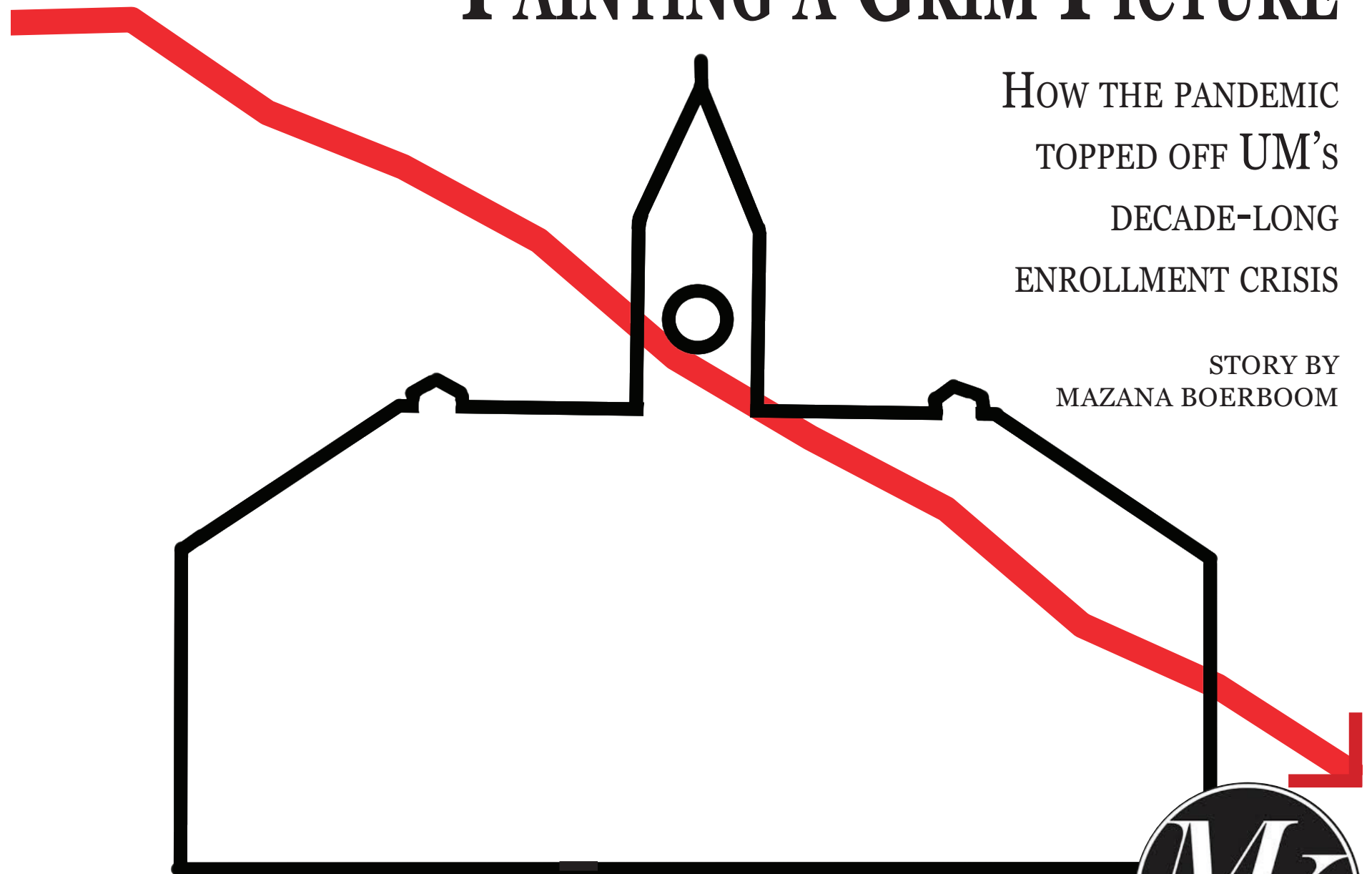


# MONTANA KAIMIN

## PAINTING A GRIM PICTURE

HOW THE PANDEMIC  
TOPPED OFF UM'S  
DECADE-LONG  
ENROLLMENT CRISIS

STORY BY  
MAZANA BOERBOOM



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Cover Design  
MaKayla O’Niel



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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Join UDASH for free recreation shuttles and guided hikes on the student break days.

March 4  
March 16  
April 2

SIGN UP FOR FREE:  
[udash.org/events](https://udash.org/events)

KAIMIN COMIC



COOPER MALIN | MONTANA KAIMIN

Thank you COVID-19 task force

Usually, it feels like adding an administrative board on a college campus is a waste of time. They make people do more work, sometimes leave others confused and mostly cost money.

But of course, this is the COVID-19 year, where classmates and professors get sick, UM rituals like the Foresters’ Ball aren’t happening, and a trip to the Curry Health Center could end with 10 days alone in a room with a globally-spread respiratory illness. When shit hits the fan, and you are still trying to figure out why the fan was turned on, it’s time for some good ol’ fashioned teamwork.

UM’s COVID-19 task force will reach its first birthday this month, after spending the past year coordinating the University’s response to the pandemic. Its members, from across departments and specialties, meet every week to look at the hard facts of the pandemic.

Using that information, they planned out our quarantine spaces, released our

campus COVID-19 numbers at the beginning of last semester and handled the little questions in between. To say that our school did not look out for us isn’t true.

In a time when communication isn’t just important, but incredibly vital to sustaining an in-person campus community, it’s far from just a small comfort to receive regular updates from a centralized task force like this one.

So, we want to take a second to thank our campus COVID-19 task force members. Because, yeah, it’s sucked to not have a normal college experience. Yeah, we’ve all lost a lot. But UM’s campus is still open. We’re able to go to in-person classes, for the most part. If we can’t attend class in person, we’ve got coordinated virtual options, too. There’s talk of in-person commencement this year. All of these things are not small feats in a time like this.

The coordination it takes to do all of this, to adjust entire course schedules and classrooms to follow public health guide-

lines, to cancel campus-wide extracurriculars, to help roll out Curry’s response and resources, and to keep us all informed about the process? None of that is going unnoticed.

And we’ve seen results. Our campus COVID-19 numbers have dropped, and task force emails are slowly but surely transitioning to information on vaccines and testing, all while each member of the team has their own important role in running the day-to-day at UM.

We’re all a part of the same community. We’re all fighting this together. And we at the Kaimin are happy to see the results of a UM-created task force for this past year.

Like it? Hate it? Wish we were dead? email us your opinions at [editor@montanakaimin.com](mailto:editor@montanakaimin.com)

Editor’s Note:

The Montana Kaimin will be transitioning our print schedule beginning in April and continuing through the semester. You’ll be able to find our print edition on news racks every

THURSDAY. We know it will be hard to have to wait another day to read us, but we know you’ll stay strong for us.

-Erin Sargent,  
Editor-In-Chief

Feature photo: KBGA livestream



Local performer Ash Nataanii sings during the KBGA and Zootown Arts Community Center’s (ZACC) Play it Forward livestream on Friday night. The concert also featured Elijah Jalil. Both artists played in support of HereMT, a program dedicated to giving the BIPOC community outdoor recreation opportunities. The livestream recording can be viewed on the ZACC’s YouTube channel. **CLAIRE SHINNER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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.

Answers to Last Week’s Sudoku:

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



Briefs: Vaccines, research growth and more anti-trans legislation

**Johnson & Johnson vaccine approved for use in the U.S.**

The Food and Drug Administration approved the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in the United States on Feb. 27. It is the third vaccine approved by the FDA for emergency use against COVID-19. This vaccine has reported 72% efficacy against moderate symptoms and 84% against severe cases. According to a statement from the company, Johnson & Johnson will be shipping more than 20 million doses to the U.S. in March, and 100 million doses in the first half of 2021.

(Mariah Thomas)

**UM research, law program rank nationally**

According to a UM News release, the University of Montana was ranked sixth nationally for growth of research spending by the National Science Foundation. The release stated that UM nearly doubled research expenditures between 2014 and 2019, increasing funding from \$55 million to \$104.7 million. "Amidst the pandemic, we have already exceeded \$100 million in research awards this year, which bodes well for continued research growth at UM," Scott Whittenburg, UM's vice president for research and creative scholarship, said to UM News.

The Alexander Blewett III School of Law

was also ranked fourth nationally for law school affordability by Best Value Schools, according to a UM News release. UM's law school admissions website estimates that an in-state student will pay \$14,941 per year in tuition and fees. Students from out-of-state are estimated to pay \$36,543 in tuition and fees each year at the law school. According to a U.S. News survey of 194 law schools, the national average for in-state students at public law schools is \$28,264; for out-of-state law students at public schools the average was \$41,726. (MT)

**Gender transition ban passes the state House of Representatives**

House Bill 427 passed the state House of Representatives on Feb. 25. The bill is a modified version of House Bill 113, which aimed to prevent health care providers from providing gender-affirming medical care to minors. HB 113 was defeated in the House of Representatives on Jan. 27, when five legislators switched their votes on the bill.

