



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

Northern Network News

The Official Newsletter of MSU-Northern - February 13, 2026

*Student
Spotlight*

**CANNAN
SMITH**

"Built my skills. Found my purpose."



Click on the photo to watch his testimony

First Brown Bag Lecture of the Semester



MSU–Northern kicked off the semester’s Brown Bag Lecture series on Wednesday, February 11, in the ATC Hensler Auditorium with a presentation titled *“Engineering Concepts in Education.”* The session was led by Jeremy Siemens, PE, PLS, Associate Professor in Civil Engineering Technology.

Siemens introduced attendees to fundamental engineering concepts encountered by students during their undergraduate studies, while also exploring the broader, metaphorical value of these ideas across other educational fields. The presentation was designed to be accessible to all, with no prior mathematical knowledge required.

Siemens earned his BS in Construction Engineering Technology from Montana State University–Bozeman and later a master’s degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Washington. A licensed Professional Engineer and Professional Land Surveyor, he has taught full time at MSU–Northern since 2004 and continues to bring real-world engineering and surveying experience into the classroom. He is active in ASCE, Engineers Without Borders, and MARLS.

Upcoming Brown Bag Lectures will be presented by:

- Dr. Praveen Dubey on Thursday, March 12
 - Dr. Kasthuri Udayakumar on Wednesday, April 15
-

We Love Northern Ball Celebrates Community Support



The MSUN Foundation's 2026 We Love Northern Ball was an evening filled with generosity and celebration.

This year's event saw an incredible show of support from alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and community members. A total of 55 pledges were made during the evening, reflecting strong engagement and enthusiasm from those in attendance. The overwhelming participation demonstrated the deep commitment this community has to the future of MSU–Northern and its students.

In addition to the strong pledge participation, the live auction proved to be another major highlight of the night. Competitive bidding and enthusiastic involvement led to a highly successful auction, with guests eagerly supporting the university through a variety of packages and experiences.

The We Love Northern Ball continues to serve as one of the Foundation's signature fundraising events, bringing the campus and community together in support of student success and campus initiatives. The energy in the SUB Ballroom was electric as guests celebrated not only the impact of their giving, but also the spirit and strength of the Northern family.

"This event is truly a reflection of what makes Northern special," said Melanie Skoyen, managing director at the Foundation. "The generosity, pride, and belief in our students were on full display. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who made the evening such a success."

Proceeds from the event will directly support MSU–Northern students and key campus priorities, helping ensure that Northern continues to thrive for generations to come.

The MSU–Northern Foundation extends sincere thanks to the sponsors, donors, volunteers, and attendees who made this year’s We Love Northern Ball one to remember.

Wrestling Senior Night



Senior Night on Saturday, Jan. 30, before Northern’s dual against Southern Oregon, honored two wrestlers whose paths and impact helped define the program.

Ryan Graves (157), a transfer from Idaho, spent three seasons at MSU-Northern becoming a team leader and captain. A former state placer and NJCAA national qualifier, Ryan carried his success into the NAIA ranks, earning multiple academic honors while majoring in Integrated Health Sciences. Nationally ranked and chasing another trip to the championships, he leaves a legacy of leadership, work ethic, and faith.

Shane Mattson (285) took a different road, returning to wrestling after starting college football. The towering heavyweight quickly became a force for Northern, racking up 16 falls this season — one of the best totals in the NAIA — while earning a national ranking and pushing toward another national tournament berth. His power on the mat and energy as a teammate made him unforgettable.

Together, they represent the heart of Northern Wrestling — dedication, resilience, and lasting impact beyond (finish this sentence).

Talent Search Students Visited MSU-Northern Campus



On Wednesday, Feb 11, MSU-Northern welcomed a group of Talent Search students to our campus. A group of Upward Bound students is scheduled to visit on Feb. 25. Each group brings approximately 25–30 students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, primarily from the Helena, Anaconda, and Butte areas.

Students begin their visit with lunch in the Student Union Building, followed by time to connect with Carmen Lunak and Jessica Meyers who share the value of a Northern degree, in addition to information about services for students on campus. Then the group is split into two teams for guided campus tours, giving students a firsthand look at academic programs, facilities, and student life at Northern.

