

# IGNITE the **POWER** WITHIN



**WEBER STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



## *Dear Weber State Family:*

Reflecting on the hopes and aspirations that we had a year ago for our 2019–20 academic year, we, like each of you, never imagined what would transpire. Today, though the world looks quite different than it did last year, we're still hopeful. Through the coronavirus pandemic, calls for racial and social justice, and major economic disruptions, Weber State University has maintained a trajectory that is ever upward, focused on meeting our students where they are and working with them to achieve their desired destinations.

Together we have navigated changing circumstances to accomplish milestones. Our faculty and staff are more committed than ever to providing rich, individualized experiences. They are focused on igniting the power within each student to unleash their creative thinking and engaged problem-solving potential to address challenges of our times within our communities and beyond.

While there is still much work to do, I maintain that telling our own story louder and prouder—and you sharing our story far and wide—accelerates our vision to guide students of all backgrounds from where they are to where they want to be.

Within our award-winning annual report, you will have the chance to celebrate many of the outstanding accomplishments from this past year, from university recognitions to regional and national accolades. You will

also meet many of our inspiring students who refuse to allow the difficult times we find ourselves in to halt their path to success, as well as the faculty and staff who support them every step of the way.

Weber State has a rich tradition of not only overcoming historic challenges but also emerging from each as an institution better poised to thrive in the future. It is our intent to do it again as we culminate our comprehensive strategic planning efforts in the months ahead. We enter the fall with a wind of support at our back to thrive through in-person and digital environments. We are optimistic in our ability to adapt to changing financial conditions and strive to overcome the pandemic and promote social mobility.

Your ongoing support has proven to be so pivotal to our success. I hope you revel in the accomplishments within this report as much as I do.

I look forward to the bright future that we will ignite for Weber State, together.

Best,



Brad L. Mortensen, President



## RISING AMID A PANDEMIC

4–6

As the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of life, Weber State took action.

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## DEDICATION DRIVES US

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Our faculty is known for their expertise, creativity and dedication to students.

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Our students learn through one-on-one research opportunities.

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We continue to advance our academic programs and learning environments.

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39–48

Weber State engages the community on a daily basis, from providing scholarships to offering opportunities to small businesses.

## ACHIEVEMENT IN ATHLETICS

49–53

Weber State's athletes transform their dreams into reality.

## *Falling we are lifted. Rising we lift each other.*

The COVID-19 pandemic cost jobs, wages and time with family, as well as increased death, loneliness and sorrow, worldwide.

As many in our Wildcat family felt the toll of the pandemic, our flame burned bright.

Before the first reported WSU case of the virus in March, Weber State put emergency plans in action and prepared to go virtual. Classes went online, staff and faculty began working remotely, WSU Athletics suspended events and spring commencement was rescheduled. Extra sanitary precautions were put in place to protect the community, from the residence halls to testing centers to Stewart Library.

Events like the Outdoor Weber entrepreneurship competition and Intermountain Sustainability Summit were held virtually. Summer classes, too, were held online.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding allowed the university to help students who incurred expenses due to campus disruption during spring semester. Amounts ranged from \$100 to \$500 to cover expenses such as food, housing, healthcare, technology, course materials and childcare. CARES Act funds were also made available for students in the summer and fall 2020 semesters.

Also in support of students, Stewart Library, in collaboration with Student Affairs Technology and most colleges across campus, loaned out 92 laptops, 27 Chromebooks and 20 WiFi hotspots so students could continue their spring and summer coursework. Additionally, faculty members in the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology cannibalized labs of high-end computers and loaned them out for manufacturing, mechanical engineering and interior design students to run specialized design software.

Weber State's efforts also went well beyond our campus community.

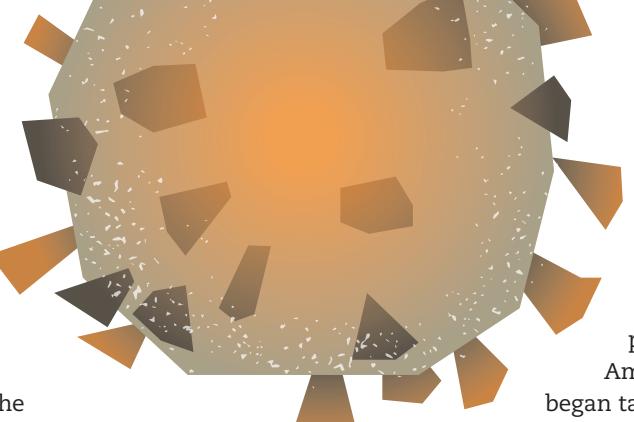
The Dumke College of Health Professions donated 15 ventilators, 1,000 masks, 200 fluid-resistant gowns, as well as hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer, head covers, boxes of gloves and eye goggles to local medical facilities. Further efforts on behalf of frontline healthcare workers included Weber State joining the Sew Your True Colors Campaign to provide masks, and 3D lab director in the John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics, Jeff Clements, coordinating a campus-wide collaboration to print face shields.

Adjunct economics professor Jennifer Gnagey provided an expert resource when she quickly produced and uploaded how-to videos for the thousands of Utahns filing unemployment claims. In addition, Weber State Athletics helped host a drive-through food drive in the Dee Events Center parking lot that collected 9,000 pounds of food for Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah and the Salvation Army.

These are only a handful of the ways Weber State stepped up to help the community during the

Rising  
A Mind A  
Pandemic





pandemic, which also revealed the grit and fortitude of our students.

Microbiology major, Niharika Mishra, was among many international students unable to return home at the height of the pandemic. She stayed in University Village on the Ogden campus and spoke to her family in India through FaceTime. Even during this frustrating situation, she thought of others before herself. "Right now, I don't want to go home," Mishra said last May. "Maybe, in my travel, I might get the virus, and maybe I turn out to be asymptomatic and spread it to other people."

The strength we saw in our students was reflected among alumni.

Junior high English teacher Tela Faeamani BA '19 transitioned all six of her seventh and eighth grade courses at Mueller Park Junior High School in Bountiful

to online formats, while helping four of her own children learn from home.

Luis Martinez BS '20, a paramedic at Gold Cross Ambulance in Salt Lake City, began taking increased sanitary precautions to another level while transporting patients.

Whitney Hilton AS '13, a registered nurse, demonstrated her love for New York City as she joined an Intermountain Healthcare response team to fight the virus in the city last April.

"As nurses, you know you're going to see death," Hilton said. "But no one really prepared me for the amount of death I was going to see."

Through it all, as a university community, our connections strengthened us. Discouragement did not dim our flame.



# Energized by Serving Others

ANNA ROBBINS, MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION MAJOR AND AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDENT SENATOR, PLANS TO USE HER EDUCATION TO BE PART OF THE CHANGE SHE WANTS TO SEE



Why would someone quit a successful job and move 2,000 miles across the country at the start of the third trimester of her pregnancy?

For **Anna Robbins**, the answer comes easy. "I always knew I would return because I had a piece of Weber State in my heart," she said, explaining her move last summer.

Robbins first attended WSU in 2007 as a track athlete, fresh out of high school. Reluctant to leave the warmth of Arizona for Utah's colder climate, she overcame her initial nervousness and made the most of her experience. "I jumped in, got involved and made friends," she said.

She ran track, discovered rugby, got involved in housing, served as the student senator for diversity and pursued studies in athletic training. In hindsight, Robbins realizes she took on too many roles at once. She eventually left and finished her degree at BYU Hawaii.

When Robbins decided to pursue a master's degree to better support her future child, her heart led her back to Weber State. Again, she left her comfort zone, this time a successful job in personal training in Virginia, for Utah. After giving birth to her son, Rio, last October, Robbins laughs that

everyone knew her as the person who brought her baby to class.

In May, Robbins combined her passion for fitness and desire to serve by enrolling in the Salt Lake Police Academy, days before George Floyd's death in Minneapolis.

For Robbins, that was even more of a reason to pursue her new career.

"I'm a supporter of Black Lives Matter, and that can be awkward when you are in law enforcement," Robbins said. "We need good police officers. We can't let a few bad eggs ruin all the positive. The academy does not teach us to use excessive force."

She recently switched her graduate program to the Master of Professional Communication degree at WSU, in hopes that she'll learn how to de-escalate situations, and use communication skills to educate and dispel misunderstandings.

During the 2020–21 academic year, she will serve as African Diaspora Student Senator for the WSU Student Association.

"I love getting involved," she said. "That is my energy. That's what drives me."

## Someone Who's Going to be There

CRYSTAL CREST WINNER ARMAND BERRY WAS INSPIRED TO INSPIRE OTHERS

Ogden High School physical education teacher and baseball coach Troy Kolan treated **Armand Berry** and his twin brother, **Antonio**, differently than some K-12 teachers had in the past. "He treated us like we were normal," Armand said.

Armand and Antonio were born premature and are shaken baby syndrome survivors. The brothers' retinas were damaged when they were shaken as infants, and, as a result, they are both legally blind. Armand also has multiple sclerosis, and Antonio was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Armand said Kolan inspired him and Antonio, a WSU family studies major, to stay active and get involved in sports, despite their physical limitations.

Armand, a WSU physical education major with minors in sport coaching education, family studies and health promotion teaching, hopes to emulate Kolan in his career. As the 2020 Crystal Crest Awards winner for Wildcat Achievement, he has already inspired the Weber State community with his story.

While Armand said he has benefitted from accommodations from WSU faculty and Disability Services staff, college has been difficult.

"Walking around, it's a struggle," he said. "Sometimes, my hands lose their feeling, so I can't grip onto a pen to write."

It will all be worth it, though, when he's able to pay it forward by inspiring children with disabilities to strive for success.

Armand has a nearly perfect GPA and has participated in Weber State's Child & Family Student Association, Future Educators Association, First Generation Club and anthropology and sociology clubs. He is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and volunteers at the Treehouse Museum.

"Hopefully, I can take everything I have learned and give it back to future generations," he said. "Kids don't need more authority figures; they need someone who's going to be there."

Armand plans to graduate in 2022. Until then, he will learn as much as he can to one day help as many kids as possible.

"I'm really glad I've had the professors I've had," he said. "I'm thankful for the inspiration and the mentorship."



Armand Berry (left) with his brother Antonio

# Opportunities Ahead

A WILDCAT SCHOLARS STUDENT LOOKS TOWARD A FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE



At only 18 years old, Jollyn Mukura has already spent more than one year working on earning her RN degree from Weber State University.

In the fall semester of 2019 Mukura was a Wildcat Scholar, a program designed to support the next generation of leaders by revamping the first few years of college. Wildcat Scholars have the opportunity to skip non-college credit courses and receive free books and parking, along with other benefits. First-generation, low-income and undocumented students are encouraged to apply.

