

THE FOUNDATION

Mar 2021

Inside

Education is Power: NAAC helps Native American students shine

Coming Up

- **March 11** - Campus blood drive
- **April 22** - Spring 2021 semester ends
- **May 1** - Commencement
- **2021 Wine & Food Festival**
Events planned for fall



Shawna Hagadone
Class of '19

"The experience you will gain at MSU Billings will shape you for a lifetime."

Education is power

As I was researching which college to attend, I did not want to venture too far away from my hometown of Poplar, Montana. Billings seemed to be the ideal location because it is far enough, yet close enough if I needed to take a quick trip back home. It also gave me great comfort to know that my family and friends would be able to visit me more often than they would have been able to had I chosen to attend college elsewhere.

Like many first-year students, I had no idea what I wanted to study in college. All I knew was that I wanted to get my degree. I knew that from an early age. Still, I was not sure how a degree would change my life. Now that I am in the workforce utilizing my Business degree at Wells Fargo, I can see how crucial that decision was. I am learning that a college degree can set you apart from other candidates.

I am thankful for the cultural diversity on campus at MSU Billings because it exposed me to so many different experiences and resources that I do not think I otherwise would have known had I not attended MSU Billings. Education is power, especially for a Native American woman. Initially, I thought I would take my knowledge back to my reservation, pursue a career there, and help my community, but I soon realized that I still have so much more to learn.

My advice to Native American students who may be thinking about attending college is to go for it! The experience you will gain at MSU Billings will shape you for a lifetime. I am thankful that I made MSU Billings my university of choice because the knowledge I gained there has established a firm foundation for my future – academically, socially, and culturally. I am pleased to say that if I had to do it all over again, I would choose MSU Billings.

Cover photo courtesy of Lifetouch National School Studios



MSU Billings saw a 21% increase in American Indian student enrollment at City

Diversity is the heartbeat of MSU Billings

Fostering a diverse and inclusive community that reflects Montana and the world helps prepare all students for a global economy. As 2021 advances, MSU Billings continues its unwavering commitment to our unique student body; they are the heartbeat of this university.

Our objective is to encourage an atmosphere that welcomes every student. When students can see themselves in our classrooms, then MSU Billings can better attract, retain, and graduate a diverse student body.

The Native American Achievement Center (NAAC) is one example of employing program support to create a sense of belonging for students. Take a moment to read Sunny Day

Real Bird's article in this issue. You'll see that by affirming students' choice of MSU Billings through cultural activities, relationship building, and inclusion, we can help students plot a successful path from high school to the workplace. We've highlighted some of the donors who have lent their support to this effort.

And we can't forget the power of financial assistance, be it connecting students with campus services so they can access federal and tribal aid or coaching students to apply for scholarships. The MSU Billings Foundation has some scholarship support for Native American students – notably the Charles Beardsley Undergraduate Endowed Scholarship for Native

Awareness, inclusion, engagement: NAAC crafts formula for student success

By Sunny Day Real Bird (Crow and Gros Ventre)

Director of the Native American Achievement Center

The Native American Achievement Center (NAAC) at MSU Billings plays an integral role in the tribal experience on campus by recruiting and retaining Native American students. Our office serves as an advocate for students pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities at MSU Billings and through the extension services at City College, which also provides academic and student support. Additionally, the NAAC helps to increase cultural understanding, awareness,

and appreciation across all socio-demographic boundaries.

Currently, we have 314 Native American students enrolled, which is approximately 8 percent of our population here at MSU Billings. Our goal is to increase that number. Recently we added to our staff Eva Hoops, who will serve as our Native American Success Advisor for the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservation, and Madison Morgan, who will help in the areas of retention and media. We are in the process of creating a smooth transitional program

Continued on page 4...

Gifts support program expansion, cultural events

Thanks to all who support MSU Billings' Native American students. Highlighted below are some recent donors whose contributions have enhanced Native American programs.

Donor

TC Energy

Steele-Reese Foundation

Anonymous Donor

100 Strong Billings

Billings Community Foundation

Kelcey Packineau

Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

Impact

Expansion of Native American Achievement Center

Native American student retention efforts

Native American student recruitment and retention efforts

NAAC Sweat Lodge construction

NAAC Sweat Lodge construction

Alumni Association Powwow Brunch

Expansion of Native American Achievement Center



College in Spring semester 2021 - much of that growth in healthcare programs.

American Studies, the Roseanna Chatham Milne Memorial Endowed Scholarship, and the MSU Billings American Indian Teacher Education Endowed Scholarship – but with your help, we can do more.

We need donors like you to partner with us. You are the key to helping MSU Billings students from all walks of life reach their highest potential. Whether you choose to create an endowment, give a financial gift to scholarships, or offer your time and talent, you have the power to impact your community through students.

To learn how you can make a difference or leave a legacy at MSU Billings, please call us at (406) 657-2244 or visit us online www.msubfoundation.com/make-a-gift/donate-today/.

"When students can see themselves in our classrooms, then MSU Billings can better attract, retain, and graduate a diverse student body."

Bill Kennedy
President & CEO



Corks & Cuisine: 29th W&F reinvented for 2021

By Jeanne Moller

Senior Development Officer

The MSU Billings Foundation is happy to report that it will hold its 29th Annual Wine & Food Festival for 2021. Although the event will look slightly different this year, at the core, our mission remains the same—to help MSU Billings students. We look forward to getting together. We have missed our guests and the fun that goes along with wine, food, and friends!

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to cancel the festival and replace it with a very successful scholarship campaign. From this reinvented event came funding for students at MSU Billings to continue their studies. Thank you for



going above and beyond to help our students, even during such uncertain times.

As we plan the 2021 Wine & Food Festival, of course, our guests' and volunteers' safety is our number one priority. For this reason, we are moving our events from the usual time in May to early fall, with the hope that by then, everyone will be more comfortable gathering in groups. **Please note this is a change in date from our message in January's newsletter.**

Please keep checking our website www.msubfoundation.com/wine-food/wine-food-festival/ for updates, and plan to join us! A big thank you for your continued support of the students of MSU Billings. Your help changes lives!

...Continued from page 3

for incoming high school students to build relationships with their peers, faculty, staff, and tribal leaders in our community. The NAAC is also making available opportunities for students to address any financial barriers they face as we work to ensure they are connected to all the necessary resources on campus to help them succeed. So, as you might imagine, we have many great things happening here at MSU Billings.

Of course, we also pride ourselves in providing the best extra-curricular activities at the NAAC with various cultural activities throughout the academic year, such as lecture series, special events with Native scholars, educational workshops, tutoring, the Veterans' Medicine

Wheel, and the MSU Billings Powwow. These activities help retain our students, keep them culturally engaged, and make them feel a sense of acceptance and inclusion on campus.

I must give our generous donors a big thank-you for their dedication and support of the NAAC and our students' financial needs. Because of your help, we can create a cultural atmosphere representing our Native students who have come to enjoy resources like the first sweat lodge located on a university campus. The NAAC is committed to providing the best support to our Native student population at MSU Billings by empowering them in their individual, social, cultural, and academic development.



www.msubfoundation.com

MSU Billings Foundation | 1500 University Dr | Billings, MT 59101

Phone: (406) 657-2244

Email: info@msubfoundation.com