Talent Search (TS) is the TRIO program created immediately after Upward Bound that aims to serve students earlier in their educational pipeline. Talent Search was created in 1965 to identify and assist middle school or early high school, students. It focuses on earlier intervention, providing counseling to encourage students to finish high school and enroll in college.

Human Resources Updates

Changes in roles at MSUN

- Krystal Steinmetz - Communications and Marketing Assistant; formerly LRI

- Morgaine Lomayesva - Accessibility Resources Coordinator; formerly LRI
- Matt Erdel - Instructional Designer/Educational Developer in OTLE; formerly SSS
- Dr. Taryn Wallon – Dean of Students and the Campus Housing Authority; formerly Asst. Dean of Students/Director of Housing
- Eva Stokes – Director of Facilities Services; formerly Asst. Director of Facilities Services
- Deborah McLean – Counselor, Student Clinic; formerly a Pre-Master’s Counseling Services Intern
- Breeze Miller – Director of Catering; formerly Asst to Catering/Cook II
- Clara Osborne – Director of Food Services; formerly Director of Catering

Returned to Campus

- Deborah McLean – Counselor, Student Clinic; formerly a Pre-Master’s Counseling Services Intern
- Justin Mason – Director of the Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence (OTLE), formerly Sr. LMS

New to Campus

- Joey Davis – ITS Desktop Support
- Sidhart Kristamurthi – Asst. Football Coach of Quarterbacks



Free Counseling Services Available to MSU-Northern Students

MSU-Northern students have access to **free, confidential mental health counseling services** right on campus through Student Health Services in the SUB. These services are here to support student well-being, offering a safe, welcoming place to talk through stress, anxiety, life challenges, and more.

Leading these services is **Deborah McLean**, Northern’s mental health counselor. Deborah recently stepped into this role after earning her graduate degree from Concordia University, Irvine, and completing clinical internships at MSU–Northern and the Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line. She also previously served as a Program Therapist with Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch, working with students at Havre Middle School.

Deborah uses an attachment-based approach focused on building supportive relationships, strengthening resilience, and helping students develop healthy

coping skills and connections. She is committed to creating a nonjudgmental space where students feel heard, supported, and empowered.

Students can find Deborah's office in Student Health Services in the SUB and are encouraged to take advantage of this free resource whenever they need support.

Windauer Earns Second CCC Wrestler of the Week Honor

MSU-Northern's Justin Windauer continues to make noise on the national stage. The No. 24-ranked Lights standout has been named Cascade Collegiate Conference Men's Wrestler of the Week for the second time this season.

The junior from Columbia Falls, Montana, who is ranked No. 12 nationally at 157 pounds, dominated the Missouri Valley Invitational. Windauer went undefeated on his way to the individual title, recording two technical falls, three pins, and a 12–1 major decision.



As a team, the Lights placed ninth out of 41 teams with 91 points. Northern had three wrestlers reach the podium, highlighted by Windauer's championship performance. Shane Mattson also placed, finishing sixth at heavyweight. He went 2–2 on the day, earning a fall and a decision in his wins.

Senior Runners Honored at Saturday's Game



MSU-Northern's cross country and distance track programs recognized seniors James Stensland-Plymale, Makaela Kelly, and Zack May at halftime of the men's basketball game against Valley City on Saturday, Feb. 7. All three student-athletes will graduate this spring and were honored for their contributions to Northern both athletically and academically.

James Stensland-Plymale is a two-year member of the Lights program and qualified for the 2024 NAIA Cross Country National Championships in Columbus, Missouri — one of his top achievements. He recorded personal records at the national meet and again in the 5,000 meters at the 2024 Trudnowski Open. During his career, the Lights placed fourth at the 2024 Frontier Conference meet and eighth in 2025.

Makaela Kelly, a two-year Skylights runner and transfer from Dakota Wesleyan, has excelled in the classroom and in competition. She holds a 3.90 GPA and has earned MSUN Honor Roll, Frontier Conference Academic All-Conference, NAIA Scholar-Athlete, and Champion of Character honors. She set PRs at the Frontier Conference Championships and the Bengal Invitational in the 5,000 meters.

Zack May has been a steady contributor for the Lights for two seasons. He recorded a PR at the Frontier Conference Championships and helped Northern to a fourth-place conference finish in 2024 and an eighth-place finish in 2025.

