

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Diversity Report

**ACADEMIC YEAR
2023 – 2024**



WELCOME



1

I am thrilled to present **MSU's annual Diversity Report**, a compilation of the accomplishments and activities of our university community over the past year. As you flip through the pages of this report, exploring progress that has been made within the five themes of our Diversity and Inclusion Framework, I hope you will see and feel the intentionality, care, and relationships upon which each of these efforts is built. The students, campus colleagues, and community partners behind these projects are driving positive changes that will create opportunities for the future

As always, this report provides a snapshot of the exemplary work being done at MSU and is not a complete account of the efforts taking place. For more detailed information on demographics and data, visit the University Data & Analytics website. More information about MSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts can be found at montana.edu/diversity.

Sincerely,
Ariel Donohue, Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Photos from top, left to right: 1. American Indian Council Powwow 2. African Cultural Celebration 3. International Food Bazaar 4. First-Generation College Celebration Committee 5. Asian Multicultural Night 6. Bangladeshi Night 7. Multicultural Graduation Celebration 8. Gender Equity Alliance.



2



5



6



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4



7



8

sense of belonging · support · dialogue

CAMPUS CLIMATE & INTERGROUP RELATIONS



Montana State fosters a campus culture that celebrates a wide range of identities and perspectives. This year, student organizations continued to develop community and hosted opportunities for cultural exchange. Our first Juneteenth celebration, with a family-friendly festival on the Romney Oval, was attended by hundreds of MSU and community members. Events in recognition of National First-Generation College Celebration Day included a student panel and a speed networking event. New initiatives, including the Morrill Scholars Program and the Society for Neurodivergent Graduate Students, complement our ongoing efforts to help people feel more connected, understood, and engaged at MSU.

First Annual Lū'au

The newly founded Pacific Islander Student Association held its first-ever lū'au in April. The lū'au featured traditional activities such as Huki Huki (tug of war) and Uma (laying down arm wrestling). They served Kalua pork, Pani Popo, and other foods from a range of Pacific Island cultures.



Neurodivergent Graduate Students

SNGS connects students, assists with accommodations, and promotes self-advocacy to help students succeed both personally and professionally.



Language and Story Exchange

The Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Education hosted two listening sessions where a total of 50 participants shared their multicultural and multilingual heritage identities. Campus partners facilitated discussions focused on building community around experiences of belonging at MSU and in Montana.



Pablo Santibanez (He/Him)

As a Graduate Assistant in the Diversity & Inclusion Student Commons, Pablo hosted biweekly group discussions on diversity topics, coordinated materials for Safe Zone trainings, and supported a student Multicultural BBQ. In MSU's Mental Health Counseling program, Pablo is learning ways to increase mental health access for historically underserved populations.

264

first-year students participated in the inaugural cohort of the **Morrill Scholars Program**, which helps students create a sense of purpose and belonging through faculty and peer mentor support.

\$3.37 million

NIH grant was awarded to psychology professor **Neha John-Henderson** to continue research into the links between trauma, social connectedness, and health in the Blackfeet community.

12

students found support through **Building MSU Families**, a program that connects Indigenous students with faculty/staff "relatives" to build community throughout the students' educational journey.

Montana State University has been named the **No. 2 military friendly school** in the nation by the website [MilitaryFriendly.com](https://militaryfriendly.com).

EDUCATION & SCHOLASHIP



Sorting Out Race Exhibit

The MSU Library hosted a traveling exhibit of 130 items donated to thrift stores that displayed racial imagery and harmful stereotypes. The exhibit invited visitors to reflect on questions surrounding racial stereotypes and inspired conversation about ongoing racial struggles.

photo by Ann Vinciguerra

MSU is committed to providing educational experiences that incorporate diverse viewpoints and are accessible to all. A multitude of workshops are offered through the Diversity and Inclusion Development Certificate program to help individuals expand their awareness, knowledge, and skills. This year student, faculty, and staff leaders were invited to participate in the Moral Courage program to learn conflict resolution skills and practice hearing—not fearing—different opinions and ideas. Panelists and art exhibits helped educate the MSU community on aspects of identity, equipping them with knowledge necessary to combat biases and discrimination.



