

**The University of Montana Western
Academic Newsletter
Academic Year 2010-11, Block 8 Issue
April 22, 2011**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Education faculty member Laura Strauss has had a paper entitled, "She's Strict for a Good Reason: Highly Effective Teachers in Low-Performing Schools," published in the February 2011 edition of *Phi Delta Kappan*. The lead author of the article is Dr. Mary Poplin, a professor of educational studies at Claremont Graduate University, and a member of her dissertation committee.

Professor Alan Weltzien presented a cutting from his 2nd chapter, "Standard Routes, Standard Highways" at the annual PNASA (Pacific Northwest [chapter of] American Studies Association) conference, held at WSU-Vancouver. This group is a natural audience for the book he is revising, *Exceptional Mountains*.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

With the current batch of program reviews that are underway and will be completed by July 1, Montana Western will have completed reviews of all of its academic degree programs. Program reviews include a review of the program assessment system in place for each program and the initiation or modification of those systems that are currently inadequate. This is critical for the campus to meet the strong recommendation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) that all of Montana Western's programs must have adequate assessment systems in place this year. Assistant Provost Brian Price has been guiding departments through this process.

DEVELOPMENTAL MATH

Another NWCCU recommendation was for the campus to improve its system of developmental math. The Mathematics Department has been improving its developmental math program. Math Instructor Mike Walker has agreed to take an extra large role in the refinement of this program.

In addition, a full-time temporary faculty member (Debbie Seacrest), who is completing a doctorate degree in mathematics education, has been hired. This will allow the department to have closer to the number of faculty necessary to offer a second developmental math course and reduce enrollment from the 30 to 35 students that has been typical in the past for the current single developmental math course. 70 percent of Montana Western students require at least one developmental math course.

A second developmental math initiative has been for the campus to participate in a state-wide grant application for a U.S. Department of Labor workforce development grant, a component of which would supply training of instructors and equipment and software for assistance with developmental math. If funded, Montana Western's share of this grant would be \$147,000.

FALL FACULTY MEETINGS

Fall faculty meetings will occur as part of the annual campus fall conference sometime during the week of August 22-26, 2011. Bethany Blankenship is currently organizing the faculty workshops associated with these meetings. For now, please keep the entire week open in your schedules. Details will be provided by email as they become available.

Note: *This newsletter will be posted on the Provost's website at <http://www.umwestern.edu/administration/vcaa/newsletters/> Back issues can also be found at the same site. It will also be mailed to Dillon community members who express an interest in receiving it. The purpose is to have a central, broadly distributed information resource to keep people informed about Montana Western, its programs, and its faculty, staff, and students. If you have academic information that you believe would be appropriate for this newsletter please send it to Karl Ulrich in the Provost's office, k_Ulrich@umwestern.edu*