HB 427 would prevent healthcare providers from performing gender affirming surgeries on transgender minors. The bill states: "A health care provider may not: (1) perform gender

transition procedures on a minor to treat gender dysphoria; (2) remove any otherwise healthy or nondiseased body part or tissue of a minor to treat gender dysphoria; or (3) refer a minor to a health care provider for gender transition procedures." HB 427 is currently being heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. (MT)

**UM plans activities for 'wellness days'**

Instead of a spring break this semester, the University is giving students and faculty three non-consecutive days off that they're calling "wellness days." The first is this Thursday and the other two are Tuesday, March 16 and Friday, April 2. For each "wellness day" UM will host planned events for both students and faculty.

On Thursday, students can catch a bus from 12:30-4:30 p.m. to the Moon-Randolph Homestead for a roughly 2-mile hike and tour. Other options include a virtual tour of the Missoula Art Museum from noon to 1 p.m., or one of several discussions on Dr. Beverly Tatum's March 3 President's Lecture on race and racism.

March 16 events include a tour of the campus's Montana Arboretum and writing notes of gratitude in the UC Ballroom. April 2 plans include a host of activities on the M Trail and showings of various Planet Earth films in the UC Theater. (Mazana Boerboom)

**COVID-19 and vaccinations in Missoula County**

As of Monday, Missoula County is still in the first tier of Phase 1B of COVID-19 vaccinations, as national shortages continue to slow progress. As spots open up, Missoula County will update their website for sign ups, or people can call (406) 258-4636 and choose option three for vaccine info. All Missoula County residents who are 70 and older and who are a person of color can get the vaccine in this stage.

As of Monday, Missoula County:

- Administered nearly 30,000 total doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Completed more than 11,000 second doses, which fully immunize recipients.
  - Had 93 active cases of the virus.
- Montana:
- Administered 255,000 doses, almost 100,000 more since last week.
  - Completed more than 87,000 second doses.
  - Had just more than 1,600 active cases. (MB)

The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18							19			
20							21			22				
			23			24		25						
26	27	28				29		30				31	32	
33						34		35				36		
37				38	39							40		
41				42							43			
44			45				46		47	48				
		49				50		51						
52	53					54		55			56	57	58	
59						60		61						
62						63					64			
65						66					67			

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ACROSS

- 1 Boat's berth  
5 Part of a repair bill  
10 Skewed view  
14 Multinational money  
15 Come about  
16 A while ago  
17 Flashcards subject  
19 Kind of ID  
20 Renter  
21 Courting music  
23 Put up, as a picture  
25 Flinch, say  
26 Varied  
30 Biased against seniors  
33 Bird feeder filler  
34 Small sample  
36 80's group who sang "Take On Me"  
37 Melville setting  
38 Talk like Porky Pig  
40 Slot machine icon  
41 Pop-ups, e.g.  
42 Cheyenne shelter  
43 Ticklish Muppet  
44 Navy clerk  
46 Tactful  
49 Koontz creation  
51 Within earshot  
52 Ivory tower inhabitant  
55 Etsy wares  
59 Piercing site  
60 Assessment  
62 Chutzpah  
63 Now or \_\_\_\_\_  
64 Edit menu choice

- 65 Gives the heave-ho  
66 WTO's concern  
67 Pound sound

DOWN

- 1 Close, as an envelope  
2 Tackle box item  
3 Blue flower  
4 Cheap insult  
5 Sing the blues  
6 You-here link  
7 Tiny amounts  
8 Willow for basketmaking  
9 Craft anew  
10 Pep in one's step  
11 Impossible to fill  
12 Got an A+ on  
13 Parched  
18 Try, as a case  
22 Raring to go  
24 \_\_\_\_\_ and go  
26 Test, as ore  
27 Glove leather

- 28 Like some temperatures  
29 Old-fashioned  
31 Cause of a red face  
32 Medium's card  
35 Oktoberfest souvenir  
38 Forestall, with "off"  
39 Urban housing  
43 Mistake in print  
45 Runway figures  
47 Safe from hackers  
48 "Fame" singer  
50 Fare with onions  
52 Aquatic plant  
53 TV cable, for short  
54 Spanish sparkling wine  
56 Monetary penalty  
57 Type of list  
58 Winter coat?  
61 Conducted

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

FROM	BACKS	CITE
LARA	AWAIT	ONYX
AVANT	GARDE	ROLE
BELIE	REDPE	PPER
	CRUD	INSERT
STRUNG	CANTER	
LAIR	HOARSE	AMC
OCTET	GIG	REBEL
BOA	HARROW	ALGA
MAIDEN	INSEAM	
ABOUND	ONIT	
FORGERIES	SWAZI	
OGEE	ENVISIONED	
ULNA	STEEP	ONTO
LEOS	SORRY	DEAL

Don't blame a bad day on the stars

ALEX MILLER

michael6.miller@umontana.edu

Mercury is no longer in retrograde you say? Well shoo darn, cuzzin! The colossal feelings of unrest are finally going away, until some other bullshit happens in your life that you'll blame on the star charts. It's cool though, we'll still be here slinging that sweet astrological knowledge.

**PISCES (FEB. 19–MARCH 20):** One fish, two fish, you need to cool it. You're so sensitive that a gentle breeze could hurt your feelings. It's not a bad thing to be the emotional friend of the group — your empathy powers are truly impressive. But take a breath, reschedule your daily cry and carry on with your day.

**ARIES (MARCH 21–APRIL 19):** Competition is your blood type, Aries. It's your greatest motivator, but also your Achilles' heel. You remind us the most of Kenan Thompson's version of LaVar Ball, who goes on "Weekend Update" yelling "never lost!" and hawks his Big Baller Brand shoes. That's you, bald cap and all.

**TAURUS (APRIL 20–MAY 20):** You're kind of the bad boy of the friend group, galactic bovine. Authority and you usually mix, unless that authority says or asks something stupid of you. Then hell breaks loose, you buck the trend and the rules are slashed and burned. Then it's back to being a cool, grass-eating space cow.

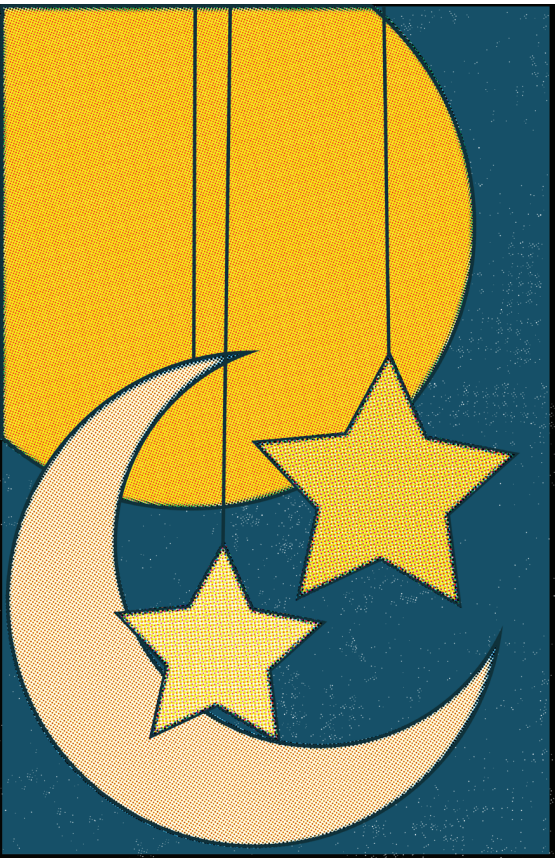
**GEMINI (MAY 21–JUNE 20):** Gem, you're in love with love, don't try and hide it. You have strong elements of the cliché hopeless romantic character in any early 2000s rom-com. You're not a two-faced romancer, you're about that steadfast life. Through thick and thin, you'll love until it hurts. Which probably isn't healthy in reality, but fuck it.

**CANCER (JUNE 21–JULY 22):** You're a creative hermit crab, Cancer. Big groups send you scuttling back into your neatly decorated shell, and inside you like to write poems about sea anemones and smoke fancy French cigarettes. Oh shit, you're just a hipster, nvm.

**LEO (JULY 23–AUG. 22):** You know who is a Leo? Bugs Bunny. How many times has that silly rabbit forced himself to the forefront of the "Looney Tunes?" Every. Damn. Time. So, yea, you're an aggressively cartoonish showman who has an affinity for carrots.

