

**MONTANA WWAMI  
FACULTY AND STAFF  
AWARDS**

**Annual BBQ Teacher Awards,  
August 2023 – Billings**

The WWAMI Student’s Choice Teacher Appreciation Awards have been going strong since 2009. The Billings Track Office, located in the Eastern MT AHEC (Area Health Education Center) at RiverStone Health hosts an annual BBQ event every summer. Teaching faculty, students and families gather to celebrate the year and its accomplishments.

During the picnic, the previous school years’ 3rd and 4th year nominees for the teaching awards are announced. Students nominate faculty for their outstanding teaching, coaching and dedication to students. We thank the following 2022-2023 Billings Track Student’s Choice Teacher Appreciation winners for their dedication and passion to the art of teaching:

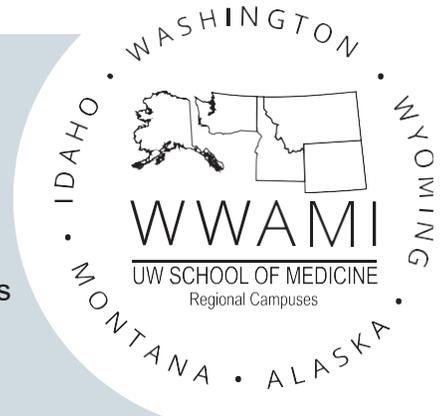


*Dr. Teresa Blaskovich, third-year pediatric clerkship at The Children’s Clinic in Billings and Dr. Michael Bradshaw, fourth-year neurology clerkship at Billings Clinic*

**SUMMER 2024**

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**Montana WWAMI  
welcomes a new Assistant Clinical Dean**

Serena Brewer, D.O., Clinical Associate Professor, UWSOM, Dept. of Family Medicine, is the newest member on the Montana WWAMI team. Since 2008, she has been an integral member of the medical staff at Southwest Montana Community Health Center in Butte where she continues to provide family medicine care with a special emphasis on adolescent health. Dr. Brewer’s true calling is as a teacher, and she and her dedicated team have created a robust learning environment for WWAMI students rotating in Butte. Given her background with Montana WWAMI, she has hit the ground running in her new role as assistant dean. She looks forward to visiting clinic/hospital faculty and administration, and students at the many teaching sites in the state.

## MONTANA WWAMI FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS (cont)

### Richard M. Tucker Award, Excellence in Teaching

UW Medical students nominate educators from the WWAMI region and based on those nominations the UWSOM selection committee selects honorees who have demonstrated true enthusiasm and outstanding dedication in providing teaching and mentoring to students. We thank the following Richard M. Tucker Award winners for their dedication and passion for the art of teaching:



Left: Megan McMillan, M.D., UWSOM Clinical Assistant Professor, Billings Clinic. Pictured with Director, UWSOM Medicine Student Program, Doug Paauw, M.D.  
Right: Colin Fitterer, M.D., UWSOM Clinical Instructor, St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings. He was twice chosen by students for the Richard M. Tucker Award.

### 2024 Dr. Ron Lemire, MD WWAMI Resident Teaching Award

Congratulations to Dr. Lauren Wilson on being the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Ron Lemire, MD WWAMI Resident Teaching Award. This award is given every other year to an outstanding member of the WWAMI teaching faculty. Recipients demonstrate exceptional commitment to residents in the UW School of Medicine Pediatric Residency Program and unfailing determination to ensure the quality of their pediatric education.



Lauren Wilson, MD, UWSOM Clinical Associate Professor, Dept. of Pediatrics, Missoula Pediatrics

## WWAMI Pro awards honor professionalism

WWAMI Pro is a medical student-driven recognition program, created to empower students to honor professionalism in the UW School of Medicine (UWSOM) community. UWSOM students can recognize any individual who contributes to a positive, respectful and supportive learning environment. We are proud to share the recent award recipients from Montana:



Kay Cee Gardner, M.D.  
(Clinical Assistant Professor, UWSOM, FM) Billings Clinic - Miles City



