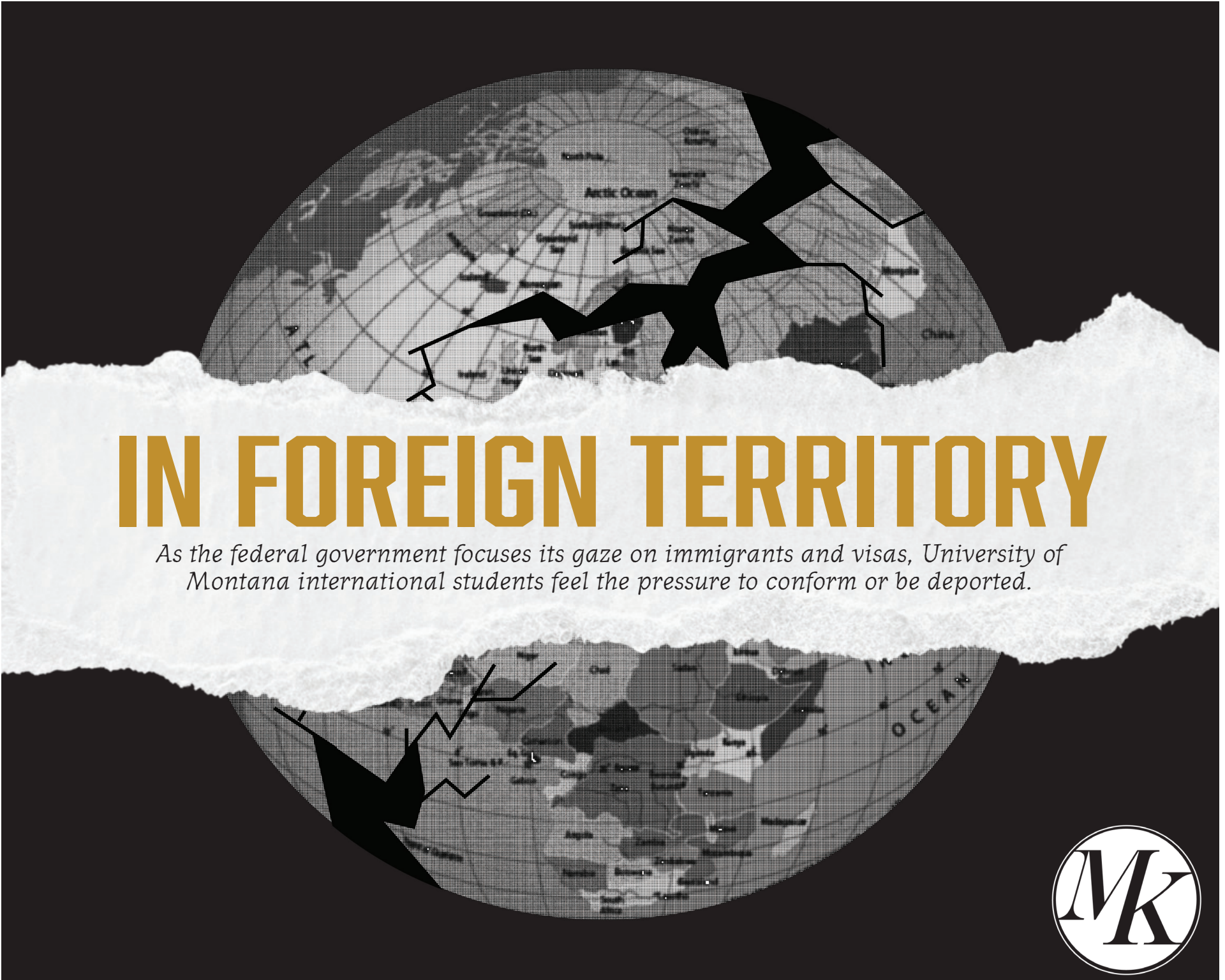


MONTANA KAIMIN

The cover illustration features a circular, halftone-textured globe centered behind a horizontal tear in a white paper-like layer. Two black, jagged, bird-like silhouettes are positioned on either side of the tear, appearing to fly through it. The globe shows various geographical labels such as 'North Pole', 'Arctic Ocean', 'Europe', 'Africa', 'Asia', and 'OCEAN'.

IN FOREIGN TERRITORY

As the federal government focuses its gaze on immigrants and visas, University of Montana international students feel the pressure to conform or be deported.



6 BEEFY TARIFFS

12 FREAKY FANTASY

15 LET'S GO LESBIANS

Cover illustration by Barrett Clement

September 11, 2025 | Volume 128 | Issue No. 2

Kiosk



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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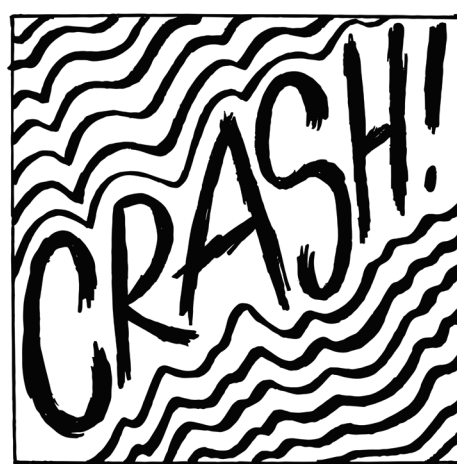
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POLITICAL CARTOON

"These people are SICK!"



DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 3 EP 1



TO BE CONTINUED...

BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

BARRETT

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

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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:

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

Bear repellent



Monte repels from the roof of Eck Hall during the Welcome Feast on Sept. 5.
DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN

Anonymous, not imaginary

For this issue’s cover story, the Kaimin chose to do something out of the ordinary: grant a source anonymity.

In journalism, when sources are granted anonymity, it means that the source and the journalist have reached an agreement that the source’s name and other potential identifying information like age, major or job will be intentionally excluded.

According to a 2020 study by the Pew Research Center, 82% of U.S adults said there are times when it’s okay to use anonymous sources, and 67% said it’s okay only in certain circumstances. Even using anonymity in cases that can be categorized as “certain circumstances,” using anonymous sources often have a negative impact on readers’ trust in the media.

More recently, Gallup News reported that 36% of U.S. adults have no trust at all in the media. Another 33% of Americans expressed “not very much” confidence.

Making the decision to grant anonymity is not taken lightly, but in today’s political climate, at times it’s necessary to protect a source. There are certain articles — in this case, this week’s feature on international students — that are sensitive enough to have the potential to impact a source’s career, freedom and personal safety.

Because of this, international students at the University of Montana are suppressing their own opinions and choosing not to participate in protests for fear of deportation. When people are being threatened with deportation for speaking up for what they believe in, it creates an intimidating atmosphere for students deciding whether they can or should interact with journalists. In order to hear the opinions of those afraid for their safety and status as students at UM, the Kaimin granted a source anonymity.

As of April 24, over 280 colleges and universities identified more than 1,800 international students and recent graduates who had their legal status changed by the State Department. It’s one part of a larger federal attack on international students, continued by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

“If you apply for a visa to enter the United States and be a student, and you tell us the reason you are coming to the United States is not just because you want to write op-eds, but because you want to participate in movements that are involved in doing things like vandalizing universities, harassing students, taking over buildings, creating a ruckus — we’re not going to give you a visa,” Rubio said to ABC News.

Because of this, international students at the University of Montana are suppressing their own opinions and choosing not to participate in protests for fear of deportation. When people are being threatened with deportation for speaking up for what they believe in, it creates an intimidating atmosphere for students deciding whether they can or should interact with journalists.

There are common misconceptions among readers about the use of anonymous sources and the credibility of what they are saying. It can seem a bit strange that sources go unnamed in exchange for their testimony. But when personal safety is on the line, offering to not name sources is how publications get genuine, profound viewpoints. Without the fear of retribution, unnamed sources don’t have to hold back.

As The New York Times wrote, “We understand readers’ wariness, but many important stories in sensitive areas like politics, national security and business could never be reported if we banned anonymous sourcing.”

Like The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Associated Press, at the Kaimin we have our own policy regarding the use of anonymous sources. The Kaimin has adopted the widespread practice of granting anonymity when a source fears retribution for talking on the record, and only with the approval and knowledge of a supervising editor. This is how journalists hold ourselves and our work accountable, while making sure that we are transparent with our readers.

As journalists, we carry a responsibility to report on issues surrounding public concern, such as healthcare, government and international affairs. But local news requires finding local sources, and quoting these sources can have a direct impact within their community. Anonymous sources are not imaginary people. They are the people you pass by on the Oval and sit next to in class.

