protect students who might be targeted by Trump's executive orders. "In my mind, universities and corporations are willing to put money first," they said. "That's just something I would need to see actively happen in order to feel like I'm willing to put my belief in school."



Raised in Okinawa, Japan, history education major Bell Smith recently came to the United States to attend the University of Montana. Smith worries about the safety of themselves and others as numerous executive orders have been made by the Trump administration targeting transgender people.

Holding onto a diverse future

Trump's executive orders, including federal freezes on foreign aid and the withdrawal from the World Health Organization, could potentially impact other countries beyond the United States.

Second-year grad student Shafiqul Islam predicts an impact not just on America, but his home country of Bangladesh.

Islam, who plans to graduate in May with his master's in literature, attends the University of Montana on a Fulbright scholarship.

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program gives grants to students who want to study abroad. For Islam, it brought him from Bangladesh to Montana to continue studying ecocriticism.

While Islam said he is not concerned about his grant, he worries about the Trump administration's actions preventing future Fulbright students from studying in the U.S.

Kylla Benes, the director of external scholarships and fellowships at UM, stated in an email to the Kaimin that, so far, the Fulbright program has not been affected and applications for the program will continue as usual.

If funding were to be impacted, Islam predicts a loss of culture and community for international students on campus. Students studying abroad on Fulbright scholarships are guided to act as cultural ambassadors, Islam said.

In terms of his own future, Islam considered universities outside of the U.S. If he is unable to get into his top choice, Islam is considering applying to doctorate programs abroad, including Norway and Australia.

"The U.S., as of now, doesn't feel like a foreign country to me, because of all the people that I know here," he said. "So if I have to leave this, that means I will have to start again somewhere else."

Fulbright grants have helped Islam get in touch with other students from around the world, which he said helps broaden his perspective on climate studies. "If the Fulbright funding is cut, you lose those opportunities, then the future generations will be affected," he said.

Islam was born in a town outside of Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he witnessed the large-scale extraction of sand from the Padma river wreak havoc, eroding the banks and causing major flooding. After Islam witnessed family members lose their homes and belongings to flooding, he decided to



Shafiqul Islam, a second-year grad student, came to the United States from Bangladesh as a Fulbright Scholar. He is concerned about how the recent flurry of executive orders will affect opportunities for foreign students.

study climate injustice.

It's organizations like the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, that provided Bangladesh with over \$300 million in aid in 2024, according to the database Foreign Assistance.

A Jan. 20 executive order by Trump stated the foreign aid industry and bureaucracy is "not aligned with American interests," and ordered a 90-day pause in foreign development assistance. This hit organizations like USAID hard, causing mass layoffs and ending research projects.

"Stopping the funding is one thing, but how it affects people will have long, lasting consequences," Islam said.

