

AUGUST 2016



Happy School Year, and welcome to our Division Newsletter!

As the new school year starts, we thought it would be a great idea to share current information monthly on what's going on within the Division! Here, you can find information on how our different offices work, what events are happening, and some of the things your co-workers are working on! Do you have an idea of something you'd like to add? Email EAR@montana.edu! **Happy Fall 2016!**

A Note From Our VP

Faith in a Seed

I want to welcome my colleagues to the exciting start of a new academic year. This fall our campus is once more on track to set a new enrollment record while continuing to improve the academic profile of our incoming class. This is a remarkable achievement, and it is grounded in the efforts of countless individuals throughout the university, beginning with our admissions process and culminating in graduation.

Our students come to study with our superb faculty, to expand the scope of their economic and life opportunities, and to advance and clarify their values by finding new and better ways to put them into common. More fundamentally, though, they come to MSU because they want to move in the direction of their dreams.

Helping our undergraduates establish and stay on the educational path toward their most important goals is the calling and task of the division of student success. We do this in many ways, ranging from ensuring students have access to all available financial resources and appropriate class schedules to supporting their engagement opportunities and health and wellness. And across these many efforts, we collaborate with a number of partners, including our colleagues in the colleges, our friends in residence life, and the student colleagues who daily work beside us.

Our collective job, in other words, is to help our students look and plan across the entirety of their undergraduate degree. Whether it is through tutoring, student groups, financial education, or another of our many efforts, we want to provide the challenge and support needed to help them align their strengths, values, and goals with their learning choices both inside and outside the classroom.

So regardless of our particular project or team, our endeavors share a common aim: We work at the intersection of learning and development to help our students craft a signature educational experience. Their MSU journey culminates with our seniors crossing the commencement stage before their families and loved ones, accepting their hard-earned diploma, and shaking the President's hand.

I have been doing this work for some three decades now, and there is still something inspiring about witnessing student success. I am proud to be part of the team that makes it possible. In fact, I am reminded of one of my educational heroes, Henry David Thoreau, who wrote: "Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders." When I consider the work done by our colleagues in this division and by the broader learning community of which we are a part, I think we can all expect wonders.

—Chris Kearns

Vice President for Student Success

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Aaron Grusonik

Student Safety & Welfare

Every month, we'll have someone talk about what they've been up to. Do you have something that you're excited to be working on, or have something you'd like to know more about? Email EAR@montana.edu with suggestions or submissions.

Last week, I was in the local office supply store, picking up some computer paper for my home office. As I stood there, confused why they measure the thickness of paper in pounds and debating the benefits of recycled vs acid free paper, I overheard a conversation between a father and store employee that reminded me of my childhood. The father, sent out with his daughter, a pigtailed excited 8-year-old, was tasked with purchasing school supplies for the start of the new school year. As he asked to see the school supply list, worth its weight in gold to the man who likely hadn't been in a third grade classroom in the last 30 years, I sensed a mix of emotions and thoughts that felt reminiscent of my past.

The annual start of the school year marks and commemorates new beginnings for parents and students across the country that mean far more than the end of summer or the start of another academic year. These new starts represent leaps of faith and ventures into the unknown. Like the father and his daughter, our students share mixed feelings as they embark on the journey of a new year. These feelings are vast and can be conflicting. Imagine feeling a mix of excitement, nervousness, motivation, fear, ambivalence, uncertainty, and loneliness all at the same time. When we enter into the new and unknown, we often need grounding and direction. Like the father and his daughter buying school supplies, we need that class list, syllabus, advisor, or resource to help guide and steer us until we can discover our new path and gain our own traction for the year.

The Division of Student Success fills these roles for students not only during this crucial time, but throughout the year and during their tenure as students at MSU. Our division, from the Office of Admissions to Student Health Services, is tasked with helping students enter, adjust to, and thrive in the academic culture that is unique to MSU. We literally help students enter into the unknown, celebrate their successes, and provide support when they struggle- this is not easy work!

As the start of the 2016-2017 academic year approaches, I want to remind my teammates and colleagues that there are resources to help you do this cumbersome (at times) work, especially when working with struggling or concerning students. The Safety and Welfare Team, in the Office of the Dean of Students, is a team that serves as a resource to faculty and staff when they are concerned about the well-being of a student. The multidisciplinary team of practitioners, protectors, and providers meets regularly to assess risk, create safety plans, and manage student safety. We also serve as consultants across campus, helping faculty and staff optimize their work with students who may have unique needs- in a sense, we serve as your "school supply list," providing stability and focus, as colleagues face trying student situations.

I personally want to thank the members of my Safety and Welfare Team for being so committed to these difficult and important tasks and I want to personally offer our services and resources to my colleagues in the Division of Student Success. Please feel free to access our [webpage](#) which contains resources, tips, and an online safety and welfare reporting form. Here is to another exciting and successful academic year! GO CATS!

