

MONTANA WWAMI FOUNDATIONS 2025 NEWSLETTER



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MONTANA WWAMI

A cooperative program of the University of Washington Medical School

WWAMI BY THE NUMBERS

1000+ Montanans have received medical education through Montana WWAMI since 1973

Total Montana students per class per year **30**

199 students rotated through **392** clerkship slots in Montana last year

590 WWAMI faculty taught at Montana hospitals and clinics last year

“I am confident that the future of Montana WWAMI is incredibly bright.”

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

*By Brant Schumaker, DVM, MPVM, Ph.D.
Director and Assistant Foundations Dean, Montana WWAMI*

As I conclude my eighth month as the Foundations Dean of Montana WWAMI, I am deeply humbled by the trust placed in me to lead the classroom phase of this exceptional medical education program. Montana WWAMI has a rich legacy, and I am proud to be part of it, especially as we celebrate the admission of our 53rd class of students this year.

Our strong connection with Montana’s clinical community is a cornerstone of the program’s success. There are now 425 Montana physicians who are WWAMI graduates, making our medical school truly a part of the fabric of the state. The collaboration between our faculty, staff, students, and physician partners is critical in providing clinical education that prepares our students for practice, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Thanks to the vision of our state’s leadership and the support of our Legislature and medical community, Montana WWAMI continues to thrive. Our students get to be trained both in the classroom and alongside medical preceptors in hospitals and other clinical settings around the state, preparing them for practice as physicians in many of Montana’s rural and underserved populations.

Our association with the University of Washington, renowned as one of the top medical schools in the country, ensures our students receive an education that is second to none. I am confident that the future of Montana WWAMI is incredibly bright, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to training the next generation of healthcare leaders.

I am excited for the journey ahead and grateful to be a part of this incredible community!



EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS

DR. NICOLE MEISSNER & DR. LAURA GOODELL

Congratulations to Dr. Nicole Meissner and Dr. Laura Goodell for being this year's recipients of the Montana WWAMI Foundations *Excellence in Teaching Award!*

Dr. Meissner may walk through the halls like she's on a mission, but she always stops to ask students how they're doing. No matter what she else she is involved in, she always makes time for her students. Additionally, she has a knack for making the most complicated histology topics feel approachable, offering gentle encouragements such as, "You need to know this for the boards—this is high yield!" Whether it is through her Jeopardy-style review sessions or revising and improving histology slides, Dr. Meissner has always gone above and beyond for her students.

Dr. Goodell has a way of making sure no student is left behind. If one explanation doesn't land, she'll try another—and another—until it clicks. It is her dedication to making sure students truly understand the material that makes her teaching unforgettable. She has been an incredible source of comfort to the students through their ups and downs.

Dr. Meissner and Dr. Goodell, thank you for your kindness, tenacity and compassion in teaching—you have given your students the capacity to be curious and you have shown what it means to love medicine.

Excerpts taken from a speech by Isbah Kahn E23



Dr. Nicole Meissner & Dr. Laura Goodell

GRADUATING STUDENT AWARDS

George and Laurine Harris Scholarship



TREY DSCHAAK E21

Dr. George Saari Award for Professionalism



ELLEN GUYER E21

WWAMI ON THE ROAD...

Four Montana WWAMI students – **Isbah Khan, Chelsea Koessel, Gabrielle Spurzem, and Mackenzie Winters** - presented their research at the **Western Student and Resident Medical Research Forum (WSMRF)** in Carmel, CA last month, providing these future physicians with a valuable platform to highlight their work and gain meaningful feedback in a supportive environment.



Isbah Khan was honored with the prestigious Edwin E. Osgood Award for presenting the top-scoring abstract.

E23 POSTER SESSION AWARDS

- RUOP: **Chelsea Koessel** – *Fostering an Inclusive Future: Advocating for a United and Equitable Community via the Uptown Business Improvement District (BID) in Butte, MT*
- RUOP: **Ty Running Fisher** – *The Dangers of E-Cigarette Use in Adolescents in Lake County, MT*
- Discovery: **Gabby Spurzem** – *Financial Toxicity in Cutaneous Lymphoma: A Mixed Methods Study*
- Discovery: **Mackenzie Winters** – *Work Performance and Quality of Life Among Young Adult Cancer Survivors*

WELCOME TO OUR MONTANA WWAMI E24 CLASS!



STERN CLINICAL INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE

By Dr. Laura Goodell, the Montana Stern Regional Faculty Educator (UWSOM). Dr. Goodell invites you to engage with her and fellow teaching physicians to access medical education faculty development sessions (many with CME).