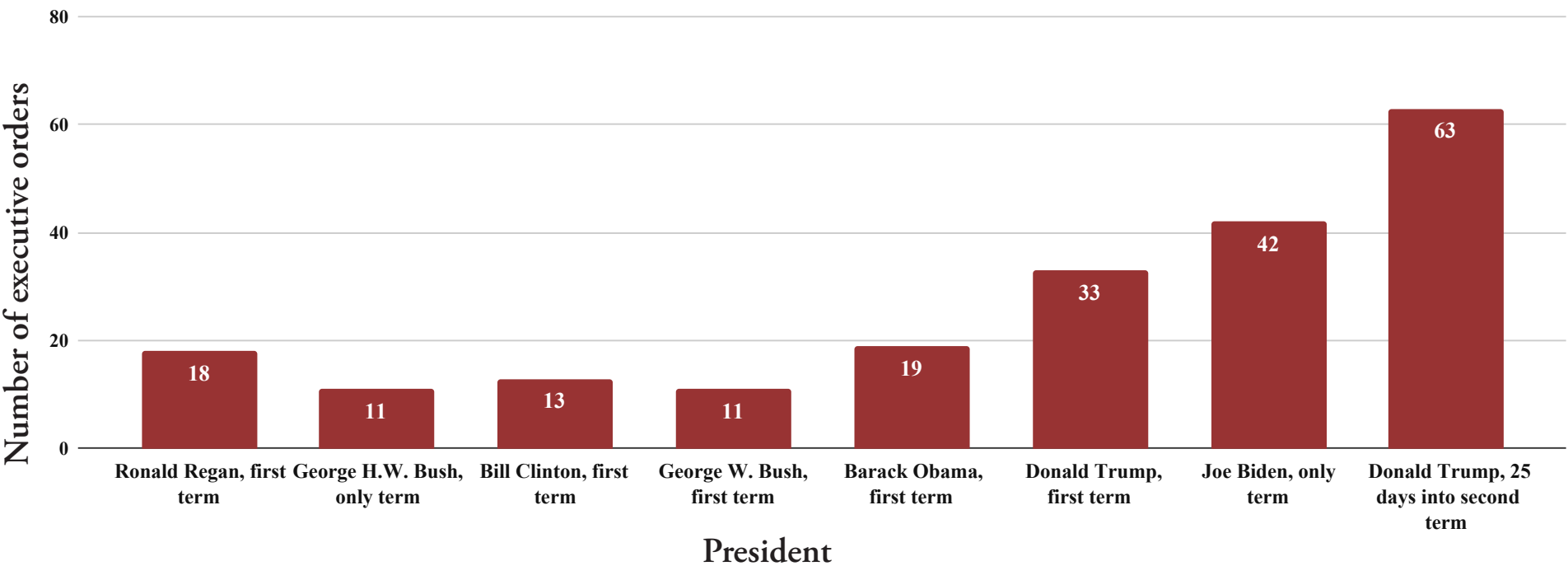
On campus, Islam also serves as the president of the International Students Association. He organizes events for the small community of international students, which he said comprises roughly 1.5% of campus.

One particular executive order issued by Trump caused paranoia and concern among the international students, Islam said. Signed on Jan. 20, the order targets immigration laws and empowers both the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, to deport undocumented immigrants.

The campus Office of Global Engagement sent an email to international students instructing them on the proper protections if they're stopped by ICE, including carrying identification at all times and staying calm while being questioned. Islam said the email came after multiple students reached out to the office for guidance.

Islam said he believes America is built on diversity. "Globally, the U.S. is known as a melting pot," he said. "So if that fundamental aspect of the U.S. is lost, that should concern Americans."

Number of executive issued orders by presidents in their first 100 days



Indigenous citizenship

Wally Coburn, a 20-year-old sophomore at UM and a member of the Blackfeet tribe, spends a lot of time in their dorm room in order to cope with the recent executive orders.

“I have kind of just been scared and keeping to myself right now,” they said.

Coburn took several reactive measures after Trump’s slew of executive orders, including stockpiling birth control and making sure they had proper identification.

Worried about their ability to pay for school after Trump’s initial federal loan freeze, Coburn

pulled a small investment fund set up by their late grandmother.

“Funding was the wake up call,” Coburn said. “I didn’t want to be funding these companies that are in [Trump’s] pocket. My grandmother wouldn’t have wanted that with her money. I don’t want it. My mom doesn’t want it.”

Aside from being concerned about their transgender friends, Coburn said they are worried about access to birth control and other contraceptives. To protect themselves, they requested a six month supply of birth control from their pharmacy rather

than their typical three month installment. But a six-month prescription wasn’t covered by their insurance, and Coburn paid \$31 to cover the cost.

Like Islam, Coburn is keeping an eye on the activities of ICE. They applied for a new passport to keep on them, in addition to their tribal identification.

Coburn dual majors in biology and art, with a focus on genetics. Once they’ve gotten their degrees, they’re looking to study abroad. Trump’s attempt to reverse birthright citizenship particularly put them on edge.

Coburn worries the 1924

American Indian Citizenship Act, which established citizenship for Indigenous populations in America, could be overturned if the president succeeds in reversing birthright citizenship.

Trump’s lawyers cited the 1884 court case, *Elk v. Wilkens*, where the Supreme Court ruled Indigenous people born on reservations were not “subject to jurisdiction” of the states and were not “constitutionally entitled to citizenship.”

“It’s only been 100 years since Native Americans had citizenship granted to them,” Loburn said.