Mukura is an international student from Rwanda who graduated from Layton Christian Academy before attending WSU. She said the program was immensely helpful because she was able to get help with English classes as well as additional advising.

"Most international students need to be in that program because they have no idea what they are walking into," she said.

Mukura chose to attend WSU because of its proximity to Layton Christian Academy, where her younger sister is still a student.

"I didn't know a lot about Weber but when I got there it was so exciting to know they have an amazing nursing program and a good support system," she said.

While she initially thought about pursuing a business degree, Mukura ultimately chose nursing because she didn't want a job sitting behind a desk.

"I've always had a passion for people," she said.

That passion may one day take Mukura back to Rwanda, where her parents and siblings still live. She plans to graduate in 2023 and wants to then become a nurse anesthesiologist. Mukura said nurse anesthesiologists aren't commonplace in Rwanda.

"I would be able to help a lot of people," she said.

While it took a little convincing because her family wanted her to become a doctor, Mukura says she now has their full support.

"It's really good I have a family that backs me up and tells me to keep going even though it's hard," she said.

During her first year at WSU, Mukura had the chance to shadow healthcare professionals at Intermountain Healthcare in Ogden. During that experience, she learned many nurses felt underappreciated.

"But they were able to show me there's also a good side," she said. "You're able to treat the patients and I learned a lot."

## Raising Awareness

### COMMUNICATION MAJOR RECOGNIZED FOR PR EXCELLENCE

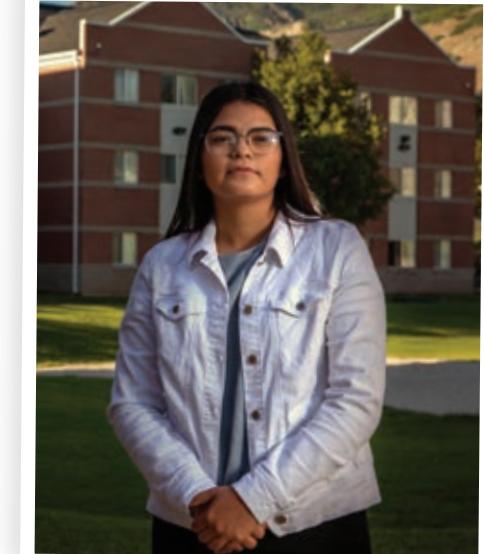
Weber State University took top honors in the 2019 Utah Public Relations Student of the Year Competition, hosted by the Salt Lake City chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

Karen Valdez, a communication major, shared first place in the contest with a BYU-Idaho student, and WSU students Kylie Harris and Conner Arvidson were selected as runners up.

"Honestly, it's unreal," said Valdez, who finished her bachelor's degree in communication last spring.

Students in the competition created a yearlong strategy to raise awareness for the Major Brent Taylor Legacy Foundation, which honors North Ogden mayor Maj. Brent Taylor, who was killed while serving in the Utah National Guard. The foundation is dedicated to making a difference in the local community, raising scholarship money and supporting military families. Finalists were selected for a live competition, where they presented their strategies, pitched news stories, wrote news releases, developed responses to a crisis and spoke to journalists in a mock news conference.

Valdez received \$1,000 and was honored at the Golden Spike Awards. She later began an internship with the foundation and helped connect it with Ogden Peak Communications, WSU's student-run public relations and advertising group.



Valdez relates the lessons Taylor taught his children and exemplified to those she learned from her own parents, who pushed her to become the first in her family to attend college.

"My parents are such hard workers," she said. "When I was young, my dad worked two different jobs, and he would get up really early, and he used to say, 'If you're ever going to do something, give it your best shot. If you're not going to do your best, you might as well not do it at all.'"

The 2019 competition marks the seventh time since 2011 that Weber State students have earned a top prize in the competition.

"It's honestly changed my life," Valdez said.

## MIS grads receive 100% acceptance to Carnegie Mellon

Weber State achieved a perfect score for recent management information systems graduates accepted to Carnegie Mellon University's graduate program for information security and information management.

Five of the graduates started CMU's master's program this fall, and nine participated in the Summer Security Intensive Information Technology Lab to get a look at the rigors of the master's program and complete three cybersecurity courses. After the summer program, students typically join the master's program.

CMU has an average acceptance rate of less than 20 percent.

In the past four years, 20 WSU students have been admitted to the CMU graduate programs and 22 to the summer program.

In 2018, WSU was selected as a CMU National Education Partner, allowing admitted students to receive scholarships equal to at least 30 percent of tuition per semester with additional scholarships based on the strength of their applications.

"The students we are sending to CMU will go on to be leaders in the industry," said Randy Boyle, WSU management information systems professor.

# Fast Track to Success

## WILDCAT SCHOLAR CAMILLE LOPEZ FOUND HER PATH AT WEBER STATE

Camille Lopez wasn't always excited about going to school. In fact, she was told she should drop out of the alternative high school she attended while growing up in the Rose Park neighborhood of Salt Lake City. After being told she couldn't walk at her graduation, she did drop out.

When she finally earned her last required high school credits at 23, she worked and tried furthering her education at one of Utah's technical colleges where she found the experience impersonal and unfriendly.

But in the fall of 2019, Lopez found Weber State and the Wildcat Scholars program.

"I honestly don't believe I would still be in college today if it wasn't for that program," she said. "They give you all the tools you need to succeed and they're super helpful."

Not only is Lopez now a sophomore pursuing a career in special education, she is doing so while raising three young children, one of whom is on the autism spectrum.

Lopez said Wildcat Scholars has helped her immensely. The program provides academic support to students who qualify. Lopez was able to fast track through her general education courses in the fall semester and earn a 4.0 GPA, all while potty training her kids.

"They teach you successful people don't have more hours in the day, they just manage their time well," she said.

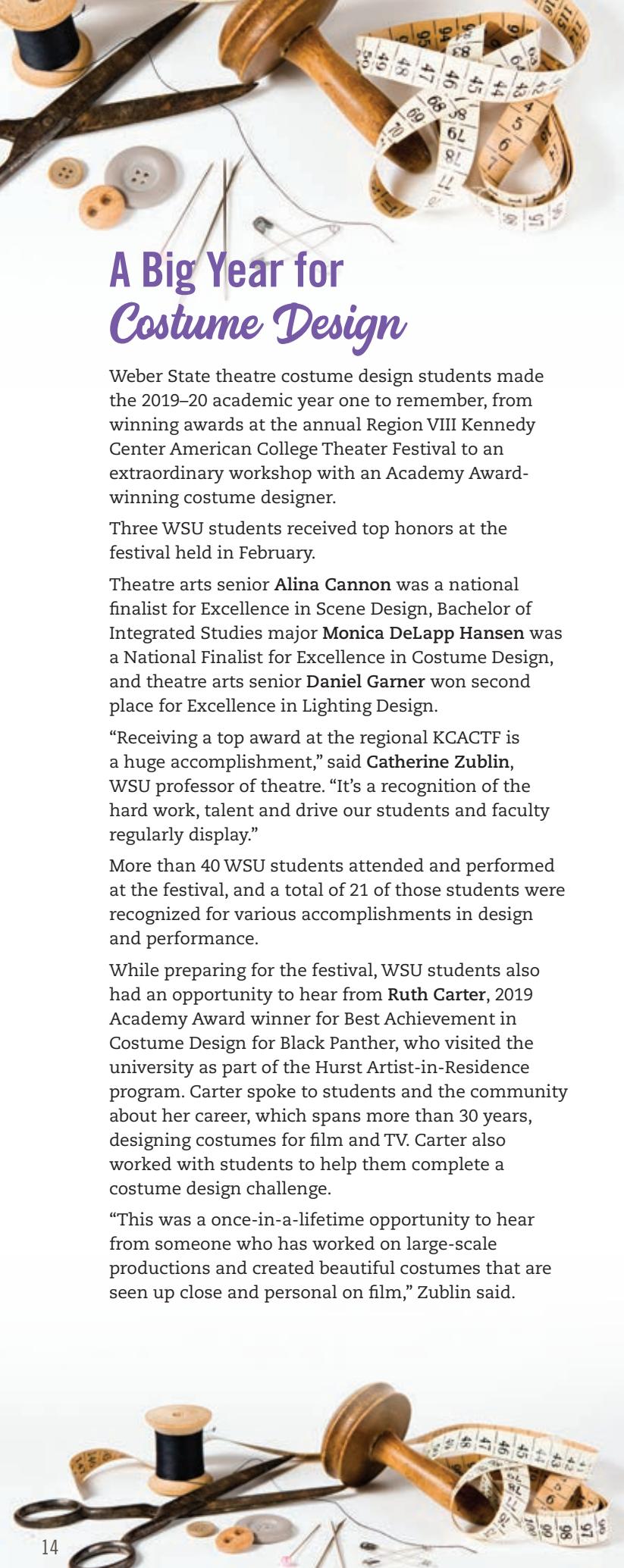
With the help of a recommendation from professor Eric Amsel, Lopez was also able to secure a job as a registered behavior technician with the Neurobehavioral Center for Growth.

Amsel initially worried Lopez would be overwhelmed in his Designing Your Life class, formerly titled "Adulting," but she excelled and became a leader in the class. "She didn't force it but was always engaged, always asking questions," Amsel said. "There was a lot of group work and she sort of pushed them."

Lopez wants to work in an essential skills classroom for young children because she has seen her eldest daughter mistreated in school. Eventually, she plans to become a board-certified behavior analyst and earn a master's degree.

"I knew I wanted to help people but I found my calling," she said, "just like every freshman at Weber State University."





## A Big Year for Costume Design

Weber State theatre costume design students made the 2019–20 academic year one to remember, from winning awards at the annual Region VIII Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival to an extraordinary workshop with an Academy Award-winning costume designer.

Three WSU students received top honors at the festival held in February.

Theatre arts senior Alina Cannon was a national finalist for Excellence in Scene Design, Bachelor of Integrated Studies major Monica DeLapp Hansen was a National Finalist for Excellence in Costume Design, and theatre arts senior Daniel Garner won second place for Excellence in Lighting Design.

“Receiving a top award at the regional KCACTF is a huge accomplishment,” said Catherine Zublin, WSU professor of theatre. “It’s a recognition of the hard work, talent and drive our students and faculty regularly display.”

More than 40 WSU students attended and performed at the festival, and a total of 21 of those students were recognized for various accomplishments in design and performance.