Kennan Hooker, M.D.  
Montana WWAMI student e-21



Michaela O'Donoghue, M.D.  
Montana WWAMI student e-21



Anne Thomas, M.D.  
(Clinical Associate Professor, UWSOM, PBSCI) Bozeman Health

## UWSOM MONTANA WWAMI ADMINISTRATION

### Foundations Phase

**Brant Schumaker**, D.V.M., M.P.V.M., Ph.D. Director & Assistant Dean WWAMI [brant.schumaker@montana.edu](mailto:brant.schumaker@montana.edu)  
**Mike Spinelli**, M.D., Associate Director [mspin@uw.edu](mailto:mspin@uw.edu)  
**Kayla Ouert**, Montana WWAMI Program Manager [kayla.ouert@montana.edu](mailto:kayla.ouert@montana.edu)

### Patient Care Phase

**Serena Brewer**, D.O., Montana WWAMI Assistant Clinical Dean, [szbrewer@uw.edu](mailto:szbrewer@uw.edu)  
**Jay Erickson**, M.D., Montana WWAMI Assistant Clinical Dean, [jerick@uw.edu](mailto:jerick@uw.edu)  
**Bernadette Duperron**, Program Administrator [duperron@uw.edu](mailto:duperron@uw.edu)  
**Judi Sullivan**, Program Administrator [jasulliv@uw.edu](mailto:jasulliv@uw.edu)  
**Lisa Benzel**, Montana WWAMI TRUST Director [lisabenz@uw.edu](mailto:lisabenz@uw.edu)  
**Ali McInnis**, Montana WWAMI TRUST Administrator, [alij@uw.edu](mailto:alij@uw.edu)

## MONTANA WWAMI TRACKS AND CLERKSHIPS

Each spring, a group of UWSOM patient care phase students embark on their clinical learning. Clerkship rotations are available to WWAMI students in communities across the state including Great Falls, Helena and Kalispell. Montana also offers training Tracks in Billings, Bozeman, and Missoula, allowing completion of many third-year required clerkships (internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, surgery, and OB/Gyn) within that community. Tracks are a popular option for students who want to stay in their home state as much as possible. Montana also offers a fourth-year Explore & Focus track, which is a state-based track rather than city-based.

### Geriatric Empathy – Billings Track



Last spring, “Trackers” spent the evening with Billings Track Coordinator Jenny Jutz and the Eastern MT AHEC Equity Coordinator, Rachel Hill, learning about geriatric empathy in Minute-To-Win-It style games. Students broke up into teams of two and raced against each other to complete various tasks while suited up in weights from the neck down. While competing, they also wore simulated tremor gloves and different vision goggles, replicating eye issues, such as cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, etc. Although fun, it provided a serious glimpse into what our geriatric population goes through on a day-to-day basis, whether it’s counting change; putting together puzzles; or “simply” bending over to pick up something off the ground.

### Student Didactics – Bozeman Track



In Bozeman WWAMI clerkship students are offered the opportunity to participate in didactic sessions with local physicians. Track Director Dr. Julie Topping leads the didactics alongside a physician colleague. Sessions start with presenting a chief complaint, then the students ask questions to elicit the history. Dr. Topping acts as the scribe while another physician helps lead the discussion. Students are given the exam findings and are encouraged to request labs and lit reviews to provide a differential diagnosis. A summary is provided at the end which includes diagnostic teaching slides. Cases range from numerous specialty topics to the more common primary care encounters. These sessions have been very engaging for both the faculty and the students.

### Community Outreach – Missoula Track



The career coordinator at Missoula County Public schools invited the Missoula Track office and WWAMI students to talk to a group of fifth grade students who were interested in medical school. Montana WWAMI students Robell Bassett and Erica Olson shared about medical school, WWAMI, about the different kinds of doctors, and what prompted their interest in attending medical school. The kids used stethoscopes to listen to their hearts and they extracted DNA from strawberries! It’s possible the medical students had more fun than the fifth graders!

## Feedback: Strengthening Learning by Giving Effective Feedback and Creating a Positive Learning Climate



In March, WWAMI-Missoula and the Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana with the help of Montana Stern Faculty educator Laura Goodell, M.D., and UWSOM’s Director of CLIME (Center for Learning and Innovation in Medical Education), Somnath Mookherjee, M.D., hosted a faculty development session for Montana faculty. The goal, to provide concrete skills to boost teaching confidence and facility in giving appropriate feedback while creating a positive learning climate that helps students meet their learning goals.

## FACULTY RESOURCE

Montana Stern Faculty Educator  
Laura Goodell, M.D.