Anonymity is not lazy or effortless journalism, it is a necessary tool that allows people who would have otherwise remained silent to tell their truth under protection.

- Madelynn Pandis, audio editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at
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In local news...

SAV CHAVEZ

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA STUDENT WINS NATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE AWARD

Lance Chauhan, a UM student majoring in pre-medical biology, received the Bette Worley Student Achievement Award for his novel research through the University of Montana Neural Injury Center, receiving a \$500 stipend.

Transferring from Western Colorado University to UM, Chauhan explored changes in an artistic individual after they experienced a mild to moderate brain injury in the Neural Injury Center.

“Overall, I am forever grateful to the National Student Exchange program for allowing me to participate in all the wonderful experiences I’ve had, all the irreplaceable knowledge I gained and lifetime connections I have formed,” Chauhan said in a press release. “These experiences have shaped my academic, personal and professional outlook in the best way possible.”

The National Student Exchange provides travel and study opportunities to students enrolled at its 165 member colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

MISSOULA COUNTY APPROVES 2026 BUDGET, INCREASES PROPERTY TAXES BY 8%

Missoula County commissioners approved the 2026 budget on Thursday, which includes an 8% property tax increase to raise an additional \$4.6 million.

“We are in a very fiscally constrained situation, and I think this budget will basically keep the status quo and allow us to continue delivering the level of services we have been delivering with very few exceptions to that,” County Commissioner Dave Strohmaier said.

The budget increased 9.3% from last year’s \$256.8 million. Chris Lounsbury, the county’s chief administrative officer, said the increase is largely driven by increased wages for county employees, increased medical costs at the jail and a loss of revenue from housing state inmates.

County taxes make up about 28% of outside-of-city-limits homeowners’ tax bill, Lounsbury said to Montana Free Press.

Of the \$7.6 million in proposed one-time requests, commissioners approved \$6.2 million, including funds to remodel parts of the courthouse and administration building, replace 911 dispatcher computers, purchase new permitting software and move the bathrooms from Johnson Street shelter to the Temporary Safe Outdoor Space, according to Montana Free Press.

The budget also includes a new health sanitarian, someone who identifies and addresses environmental health hazards, a geographic information systems specialist and building code contracted services that will be funded by related fee and not affect property taxes.

Confessions of a college town: Roommate horror stories



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Finding housing in college can be tough, but finding a compatible roommate can be even tougher.

Moving in with an old friend may seem like a safe bet, but it doesn’t always turn out that way. Sydney Bennett and Rose Scheffler thought that inviting an old high school friend to live with them would be a good idea, only to be thoroughly disappointed.

“We had a spare room so we were like, ‘You could stay with us!’ And she was like, ‘Oh my god, that would be so great.’ We were such good friends in high school, this will be so nice. We were wrong about that. She had a lot of little roommate habits that were a little annoying, but then also just like generally stirred up an enormous drama shit storm,” Scheffler and Bennett said.

ELLE DANIEL

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Supreme Court allows LA ICE stops

On Monday, the Supreme Court lifted a federal judge’s previous order to prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement from making immigration-related stops in Los Angeles. The court did not provide reasons for lifting the restriction. Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson were the only three dissenting members. ICE raids have previously been filmed rounding up groups of Hispanic and Latino citizens. Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass anticipates “sweeping consequences” in the wake of the ruling.

Conflicting alcohol reports

A previous study by the Department of Health and Human Services warning of the link between drinking alcohol and cancer will not be submitted to Congress. Originally, the Alcohol Intake and Health Study warned that even one drink a day raises the risk of liver cirrhosis, oral and esophageal cancer. A new study by the National Academics of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine supported moderate drinking as healthier than not drinking. However, several panelists were accused of having prior funding ties to the alcohol industry.

Whistleblower sues Meta

The former head of security of WhatsApp, Attaullah Baig, filed a lawsuit on Monday against Meta, accusing the company of ignoring security and privacy flaws that put its users at risk. Baig claimed WhatsApp and Meta employees could gain access to user information including profile pictures, location and contact lists. Additionally, Baig alleged Meta, which owns WhatsApp, failed to address previous hacking occurrences and rejected his proposals for security fixes.

PRESIDENT’S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS

ROBERT PUTNAM
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

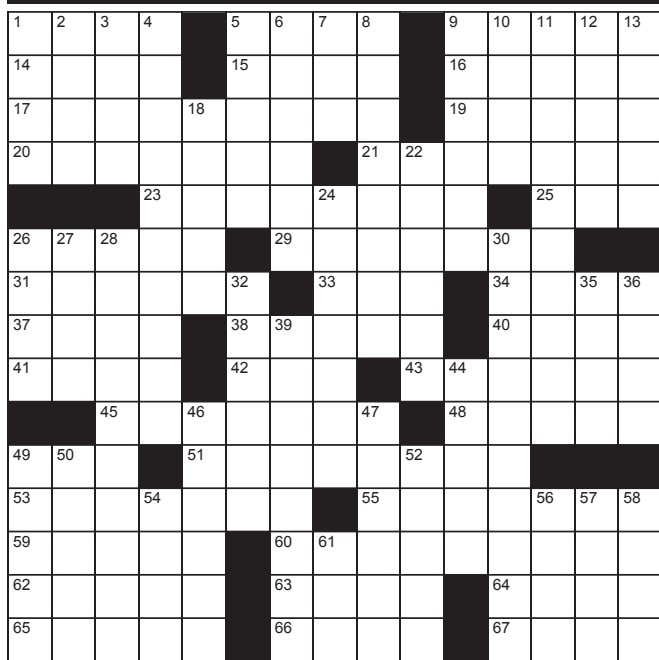
7 P.M. MONDAY, SEPT. 15
UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM AND ZOOM

UNIVERSITY OF
MONTANA
MAUREEN AND MIKE
MANSFIELD CENTER

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY.
ASL interpretation will be provided for this event.



New Kaimin
Cast episodes
out every
other
Monday. Scan
for the latest.



ACROSS

- 1 Carb or fat unit
- 5 "Gilligan's Island" actor
- 9 Reduce drastically
- 14 Glorified gofer
- 15 German auto
- 16 Suggest
- 17 Spa feature
- 19 Rubbernecked
- 20 Putting in a corral
- 21 Medal giver
- 23 Self-doubting
- 25 Ike's WWII command
- 26 Swiss capital
- 29 Irregular
- 31 Leaped forward
- 33 VA time zone
- 34 Shaver's bane
- 37 Snowman in "Frozen"
- 38 Muse of love poetry
- 40 Kind of package
- 41 Andean land
- 42 Do lacework
- 43 Tear gas target
- 45 Splits in two
- 48 Like some lingerie
- 49 Shade of blonde
- 51 Heartbeat phase
- 53 Attacking, as the fridge
- 55 Middle bit of a Venn diagram
- 59 Some downloads
- 60 Uncomfortable
- 62 Group of eight
- 63 Yuletide song
- 64 TV's Nick at ____

- 65 Musical intervals
- 66 Bulgy biceps, slangily
- 67 Sink pipe

DOWN

- 1 Struggle for air
- 2 Confirmation, for one
- 3 Yemeni city
- 4 Having significance
- 5 Trumpet and trombone
- 6 Highest point
- 7 DiCaprio, to fans
- 8 Chicago suburb
- 9 Document seal
- 10 ROFL relative
- 11 Increase in value
- 12 Cold shower?
- 13 Prefix with plane or electric
- 18 Chop finely
- 22 Loud speaker
- 24 Fashions
- 26 Broadway disaster
- 27 ____ of thumb
- 28 Opponents of government
- 30 Hard to follow
- 32 Keep in custody
- 35 Canadian tribe
- 36 "An Affair to Remember" co-star
- 39 Wreaking havoc upon
- 44 Speck in the sea
- 46 Official orders
- 47 Hot, as in goods
- 49 Jousting gear
- 50 Lasagna layer
- 52 Track shapes
- 54 Paleo, for one
- 56 Animal shelter
- 57 Dog in "The Thin Man"
- 58 Chick's chirp
- 61 Rawls or Reed

Answers to Previous Crossword:

M	A	R	C		M	A	N	E		A	T	T	A	R
O	L	I	O		O	L	I	N		N	O	R	S	E
T	A	B	L	E	S	A	L	T		A	G	A	P	E
E	N	S	U	R	E	S		O	C	T	A	V	E	S
			M	A	Y		L	M	A	O		E	N	E
P	R	I	N	T		G	O	B	B	L	E	R		
R	A	D	I	O	I	N	G		L	E	S	S	O	R
O	M	E	N		S	U	I	T	E		S	A	G	O
W	I	N	C	E	S		C	O	S	T	E	L	L	O
		T	H	R	U	W	A	Y		O	N	S	E	T
P	H	I		M	E	A	L		R	A	T			
L	E	F	T	I	S	T		B	E	S	I	D	E	S
A	N	I	O	N		S	O	L	I	T	A	I	R	E
I	R	E	N	E		O	W	E	N		L	A	I	N
T	I	D	E	S		N	E	W	S		S	L	E	D

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What's your song of the summer?