While preparing for the festival, WSU students also had an opportunity to hear from Ruth Carter, 2019 Academy Award winner for Best Achievement in Costume Design for Black Panther, who visited the university as part of the Hurst Artist-in-Residence program. Carter spoke to students and the community about her career, which spans more than 30 years, designing costumes for film and TV. Carter also worked with students to help them complete a costume design challenge.

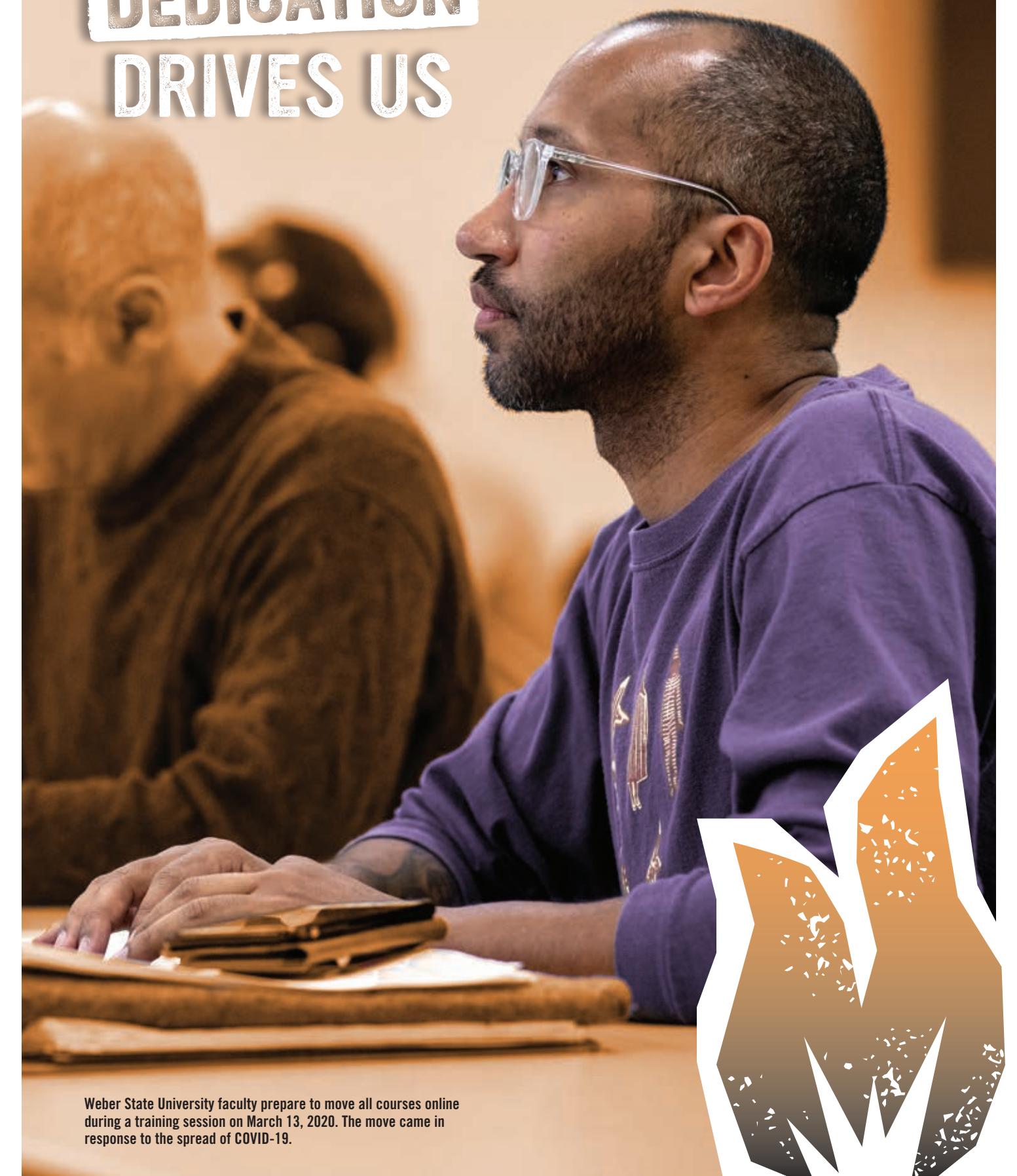
“This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear from someone who has worked on large-scale productions and created beautiful costumes that are seen up close and personal on film,” Zublin said.



Scenes from Weber State Theatre's production of  
The House of Edgar Allan Poe



# DEDICATION DRIVES US



Weber State University faculty prepare to move all courses online during a training session on March 13, 2020. The move came in response to the spread of COVID-19.



# Note of Perfection

PROFESSOR YU-JANE YANG RECEIVES NATIONAL  
RECOGNITION FOR HER PASSION FOR TEACHING  
AND DEDICATION TO STUDENT SUCCESS

As WSU's director of keyboard studies and a Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor, Yu-Jane Yang's passion and dedication in teaching was rewarded in 2020 when she was recognized nationally as the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Teacher of the Year, chosen from all the finalists nominated by the affiliated state Music Teachers Associations among all fifty states in the U.S.

Now in its 20th year, the award recognizes an individual teacher who has made a difference in students' lives, has contributed to the advancement of music in their community and is an example of a professional music educator each year. MTNA has over 22,000 members across the U.S., primarily university music professors and independent studio teachers. This is the first time the award has been given to a teacher from Utah.

"I am extremely humbled by this totally unexpected national honor," Yang said. "I would like to attribute this prestigious award to all of my inspirational former teachers and mentors, to my remarkable and diligent WSU students, and to

President Mortensen and the administration, as well as many generous music donors of WSU, from whom I have continuously received their incredible support."

Yang's students join their professor in outstanding achievement this year.

The Utah Music Teachers Association (UMTA) State Collegiate Piano Concerto Competition is recognized as one of the two most competitive state events for collegiate piano students. In 2020, four of the top six awards went to Yang's WSU students. **Min-Shan "Susan" Tsai** earned first-place state honors, and **Ting-Yu "Cindy" Lu** received third place. **Shu-Han Shen** and **Miranda Hoggan** were each awarded honorable mention.

Laurisa Cope, UMTA president commented, "Yu-Jane is the most dedicated, unselfish teacher, mentor and friend I know. Thank you for all you have shared with the teachers and students of Utah."

The MTNA award ceremony was postponed to March 2021, but the award and praise were posted virtually at [mtnafoundation.org](http://mtnafoundation.org).





## Constructing with Soul

### WSU FACULTY JEREMY FARNER RECOGNIZED FOR ADVANCING CONSTRUCTION

When Jeremy Farmer talks about building community, he means it literally.

He's helped build schools, homes and orphanages from Ogden to Africa, both improving communities and educating the next generation of construction leaders.

The Associated General Contractors of Utah, an organization dedicated to advancing the construction industry, recognized Farmer as their 2020 honoree for the "committed time, energy, and soul" he puts into making the construction industry a better place to work.

Farmer, building design and construction professor, began teaching at Weber State in 2008. He has taken students around the world to improve lives and opportunities through new and enhanced facilities. He has worked with WSU teams to upgrade and build multiple schools and orphanages in countries including Thailand, Peru and Mozambique.

In addition to his service abroad, his outreach along the Wasatch Front includes overseeing the design and construction of several Habitat for Humanity homes.

He and his students just completed, as a top 10 finalist internationally, a new all-electric, net-zero home in central Ogden for the 2020 Department of Energy Solar Decathlon. Turn to page 40 for more information on the net-zero home.

Farmer helped initiate Utah's Architecture, Engineering and Construction (UAEC) Pathway to help students as early as ninth grade begin taking university courses to prepare for a career in the AEC industry. Today, the Pathway serves more than 1,000 students in 26 schools and partners with nine other higher education institutions throughout Utah. Jeremy has been instrumental in bringing industry and education professionals together to address labor shortages, educational challenges and student debt, offering proactive solutions that benefit students, teachers, employers and the state of Utah's economic outlook.

Farmer also directs WSU's Wadman Center for Construction Excellence.

## Paying it Forward

### NUTRITION PROGRAM DIRECTOR DAVID AGUILAR-ALVAREZ TWICE RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Any faculty member would feel honored to receive one of the awards David Aguilar-Alvarez, assistant professor of nutrition and nutrition program director, won during the 2020 spring semester: the Crystal Crest Master Teacher Award and Presidential Teaching Excellence Award. The awards are especially meaningful to Aguilar-Alvarez, though, since his own teachers played a vital role in his success and have continued to fuel his passion for teaching.

While growing up in Culiacán, Mexico, a socioeconomically diverse city, Aguilar-Alvarez learned from his teachers that he could develop his interests while also contributing to society.

"They showed me that I could be successful by trying to solve problems," he said. "I was very aware of how these mentors really helped me professionally, and I owe them a lot. I was inspired by that to go on a similar path."

Aguilar-Alvarez said he prioritized teaching when looking for a job in academia, and Weber State has allowed him to strike a good balance between research and teaching, including hands-on instruction using the kitchens, greenhouse and garden at Weber State University Davis and the nutrition biochemistry lab on the Ogden campus. While learning, Aguilar-Alvarez believes students "need to relate to problems that happen in their community — problems that can be solved — and they need to feel that their opinion and what they do, do have an impact."

Recently, he has also turned his attention toward the broader Ogden community. Using his nutrition expertise and his understanding of the unique strengths and struggles of the Hispanic community, Aguilar-Alvarez consults and teaches classes for the Ogden Civic Action Network (OgdenCAN), a partnership of local organizations working to improve the welfare of residents in the East Central neighborhood of Ogden.



**"Students need to relate to problems that happen in their community — problems that can be solved — and they need to feel that their opinion and what they do, do have an impact."**

## WSU Faculty Honored for Research and Innovation

In October of 2019, Weber State University hosted the inaugural Research, Commercialization and Entrepreneurial Awards to honor faculty who have made significant contributions to Weber State, the community and the world through research and innovation.

"Research and innovation are crucial because they discover, explain and validate new knowledge, ideas and

technologies essential in driving the future of society and humanity," said James Taylor, WSU's Sponsored Projects and Technology Commercialization director. "Our research activities foster professional excellence and have critical economic, societal and environmental impacts locally, nationally and internationally."

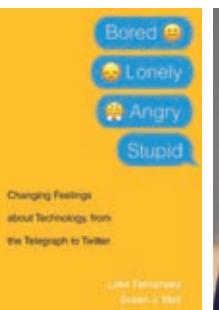
### { AWARD RECIPIENTS }



John Sohl, physics professor, received the Innovation Research Award for his work on WSU's High Altitude Reconnaissance Balloon for Outreach and Research (HARBOR). He has also been involved in laser-development engineering projects with the Utah Science Technology and Research Initiative and with the Utah Center for Aeronautical Innovation and Design.



