

OTTER PRIDE

2025-2026



**GREAT FALLS
COLLEGE**
MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY



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At Great Falls College, we are transforming lives and shaping the future of our community—one student and partnership at a time.

As we reflect on the past year, I'm proud to share the incredible momentum building across our campus. We have seen groundbreaking academic initiatives, expanded partnerships, incredible workforce development opportunities and sustained enrollment growth. Great Falls College is thriving!

We hope this edition of Otter Pride offers a glimpse into the innovation, resilience and dedication driving our mission. You'll meet inspiring students, visionary faculty and generous supporters who are helping to build a stronger, more vibrant Montana through accessible, high-quality education.

Whether you're a longtime friend of the college or just getting to know us, I hope you'll be as energized as I am by the stories within these pages. Great Falls College is not just educating students—we're empowering futures.

Thank you for believing in the power of education and in the mission of Great Falls College.

Dr. Stephanie Erdmann
Dean/CEO, Great Falls College



Otter Statistics

17:1 | **133+** | **14**
STUDENT : FACULTY | ONLINE CLASSES | AVG. CLASS SIZE

20+ DEGREE PROGRAMS

BUSINESS & ACCOUNTING | EDUCATION | HEALTH PROFESSIONS
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | TRADES | TRANSFER PATHS

10+ | **550+**
WORKFORCE & TRAINING CAREER PROGRAMS | HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DUAL ENROLLMENT

8-WEEK ADVANTAGE

CLASSES OFFERED IN 8-WEEK SESSIONS FOR GREATER FLEXIBILITY

46%
GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS PURSUE A 4-YEAR DEGREE
Saving \$\$ by starting here and finishing at a four-year school

250 | **2,078** | **18+**
AVG. # OF GRADUATES EACH YEAR | AVG. TOTAL ENROLLMENT | STUDENT CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

50%
OF TUITION COSTS VS. 4-YEAR MONTANA SCHOOLS

6 STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC SUCCESS & ACCESSIBILITY | C.A.R.E. PROGRAM
MILITARY FAMILY CENTER | NATIVE + INDIGENOUS CULTURE CENTER
STUDENT FOOD PANTRY | TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE CENTER



What's New At... Great Falls College

Great Falls College has revitalized its campus support centers—putting student success front and center.

Two key spaces - the **Native + Indigenous Culture Center** and the **Military Family Center** - have moved into newly renovated, welcoming areas with upgraded amenities and expanded resources tailored to the communities they serve. A refreshed study lounge in the Marias Wing rounds out the transformation, offering a flexible, comfortable environment for all students.



Pictured: student uses computer resource in the Military Family Center



It's important because when you come to a college, we all have different groups, different diversity. To have the center here for them is just a comfort, a home away from home where they can come and relax. I'm working with the Vet Center coordinator, Chris Sawhill, and we're going to collaborate together to get more students into our area.

Calvin Gone

Native + Indigenous Culture Center student ambassador

Now located in the heart of campus in the Sun River Wing, the Native + Indigenous Culture Center features dedicated study rooms, a kitchen and a children's play area - thoughtfully designed with input from Native students, faculty and staff to reflect and support their cultural and academic needs.

Right next door, the Military Family Center provides private study rooms, computer stations, free printing, a refrigerator, coffee maker and anatomical models for hands-on learning. Like the Native + Indigenous Culture Center, it was shaped by feedback from the students it serves.

In the Marias Wing, the redesigned study lounge offers cozy seating, flexible layouts and an inviting atmosphere that encourages collaboration, focus and student well-being.



New exterior signage has recently been installed throughout campus as part of our extensive wayfinding redevelopment project.



These updated signs are designed to improve campus navigation, enhance visibility and create a more welcoming and accessible environment for students, employees and visitors. This project reflects our commitment to making it easier for everyone to find their way around campus confidently and efficiently.

The installation of exterior signage marked the first phase of our wayfinding improvements. Phase two, which included new interior signage and updated campus wayfinding maps, has now been completed. Together, these enhancements provide clear, consistent guidance across all buildings and outdoor spaces.