**VIRGO (AUG. 23–SEP. 22):** There's a lot of KnOwLedGe in your head Virgo. It's like a supercomputer up there, filled with the latest TikTok trends, mathematical formulae and photographic memories of your friend's kindergarten crush. You'd absolutely kill it at a trivia night.

**LIBRA (SEP. 23–OCT. 22):** What do you daydream about all the time, Libra? Perfectly balanced scales? Bowls of guacamole on a neverending conveyor belt with all the chips you could want? Zac Efron? We'll leave your head in the clouds for now, just don't forget to come down from time to time.



OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

**SCORPIO (OCT. 23–NOV. 21):** Oh? What is this? A positive Scorpio horoscope? Well just like your unabashed authenticity, so too are we being authentic when we say you suck a lot sometimes. But, you are one of the most blunt and genuine signs, so our frankness is actually a compliment to you.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22–DEC. 22):** Are you an actor or something? Sag, you're super duper good at imagining things and relating to people. And you use those skills to monologue the truth to someone. It can be a bit much, and you definitely didn't need to do it in front of a live audience, but it is appreciated.

**CAPRICORN (DEC. 23–JAN. 19):** Would it be a stretch to say your motto is "do it for the 'Gram?" Everything has to be picture perfect for you, Cap. Flash, perfection and some pizzazz keep you floating along. That perfectly cooked five-course meal that you posted the other day definitely wasn't takeout, right?

**AQUARIUS (JAN. 20–FEB. 18):** Oh piss off, you "unique" cup bearer. Just because you have a Co-Star does not mean you know the way of the world. Bam. Dunked on.



# Free-speech legislation raises discrimination concerns

MARIAH THOMAS  
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House Bill 349, which aims to protect students in Montana from being kicked out of a club for harassing behavior, raises potential concerns of discrimination among student groups.

Anthony Johnstone, who teaches courses on Montana’s constitution at the Alexander Blewett School of Law, said HB 349 would do two things at state universities. First, the bill would enable university-recognized student groups to exclude members based on beliefs. Second, it would limit a university’s enforcement of harassment and anti-discrimination laws.

“Both aspects of this bill go further than the courts require under the First Amendment,” Johnstone said.

The bill states that colleges or universities cannot remove someone from a student group for harassment that stems from speech or expression. The only exception being cases so severe that to educational opportunities.

Dylan Klapmeier, the communications director for the Montana House of Representatives Majority, said HB 349 hinges on the idea that if all students are required to pay fees for student groups, then they should all get the resources provided to student groups.

He added that the bill is part of an effort during this legislative session to ensure students’ rights are being protected on campuses. Other such bills include House Bill 218, a bill abolishing free speech zones, and House Bill 102, — signed into law on Feb. 18 — which will allow guns on campus beginning in June.

Klapmeier said HB 349 was meant to be a companion bill to HB 218.

“Freedom of association and freedom of speech complement each other because it’s about students — individually or in groups — being able to share ideas,” Klapmeier said.

HB 218 enjoyed strong bipartisan support as it passed the house on Feb. 19. But unlike its companion bill, HB 349 is not experiencing that same breadth of support in the state Legislature. It is also opposed by some student groups at UM.

Maggie Bornstein, the Associated Students of the University of Montana’s student political action director, said ASUM is against the bill.

“HB 349 blurs the line between what is



CONTRIBUTED

free speech and what is protection from discrimination,” Bornstein said.

Bornstein said the bill would allow religious, political or ideological student groups to exclude members based on their beliefs. She said if the bill passes, it would force ASUM to provide funding to discriminatory groups, adding that ASUM would also have to revise their fiscal policy to include discrimination as a protected position.

Nas Jabr, the vice president of UM Lambda Alliance, a student group that promotes inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ students, said the alliance is against the bill too. Despite a club policy to not engage in politics this year, they made an exception for this bill. Jabr said it was important to speak out against HB 349 because it would possibly allow harassment.

While Lambda understands the importance of free speech on a surface level, Jabr is concerned this bill threatens the welcoming and safe environment UM offers to students.

Jabr added that, in theory, the bill would force ASUM to provide funding to both Lambda Alliance and to a potential group that contradicts what Lambda Alliance stands for.

“If hate groups are given the permission to speak, we’re worried students won’t feel safe and comfortable on campus, which, for LGBTQ students, is sometimes the only place they do,” Jabr said.

Jabr said a lot of discrimination they’ve experienced against LGBTQIA+ students on campus occurs on microaggressive levels, an example being professors and other students refusing to use proper pronouns for transgender students.

Johnstone, the law professor, added that HB 349 blurs the line of authority between the university system and the state Legislature, much like other bills this legislative session.

But he said HB 349 may raise larger concerns, as the bill conflicts with federal anti-discrimination guidelines. If the University does not follow federal anti-discrimination guidelines, it could lose federal funding, including student loans.

Johnstone said the likelihood of that happening is low, but is still a risk if the bill is enforced on state campuses.

HB 349 passed the state House of Representatives on Feb. 23 in a vote of 67-33. It is now in hearings at the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“Our concern with the bill’s passage is that it will give people permission to start acting on their hateful beliefs instead of just having them,” Jabr said.

They added that in a worst-case scenario, there could be more reports of discrimination on campus.

# First director of inclusive excellence advocates for students

GRACE CARR  
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Salena Hill was sitting on a bench in the Branch Center having her photo taken, when a young child, no older than two, waddled over to her in his puffy winter coat. Even masked, one could see Hill’s face light up as she spoke to the boy and his father.

A passion for helping others and meeting new people is among the reasons Hill was hired as University of Montana’s first director of inclusive excellence.

“I want to be that person where, when something heavy happens to a student and they’re not sure if it was a microaggression or if it was an actual unjust thing that happened, they can come and sit and share that with me,” Hill said.

Hill is a UM alum. She earned a master’s in school counseling in 2008 and a doctorate in counselor education in August 2020. She began her new position on Feb. 22 and spent her first week meeting new people, getting re-engaged with campus and having conversations with students.

In her position, Hill plans to focus on student inclusion to encourage diversity on campus. Her goal is to shape this new position to best support students on campus and identify changes that need to be made.

“My focus is really just being a support person for the BIPOC and LGBT students,” Hill said. “I’ll also be connecting students with services or advocating for them when services don’t really accommodate or align with the needs that they have as BIPOC.”

Hill, a Crow tribal member, said being Native American in Montana gave her the personal experience to better help her empathize with students. She said she knows what it’s like to internalize feelings and questions, and she hopes to help others work through their own.

Hill added that she plans to utilize her counseling skills to listen and support students while also learning from their conversations. She emphasized the importance of hearing other students to understand what is happening on campus and what changes need to take place.

“You can’t really advocate for something you don’t understand fully, or haven’t heard a personal story,” Hill said. “When you do any type of diversity work, you have to know what you don’t know.”

She is most looking forward to hearing student

stories and connecting with them. Hill said she feels honored to sit in on somebody’s experience because it gives her more insight and ideas on what needs to change.

Hill’s advocacy style is gentler in its approach. She tries to understand all angles of a situation and determine the proper ways to approach it, as not every scenario is black and white.

But her goal of serving the students and making a positive impact will remain the same.

“This office and this center can serve as ‘okay, that happened, so let’s go forward and figure out how we can start creating change within this system,’” Hill said.

Her office is in the Branch Center on the second floor of the University Center. And she encourages students to stop by for a conversation.



Salena Hill is the University of Montana’s new Director of Inclusive Excellence where she will be serving and supporting the University’s LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC community. “Being a Crow person, everything you do is to help the greater good and everyone has a role within that community. For me to be able to serve in a role like this I really do get to give back to the whole campus,” said Hill. **ZACH MEYER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

# Asymptomatic tests are back at Curry Health Center

MARIAH THOMAS  
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Since Feb. 17, Curry Health Center has once again been offering COVID-19 tests for asymptomatic patients, according to Curry officials.

Dionne Peterson, a registered nurse and the COVID-19 coordinator at Curry Health, said there are 10 slots available daily for testing students who are not experiencing symptoms but are concerned about possible exposure. The service will be available Monday through Friday for the foreseeable future, she said.

She said students who wish to receive an asymptomatic COVID-19 test should call Curry Health before noon. They will then be put on a schedule and a provider will call them back with information regarding their test.

Peterson added that asymptomatic students will receive a different test than the rapid-result kind given to those experiencing symptoms. Instead, Curry uses more sensitive PCR tests that — according to the Food and Drug Administration — detect proteins from the virus. Students who are symptomatic receive a rapid PCR test, but Peterson explained higher-complexity PCR tests are used for asymptomatic test subjects.