According to Coburn, their

hometown of Browning has a higher population of veterans, including Coburn’s father.

Trump’s executive orders targeting diversity, equity and inclusion would have the potential to impact veterans, something Coburn takes personally.

“I feel especially betrayed,” they said. “I was surrounded by that kind of culture, respecting the sacrifices they’ve done, and then just to get that slap in the face of just, ‘We might revoke your citizenship despite all of the contributions you’ve had to our country.’”

What’s next?

According to Van Kley, the assistant professor of law at UM, whether or not the country is in a constitutional crisis remains to be seen, but, she said, “I think that the concerns about that are legitimate.”

“This feels different because we’re so used to our individual rights really driving the narrative,” she said. “What will really be the test is compliance with court orders.”

President Bodnar’s campus-wide email stated that despite

the changes, the University’s “dedication to education, the belief in the power of knowledge and its commitment to an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment” will “remain constant.”

Though more concrete answers are still yet to come, research and creative scholarships director, Whittenburg, is holding steady despite the unknowns and the potential for a longer legal battle.

“It’s just an age of uncertainty,” he said.

Additional reporting by Claire Bernard and Mackenna Gleave

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Student choreographers bring cranes and carousels to regional conference

KATE WIDMER

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As the seats of the Open Dance Theater filled for the annual American College Dance Association Benefit Concert, there was an extra buzz in the air.

The Feb. 7 ACDA Benefit Concert aimed to raise money for the performers to attend an upcoming regional conference, while also giving the public a chance to see the dances performed.

Typically, only one dance performance is selected for presentation at the High-Desert Regional Conference of the American College Dance Association, an annual showcase of works by dance students that will be held in Laramie, Wyoming, on March 26 to 29. This year, two were selected, both by dance students in their junior year: “Ciclo” by Isabela Sant’Anna-Skites and “The Sedge” by Taylor Ferguson.

Each extended arm and careful leap had a little extra spark as the performances carried on.

Sant’Anna-Skites is a Brazilian-American dancer and choreographer behind “Ciclo,” named for the Brazilian-Portuguese word for “cycle.” Sant’Anna-Skites said her piece was inspired by “the cycles of life that we find ourselves in that are really repetitive, and how we can find freedom within that or break out of those constraints.”

The performance follows a loose narrative of horses breaking free from a carousel, with the first half largely rooted in stricter ballet and modern techniques and the second half being very expressive, using many contemporary dance techniques. “They’re escaping and jumping off and hopefully having fun,” Sant’Anna-Skites said.

The symbol of the carousel has long inspired her, with Sant’Anna-Skites citing the Joni Mitchell song “The Circle Game” and a postcard from local store Butterfly Herbs of ponies jumping off of a carousel, as piquing her interest in the concept.

The performance was executed by an ensemble of six and was a collaborative creation, with each dancer creating their own individual dance phrases that Sant’Anna-Skites would edit to suit her vision, one that’s still being developed, though, and that’s part of the fun of having her piece be selected. “I think art

is never finished, so it’s really an honor to continue to work on and evolve a piece after already presenting it,” she said.

The other selected piece is by Taylor Ferguson, a 20-year-old studying wildlife biology and dance originally from Wichita, Kansas, who aimed to combine the spirit of both disciplines. Her work “The Sedge” is the term for a group of cranes.

Nature has always inspired Ferguson, and her approach to this piece was no exception. Her inspiration for this piece came when two cranes flew overhead during a backpacking trip in Yellowstone she took two summers ago. “They have this rattling call, and [as] they were calling, it was echoing down the valley, and I just immediately started crying, because they’re like dinosaurs in the sky,” she said.

From there, Ferguson became interested in the birds and discovered they have intricate courting dances. “That’s when I was like, okay, so I should probably make a dance piece about this,” Ferguson said.

“The Sedge” centers on the movements and behaviors of Sandhill cranes, and was partially developed by having the dancers, an ensemble of eight, develop their own crane-inspired movements after watching provided videos of them. Ferguson would then take whatever phrases stuck out to her and mixed and matched until the piece felt right. Ferguson might not have choreographed like that before, but ultimately found it fun, and felt that it suited the natural feel of the piece.