Optimizing The Learning Environment

Physician burnout is common and a source of great stress for physicians. It turns out that burnout begins even in medical school and residency and manifests as exhaustion, disengagement, decreased empathy, and career regret. So, what can we do about it? Nurturing a positive learning environment can be protective. Learning environment is a complex psycho-social-physical construct, experienced by the learner and influenced by the teacher, setting, and culture. Psychological safety is a key ingredient to a positive learning environment where students can be themselves, participate without fear or ridicule, and are safe to make mistakes.

The following are “small but mighty” strategies to help support a positive learning environment.

1. Be Kind

- *Acknowledgement:* Greet your learner by name, introduce yourself. Orient them. Recall what it's like to be a novice.
- *Relationship:* Get to know your learner as a person. What are their interests?
- *Respond to violations of group norms:* What you tolerate, you will encourage. Do not tolerate rudeness, belittling or shaming.

2. Be Transparent

- *Set expectations:* Make it clear what the student should do and can do (or cannot do), work expected, and learning objectives for time together.
- *Give specific feedback:* Be specific, clear, and timely. Ground your feedback in direct observation. Feedback can and SHOULD be constructive and oriented toward learner growth.
- *Explain what you do and why:* “Think out loud” with your learner – don’t leave them guessing.

3. Provide Autonomy as Able

- *Be clear about support:* Demonstrate trust in your learner and confidence in their capabilities. Allow opportunities for them to be valued members of the care team. Be clear there is support available when needed and how to access it. Conversely, too much autonomy when a learner doesn't feel ready makes the environment unsafe.
- *Lower the stakes:* “It's okay if you don't know.” Give your learner the tools to find answers if they don't know.

4. Model Humility & Curiosity

- *Nurture a growth mindset:* Model lifelong learning.
- *Practice Inquiry:* Use questions to help gauge understanding and promote critical thinking, not to test knowledge.
- *Thanks:* Acknowledge the learner's effort and work. When wrong answers happen, highlight what was right and help them learn from there.

Consider using these tools to cultivate an effective and supportive learning environment. Not only is it important for the quality and safety of patient care, but it is imperative to enhance well-being among our learners and peers.

Griffith 2021 JAMA Netw Open; Gruppen et al 2019 Academic Medicine; Dr. McClintock 2024 CLIME 1.0 Clinical Teaching Certificate.

IN MEMORY OF

DR. KATHY JUTILA

Kathy had a long association with the WWAMI program. Her father John Jutila was instrumental in bringing what was then the WAMI program to MSU in 1973, serving as its first director. Her brother Mark Jutila taught immunology to a generation of WWAMI students.

Kathy received her bachelor's and master's degrees from MSU before going to the University of New Mexico for medical school where she also completed her residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in cardiology. She practiced cardiology in New Mexico for many years before returning to her native Montana, becoming the sole physician serving Harlowton.

In 2015, Kathy joined the WWAMI faculty in Bozeman. Her love of patient care kept her practicing part-time in Harlowton, making the 100+ mile trip from Bozeman many times.

Kathy passed away unexpectedly on Memorial Day 2024. We miss our friend, especially her enthusiasm and her contagious good humor.

Contributed by Martin Teintze



Dr. Kathy Jutila
April 20, 1955 – May 27, 2024

THE BULLETIN BOARD

UPCOMING EVENTS

- MT WWAMI Faculty Development Conference (Apr. 4-6 @ Fairmont Hot Springs)
- Match Day (Mar. 21)
- E24 Poster Session (Nov. 10)
- Foundations Celebration (Dec. 12)

PLEASE VISIT!

As always, we love it when you stop by to say hello and tell us in what you've been up to!

We are located on the 2nd Floor of Building 5 at Bozeman Health. We hope to see you soon!

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

Please fill out the enclosed graduate survey or go online at www.montana.edu/wwami/graduatesurvey



MONTANA MISSES YOU!

Want to come back? Cities and towns all over the state are looking for physicians.

For more information, please contact Lisa Benzel, lisabenz@uw.edu (406) 660-0246

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING WWAMI!

Your tax-deductible donation to our funds helps the next generation of doctors with student debt relief, critical teaching equipment, specialized learning opportunities, and student research.

- **The WWAMI Contribution Fund** provides the most flexibility, allowing us to bring together Montana students, faculty, and special guests in Bozeman and Seattle.
- **The WWAMI Program Memorial Fund** memorializes deceased alumni, faculty, and friends of WWAMI. In addition to supporting special programs, it is used for the *Dr. George Saari Professionalism Award* which recognizes significant humanitarian contributions to medicine and the community.
- **The WWAMI Scholarship Fund** supports Montana WWAMI students based on financial need.
- **The Teaching Equipment Fund** purchases enhanced teaching equipment and software to improve student instruction.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION:

- By **MAIL** using the enclosed form
- **ONLINE** with this QR code or at www.montana.edu/wwami/donations_gifts
- By **PHONE**: 406-994-2053



QUESTIONS? Please contact Brant Schumaker at 406-994-4411 or brant.schumaker@montana.edu

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