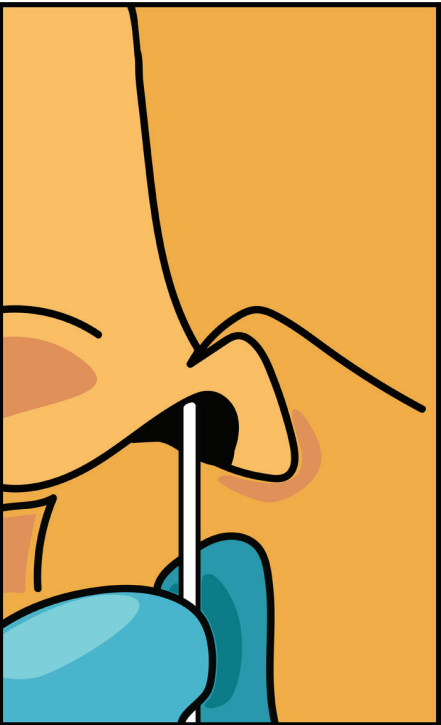
“These tests are similar to the ones used by the Missoula Health Department,” Peterson said, referring to the sensitive PCR tests. “It’s a better test medically and scientifically for detecting asymptomatic cases.”

Peterson added the asymptomatic tests can be expected to return results in between a day and a day and a half.

She said students should continue wearing masks, practicing social distancing and being cautious about attending large gatherings without COVID-19 mitigation procedures. In addition, Peterson said any students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and schedule a test through Curry Health.

As of March 1, according to Missoula County Public Health’s COVID-19 dashboard, the University of Montana had 10 active cases of the virus.


Peterson said any student with concerns or questions regarding COVID-19 or asymptomatic testing should reach out to Curry Health Center.



OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN


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# PAINTING A GRIM PICTURE

## HOW THE PANDEMIC TOPPED OFF UM’S DECADE-LONG ENROLLMENT CRISIS

STORY BY MAZANA BOERBOOM  
DESIGN BY ELLA MUSGROVE

1989  
9,679  
students

When beloved history professor Robert Greene died in December, students and faculty alike grieved not only the loss of a remarkable friend and teacher, but also the Russian history classes he taught.

“He was like a genius, and I always heard the best thing about his classes, and I really wanted to take his Soviet-era history class,” said Maddie Hagan, a junior studying history and philosophy at the University of Montana.

Now, Hagan won’t get the chance; not only because Greene is gone, but because his position isn’t being filled. Hagan had friends who had religiously enrolled in all his classes, from Imperial Russia to the Russian Revolution. But the popular Russian history classes might not be taught again.

UM’s declining enrollment has caused smaller programs like history and philosophy to cut funding, and oftentimes, faculty positions. Since 2017, UM has had a 13% decline in faculty — sometimes from layoffs,

but often from leaving retired faculty positions unfilled.

As a result, programs and classes around campus have been cut, leaving students with fewer options to complete degree requirements.

Hagan has been frustrated to see her academic options dwindle as important programs, faculty and classes are cut. Next semester, she has the choice between only three upper division electives for her philosophy major. With only eight courses on the syllabi for this semester, philosophy course offerings have been more than halved since 2011, the peak of UM’s enrollment.

“There’s great students and great faculty and a great academic environment in history and philosophy, and in the humanities in general, and I don’t think it gets the attention it deserves,” Hagan said.

In her three years at UM, Hagan has witnessed declining enrollment empty entire floors of residence halls, and felt the undercurrent of fear among faculty as budgets were slashed. Then, the global pandemic upended everyone’s way of life.

Hagan is one of only 9,500 students enrolled at the University of Montana this

semester. After a decade-long decline in enrollment closed with a pandemic that has caused higher education institutions everywhere to struggle, UM is grasping at ways to reach new students and keep current ones.

The numbers paint a grim picture.

In that decade, UM lost 39% of its students and around 20% of its budget. Enrollment dropped below 10,000 students for the first time in 30 years. And in the last year alone, UM lost more than 700 students, for a 7.3% overall drop in enrollment.

The continued decline and resulting loss of classes and faculty has lowered morale at UM. And the pandemic has worsened that blow.

Before the pandemic, administrators — and in particular UM President Seth Bodnar — were optimistic that, this year, they’d break the downward trend.

“If you had asked me at this time last year... I would’ve told you, based on the number of applications [UM had received], that our enrollment would’ve been up one or two percent,” Bodnar said, referring to the point in 2020 just before COVID-19 hit the U.S. with force and UM lost hope for breaking the enrollment trend.

Leaders at the University have been jumping ship, with former provost Jon Harbor and former enrollment Vice President Cathy Cole both taking jobs elsewhere last summer, and multiple dean positions being replaced within the last year.

Yet UM administrators hold onto hope that their institution will persevere through

both the pandemic and the enrollment decline, emerging better off on the other end of this uncertainty.

The overall decline in enrollment isn’t unique to UM. According to a Statista report, overall enrollment in public colleges across the United States peaked at just over 15 million in 2010 and 2011, similar to UM’s 2011 peak. Since then, overall enrollment has declined nationally, though not as drastically as it has at UM.

Last year, though, the COVID-19 pandemic took a significant toll on higher education across the board. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that from fall 2019 to fall 2020, U.S. colleges and universities saw an overall 3.3% decline in enrollment; with a 4.4% decrease in undergraduate enrollment and a 13% decrease in freshmen enrollment. That’s compared to UM’s overall decline of 7.3%, undergrad decline of 7.5% and freshmen drop of 9.1%.

The study found that high school graduates were more likely not to enroll in colleges or universities right out of high school after COVID-19 shut down much of the world.

Mary Kreta, UM’s associate vice president of enrollment, said over the span of a three year average (from 2018-2021), applications have been up 41% and admitted students are up by 50%. The numbers were promising, and hopes of increased enrollment were high last year.

But when the pandemic arrived, hopes of reversing the enrollment trend quickly dissipated.

Two-year colleges, like UM’s Missoula

College, were also hit disproportionately by the pandemic. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, public two-year colleges’ enrollment dropped by 9.5% from 2019 to 2020.

“We do have a lot of students who are parents. We have a lot of students that may have more difficulties learning in a remote environment,” Dean Thomas Gallagher of Missoula College said. “I know we’re really concerned for a lot of our students, because there are a lot of issues resulting from isolation and perhaps depression and emotional issues that come along with that. So we’ve seen, as a result, we’ve seen some significant declines in our enrollment.”

Missoula College saw an increase in enrollment in 2019, but lost that progress after the pandemic, with a sharp 21.1% decrease from spring 2020 to spring 2021.

Gallagher said the numbers aren’t good, but that the college has managed to maintain all its programs and reduce costs by limiting the number of course sections.

Other UM colleges have had to get crafty with budget reductions over the years as well.

Alan Townsend, dean of the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, said his college has absorbed some cuts over the years, though projections for next semester’s enrollment in the college are strong and research opportunities remain abundant.

Dean Timothy Nichols of the Davidson Honors College said the college has had an 11% reduction in budget, but has had significant support from donors. Still, the college has had to absorb multiple small Intro to Honors classes, a special feature in the college praised for its typically small size, into one large class, and cut a position after a staff member left.

Dean Barry Brown of libraries said the Mansfield Library has seen a budget reduction of 33% over eight years and 12% from 2020 to 2021. He said they’ve cut library staff, faculty and student employees over the years

2011  
15,669  
students

and canceled a lot of library collections.

Even colleges that haven’t had to deal with major budget cuts, like the College of Business, College of Arts and Media and the Alexander Blewett III School of Law, have had to cut faculty numbers down.

“It’s time to think creatively to reimagine, reinvent and rebuild our academic and creative enterprises towards relevance, renewed excellence, and radical inclusion,” College of Arts and Media Dean Laurie Baefsky stated in an email. “Who better than [the College of] Arts and Media to inventively disrupt existing narrative of ‘how things are done,’ and invent new pathways in educating and preparing our next generation of creatives? We’re ready for the challenge.”

When Professor of Theater John DeBoer began teaching at UM in 2008, he was bubbling with enthusiasm and youthful optimism, much like the more than 14,000 students he shared campus with at the time. Eventually, he’d become an interim dean of an entire college. But until then, he was just excited to be teaching what he loved.

“I was so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed when I got here,” DeBoer said. “I mean, it was a big old playground.”

He said even when enrollment was at its all time peak, with nearly 16,000 students in 2011, the arts always had to find ways to stretch a dollar. Funding productions and projects can be spendy, but he said he never felt the arts were being slighted or underfunded.

“Things changed, and we didn’t do a good job of aligning ourselves with the new world, of what Montana students were expecting from recruitment, what students nationally were expecting from recruitment,” DeBoer said.