Each dancer’s ticket to the conference costs \$300, and from the proceeds, the money will be used to pay for half of each ticket. About 13 dancers will be attending with their excited choreographers.

Both choreographers said the ACDA Benefit concert was a positive experience. They highlight getting to see the other performances and being a part of Dance Days, an annual recruitment event for middle and high schoolers, as favorite moments.

Kate Widmer is an arts reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at kate.widmer@umontana.edu. For more stories from Widmer and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com



“The Sedge” CONTRIBUTED | KERRIGAN EDWARDS



“Ciclo” CONTRIBUTED | KERRIGAN EDWARDS

Guide to campus coffee

KEELY PROEBSTEL

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Caffeine: It's the lifeblood of any university, and given that we have four coffee shops on campus, the University of Montana is clearly no different. (RIP, Rise & Rooted.) With so many options, how could you ever decide where to go? The Kaimin visited each shop and asked for one of the most popular drinks at that location. What we found is that not all java joints are created equal.



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The Market

Hosted in the University Center, The Market is a convenience store with a coffee bar that comes with a giant selection and longer lines. The self-checkout helps cut down on wait times, but if you're trying to grab a danish before your linguistics class, you might want to plan ahead. It's open Monday through Friday which is unfortunate, because it means you'll have to make the long trek from your dorm to Liquid Planet if you want something to treat your Saturday morning hangover. But it does boast the longest hours.

Drink: Tiger chai latte (\$4.25). The waiting-in-line thing extends to the drinks themselves, like some kind of bad metaphor. The latte itself is borderline scalding, with disproportionately more chai concentrate than milk and is filled to the lip of the lid. To be clear, save for the wait, none of these are complaints. 4/5

Think Tank

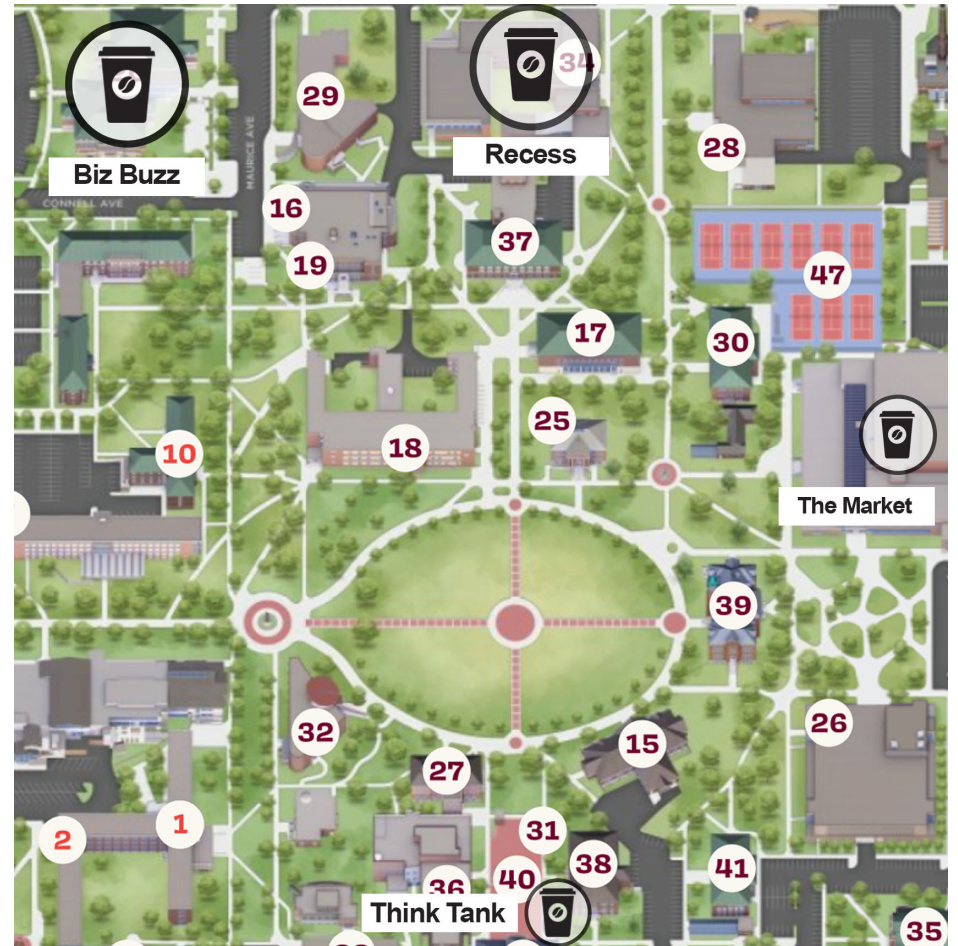
The first of the cutesy, subject-themed coffee shops is Think Tank, found in a little, aggressively-90s building by the underground lecture halls. Seventy-five percent of the time there's no one else in line, but the other 25%, there's five people ahead of you. That means the line extends out the door, which is fine in warmer weather, but really sucks while we're in the "arctic hellscape" phase of winter. All the seating is outside too, so you might want to bring a snow brush.