Former vice provost and dean of Online & Continuing Education Bruce Davis, who passed away unexpectedly last December, received the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award for his advocacy for innovation in northern Utah. Davis also helped Weber State strengthen its economic development plans for northern Utah, taught entrepreneurship courses for many years and was a Layton City Council member.



Luke Fernandez, WSU School of Computing assistant professor, and Susan Matt, history professor, received the Outstanding Research Award for their book, *Bored, Lonely, Angry, Stupid: Changing Feelings about Technology, from the Telegraph to Twitter*. The book examines technology's influence on Americans' emotional lives and puts contemporary worries about the digital age into historical perspective.





## History Starts Here

Weber State University professor Matthew Romaniello was selected by the World History Association to serve as editor of the *Journal of World History* starting in January 2020. The publication is devoted to the study of concepts like large-scale population movements, trade, technology and the spread of ideas. Students can also sign up to work with the journal and learn about publishing.

## WSU Construction Teams Earn Top Spots at Regional Competition

Student teams from Weber State University's Parson Construction Management program took top honors at the regional Construction Management Challenge hosted by Brigham Young University in November 2019.

WSU students took first place in the Heavy Civil and Design-Build challenges, and third place in the Commercial challenge. The teams were interdisciplinary, with students from the construction management major and the building design and construction emphasis.

"This competition is a unique opportunity for students to gain real-world experience," said Russell Butler, construction management advisor. "Students come away from it with a better understanding of how their classes are preparing them for the industry."

The Construction Management Challenge is designed to teach students the critical skills required to understand how projects are awarded in the industry. The challenge also helps students prepare for the Associated Schools of Construction competition held each spring. The competition problems are sponsored and conducted by local general contractors and typically judged by the actual management team who built the project.

Teams are tasked with addressing a challenge within a specific sector of construction and must work as a team to find a solution. The written plan and visuals are submitted, followed by an interview with the panel of judges where they are grilled on each element.

"Beyond learning the specific skills needed, students also benefit from the recruiting process and networking that occurs," Butler said. "Companies know the students who attend the competitions tend to be better prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the industry."



The WSU Design-Build team at the ASC Region 6 and 7 Competition in Reno, Nevada



## Undergraduate Research Launches Nutrition Student on a New Path

Weber State's Office of Undergraduate Research recognizes students and faculty members for outstanding research and mentorship each year from nominations submitted by faculty and students engaged in undergraduate research. In April 2020, four student researchers and four faculty mentors were recognized for their contributions to undergraduate research over the past academic year.

April Callister, a sports nutrition education major, was selected as the outstanding undergraduate researcher for the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education. With the guidance of her mentor, David Aguilar-Alvarez, an assistant professor of nutrition, Callister collected diet information, waist circumference measurements, blood glucose levels and other health indicators from 167 Weber State students.

There is significant evidence linking the indicators Callister measured to metabolic disease, she said, but the relationship between different indicators is not yet fully understood. Using her data, she looked for potential links between indicators, and she found that people with higher levels of fat deposits around their organs in the abdomen, called visceral fat, had higher resting blood sugar levels than those with lower levels of visceral fat. In addition, lower sugar consumption was associated with lower waist circumference and lower levels of triglycerides circulating in the blood.

Some of her other findings varied by sex, suggesting that metabolic disease may develop differently in men and women, which could lead to different interventions.

Callister presented her research at Weber State's 16th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, held virtually in April 2020. She was also scheduled to present at two academic conferences for professional researchers and one undergraduate research conference. While two of her conferences were unfortunately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she said conducting the research was a transformative experience.

"I always felt like an equal in the project," Callister said of Aguilar-Alvarez's mentorship. "It gave me a ton of confidence. He's always been really good at instilling confidence in people."

The experience also shifted her career plans. While she is continuing with her prior plan to become a physician's assistant, she now intends to enter academia so she can continue to engage in research.

# 2020

## Awards for Outstanding Undergraduate Research and Mentorship

The Office of Undergraduate Research recognized four student researchers and four faculty mentors in April 2020 for their contributions to undergraduate research.

### OUTSTANDING STUDENT RESEARCHERS

April Callister  
Education

Houston Crudele  
Science

Sarah Honeycutt  
Social & Behavioral Sciences

Samantha Rust  
Arts & Humanities

### OUTSTANDING FACULTY MENTORS

Elizabeth Balgord  
Science

Anne Bialowas  
Arts & Humanities

Cory Butts  
Education

Todd Hillhouse  
Social & Behavioral Sciences



# Undergraduate Science Research Flourishes at WSU

WHETHER ON CAMPUS OR AROUND THE GLOBE, COLLEGE OF SCIENCE STUDENTS CONDUCT IMPORTANT RESEARCH TO IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURAL WORLD.

## TRACKING BIRD POPULATIONS

Zoology professor John Cavitt and students are hoping to determine bird populations through a research technique called mark recapture.

The team captures birds in nets in the foothills east of Stewart Stadium, which are then banded and released so the team can determine populations by the number recaptured over time.

Cavitt plans to continue the research, which he began in 2019, in coming years to gain more robust data before publishing results. Students were able to present preliminary findings at WSU's Undergraduate Research Symposium, held virtually in April. Visit [weber.edu/annualreport](http://weber.edu/annualreport) to see video of this research.



## RESEARCH ON HEMP

Jeffrey Colbert ran into his fair share of issues while conducting research on hemp, but he still feels he was able to gather valuable information about growing the plant as a cash crop.

Colbert, who graduated in spring 2020, began the project in 2019.

Many of his seeds didn't sprout, and many of those that did drowned during a wet spring. Though he didn't end up with enough data to draw scientific conclusions, Colbert was able to gather anecdotal evidence about which soils in Utah work best for growing hemp.

"It gave me a good basis for what I would do if I were a farmer," Colbert said. "How I would go about developing seeds to have a higher germination rate."



## A WOODRAT'S CACHE

Under the supervision of zoology professor Michele Skopec, Weber State students have had the opportunity to research the caching behavior of woodrats — also known as packrats.

Courtnee Goodwin, a zoology major who will graduate in fall 2020, has been working with the captive woodrat colony on the Ogden campus for several years now. Her research was to prove whether a woodrat exposed to a specific item would cache that item more quickly the next time because it had already been exposed to it.

She was able to present that research in Washington, D.C. for the American Society of Mammalogists, as well as at the Utah College Undergraduate Research Convention.



## NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION HONOR

A Weber State University zoology graduate has received a major science grant to research a rodent impacted by drought in Central Chile.

Chyanne Smith, who graduated from Weber State in April, was accepted to the prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program to conduct her research on a medium-sized rodent, called a degu. She'll conduct this research as part of her master's program in environmental science at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Though the research in Chile has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith hopes to start in the summer of 2021.





# WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

## *Facts & Figures*

### A COMMENCEMENT TO REMEMBER

Wildcats displayed grit, tenacity, and a great deal of patience, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed the spring 2020 commencement ceremony to Aug. 29.

The long-awaited celebration closely followed health department recommendations for social distancing, while honoring the class of 2020 for reaching the major milestone.

“The graduating class of 2020 will always be remembered as those who had the determination to complete their college education during a time of historic tumult,” said WSU President **Brad Mortensen**. “I applaud their grit and tenacity and know they will use these strengths to continue to lead and succeed.”

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY  
RANKED AMONG:

The Princeton Review's  
Best Western Colleges

Forbes'  
America's Best-in-State Employers

U.S. News & World Report's  
Best Regional Universities in the West

24/7 Wall St.'s  
Most Affordable Colleges with Best Outcomes

LendEDU's  
Colleges with the Best Return on Investment

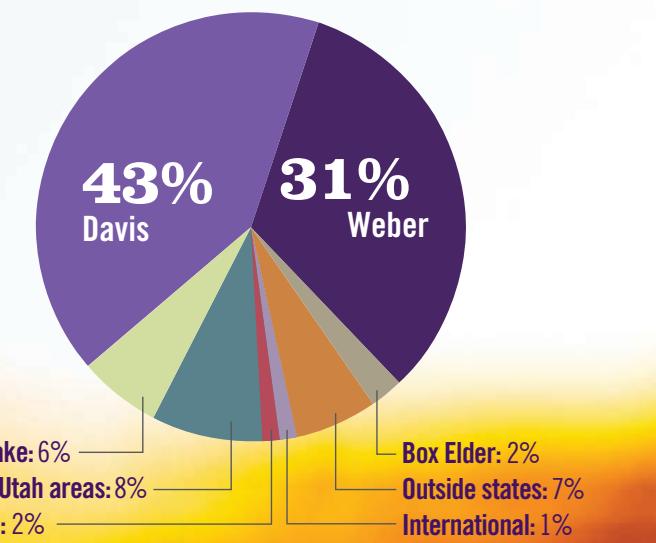


MEDIAN GRADUATE  
SALARY

**\$54,475**

Based on fifth-year median wages

Fall 2019 Enrollment by  
**COUNTY OF ORIGIN**



MORE THAN  
**225**  
DEGREE  
PROGRAMS

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED  
BY LENDEDU FOR

**LOW STUDENT  
LOAN DEBT**

**174**

STUDENT-ATHLETES  
earned ACADEMIC  
All-Conference Honors  
in 2019-20

WSU PROVIDED MORE THAN  
**\$92 MILLION**  
IN SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID  
TO 13,519 STUDENTS  
and

**\$3.7 MILLION**  
IN PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS TO 1,960 RECIPIENTS.  
FOR THE 2019-20 ACADEMIC YEAR.



Gifts to WSU in  
fiscal year 2020 totaled

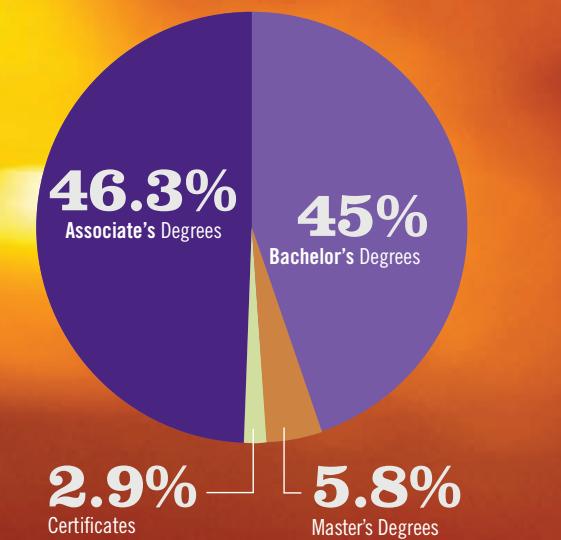
**\$9,287,793**



**16**

GRADUATE  
DEGREE PROGRAMS,  
including the DOCTOR OF  
NURSING PRACTICE

Distribution of  
DEGREES & AWARDS for 2019-20



Ogden-Clearfield Metro Area

Among best metro areas  
for recent graduates  
to find a job  
—Frontier Business

**80%**  
FACULTY WITH  
TERMINAL DEGREES

RANKED AMONG COLLEGE FACTUAL'S  
**TOP COLLEGES  
FOR VETERANS**

STUDENT TO  
FACULTY  
RATIO:  
**21:1**

Weber State is on track to become  
**CARBON NEUTRAL**  
by 2040

a decade ahead of our original goal.