He watched over the years as enrollment ticked down, first dropping below 15,000. And then the numbers fell just under 14,000 in 2014, and below 13, then 12 and 11. And then, finally, sinking under 10,000 in the first year of the new decade. But DeBoer doesn’t

like to think of enrollment as the benchmark for success.

“I think that the biggest change is always the morale — that people lose their jobs, or positions don’t get filled — and people’s spirits deflate because of a sense that we weren’t successful,” DeBoer said. “And yet the small victories of the students that we’re working with, the productions that we’re

“I think that the biggest change is always the morale — that people lose their jobs, or positions don’t get filled — and people’s spirits deflate because of a sense that we weren’t successful.”  
- John DeBoer

putting on, the art that we’re making, those feel better than ever.”

DeBoer found the strong connections formed between professors and students

remained stronger than ever.

Over the years, he faced the increasingly difficult experience of watching as his colleagues lost their jobs. In 2019, he was



put in the position to make the cuts himself, when he was appointed interim dean of the College of Arts and Media — the newly established college that joined the School of Journalism, media arts, and visual and performing arts.

“Intellectually, you can process it as necessary. Emotionally, it’s devastating,” DeBoer said. “You have to continually acknowledge the humanity of the situation and not just brush it off as, ‘well, we had to make a decision and we made it.’”

DeBoer stepped back into his professor role once Dean Laurie Baefsky was hired in fall 2020.

He said he missed the time he had as a professor, teaching and creating art, though he can now empathize with authority when they have to make tough calls.

“Every hard decision has its own unique details that informed the decision making process, and so you know ones that are entirely financial are really difficult. Because they’re not based on performance, and they can make you really sad,” DeBoer said. “But you have to live with that sadness. Part of being a leader is being open to being a little bit humble and a little bit vulnerable.”

The continued drop in student enrollment created the budget issues that have led to cuts. While 40% of the University’s budget comes from state funding, the other 60% comes from student tuition and fees, said Dave Kuntz, UM’s director of strategic communication. So, when more than a third of students are lost over a decade, a lot of money is lost too.

In the last year alone, the budget, at \$126 million, decreased by 4.6% and almost 70 faculty and staff positions were cut.

Kuntz said staff cuts are made in an effort to protect “academic excellence.” And funding priority was given to departments with higher enrollment rates. Those decisions were never easy to make, though.

Kuntz agreed that enrollment has made a direct blow to campus morale.

“But I’ll also say many folks on this campus are motivated by the mission to serve students, and continue to do so with this trend happening the way it is,” Kuntz said.

●  
UM’s Acting Provost Reed Humphrey has been at the University for 15 years. He was named acting provost after Jon Harbor left the position to take a job at Purdue Global University, Purdue’s online school, in the summer.

“I’ve experienced a really stable University and I’ve been experiencing the decline at UM along with everybody else,” Humphrey said. “The enrollment decline affects everybody, right? I mean, it’s affected faculty, it affects staff. And it certainly affects our ability to deliver the kind of academic program that we would prefer to deliver.”

Humphrey said he thought one of the core problems of enrollment decline is the perception the trend gives the University. He said

the drop can lead people to believe there’s a problem with UM’s academics or campus life, which he said are both still top-notch. Though he said without careful planning, resources could become constrained and take a toll on those important aspects of University life.

Another misconception, he said, is that the

provost position for the next couple of years, until administrators can conduct a thorough candidate search when the pandemic is over.

Another new administrator is Mary Kreta, the associate vice president of enrollment who took over after Cathy Cole left the position to work at a small college in Iowa.

Kreta has already started working toward

program, increasing digital marketing and making phone calls to potential students.

“I wanted to make a difference, and I felt the University of Montana was the best use of my skill set,” Kreta said. “Because you have an incredible University that serves the state very well, and a campus community that is ready to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work.”

Another big part of recruitment strategies is trying to share UM’s strengths; whether that be faculty-student interactions, research opportunities, or the incredible access to the outdoors afforded by Missoula.

“We have a great education here that frankly we haven’t done, and hadn’t done in the past, as good a job telling students about,” Bodnar said. “And so of course when I joined we said ‘we’re going to focus on that,’ but almost more importantly I think we have an obligation for the students that come here to do everything we can to help them and support them in persisting and succeeding in higher rates.”

A bright spot in enrollment is that retention rates, or the number of students who continue to enroll from semester to semester, were up to 88% from fall to spring this year.

“Which means more students who come here are persisting and succeeding at higher rates, and that’s incredibly important, and we’re working to continue that growth,” Bodnar said. “The pandemic obviously creates some challenges, but that’s really important to me that the students who come here, they persist and they succeed to graduation, and we’re making great progress there.”

Native American student enrollment also rose by 20.3% from spring 2020 to spring 2021, compared to national averages that show the demographic as having the largest decrease overall.

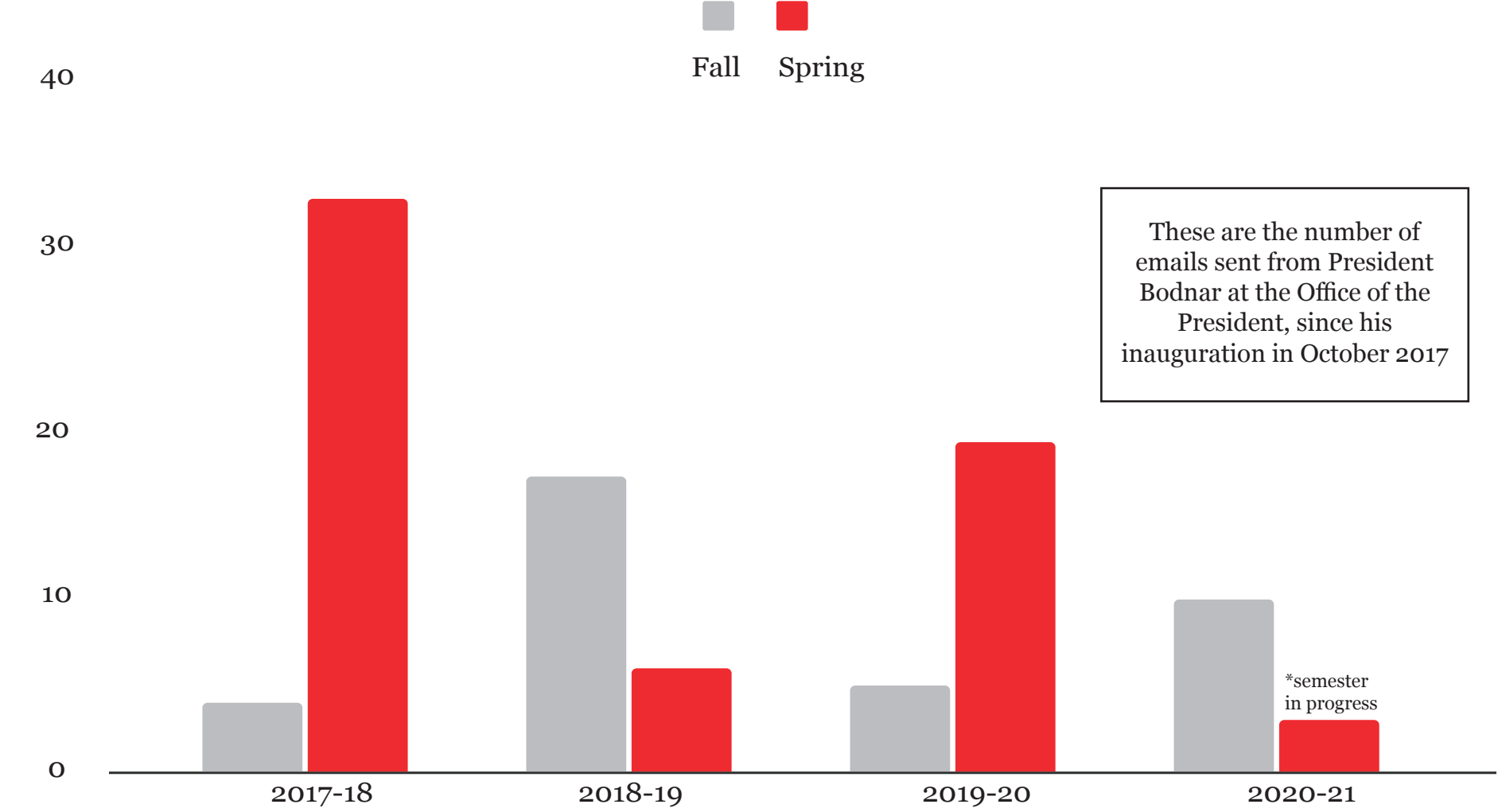
Bodnar said having better outreach to Native American students was one of his priorities and he’s happy to see its success.

●  
Hannah Hill, a student studying wildlife biology and ecosystem science and restoration, is aware of enrollment decline and wants to help change it.