Drink: Peach/mango white Lotus (\$4.50). It's understandably popular and hard not to like, unless you don't like peach or mango, of course. Presumably refreshing on hot days, but it is a nice reminder that spring will come again in these bitter times. 2/5

Biz Buzz

In the Gallagher Business Building, the cutely named Biz Buzz is where you can get your caffeine fix. The bar is tucked into a cubby down the stairs from the first floor. Just follow the stock market LED signs and you'll find the treasure you seek. The shop is only open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, which doesn't leave a lot of time to get your cup of joe. There's seating in the atrium just a few steps away with string lights and artwork on the walls, so you can enjoy your drink in style.

Drink: Caramel Macchiato (\$4.50).



Locations of the reviewed coffee shops on UM campus. CONTRIBUTED | UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Sweet and sugary, it's a perfect pick-me-up between accounting classes. Just don't get it iced if you don't like drinking globs of solidified caramel through a straw. 4/5

Recess

Located (predictably) in the Phyllis J. Washington Education Center building, Recess is open from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday. It might have slightly inconvenient hours, but its children's book-themed decor makes it the cutest coffee place on campus. Since it's in a lobby area, there are plenty of places to sit and drink your latte. Besides education majors, not many people spend time in the building, but don't think that means a shorter wait time. Regardless of when you

go, there will be two or three people in line. Like the sun setting in the West, it's a universal constant.

Drink: Blood orange white Lotus (\$4.25). It was fine. That kind of feels like damning it with faint praise, but the syrup and the already citrusy Lotus base blend into each other in a way that comes off as kind of one-note. It did feel fancy, though, like a super-caffeinated Italian soda. 3/5

Keely Proebstel is an arts reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at keely.proebstel@umontana.edu. For more stories from Proebstel and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com

The trouble with the transfer portal at UM

RILEY COMSTOCK

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University of Montana basketball's Kai Johnson was a powerhouse guard during his time at Western Washington University, leading a high scoring team and developing an impressive personal stat sheet.

In his junior year at Western, Johnson led the team to tenth in the nation in scoring in Division II. In his third season, he broke into the program's top 20 in points scored and ranked fourth in program history for single season points, scoring 627.

Johnson was a dominant high school player in Olympia, Washington, securing his team fourth place in the ultra-competitive 4A division in the Washington high school basketball championship, but while he ran it up at Western, Johnson felt he was missing something.

"I wanted a place where I could go to win," Johnson said.

Western went 9-9 his junior year, which was in the bottom half of the league's teams. In fact, the Western Washington Vikings hadn't cracked the better half of the league since Johnson started playing for them.

"I put up good stats at Western Washington, but we didn't win games," he said.

Johnson made a common, yet newly-available choice in his quest to be part of a winning program. He entered the transfer portal.

"I didn't know what to expect, especially since I'd never been recruited before," Johnson said. "I walked on to Western Washington."

Johnson had a teammate who transferred the previous year, so he had a glimpse of what the process would look like, but not a solid idea.

"I had a bunch of schools reaching out to me through Twitter, through text messages and a bunch of random phone numbers," he said.