We appreciate the patience and enthusiasm of our campus community throughout this project and look forward to the positive impact it will have on the overall campus experience.



Student and Alumni Highlights



Great Falls College has been right for me just because, born and raised right here in Great Falls, I could literally take one class at a time. It just works with my schedule. They're super huge on making sure work, school and home life is all put together. They take that into consideration when you go to your advisor and talk about those things and be like, 'Okay, I can't do too much, but what can I do?' And they tell you what you need to do and give you the best options possible to make sure that you're successful.

Ashley Joseph, Pre-Nursing



The addictions field interests me because I'm able to help people and guide them and to let them know that there's a different way to live and that they can do this... I believe a lot of addicts ... don't live up to their full potential. And I'm hoping that I can be part of the process for them, guide them along, so that they will be able to reach their full potential in life.

Calvin Gone, Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling



It feels very accepting. It doesn't feel like there's parts of the college that are walled off because I'm not part of that program. Everybody seems to be very happy, energetic, always willing to engage with you, wanting to make sure that you've got everything you need and that you're set up for success.

Joshua Werkhieser, Welding and Fabrication



Doing my schooling online through Great Falls College has allowed me to put my career and family first. The program is still very thorough and in depth. I truly feel that distance learning has been a huge benefit of the program as it allows for more flexibility in my life and has been a blessing.

Kat Andrews, Veterinary Technician



I feel like the instructors here at Great Falls College are very patient. They're kind. They're willing to sit with you one-on-one whenever you need it to help you. They really want to watch you succeed and be a really good RN.

Alicia Kadaja, Registered Nursing



I decided that it would be a more logical decision to come home and be with my family. I'm so glad that I've done that because I'm able to save money and still get a quality education and take things at my own pace while preparing myself for the next steps for my bachelor's program. The faculty have been fantastic, and all of the students have been great.

Heath Voy, Associate of Arts and student body president



Everybody is so welcoming and loving, and they're wanting you to achieve... My professors are awesome. They help me when I ask questions, and I'm not getting something.

Chilo Ketterling, Early Childhood Education



When I finish the program, my first goal is to immediately start working as a dental assistant and getting that experience and getting my foot in the door. I already work at an office right now, but I don't get to do all the things because I'm not certified yet, but I'm excited to start working as a dental assistant, and then I might take a few years off (school) and earn more money, so that way I can pay for dental hygiene school.

Myra Ingram, Dental Assisting



This program's challenging, but it's also very rewarding. They have really nice equipment here and the instructors are awesome. You can tell they all care about their profession, and they care about the students. They definitely put in a lot of time into each and every student.

Justin Miller, Dental Hygiene

ONE.TWO. FREE!

LEARN, GROW & EASE INTO COLLEGE.

Studies show that freshmen who take dual enrollment classes have a higher retention rate (**80% vs 64%**) and higher grade-point averages (**3.1 vs 2.8**) than freshman who do not take dual enrollment classes.

Dual Enrollment at Great Falls College offers high school students a seamless transition to college, saving time and money.

Students from across northcentral Montana can access dual-enrollment classes either at their high school, online or on the Great Falls College campus.

With the 1-2-Free program, students enjoy their first two classes free and subsequent classes at 50 percent off tuition (although some courses require fees).

In the 2024/2025 school year, 760 dual-enrolled students attended Great Falls College. Some of these students achieved remarkable milestones by earning college credentials before graduating high school.

- Seven students completed an Associate of Applied Science in Welding
- Six students earned a Certificate in General Studies
- Four students earned an Associate degree in other fields.

By earning these credentials early, students saved between \$1,000 and \$2,200 in tuition and fees. Additionally, this head start can shorten their general education coursework by one to two years, accelerating their path to a college degree or career.

Otter Honors 2025

Celebrating outstanding faculty and students of Great Falls College.