The sophomore from Nevada fell in love with the University’s atmosphere on her college tour and now wants to provide that experience to new potential students. She joined the Advocates, the student group that runs tours, and became a tour guide herself.

She recently gave her first campus tour, and despite the nerves, enjoyed telling the potential future freshmen about her favorite lounging spot on campus and the excitement of Griz athletic games during pre-COVID times. She hopes she sparked the same love for the campus in them that she felt on her first tour.

Hill said the pandemic has made a lot of things more difficult, and she’s aware the problem can’t be fixed overnight. She feels like there’s a lot of uncertainty about UM’s



## Emails from the Office of the President

future. She wishes there was more communication from administration across multiple platforms. She’d like to know things like what next semester will look like and when the start date will be. And even if they can’t provide answers, she’d like to at least know when there will be answers.

“It feels like a lot of our communication now is like COVID Response Team, and not so much like President Bodnar himself speaking,” Hill said. “But I also understand that he’s probably very busy right now to say the least. But yeah I do kind of miss hearing from him directly.”

Bodnar said it’s been more difficult for him to engage with students during the pandemic.

“I’ve really missed that part of the job,” he said. “I’ve missed being up in the student section for the passing out of pizzas during the third quarter of football games, or the student section at basketball games, or just walking and having lunch over at the Food Zoo and just talking to students.”

Since March 2020, the Office of the President has sent out 29 emails, only 13 during

this academic year, to students. Five of those emails were sent within the same fateful March week of spring break, as the University made the switch to remote learning. Since spring 2020 ended, though, there have been

“It feels like a lot of our communication now is like COVID Response Team, and not so much like President Bodnar himself speaking. But I also understand that he’s probably very busy right now to say the least. But yeah, I do kind of miss hearing from him directly.” - Hannah Hill

months-long gaps between emails from Bodnar, which are usually sent on holidays.

In his first year as president, Bodnar sent

more frequent emails. During Bodnar’s first full semester as president in spring 2018, the Office of the President sent 33 emails to students, and in the fall that year he sent 17. In the fall and spring of 2019, he sent only a collective 11 emails.

Though COVID Response Team emails, which provide in depth updates on the virus, come out weekly, there’s still very little sense among students about what’s happening behind the scenes at UM.

Bodnar said he’s been wondering about the best ways to communicate with students during the COVID-19 era.

“At the beginning of this pandemic it was important, as that situation was changing pretty rapidly, to have a lot of communications from myself and my office as part of that response and as the modalities were changing,” Bodnar said. “And as things have settled down, there’s been less of a need for that kind of constant communication.”

Hagan said she’s only picked up on whispers of budget cuts and enrollment issues from faculty herself. She was shocked to learn that entire floors of dorms like Jesse

Hall are completely vacant. She noticed the new coffee shop in Eck Hall last year, the renovation of the Corner Store and the ice rink installed on the Oval.

“All of which I think are good things, but are more of a way to draw students in than benefit the students that are already here,” Hagan said.

She thinks the money should be allocated toward academics that are suffering, particularly when faculty jobs are on the line. Hagan said there’s been some informal talks among history students about protesting for humanities funding if budget cuts are too large. And she said she’d organize it if it came to that.

“It’s so important that humanities are funded, especially in times of social strife, which I think that we’re in. Having funding and having students and having that publicity surrounding humanities is really important,” Hagan said. “And I hope that the administration recognizes that some of the best and brightest students at the University are coming from humanities and are worth supporting.”



high overturn in leadership is a bad thing.

“Change in leadership can be healthy,” Humphrey said. “There’s a balance there, right? It can be perceived as unhealthy, but inviting individuals into Missoula and into this campus environment can likewise

“The enrollment decline affects everybody, right? I mean, it’s affected faculty, it affects staff. And it certainly affects our ability to deliver the kind of academic program that we would prefer to deliver.”  
- Reed Humphrey

bring new ideas. And this is a campus, like any campus, that is healthiest when it has refreshed ideas.”

Humphrey will likely hold the acting

refining recruitment strategies at UM, by improving communication with potential students and providing them with personalized interaction.

For example, she said UM sends out email reminders for things like scholarship dead-

lines, and matches every student who tours UM with a faculty member from the department they’re interested in for a conversation. They’re also developing a text message



# Repetition is the father of... boringness

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Perhaps the most accurate way to describe King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard is prolific: Since 2015 the band has released 12 full-length albums.

But quantity is not always quality.

The Australian outfit’s latest offering, “L.W.,” is the sister album to 2020’s “K.G.” (get it, “K.G.L.W.,” it’s their name! They’re highbrow!). And that album started down a path this record has continued. And that path, dear reader, is one full of pseudo-sitars, boring arrangements and songs that mostly all sound the same.

The opener, “If Not Now, Then When,” is like a great first date: The connection is electric and the future holds so much promise. But then you see them in the wild and they’re a different, boring person. The song feels like an homage to Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition,” with the bulk of the track featuring a swaggering synth and hiccupping bass. It’s slick and fun, and should set the tone for the sonic journey your ears are

about to embark on.

But then, the rest of the album just happens. A band should never be faulted for trying to create a cohesive album that follows either a lyrical or sonic storyline. But ‘ol Gizzard Wizard over here just made a bunch of songs that sound way too similar. The Beatles made a sitar edge sound cool back in the ‘60s. It should have stayed there.

And that is the most annoying part of this whole album: The same riff and sound is throughout the record. It would appear that the repetitive usage is not for some droning, hypnotizing effect — as in mid-70s krautrock, where the same riff would sound different because of repetition. No, oh no. This stupid guitar/sitar line shows up like the unwanted party guest peaking their head into every room trying to feel a part of the vibe.

But this is not a bad band. In the past, they have put out adventurous, sonically distilled versions of LSD (like on “Flying Microtonal Banana” or “Infest the Rats’ Nest”). And that

prowess is still here, albeit buried beneath the muck and the mire of boring repetition.

Track four, “Supreme Ascendency,” is good. Actually, it’s the second best on the album, but who’s counting when there are only two good songs? Yes, the aforementioned sitar-ish sound comes back, BUT the addition of forward-sounding piano (and a drum beat lifted from early Moby) blend together to make the only truly catchy song on “L.W.” Think of a mobile bamboo forest invading an urban sprawl, that is what this song sounds like.

The best indicator that a song is good is when your static joints loosen, and a full-body rhythmic swing melds with the beat of the song. “K.G.L.W.,” the eight-and-a-half minute album closer, does that. It’s a downtuned, heavy, beat-the-ever-living-fuck-out-your-ears riff-a-palooza. It’s as if Black Sabbath and Gojira met in Australia to discuss the business of heaviness. But it also doesn’t make a whole hell of a lot of sense on this album.

Psych rock isn’t really supposed to make



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sense, but it’s also supposed to be adventurous and weird. “L.W.” fails to do that, but King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard will certainly bounce back — with 15 more albums of material.

# ‘Behind Her Eyes’ is a series that leaves your head spinning

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Netflix’s new limited series “Behind Her Eyes” — filled with erotic obsessions, strange dreams and, would you believe it, a mysterious well in the woods — is a worthy binge, but a little too shocking and stupid to be a great thriller.

Based on a novel by Sarah Pinborough, this six-episode psychological thriller follows a love triangle that is more dangerous and deceiving than affectionate.

While “Behind Her Eyes” is a thriller, it starts out like a soap opera, focusing on the affair between Louise (Simona Brown), a divorced mom, and David (Tom Bateman), a married man with a mysterious past. To throw another monkey wrench in Louise’s life, David happens to be the therapist at the psychiatric office where she works. But, of course, nothing is as it seems.

By the end of episode one, viewers see the night terrors that haunt Louise every time she closes her eyes.

Despite Louise’s affair, she gradually befriends David’s wife, Adele (Eve Hewson). The closer Louise gets to the married couple, the stranger things become. Adele slowly divulges the reality of her estranged rela-

tionship with her husband, painting him as an abusive and neglectful spouse. But as the series progresses, it’s revealed that David’s not the problem.

With every dream, flashback and cryptic conversation, the soapy facade of “Behind Her Eyes” crumbles to reveal a complex, thrilling and strange story beneath the surface.

But the time it takes to get to the actual thrill is far too long. The first two episodes feel generic, focusing on the dull chores of Louise going to work, picking up her son and attempting to avoid David. By the time the series picks up the pace, the change in tone feels a bit disjointed.

One moment this series is a mystery, and the next it’s a bizarre and fantastical story about supernatural powers. The middle of the series is more plausible and smartly crafted, with hints that Adele is not really as innocent as she appears. Then things get weird.

