



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**NORTHERN**

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## Northern Network News

The Official Newsletter of MSU-Northern - February 27, 2026

### Student Spotlight: Lisa LaTray-Bigby

*Alumni  
Spotlight*

**LISA  
LATRAY-  
BIGBY**

*"Finishing what I started."*

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The image is a video player thumbnail. On the left, there is a dark red background with white text. The text reads "Alumni Spotlight" in a cursive font, followed by "LISA LATRAY-BIGBY" in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the quote "Finishing what I started." is written in a cursive font. At the bottom right of this section is the MSU Northern logo. On the right side of the thumbnail is a photograph of Lisa LaTray-Bigby, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black top and a necklace. A large white play button icon is overlaid on the photograph.

[Watch Lisa's testimony...](#)

## MSU-Northern Honors Skylight Seniors



MSU-Northern recognized five senior members of the Skylight women's basketball team whose impact extends far beyond the court. This group helped lead the team to a No. 1 national ranking in three-point percentage while breaking school records for single-season and single-game three-pointers and setting a new single-game scoring record. They will enter next week's Frontier Conference Tournament in Butte as the No. 5 seed. Collectively, the seniors have contributed hundreds of service hours and will all graduate, representing MSU-Northern and the Havre community with excellence.

**Lauren Gunn**, a nursing major from Saginaw, Michigan, joined the Skylights after three standout seasons at Arizona Christian University. She is averaging 10.8 points and 3.9 rebounds per game while leading the Frontier Conference in assist-to-turnover ratio and sharing the team lead in assists. Gunn surpassed 1,000 career NAIA points this season and is on track to earn Academic All-American honors.

**Addie Kiefer** of Rathdrum, Idaho, returned strong after last year's injury-shortened season, recording two double-doubles while shooting an impressive 66 percent from the field. A top offensive rebounder throughout her career, she is graduating with a degree in Integrated Health Science and plans to attend physical therapy school. Kiefer holds a 3.99 GPA and is poised to earn Academic All-American recognition.

**Becky Melcher** from Forsyth, Montana, has scored more than 1,000 career points between Miles Community College and MSU-Northern. She averages 13 points per game and ranks among the Frontier Conference leaders in scoring and three-point shooting. This season she set MSU-Northern's single-season record for made three-pointers and will graduate in May with a business degree.

**Canzas HisBadHorse**, an Integrated Health Science major from Lame Deer, Montana, has tallied 1,411 career points and leads the team this season with 14 points and 8 rebounds per game. She ranks among conference leaders in scoring, rebounding, and field goal percentage and has earned all-conference honors and Player of the Week recognition. In two seasons at Northern, she has totaled 749 points and 377 rebounds.

**Taya Trottier** of Harlem, Montana, has been a three-year starting point guard and consistent leader despite missing significant time due to injury early in her career. She has accumulated 822 points, 384 rebounds, and 140 steals while shooting over 44 percent from the field in her career. This season she is shooting 50 percent from the field and 43 percent from three-point range while ranking among conference leaders in assists. Trottier will graduate in May with a degree in Integrated Health Science.

## Lights Honor Three Senior Standouts



The Northern Lights men's basketball team honored three seniors who made a lasting impact on the program both on and off the court.

**Leo Seawell**, a native of Portland, Oregon, embodied leadership and consistency during his two seasons with the Lights. Coming off the bench, Seawell brought toughness, energy, and focus that helped prepare the team daily for practices and games. Returning from injury, he totaled 116 points, 29

assists, and 17 steals while shooting an impressive 38% from three-point range in his Northern career. In the classroom, the Business Administration major compiled a 3.75 GPA, earned two Academic All-Conference honors, and is on pace to be named an NAIA Scholar-Athlete.

**Rafi McEnroe**, from Honolulu, Hawaii, made the most of his year and a half with the Lights. Known as a “microwave” scorer for his ability to heat up quickly, McEnroe tallied 370 points at Northern and entered the night with 981 career points while shooting 47% from the field. He also made an impact on the boards, averaging 4.1 rebounds per game this season and collecting 150 total rebounds during his time with the program. McEnroe will graduate this spring with a degree in Liberal Studies.