MSU–Northern Foundation Announces the Dan Ulmen Memorial Scholarship

The MSU–Northern Foundation is honored to announce the establishment of the Dan Ulmen Memorial Scholarship, created to celebrate the life, dedication, and lasting impact of Dan Ulmen.

Dan Ulmen served as Facilities Director for MSU–Northern and played a pivotal role in numerous campus improvement efforts, including the Morgan Hall renovation project. His leadership, work ethic, and deep commitment to Northern helped shape the campus in meaningful and lasting ways. Dan passed away in November, leaving behind a legacy of service, friendship, and pride in MSU–Northern.



In tribute to Dan's life and dedication, his close friend and former classmate, Jeff Ament of Pearl Jam, has generously established the Dan Ulmen Memorial

Scholarship. The scholarship will support students from Big Sandy High School and North Star High School who choose to attend MSU–Northern, reflecting Dan’s unwavering support for both his community and the university.

The Dan Ulmen Memorial Scholarship stands as a testament to Dan’s commitment to MSU–Northern and the enduring friendships and connections formed here. Through this gift, his memory will live on by helping students pursue their educational goals.

For more information about the Dan Ulmen Memorial Scholarship or to contribute, please contact the MSU–Northern Foundation at (406) 265-3770.

A Musical Era Reborn on the MAT Theatre Stage



This is the final weekend to experience *Voices from the Canyon*, a powerful musical tribute celebrating the legendary artists of Laurel Canyon.

For its fifth installment, the tribute series spotlighted the iconic hillside neighborhood that became a creative hotspot in the 1960s and '70s. Laurel Canyon gave rise to a generation-defining sound, and this concert brought it back to life with unforgettable music from The Byrds, The Mamas & The Papas, Crosby, Stills, Nash (& Young), Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, Eagles, Jackson Browne, and Carole King. Their rich harmonies, heartfelt lyrics, and groundbreaking songwriting shaped an era—and continue to resonate today.

Don't miss your last chance to step into the sound of a musical revolution.

February 6, 7, 13, & 14 | 7:30 PM

MSUN/MAT Theatre

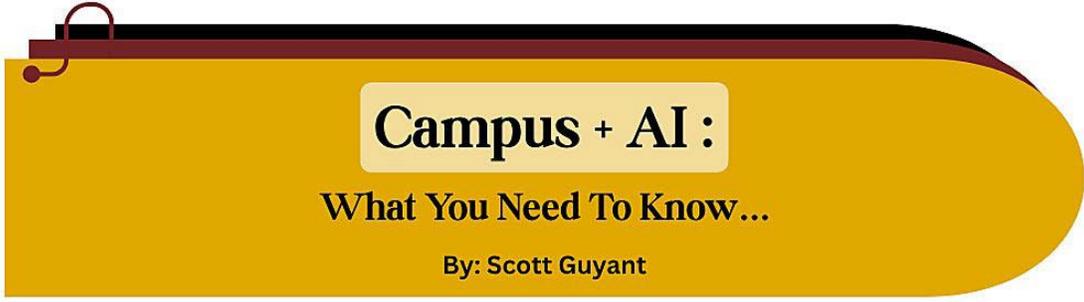
[Click here for Ticket...](#)

Creativity Flows at Winter Wellness Papermaking Workshop



On February 5 and 12, the Winter Wellness Workshop Series kicked off with a creative, hands-on papermaking session in the Vande Bogart Library Makerspace. From 4:00–6:00 PM, participants rolled up their sleeves and dove into the art of transforming recycled materials into beautiful, handmade paper.

In the first session, attendees learned the fundamentals of papermaking and crafted their own custom sheets. In the second session, they focused on preparing signatures for binding. Participants learned how to fold, trim, and punch pages to create the interior structure of a handmade book. In the next session, participants will assemble and bind their books. This session focuses on sewing signatures and adding covers to complete a simple, handmade book.



Campus + AI :

What You Need To Know...

By: Scott Guyant

“Smarter, Not Easier: Using AI as a Study Partner”

More students are adding AI tools like ChatGPT to their study routine. Surveys suggest a large share of learners and instructors have already experimented with generative AI for coursework (Baytas & Ruediger, 2024; Freeman, 2025). Used well, AI can act less like a shortcut and more like a study coach.