KAIRI LISING

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What a summer. Crazy is an understatement. Tumultuous is a bit closer. Something must be in the water because how has it felt like this summer was a whole year in itself? What we do know is the summer always has an iconic song that defines it. So what do the top 100 hits say about you?

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): You discovered something about yourself this summer, Virgo. You're done hidin', now you're shinin' like you're born to be. And you're born to be a K-pop fan. You're gonna be "Golden" from the hit movie K-pop Demon Hunters. I cannot blame you. It's a certified banger.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): It's Chappell Roan breakup summer, Libra. The one got away and you spent the summer counting down the days until your ex is just another person on "The Subway" by Chappell Roan. You know what? Fuck this city. Move to Saskatchewan.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): Scorpio! You dirty dog! You turned into a sweet talking savant this summer. Tell your mama, tell your daddy: You were for the streets. Nothing wrong with that, of course. Like "Sugar On My Tongue" by Tyler the Creator, your body is so sweet. Invite me if you come :)

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You were in your feels all summer, Sag. Category is... definitely not over the one that got away. You don't want to learn another scent. You don't want the children of another person to have the eyes of the one you won't forget. I can't blame you for not wanting to get "undressed" by sombr. Get well soon?

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): You were picking petals this summer, Capricorn. They love me, they "Love Me Not" by Ravyn Lenae has been your mantra. Your summer situationship has put you through the wringer and it's far from over. Some bad advice: Text them to come over.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): We get it. You're in "love." The angels up in the clouds are jealous knowin' what you found. Your summer fling has turned into something out of the "Ordinary" by Alex Warren. LUCKY YOU. GOOD FOR YOU. I'M NOT JEALOUS AT ALL.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Sorry not sorry, Pisces. Your summer was stupid! Or was it slow? Maybe it was useless. But there's a cuter word for it, I know! You were the "Manchild" by Sabrina Carpenter; your break was filled with dumb decisions. Learn from this!

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Your summer was one of many "Beautiful Things" by Benson Boone. Late nights and moonbeam ice cream. You never wanted it to end. You want it, you need it, oh god. Please, stay. Sorry, Aries, beauty fades. Time to get up for your 9 a.m. class.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): I could describe your summer with one single word: "Gnarly" by KATSEYE. And what does that mean? You discovered that you're a hottie, like a bag of Takis. You're the shit and they're all trying to copy. You're going into the school year ready to serve.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): Word is that you've been crazy this summer. Maybe a little "Illegal" by PinkPantheress. It's okay, Gemini. Your secret is safe with me. Is this illegal? It feels illegal.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Wow, Cancer, you raged this summer. Every night you were out on the town or up to something with a rando. Maybe it's you exploring your adulthood, or maybe you're trying to fill the hole (emotionally or physically). This summer was a "party 4 u" by Charli XCX. Party on!

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Your turn of phrase this summer was "Leave Me Alone" by Renee Rapp. I can't blame you. It's been a long long life and you just want to have fun. You've been real bad but a real good kisser. So sounds like a successful summer.

BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

U.S. tariffs impact local business

AIDAN GRAHAM | NEWS REPORTER
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Gary's Local Burgers, a fast food restaurant on campus, increased its prices this summer, citing import tariffs and the rising cost of beef behind the decision.

On June 21, Gary's Local Burgers, formally known as Gary's Six Dollar Burgers, announced on social media its plan to increase its prices by \$1.95 at its campus location, and by 95 cents at its original downtown and Westside locations.

"There was a moment when we weren't making money on our burgers at all, when the prices went up," said Tom Winter, owner and founder of Gary's Local Burgers. "We are stuck between a global trade war, the general increase in all prices and trying to keep our prices affordable. I hate it."

According to a study from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the price of ground beef has increased 11.4% since June 2024.

The rise in prices can be linked to tariffs placed on some of the largest importers of beef to the United States by the Trump Administration. Countries like Canada, Mexico and Brazil, which face 25-50% tariffs, import over 70% of beef in the United States, according to U.S. Import Data.

"I kind of thought that their whole motto was providing a \$6 burger," said Alex Kenney, a 20-year-old cybersecurity major. "I was really appreciative of a not super expensive burger option, and now it's, especially if you get a drink, pushing into the double digit territory again, which is just kind of the unfortunate truth of eating out these days."

Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that the U.S. imports an average of four billion pounds of affordable lean cut beef per year to combine with local meats. This, with imposed tariffs, has caused an increase in the cost of production of ground beef.

"I started this in my front yard as a place to make affordable food for people in an economy like ours that was not helping anyone, and it's still possible, but the prices have gone up," Winter said. "I didn't anticipate a tariff war with Brazil. We increased our prices in our other locations first this summer, and that sucked too, because it's literally \$6 in the name. I



Gary's Local Burgers chef Spencer Ladner prepares burgers for customers on Sept. 5. The burger price at Gary's has risen by \$1.95.
JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

pledged not to do it."

The chain has made it a point to provide affordability without sacrificing quality in comparison to its competitors. For many locals, this has made Gary's an affordable alternative to other local fast food restaurants. The Wally, a signature burger of local competitor Wally and Buck's, runs \$10 for the burger alone, compared to the original \$6 for a burger from Gary's.

"It's tough to say as someone who is an owner of these things, but your first responsibility is to your customers or your workers. They should be drawn from the same pool. The people who work at your restaurants should be able to afford the food they're cooking," Winter said.

The chain, which employs a number of students and young workers, has a starting pay of \$20 an hour with the addition of tips. That, compared to the state average of

\$15 an hour, has been a point of pride for the restaurant.

"You can't decrease what you pay them. It's not right. I would have expected them to quit," Winter said. "So we made the decision to increase the prices on the customer side and do everything we could to tell people why it's happening."

The local burger spot claimed it will make an effort to reduce raising prices in the future without sacrificing quality or docking pay for its employees. Through the subsidization of other menu items, the restaurant believes it can keep the heart of its business, the burger, at an affordable price in the face of future challenges.

"We're doing everything we can to keep an affordable, local food option in the University," Winter said. "And if anyone ever has any problems paying for food at all for a burger or anything like that, send us a

message on social media or something and we will be discreet. We will do what we can to make sure you're not hungry."

Data from the Department of Agriculture showed the U.S. cattle cycle, the 10-year period in which the national cattle herd expands or contracts due to perceived profitability, reached a 94.2 million head, the lowest it's been in 52 years. This is expected to drive beef prices to a record high in 2026.

As many local businesses continue to wrestle with current economic conditions, the divide between customer and vendor continues to increase.

While Gary's continues its attempts to provide affordable meals for students, its struggle is an echo of the financial problems many continue to face in the wake of federal changes.

Director of African American studies steps down after 18 years

SABRINA PHILIP | NEWS REPORTER

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After 18 years, Tobin Miller Shearer will step down as the director of African American studies at the end of the academic year.

"It's time for a new vision and new energy," Shearer said.

Shearer announced he would be officially stepping down from his director position in May. While there is no replacement for the director yet, Shearer said it was a decision he made of his own accord.

"Just to be absolutely clear, I got zero pressure from anyone," Shearer said. "This has come out of extensive conversations I've had, about how we best position programs like African American studies at a time when they're under attack ... our thought is that a healthy program has a director step down, not as a point of weakness, but as a point of strength."

Before becoming the director of the program at the University of Montana, Shearer graduated from Northwestern University with a doctorate in history and religious studies. Since then, Shearer published numerous books concerning race, religion and the Civil Rights movement, published work in the New York Times and worked in various areas around the country in volunteer groups. Shearer also co-founded his organization, Damascus Road, which focuses on anti-racism training.

In 2008, Shearer took the position as the director of African American studies at UM.

According to the interim dean of humanities and social sciences, Christina Yushimura, Shearer is one of the longer-serving program directors. "His role in guiding and building on one of the oldest African American studies programs in the country is a testament to his commitment and his values," she said.

The African American studies program, which is the third oldest of its kind in the United States, was founded in 1968. When Shearer took charge, he made significant changes, including creating the possibility to graduate from the program with a major and/or a certificate.



