

2023 President's Outstanding Student Award Recipients
College of Humanities & Sciences

Name	Major	Concentration	Nomination Statement
Katrina Kaylie White	Anthropology	Archaeology	Katrina K. White, AA in hand, came to UM in 2021, energized by the idea of diving into anthropology, archaeology, and history. Distance was a major obstacle: she was a non-traditional student with a young family rooted in the Flathead Valley. Unfazed, she threw herself into UM online and then into commuting, braving treacherous winter trips. Flouting all barriers, her participation and classwork were amazing, taking ownership of learning and making each project uniquely hers.
Christina Vasquez	Anthropology	Cultural and Ethnic Diversity	In the past three years, Christina Vasquez has become an anthropologist and a writer. Through essays on diverse topics: Labor Day, documentary film on Pikuni in Montana, Franz Boas, and comparative analysis of gender and egalitarian societies, she has accomplished and demonstrated both skills and commitment to the anthropology of cultural and ethnic diversity. We commend her on her graduation for her personal growth, her dedication, and contributions to our department and wish her every success.
Emma Elizabeth Zoiss	Anthropology	Forensic Anthropology	Emma Zoiss has been an exemplary student throughout her time in the Anthropology Department. Her drive, acumen, and conscientious nature have helped her stand out in every class. Her Honors research has also afforded her an opportunity to shine in the molecular anthropology laboratory, where she has completed original research and has been a great help on a variety of projects where her attention to detail and deep understanding of the work has made her an integral part of the lab and department.
Connor Bradford Simpson	Anthropology	No Concentration	Connor is graduating with a double major in Anthropology and Linguistics. He is incredibly bright – his contributions are on a par with advanced graduate students. Connor worked as a staff writer for the Kaimin, was a volunteer for the 2022 Institute on Collaborative Language Research, and

received the Lee and Donna Metcalf Scholarship. Off campus, he has served as volunteer for the Gay Health Task Force. In the Fall, he will begin his MA in Linguistics here at UM. Congratulations, Connor!

Chase Orville Pimley Applied Science No Concentration

Using his interest in science and his background as an EMT, Chase explored the requirements for his next pursuit, pharmacy school. He selected challenging courses and built a unique plan using the Bachelor of Applied Science degree beautifully to establish a strong academic foundation for his graduate study. Throughout the process, Chase was organized, aware, and agile as he navigated his educational journey. Looking forward to hearing about wonderful successes in the future.

Hope M. Smelser Biochemistry Health Professions

Hope has a stellar record for academic achievement, research accomplishments, extracurricular activities. Furthermore, she is someone who could teach a master class in time management, since when Hope is not pushing back the frontiers of innate immunology, she is saving lives and patching wounds as an EMT, a job she has held full-time while pursuing her degree in Biochemistry.

Devyn Gabriella Cameron Biochemistry No Concentration

Gabi brims with enthusiasm for her studies in Biochemistry. She is always looking for the next challenge. Whether excelling in her courses, working on solutions to climate change in the lab and with Sunburst Sensors in Missoula, or pursuing challenging cases at the State Crime Lab, she brings excitement and exuberance to everything she does.

Kyle Douglas Montgomery Biology Cellular & Molecular Biology

In addition to maintaining academic excellence, Kyle participated in research projects in the UM Center for Translational Medicine to improve vaccines for diseases like tuberculosis and RSV. Kyle was also involved in extracurricular groups including the neuroscience club, GrizMed, and the Montana Health Professional for a Healthy Climate. Kyle plans to attend medical school and become a research-active physician and work to improve health outcomes of underserved, rural populations in Montana.

Katherine Rebecca Wendeln	Biology	Ecology and Organismal Biology	Katherine has been a stellar student, and she loves research (already a co-author on two publications!) and sharing her passion for the environment with others. While at UM she has lived this already – working as a UM outdoor program instructor and at the P.L. Wright Zoological Museum, a member of the UM Birding Club and the Wildlife Society student chapter, a backcountry first responder, a certified Montana Master Naturalist She has helped rehab injured raptors and even tag rattlesnakes!
Caroline Quinn Kane	Biology	Field Ecology	Caroline wants to become a research scientist focusing on fire ecology and changing climate, and she is well on her way! While at UM, she worked as a research assistant at the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory, as well as at Climate Smart. Caroline also gave back to the UM community – she was an Ambassador for the College of Humanities and Sciences, part of the Franke Global Leadership Initiative, as well as a violist with the UM Symphonic Orchestra.
Hannah Madison Christman	Biology	Human Biological Sciences	Hannah is the unanimous choice for this year’s President’s Award for her academic excellence, service to UM and research scholar productivity. She received numerous awards, was involved in many extracurriculars, and served as Neuroscience Club President. As a student researcher she generated an impressive body of research in the Piggott Lab. Upon graduation, Hannah will pursue a career in neurology. Congratulations Hannah, we look forward to hearing about your continued success!
Tyler A. Grina	Chemistry	No Concentration	We are proud to recognize Tyler Grina as our Outstanding Senior. He is an exceptional student in chemistry, and has excelled in advanced courses in physics and mathematics, developing a broad and deep knowledge of the physical sciences. Tyler has served UM students in important ways such as coordinating our peer-led team learning program, substituting ad hoc in lecture courses, laboratory teaching assistant, and contributing to the success of peers with his supportive, collaborative disposition.

