

MONTANA WWAMI

A cooperative program of the University of Washington School of Medicine

2026 FOUNDATIONS NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Brant Schumaker, DVM, MPVM, Ph.D.

Director and Assistant Foundations Dean, Montana WWAMI

As I reflect on my first year in Montana WWAMI, I am continually inspired by the dedication of our students, faculty, and staff. From student research presentations at the Western Medical Research Conference to the ongoing strengthening of our Foundations curriculum, there is clear momentum across the program and much to celebrate.

Montana WWAMI's mission is deeply rooted in service to our state and its communities. That commitment is reflected in the success of our students and graduates—65% of our WWAMI alumni ultimately practice in Montana. Together, these outcomes underscore our role in strengthening the state's physician workforce.

Through a robust statewide clerkship network and strong partnerships with our clinical community, our students gain hands-on experience in diverse settings, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This collaboration between faculty, staff, students, and physician partners ensures our graduates are well prepared to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the communities they serve.

A key focus this year has been enhancing and systematizing academic support for our students, with early returns that are both promising and encouraging. With an exceptionally committed team and strong clinical partnerships across the state, I am confident the future of Montana WWAMI is bright as we continue preparing the next generation of physicians.



1167 Montanans have received medical education through Montana WWAMI since 1973

30 Montana students per class per year spend the first 18 months in the Foundations phase of the program

65% return rate of WWAMI physicians to Montana over the life of the program

590 WWAMI faculty taught at Montana hospitals and clinics last year

WWAMI BY THE NUMBERS

"Thank you, WWAMI! This program allowed me to follow my dreams and return home to Montana!"

- E84 Graduate

IN THIS ISSUE

- Greetings from the Director
- WWAMI by the Numbers
- Faculty Recognitions
- WWAMI on the Road
- Welcome E25 Class!

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Congratulations to Dr. Laura Goodell for being this year's recipient of the Montana WWAMI Excellence in Teaching Award! This award is voted on by the students and given to the instructor who they feel has had the most impact on their medical education to date.

Dr. Goodell, an E03 graduate of the MT WWAMI program, has been teaching at MT WWAMI for fifteen years. Currently, she is the Site Lead for Head/Neck/Gut, Reproduction & Development, and Integrations blocks, and she also teaches Cardiovascular Systems and Respiration & Regulation. Separately from WWAMI, she is a family physician at Student Health Services on the MSU campus.



Laura Goodell, M.D.

RETIRING FACULTY

It is with both joy about the future and heaviness of heart that I announce my retirement from WWAMI effective this June. I have been teaching in Montana WWAMI for 30 years, and have been the FCM Clinical Director and Faculty Mentor for 11 years.

Teaching has been one of the most rewarding and satisfying parts of my professional career. The personal and professional growth I have felt learning new medical topics, being with students, and working as a team with faculty will stay in my heart and mind forever.



Colette Kirchhoff, M.D.

I plan to continue practicing part-time at Eden Hospice and with the Montana Physicians Health Corp, caring for the underserved. Mostly, though, I plan to spend time with my four grandchildren and their families, as well as to continue ethnobotany teaching and studies in Pony, Montana.

When I moved to Bozeman in 1988, many of my professional colleagues were WWAMI faculty, which is what inspired me to start teaching. I taught third year Internal Medicine clerkships for about ten years and I have been the PCP director for the last two years. During my time with WWAMI, I organized the annual Women in Medicine event, as well as the Speed Dating Internal Medicine Physicians event.



Pam Hiebert, M.D.

While I am retiring as PCP director, I plan to continue teaching first and third year students for a few more years, as well as continue my clinical office practice. I look forward to spending more time with my three grandchildren, as well as enjoying hiking, XC skiing, backpacking, and playing piano.

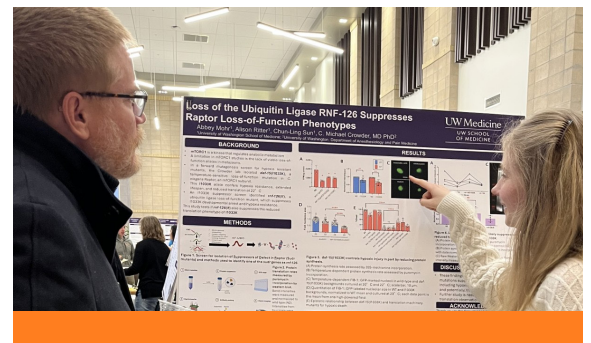
2025 STUDENT POSTER SESSION AWARDS

People's Choice Awards

- **Mackenzie Bernhardt:** *Educational Outreach on Harm Reduction for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder in Helena, MT*
- **Lauren Bingham:** *Increasing Patient Opioid Education & Community Resource Utilization in Darby, MT*
- **Nina Coppolillo:** *Decreased metabolism of cervical immune cells after treatment of bacterial vaginosis*

Best Poster Awards

- **Rebecca Boylan** for *Exercise as Medicine: Running for Body and Spirit in the Apsáalooke Tribe and Community of Hardin, MT*
- **Kyle Montgomery** for *Comparison of CAR T Cell Administration Routes in Murine CNS Lymphoma*

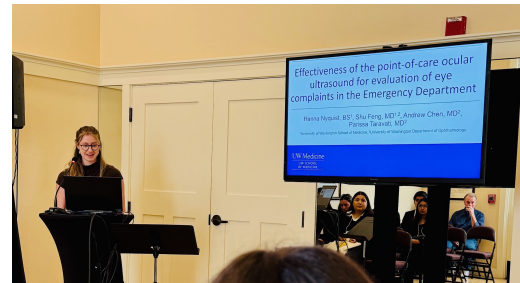




WELCOME TO OUR MONTANA WWAMI E25 CLASS!

WWAMI ON THE ROAD

In January, seven Montana WWAMI students -- **Madison Alessi, Barla Beaudoin, Rebecca Boylan, Kathryn Castro-Quilang, Nina Coppolillo, Brynne Miller, and Hanna Nyquist** -- presented their research at the Western Medical Research Conference in Carmel, CA. This opportunity provides these future physicians with a valuable platform to highlight their work and gain meaningful feedback in a supportive environment.



THE BULLETIN BOARD

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

Please fill out the enclosed graduate survey or use this QR code or go online at www.montana.edu/wwami/graduatesurvey.html.



MONTANA MISSES YOU!

As always, we love it when you stop by to say hello and tell us how you're doing!

We are located on the 2nd Floor of Building 5 at Bozeman Health.

We hope to see you soon!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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 as the average national debt upon graduation continues to rise.

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 the QR code or at www.montana.edu/wwami/donations_gifts.html
- By **PHONE**: 406-994-2053

QUESTIONS?

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

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