African American Studies professor Tobin Miller Shearer stands for a portrait. Shearer will step down in May after 18 years at UM. **JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Shearer created new courses within the program, including "White Supremacy History and Defeat." Creating the course in 2016, Shearer faced harsh criticism in the form of death threats, which was a significant point in his career.

"I was put on this thing called 'Professor Watch List' for being a dangerous professor by this far right organization called Turning Point [USA]," Shearer said. "Because of the death threats that came in teaching that course, we had to hold the first year of that class in a secret location on campus, and we had to have police present both at the beginning and the end of every class because of the viability of those death threats."

Other courses Shearer created include those focused on racism, civil rights, African history, Black religion and more. According to students, Shearer has enhanced their passion for academics when teaching these classes himself.

"He's inspired an intellectual fervor, and I want to adopt his approach to academics," said India Hite, a graduate student from Acton, California, studying history.

"He talks about challenging topics. It's important that we have hard discussions and talk about technical things, but also learn how to do it delicately and respectfully and courteously."

Shearer focused on building connections in Missoula and Montana, participating in public events and collaborative groups, like the Montana Black Collective. According to Shearer, he has spoken in nearly every city in Montana concerning African American studies.

Despite these accomplishments, Shearer said the importance of his role as director is most seen in his students, especially in the current state of the country. This, he said, has affected who he is as a person and what he wants his students to take away from their courses.

"We're going to make choices to follow the research, to follow academic freedom and to support accurate telling, particularly about African American history. Not one that is afraid to face the truth," Shearer said. "My students have shown me again and again their fearlessness in facing the truth."

According to Shearer, while there are aspects of the director role he will miss, he feels excited to have the chance to do more research and mentor the new director in their transition.

Morgan Curtin, a UM alumna, said students are lucky to have Shearer on campus.

"They should cherish the opportunity to learn from a super passionate educator that wants to see you succeed in his courses and wants you to have a good understanding of the African American experience in the United States," Curtin said. "Be excited about it, enjoy the experience and really just take in everything you can while he's around, because he is such a fountain of information and knowledge."

Shearer said the new director will most likely come from within the University, and they hope to announce the new hire by February.

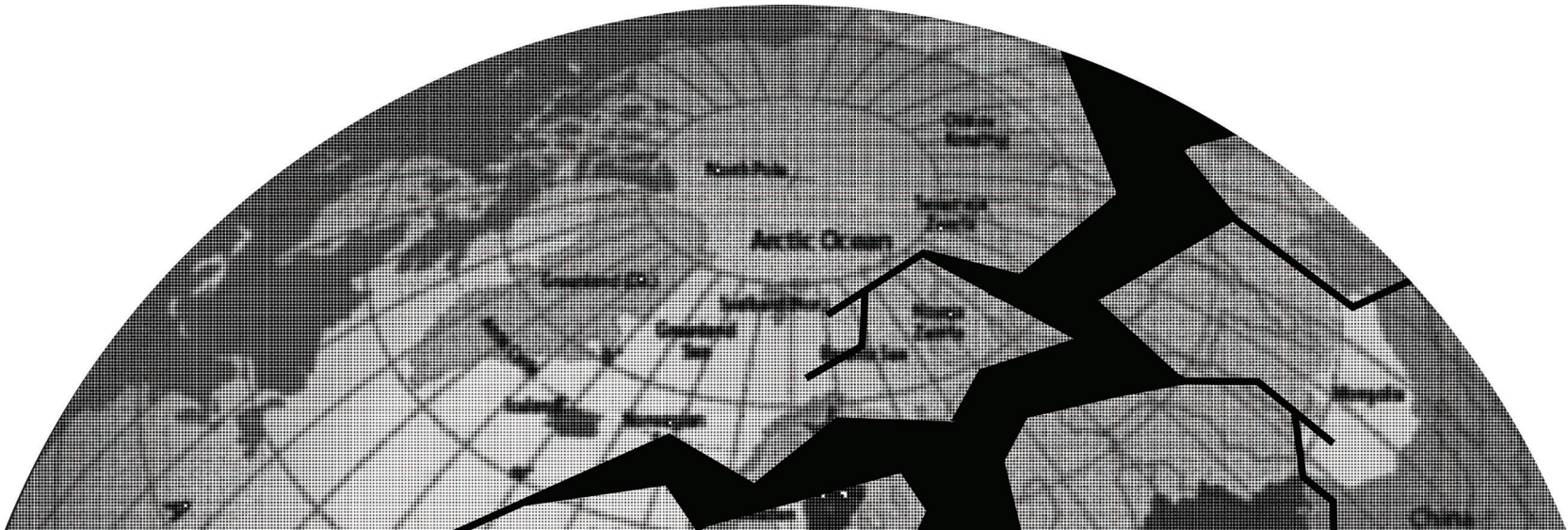
Despite his academic and educational success during his director role, Shearer shared his gratitude for his students and their ability to carry out his mission within the program.

"I have nothing but gratitude for the students I've gotten to work with and nothing but undying pride for what they've accomplished coming out of the program," Shearer said.

While Shearer plans to officially step down from the position in May, he will continue to be a professor of African American studies and a mentor and adviser to students.



A mural decorates a fence along the parking area at UM's International House. The International House hosts visting foreign exchange students.



IN FOREIGN TERRITORY

As the federal government focuses its gaze on immigrants and visas, University of Montana international students feel the pressure to conform or be deported.

BY SAV CHAVEZ | PHOTOS BY HENRY DOELLINGER

On a chilly day in March, a small group of demonstrators gathered in front of Main Hall, chanting in support of the thousands of federal government employees fired by the Trump administration as part of wide-ranging federal cutbacks. To the side, out of range of news cameras, two international students looked wistfully on.

They would have liked to join, but these students weren't from Montana, or the United States. They had to protect their visas. One of them, referred to here as the international student, spoke to the Kaimin on the condition of anonymity because she feared her visa could be jeopardized if she was publicly critical of the Trump administration.

From a serious increase in international student arrests to social media scrutiny and the federal government taking action against schools like Columbia University and Harvard University, exchange students across the nation have become hypervigilant of every action they take. For students at the University of Montana, the fear came abruptly, and now makes one in particular

wonder if coming to the University was the right choice for her.

The student was one of 138 international students at the University of Montana whose college experience changed dramatically when President Donald Trump took office in January. Not long after, his administration issued a series of executive orders targeting immigrants, student visas and free speech.

University officials said this week that international student enrollment has dropped 6% since last year — including

revenue, school officials said. The Montana University System could lose \$4.5 million in yearly revenue alone.

The fear of being deported or having visas revoked caused widespread stress for international students at the University of Montana, students and officials say, whether they have immigrant visas, are seeking permanent residency in the U.S. or are here on student visas.

Bodhi Murphy, director of UM International Students and Scholars,

immigration," Murphy said. According to Murphy, the administration's focus then shifted to include legal immigration as well.

While the current decrease in students at UM is not a large one, Murphy anticipates a continued downward trend if attacks on international students do not change.

"This is a tremendous loss to U.S. institutions like UM, our communities and the nation," Murphy said. "The loss of international students and scholars in the U.S. means a loss of economic contributions, academic and research excellence, innovation and entrepreneurship, cultural exchange and global perspective, workforce development and diplomatic and trade benefits."

For the international student, returning to her home country is not the goal. She plans to become a permanent resident of the United States in order to be with her husband, and yet she cannot express her thoughts on the government without fear of having her visa revoked and being deported.

"If I were applying to schools now, I think I would still have come to America. I want to be with my husband, but it is very hard. It is

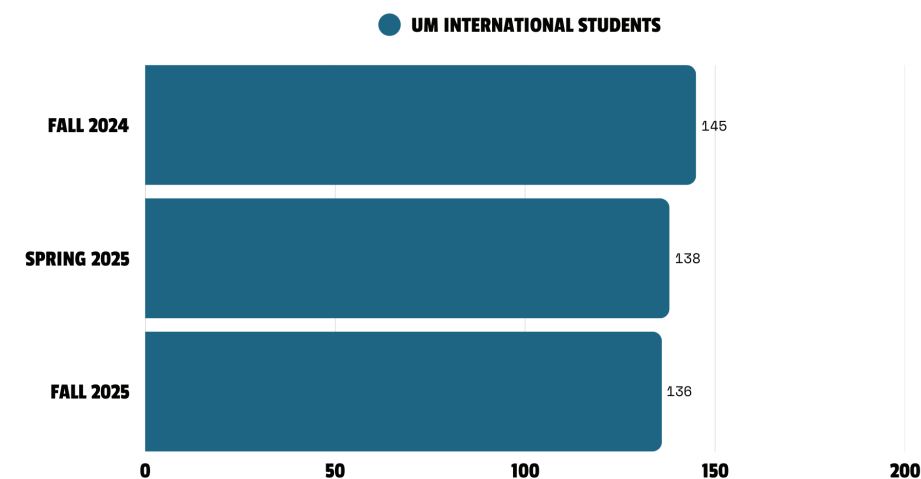
"I ASK MYSELF A LOT WHY I CHOSE THIS COUNTRY TO STUDY MY MAJOR"
-international student

students from Iran directly affected by the Trump administration's travel ban from Muslim countries and others advised by their home universities to go to other countries because of uncertainty over student visas.