Bella A. O'Brien	Communication Studies	Communication & Human Relationships	Bella O'Brien is a remarkably driven student at the University of Montana, dividing her time between rigorous coursework in Communication Studies and ongoing responsibilities as an athlete on the UM Soccer team. Despite having competing demands on her time, Bella is consistently accountable and prepared in all of her roles at UM, and she has brought keen insight and appreciated collegiality to our classes. Bella plans to continue in the MPA program at UM.
Grant Lane	Communication Studies	No Concentration	Grant Lane has been a highly engaged student throughout their time as a Communication Studies major at the University of Montana. While managing a full course load, they have also worked in IT, Admissions, and currently as the Social Media Intern for the Communication Studies Department. In addition, they are the vice president of Lambda Pi Eta, the Communication Studies' Honor Society, and they regularly work to plan events for all students in the major to attend with their peers.
Jacey Anne Grange	Communication Studies	Organizational Communication	Jacey Grange is graduating Summa Cum Laude with a major in Communication Studies and an option in Organizational Communication in just three years. Since 2021, she has worked as a Student Advocate and Recruitment Advocate Lead at the University of Montana to promote enrollment and retention as UM. While completing her degree, Jacey also completed two marketing/PR internships with the Downtown Missoula Partnership and the Missoula County Fairgrounds.
Zita Katherine Ottersbach	Communication Studies	Rhetoric and Public Discourse	Zita Ottersbach brings genuine curiosity and passion to everything she does, including her academic career. She approaches problems critically and carefully, and not only works to learn new concepts, but deeply understand them. Zita actively engages with class material, is not afraid to ask questions, adds her input to class discussions, and often serves as an unofficial classroom leader. Classmates and professors have often appreciated her dedication and kindness.

Ian Thomas Davison	Computer Science	Software Engineering	During his studies at UM, Ian Davison has demonstrated himself to be an outstanding computer scientist. Faculty have noted that Ian's level of engagement with the material, conscientiousness towards people he works with, effort in accomplishing his goals, and curiosity about computer science are all exceptional. We are delighted to have this opportunity to recognize Ian as a scholar and celebrate his contributions to our department.
Emily Grace Greenlund	Creative Writing	No Concentration	Emily is an individual of heart and spirit as well as an outstanding thinker and writer. She has an adventurous cast of mind. A visual artist as well as a creative writer, she loves to explore new ways of seeing, to do research, to travel, to experience the world with her eyes wide open. She promises to go far along whatever path (or paths) she chooses to follow.
Hanna Elizabeth Antonsen	Economics	No Concentration	Hanna Antonsen took her love of logic puzzles and turned it into a passion and talent for Economics. Hanna shines brightly in her strong cohort of Economics majors. She is intelligent, thoughtful, caring, hardworking, and humble which means she is embarrassed by these words although they are all true. We look forward to following her as she applies her outstanding problem-solving skills to the world's problems.
Madeline Nicole Kelly	English	Creative Writing	Madeline Kelly is one of the most mature and thoughtfully engaged undergraduate students I've encountered in my two decades of teaching. Not only contributing to workshop discussions, but going above and beyond to create cover art for a class anthology, she is the best kind of member of the learning community that a writing workshop is. She has impressed her teachers and peers alike with her drive to study the craft and art of poetry.
Sydney Jayden Heidtke	English	English Teaching	Sydney Heidtke is an outstanding beginning English language arts teacher. She not only has a deep understanding of language, literature, and pedagogy but, further, engages her students with lessons that spark curiosity and resonate with physical energy and joy. She takes academic risks and the models what her students need to know—

that she will be there for them and share in the delight of their discoveries about language, the world, and themselves.