Team captain **Leon Sayers IV** of Spokane, Washington, closed his Northern career as one of the Frontier Conference’s top all-around forwards. Sayers surpassed 1,000 career points in November and finished with 1,261 career points, including 643 as a Light. A two-time Academic All-Conference selection and likely repeat All-Conference honoree, he led the team this season with 14.7 points and 4.8 rebounds per game, helping guide the Lights to 16 wins and a berth in the Frontier Conference Tournament. The Trades Management major also earned his Electrical Technology degree and maintained a 3.66 GPA while positioning himself for NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition.

## Faculty Highlight Creative Classroom Approaches at Teaching & Learning Festival



MSU-Northern’s Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence (OTLE) hosted its annual Innovative Teaching & Learning Festival on Wednesday, Feb. 25, in Hensler Auditorium. Faculty and staff gathered to hear short presentations

highlighting creative teaching strategies and classroom research, with each session followed by discussion and questions.

**Brandon Matson** shared a peer-teaching project in which students produced “how-to” instructional videos that demonstrated course-related skills. Each video included a short quiz for classmates, encouraging engagement, reinforcing key concepts, and strengthening communication and critical-thinking skills through student-led instruction.

**Burke Wallace** outlined best practices in online teaching, emphasizing that effective online courses require clear structure and intentional design rather than simply posting materials. Attendees were encouraged to identify one practical improvement they could implement to strengthen their own online courses.

**Gwen Hart** discussed experiments with peer review in WRIT 122: Intro to Business Writing, examining the effectiveness of Canvas rubrics, self-reviews, and AI-assisted feedback in helping students provide stronger critiques and improve revisions.

**Kyra Kaercher** presented her use of “unessays” in introductory science courses to engage non-majors in scientific inquiry. The creative, student-designed projects allow learners to explore scientific concepts in personally meaningful ways, helping shift perceptions of science from memorization to exploration.

**Mary Ward** closed the session with a presentation on designing accessible courses that support diverse learners while maintaining high academic standards. She highlighted the value of instructional redundancy—combining live demonstrations, recorded lessons, and clear written guidance—to reach more students effectively. Ward emphasized that pairing clear expectations with structured flexibility helps place-bound, working, and parenting students succeed. When implemented intentionally, accessibility strengthens retention, promotes excellence, and enhances academic programs.

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## Major Gift to Science Research Endowment Advances Student Discovery at MSU-Northern



A special check presentation was held during the We Love Northern Ball to celebrate a generous contribution to the Science Research Endowment from Tim and Kristen Wynne, along with Roger and Darlene Pugh. Their support strengthens hands-on research opportunities for students and reflects a shared commitment to academic excellence at Northern.

The Science Research Endowment plays a critical role in equipping students and faculty with the tools and resources needed to pursue meaningful, impactful research. Thanks to the vision and generosity of the Wynne and Pugh families, Northern students will continue to gain valuable real-world experience that prepares them for graduate studies, careers in science, and leadership in their fields. The MSU-Northern Foundation is deeply grateful for their investment in the future of science education and discovery at MSU-Northern.

## Lions Club Invests in Culture with Powwow Sponsorship



The Lions Club recently demonstrated its continued commitment to community and culture with a \$500 donation to support the upcoming 49<sup>th</sup> annual Sweetgrass Society Powwow. Lions Club president Russ Stinnett presented the check to Sweetgrass Society representatives MorningStar Thomas and Tabias Melendrez, securing a **Gold-level sponsorship** for the two-day event, scheduled for April 24-25, 2026.

Hosting the annual powwow costs approximately \$30,000 and covers the many behind-the-scenes expenses required to create a welcoming, high-quality gathering. The celebration honors and uplifts Native American culture and community, bringing together families, friends, dancers, and singers from across Montana and Canada. Funded entirely through donations and fundraising efforts, the powwow remains free and open to the public.

Community members and businesses are invited to support the event through sponsorships. Gold-level sponsors (\$500+) receive banner and poster recognition, announcer shout-outs, media acknowledgment, and program placement. Maroon-level sponsors (\$250) receive banner recognition, event announcements, and social media acknowledgment. Friends of the Sweetgrass Society sponsors (under \$249) are recognized through social media and a listing of generous supporters.

The Sweetgrass Society and its representatives extend their sincere gratitude for the continued support and donations from local and out-of-area contributors.