The loss of international students will have significant ramifications for the diversity of Montana's student body as well as future

said the government's focus on visas and immigration rights has had negative impacts for international students on campus.

"The outpouring of concern for international students started in late January of 2025 after the current administration took office and began issuing executive orders in line with their 'crackdown' on illegal



DANE CLEMENTS | MONTANA KAIMIN

hard being away from my family,” she said. “I want to build my career here, but it is very hard right now.”

LOSING TRUST

When Trump expanded his 2019 executive order, EO 13899, targeting alleged antisemitism on college campuses, 300 students were unaware that their alleged participation in pro-Palestinian protests would soon lead to their visas being revoked.

Demonstrations in support of the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel began in 2023 after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by terrorist group Hamas. Protests in support of Palestinians broke out across multiple American college campuses, including Columbia, where students participated in a sit-in protest of their campus’s library.

Several actions have been taken against students and universities involved in these demonstrations. A dramatic increase in arrests, visa revocations and threats of deportations took place following the turnover in federal power.

According to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the federal government aimed to increase its efforts to deport college students who had engaged in pro-Palestinian activism.

“If you apply for a visa to enter the United States and be a student, and you tell us the reason you are coming to the United States is not just because you want to write op-eds, but because you want to participate in movements that are involved in doing things like vandalizing universities, harassing students, taking over buildings, creating a ruckus — we’re not going to give you a visa,” Rubio said to ABC News.

On March 8, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers arrested Mahmoud Khalil, a former graduate student at Columbia University, for his involvement in a pro-Palestinian protest. Khalil was the first person to face deportation following President Trump’s crackdown on alleged antisemitic activity at universities.

Khalil, an Algerian citizen with permanent residency in America under the green card program, spent 104 days in an immigration detention camp following his arrest, missing the birth of his first child.

Shortly after his arrest, the Department of Homeland Security raided Columbia University students’ dorms, arresting another international student and prompting a third to flee to Canada, according to AP News.

Students at Columbia University turned to the Immigrants’ Rights Clinic asking for advice. They were unsure if their visa was at risk of being revoked or if they should delete their social media. According to Elora Mukherjee, law professor at Columbia University and director of its Immigrants’ Rights Clinic, some asked if they should move off campus to make it harder for immigration officials to find them.

In the wake of the arrests at Columbia University, the UM international student said she realized participating in protests may be unsafe for her. She felt as though she was pushed further into vocal paralysis, unable to express herself with the student body she had worked so hard to be a part of.

“I can only enjoy or see my American friends post their activist stuff or protest their beliefs. I feel jealous of that, actually. I feel like I lost my autonomy,” the student said.

But she was not the only international student feeling the pressure to hide.

THE TURNING POINT

For former UM international scholar Hannah Staus, watching Montana students having their visas revoked was the turning point when she realized she may not be safe in America. Staus, from Germany, began her study abroad in August 2024 to study journalism. While she described her first semester as mostly quiet, the spring semester was quite the opposite.

“I had an amazing time in the fall semester up until a few weeks before election night,”

Staus, a former Fulbright Scholar, said. “The election didn’t stress me out much because I was completely convinced there was no possibility that Trump would be voted in as president again.”

Counting down the days in January to the inauguration of President Trump, Staus said she could feel a sense of anxiety spread throughout her peers. Ten days after the inauguration, the first 300 international student visas were revoked.

At the time, Staus said she didn’t feel worried, but she was shocked. She sifted through her memories trying to remember if she had attended a protest that could get her in trouble with the federal government.

“I couldn’t remember one, so I thought I’d be safe. I thought it would stay as a few cases of people who were really active in the pro-Palestine protest scene to set an example,” Staus said. “But this hope changed quickly.”

By April 24, over 280 colleges and universities had identified at least 1,800 international students and recent graduates who had their legal status changed by the State Department, including three students at Montana State University in Bozeman and one student at the University of Montana.

The next day, the Trump administration shared that it would restore all terminated visa statutes, allowing international students to continue their studies, including the one UM student. The identity of the student was never publically released.

But there was a fear instilled among international students in the U.S. and abroad, according to Donna Anderson, director of the Global Engagement Office at UM. Unlike previous incidents, revocations now affected

students with minor infractions, including traffic violations.

During this time, Staus found herself reading the news daily. “It felt like all I read about was how international students were targeted. I felt unwelcome in this country, which was weird because campus made me feel welcomed and everyone in Missoula was nice to me,” she said.

Prior to the international students in Montana having their visas revoked, Staus did not feel nervous about immigration officials showing up to the University. She thought Missoula was too remote.

“This definitely changed when the first international students in Montana had their visas revoked,” she said.

When a routine check was done on the 400 international students at Montana State University, two students had their visas revoked, MSU spokesperson Tracy Ellig said to the Montana Free Press.

The Montana branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, a nonprofit civil rights organization, filed a lawsuit against the federal government on behalf of the students, defending them after a government check of their information showed the students had both been arrested previously in Bozeman, one for theft and the other for assault.

“International students suddenly realized we’re not safe just because we are in Montana,” Staus said. “I switched my Instagram to a private account after that. I stayed away from the protests downtown and on campus because we were scared that they might see on our GPS information whether we took part or not.”

As a journalism student, Staus was scared she might already be on the government’s



CONTRIBUTED | HANNAH STAUS

radar. She chose not to publish articles she wrote for her classes, having her capstone project withheld from being published until she was safely back in Germany.

“My professors didn’t hesitate and understood why I didn’t want to publish my stories. This was probably one of the most eye-opening moments of realizing “This is actually happening,” Staus said.

Trying to navigate the risk factor of publishing her article caused additional stress for Staus during her final exams. While she weighed the possibilities of what could happen to her if her story was published, she also had to think of her family who planned to visit her.

“My family was worried because some of them wanted to visit me at the end of the semester, but at the same time there were stories in German news about German citizens not being able to cross the border,” Staus said. “This was so stressful at times. I definitely felt relieved when I finally crossed the border to go home.”

While this was the end of her time in America, it would not be the end of the federal government’s attacks on international students entering the country.

CENSORED AND SILENCED

In late May, U.S. embassies worldwide paused three types of visas, including two that are specific to students, from making appointments because of the beginning of expanded social media screening procedures. While the pause only lasted for about a month, in-depth social media screenings continued to take place for people entering, leaving and studying in the United States.

Like the immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, there are different tiers to visas. F-1 is specifically for students attending private elementary schools, high schools, colleges or universities. M-1 visas, are also student specific but for students attending vocational schools. J-1 visas are an exchange visitor visa which allows people to come into the country for approved exchange programs. This offers visas to au pairs, camp counselors, interns, physicians, scholars and other professionals.

On May 22, the federal government announced it had revoked Harvard University’s certification under the Student and Exchange Visitor Program and stripped the university of its authority to sponsor F-1 and J-1 visas for international students for the 2025-26 academic year.

According to a press release put out by Harvard University, the federal stripping of the university’s certification continued the government’s attacks to retaliate against the university’s refusal to “surrender its academic independence and submit to the federal government’s illegal assertion of control over their curriculum, faculty and student body.”

The federal court issued an injunction against the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security’s revocation. Without the order, Harvard would not be able to enroll students on F-1, J-1 or M-1 visas, which make up 27% of the student body.

Anderson said policies and visa revocations have had a chilling effect on international students’ interest in studying in the U.S.

“The [federal] administration’s actions have created a climate of fear and uncertainty, including Harvard’s Student Exchange Visitor Program certification revocation, mass visa revocations for minor infractions and protest activities and enhanced social media vetting that delayed visa processing for months,” Anderson said. “It sets a precedent for using SEVP as a political tool against universities.”