Georgia A. Berry	English	Literature	Without a doubt, Georgia is one of the best students I have worked with in my twenty-some years at the University of Montana, a student who not only works incredibly hard but always goes above and beyond what is called for, producing graduate-level work in undergraduate courses. Georgia is, in all regards, an exceptional student, a student with tremendous promise.
Kennedy-Anne H. Marx	Environmental Studies	No Concentration	Kennedy-Anne Marx exemplifies engagement in community and environmental issues, Marx has served for four years as an executive office for the Pacific Islanders Club. She's helped perpetuate Pacific Islander culture, build community, and organize initiatives around diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus and beyond. Marx received the Kain McCay Scholarship for her academic excellence and environmental organizing.
Taylor Edward Curry	French	No Concentration	While at UM, Taylor Curry has been a stellar student, consistently doing excellent work and earning straight A's in his French classes. He even maintained his 4.0 GPA during his year studying at the Université Jean Moulin in Lyon, France, earning 27 credits toward his French and Political Science majors. Besides achieving excellence in academics, Taylor was always an intelligent, cooperative class participant. We know he will apply this commitment to excellence to his future endeavors.
Hanna Kollbaum	Geosciences	No Concentration	Hannah has performed at a consistently high level in her Geoscience courses and is a clear standout academically in her class.
Grace J. Ravesloot	German	No Concentration	Grace Ravesloot has been an excellent student of German who consistently demonstrated her commitment to deepening her knowledge of German language, literature, and culture in all her courses at UM while she also studied music. She has been a resourceful and thoughtful student, and a joy to work with. We are excited to have the opportunity to nominate

Grace for her outstanding work in German Studies.

Stephen Vincent Hayes

History

No Concentration

When selecting stand-out History students, we count dedication, insight, and follow-through alongside evident intelligence, subtlety of thought, and complexity of analysis. A student who regularly ticks all those boxes is rare. Rarer still is the student who does all those things every time but also shows agility of mind, creativity of perception, and blazing, bright brilliance. Stephen Hayes is that rarest of students. Congratulations and congratulations again!

Mariah Colleen Thomas

Journalism

No Concentration

Mariah Thomas is the student departments hope to claim as "one of ours." She is a thoughtful scholar, an empathetic leader and a thorough journalist. During her time at the School, she volunteered to help lead student advocacy on issues of access, equity and inclusion, she was fully engaged as an editor at the Kaimin and led the campus student honor society. Now, she is headed to Ohio as part of the highly competitive Report for America. It is my honor to nominate Mariah Thomas.

Jenna Grace McVey

Linguistics

No Concentration

Jenna is graduating with double major in Linguistics and Communication Studies. She has excelled in her courses - rising to every challenge graciously, and impressing each of her professors with her keen insights, commitment, and professionalism. We are delighted that she will be joining the MA Program in Linguistics in the Fall. Off-campus, Jenna played a central role in the distribution of COVID vaccines with MCCHD. She is a wonderful ambassador for our Program. Congratulations, Jenna!

Esther Anne Lyon Delsordo

Mathematical Science-Computer Science

No Concentration

Esther completed the demanding combined major in Mathematical Sciences and Computer Science with high honors (and also a minor in biology). She was fully involved in the two fields of her major, participating in research in both mathematics with Professor Eric Chesebro and in computer science with Professor Jesse Johnson. She held four summer tech internships, and also did arctic biology research in Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago about halfway between Norway and the North Pole.

Jonah Britton	Mathematics	Applied Mathematics	Jonah is completing two majors, both Mathematics and Physics. And for his math major, he fulfilled the requirements for not only one, but two concentrations: Applied Mathematics and Combinatorics & Optimization. Along the way, he found time to study a semester abroad at Aberystwyth University in Wales. In addition to all of this, he is also earning the Global Leadership Certificate and graduating summa cum laude in four years as a University Scholar through the Honors College. Wow!
Sarah Nicole Evans	Mathematics	Mathematics Education	Sarah Nicole Evans is prepared to become an influential teacher of mathematics. She displays a deep knowledge of mathematics and of mathematics teaching-and-learning. She served in a special student teaching position, replacing a veteran teacher on maternity leave, leading instruction in AP Calculus, AP Statistics, Precalculus and Algebra 1. In this role, colleagues characterized her performance as phenomenal, fabulous and amazing. Congratulations Sarah on this well-earned recognition.
Adam Philip Viray	Mathematics	No Concentration	Adam completed 2 degrees and 3 majors—a rare accomplishment: a BA in Mathematics and Physics, and a BS with the combined major in Mathematical Sciences & Computer Science. He also completed a minor in yet another area, Geosciences. He graduated with honors while taking demanding classes, including several graduate courses each in applied mathematics and the geosciences. He also did research in the geosciences, developing a plant hydraulic model, and is now continuing this research full-time.
Jack Hughett Schwaiger	Mathematics	Statistics and Data Science	Jack Schwaiger is an exceptional Mathematics student with a concentration in Statistics and Data Science. He has made notable contributions to Large Language Models, researched maximal-independent sets in grid graphs, and is interested in Graph Neural Networks. Jack has also gained valuable experience through internships and tutoring high school students. Despite his busy schedule, he enjoys engaging in outdoor activities such as river surfing, golfing, skiing, and biking with his dog.