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Office Interview

Registrar's Office

Every month, we'll have someone talk about what they've been up to. Do you have something that you're excited to be working on, or have something you'd like to know more about? Email EAR@montana.edu with suggestions or submissions.

What does your office do for students?

- "We promote student success!"
- "We translate policy into something students can understand"
- "We solve problems for students so that they can graduate and accomplish their life goals"
- "We're the answer people - we find the answers to a lot of student questions that may not even have to do with our office"

When would you say your office is busiest?

- "(Besides all the time), any academic deadline is fairly busy, like the last day to drop classes"
- "Beginning and end of term"
- "Leading up to any break in school, students tend to want to take care of things before they leave for breaks"

What's one thing the Division might not know about your office?

- "We have two vaults!"
- "We really do have student records dating back to the start of this university (1893)"
- "We have a culture committee that plans events for our office, from birthday celebrations, to other fun events!"
- "The Registrar trivia team placed 4th in pub trivia! Out of 20 teams!"
- "We all have 4 PM coffee every day"

What is your favorite office memory?

- "Montana Hall bathrooms were being renovated, and some staff had fun with sitting on toilets outside"
- "At one point a window fell on a staff member, but from the sound of her screaming, we thought that there may be someone intoxicated on campus. We soon found her, and took her to the hospital. She's totally fine now!"
- "When President Cruzado visits for events and thanks us for a job well done! It means a lot."

What gets you up in the morning?

- "Coffee..."
- "The students"
- "Knowing that when I come into work that we will do something to impact a student, to make their lives easier, to make their day, to help them realize they can graduate on time, to empower them to make changes"
- "Knowing that every day we have the power to make a difference for students"
- "The people I work with are pretty cool too..."



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Process, Process, Process

Helping a student withdraw from the University

Working within Student Success means ebbs and flows, depending on the time of year. In this section, we'll go over common student processes popular by the month.

University Withdrawals - [online student resource here.](#)

- **If a student has not confirmed their bill (paid any amount for the semester to MSU)**, they will be zapped from the system. They are able to call the Registrar's office (x6650) to be dropped from the system, and call Residence Life (x2661) to handle their on campus housing if relevant. If the student is receiving Financial Aid, they need to submit in writing that they'd like to cancel their aid. (They can do so by emailing finaid@montana.edu)
- **If they have confirmed their bill**, the student will need to submit a University Withdrawal with the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success. (x7627)
- **If a student asks you about withdrawing from a past semester**, send them to the Office of the Dean of Students' Office to inquire about a Retroactive University Withdrawal. Students can only apply for a semester within **3 years**, and for only very extenuating circumstances (death in the family, medical illness, etc.)

Help Needed! & Events

- Consider signing up to help with **Ask Me Tents, Convocation** or **Service Saturday!** Sign up using [this form](#).
- Our **Division Kick-off** is on September 12th, 11AM - 1PM!
- September's **Coffee Corner** will be on September 14th, 9:30AM, Admissions office.
• *Send opportunities to EAR@montana.edu to be featured in the next newsletter!*

Shout-Outs

Send us your quick Shout-Outs or Kudos to fellow staff for a job well done! They can be serious or silly, professional or personal achievements!

- ⇒ Congrats to [Erin MacDonald](#) (DOS) on MSU Panhellenic Council's College Panhellenic Excellence Award, 1 of 27 awarded in 2016. She works hard with MSU's sororities (among many other duties), and it really shows! - *DOS*
- ⇒ [Korrin \(Engel\) Fagenstrom](#) - you have done phenomenal job with orientation this summer. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication over the last year. Your investment in our future students is very apparent and much appreciated! - *Isaac Hunter*
- ⇒ Kudos to [Michelle Mulhill](#) (DRV) for successfully programming our first ever Veteran Jumpstart Program, helping our incoming Veteran students start their first college experience off on the right foot! - *Nicole Redding*
- ⇒ [Kate Cowart](#) (DOS) is fairly new to the Division herself, and has taken on a large task of creating an on-boarding program and maintaining engagement within Student Success. She's approached the challenge with grace and a sense of humor. Go Kate! - *Korrin Engel*
- ⇒ Thank you to [Admissions and the Office of Student Engagement AND all of our Division volunteers](#) for perfecting the welcoming of our biggest freshmen class yet! Your effort doesn't go unnoticed—you all are superstars!

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The Month in Photos

Send photos to EAR@montana.edu to get them featured in next month's newsletter!



This photo comes from the [MSU Duck Pond Facebook](#), run by our very own **Laurynn Olson**, from the Office of Student Engagement!



This photo comes from the Registrar's office, during their August birthday potluck!



Office of Student Engagement at the opening of Yellowstone Hall!