In June, the Department of Homeland Security introduced strict social media vetting rules for students entering the country. Applicants were told to set all their social media accounts to a public status,

of Homeland Security] can censor it. When I come into the US or go out, it could affect my visa status. It’s so frustrating,” she said. “I thought I should be careful of each behavior in America. I had just heard many students had been kicked out of America because they are from certain countries. I feel paralyzed. I ask myself a lot why I chose this country to study my major.”

For the international student, connecting with students on campus had felt difficult with the school being predominantly White. Between the language and cultural barrier, there was a disconnect.

“Figuring out the school is a lot. I always have this huge consciousness about such a White-dominated school. It’s hard, I often feel very isolated. I don’t know how to navigate White American culture in general,” she said.

In addition to being surrounded by new cultures and foreign languages, there’s



International Students and Scholars Director Bodhi Murphy sits in his office in the Global Engagement Office for a portrait on Sept. 9.

meaning that anyone can look at them. If students refuse, the department may flag their account as “evasive” and subsequently revoke their visa.

For the UM international student, social media was a great place to connect with American students and find people with similar political views. She was very active on her social platforms, reposting articles that supported social justice in America and in her home country, posting her own thoughts and chatting with others.

Now, to protect her safety, she does not post online. She can only watch from the sidelines, both in person and online. Without the chance to speak up for her beliefs, the student said she feels like she cannot do her life’s work.

“I cannot talk about complicated things on my social media because [the Department

tuition to pay. International students studying at UM pay out-of-state tuition, a \$150 international student fee and often use University housing and dining plans. The cost of attendance fluctuates based on the program, but an academic year of undergraduate tuition and fees are estimated at \$34,769, with a cost of living estimated at \$21,074. For graduate level study, it is estimated at \$29,663 for tuition and fees, and \$30,524 for living expenses.

Now, two new charges have been included. A \$250 visa integrity fee for nonimmigrant visa applicants and a \$24 “I-94” fee were introduced under the “Big Beautiful Bill,” a bill designed to reduce federal budget spending, which has been enacted into law. In total, for international students to study at the University of Montana, the average cost is approximately

\$57,700 for undergraduates and \$62,000 for graduate students per academic year.

In addition to this bill, the international student has the \$5,000 cost of her green card that she must pay in order to stay in America with her husband.

“It is financially a lot. I see my other friends who go to bars and go see concerts, and I get a little sad,” she said. “I go to school and work and then I come home to do my studies. I applied for many scholarships in order to help with the financial burden of school, but I try to work as much as I can to pay for my green card.”

STRUGGLING TO STAY

On Aug. 27, the Department of Homeland Security proposed a rule that would eliminate the current duration status policy for international students.

The duration status policy allows students studying in America to stay in the country as long as they are continuing their education. With the elimination of this and a switch to a fixed term, students who are enrolled in programs that have a longer completion rate, like graduate programs and non-traditional students, would be at risk of not being able to complete their studies in America. By switching to fixed terms, students would be limited to one to four years on F-1 visas.

National Association of International Educators Director Fanta Aw said this policy switch would represent a dangerous overreach by the government into academia. “This increases government oversight without addressing real problems in the immigration system and lacks evidence that these changes would solve existing issues,” she said.

She argues the change will force students into a “sea of administrative delays” and would grant the government the ability to require its approval for changes in majors or levels of study. The proposal is currently under review with National Association of International Educators. Aw noted that it “flies in direct opposition” to President Trump’s comments supporting international students in the U.S.

As the international student begins her final in-person semester at UM, she continues her journey through her program alone, forced into solitude by the fear the government has created.

“I am really glad I made admission before he became president, but I think to myself, what if I came in a different timeline? It is a really demoralizing time to be studying in America,” the student said.

Her joy for studying in America has been siphoned out and replaced with powerlessness. She goes through her classes in silence. She returns home to her apartment where she lives alone, studies and goes to bed in preparation for another day of attempting to blend in to stay safe.

Fantasy football leagues with a dark twist

JACK SNOW | SPORTS REPORTER

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With the return of football season comes the return of fantasy football leagues.

Fans of any team can add extra fun to the season by playing fantasy football, but the consequences for losing in a mock league may be even more serious than the real deal.

While winning feels great no matter the context, losing often has additional punishments in the world of fantasy football. These nightmarish penalties are doled out at the end of the season to the player with the league's worst record, and they're often equally creative and embarrassing.

Marcus Wait is a junior studying psychology at the University of Montana, but for the next few months he will be managing a handful of mock football teams. Wait, like many fans, is in several leagues. Some have run of the mill prize structures like "loser has to buy the winner a jersey."

But the highest stakes come from a league where losing means more than just losing money. "We gotta dress up as a femboy," Wait said. "You have a little stand and you have to bring people into your femboy club all day on the Oval." According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a femboy is "a young man presenting himself in a feminine way."

Such punishments are becoming a staple of the fantasy football world. While first place rewards aren't uncommon, the real battle is often trying to avoid the terrible fate of the season's worst record. "The real motivation is to make sure you don't lose," Wait said.

Oftentimes punishments are extensively discussed beforehand to see who can come up with the most creative or humiliating act. In the league of Hunter Alderman, who studies dentistry, one member brought up more serious ramifications.

"We debated having to commit a felony or arson," Alderman said, but ultimately they settled on the loser having to perform a live standup comedy routine in the local area.

The tradition has also spawned satirical punishments online. Alderman recounted seeing a fake fantasy league where the loser would have to "get somebody pregnant and raise the kid," but said that "obviously a lot of those are jokes."

Some leagues are a bit more merciful. UM physical therapy student Dawson Gray is the commissioner for several leagues and likes to lean toward monetary rewards rather than public humiliation rituals. But he's no stranger to the odd punishment. "The very first season I ever played, the loser had to get a flower piercing in the ear and wear it for two months," Gray said.

For many fans, it's a way to connect with those they care about. "I like that I can be joined with friends or family," Wait said. "It brings a lot of people together."

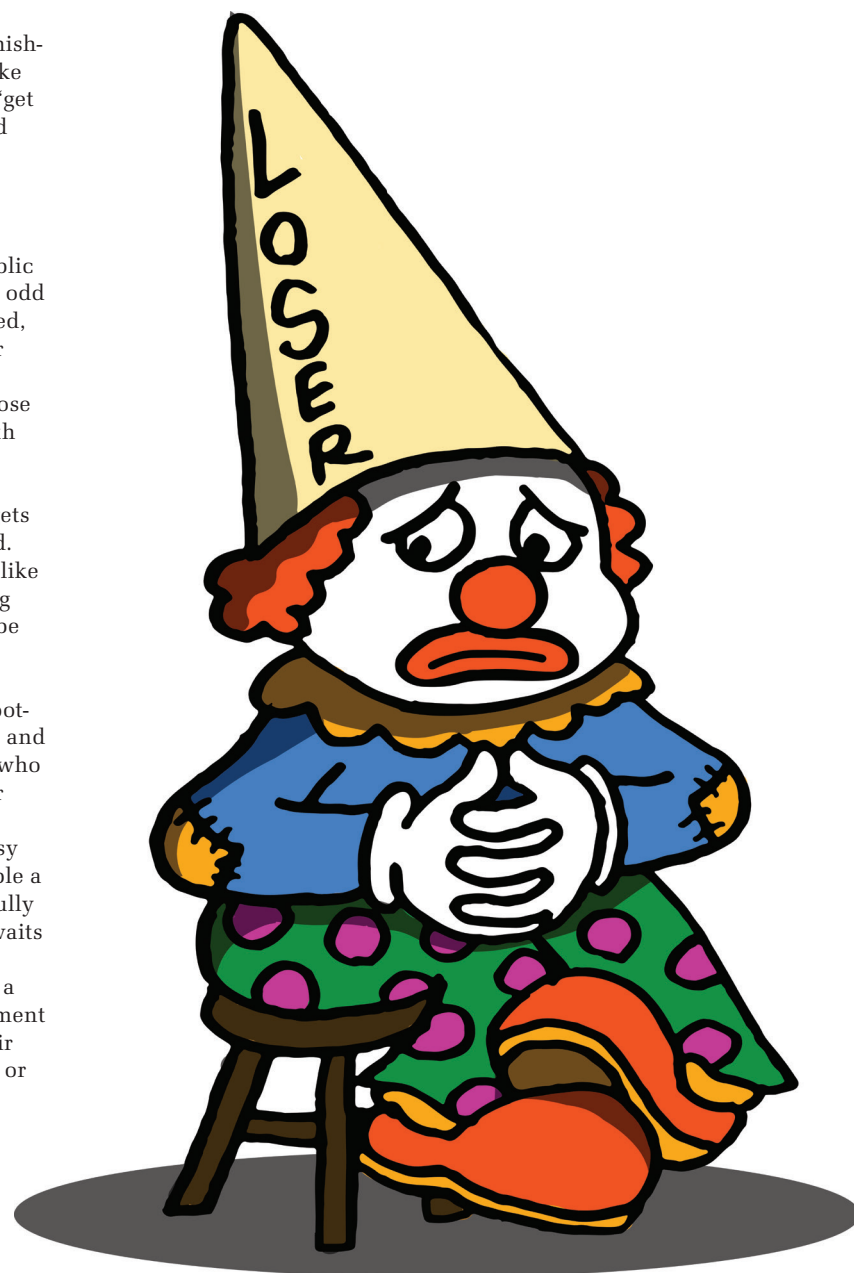
Many fans enjoy the stakes themselves. "It gets me more involved in the sport," Alderman said. "Obviously the Jaguars are my team, but I feel like these players are my team now. I'll be watching the Chiefs play the Jaguars, but I'll still kinda be hoping that Xavier Worthy gets a garbage time touchdown."