Research on AI in higher education points to three main benefits: **personalized explanations, practice opportunities, and faster feedback** (Labadze et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2025).

1. Clarifying tough concepts

Students report using AI to summarize dense or difficult readings, restate instructions, and walk through worked examples (Attewell, 2025). That can be especially helpful late at night when the instructor’s office hours are over. The key is what happens next: can you now explain the idea in your own words, or solve a similar problem without help?

2. Extra practice and early feedback

AI can also generate practice questions, flashcards, or mini-quizzes and then explain what you got wrong. This kind of low-stakes repetition supports metacognition and makes it easier to identify gaps before a test (Wu et al., 2025). AI can also offer quick comments on early drafts, which EDUCAUSE highlights as a promising use of generative AI in teaching and learning (Robert & Muscanell, 2023).

3. Planning and accessibility support

Some students will/have used AI to break an assignment into manageable steps: “Help me form a plan to complete this paper over two weeks.” Others use it to simplify wording or rephrase complex text. Reports from Jisc and UNESCO describe these features as especially valuable for multilingual and disabled students who need more flexible ways to access course content (Attewell, 2025; Miao, 2023; U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

To keep AI as a study partner rather than a ghostwriter, try these three habits:

1. Attempt the task first, then ask AI to critique or clarify.

2. Ask for steps, explanations, and practice questions, not finished products.
3. After using AI, close the tab and write your own summary or solve a similar problem.

Used this way, AI can help you study more often, understand more deeply, and get feedback more quickly without replacing your own thinking.

Full references and further reading for this column are available at: <https://libguides.msun.edu/c.php?g=1502960>

As always please reach out to me with questions, comments, or topics you would like me to address next.

Scott Guyant
Research Librarian

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Federal Holiday - Presidents' Day – Mon., Feb. 16

No Classes, Offices Closed

Now Accepting Student Excellence Nominations

The Student Excellence Awards recognize Northern students who have exemplified a commitment to the pursuit of high academic achievement and significant student engagement. These students hold themselves and others to a high standard, strive for integrity in all areas of their lives, and model for others a commitment to holistic learning and engagement.

This year, we will be awarding students as part of the Awards Day celebration, scheduled for April 17th. The deadline for submissions is March 13th, 2026.

[Click Here to nominate a student ...](#)

If you have any questions please contact Taryn Wallon, Dean of Students.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring 2026 Career Fair – Feb. 18

The Career Center reminds students and alumni to attend the Spring 2026 Career Fair on Wednesday, February 18. Stop by the Gym between 9 am - 12 noon to network with potential employers, learn about job opportunities and share your resume. Over sixty companies have registered to attend. Many of these companies have traveled a long way to be here in Havre and they are eager to visit with students. Attendees are encouraged to take the time to stop by each table.

Brown Bag Lecture Series

Thursday, March 12, 2026, 12pm-1pm in ATC Hensler Auditorium - Presented by Dr. Praveen Dubey

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 12pm-1pm in ATC Hensler Auditorium - Presented by Dr. Kasthuri Udayakumar

Winter Wellness Workshop: Bookbinding II (Binding & Covers) – Feb. 26

Date: February 26th

Time: 4:00 PM-6:00 PM

Location: Vande Bogart Library Makerspace (Main floor by the study rooms!)

In the second bookbinding session of the Winter Wellness Workshop Series, participants will assemble and bind their books. This session focuses on sewing signatures and adding covers to complete a simple, handmade book.

The workshop is beginner-friendly and designed to be calm and approachable, with guidance available throughout the process. All materials are provided, and no prior experience is required.

Winter Wellness Workshop: Mindful Journaling – Mar. 26

Date: March 26th

Time: 4:00 PM-6:00 PM

Location: Vande Bogart Library Makerspace (Main floor by the study rooms!)

The Winter Wellness Workshop Series concludes with a mindful journaling session using the handmade books created earlier in the series. Participants will explore journaling and mindful doodling as creative, low-pressure ways to reflect and unwind.

This session is beginner-friendly and open to all, with no expectation to share or write in any particular way. All materials are provided, and no prior experience is required.

