Olene S. Walker

“The Walker Institute at Weber State University combines two passions of mine: education and politics.” – Olene Walker

Selfless public servant, Weber State alumna
Born and raised in Ogden, Utah, Olene Walker is widely respected for her selfless public service on behalf of Utah’s citizens. After attending Weber State, Olene received her bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees from Brigham Young University, Stanford University, and the University of Utah, respectively. She served the state of Utah for 22 years in various capacities, most prominently as both Lieutenant Governor and Governor, the first woman in Utah to hold either office. While in office, she vowed to keep education as the highest funding priority and to provide a nurturing environment for Utah’s students. Governor Walker’s ongoing legacy of advocacy and engagement continues at the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service, founded together with Weber State University, to cultivate and inspire Utah’s future leaders.

Mission

The Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service is a non-partisan center dedicated to promoting leadership and public service among Weber State University students and in the community at large. To this end, the Walker Institute provides opportunities for civic education, public forums on current issues, and ideas for political reform. Also central to the Walker Institute mission is a robust program of internships in local, state, and national politics, government, and public service organizations.

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Internships

Applying classroom knowledge and skills to practical learning experiences introduces students to the practice of politics, the process of government, and the variety of public service opportunities available to them at every level of government, and in the private and nonprofit sectors. Walker Institute interns from Weber State University are preparing to lead Utah into the future. According to the Collegiate Employment Research Institute and the Millennial Branding Student Employment Gap Study:

- 75% of university graduates will have one or more internship experiences
- 91% of employers expect internship experience

Sarah Gribble served as a press intern with U.S. Senator Orrin G. Hatch during the summer of 2013 in Washington, D.C. Sarah worked side by side with Senator Hatch’s communications director, writing news releases, accompanying the Senator to press interviews, in addition to her regular internship responsibilities with constituent service. Sarah developed her communication and organizational abilities and acquired valuable contacts, all of which enhanced her leadership skills and her post graduate employment prospects. Sarah is graduating December 2013, with a degree in Public Relations and Advertising Communication, with an emphasis in International Affairs.

Meet an Intern: Stuart Call

“The internship opportunities that I have had at all levels of government have increased my knowledge of the political process, given me greater confidence in participating in government, and helped me cultivate a great appreciation of public service and leadership.

Since I started attending Weber State, I have completed internships at the local, state, and national levels. Working with Ogden City’s Community and Economic Development Department has given me a greater appreciation of the importance of being involved in politics locally. Working on the state level, with lobbyist Spencer Stokes, has introduced me to many people with whom I can network and find potential employment after graduation. Working on the national level, as an intern in Senator Mike Lee’s office, has helped me have a greater appreciation of my country and representative democracy. In addition to these internships, I have also been able to intern for the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service. It was a wonderful experience that gave me a sense of the importance of helping other students fulfill internships and learn the value of becoming more civically engaged.”

Leadership and Civic Education

What are the necessary qualities of leadership in a constitutional republic? In a democratic community? How are students to seek out and lead a life of consequence? The practice of politics aims at securing the common good and happiness for any community or state. Leadership in the American constitutional order requires not only decision, caution, and independence, but also wisdom and prudence. The Walker Institute provides opportunities that prepare students for leadership in government, politics, and public service through internship experience, political participation, and active citizenship.
Research

The Walker Institute supports student and faculty research projects. The title of the current Walker Institute research team project is “Responding to the Nation’s Call for Improving Teacher Effectiveness: Box Elder and Davis School Districts as Case Studies.” The project is a study of teacher effectiveness policies being developed in Utah and, more specifically, the implementation of those policies in Box Elder and Davis School Districts in response to federal and state legislation.

Donations

HELP GROW GOVERNOR WALKER’S VISION AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS BY GIVING TODAY.

Visit https://apps.weber.edu/AlumniGiving/ and follow these three simple steps:
1. Select “College of Social & Behavioral Sciences.”
2. Select “Political Science and Philosophy.”
3. Select “Olene S. Walker Institute” and enter your gift amount.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUSTAINING SUPPORT!
Executive Board of Directors

An independent Board of Directors, nominated from members of the Weber State community and leaders in Utah’s government, business, and public service sectors, governs the Walker Institute. It is also Governor Walker’s vision to convene a Walker Institute Student Board of Directors on the Weber State campus, to involve students in the governance and direction of the Walker Institute.

Student Board of Directors

The students who serve on the Student Board of Directors have the opportunity to help shape the direction of Walker Institute programming and assist in developing and enhancing the Walker Institute internship program. These student leaders are necessary to the development of the Walker Institute as a center for engaging students and the community in a discussion of the important issues confronting the state of Utah and the nation as a whole.

Meet a Student Director: Ashlee Cawley

Ashlee Cawley is a Junior, pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and English at Weber State University. She works at the Multicultural Student Center and serves as Director for the American Democracy Project. As Director, she works closely with faculty to plan and oversee initiatives to promote civic engagement. This year, she has focused on student-oriented issues and the importance of student involvement in the democratic process at the campus-level. As Director of the American Democracy Project, Ashlee has enjoyed partnering with the Olene S. Walker Institute to bring Senator Mike Lee to campus to deliver the Constitution Week address. Her service on the Walker Institute Student Board of Directors has enabled her to make connections on campus, develop her executive and communication skills, and examine ideas and views from alternative perspectives.

Meet Our Director

Carol McNamara, the new Director of the Walker Institute, arrived at Weber State University in January 2013 from Utah State University, where she was the Co-Director of Operations for the Institute of Government and Politics and taught for 22 years. She received her PhD, in Political Science from Boston College.

Carol shares Governor Walker’s vision to (1) develop the Walker Institute into a vital center of civic and leadership education and dialogue for Weber State students and the adjacent community, and (2) expand the internship program to provide life changing opportunities for students from across campus in Washington, D.C., at the Utah State Capitol, and in local offices.