



WEBER STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Achieving Brilliance.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



## Dear Weber State Family:

Earlier this year, I was at a gathering of university presidents in Seattle. One of my counterparts told the group that her institution faced a \$4 million cut. In the same sentence, she said she was excited for the future.

I can totally relate.

Closer to home, our state lawmakers enacted legislation requiring Utah's degree-granting institutions to develop reallocation funding plans. For Weber State University, that meant cutting \$6.7 million from our budget, ideally by identifying underperforming programs with low enrollments, few graduates, and little if any market demand, and eliminating them.

If the legislature accepts the proposed cuts, Weber State has the opportunity to reclaim the funding and invest it in high-performing degree programs or areas that meet future students' and employers' needs.

While this was an agonizing process, I, too, am excited about the future and confident that Weber State is well-positioned to continue to educate our students and prepare them for careers that will power Utah's economy.

That spirit of forward thinking is evident in our newly remodeled McKay Education Building, with innovative labs and spaces to train the next generation of Utah teachers and child care professionals (page 33).

We continue to invest in high-yield programs that meet industry needs, including on-site courses at Hill Air Force Base (page 39) and the launch of our new Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program (page 27). This past academic year also saw the first Master of Physician Assistant Studies graduates (page 11).

True to our core theme of making education accessible to all, we launched our direct admissions initiative for high school seniors in Davis, Morgan, Ogden, and Weber school districts (page 4). We also reduced educational costs for current students by replacing physical textbooks with open educational resources (page 3).

These are just a handful of the innovations you'll read about in this year's report, and why I am confident that the difficult decisions made this spring will help ensure a brilliant future for Weber State and our students.



Brad Mortensen  
President

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TOP 10 DEGREE AREAS

(Degrees awarded for academic year 2020–21 through 2024–25, excluding general studies)

- 1 Nursing.....4,471
- 2 School of Computing.....2,962
- 3 School of Radiologic Sciences....1,670
- 4 Professional Sales .....1,097
- 5 Health Sciences.....1,018
- 6 Medical Laboratory Sciences .....969
- 7 World Languages & Cultures .....845
- 8 Criminal Justice.....785
- 9 Teacher Education.....783
- 10 Health Administrative Services.....718

STUDENTS SAVE WITH OER

Weber State eases the burden of expensive textbooks and course materials through Open Educational Resources, which are materials in the public domain or released under a license allowing them to be freely used, modified, or shared.

The university’s Stewart Library awards grants, funded by the Provost’s Office and the library, for faculty to train in using or creating their own OER materials. Additional funding has come from private donors, including the Sally Langsdon Barefoot Foundation in 2024 and 2025.

\$58,491 2024 OER Grants to Faculty

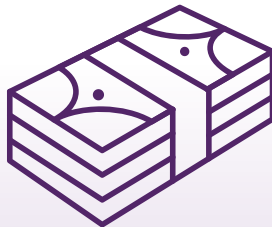
\$534,401 2024–25 OER Student Savings

The Department of Psychological Science adopted OER materials for Introductory Psychology classes for university students and high school students in concurrent enrollment, saving approximately 3,070 students a total of \$516,865 per year.

\$70,615

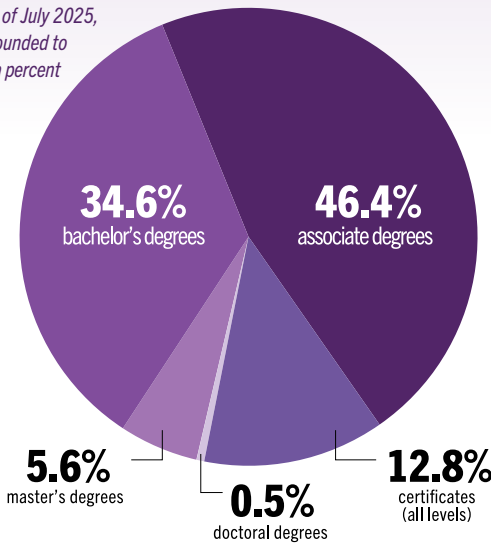
Median BS/BA Graduate Salary

(Based on fifth-year median wages of 2019–20 bachelor’s degree graduates)



2024–25 Distribution of Degrees & Awards\*

\*Preliminary data as of July 2025, subject to change, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent



WSU IN THE COMMUNITY

Students Serving

3,126 students recorded 90,961.92 community engagement hours in 2024–25.\*

\*Preliminary data as of July 2025, subject to change

Community engaged learning (CEL) courses combine academic coursework with educational experiences that encourage engagement with community members, partners, and organizations. This experiential learning utilizes skills and knowledge gained in the classroom by connecting students with the community and provides educational opportunities that help address community priorities. In 2024–25, 7,014 students took part in 428 CEL courses.

Discover how WSU stays involved in the community at [weber.edu/ccel](https://weber.edu/ccel).

Weber Cares Pantry

(July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025)

- Client visits: 3,777
- Pounds of food distributed: 25,663.95

DEDICATION TO SUSTAINABILITY

Weber State cut electricity consumption by 31%, natural gas consumption by 51%, waste going to landfills by 32%, total greenhouse gas emissions by 43%, and water consumption by 29% as of fiscal year 2024 based on a 2007 baseline.

WSU has saved over \$27.3 million in avoided utility costs since 2007.

During fiscal year 2025

- 96 departments participated in the Green Department Certification Program, which incentivizes departments to make campus more sustainable.
- 32 departments offered one or more classes with content related to sustainability.
- Students, faculty, and staff earned 177 badges through the Green Badge program, which offers sustainability learning through events, readings, volunteer work, and more.

Over half of WSU facilities use electricity instead of natural gas for cooling and heating.