WSU has **REDUCED\*** its  
NATURAL GAS CONSUMPTION BY  
**30%** | ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION BY  
**32%** | CARBON FOOTPRINT BY  
**45%**

while the university has grown by more than  
**536,115 square feet**

\* as of fiscal year 2019, when compared to a 2007 baseline

**\$2,298,775**

The amount WSU **SAVED** on  
its electric, natural gas and  
water bills in fiscal year 2020



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY  
NAMED TO:

The Arbor Day Foundation's  
Tree Campus Higher Education list

## Student Discoveries in Neuroscience

Students in Weber State's Neuroscience Program had a successful year and saw the publication of two peer-reviewed articles thanks to their hard work.

Former WSU professor Todd Hillhouse led students in the research endeavors. One study looked at the addictive qualities of nicotine and led to the publication of "Repeated nicotine vapor inhalation induces behavioral sensitization in male and female C57BL/6 mice" in *Behavioural Pharmacology* in May 2020.

Sarah Honeycutt, the first author on the study, is now pursuing her doctorate degree in Buffalo, New York. She said the publication of the paper is important because it means other scientists in the field felt their research methods were thorough. "It basically means I'm a real scientist, which is really cool," she said.

Honeycutt originally majored in psychology at Weber State but adopted a neuroscience minor after taking a class on the subject with Hillhouse in 2016. She has since won several awards in her time at Weber State including Outstanding Student and the Big Brain Award for the Neuroscience Program.

She said the opportunity to do research in a lab setting was transformative. "I took Dr. Hillhouse's biopsychology class and it opened up a new realm of possibility for me," Honeycutt said.

WSU students Allyson Barraza and Andrew Maloy and former WSU student Patrick Garrett also participated in the project.

The second peer-reviewed paper was an endeavor to find out if Dextramoraphem, a drug with properties similar to ketamine, is effective as a potential rapid-acting antidepressant. Hillhouse and the students involved in the research concluded it most likely isn't.

This research resulted in the publication of "Assessment of the rapid and sustained antidepressant-like effects of dextromethorphan in mice," in *Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior* in August 2020. WSU students Ashley Peterson and Justin White participated in the research, along with WSU graduate Jesus Saavedra. Garrett and Honeycutt, who are authors on the other paper as well, were also involved in this study.

Hillhouse said the publication of these peer-reviewed articles demonstrates that these students understand the process of science and are ready to make the jump to doctoral programs.

"It is amazing to have undergraduate students with a peer review publication," he said. "I know graduate students that struggle to have one manuscript accessed for publication."



# BEYOND BOUNDARIES



## Computer & Automotive Engineering Building, *Now Open for Learning*

A world pandemic did not stop construction on the new Computer & Automotive Engineering Building at WSU Davis, which opened as planned fall semester 2020.

The 51,000-square-foot building will help the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology accommodate growth. In addition to six classrooms, the \$20 million building features a testing or “sandbox” environment for computer science and software engineering courses. The new home of the automotive technology program will enjoy updated automotive shops, including a Tesla learning center and an engine test cell.



## New Wildcat Leaders

HAVING THE VISION TO LEAD A UNIVERSITY IS A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE AT ANY TIME, LET ALONE DURING A WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC, BUT LEADERS WHO JOINED WEBER STATE DURING THE 2019–20 ACADEMIC YEAR STEPPED UP TO GUIDE THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH A TUMULTUOUS PERIOD.

When provost, Ravi Krovi, arrived in March 2020, he presented WSU President Brad Mortensen with a 90-day plan, “which went out the window in the first week, as we moved into COVID crisis mode,” Krovi remembers with a laugh.

What the crisis did provide was an intense crash course on the university’s people and processes. Krovi said he was pleased the strengths that attracted him to Weber State have been on constant display during the crisis. He noted especially the student focus, collegiality, shared governance and fiscal stability.

“You have to be adaptive and flexible,” Krovi said. “That is part of my operating model. Get everyone engaged. You have to collaborate and communicate, which means engaging all the key stakeholders, faculty senate, administration and students in important decisions.”

Weber State also welcomed Kristin Hadley, dean of the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education, and Matthew Mouritsen, dean of the John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics. Both deans were selected in national searches, though each had many combined years of teaching and leadership at Weber State. Hadley and Mouritsen assumed responsibility for their colleges well prepared for a crisis they never expected to face.

Hadley said the College of Education had been working diligently with technology before the pandemic to implement virtual courses for the Master of Education. “These experienced faculty then became the ‘experts’ needed on campus to train faculty in other areas,” she said.

“When we needed them most, our values and principles helped us steer through some of the most trying times any of us have faced,” Mouritsen said. “Our sudden transition to virtual teaching was made much easier because we already knew how we would focus on students.”

New vice president for University Advancement Betsy Mennell arrived with 20 years of external relations experience at several universities, including many years at Northern Arizona University. She found Weber State, with its proud 131 year history, was well positioned to continue serving students and the community in any environment.

“The university’s stability and dedication to helping our students succeed, sustains and strengthens positive relationships with donors and the community even in the most difficult of times.”



Ravi Krovi



Kristin Hadley



Matthew Mouritsen



Betsy Mennell



# Computer Science Offers More Paths for Students

WEBER STATE STUDENTS CAN NOW EARN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE IN 14 MONTHS, THOUGH THE TIME FRAME IS FLEXIBLE, THANKS TO AN INNOVATIVE NEW PROGRAM.

In fall 2020, the computer science program launched CS Flex, a collection of 10 online computer science courses that allow students to move at their own pace, advancing through the material as soon as they master it, said Linda DuHadway, associate professor of computer science and coordinator of CS Flex.

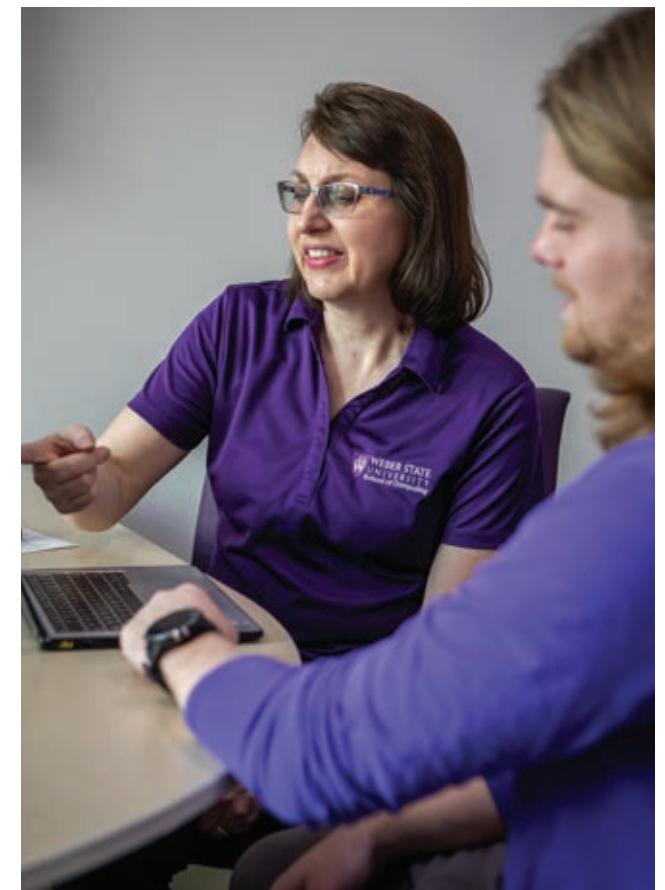
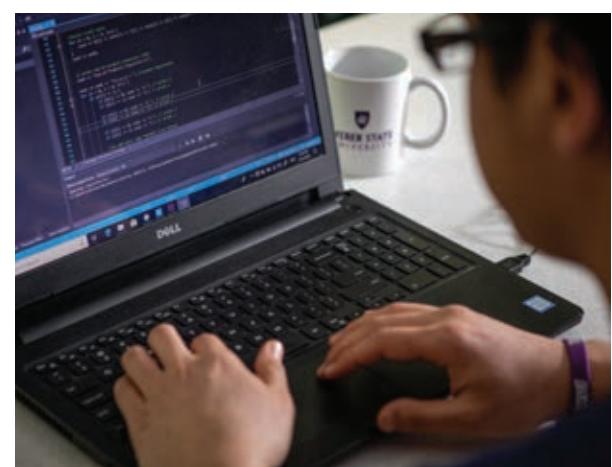
"It's unique across the country," DuHadway said of the program. "Other programs have built flexibility within a certain time frame, and we've broadened that time frame and made it more flexible." Students can begin and complete courses outside the schedule of a traditional semester, she said, and they can work at a slower or faster pace, based on their needs.

Computer science faculty developed the online curriculum for CS Flex with the support of a Talent Ready Utah grant for \$249,281 awarded in July 2019, DuHadway said. The grant concluded in June 2020, but the curriculum the program built will continue to be used and updated, extending the benefit of the grant for years to come, she said.

The grant also funded tuition scholarships for 10 high school teachers who participated in a pilot of the program during the spring and summer of 2020.

In July 2020, the School of Computing also added the new Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Teaching program.

"We noticed a lot of schools wanting to teach computer science, but they lacked educators who had experience or degrees to qualify them to teach the courses," said Drew Weidman, professor of computer science and coordinator of high school concurrent enrollment for the computer science program. "That was the driving force behind creating this degree."



## Student-Produced App Streamlines Study Abroad

With funding from the Office of Undergraduate Research, Rose Harris, a double major in German and computer science, created a new smartphone app to help students prepare to study abroad at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. Based on her own experience at University of Bayreuth, Harris's app — called Bayreuth Study Abroad — walks students through applying to the university, securing housing and finding social and academic support. In May 2020, Harris launched her app in the Google Play Store, and she's in the process of publishing the app through the Apple App Store.

