

## Engaging in Critical Dialogue

Reflecting on the pandemic's ongoing toll on each of us and our Weber State students, please take the time to continue to reach out and personally connect with others. That personal interaction is critical to our well-being and belonging. Let's watch out for each other throughout this semester.

The need for this is magnified as we unpack last week's abhorrent and violent assault on the U.S. Capitol and what that says about the discord and fragility of our society. One of our primary roles as a university is to promote civic education, appropriate civic engagement, and critical thinking while often engaging in policy and ideological discourse. In these conversations, we focus on creating a common ground that fosters intentional listening.

Sometimes engaging in critical dialogue can be tiring, challenging, and emotionally draining. Here are a few resources that may be helpful while engaging in these conversations:

- Blomquist Hale will be facilitating a [one-time processing group](#) on January 21st from 2:00-3:00pm for faculty and staff to engage in discussion about dealing with trauma and taking care of ourselves in order to be able to take care of others.
- Donna Hunter, with Counseling and Psychological Services, will be facilitating a group processing group through the semester. Please [email](#) her for more information.
- We are hosting a [relaxation and meditation group](#) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12:30-1pm with Craig Oreshnick.
- Leah Murray will be hosting a session about [Facilitating Political Conversations with Students](#) for those who want to discuss how to engage in these conversations in our programs and classrooms.
- This evening, we will be hosting, [How to be an Anti-Racist: From King to Kendi](#).

## Legislative Information

As of today, our state financial forecast looks promising. We anticipate a 3% salary increase for state and higher education employees but will know more information when the final budget is passed. While there has been no talk of restoring cuts, we do not expect additional cuts at this time.

At the federal level, we are waiting for additional guidance from the Department of Education regarding how new stimulus funds will impact higher education, but we anticipate being able to continue to offer additional pandemic aid to our students and receive another infusion to help the university address financial impacts from the pandemic.

## Enrollment

As of last Friday, our spring enrollment is down 1.5%, which is a positive gain from prior weeks. This would not have happened without the support of many individuals across our campuses. Thank you to those who accommodated waitlists by adding additional sections, finding instructors for additional sections, and teaching those. Thanks also to our advisors for reaching out to students, to the efforts of our financial aid office, and thank you to all of you for fostering an environment to help our students feel welcome at Weber State. Please continue to connect with students especially during these first few weeks of the semester. Our personal connections with students are what make Weber State unique.

## Testing and Vaccinations

### Testing

- Entry testing will be available Jan. 4–22, 2021 for on-campus students, faculty, and staff. Testing continues to be available to any member of our community, even if you don't regularly come to campus. You can sign up for a test using the COVID [testing form](#). After January 22, we will be emailing randomly selected on-campus individuals to be tested as we continue to monitor COVID on our campuses.
- We still want all individuals to self-report if they have tested positive for COVID. Individuals with symptoms can be tested at our [symptomatic site](#) in the Marriott Allied Health Building.
- Information on our current testing numbers can be found on our [COVID website](#).

### Vaccinations

- Weber Morgan Health Department is currently providing vaccines at the Dee Events Center through a collaborative effort with Weber State.
- While we are assisting in the administration of vaccines, we do not have control over the timelines or availability of vaccines.
- As of today, the current guidance prioritizing teachers does not include higher education institutions.
- We are working to secure our Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) to be able to administer vaccinations to faculty and staff but do not have information regarding that yet, and we do not know when vaccines will be available to order for our POD based on the federal and state prioritization guidelines.
- The guidance and availability of vaccines is changing on an almost daily basis, and we are in regular conversations with the Weber Morgan Health Department regarding what this means for our students, faculty and staff. We will share vaccine updates for our campus community as soon as additional information is available.
- Please visit the following websites for more information regarding vaccine distributions in our area:
  - [Davis Health Department](#)
  - [Weber Morgan Health Department](#)

Thank you again to the hundreds of individuals on our campuses who are assisting with testing and vaccination efforts. These efforts would not be successful without assistance from our

faculty, staff, and students. Thank you for everything you do to continue to mitigate the spread of COVID both on campus and in our community.

### **Moving Forward**

Later this week, we will be sending a survey to students, faculty and staff to begin planning for summer and fall semesters. Please take just a few minutes to complete this survey.

Our hope is to be able to offer in person graduation ceremonies in the spring, but we are asking for colleges to plan for multiple scenarios (e.g. in person, virtual). Our current guidance regarding travel and events can be found on our [COVID website](#).

Thank you to the Staff Advisory Council, Human Resources, and others for their work in examining what remote work will look like for our university moving forward. In concert with the new, state [executive order](#), we will be evaluating our current practices by July 1.

Additional information regarding our strategic planning town hall (February 9) and future faculty/staff town halls (February 5, March 5) will be posted in the Announcements app.

Wishing us all health, happiness, and fortitude.