Since transferring, Johnson has seen success both personally and on the University of Montana team. He has a points average of 11.2 per game and an over 50% shooting average.

The Griz are ranked first in the Big Sky Conference and decisively defeated second-place University of Northern Colorado during its second matchup of the season. Johnson is part of a dynamic and highly skilled team that continually shows its ability to change its play style and win.

Johnson's story offers a glimpse into the transfer portal, but the conversation about the massive change to college athletics is far more robust than one athlete.

Along with the advent of the NCAA's name, image and likeness allowance in 2021, college athletics has changed drastically over the last several years. These changes have been likened to shifting college athletics from the amateur model it now holds to a model like that of the professional leagues.

The question that remains is whether college athletes should focus on building themselves within a program or purely on their playing time and athletic success.

How does the portal work?

Since its introduction in 2018, the transfer portal allows athletes to transfer between schools without needing the blessing of their coaches, and without having to ride the bench for a whole season.

Before the advent of the transfer portal, athletes could still switch schools, it was just a slightly more arduous process. Athletes would be ineligible to play for an entire season after the transfer.

Prior to 2018, students had to ask their coach for permission to talk with other schools about being recruited, and coaches could deny that request or put restrictions on it. One restriction would be to deny athletes the ability to talk to other schools in the Big Sky Conference, said Jean Gee, Griz Athletics senior associate athletics director and NCAA compliance administrator.

A lengthy appeals process could change the ability to transfer, but not without significant effort on the athletes' part.

Now, schools cannot put any restrictions on athletes. Athletes don't even have to talk with their coaches before they enter the portal.

"I encourage them to talk, you know, your head coach needs to know and I feel like it's better coming from you than from me," Gee said.

With current rules, athletes are allowed a one-time transfer without the requirement of a redshirt year. After that, any subsequent transfer requires that the athlete must sit out for a season before playing, which can also be appealed with a waiver.

This change in market availability for student athletes has vastly changed the lives of not only athletes, but coaches, too.

"We used to have a one year, two year, three year plan for what we want the team to look like, and then we'd go and recruit to that plan," Griz football head coach Bobby Hauck said. "Now it changes everyday."

Athletes now simply need to notify their athletics administrator of their intent to transfer, and they then have two business days to make the entry.

While coaches and athletes are technically barred from discussing potential roster spots and terms of a transfer before the student has entered the portal, the new, high-stakes world of college athletics has left some wondering if schools are honoring that.

"It's amazing how someone's in the portal and then they're out on Twitter within an hour saying, 'I've just committed to blah blah blah,'" Gee said. "So we know these conversations are happening."



Kai Johnson, a senior guard for the Griz basketball team, jumps for a rebound in the Brawl of the Wild game against the Montana State Bobcats on Jan. 25. **NOAH EPPS | MONTANA KAIMIN**

According to Gee, the rule is quite clear and expansive, barring schools from talking with not only the students, but parents, high school coaches, club coaches and others closely associated with the athlete.

Another important rule is that students can only enter the portal at specific times.

Each sport has specific portal windows when athletes can transfer. After they are entered, regardless of if a school is looking at them or not, athletes are free to talk with any school interested. Sometimes, though, they don't have any bites on their lines.

By the numbers

Entering the portal is a risky decision. While a highly skilled athlete might have a solid shot at finding a spot on another team's roster, it can be a coin toss. Literally.

"The number is high as far as who goes in it, [and] the number will be high on who never comes out of it. And that's the risk that players take as far as getting in there," said Justin Green, the Griz football recruiting coordinator and running back coach.

Success in the portal largely varies by sport and division. The NCAA keeps detailed data of what time of year, what sport, scholarship details and success for students entering the portal. The most recent data available is from 2023.

For one of UM's biggest programs, football, the portal isn't always kind. With 129 teams in the Football Championship Subdivision, many of whom have nearly 100 roster spots available, the pickings can be slim.

FCS athletes see a 48% success rate at transferring to a new NCAA school. Of that number, 51% are aided at their new Division I school, meaning they are receiving some form of assistance, such as a scholarship, and 19% are unaided, with no scholarships. The remaining 31% drop to Division II or Division III schools.