Annual Casino Night – Mar. 25

ASMSUN is excited to announce the date for their Annual Casino Night. We will be hosting this event on March 25th, 2026. Registration for students opens at 5:30 PM. The Casino and the Lights Lounge open at 6:30 PM. Casino closes at 9:30 PM.

Spring Break – March 16-20

Spring Fling – Apr. 3

CAMPUS SCHEDULE

Friday, February 13

Skylights Basketball @ Rocky Mountain College - 5:00 PM
Lights Basketball @ Rocky Mountain College - 7:00 PM
Voices from the Canyon: A Laurel Canyon Tribute - 7:30 PM

Saturday, February 14

Skylights Basketball @ Carroll College - 5:00 PM
Lights Basketball @ Carroll College - 7:00 PM
Voices from the Canyon: A Laurel Canyon Tribute - 7:30 PM

Monday, February 16

Holiday ~ Presidents' Day ~ No Classes, Offices Closed

Wednesday, February 18

Spring 2026 Career Fair - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Friday, February 20

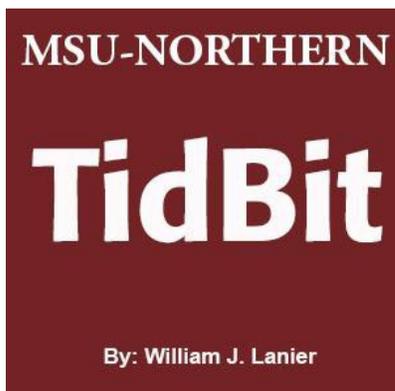
Lights Wrestling @ Cascade Collegiate Conference
Skylights Basketball vs Montana Tech - 5:00 PM
Lights Basketball vs Montana Tech - 7:00 PM

Saturday, February 21

Lights Wrestling @ Cascade Collegiate Conference
Skylights Basketball vs Montana Western - 5:00 PM
Lights Basketball vs Montana Western - 7:00 PM

Sunday, February 22

Daytona Days - Morgan Lounge - 5:00 PM
Watch party for the Daytona Duels with a presentation on the history



(#451) Montana's Scouting America Program thanks MSU-Northern

On January 17th, MSU-Northern hosted the 2026 Hi-Line District 14th Annual BSA Merit Badge College. This is where Scouts BSA youth take classes and earn/work toward a variety of merit badges. For the seventh consecutive year, this event has been on the MSU-Northern campus. More than 50 scouts and 20 leaders from Great Falls, Gildford, Big Sandy, Chester, and Havre attended this year's merit badge college.



The Hi-Line District Merit Badge College is currently the longest continuously running Merit Badge College in the state of Montana. Other merit badge

colleges held in Montana are held at MSU-Great Falls, MSU-Billings, Carroll College, and the University of Montana. Over the past seven years, approximately 440 scouts, leaders, and parents from around Montana have attended the Merit Badge College on the Northern campus.

I want to thank the following for having taught and/or assisted with this year's Merit Badge College: Jason Tanner (Welding), Dr. Jack Bieger (Crime Prevention & Law), Dr. Gary Succaw (Chemistry), Jody Corner (Communication), Paul Nugent (Fingerprinting), and Jeremy Malley (Citizenship in the Nation). We also had a special visit from Dean Steven Don and Vice Chancellor Dr. Jennifer Brown, who welcomed everyone to MSU-Northern.

I would also like to thank the following: Tammy Boles (Student Activities), Eva Stokes (Facility Services), the MSU-Northern Facility Services Custodians, Jim Potter, Sue Solomon, and Dining Services. Without all these people, this event would not have been nearly as successful.

Also, a special thank you to Northern Alum Jennifer Thompson (Graphic Design by JT), who designed the patch given to all who attended and assisted with the event.

The scouts, volunteers, parents, and leaders look forward to continuing and expanding this partnership with Northern. Again, thank you, MSU-Northern! If you're interested in teaching a merit badge, please reach out to me.

Please continue to check back for more NNN TidBits! If you see anything that you would like me to highlight, please send it to me at wjlanier1963@yahoo.com

Visit our website

Montana State University-Northern | 406-265-3700 | www.msun.edu

STAY CONNECTED



MSU-Northern | 300 13th Street West | Havre, MT 59501 US