DEAN'S AWARD WINNERS



Staff Excellence
Ginny Pierce
Marketing Specialist



Teaching Excellence
Mark Plante
Mathematics



Outstanding Adjunct Faculty
Deb Huestis
Early Childhood Education

STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

General Studies

Destin Dicky, Biology
Tesla Larocque, Writing & Languages
Ivy Johnson, Communications, Arts & Humanities
Amanda Tucker, Mathematics
Alex Ramsbacher, Natural Sciences
Elizabeth (Beth) Ronshaugen, Social Sciences

Business & Trades

Deanna Nash, Accounting

Daniel Emigh, Business (Office Management)
Josh Schatz, Computer Technology
Shawn Tadlock, Welding & Fabrication (CAS)
Carter Tuss, Welding & Fabrication (AAS)

Health Sciences

Amanda DeWitt, Registered Nursing
Angel Maresnich, Dental Assistant
Kathleen (Kit) Wiersema, Dental Hygiene

Nena Horner, Health Information Coding Specialist
Hillary Whitney, Health Information Technology
Vanessa Petters, Physical Therapy Assistant
Christina Hagar, Practical Nurse
Tessa Gatz, Respiratory Therapist



With the help of longtime Development Board members such as Brian Hoven, the board has grown to 19 members in recent years. In this photo, Hoven is shown serving students at the annual Burger Burn, an event sponsored by General Distributing and board member Glenn Bliss.

Development Board members serve as community advocates of Great Falls College.

The Great Falls College Development Board is an advisory body that supports the college's non-grant fundraising initiatives and helps advance institutional priorities. In addition to assisting with fundraising efforts, board members serve as dedicated advocates, fostering connections between the college and the wider community. They play a vital role in promoting awareness of the programs, training, and educational opportunities available at Great Falls College.

Members include: Micah Jam, Dwight Holman, Brian Hoven, Ron Nelson, Trevor Floerchinger, Shawn Ostberg, Lois Spencer, Randy Williams, Justin Jones, Glenn Bliss, Heidi Hockett, Terri Lynn Dahl, Dr. Toni Sawhill, Rep. Russ Miner, Rep. Jane Weber, Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos, Dr. Stephanie Erdmann, Kristi Voboril and Scott Thompson.

Training Tomorrow's Workforce: Great Falls College Expands Career-Focused Programs in Continuing Education and Training



Great Falls College's Career and Technical Education department continues to prioritize strong partnerships with local industry to close workforce gaps and train future employees in high-demand, high-wage fields. Through responsive programming and community collaboration, the college is equipping students with the skills needed to enter and advance in the regional workforce. Current offerings include:

Structural Welding

A seven-week course designed and taught in direct collaboration with industry partners to prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce. Since launching in July 2023, every class continues to reach full capacity.

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Offered monthly, this program has certified 289 individuals since 2021. Many graduates have continued their professional development through additional credentials such as Home Health Aide and Medication Aide I and II.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

This program supports the region's need for qualified drivers, having helped 66 students obtain their CDL permit and 31 students earn their Class A license.

Future Build

An eight-week, job-focused education and training program designed for at-risk youth and young adults, particularly those living below the poverty line or re-entering society from the justice system. The program focuses on construction trades training and essential job-readiness skills.

Basic Flooring Installation - *NEW!*

A 10-week, 300-contact hour program offering hands-on training in floor covering installation. Students receive 75 hours of instruction in carpet, hardwood, resilient flooring, and tile installation. This program prepares students for entry into a high-wage, in-demand trade by developing practical skills and industry-aligned techniques.

Build Montana - *NEW!*

Created by the Montana Contractors Association and the MCA Education Foundation, Build Montana addresses the growing gap between skilled trades workers and retirees exiting the industry. This week-long spring course connects students with hands-on training, industry-recognized certifications and career exploration in Montana's construction sector.

