

BFCC MAGPIE



MAY 2026

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SPRING FLING 2026 CREATES A FUN BREAK BEFORE FINALS WEEK

Blackfeet Community College hosted our annual Spring Fling on April 22, 2026, giving students a chance to relax, connect, and de-stress before finals week. The event featured a campus cookout and a variety of friendly competitions that brought energy and laughter to the afternoon.

A watermelon eating contest, sponsored by the Education Department, was a highlight of the day and drew strong participation and excitement from students. Winners included Joe Schildt, Donna Kipp, Mark Smith, Felix RunningCrane, and Sierra Freedenburg. We also want to thank staff member Ron Lahr for generously donating a fifth-place prize, which added to the excitement and spirit of the competition.

Admissions sponsored a three-legged race that added plenty of fun, with Jacob Burns and his partner taking first place. Second place went to Sierra Freedenburg and her partner, followed by Jack Billedeaux and his partner.

Additional activities included an egg race, where Jhett Cobell placed first and Tyler RunningCrane placed second. The cornhole tournament rounded out the event, with The Outlaws earning first place and JW and Kylie placing second. We are proud to see events like Spring Fling bring students together in a positive and engaging way. It was a great reminder of the importance of community, connection, and taking time to enjoy campus life as the semester comes to a close.



ALLEN WALKER SELECTED FOR MAX BAUCUS INSTITUTE INTERNSHIP

We are proud to recognize our student Allen Walker for being selected for a competitive opportunity through the Max Baucus Institute.

Through this program, Allen has been placed with the Native American Development Corporation in Billings, Montana, where he will gain hands-on, real-world experience supporting individuals and businesses. In his role, he will assist in connecting people with resources such as grants and funding opportunities that support financial stability and long-term success.

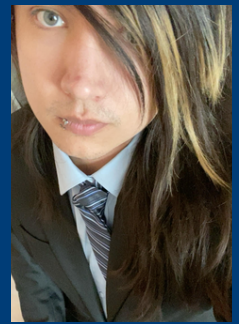
Allen shared that his motivation to apply came from a strong desire to learn, grow, and challenge himself. "I wanted an opportunity that would push me both personally and professionally," he said.

During his time at Blackfeet Community College, Allen has taken on leadership roles and remained actively engaged in campus and community initiatives. His involvement in American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) and his experiences connecting with tribal leadership have helped prepare him for this next step.

We are proud to see Allen pursuing opportunities that align with his goals. He hopes to one day own his own business, and this internship will provide valuable insight into how businesses are built, how funding systems work, and how to create meaningful connections.

We also appreciate the advice he shares with other students: "Be bold and get comfortable with being uncomfortable."

Allen will be relocating to Billings for the summer as he begins this exciting new chapter. We congratulate him on this achievement and look forward to seeing his continued success.



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ANNUAL COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR CONNECTS STUDENTS TO FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Blackfeet Community College hosted its Annual College & Career Fair on April 15, 2026, welcoming nearly 200 students and community members for a day focused on exploration, connection, and future planning.

Throughout the event, students engaged with college and career representatives, asked questions, and learned about the many pathways available after high school and beyond.

Events like this go far beyond a day outside the classroom—they are meaningful steps toward building a future.

We extend our sincere appreciation to every student who participated and took the time to explore their options and connect with representatives.

Celebrating Student Achievement

A special congratulations goes to Mark, Maria, and William, who were each awarded a \$500 scholarship for their participation in the College & Career Fair. This recognition reflects more than financial support—it highlights their initiative, curiosity, and commitment to pursuing higher education.

Thank You to Our Partners

We would also like to recognize the organizations whose generous support made these scholarships possible:

- Montana University System
- GEAR UP
- Reach Higher Montana
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- American Indian College Fund
- Montana Digital Learning Initiative
- Montana Postsecondary Educational Opportunities Council
- University of Montana Billings

Their continued investment in students helps open doors, create opportunities, and inspire brighter futures.