Others enjoy the technical side of fantasy football. "It's kinda a merge of my love for football and my love of doing things optimally," said Gray, who likes analyzing player statistics to project their performance.

With a high intensity season looming, fantasy football players have done their best to assemble a fictional squad of elite athletes that can hopefully save them from whatever dire circumstance awaits the league's worst player.

Fans of less successful NFL teams are in for a rough season and need to take their entertainment where they can get it, even if it's watching their friends receive permanent body modifications or do crowd work at a local comedy show.

The activity truly has something for everyone. From the family-focused fan to the hyper-competitive sadist, anyone can have a good time watching on Sundays as their mock team either thrills or disappoints them. The femboy costume is just there for a bit of extra encouragement.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Why Montana-born athletes matter

DILLON RICHARDSON | SPORTS REPORTER
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Of the 300 student-athletes on the campus of the University of Montana, a quarter were born in the Treasure State.

While putting on the Griz jersey may mean more to them, Montana players still have to fight for opportunity.

One program with very few Montanans is the UM volleyball team, which had only three out of 18 players from the Treasure State last year. However, those three players combined accounted for over half of the blocks for the season.

This year is no different, with only three Montanans on the 2025 roster.

The head coach of the volleyball team, Allison Lawrence, said recruiting Montana players is an enjoyable experience.

"Our preference is to go after someone in state versus out of state," she said. "They know the rivalry piece, they know this area, they have a lot of pride in Montana and have since they were very young, so I think that is a natural fit."

Lawrence said that she would prefer a Montana-born player over an out-of-state player, assuming they were equal in skill.

"I think it's been fun to recruit our Montana players," Lawrence said. "You get to see them grow up."

Sydney Pierce, a sophomore marketing major from Billings, was one Montana-born player Lawrence really wanted to have on her team.

"I was super excited to represent something way larger than myself, and to get to represent my state," Pierce said.

Pierce said even though the team hasn't gotten the outcome they've wanted, her time here has been lots of fun.

"The culture's great," she said. "Everyone in the gym is so dedicated and just so loving. It's just such a good environment."

In her first season as a Grizzly, Pierce played in 19 of 27 matches and was fourth in blocks per set.

Another team making the most of its few Montanans is Griz soccer. Even though four out of 32 players are from Montana, three Montanans were in the starting lineup on Aug. 31 when the Griz defeated the University of Nevada 2-1. According to head coach Chris Citowicki, there is a good reason.

"If we have a Montana kid on the roster, they have to be good enough to be starting games and playing in games," Citowicki said. "I don't want to just bring in anybody and cut them after two years. I think it's important that our Montana kids are stars, and that they stand out."

For Citowicki, he wants Montanans to be standouts to set an example for youth in the area. He also added that not all Montana players have to start out as stars, but be willing to put in work to get better.

"They've got to be able to play our style of soccer the way that we do it, and they have to have that hunger and willingness to continue developing," he said. "If they have that mindset, we can turn them into stars."

Citowicki said that even in the new world of the transfer portal, born and raised Montana players want to stay at UM.

"They love it, and I mean look at the fans, right? Who doesn't?" he said. "They get more attention than anybody, which is why they have to be players, right? Because the pressure on them is immense compared to the kid that comes out of California."

Citowicki said freshman Liv Thorne-Thomsen is a player that could easily be a future star for the Griz.

"Liv was a superstar hockey player, and we have our seniors try to wreck her in practice all the time, and they just can't get her off the ball," he said. "Her ability to hold the puck, to move around people translates perfectly into soccer as well, and so does the vision that she gets out of that sport, which is quick decision making, and she does it in soccer too."

Though Citowicki eventually brought her on, Thorne-Thomsen said her process was very different from most others'.

Thorne-Thomsen got recruited through soccer camps, which led to her getting in contact with the UM coaching staff.

Now that she's here, Thorne-Thomsen says UM has been a great experience so far.

"I love the whole team and the coaches," she said. "The classes, I mean, they're classes but they're still great. Everything about it has just been an amazing experience so far."

Thorne-Thomsen added that playing just a few blocks away from where she went to high school makes it even better.

"You really get to see the fans and you're like, 'I've sat there,'" she said. "I get to see my friends from high school, and I get



Sophomore Sydney Pierce (right) leaps and spikes the ball during a game on Sept. 5 against Oakland.
JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

to see everyone who lives here and it's awesome."

Thorne-Thomsen has appeared in three games this year as of Sept. 8, but whether or not she's playing, she said she's having fun.

"I love getting out there, but then also being on the bench. Everyone's all in, all the time," she said. "It doesn't matter how many minutes you get. You're still cheering on your team and you still win together."

Theatre alum returns to UM in Shakespeare production

SYDNEY MOATE | ARTS REPORTER

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A girl with hair as red as a sunset jumps from behind a curtain at the top of a small wooden stage.

“O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention,” she calls to the several hundred people on the Oval. “A kingdom for a stage, princes to act and monarchs to behold the swelling scene!”

Rikky Johnson returned to the University of Montana as Chorus, the narrator of Shakespeare’s “Henry V,” in Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. She is the first UM graduate in years to act in one of Montana’s most essential theatre productions.

She asks the audience to imagine a vast kingdom and five years of history before them, in a two hour production on a stage that looks like a single throne room.

Johnson graduated from UM’s College of

Theatre and Dance in 2024 with a BFA in acting. Originally from Bozeman, where she discovered her love of acting at Bozeman High School, Johnson attended Southern Oregon University to be near the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. But all her classes were online due to the pandemic. Johnson felt if she was going to be inside, she would rather be at home, so she came to UM to live with her sister and found a home in the theatre program.

“I think the arts create an opportunity to form community and build empathy in groups of people. For me personally, it’s where I find the most connection with other people and myself. When I participate in art it feels like I’m doing something meaningful,” Johnson said.

After graduation, Johnson moved to Chicago, which she described as a hotspot for theatre, along with other friends from the theatre school and her partner Blake, who she met in the acting program and started dating

as a sophomore.

Johnson said Montana Shakespeare’s in the Park’s can be pretty selective and difficult to get into. “It was kind of ironic to leave Montana and get the biggest gig in Montana I always wanted.”

Johnson has been watching Montana Shakespeare in the Parks since she was 14. The company, in its 53rd season, operates out of Montana State University. It hasn’t had Montana actors in a long time because there’s only a small pool of actors in Montana.

With Johnson on the main stage and more UM alums and students as production staff and acting apprentices, “We’re starting to see more Griz presence in the company, which is awesome,” she said.

At each tour stop, the company of actors presents one of two plays. Johnson plays the narrator Chorus in “Henry V,” often delivering direct address, talking right to the audience and giving exposition. She also plays an

unnamed girl who represents the cost of war. Both of these characters are typically male. They have a high contrast to her character in “As You Like It,” in which she plays the cousin of the main character, Celia.

Johnson described Celia as “representative of femininity in the play, a real girl’s girl.” She compared the relationship between Celia and her cousin, Rosalind, to her favorite movie, “Little Women” (2019). Johnson, who has five sisters, said, “The relationship amongst sisters and amongst women is so important to me. The relationship between Celia and Rosalind is so important. I love to see powerful young women dominating the screen.”

She described Shakespeare’s poetic style as something an actor gains knowledge and comfort in. She said Shakespeare doesn’t come easy to actors, but the more time put in, the quicker they can pick it up.