Degrees and Certificates

Degrees

Associate of Arts
Associate of Science
Certificate in General Studies
Technical Studies, AAS
Accounting, AAS
Early Childhood Education,
CTS, CAS, AAS
Office Support, CAS
Office Management and
Supervision, AAS
Substance Abuse and
Addictions Counseling, AA, CTS
Computer Programming, AAS
Cybersecurity, AAS

Health Professions

Dental Assistant, CAS
Dental Hygiene, AAS

Health Information Coding
Specialist, CAS
Health Information Technology, AAS
Physical Therapist Assistant, AAS
Practical Nurse, CAS
Registered Nurse, ASN
Respiratory Therapy, AAS
Surgical Technology, AAS
Veterinary Office, CTS
Veterinary Assistant, CAS
Veterinary Technician, AAS

Trades

Welding Technology and Fabrication,
CAS, AAS

AA = Associate of Arts

AAS = Associate of Applied Science

ASN = Associate of Science Nursing

CAS = Certificate of Applied Science

CTS = Certificate of Technical Studies

MEETING YOU WHERE YOU ARE

Great Falls College offers courses and programs in a variety of formats. Programs may be completed 100% online, fully onsite, live online or online with limited onsite requirements, depending on the program. Visit www.gfcmsu.edu/academic-programs for more information.



Onsite

Learn through regularly scheduled class times with the instructor and classmates in onsite programs.

- Scheduled class meeting times
- Specific location required



Online

Complete the program online, with deadlines but no set meeting times or location.

- No scheduled class meeting times
- No specific location required



Live Online

Participate in real-time, without coming to campus through Live Online programs.

- Scheduled virtual class meeting times
- No specific location required
- May include some individual online learning

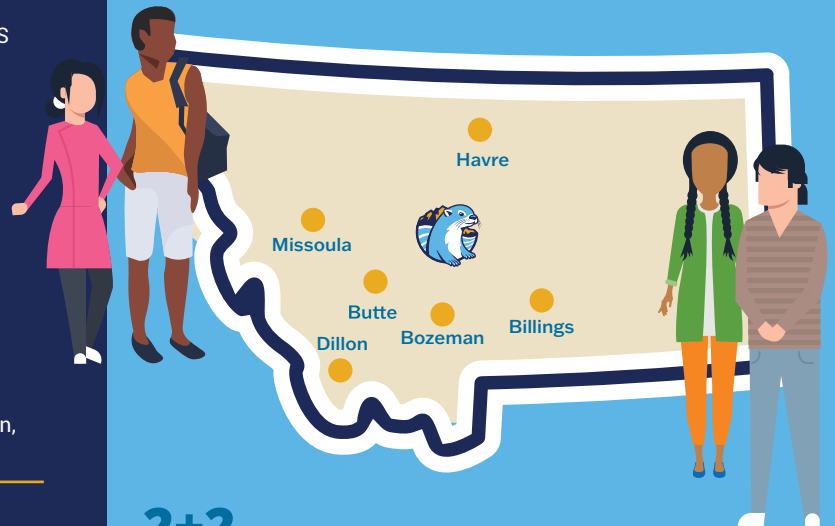


Online with Limited Onsite

Complete the program mostly online or live online with short onsite, hands-on learning opportunities.

- Some scheduled class meeting times, most work completed online or live online
- Specific location may be required for short onsite activities, such as labs and clinicals

WHERE WILL YOU GO FROM HERE?



2+2

Start here and **move** to a four-year university after completing your General Studies certificate or Associate degree with concentration areas in:

**Business and Accounting • Computer Technology
Education • Fine Arts and Humanities • Health
Professions • Science, Math and Engineering •
Social Sciences**

Or **start** here and **stay** here to complete your bachelor's degree through distance programs in:

**Social Work • Criminal Justice • Psychology •
Business • Accounting • Education • Cybersecurity**

1+3

Start here for a year and **transfer** to receive your bachelor's in **Engineering**.

OTHER PATHWAYS

In addition to the pathways listed, our **Advising and Career Center** helps students tailor their own plans for transfer. Call us at (406) 268-3700 or email admissions@gfcmsu.edu.



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Find out more!

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