Kyle Douglas Montgomery	Microbiology	No Concentration	In addition to maintaining academic excellence, Kyle participated in research projects in the UM Center for Translational Medicine to improve vaccines for diseases like tuberculosis and RSV. Kyle was also involved in extracurricular groups including the neuroscience club, GrizMed, and the Montana Health Professional for a Healthy Climate. Kyle plans to attend medical school and become a research-active physician and work to improve health outcomes of underserved, rural populations in Montana.
Amber Moon Larrea Peterson	Multidisciplinary Studies	No Concentration	Amber Moon Peterson utilized the multidisciplinary studies program in wonderful ways creating a course plan that emphasized new skills while retaining beautiful artistry. Always diligent, insightful, agile, and motivated, she embraces the mantra of a lifelong learner. Her studies combined technical training in media arts and theater with select courses in entertainment management. This educational experience positions her for a future in the arts as a professional who can do it all.
Holly P. Hutchinson	Native American Studies	No Concentration	Holly Hutchinson has excelled in all of her coursework in Native American Studies, consistently demonstrating her notable talents as a writer and critical thinker. Through her insightful comments, generosity to others, and positive spirit, Holly has helped make the classroom experience more rewarding for her classmates. The NAS faculty and staff are impressed with everything she has achieved in her years with us and know she will go on to accomplish great things. Congratulations Holly!
Hannah Madison Christman	Neuroscience	Cellular and Molecular	Hannah is the unanimous choice for this year's President's Award for her academic excellence, service to UM and research scholar productivity. She received numerous awards, was involved in many extracurriculars, and served as Neuroscience Club President. As a student researcher she generated an impressive body of research in the Piggott Lab. Upon graduation, Hannah will pursue a career in neurology. Congratulations Hannah, we look forward to hearing about your continued success!

Ellsie Grace Green	Neuroscience	Cognitive Neuroscience	Ellsie was the top choice for this year's President's Award. For her outstanding service to UM, she was awarded the Leadership & Service in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Award. She has a great passion for supporting both neurodivergent populations and those who have served in the military. Ellsie will pursue a career as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and Certified Brain Injury Specialist in a veteran's hospital. Congratulations Ellsie, we look forward to hearing about your continued success!
Samuel Bennett Sullivan	Philosophy	No Concentration	Sam Sullivan strikes one as exceptional within minutes of meeting him. Sam is a quiet and deeply intentional person who uses his thirst for knowledge to carefully craft his beliefs. Sam never hesitates to engage with others and stand for what's right, but always carefully practices humility, generosity, kindness, and gratefulness at levels one rarely encounters in life. Sam studies and practices philosophy as a guide to the good life in truly inspiring ways.
Ailey K. Robinson	Physics	Astronomy	Ailey worked on exoplanet research at UM. Ailey served as the student member of a search committee for two tenure-track faculty members in Physics & Astronomy. Ailey plans on attending graduate school in astronomy after a gap year and hopes to do so in the Netherlands.
Haleigh Elizabeth Brown	Physics	Computational Physics	Haleigh did a long internship through the Montana Space Grant program. Haleigh did research on computational modeling of balloon trajectories. Haleigh has been accepted to graduate school at Purdue University.
Jonah Britton	Physics	No Concentration	During his time at UM, Jonah spent a semester abroad in Wales. Jonah did research on photoionization of heavy atoms, combining both experimental and modeling work.
Abigail C. Cook	Political Science	American Politics	Abigail Cook is graduating with a major in political science with a concentration in American politics. She also earned a minor in journalism. Political science faculty have been impressed that Abigail sought out challenging classes, including research- and writing-intensive courses. In addition, she

supplemented her concentration in American politics with a range of courses across the discipline.