The Annual College & Career Fair remains an important part of BFCC's commitment to supporting student success, encouraging exploration, and helping students take the next step toward their educational and career goals.



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WESLEY WELLS LEADING THROUGH SERVICE

We are proud to recognize our student Wesley Wells for being named a recipient of the Montana Student Volunteer Award. Although Wesley was unable to attend the live ceremony, we gathered on campus to celebrate his achievement and recognize the impact he continues to make at Blackfeet Community College. During the event, our Student Success Director shared meaningful words about Wesley's dedication and the positive example he sets for others.

Wesley consistently goes above and beyond in his service to our campus community. He volunteers his time with the campus food pantry, fitness center, and Student Center, and is always willing to lend a hand during events—whether it's setting up, cleaning up, or simply checking in to see where help is needed. He has also contributed to campus clean-up efforts, helping maintain a welcoming environment for students and visitors. In addition to his work on campus, Wesley actively promotes BFCC in the broader community by encouraging others to enroll and take advantage of the opportunities available here.

We are grateful for Wesley's commitment, leadership, and willingness to serve. His actions reflect the values of our college and demonstrate the importance of giving back to the community. He was honored by the board on April 29th.

We congratulate Wesley on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for the positive impact he continues to make.



CULTURAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH DR. MIKE BRUISED HEAD

On March 27, 2026, faculty and staff at Blackfeet Community College participated in a professional development session led by Dr. Mike Bruised Head, Ninna Piiksi (Chief Bird), held in the Student Commons Area.

Dr. Bruised Head focused on three key areas: Land-Based Learning, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and the importance of acknowledging and citing Elders. He emphasized that land carries knowledge and history, and encouraged continued use of original Blackfoot place names, which hold stories and songs of the people.

He also spoke about the importance of honoring Elders as knowledge keepers, and made a request that BFCC consider recognizing community grandparents with their own "doctorate" recognition for their contributions to TEK.

The presentation also highlighted culturally appropriate research methods and the importance of integrating Blackfoot ways of knowing into education, research, and institutional practices. Overall, the session reinforced the importance of language, culture, and tradition in strengthening student learning and community identity.

The presentation is available on the BFCC YouTube channel: @blackfeetcommunitycollege

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Laura Latray Earns 1st Place at MSU Research Celebration

We are proud to recognize our student Laura Latray for earning 1st place in the TCU Poster Contest at the MSU-Bozeman Research Celebration held April 9-10, 2026.

The MSU Research Celebration is an annual event that brings together students, faculty, and researchers to present projects, share ideas, and highlight innovative work across disciplines. The TCU (Tribal Colleges and Universities) Poster Contest specifically showcases research from tribal college students, providing a platform to share work that impacts Indigenous communities.

Laura's research project focused on understanding and improving the birth experience for women in her community. Inspired by observations and experiences connected to BFCC data shared during the Bear River Massacre event, she explored what birth looks like for women on and around the reservation. Through interviews and research, including reviewing IHS records, Laura identified practical ways to improve care and support. Her work also includes sharing resources, contact information, and educational opportunities available to families.

"Birth is an important part of life—the beginning," Laura shared. "I wanted to know more about what the average birth experience was like for women around me."

Presenting at the event was a meaningful experience for Laura. She connected with others interested in Indigenous birthwork, the history of Indigenous women, and advocacy for Native communities. She also valued the opportunity to hear personal stories that reinforced the importance of culture and family connection during and after pregnancy.

While she approaches recognition with humility, Laura shared that the experience of presenting and winning has encouraged her to continue her work. "Getting the opportunity to share the knowledge I've accumulated inspired me to keep working on my projects," she said.

We also recognize the support behind her success. Laura expressed her gratitude to Betty Henderson-Matthews and Natalie, as well as the INBRE program, Blackfeet Community College, Montana State University, and Zoe Pratt for providing the opportunity to present.

For students interested in research, Laura offers simple but powerful advice: "Research is just being nosy. Just wanting to know the who, what, where, how is research. It is something that anyone who has interest in can participate."

