

Faculty Report

Amber Lawrence, Graphic Design

- Amber worked with the Flathead County Library Bigfork to offer a community sewing lesson. She assembled a group of volunteers, designed and published a simple pattern, and created kits for attendees. Visitors were taught how to create a book pillow. It was well attended and there was interest expressed by the Library Director to offer more events in the future. Amber used skills in InDesign for the pattern, which is a class taught in the Graphic Design program (Intro to Desktop Publishing) and used color theory to create the kits of fabric for the pillows.

Laura Van De Kop, Mathematics

- Laura attended MCubed in Butte, in August. MCubed is professional development for Montana Math Teachers, K-14. It is professional development made available by the Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM). M³ = Montana Math Meeting (MMM... MCubed)

Dr. Eliza Sorte-Thomas, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education

- Dr. Thomas was able to provide teacher support at multiple teacher conferences this summer, locally and nationally.
 - Some of note locally, included the Doris Mountain Summit in June, where educators are working on project-based and competency-based education. She spoke on starting small but starting.
 - Additionally in June, Eliza presented at the Western Montana Comprehensive System for Personnel Development Summer Institute in Polson where she spoke on Creativity, Early Childhood Teacher Identity, and Intentional Use of the Montana Early Learning Standards.
 - As back to school approached, Eliza was the afternoon Keynote speaker for the Northwest Montana Reading Council and spoke about how education has changed over the last fifty years since it was the council's fiftieth year of a Kalispell conference.
 - Lastly, Eliza was given the opportunity to speak to Ruder Elementary in Columbia Falls about the power of Me and We based on Mohammad Ali's short poem, "Me. We."
 - At each of the local teaching opportunities it was powerful to have former FVCC students who are now teachers in her sessions still learning and growing in their graduated field – early childhood education and elementary education.
- Students from FHS and GHS early childhood classes joined Eliza on campus in May to celebrate EDEC education and Running Start. Running Start provided swag and students enjoyed several hours on campus learning about a teaching strategy in early childhood, the EDEC program, and education overall. Special thanks to FHS teacher Karen Strong and GHS teacher Kelly Byerly for offering EDEC 108 in their high school settings.
- Eliza also had the privilege of celebrating three EDEC AAS graduates as they completed their bachelor's degree from Salish Kootenai College. Students were able to receive their degree through a partnership and grant with the SKC early childhood department.

- L to R (pictured holding their apple paperweights, gifted to them by Dr. Thomas): Shay Reynolds works at Discovery Childcare in Kalispell, Sabrina Davis is working in Iowa in childcare, and Lisa Bell is a new kindergarten teacher at Russell Elementary and also joining us at FVCC as an adjunct instructor in the early childhood program, where she earned her degree.



Dr. Ranell Mueller, Psychology

- Dr. Mueller attended the International Society of Anthrozoology conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan June 19th-22nd, 2025. She presented her research titled, “How do older adults in a rural community view the use of non-human animals in research; for consumption and as pets?” As a result of attending the conference, Dr. Mueller made further connections in the field and was invited to be part of the committee for Gerontology professors who study human-animal relationships by Dr. Jessica Bibbo.

Carlin Phillips, Substance Abuse Counseling/Pre-Social Work Transfer

- In June, Carlin was approved for the Addictions Counseling Candidacy License by the Board of Behavioral Health, through the State of Montana’s Department of Labor and Industry. Carlin began a licensure candidacy internship with Recovery Centers of Montana, at the 50-bed men’s inpatient facility in Columbia Falls. Carlin led psychoeducational and therapy groups three days per week and continues to lead groups at the ranch on Saturdays.

David Hembroff, Physics and Mathematics

- David developed an online version of PHSX 110- Conceptual Physics to support distance learning in trades programs (recorded lectures, assembled homework, built Canvas shell and grading system)
- David also trained with Montana State University Montana Space Grant Consortium (MSGC) Borealis undergraduate research internship program and with Idaho State University space grant team on weather balloon launches with student experiments in preparation to offer a summer internship for undergraduate students at FVCC during the Summer of 2026.

Marty M. Mullins, Adjunct Faculty, History & Political Science, Associate Director of the Honors Program

- Marty taught a "Special Studies" class at the Chautauqua Institution in Summer 2025, "20th c. Europe through the Lens of Paris, Vienna, Prague and Budapest". Chautauqua Institution, located on Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York State, is dedicated to the exploration of the best in human values and the enrichment of life through a program that explores the important religious, social and political issues of our times; stimulates provocative, thoughtful involvement of individuals and families in creative response to such issues; and promotes excellence and creativity in the appreciation, performance and teaching of the arts.