Louise’s night terrors somehow connect to the world of astral projections, where she can escape her physical body and explore the world as a floating, blue ball of light. The shift is not subtle, making the whole series feel less like a thriller and more like some knock-off of “Doctor Strange.”

Yet, Louise’s rare ability does little to make

up for her boring personality. Regardless of how much life Brown brings to her character, Louise is still a secretary who spends her time watching talk shows and drinking wine.

It’s refreshing to see a Black, female lead, but the show never really delves into the broad implications of race, nor how it individually affects the characters. Louise’s life revolves around her obsession with David and Adele, which only undermines the depth of her characterization because nothing is really about her, it’s always about them.

Adele is a little more nuanced. Naturally, as a supposedly innocent, sweet housewife, she is never the culprit for egregious behavior, especially murder. While “Behind Her Eyes” is poorly paced, untangling Adele’s messy history is a fun pastime. Especially with Hewson’s sickly-sweet facade reminiscent of Amy Dunne’s performance in “Gone Girl.”

“Behind Her Eyes” shows most of its color through thrilling dream sequences. Visually, the footage is pleasing, even if the CGI fires feel out of place. However, it’s hard to find whether Louise’s dreams really add up to anything because of her dull personality.

With a series-ending plot twist that feels more stupid than shocking, this series promises a major #WTF moment. But the mostly



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# Prose and Poems’ small turnout with a big impact

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The sound of poetry being read echoed across the empty seats of the University Center’s theater at this year’s annual, pandemic-impacted Prose and Poems event at UM.

Pre-pandemic, nearly 40 poets across UM would come to the event to express their most inner thoughts or favorite rhymes. This time, nearly a year into the coronavirus pandemic, only two showed up.

The UM Student Involvement Network has seen a dramatic drop in attendance of their events since the pandemic started. Despite this, the group is adamant about creating safe spaces and fun events for students and people of the Missoula community no matter what the turnout is.

At max capacity, the theater holds up to 298 people. Last Tuesday evening’s event, seven were in attendance, five of whom were the staff that was required to be there.

Hailey Michelson, the adviser for the network, said that before the pandemic, Prose and Poems was one of their biggest events.

“When we used to have this fully in-person, our turnout was always pretty big,” Michelson said.

However, she said the low attendance doesn’t necessarily have to be seen as a bad thing.

The UM Student Involvement Network is supported with both university funding and money raised by the group.

Ben Borhegyi, a sophomore studying environmental science, said it was fitting to share a poem with a small group because of how intimate the poems were.

“I liked the small group. Usually, Prose and Poems have two dozen people, and sometimes during that time, you feel very vulnerable. But this time I think this event is effective with both types of groups, but this way I feel more relaxed,” Borhegyi said.

Borhegyi decided to attend because any event put on by the UM Student Involvement Network is usually the highlight of his month.

“It was really vulnerable. I don’t really share my poetry,” Borhegyi said. “Both because it’s scary, but also because I don’t

think people really appreciate them — but it’s so exhilarating.”

Though the extreme intimacy of this event was special in its own way, the Student Involvement Network is working toward getting people back on campus in a COVID-19-safe way.

“I feel most people doing classes during the pandemic forget there are ways to connect on campus outside of the classroom,” Michelson said. “I think it’s harder because things are virtual. We’re just now transitioning into doing more hybrid events [in-person and virtual].”

Morgan Starens, the director of the network’s social media, said the Student Involvement Network has around 1,800 followers on the UC Instagram, which is where the group posts their events. But the group doesn’t get the same volume of interaction as before the pandemic.

“We try to have a post to share when, where and what time; but most people don’t seem to interact much, despite the hundreds of views they get on each story,” Starens said.

Despite the low attendance, Michelson said she was hopeful for the future.

“We’re just a little bumpy right now, but once the weather gets nicer I am hopeful we will get more people to turn up. I think people are just not used to thinking there are things happening still on campus, but there definitely is” Michelson said.

Jake Ezelle decided to attend because he heard about the event from friends. He came to listen but ended up sharing his own poetry.


“I reached into my heart for this stuff, and it’s scary to think someone might not like it or someone might say something is wrong with it. But, it is exhilarating. The fact that someone liked it and maybe understood it is ecstatic to me,” Ezelle said.

Ezelle said he felt more inclined to speak in front of the small group because it felt more welcoming even though it’s still scary.

“With a small group, you see what everyone’s faces look like. With a lot of people, it’s intimidating, but I felt comfortable today, more than I thought I would. I’m not one to share my poetry so this was very exciting to me,” Ezelle said.



University of Montana sophomore Sabine Englert reads a poem during the Prose and Poems event in the University Theater on Feb. 23. Pre-pandemic, nearly 40 poets across UM would come to the event but this time, nearly a year into the coronavirus pandemic, only two showed up. **KENNEDY DELAP | MONTANA KAIMIN**



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# Cross country and crossovers: The UM sports recap

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### Men’s Basketball

The University of Montana men’s basket- ball team was able to sweep its opponent on the road, winning two games against Idaho State on Feb. 25 and 27.

“If we can play through adversity, then we can play at a high level,” said UM head coach Travis DeCuire on the postgame KVGQ radio show.

In both games for UM, freshmen ex- celled. In the first matchup, which UM won 64-58, Josh Bannan scored 19 points and fellow freshman Brandon Whitney added 14 points.

In the second game, which ended with a final score of 59-58, freshman Robby Beas- ley III scored 19 points for the Griz.

Beasley III and Whitney are both aver- aging over 10 points a game for UM, while Bannan is averaging just over eight.

In the first game, UM seized control early, taking a 17-4 lead. Later in the game, Idaho State pulled within four 61-57.

With under a minute left, Whitney made a clutch layup to seal UM’s win.

In the second game, Montana once again led late, this time by 15 points in the second half. But Idaho State proceeded to score 31 points in nine minutes to tie the game at 58.

Whitney once again came up clutch, making a free throw to help the Griz win by 1 point.

Before sweeping Idaho State, Montana either split its two-game series against conference opponents, or lost both games. UM’s first sweep of the season represented only the third time that the Griz have won more than one game in a row.

“This bus ride is going to be the funnest bus ride we’ve had all year,” said DeCuire.

UM will play its next two games at home against Idaho on March 4 and 6. The Griz have a 11-12 record with a 7-9 conference mark.

### Cross Country

The University men and women’s cross country teams each placed eighth at the Big Sky Cross Country Championships in Riverdale, Utah, on Feb. 27.

“I didn’t know where we would place, but eighth did not feel good,” UM head coach Clint May told UM Athletics.

Beatrix Frissell, a UM sophomore, finished at 12th place in the women’s race while Joel Mendez, a redshirt sophomore, placed 40th in the men’s race.

Olivia Lackland Henry was the first freshman in the women’s race, crossing in 27th place for the Griz.

The championship was one of two spring competitions for UM cross country. Four events that the Griz were supposed to compete in were canceled in fall of 2020, while the original Big Sky Tournament was pushed back from its original date of Oct. 30.

The other competition UM faced this spring was the Idaho Orchards Invitational in Lewistown, Idaho, on Feb. 6, where the UM men’s team won the meet, and the women’s team finished third out of four teams.

The cross country runners will all run for the UM track and field team, which opens up its season in Missoula at the Al Manuel Northwest Invitational on March 26.

### Tennis

For the first time in 2021, a University of Montana sports team defeated a Montana State University sports team, when the UM womens tennis team beat MSU, 6-1.

Julia Ronney, Lauren Dunlap, Ivayla Mit- kova, Olivia Oosterbaan and Maria Goheen all defeated their opponents in solo match- es. Enni Zander from MSU was the only Bobcat to take down a Griz tennis player.

Oosterbaan and Ronney teamed up to beat a duo of MSU players 6-4 while Goheen and Mitkova ran over their oppo- nents, 6-1. Dunlap teamed up with fellow UM tennis player Alex Walker to take down a pair of Cats 6-2.

UM has lost to MSU in volleyball twice and in women’s basketball twice. The Montana men’s tennis team will not take on Montana State until April 24.

The UM women’s tennis team is now 3-3 with a 1-0 record in conference play. The Griz have already had eight games canceled in 2021.

The next step for the Griz women’s tennis team is to travel to Oregon to take on the Pilots at the University of Portland.



University of Montana forward Mack Anderson dunks the ball during a game against Idaho State on Feb. 15, 2020. The Griz hung on for a win against the Bengals during the recent game on Feb. 27, 2021, with a close final score of 59-58. **SAVANNAH STANHOPE | MONTANA KAIMIN**

# Meet the teacher and UM student who keep score for Griz volleyball

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Jon Fines, a kindergarten teacher and assistant scorekeeper for the University of Montana volleyball team, found himself in a sticky situation when his regular partner was in the ICU getting an organ transplant and he had to score an intense matchup between UM and its rival, Montana State University.

Fines knew how to score and keep stats for every aspect of a volleyball matchup, except for a shortened fifth set. Much to Fines’ dismay, the rivalry game went into a fifth set.

“It went to five [sets],” he said “I was definitely stressed out.”

Fines was able to pull through, calling his partner, Mike Kinsella, immediately after to share the story. Kinsella, the main scorekeeper for UM volleyball, has been working for the University for 29 years. Kinsella is also a non-traditional student at UM’s Missoula College, studying medical coding.

Kinsella has only missed five UM home volleyball matches in 29 years, two of them being when he had an organ transplant. Fines has been his assistant since the early 2000s, when Jerry Wagner was still UM’s head coach.

“[Fines and Kinsella] have been a huge asset to Grizzly volleyball over many, many years,” said Janie Haight, UM’s internal operations and events coordinator. “They are so dedicated.”

Kinsella originally got the job as a student at UM in 1992, when he was asked to help out with some scoring. Montana made it to the NCAA tournament that year and Kinsella fondly remembers traveling to watch the tournament.

Kinsella also played on an intramural volleyball team in McGill Hall, which used to be a gym, with former Griz volleyball players. Once, Kinsella traveled to Bozeman to take on Montana State in a friendly club volleyball matchup, which turned into a five-set set match in a packed gym.

“We went walking in not expecting anything, and they had announced it all over campus,” said Kinsella. “We beat them in five.”



Scorekeepers Mike Kinsella, left, and Jon Fines, right, sit behind the scorers table at a University of Montana volleyball game on March 2. The two have been score- keepers for UM volleyball for over a decade. **ZACH MEYER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Kinsella was a scorekeeper and student when Kate Horning played for UM in 1991. He now watches Horning’s daughter, Kelly Horning, play middle blocker for the Griz.

Kinsella has also seen some current UM volleyball players develop from high school, thanks to his coaching role at Sentinel High School. There he watched and coached current UM volleyball players Elsa Godwin and Serena Moreno as they won back-to-back state championships. He also has coached at Alberton High School.

Fines is currently a kindergarten teacher at Jeannette Rankin Elementary School in Missoula, where he has taught for 14 years. “I love it,” he said.

Fines began playing volleyball when he was going to high school in Hawaii. He grew up watching the University of Hawaii play volleyball and is still a fan.

“They do volleyball like nowhere else in the country,” Fines said.

Along with cheering for Hawaii, Fines is an avid UM fan alongside Kinsella. During Griz games the duo often have to stifle cheers in order to maintain their integrity while scoring.

“I’m trying not to scream, because I love to scream when I see a good hit or a great play,” said Kinsella.

Fines and Kinsella both played volleyball together on club and intramural teams before Kinsella embarked on what

he calls a “colorful medical history.” Now the two only score volleyball together.

“Me and Jon are a very good team,” said Kinsella. “We communicate well on the bench.”

Every year, the two have to compete in a fifty-question test in order to stay certified as official NCAA scorekeepers. Referees from around the conference often recognize the duo.

“We get compliments from Big Sky [Conference] officials who come into work for our matches,” said Haight.

The two don’t see themselves stopping anytime soon.

“It’s fun to see the girls play. I’m a huge volleyball fan,” Fines said.



# Lady Griz fall to conference leader Idaho State on senior night

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Saturday's game against Big Sky Conference leader Idaho State saw Montana keep within a couple possessions from turning the game, but it could not overcome the Bengals' offensive barrage, losing 72-56 in Dahlberg Arena.

"We can get better looks and things we can't control," head coach Mike Petrino said. "But I'm proud of our effort, their resiliency, to come back from a tough night."

Montana's second straight loss left the team at 9-7 in the Big Sky Conference, and 11-9 overall. Both losses were against ISU, with Montana dropping the first game 79-49.

Saturday's game, on senior night, featured an opening tribute to the Lady Griz's lone senior, Madi Schoening. Schoening played limited minutes, scoring one free throw late in the game.

In front of some family and friends, the Lady Griz capitalized on an 8-2 run, fueled by six points from Abby Anderson, which put the team up to a 12-7 lead.

Anderson thrived on points down low, and Montana battled ISU through a tight first half. A three by ISU's Jordan Sweeney opened an 11-point rift that Montana could not close as the Bengals shot at an impressive 80% from the field in the second quarter.

"They are at the top of the league for a reason," Petrino said. "They knocked off a Power Five opponent. They are efficient."

Montana narrowed the gap to 33-44 at the half, with help from sophomore Carmen Gfeller. The power forward made her first eight buckets in the game and finished with a team-leading 19 points.

"Once I hit those first two, then I get in a rhythm kind of, and I can find my teammates and get them going too," Gfeller said. "I think it just makes the game all that much better."

The Lady Griz had one last chance in the third quarter, where they trailed by just six. But as UM inched within striking distance, ISU responded with a three from Montana Oltrogge. ISU ended the game shooting 49% overall.

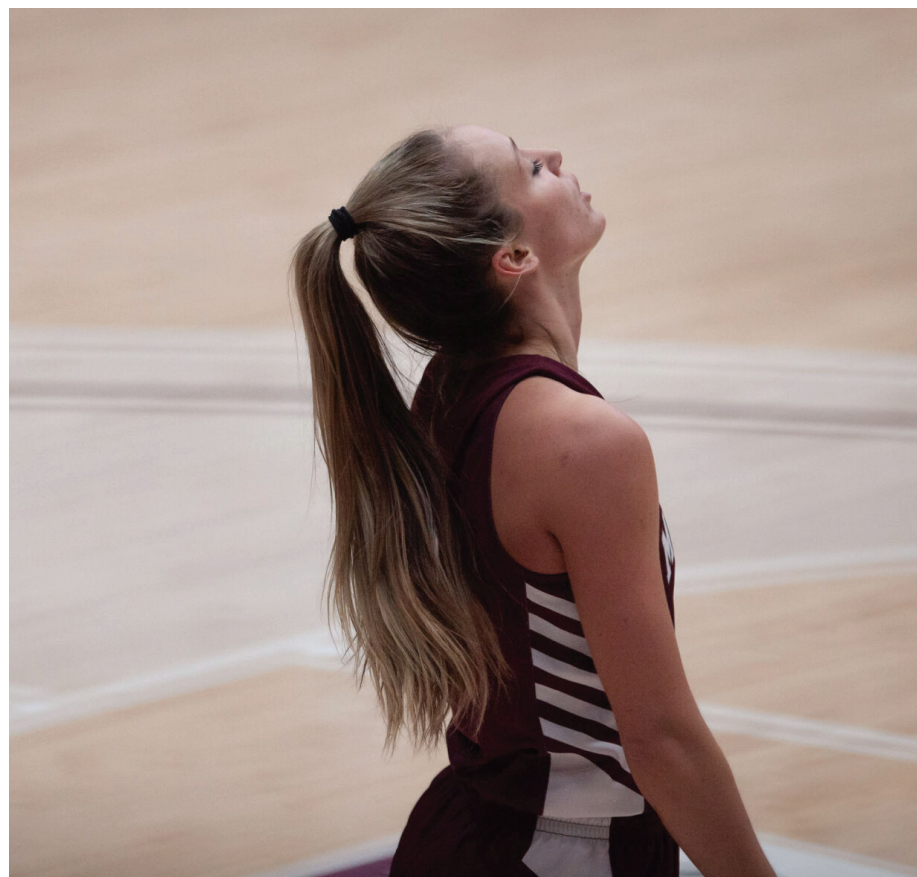
Even Gfeller went cold later in the game. She said the Bengals were powerful opponents.

"They make us work on defense," Gfeller said. "They wear us down and they're really disciplined and they take really good shots in their high percentage shots."

ISU took a 53-42 lead into the final quarter. The Bengals also made 11 threes in the game, hitting four in the fourth quarter alone. As time ticked off the clock, Montana subbed out senior Schoening, who received standing applause from the few dozen fans in the arena.

Montana's regular season is down to just one game against the University of Idaho, at 7 p.m. Friday.

From there the Lady Griz will travel to Boise, Idaho, for the Big Sky Championship Tournament.



University of Montana guard Sophia Stiles takes a deep breath during the game. Stiles ranked third in scoring for the team, bringing in nine points during the game. **SARAH MOSQUERA | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Idaho State University guard Callie Bourne falls during the game. Bourne led in scoring for the Bengals, leading them to a win with 22 points. **SARAH MOSQUERA | MONTANA KAIMIN**



University of Montana guard Abby Anderson is blocked by two Idaho State University Bengals players during their second face off of the weekend on Feb. 27 at Dahlberg Arena. The Bengals defeated the Lady Griz for the second time, 72-56. **SARAH MOSQUERA | MONTANA KAIMIN**