[Download a Sponsorship Flyer](#)

[Contribute to the Powwow](#)

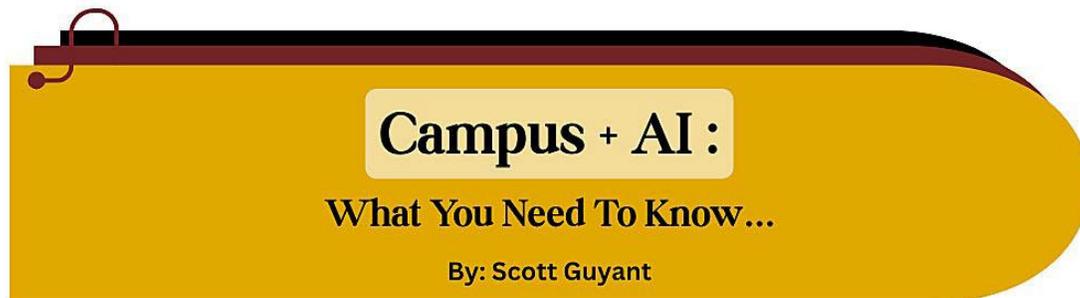
[Vendor Application](#)

[Princess Application](#)

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## Participants Craft Handmade Books at Library Makerspace Workshop

The Winter Wellness Workshop Series continued Feb. 26 in the Vande Bogart Library Makerspace, where participants gathered for Bookbinding II (Binding & Covers). During the session, attendees assembled and bound their books by sewing signatures and adding covers to complete simple handmade volumes. The beginner-friendly workshop was designed to be calm and approachable, with guidance available throughout the process. All materials were provided, allowing participants to focus on learning the techniques and enjoying a creative, low-stress experience.



## The 3-Line AI Use Note (A Tiny Habit That Saves Everyone Time)

If you're a student, you've probably wondered: "Do I need to say I used AI for this?" If you're faculty, you've probably wondered: "Did they use AI?" This dilemma creates a fog around the problem of AI but there is a simple fix.

That simple fix is the "AI Use Note": a short disclosure at the end of an assignment that makes assistance visible without turning honesty into extra homework. Many universities now encourage clear course expectations and

student disclosure when AI meaningfully shapes work, especially when different policies can vary from class to class or from one assignment to the next (University of Minnesota, n.d.; Stanford University Office of Community Standards, 2023).

Why this helps students: it lowers the stakes of doing the right thing. Instead of guessing what counts as “too much,” you document what you did. That’s a professional skill, not a confession. It also protects you: if you used AI for brainstorming or polishing, then your instructor doesn’t have to play AI detective.

Why this helps faculty: it shifts the conversation from “gotcha” atmosphere to learning one. You can require a brief note in any course, even when AI use is allowed, limited, or prohibited except for accessibility or editing. You also get better assessment data: when students tell you how they used tools, you can adjust prompts, rubrics, and supports. Plus, it aligns with a growing best practice: don’t make disclosure feel punitive or mysterious, make it routine (University of Minnesota Writing Across the Curriculum, 2025).

Most importantly, the AI Use Note pairs naturally with verification. If AI suggested facts, definitions, or citations, the note nudges students to check them. The message becomes: “Use tools if permitted, but own the accuracy.”

Here is a Ready-to-copy template box (paste into syllabus or assignments)  
AI Use Note (3 lines)

Tool(s) used: [Name/version, if known]

How I used it: [Brainstorming / outline / revising / coding help / etc.]

What I changed or verified: [Key edits I made, sources I checked, or “No factual claims added”]

Here is a sample from a presentation I did recently:

AI Use Note:

ChatGPT version 5.2 Thinking

How I used: Drafted the slide-by-slide outline and first-pass speaker notes (20–25 minute pacing). Helped me translate frameworks (ACRL, EDUCAUSE, NIST, OECD, UW/UW–Stout guidance) into teachable routines and activity ideas. Suggested plain-language phrasing for students/faculty (verification checklist, activity prompts, AI Use Note template).

What I did/changed: Selected the final dialogue and text, structure, and emphasis for UW–Stout’s polytechnic/applied-learning context. Verified the sources and links; matched claims to the cited documents. Edited for clarity, tone, and accessibility; I’m responsible for the final content. Integrity & privacy; (this is optional but good practice) No student records, grades, or confidential institutional data were entered into AI tools (this includes assignment prompts that are the intellectual property of the professor). AI output was treated as a

draft all factual statements were checked against reliable sources before inclusion.