She feels, for both the audience and the actors, “Don’t work so hard to figure out what each word means, let it wash over you. It’s like sitting in a dark room and letting your eyes adjust. It’s got poetry, it’s got rhythm. It’s on us [the actors] to make it accessible and understandable.” She also admits she still sometimes has to look up words and described it as a constant learning curve.

Bernadette Sweeney, director of the School of Theatre and Dance, said, “It’s fantastic to see Rikky on the main stage as a proud alum of the program. We have not had an alum on the stage in a very long time.” She described Johnson as a versatile actor with a great work ethic, which Sweeney said is an essential trait to being a successful touring actor.

In addition to Chorus and Celia, Johnson has played Puck in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at UM and was in the contemporary play “Men in Boats.” She looks back fondly on her role as Sally Bowles in “Cabaret” while at UM. “That was the most intimidated I’ve been to step into a role. I didn’t consider myself much of a singer, but it was super affirming. I came out of it feeling like I had learned a lot and grown a lot,” she said.

After many roles, Johnson learned that acting is a profession that comes with a lot of criticism. “I try to remind myself that everyone is coming into every interaction from their own unique background and perspective and experiences,” She said. “A lot of times criticism is so incredibly objective, you can’t really argue with someone’s opinion. It’s important to ground myself in the opinions of the people who really matter to me.”

Rikky Johnson will return to Chicago to continue her career in acting along with more graduating acting students and friends she’s made among the cast of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. “



Rikky Johnson performs in a Montana Shakespeare in the Parks production of Henry V as Chorus on the Oval on Aug. 29.

HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN

Opposition meets lesbian representation

BEE REISWIG | ARTS REPORTER
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With rats crawling through her hair extensions, pop singer Chappell Roan is working to normalize queer identities.

The rats can be seen in the 2025 music video “The Subway” about the emotions that come with a bad breakup. Sapphic and lesbian artists like Roan have risen in popularity recently, as well as in movies and TV shows. Even “lesbian fashion,” like jorts, baggy pants and carabiners have become more mainstream. However, that progress doesn’t come without backlash and criticism.

Josie Miller, a master’s of literature student from Florence, Montana, said that the most popular artists, though a step forward for queer women, show the lack of diversity still accepted by the public.

“It’s interesting to me that a lot of the sapphic artists who are getting blown up right now are White,” Miller said. “There aren’t as many sapphic artists of color, you’re not seeing a lot of like butch or masc representation.”

The 22-year-old lesbian cited both Roan and Renee Rapp as examples of more publicly digestible figures.

Rapp was targeted by Betty Who, an Australian musician, said on the “Made it Out” podcast that she would “hold space for [Rapp] in 10 years if she goes, ‘Oops, I met the love of my life and it’s this man, I didn’t mean to.’”

According to Them magazine, Who has since apologized for her remarks. The comments under the video on YouTube call her “lesbophobic” and “tone deaf.”

Abigail Molm, a 20-year-old junior in business management, shared similar thoughts.

“It paints kind of a negative image of lesbians. It’s kind of telling people that, you know, you can say that you like only women, but that in 10 years, maybe that will change and you might fall in love with a man and then everything you’ve been saying about your lesbian identity has been pretty much invalid,” Molm said.

The term lesbian goes back to ancient Greece. Sappho was born around 615 B.C.E. on the island of Lesbos. She has long been recognizable as a symbol for women who love women. In fact, the first lesbian group in the 1950s had to veil their reference to

ancient Greece. Instead, they were called the Daughters of Bilitis. But debates still come up about her true identity: bisexual, lesbian or beyond label.

“Sappho was a singer/songwriter,” said Beth Hubble, professor and former director of the women’s, gender and sexuality program. “We think of her as a poet because we have at least parts of her poems ... it would have been performed with a lyre and it would have been performed publicly.”

Though society has come a long way since the 1950s, queer representation in media is far from perfect. When it comes to fictional characters as opposed to real-life celebrities, Molm would recommend “One Day at a Time,” a Netflix sitcom about a Cuban-American family that features a lesbian character. “Yellowjackets” is Miller’s pick for great queer female characters. The fictional plot focuses on the events that follow a high school soccer team’s plane crash in the wilderness.

However, it does fall into Miller’s three tropes of sapphic media.

“Either their lover is dead, that’s rule number one, rule number two is that they cannot have access to electricity and rule number three is that it’s a coming out narrative,” Miller said.

Some of the examples she gave were: “The Last of Us,” an HBO Max series based on a video game about the zombie apocalypse, the HBO Max movie “Portrait of a Lady on Fire” about a short affair between a painter and her aristocratic subject and “Dickinson,” a historical fiction show about the sapphic poet Emily Dickinson on Apple TV+. Each of them fell into one or more of the categories she had laid out.

Both Molm and Miller agreed that “Orange is the New Black,” a seven-season show about a women’s prison, was less-than-perfect in its portrayal of sapphic characters, though for different reasons. Molm said that the show, currently on Netflix, played into toxic stereotypes like the “predatory lesbian” trope.

Miller, on the other hand, felt that it had welcome diversity in its representation. However, she also said that it was sexualized for the male gaze, or written from and for a typically heterosexual male point of view. The show was written by a predominately female team, and was inspired by a true account of a woman’s correctional facility.

“For a lot of people it’s really hard to conceptualize an identity ... that doesn’t center around men,” said Miller, who is also



She walked



So that they could run



TARYN THOMPSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

getting a graduate certificate in women’s, gender and sexuality studies. “It’s this constant discourse in society that you need a man to be successful.”

Hubble, having worked at the University for 20 years, feels that there has been considerable improvement over time with regards to queer representation.

“I think that we’ve seen tons more inclusive representation,” Hubble said. “And [we’re] starting to see representation in some places where the fact that the character is gay is not their only characteristic, it’s just part of them.”

That kind of movement forward is why Hubble believes that no matter how scary this period in time may be for queer people, society isn’t regressing. According to Hubble, the fact that artists like Chappell Roan are

able to be so open about their identities is a positive sign for the LGBTQ+ community.

In her own classrooms, Hubble notes there appears to be more originality and individuality in the way students present themselves, making the world more “gender expansive.” She has also been excited to see out-and-proud artists like Roan use their platforms to support fellow LGBTQ+ people, especially trans folks.

“This is not a turn backwards. This is a momentary backlash and it’s painful and it’s awful and it is hurting actual people in ways that are horrifying,” Hubble said. “I have seen too many beautiful things happen with people supporting each other to think it is a permanent thing.”

The Griz are back, and so are the fans

LEO SPERRY | PHOTOGRAPHER

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The roar of music, the smell of barbecue and a sea of black outfits sweeping along campus drive could only mean one thing: Griz football is back.

Campus Drive was packed with fans, tailgaters and buses. Rows of campers lined the street, with grills smoking and speakers blasting music. Families in matching Griz gear, alumni diving into the past and first-year students experiencing their first game all carved out their own piece of the celebration on Sept. 6.

While new students get their first taste of tailgating, some alumni and Montanans have been partying before the games at the University of Montana for over 15 years.

Among the tailgating vehicles is a bus with sliding containers on the exterior, along with a large flat-screen TV and easily accessible appliances. The inside is furnished with a fully working kitchen, cushioned chairs and storage space for large parties. To top it all off, the bus is painted maroon with bright yellow letters spelling "University of Montana Griz."

Other tailgaters brought a mix of game day staples, from simple folding chairs and coolers to elaborate spreads under tents. Beanbags smacked against cornhole boards, kids ran through the crowd and fans clinked drinks in anticipation of kickoff.

"Cheddar brats always hit the spot," said Max Harrison, who has been tailgating with his family for eight years at their spot in front of the stadium. "It's tradition."

For some Griz fans, tailgating isn't just about food and drinks. It is about comradery. Longtime fans shared stories from the "good old days," alumni reunited with old friends and students snapped photos in Griz gear. For many, the first game of the season was a reunion for generations of Montana fans.

Football chatter fills the air and up and down Campus Drive, there's a palpable sense of excitement and anticipation.

For students, tailgates also offer a chance to meet new people and experience Missoula coming together in a way like no other.

Clubs and teams set up tents to show support, and fraternities and sororities packed their spaces with students.

"I'm just so excited," said Rachel bruns, who attended the Sigma Chi tailgate. "You can tell by all the people here — we're all so pumped to be back," said Rachael Bruns at the Sigma Chi tailgate. "I get to meet a lot of people, and that's one of my favorite things about tailgates."



Chase Strain (left) and Branden Mertins (right) represent with Griz Nation foam hats in preparation for the opening game on Sept. 6.



Tailgaters play cornhole in campus drive before the Griz game.



Fans gather around to enjoy the atmosphere and company during the tailgate.