# 9

languages taught in the Department of Foreign Languages

# 5

language clubs and organizations are housed in the department.

During the 2020–21 academic year, faculty will teach Chinese, French, and Spanish to **560** students in 11 local high schools as part of the Dual Language Immersion Bridge Program.

An average of **36** language and culture courses taught every semester

# 389

students currently majoring or minoring in foreign languages

## WSU Foreign Languages by the Numbers



## Saving the Planet, Saving Lives

### TWO NEW WSU ACADEMIC PROGRAMS MEET SERIOUS DEMANDS

Weber State students can now prepare to save the planet or save lives with two new degree options available in fall 2020: a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and a Master of Science in Radiologic Sciences, Cardiac Specialist.

For students like **Allison Stanley**, who are interested in tackling the tough issues facing our planet, the new environmental science degree is particularly welcome.

"I realized I could take the time to explore many of the different approaches when tackling the climate emergency," Stanley said.

This interdisciplinary degree will allow students to take classes across both physical and life science subjects. Some of the work already being conducted in the College of Science includes evaluation of drinking water in Weber County and secondary biomonitoring of heavy metal pollutants in Ogden.

"Faculty and administration in the College of Science chose to pursue this degree because we are located in a region — and on a planet — with pressing environmental issues," said **Andrea Easter-Pilcher**, dean of the College of Science.

**Chris Steelman**, Coordinator of the Cardiac Specialist Program at the School of Radiologic Sciences, is excited to welcome students from a variety of health professions into the new invasive cardiology graduate program.

Students who choose the cardiac specialist emphasis will acquire the knowledge and clinical skills necessary for a career in a cardiac cath lab. New advancements in medical technology have enabled an increasing number

of procedures to help people with heart disease avoid open-heart surgery.

"We are working on a heart through a hole in your body the size of a straw," Steelman said.

The transcatheter method allows people to have surgery on their heart by inserting small tubes into their body. This less invasive method can be used to repair issues such as closed arteries or congenital heart defects.

"As cath labs continue to expand the services they offer, there is an increasing need for professionals with the experience acquired in our program," Steelman said.



## New Course Allows Liberal Arts Students to Get R.E.A.L.

{ Wanted: Liberal arts majors seeking marketable skills for the workforce }

That's the intended audience for an on-campus internship opportunity Weber State piloted in 2019–20.

Real Experience Applied Learning (R.E.A.L.) Projects is a semester long course, offered through the Honors Program, that provides students a chance to work in small groups on projects submitted by businesses and organizations.

Robert Ameling, assistant director of internships, said students from any discipline are welcome, but the program was created with liberal arts students in mind because they don't have as clearly defined pathways that lead to careers as compared to other disciplines.

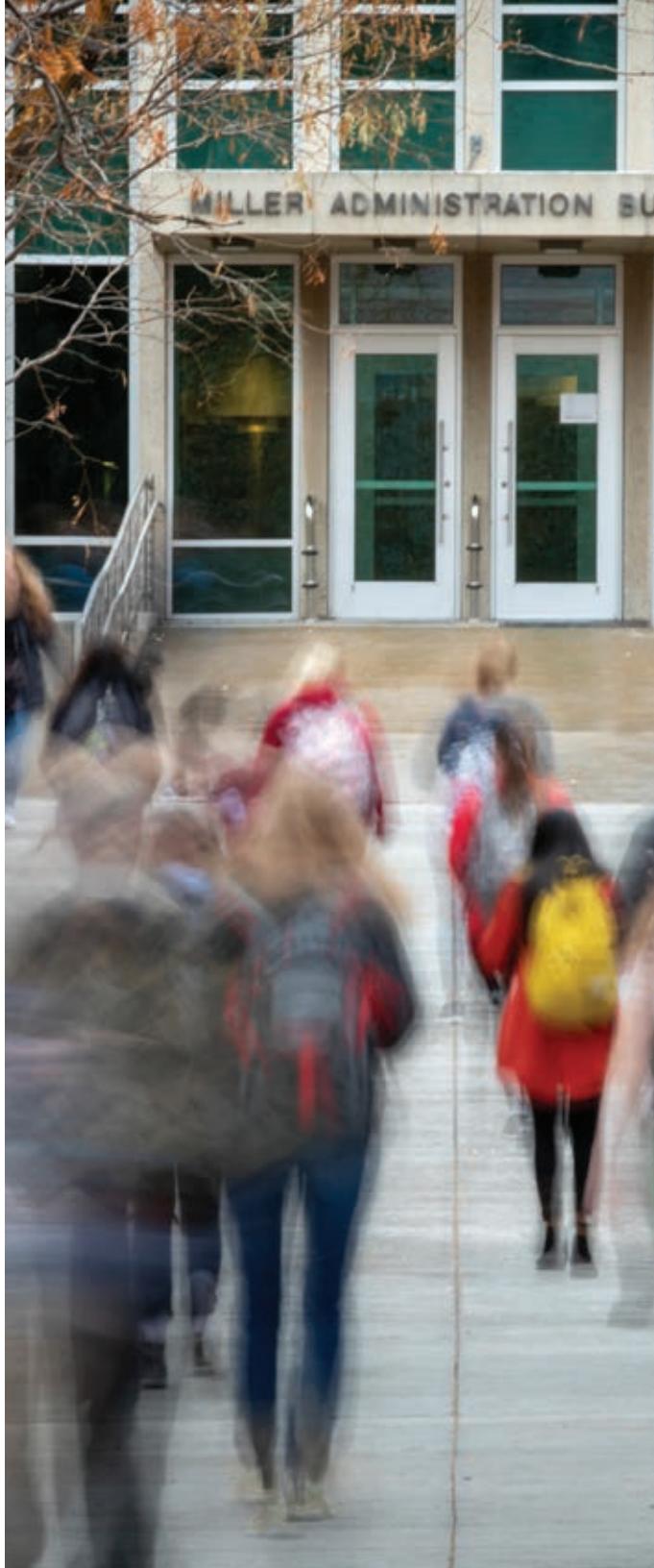
In its first year, 18 students worked on seven projects, ranging from market research to app development to web page design. The students represented more than 17 different majors, from anthropology to economics to dance.

Ameling said the program mirrors experiences students will have in their careers, working with those from a wide range of backgrounds, not just their own major. He hopes students will take the course multiple times, so they can hone their communication, project management and leadership skills.

"This gives them viable, marketable skills regardless of what career path they pursue," Ameling said.

At the end of each semester, students meet with career advisors so they can translate their experience into bullet points on their resumes.

"I was super stoked to take an honors course that allowed me more freedom to personally work creatively and to develop skills that you wouldn't necessarily learn in a classroom setting, and learn how to be professional and hold yourself accountable," said Olivia Boer, an undeclared major.



### R.E.A.L. NUMBERS

In the first three semesters, students representing 20+ majors have enrolled.

**6** Number of community projects for fall 2020

In its pilot year, R.E.A.L. had **18** students work on seven projects

**18**

Number of students signed up for fall 2020

# CONNECTIONS STRENGTHEN US



## A Sustainable Future

Weber State prides itself in equipping students to build a more sustainable future, whether that's through community programs such as the Empower Northern Utah Light Bulb Exchange, which collectively reduced energy bills for participants by \$40,000 each year, or quickly pivoting to virtual for events such as our Intermountain Sustainability Summit.

Here are two more ways WSU boosted its sustainability efforts during the 2019-20 academic year:

### NET-ZERO HOME

Students from the Department of Construction & Building Sciences had the opportunity to build a "net-zero" home for their senior project, even being named finalists in the 2020 Department of Energy Solar Decathlon. The home is designed in a way that nearly eliminates all energy bills, with costs to operate the home estimated at just over \$100 annually or around \$9 per month to be connected to the electrical grid.

For the project, the students were able to help with every aspect of the futuristic home, from excavation to finish work. They quickly turned into online project managers when the COVID-19 pandemic halted a lot of in-person work on the project in March.

"It was fun to be able to teach them that this is real life," said Jeremy Farner, WSU Building Design & Construction associate professor. "Nothing goes exactly how it's planned."

The home went on the market in September, and the proceeds from the sale will be used to build another net-zero home next year.

Weber State is on track to meet its goal to become carbon neutral by 2050 ahead of schedule.

Visit [weber.edu/annualreport](http://weber.edu/annualreport) for footage featuring the net-zero home.



### SUSTAINABILITY ATTRIBUTE

An incredibly powerful step the university has taken toward sustainability this year is adding a sustainability attribute to courses, said **Bonnie Christiansen**, academic sustainability coordinator for the Sustainability Practices and Research Center (SPARC).

Faculty can now apply to have the sustainability attribute added to their course, allowing students to search their classes specifically for sustainability. It can be applied to any course that meets requirements. For instance, if an English course has a module or writing assignment about sustainability, it could meet the criteria for the SUS attribute.

"My personal goals are to make sure that every student that graduates from Weber State understands the importance of sustainability and how to incorporate it at home and in their careers," Christiansen said.



## Weber State Opens Virtual Doors to Master of Education Students from Shanghai

Weber State students in the Master of Education program will now have their educations enriched with new classmates from Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College.

Six students from the college joined graduate-level education courses at Weber State for the fall 2020 semester, and more are expected to participate in the future.

Tianhua College students are participating virtually in fall courses this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the summer of 2020, this group also took virtual courses taught by Weber State education faculty. In the future, when international travel restrictions are lifted, Weber State faculty will travel to China to teach these summer courses.

"The value of bringing international students to Weber State is not only to increase the diversity, but also to bring world knowledge to campus," said Yimin Wang, senior international officer for Weber State and assistant professor of education at the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education.

Weber State has a relatively high proportion of students who participate in study abroad programs, Wang said, but not all of them can afford to study abroad.

Like Weber State's other international collaborations, the collaboration with Tianhua College is a way to bring those international experiences to Weber State.

Discussions are underway with several potential partner universities in different parts of the world to create more joint programs like the one with Tianhua College, Wang said. Utah's population is diverse, she said, which requires Utahns to be proficient in skills that are built through international exchange, even if they're living and working locally.

"Giving students this opportunity for them to practice the skills of perspective-taking, intercultural communication and problem-solving not only expands their own knowledge, but it's a necessary skill for them to be successful in society," Wang said.

## WSU Ranks High in International Education

Weber State ranked #17 among master's-level colleges and universities for the number of students participating in short-term study abroad programs, according to the November 2019 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange released by the Institute of International Education.