Mikael Scott Heydt	Political Science	International Relations & Comparative Politics	Mr. Mikael Heydt is nominated for outstanding student in Comparative Politics and International Relations. He excels in taking a close reading of challenging texts. He has successfully completed a broad range of Political Science courses in IR/Comparative, and seeks a deep understanding of the politics of other countries. Specifically, he has not only taken courses on the Politics of China, but is currently taking a language course in Mandarin.
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Beatrix Arzana Frissell	Political Science	No Concentration	In addition to excelling in her political science coursework, Ms. Frissell was selected as a Truman Scholar, Demmer Scholar, Montana University System Honors Scholar, UM Presidential Leadership Scholar, and most recently, the prestigious Marshall Scholar. Frissell also completed internships at the U.S. Department of Interior, working in the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, and the United States Forest Service in Lolo National Forest.
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Clara E. Bentler	Political Science	Public Administration and Public Policy	Clara Bentler is graduating with honors in political science, with an emphasis in public administration and public policy. At UM, she served as a student advocate, ASUM senator, and secretary-general and president of Montana Model UN. Clara has had significant internships at the Montana Department of Justice (through the Baucus Leaders Program), the Montana Budget and Policy Center, and the US Senate Committee on Veteran's Affairs. Clara plans a career in legislative and/or community advocacy.
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Vanessa Lynn Estrada	Political Science	Public Law	Vanessa has taken & successfully completed PSCI courses in Public Law and American Politics. She excels with challenging texts and readings, and has shown a notable improvement in her academic studies overall. In class discussions, she's passionate and thoughtful about social justice and women's issues.
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Jessica L. Jewell	Psychology	No Concentration	Jesse has clearly demonstrated talents in both academics and research. Not only did
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they complete their Honors capstone research project, promptly present in at UMCUR and win an award, but they also mined their available dataset to produce and present multiple other research posters at national psychological conferences. Additionally, Jesse has leant her time and effort working to augment the success of her peers by being involved in mentoring for both TRIO and ODE.

Alec James Brown	Sociology	Criminology	Alec Brown is graduating from UM with double majors in Sociology (option in criminology) and Anthropology (concentrations in archeology and forensic anthropology). Despite his ambitious course of study, Alec did incredibly well during his time at UM, graduating with a GPA of 3.92. His Sociology professors appreciate Alec's engagement in class and his impressive work ethic.
Justice Restuccio	Sociology	Inequality and Social Justice	Justice Restuccio is graduating from UM with majors in Sociology (option in Inequality and Social Justice) and Political Science, as well as a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Originally from Butte, Justice arrived at UM with a keen interest in inequality, which she was able to explore in both of her majors and her minor. Her Sociology professors applaud Justice's intellectual curiosity, her drive, and her endless enthusiasm for asking and answering questions.
Zachary David Mangels	Sociology	No Concentration	Zach Mangels is graduating with majors in Sociology and Political Science. An honors student from Billings, Zach was able to graduate in just 3 years despite pursuing an ambitious course of study. While at UM Zach designed and executed two independent research projects; one about racial inequality in professional football, and one about gender, class, and public support for strikes on social media. The Sociology faculty appreciate Zach's strong work ethic, seeming endless curiosity, & dry wit.
Jacob Ryan Treece	Spanish	No Concentration	Jake is originally from Missoula, MT and is graduating with a double major in Marketing and Spanish, minor in Psychology, and a Digital Marketing Certificate. Additionally, he is graduating from the Davidson Honors

College. Jake has taken Spanish courses since 2013, has a deep passion for the language, and is grateful for the doors it has opened for him with friends, relationships, and travel. Upon graduation, Jake will work for Pathlabs, headquartered in Missoula, as the Lead Content Creator.

Sidney Kathleen Scarlett

Sustainability Sci Practice

No Concentration

Sidney is an exemplary sustainability student. She worked for the Montana DEQ Reference Stream Project and in the Watson Lab analyzing stream samples from the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers. She excelled as a Sustainability Communications Intern for ASUM Sustainability and ASUM Transportation. Her top projects include outreach and data analysis for UM Parking's ParkZen app, engaging students, faculty, and staff in the UM Commuter Challenge, and much more. Sidney is graduating Summa Cum Laude.

Madison R. Palmer

Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies

No Concentration

Madison is graduating magna cum laude, majoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and minoring in English Literature. Hardworking and thoughtful, her focus is on using her knowledge to make a difference in the world. For her internship project she worked with the YWCA's GUTS! Program, mentoring middle school girls. Since 2021, Madi has been devoted to the young women of Turner Hall, serving as an RA for UM Housing. We're most proud of her and wish her great success in her future career.