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 a topic you would like me to address next.

Scott Guyant

Research Librarian

Assisted by ChatGPT 5.2 Thinking model

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### **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 17<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for submissions is March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

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

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

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### **Northern Network News Disclosure:**

The NNN is produced with the assistance of ChatGPT

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **Brown Bag Lecture Series**

**Thursday, March 12, 2026,  
Teachers' Pathways to the Profession and Their Attitude  
Towards Diverse Classrooms**

Dr. Praveen K. Dubey, Assistant Professor of Education and Director of Clinical Experience and Partnerships, will present "*Teachers' Pathways to the Profession and Their Attitude Toward Diverse Classrooms*" on Thursday, March 12, from 12–1 p.m. in the ATC Hensler Auditorium.

Drawing on data from the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey, Dubey examines two major K–12 trends: professionals transitioning into teaching and increasingly diverse classrooms. His findings highlight differences between first- and second-career teachers' perspectives, as well as gender differences in priorities and approaches to diverse learning environments, with implications for teacher recruitment and preparation.

Dr. Dubey's research focuses on multicultural education, diversity and inclusion, digital equity, STEM education, and teacher quality. He has presented nationally and uses advanced statistical methods to improve learning experiences for diverse student populations.

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

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### **Winter Wellness Workshop: Mindful Journaling – Mar. 26**

Date: March 26<sup>th</sup>  
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.

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## **Annual Casino Night – Mar. 25**

ASMSUN is excited to host its Annual Casino Night on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. Student registration begins at 5:30 pm, with the Casino and Lights Lounge opening at 6:30 pm. The gaming floor will close at 9:30 pm. This year's theme is **Speakeasy/Great Gatsby**, and guests are encouraged to dress the part. Prizes will be awarded for standout costumes, adding to the fun and festive atmosphere.

ASMSUN is also seeking volunteers to help make the evening a success. Opportunities include serving as game dealers, mocktail bartenders, cashiers, and faculty/staff hosts to mingle and engage with students.

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**Spring Break – March 16-20**

**Registration Begins – March 27**

**Spring Fling – April 3**

**First S.O.A.R. – April 10**

**Scholarship Ceremony – April 17**

**Wowwow – April 24-25**

**Finals Week – May 4-8**

**Commencement – May 9**

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## **CAMPUS SCHEDULE**

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**Thursday, February 26**

- Frontier Conference Tourney - Butte

## Friday, February 27

- Frontier Conference Tourney - Butte

## Saturday, February 28

- Frontier Conference Tourney - Butte

## Sunday, March 1

- Spring Deferred Payment Schedule: 50% Due

## Thursday, March 5

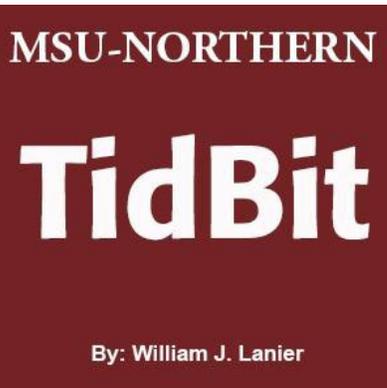
- Lights Wrestling @ NAIA National Championships

## Friday, March 6

- Lights Wrestling @ NAIA National Championships

## Saturday, March 7

- Lights Wrestling @ NAIA National Championships



## (#453) Northern Time Machine

For many of us who live in Havre and see the beauty of the campus frequently, we forget or do not realize how far the campus has come -- both in buildings and the landscape. The Kuhr Pond, Donaldson Hall, and Cowan Hall are among the most photographed buildings in Havre.

Here are four older pictures and one from last year to show some of that progression. The first two are old postcards.



1966 Northerner



1976 Northerner



**September 2025**

We need to give a shout-out to Northern Facility Services, especially Northern Athletic Hall of Famer Kino Detrick, for their continued work on the Northern Campus. Great job Kino and crew!

Do you have any old photos of the campus that you would like to share? Feel free to email them to me at [wjlanier1963@yahoo.com](mailto:wjlanier1963@yahoo.com).

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