### Writing Letters of Recommendation

Specialty specific letters of recommendation remain one of the top factors used in residency selection (2020 NRMP PD Survey). Bottom line: Our students will ask for them and we need to write them. Consider: Have you worked with the student enough to assess their skill? Can you write a strong letter of support? If not, disclose this to the student. Honesty is the best policy. The following are a few letter writing tips to get you on your way.

**INTRODUCTION:** Who are you? What is your teaching role? How well do you know the student?

**BODY:** Describe the student’s observed & demonstrated strengths. Be as generous & specific as possible. Anecdotal evidence is great; watch the length. Clinical skills are highly regarded, so comment favorably if you can. Include language that addresses the values of the specialty to which the student is applying. Describe anything else that makes the student unique (service, leadership, research). Be mindful of bias. Work hard to know your student as a unique individual & check your writing – would you use the same phrases to describe someone of a different race or gender?

**SUMMARY:** This may be the only paragraph they read. Provide a definitive statement of your support. Recap the student’s strengths and what sets them apart. Would you want the student in your residency/specialty? If yes, say so! Comparative statements are optional, but often valued by residencies (best student in xx years, or top X%, or recommend “strongest, highest, without reservation”).

**DON’T FORGET:** Be concise – keep it to one page! Use professional letterhead. Include the student’s ERAS ID and a brief statement, “the student has waived their right to see the letter.” Sign it and include your personal e-mail contact under the signature line. Cawse-Lucas, Knight, Mendiratta, Strote, 2020 UW Faculty

Laura is working on her Stern 2025 Topics. Do you have a suggestion? **Contact her at [imgood@uw.edu](mailto:imgood@uw.edu)**

## ANNUAL EVENTS:

HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) Future Health Professional's annual conference was held in Billings in April. Students from high schools across the state participated in the two-day event. Montana WWAMI staffed a "goodie" table and helped judge events and provide Q&A.



Student Erin Calkins (then in her 4th year, now a PGY1) with Judi Sullivan, Montana WWAMI Program Administrator, and Ali McInnis, Bozeman Track/TRUST Administrator

### Annual Montana WWAMI Faculty Development

**Conference** This annual event was held April 12th-14th at Chico Hot Springs Resort in Pray. The theme for the spring conference was Rural Medical Education in Montana. There were approximately 80 participants including several Montana WWAMI students. Student participation is valuable, providing an opportunity to connect with faculty and share about their experiences first-hand. Next conference will be April 4-6, 2025 at Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda.



Montana WWAMI students (back): Corbin Merchant, Erin Calkins, Nick Johnson, Ben Nalls (front): Emily Entz, Riley Galt, Nate Sisson and Braden Crowley

For many years, Montana WWAMI has partnered with the Montana AHEC team to coordinate the annual spring faculty development conference. Many thanks for their partnering and their dedication to improving the health of Montanans.

Montana WWAMI hosts a twice yearly (spring and fall) **Montana WWAMI All-Faculty retreat** to provide teaching faculty with valuable tools, resources, and tips. Our spring retreat is held the Friday afternoon prior to the start of the full weekend conference. This year, UWSOM CLIME Director, Somnath Mookherjee, M.D. and Vice Dean, Office of Faculty Affairs, Patricia Kritek, M.D., joined us in Chico for a learning session on "Teaching Across Differences."

**Mark your calendar the next all-faculty retreat, Friday, November 1, 2024, 10am-2pm at Bozeman Health, MT WWAMI Office.**

## CLINIC FEATURE:

### Partners in Pediatrics, Helena

In 2003, Partners in Pediatrics started in Helena as a solo practice with Dr. Tom Strizich. Now celebrating its 20th year, this private, physician-owned practice with six providers and 14 dedicated and caring employees provide excellent care to the Helena community. WWAMI students have been rotating at the clinic since 2012. Reflections by a former student: "My rotation at Partners in Pediatrics was an excellent experience. Dr. Strizich and the entire practice welcomed me as a student and spent time investing in my education over the six weeks I spent there. They supported me well yet gave me appropriate autonomy to grow in my clinical skills. They care about the WWAMI program and care about the future of medicine in Montana."



Pictured: Lisa Marcielle, N.P.; Tom Strizich, M.D.; Venus Villalva, M.D.; Lindsy Roundy, M.D.; Kari Loomis, M.D.; and Caitlyn Gallagher, M.D. (front middle).

## Montana WWAMI Deans:



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