This ranking is based on data from the 2017-18 academic year, when 373 Weber State students participated in short-term programs. This was the first time Weber State placed in the top 20 in this category, according to historical data on the rankings, which go back to 2004-05. The number of study abroad students continued to increase each year prior to the COVID-19 interruption.



Image courtesy of Weber State Study Abroad



## Perspectives in Printmaking

Weber State's Mary Elizabeth Dee Shaw Gallery exhibited the work of contemporary printmakers from around the world in Perspectives in Printmaking: An Evolving Dynamic during fall 2019.

Susanna Castleden, a Hurst Artist-in-Residence for the Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities, was a featured artist. An associate professor at Curtin University in Australia, Castleden creates art inspired by movement and mobility. She gave a lecture on her work before the opening reception.

Featured artists also included Sean Caulfield, Miguel Rivera, Annu Vertanen, Miriam Rudolph and Shawn Bitters. Shaw Gallery director, Lydia Gravis, and printmaking professor, K Stevenson, co-curated the exhibit.

## Women's Center Celebrates 40 Years at WSU

The Weber State University Women's Center celebrated its 40th anniversary this year, honoring a legacy of education, empowerment, social justice and advocacy.

"Since the Women's Center's founding in 1980, we have focused on empowering women and their families through numerous services and resources," said Paige Davies, center director. "The early Women's Center focused on women returning to college after divorce, marriage, motherhood, etc. Today, the center still provides support to women and mothers, as well as all other students at Weber State, through scholarships, events and resources."

The center advocates for the best educational experience for all by addressing systemic oppression, empowering communities and working toward a shared vision of gender equity in pursuit of a safe, inclusive and compassionate campus.

Over the years, the center has expanded its scope of services and taken on major initiatives, including Safe@Weber to promote the safety and well-being of all individuals. The program provides violence prevention education for the campus community on topics of consent, healthy relationships and bystander intervention. Additionally, the center offers confidential advocacy services to survivors of sexual and interpersonal violence.

The center also offers a variety of services that focus on social justice education, empowerment, leadership and engagement, as well as a resource pantry and a variety of scholarships to help students in need complete their degrees.

## 'CATapult Scholarship Supports Grateful Wildcats

When WSU President Brad Mortensen announced the 'CATapult scholarship at his inauguration, on Founders Day, Jan. 7, 2020, he had no way of knowing the increased need students would soon experience as lives were upended with a global pandemic.

'CATapult was launched to provide an energetic, upward burst of momentum for students nearing graduation but without the means to continue.

"I was just furloughed from my job due to COVID-19," wrote one student in a thank you note. "I know we will make it through this hard time in our lives, but having the help of a scholarship means so much!"

Within the first few months of its creation, 261 students received a total of \$281,512.

Thanks to generous donors, including Bob and Marcia Harris and Wells Fargo Bank, an additional \$114,615 was added to 'CATapult to provide emergency assistance to students who were ineligible for CARES Act money and were struggling with school and other expenses. A total of 255 students applied, and every one received help.

The university plans to raise \$10 million for 'CATapult to create a lasting, meaningful endowment to inspire future Wildcats in their educational pursuit.

"Going into the final semesters has been stressful enough without these unprecedented times throwing a wrench into everything," wrote one grateful student. "This scholarship will enable me to spend more time on my studies, and I hope it will help to put me in a position after graduation where I can join in on the generosity and help future Wildcats make ends meet and thrive in their educational pursuits."

# Wildcat Micro Fund

FROM LATE 2018 THROUGH JULY 2020, THE WILDCAT MICRO FUND HAS HOSTED 15 PITCH COMPETITIONS AND DISTRIBUTED 40 GRANTS TOTALING \$35,150 IN CASH AND \$6,250 IN SERVICES.



Weber State business administration major **Michael Carver** might still be in school, but that hasn't stopped him from building an innovative moving service. His business, called Boundia, doesn't only help clients move their belongings but also lines them up with a job, home and new social network — taking care of every aspect of the relocation process.

In May, Carver got a boost of \$1,000 from Weber State's Wildcat Micro Fund, which hosts monthly pitch contests for Weber State students and local entrepreneurs to receive grants of up to \$2,000. With his grant, Carver is paying a local web designer to build his website, and he anticipates the grant will cover the entire cost.

When a new business is in its early stages, a small influx of funds can be crucial to the venture's success.

"It can make a huge difference," Carver said of the small grant. "People think you need a ton of money to start up, and that's why I didn't try to start up my own business for a while, but that's

not the case." In combination with a little financial support, "it's really just putting in the effort — the money will eventually get there," he said.

To prepare applicants for the pitch contest and help them best use their grant money, entrepreneurs are also matched with expert mentors, said **Bob Gruhler**, manager of the fund at the John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics.

Established in October 2018, the fund is part of a larger collaborative effort among community partners to create an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" in northern Utah, Gruhler said. In November 2019, the fund was awarded a grant of \$718,968 from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. This grant will ensure the fund's continued support of local entrepreneurs for three years, Gruhler said, and allow it to expand its involvement in the community, with a focus on serving underrepresented groups.

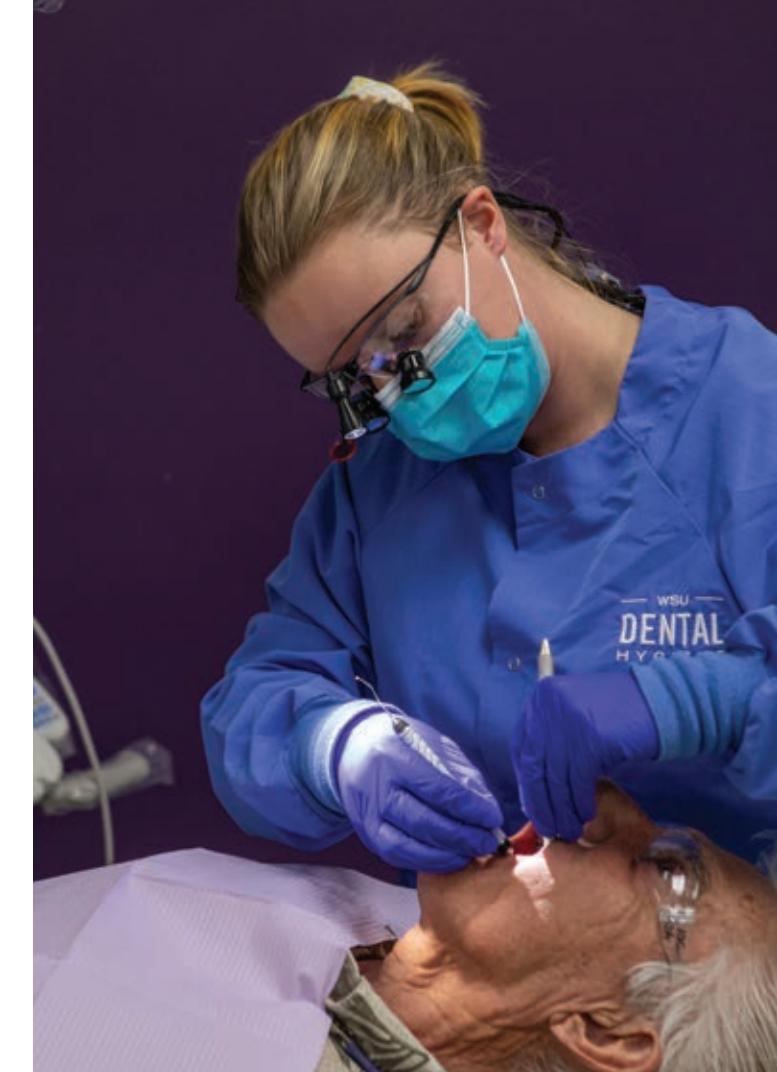
## WSU Partners with U of U Dental Program to Help Underserved Communities

Weber State's Department of Dental Hygiene began an innovative collaboration with the University of Utah School of Dentistry in the spring 2020 semester, allowing students at both schools to learn from each other while providing care to underserved patients.

WSU dental hygiene students and dental students from the University of Utah visited one another's campuses throughout the semester to work in teams that simulate a private dental practice with a full range of services. Patients receiving care included Utahns with limited access to dental services, such as low-income families, those with disabilities and those receiving Medicaid.

"This endeavor is an ideal educational approach at many levels," said **Yasmen Simonian**, dean of the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions. "We pledge to enrich the experience of students at both institutions. The program promotes interprofessional education, while addressing current and emerging needs in dental education."

The arrangement fulfills a commitment to the state legislature to combine interprofessional educational experiences between students in state schools while providing care to underserved communities.



## WSU Team Takes Second in Outdoor Weber

A Weber State team led by **Madsen Wessmen** managed to snag the \$15,000 second-place prize from Outdoor Weber, an outdoor recreation business-idea competition.

Wessmen, a professional sales major with a minor in entrepreneurship, had his idea for DOSE Hydration even before he heard about Outdoor Weber.

"We developed a lid that fits on any wide-mouth insulated water bottle or Nalgene bottle and converts it into a hydration pack," Wessmen said.

Winning the second-place prize meant a lot for a small team that previously had no funding. The money allowed them to afford a prototype of the product and pay for initial startup costs.

"It was \$15,000 that we definitely did not have," Wessmen said. "It just enables us to accelerate a lot of our plans."

The competition, which has students from colleges and universities across the nation competing for a first-place \$30,000 prize, normally brings the 10 finalists to Ogden for the final round of competition. This year, due to COVID-19, everything had to pivot at the last minute to virtual.



Weber State students Madsen Wessmen (left), Chase Moffett (center) and Chance Blackman won second place in the Outdoor Weber national entrepreneurship competition.

## First-Ever Pacific Islander College Prep Night

Last fall, Weber State hosted its first event at the Davis campus location to help Pacific Islander K-12 students and their families prepare for college.

The Ohana Association (TOA), a WSU Center for Multicultural Excellence (CME) Pacific Islander student organization, once partnered with GearUp and its director, **Brandon Flores**, to bus students to a similar event held annually in Salt Lake City. However, those in Weber and Davis counties called for an option closer to home.

"I've had a lot of students and parents reach out to me and say 'Why don't we have something like that closer to where we are?'" said **Lulu Faumuia-Latu-Peters**, Weber State multicultural retention counselor and TOA advisor.

So, she teamed up with TOA officers to plan a new event.

The inaugural Pacific Islander College Prep Night offered students and parents information on degrees, scholarships and more at Weber State and four peer institutions. K-12 students at the event connected with Pacific Islander students currently in college, professors, college staff and community members through workshops and panel discussions.

"It was awesome to see younger students get involved and ask questions from us. Even though some were shy to ask, they still came up to us after the workshop to ask their questions," said **Finau Tauteoli**, 2019–20 TOA vice president. "It was also great to see the commitment from parents in bringing their students to this event and wanting information themselves to better help their students."