In 2023, there were 1,150 undergraduate and graduate FCS players who entered the portal.

For Football Bowl Subdivision athletes, the highest level of college football that houses the Power Four conferences, the margins are better. Sixty-five percent of 2,273 students are getting through the portal to other Division I schools.

While Griz football may be one of Montana's most popular sports, driving thousands to Washington-Grizzly Stadium, both the Lady Griz and men's basketball teams often pack the Dahlberg Arena for electric showdowns on the hardwood.

For basketball athletes like Kai Johnson, the transfer portal is less cutthroat than others. Male basketball players saw a 70% success rate among the 1,296 athletes who entered the portal in 2023.

Similarly, women's basketball players saw a 70% success rate among the 865 athletes who entered the portal.

Women's soccer is also emerging as another Griz dynasty, but the ladies on the turf don't necessarily see a promising picture painted for them inside the portal. Of the 860 women's soccer players who entered the portal in 2023, the success rate was 59%.

"A lot of girls will enter with very little film, even practice film, which makes it hard to get picked up by anyone," Chloe Seelhoff, a Griz soccer midfielder, said. Seelhoff, from Snohomish, Washington, transferred after spending two seasons at the University of Washington.

The success rate of student athletes in Division I transfers varies greatly by sport and by gender. Women had about a 5% greater



Chloe Seelhoff tries to go around a Sacramento State University defender in the semifinal Big Sky Championship game on Nov. 8. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

success rate in the portal in 2023, according to calculations by the Kaimin. But for both men and women across Division I sports, the overall odds of going to another school is often only marginally better than 50/50.

What's in it for the athletes?

Despite the daunting statistics, numerous benefits may prevail for student athletes that could influence their decisions.

For one, the advent of name, image and likeness deals has vastly changed recruiting practices. While schools are not supposed to use the endorsements to sway students, a vast gray area exists in the market. While the Power Four schools may be able to offer hundreds of thousands of dollars for students to play for them, even the smaller deals can be enticing for athletes looking to transfer.

"What I've heard is happening at some bigger schools are their NIL collectives are having these conversations, and technically, within the rules, they are not allowed to be having recruiting conversations," Gee said.

Alternatively, students might just not be happy with their current school. Each sport within each school often has vastly different cultures and attitudes that can influence their decision. If a student realizes the culture at their school isn't what they want, no matter what the team or personal success might say, they might want out.

When junior Chloe Seelhoff decided she was going to leave the University of Washington, it was a scary decision. Leaving behind friends, a major and a program that had been home for two years was daunting.

But one thing really nagged at her through the process.

"[The portal] kind of had a negative connotation before, like you're just going to leave. You're going to give up. I hate thinking that

people might have viewed me as giving up," Seelhoff said. "I had to look at it as, 'No, I'm chasing my dream in another way. I'm going somewhere that I can get where I wanna be.'"

That negative connotation is pervasive throughout college athletics, even with coaches.

When Griz soccer head coach Chris Citowicki was initially thinking about portal athletes, he said, "I was always like, 'You're transferring twice, what's wrong with you?'" But in his time coaching, his mindset has grown. He said the team took its first transfer who played for two schools before UM this year. Despite previously seeing that as a red flag, he has since recognized the intricacies.

For Kenna Smith, who played at Purdue University and was released after a new coaching staff came in, and then played at Miami University, the decision to leave was based on the culture at her previous school, according to Citowicki.

"That's a good reason for you to want to look for a new home," Citowicki said. "She fits our culture perfectly."

For the coaches

Many folks might think the disadvantages to the players are simply benefits for coaches when it comes to the portal. But like athletes, they continue to struggle with the chaotic and fast-paced atmosphere that has been thrust upon college athletics.

"I've seen coaches quitting because they don't want to deal with NIL and the entitlement that comes with college kids getting paid millions," Johnson said.

While men's basketball coach Travis Decuire seems to be loving his team's success this season, he still understands the struggle.

"When guys choose not to continue to compete and don't want to be part of something

and just change jerseys whenever they feel like it, with no repercussions, that is not healthy for sports in general," Decuire said.