We are proud of Laura's accomplishment and the meaningful impact of her work. Those interested in learning more about her presentation visit www.bfcc.edu/magpie



Sabine Brigitte Advances Through Lifelong Learning Grant

We can gratefully recognize Liberal Arts faculty member Sabine Brigitte on her recent academic accomplishment. Sabine will graduate from the University of Montana on May 9, 2026, earning a Graduate Certificate in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies (WGSS) with high honors. This achievement builds on her Master of Fine Arts in Literature & Writing and provides her with an additional area of specialization, including advanced training in 2SLGBTQIA+ higher education allyship.

Sabine's success was supported through our Lifelong Learning Grant, which is part of a broader effort to invest in employees' professional growth. The initiative focuses on strengthening the college from within by supporting advanced education, building institutional knowledge, and promoting cultural wellness throughout the learning journey.

This accomplishment will further strengthen the Liberal Arts Department by expanding course perspectives, enhancing inclusive curriculum development, and bringing additional expertise into the classroom. Sabine's training in WGSS supports more diverse and culturally responsive learning environments, benefiting students across multiple disciplines. Sabine is the third faculty or staff member to complete a graduate-level program through this effort, with several others currently pursuing advanced degrees in a variety of fields.

We congratulate Sabine on this accomplishment and recognize her dedication to both her students and her continued professional growth.



Celebrating Years of Service at Blackfeet Community College

We would like to recognize and celebrate the dedication and commitment of our employees who have reached important service milestones. We are honored to recognize the following employees for 5 years of service:

- Alden Spoonhunter
- Ryann Parsons
- Rhrista Sinclair
- Dan Wagner
- Warren Juneau
- Desiree Schildt

We also extend a very special recognition to Cheryl Madman for an incredible 20 years of service. This milestone reflects a deep commitment to the mission and values of Blackfeet Community College and the impact of long-standing service to our institution. Your dedication, hard work, and passion do not go unnoticed. Thank you all for your time and service in supporting our students and community. You truly embody the spirit of BFCC and our shared commitment to education, culture, and opportunity.

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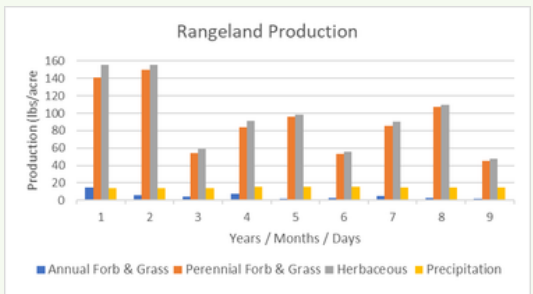
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RANGELAND FIRE UPDATE

In the early morning hours of March 29, 2026, a fire occurred southeast of the BFCC campus, within the area identified on the map. The affected rangeland consists of two sections totaling 284 acres, secured by barbed wire and electric fencing with a 3-foot buffer zone. The landscape is primarily characterized by glacial till plains and moraines, with clay loam soils classified under the Williams soil profile. The fire impacted approximately 270.6 acres (4.46 miles) within the designated area, not including any adjacent rangeland outside of college property. Vegetation in the area is composed mainly of annual and perennial herbaceous forbs and grasses, with dominant species including bluebunch wheatgrass, green needlegrass, and sage. The fire is expected to have ecological impacts, particularly on local wildlife habitats, including ground squirrels and raptor species, during the late spring and early summer seasons.

Further assessment and monitoring will be conducted to evaluate recovery and any long-term environmental effects. Three year rangeland monitoring: samples end of each month:

May	July	September
1 = 2023-05-24	2 = 2023-07-27	3 = 2023-09-29
4 = 2024-05-23	5 = 2024-07-26	6 = 2024-09-28
7 = 2025-05-24	8 = 2025-07-27	9 = 2025-09-29



USDA EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

The USDA Extension Program continues to provide hands-on, place-based learning opportunities that connect students and community members to sustainable land practices and environmental stewardship.