Since many K-12 students at the event would be first-generation college students, parents were educated too.

"I learned how important it is for our children to want to be successful students, and for that to happen, parents need to get involved and be the example," wrote one parent in a follow-up survey. "Also, FAFSA and scholarships are free money that we should start applying for ASAP."



The Ohana Association (TOA) hosted a Pacific Islander College Prep Night to assist students interested in higher education. Left to right: Lulu Faumuia-Latu-Peters, multicultural retention counselor and TOA club advisor; Finau Tauteoli, 2019–20 TOA vice president and 2020–21 president; Fusi Teisina 2019–20 TOA president

### 2019–2020 Pacific Islander College Prep Night by the Numbers

- › 103 Parents and Children
- › 25 WSU Student Volunteers
- › 57 K-12 Students
- › 5 Guest Presenters
- › 7 High School Seniors (2 Registered for College)
- › 15 Community and Student Organizations



## WSU PREP Recognized for Collaboration and Diversity

The WSU PREP program finished up its sixth year with multiple accolades, winning Weber State's 2019 Exemplary Collaboration Award and making the shortlist for the Airbus GEDC Diversity Award — a global awards program for engineering education.

The seven-week summer STEM boot camp for high-achieving junior high students focuses on populations that are often underrepresented in STEM fields, including girls, minorities and first-generation college students.

The PREP program requires many people working together to make it happen, said **Dana Dellinger**, WSU's Center for Applied Technology Outreach director.

"For that reason, it is especially sweet to win an award that recognizes the value of collaboration," Dellinger said.

PREP was one of 14 finalists for the 2019 Airbus GEDC Diversity Award for its work in increasing diversity in engineering, an award that Dellinger said is exciting to receive for a local program designed to benefit kids and families in the community.

"Having our work recognized as noteworthy and admirable by an organization seeking out great STEM programming worldwide gave us a wonderful sense of accomplishment," Dellinger said. "It is a unique compliment to Weber State and to all the partners who come together to bring PREP to our community."

Over the course of three summers, students are exposed to classes in STEM subjects such as math, engineering, and more. The students, ages 12–14, learn from industry, government and business professionals. The program first started in 2015 with 72 students, and by 2019, had grown to more than 191 students.

Despite challenges presented by a global pandemic, PREP adapted over the summer to make sure students still had access to the program. Through Zoom and Canvas, 171 students participated in classes, and they attended once-a-week PREP in the Park activities to meet one another and participate in activities.



## Weber State Criminal Justice Department Builds Ties with U.S. Marshals

Weber State is now one of two universities in Utah to establish an internship with the United States Marshals Service.

During spring semester 2020, two students majoring in criminal justice interned with the U.S. Marshals, the country's oldest federal law enforcement agency, known for transporting prisoners, searching for fugitives and protecting federal courts. These students were the first from Weber State to participate in the new internship, which will accept one Weber State criminal justice student each semester, tentatively starting in spring 2021, after a pause during summer and fall 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The great thing about the U.S. Marshals internship is that they do everything possible to expose interns to real life as a deputy marshal," said **Bruce Bayley**, professor of criminal justice and internship director in the criminal justice department. "A lot of what the agency does is quite dangerous and dynamic, so they can't bring interns on all of their activities, but they integrate interns anywhere they can."

Weber State students and administrators were able to learn more about the agency during a special visit in February 2020 from U.S. Marshal Matthew Harris, who oversees the agency's activities in Utah. Harris was accompanied by two Weber State graduates who majored in criminal justice: **Supervisory Deputy Marshal Nick Chournos**, former record-setting running back on Weber State's football team, and **Deputy Marshal Andy Desmond**, who now oversees recruiting and internships for the U.S. Marshals in Utah.

Desmond suggested that the agency work with Weber State because he knew from firsthand experience that the university has a fantastic criminal justice program, he said.

Through the internship, Desmond hopes to help students who aspire to become deputy marshals or join other federal law enforcement agencies by exposing them to "the things that they need to know about in order to make their dreams happen," he said.



# GREAT, GREAT, GREAT FOOTBALL SEASON

## THE HISTORIC WINS JUST KEEP COMING FOR WEBER STATE FOOTBALL

The Wildcats won their third-straight Big Sky Conference title with a 7-1 record during the regular season, earning the No. 3 seed in the FCS Playoffs and advancing to the semi-finals for the first time in team history. Overall, the Wildcats finished the season 11-4, a tie for the most victories in school history. But the Wildcats weren't satisfied with just those accolades.

The team finished the 2019 season ranked third in the country in the FCS STATS media poll and the AFCA Coaches poll — the highest end-of-season ranking ever for the team. Weber State led the Big Sky with 14 players selected to the all-conference teams, including five players named to the first team. Senior defensive end **Jonah Williams** was named the Co-Defensive Player of the Year, becoming the fifth player in team history to earn defensive honors. Williams ended the season with 62 tackles, with a total of 7.5 sacks for a loss of 68 yards. He was also named the 2019–20 Weber State Male Athlete of the Year and the Big Sky Scholar Athlete. In April 2020, Williams signed as a free agent with the Los Angeles Rams.

Head coach **Jay Hill**, who is returning for his seventh season, was named the AFCA Region 5 Coach of the Year in 2019. Hill led the Wildcats to a perfect 8-0 home record in 2019, and has the highest conference winning percentage in program history.

In July, the Wildcats were named No. 1 in both the Big Sky Conference media and coaches 2020 preseason polls, another first in team history. Eight players were also named to the preseason all-conference team.



# RISING STARS ON WSU'S VOLLEYBALL COURT

Weber State volleyball had a big year on the court in 2019, sweeping Northern Arizona University to make their second appearance in the Big Sky Conference championship since 1988 and earning their second postseason appearance in school history. The Wildcats ended the 2019 season with a 26-9 overall record, entering the Big Sky Conference tournament as the No. 2 seed and finishing in the postseason with a 13-5 record.

The Wildcats recorded 20 or more wins this season for the first time since 2008, and the team's 26 wins season is the second-highest total on record at Weber State. Junior setter **Ashlyn Power** ended the season with 1,459 assists, becoming Weber State's all-time assist leader with 3,703 in her career and breaking a 35-year-old Weber State record. Freshman Dani Nay was named the 2019 Big Sky Freshman of the Year, finishing the regular season as the fifth-best hitter in the conference and with the most kills of any freshman this season. The team also picked up its first and second postseason wins in school history by taking down Boise State before a competitive five set victory over the University of Wyoming in the Womens' NIVC tournament.



# TWO BIG HIRES IN ATHLETICS

Weber State Athletics welcomed new faces to important positions in the 2019–20 academic year.

In December 2019, **Tim Crompton** was named as the Wildcats' new director of intercollegiate athletics. He had been operating as the department's interim director since May 2019, replacing previous director Jerry Bovee. Crompton is a familiar face to Wildcat athletics, having coached WSU women's soccer for 15 years prior to his selection.

During his coaching career, Crompton was voted the Big Sky Coach of the Year three times (2004, 2005, 2018). His teams won regular-season titles three times (2004, 2008, 2018), and Big Sky Conference Tournament championships three times (2004, 2005, 2013). He is also a Weber State alumnus, earning both a bachelor's and master's degree.

In February, **Meagan Thunell** was named the associate athletics director and senior woman administrator for Wildcat Athletics. Thunell is a member of the Weber State Athletics Hall of Fame and played soccer at Weber State from 1998–2001, helping the Wildcats go to their first-ever Big Sky Conference Championship as a freshman in 1998.

Thunell spent 14 seasons as an assistant soccer coach for the Wildcats before serving as the interim head coach during the 2019 season. Thunell earned her bachelor's degree with a double major at Weber State, followed by two master's degrees.

## LOCKER ROOM Research

Two of Weber State football's senior linemen combined their passion for sports and science in 2019 to research the spread of germs in the locker room and how it can be combated — all while playing essential parts in the Wildcats historic 2019 season.

Offensive lineman Xavier Stilson, 26, and defensive end Kawika Tupuola, 24, submitted and presented their research paper, "Microbial Load Reduction in Athletic Locker Rooms Using Ozone Treatment," at Weber State's 16th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, which was held virtually in April 2020. Three other students assisted on the research, which involved testing the effect of ozone on bacteria like *E. coli* and *S. aureus*, commonly found in locker rooms.

"We picked this topic because it sort of allowed Xavier and I to mix our passions of 'nerding out' and sports. It allowed us to create the perfect little niche that we loved to be in," Tupuola said. "In the end, we were also able to present the information to our teammates, which turned out to be a really cool experience."

Controlled samples of the bacteria were placed in various spots in the Wildcats football locker room and training area while an ozone generator ran. Their research noted a significant difference in the bacteria kill rate from the generator running two hours (88%) versus three hours (98%), Stilson said.

Planning, conduction and presenting the data on their microbiology project was one of Stilson's best experiences as a student at Weber State, he said.

Stilson, who graduated in fall 2019, majored in microbiology and plans on attending medical school. Tupuola, an exercise science major, plans to graduate in fall 2020 and pursue a career as a physician assistant. The two men often had conversations about football and academics, as well as their desire to go into the medical field and make a difference.

"We may not have been the best on the field, or best in the classroom, but we wanted to make differences where we could," Stilson said. "Showing our fans from football and our peers from our classes and football that you can do much more than just sit on the sidelines and wait for someone else to pick up the torch is doable."



## Excellence IN SPORTS AND IN CLASS

### THE BIG SKY PRESIDENTS' CUP HAS RETURNED TO WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY'S TROPHY CABINETS

Weber State Athletics received the 2018–19 Presidents' Cup, given to a Big Sky Conference athletics program for success in both academics and athletics each year. The Wildcats finished second overall in athletic standing, totaling 10 top-five finishes in the 2018–19 season, and second in academic standings with a 3.34 department-wide GPA. More than 160 student-athletes earned Big Sky Academic All-Conferences honors during the year.

Weber State received its first two Presidents' Cup awards in 2003 and 2004. In total, the Wildcats have won the cup a league record of five times in the last 17 years.



## Impressive APR SCORE

The Wildcats also boasted high numbers in the latest multi-year NCAA Division I Academic Progress Report (APR), released in May. The latest multi-year APR calculations included scores from academic years 2015 to 2019. All Weber State squads were above the NCAA minimum score of 930 and 11 of the 14 programs finished above 950.

The APR accounts for eligibility, retention and graduation of all student-athletes on scholarship, and provides a measure of each team's academic performance.



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