Arts & Entrepreneurship

MSU's American Indigenous Business Leaders chapter hosted a panel on Arts & Entrepreneurship: A Native Take, celebrating Indigenous entrepreneurs in arts and culture.

Minjee Jeon (She/Her)

Minjee, Assistant Professor in the School of Art, co-lead a series of workshops with Montana tribal communities to promote the 988 Suicide Prevention hotline, a 24/7 toll-free crisis line that provides immediate care and resources to millions of callers every year. She was awarded the 2024 Dean's Excellence Award for Integration for this work.



The MSU Library offered two new workshops in October, **ADHD Learner Strategies** and **Dyslexia Learner Strategies**, to support neurodivergent students, faculty, and staff.

198

students studied abroad in 40 countries through the **Office of International Programs (OIP)**. OIP also received 61 incoming exchange students from schools in 19 countries.

827

individuals at MSU completed the **Indian Education for All** training this year, making steady progress towards our goal of 100% employee completion of this important professional development.

232

faculty, staff, and students completed the **Diversity Without Division** course offered by the Moral Courage program, learning to turn contentious issues into constructive conversations.



International Women's Day Panel

The Women's Center, OIP, and UNA-USA partnered to host a panel discussion with students from France, Iran, Rwanda, and the Northern Cheyenne reservation. Panelists discussed ways women are celebrated in their nations on International Women's Day and the challenges they've overcome as women in their respective fields.

ACCESS & SUCCESS



TRIO Student Support Services

TRIO SSS served 140 first-generation, low income, and students with disabilities this year. 84% of TRIO students persisted from their first to second year, and 91% are in good academic standing. Additionally, an impressive 87% of TRIO students complete their degree within 6 years.

Our land-grant mission continually reminds us that the university was created to broaden access to education and promote opportunities for diverse learners. Access goes beyond attracting a diverse set of students to enter through our doors. Once students become Bobcats, we support students to develop a sense of belonging, make mentor connections, take advantage of available resources, and ultimately see themselves as part of the MSU community. Departments take this access mission seriously, implementing student support services and seeking strategies for removing barriers to improve both academic and personal outcomes.

Adopt-A-Cop Program

The University Police Department pairs officers with student groups like ASIA, QSA, and the African Society to foster trust and connection.



As part of their **Wellbeing Initiative**, the Graduate School removed the barrier of a GRE admission requirement. This has led to an increase in applications from a wide range of students.

MOR Free Admission

The Museum of the Rockies has created the Opening Doors for Montana Schoolchildren Fund, which provides free admission to schools across Montana and covers up to 100% of transportation costs. All schools within Montana American Indian reservations attend for free with full travel reimbursement.

31

incoming **American Indian/ Alaska Native students** enrolled in the Honors College last fall—a 121% increase since Honor Bound, an Indigenous-led recruitment and retention initiative, began in 2021.

17.4%

of undergraduate students at Montana State University identify as **first-generation college students**. This reflects an increase of 1.1 percentage points from last academic year

\$240K

grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will enable the **Youth Aware of Mental Health program** to be offered in more rural and tribal Montana communities.

Miller Rijfkogel (They/Them)

Miller co-founded the Disabled Students Association, was president of Students Against Sexual Assault, and was an ASMSU Senator. They also worked at the VOICE Center supporting students who experienced interpersonal violence. After graduation, Miller will go to medical school—with June their service dog—hoping to increase disability and queer representation.



LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY



Crossing Boundaries

Javier Zamora kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month by sharing his migration story as part of the President's Crossing Boundaries Series featuring speakers who have crossed seemingly impassible boundaries, teaching lessons of human resilience and persistence through hardship and injustice.

Strong and visible leadership for diversity, equity, and inclusion often reflects the university's continual progress towards our goals. Leadership at MSU takes many forms: faculty mentoring students, staff creating programs to meet community needs, and students using their voices for important causes. When designing and planning the new Student Wellness Center, leaders prioritized access and inclusion to positively impact users for decades to come. Powerful speakers—including Stephanie Land, Javier Zamora, and Anthony Ray Hinton of the President's Crossing Boundaries Series—visited campus to share their stories of perseverance, connection, family, and hope.



National oSTEM Advising Award

Computer Science professor John Paxton was named Advisor of the Year by oSTEM, a national LGBTQ+ STEM organization, for his mentorship.



Maleeya Knows His Gun (She/Her)

A proud Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribal member, Maleeya's passion for helping her community earned her the title of Miss Indian MSU in 2022. She helped plan events for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day and coordinated No More Stolen Sisters basketball games. For this work, she received the 2024 President's Award for Gender Equity.

La Academia Familia Latina, a free 5-session program in Spanish offered by MSU's Latino Pathways Initiative, gives the local Latino community information about academic and career opportunities.

4

departments united under the new **Student Wellness Center** to provide adaptive participation opportunities, ensure physical accessibility, and foster whole person wellbeing.

95.2%

of **Diversity & Inclusion Development** workshop participants either agree or strongly agree that they can apply what they learned in these workshops to their roles at MSU.

8

First Friday Lunches were hosted by the **Queer Faculty and Staff Association** to connect members and build community with groups such as oSTEM, the MSU Library, and the City of Bozeman.



Celebrating Black History Month

St. Clair Detrick-Jules gave a public lecture about beauty and self-love in the context of her newest book, My Beautiful Black Hair. Other events honoring Black History Month included African Cultural Night, a seminar on Slavery and the Invention of Race, and a lecture on data and Black life in the 20th century.

COMMUNICATION



Indigenous Horse Painting

To mark the start of Native American Heritage Month, MSU hosted a storytelling event focused on the historical significance of horse painting for Native American tribes. The event included demonstrations by tribal members and a parade of painted horses dressed in traditional regalia.

Through effective communication of MSU's diversity efforts, more individuals may experience the richness of our diverse community and find opportunities to connect across lines of difference. First-year Agriculture student Angelina Toineeta spearheaded an event showcasing how Montana tribes have painted horses over generations to communicate, pray, and symbolize success. The Associated Students of MSU (ASMSU) created a new student position this year to lead their diversity, equity, and inclusion work and to ensure that a broad range of student voices are being heard. By celebrating and making visible this remarkable work, we convey our institutional commitments to equity and inclusion.



The Power of Story Telling Event

The Veteran Support Center and Native American Studies highlighted the value of sharing community stories and keeping our history alive.

Asian Folklore and Mythology Night

The Asian Student Interracial Association (ASIA) hosted passionate storytellers who brought to life the mysteries of ancient legends, mythical creatures, and the wisdom passed down through generations. Guests immersed themselves in the rich tapestry of Asian culture as they explored captivating myths and folklore.



Mackenzie Spence (She/Her)

As a first-generation college student herself, Mackenzie is passionate about supporting students with similar experiences. She chairs MSU's first-generation committee and was instrumental in MSU being selected into the First Scholars Network. Mackenzie is also the Program Coordinator in TRIO SSS and a board member for the Queer Faculty and Staff Association.

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students serve on **ASMSU's DEI Committee** led by the Student Diversity Advisor, a new position created to elevate conversations around DEI in student government.

\$1.5 million

was awarded to the **Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing** to provide simulation experiences for nursing students to learn and practice skills for communicating with patients through an interpreter.

5,800

fans attended the **Missing Murdered Indigenous Women/ People Awareness Basketball games**. Bobcat Athletics won a national Unity Award for their educational and awareness efforts around the cause.

MSU has earned a prestigious **STARS Gold** rating for sustainability, which accounts for elements of social equity such as affordability, ethnic and gender diversity, and institutional climate.

MSU PERSPECTIVES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend thanks to the many units and individuals who contributed content to this year's Diversity Report, including Academic Diversity Partners, Diversity Council, the Diversity and Inclusion Student Commons, and numerous others. Thank you to University Data and Analytics for providing the data and to University Communications for designing and producing this report.



photo courtesy Ava Rosvold/Bozeman Daily Chronicle



Photos from top, left to right: 1. Indigenous Peoples Day 2. Annual Black Student Union Juneteenth Celebration 3. Lavender Celebration 4. Indigenous Student Research 5. Indigenous Fashion Show 2023 6. Academic Diversity Partners tabling for "Finals Fuel" 7. African Cultural Celebration 8. African Cultural Celebration 9. LGBTQ+ Pride event on campus 10. Indigenous Peoples Day





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