This spring, interns and community partners collaborated on the development of a rain garden island designed to reflect ecological balance and support native plant relationships. The project incorporated grasses, flowering plants, and drought-tolerant species to promote water efficiency, soil health, and pollinator support throughout the growing season. Interns gained experience identifying native plants, as well as learning irrigation and mulching techniques that support long-term sustainability.

The program also participated in an Arbor Day 2026 gathering with local students and educators, highlighting the connection between land, culture, and community responsibility.

We extend our appreciation to our partners: Blackfeet Environmental Office, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, FAST Blackfeet, Piikani Lodge Health Institute, Browning High School, Montana Urban Community Forestry Association, and the BFCC Institutional Development and Maintenance Facility for their collaboration and commitment to stewardship within the Blackfeet Nation.



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NOW HIRING – JOIN OUR TEAM!

We currently have the following open positions:

- Student Pathways Coordinator (Admissions)
- Land Use & Cultural Resource Manager

If you are passionate about making a difference and supporting our mission, we encourage you to apply and become part of our amazing team by visiting

www.bfcc.edu/humanresource or by scanning the QR code with your phone camera and following the link!



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Gaylene Ducharme – Staff

Recognized for her quiet yet impactful contributions, Gaylene brings deep institutional knowledge and a strong commitment to supporting students and staff. Her reliability, fast turnaround on data, and willingness to help make her an invaluable member of the team.

Sandi Running Crane – Staff

Sandi is a key pillar of the team, known for her positive, can-do attitude and ability to take on complex tasks with ease. Her reliability, insight, and supportive nature make her a trusted and valued partner at BFCC.

Shannon Salois – Faculty

Shannon is recognized for her dedication to student success and academic excellence. She consistently goes above and beyond in her role while remaining an active contributor to Faculty Senate and a positive presence on campus.

COMMUNITY HEALTH DAY AND OPEN HOUSE BRINGS RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

We cordially invite students, families, and community members to attend the upcoming Community Health Day and Open House. This event is designed to bring together campus programs and community partners to promote health, wellness, and educational opportunities. Attendees will have the chance to explore a variety of informational booths, connect with campus departments and local organizations, and learn about services available within the community. The event will also feature interactive activities and opportunities to engage with resources that support overall well-being.

The Community Health Day and Open House, sponsored in part by Culture and Hope, reflects BFCC's commitment to supporting the whole student and strengthening connections within the Blackfeet Nation. By bringing together education and health resources in one space, the event aims to encourage awareness, access, and community engagement.

We encourage everyone to attend, learn more about available programs and services, and take part in this community-centered event.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **MAY 2:**
 - RATTLE MAKING - 10AM - 2PM - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY
 - IN STITCHES MEET UP - 10AM - 2PM - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY
- **MAY 5:** SOUP TUESDAY - 12PM - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE
- **MAY 6:**
 - CRAFT WEDNESDAY - 2PM - 4PM - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE
- **MAY 8:**
 - MAIN CAMPUS CLOSED TO PUBLIC - ALL CAMPUS MEETING
 - HOOF TRIMMING AND SHOEING DEMO - 12PM - 4PM - BFCC AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
- **MAY 11 - 13:** TIPI MAKING - 9AM-5PM - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY
- **MAY 12:**
 - HEALTH DAY - 11AM - 5PM - BFCC CAMPUS
 - OPEN HOUSE - 11AM - 4PM - STUDENT COMMONS
- **MAY 13:** CRAFT WEDNESDAY - 2PM - 4PM - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE
- **MAY 15:** SGRADUATION CEREMONY - 12PM - MULTIPURPOSE ARBOR
- **MAY 18-22:** SUMMER REGISTRATION
- **MAY 20:** ELDERS LUNCH - 11:30AM - 2PM - STUDENT COMMONS
- **MAY 21:** MAY BOOK CLUB - 4:30PM - 6PM - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY
- **MAY 27:** GNP AT THE LIBRARY - 4PM - 5PM - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY

