



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**IMAGE:** 2025 Outstanding Graduate Award Winner Lainey Smith

### **2025 MCC Outstanding Graduate Award (Art & Sciences Division): Lainey Smith**

MILES CITY, MONTANA: Each year at Miles Community College, distinguished graduating student awards are given to three MCC students based on their time as students, including academic and co-curricular involvement. These awards are presented at graduation ceremonies and are given in three divisions: General/Arts and Sciences, Career and Technical, and Nursing. Nominations are submitted in the spring by MCC faculty and staff.

This year, the Class of 2025 Outstanding Graduate in the General/Arts and Sciences Division is Lainey Smith of Miles City, Montana. Smith will be graduating *summa cum laude* with Associate of Science degrees in Pre-Professional Allied Health and STEM.

Smith was a returning starter for the Pioneer women's basketball team during the 2024–2025 season. Her athletic performance earned her second-team all-conference honors from the Mon-Dak Athletic Conference. Known for her consistency and tenacity on the court, Smith was equally impactful off the court, serving as a Resident Assistant and providing mentorship and support to her fellow students throughout the academic year.

In addition to her leadership roles on campus, Smith has demonstrated a deep commitment to her goal of pursuing a career in physical therapy. She has proactively taken steps to prepare for her future by job shadowing at MT Made Physical Therapy, working as a medical assistant at Billings Clinic, and completing the Certified Nursing Assistant course and licensing exam.

"I'm so grateful for this award!" Smith said. "It shows that all of my hard work, both on campus and in life, is paying off."

Faculty and peers alike describe Smith as a quiet leader whose strength, compassion, and encouragement positively influence those around her. Her dedication to both academic and personal development exemplifies the Pioneer spirit and reflects the values of MCC.

Smith was surprised with the award during one of her science courses on campus, where MCC faculty, staff, and teammates joined together to interrupt and present her with a certificate and medallion.

"I couldn't believe they were there for me," she laughed about the surprise classroom visit. "I was completely shocked that I had won the award, but it at least it made more sense why all of my teammates were suddenly there."

The three Outstanding Graduate Award winners will lead the student processional during the 85th MCC Commencement Ceremony, held this Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in the MCC Centra.