But Decuire is more novel in his approach to the problem.

"It's not the transfer portal that's the issue," Decuire said. "It's the transfer policies. The fact that guys can transfer multiple times and not have to sit out, that's bad for athletics at every level."

And it's not just coaches who doubt the policy.

"I feel like being able to transfer as many times as you want gives you an easy out," Seelhoff said.

The transfer portal isn't just affecting coaches and current athletes, though. It has a distinct effect on the freshman recruiting element as well.

"It's hurting players who are trying to get in to the college level," Citowicki said. But he doesn't see the impacts as all negative. "The talent now gets spread throughout the divisions, even at D1 levels. It kind of evens out the pool of players nicely if you look at it from a big point of view."

The same problem exists in football, though it is unclear if the same talent distribution exists on the gridiron.

"The high school coaches are very discouraged by the number of, or lack of, high school players being recruited right now," Hauck said.

Regardless of the new challenges, coaches love these teams and are continuously adapting to the new era, regardless of the complex air of their sports now.

"You can't get discouraged by it. You can't get aggravated by it. You just have to adjust to it," Hauck said.

On the culture

There's a distinct thread in college athletics today where people think athletes are simply leaving for more money or more playing time. It's not just fans who think that, it's the coaches that worry, too.

"A lot of our freshmen didn't play this year, they were frustrated, and I was worried, like how many of them are gonna want to jump ship? But then I talked to them and they were like, 'I love this place, I want to do this,'" Citowicki said.

The reason those players wanted to stay? The culture.

Citowicki's focus for new players, even transfers, is for them to feel they belong.

"We don't tell them that your first goal is to be a good soccer player, your first goal is to show that you want to be here. Prove that you love this culture and love this team and then the soccer piece will come," Citowicki said.

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Snowy steps

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY **DIEGO HERNANDEZ**
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The fresh snow dampened the sound of footsteps, but the heavy breaths of hundreds of runners cut through the air as they fought through the cold to the peak of Mt. Sentinel.

Running Up For Air, or RUFA, is an organization that was started as a climate outreach event in Salt Lake City, Utah. The first sanctioned event occurred in 2016 on Salt Lake City's Grandeur Peak. The organization has since grown to encompass seven events that take place across the country and all are dedicated to raising money to combat air pollution.

At 6 a.m. on Feb. 15, dozens of runners started the 6th annual 12-hour race up the three-and-a-half mile loop to the peak of Mt. Sentinel in Missoula as cheers from the event organizers and community members broke through the dark, cold air.

"It's a big, hard day on a mountain to raise money for a big, hard thing to address," said Jeff Mogabero, the director of the Mt. Sentinel race. "It's just so fun that people can come together in the middle of winter and work hard, and do it with a smile on their face."

At its base, the event is a fundraiser for Climate Smart Missoula, a local non-profit that focuses on health impact that pollution poses on the Missoula community. This race is the

organization's largest fundraising event of the year, with entry fees donated to Climate Smart Missoula. This year, in addition, each lap done by competitors earned an extra \$6 donated from an assortment of financial backers.

"Climate solutions are like climbing a mountain, it takes a lot of people, and it's one step at a time, so events like this [are] a way for people who love to run to show how much they like being outside," said Amy Cilimborg, the director of Climate Smart Missoula and a competitor in the 12-hour fundraising event.

The fundraising event offers the trademark 12-hour race as well as six- and three-hour options. While the event is advertised as a race, many of the competitors walked, enjoying the event for its community side.

"We get to see people in the community and have conversations about climate, it's just a lot of positive energy that carries us through the dark months of winter," Mogabero said.

In 2024, the race raised \$2,835 for Climate Smart Missoula. This year's donation window closes at the end of February.

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Race supporters dressed as pickles post up at the campsite atop the peak of Mt. Sentinel for the Running Up For Air race.



Jesse Carnes, 39, makes his way up a steep section of trail half way to the peak of Mt. Sentinel. Carnes placed first in the race with 12 laps in 12 hours.



Tod Bachman races along on his 3rd lap. Bachman ran the 12-hour race, completing 10 laps, earning him third in the men's category.