GREEN COLLEGE

2017-2025

Princeton Review

LEADING IN CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

With over 16,000 concurrent enrollment students, Weber State is a top institution for Utah teens getting a head start on college. The Utah Legislature annually funds concurrent enrollment, which allows students to receive college credit for classes they take in high school. Nationally, WSU ranks highest in CE students among four-year colleges, according to the most recent data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

At \$5 per credit hour, WSU Concurrent Enrollment offers more than 130 courses to help students save money, complete their degrees, and enter the workforce sooner.

EMERGING HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION INITIATIVE

Hispanic and Latino students represented 13.2% of students in fall 2024, making strides toward WSU’s goal to become an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution with 15% and more closely represent the demographics of its service region.



DIRECT ADMISSIONS

Weber State was one of three Utah institutions that made higher education more accessible and affordable by starting direct admissions in fall 2024, automatically admitting over 10,000 high school seniors in Davis, Morgan, and Weber counties.

With this ongoing initiative, students won’t need to go through the application process. They will already have student records on file and will only need to fill out an interest form to receive more information on how to enroll at Weber State.



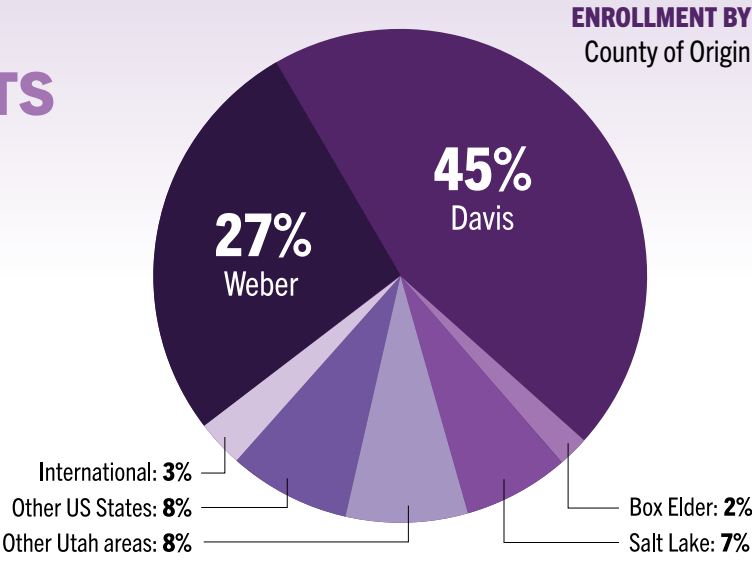
A LOOK AT WSU’S BRILLIANT STUDENTS

FALL 2024 THIRD WEEK ENROLLMENT STATS:

32,701

Total Enrollment

- Students from all 50 US states and 71 foreign countries attended WSU.
- 892 veterans attended WSU.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

20:1 Student-to-faculty Ratio

83% Faculty With Terminal Degrees

225+ Degree Programs

20 Graduate Programs

including the Doctor of Nursing Practice

25+ Online Degree and Certificate Programs

NATIONWIDE RANKINGS

Wall Street Journal in cooperation with College Pulse and Statista 2025 America’s Best Colleges

U.S. News & World Report 2025 Best Regional Universities Public 2025 Best Regional Universities West

Forbes 2025 Top Colleges

Niche 2025 Best Colleges in America 2025 Best Colleges in Utah 2025 Best College Campuses in America

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

WSU provided more than \$105.2 million in scholarships and financial aid to 14,057 students in the 2024–25 academic year.\*

\*Preliminary data as of June 2025, subject to change



# Brilliant Students.

**WSU students find success in innovative programs and high-impact experiences.**

Weber State University's Outdoor Program hosts the Experience Weber campout at Pineview Reservoir to kick off the school year and welcome new students.

# 7 BUSINESS STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO CARNEGIE MELLON GRADUATE PROGRAMS

From Left: Jacob Lowe, Bryan Escobedo, Landon Francis, Olivia Brown, Isaiah Wood, and Braxton Gray. Not pictured: Porter Geddes.



After graduating from Weber State in spring 2025, seven John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics students went on to Carnegie Mellon University to earn their master's degrees, marking a 100% acceptance rate for WSU business students who applied.

More than 50 Weber State students have attended grad school at CMU since 2018, when Weber signed an educational partnership with the university in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

WSU professor **Randy Boyle** said the partnership, which includes summer internship opportunities at CMU, provides students with a pathway to better jobs, higher salaries, and faster promotions.

**Olivia Brown** earned degrees in management information systems and business economics at WSU and received a full scholarship to CMU. She plans to study business intelligence and data analytics, eyeing a career in risk modeling based on her experience working at the Federal

Deposit Insurance Corporation and her undergraduate research conducted under the guidance of professors **Gavin Roberts** and **Brandon Koford**.

**Isaiah Wood** earned a management information systems degree from WSU and is interested in community safety. He'll study information security policy and management at CMU.

"I'm studying how digital and physical attacks can impact our power grids, water supplies, and national defense systems," Wood said. "I'm committed to protecting our communities."

Wood appreciates the mentorship and guidance WSU faculty provided during his undergraduate studies. "My professors have shown me the strength and quality of our education," he said. "They've affirmed that we belong in high-achieving positions. I can't wait to see what more we will do."

**100%** | ACCEPTANCE RATE FOR WSU  
GODDARD SCHOOL STUDENTS

# AMAZING AUDIENCES LOCALLY & INTERNATIONALLY

## SYMPHONIC BAND WOWS STATE BANDMASTERS

The Weber State Symphonic Band performed for the Utah Bandmasters Association Conference in St. George, Utah, in January. The band was selected through an audition process and prepared for the event throughout the fall 2024 semester.

Under the direction of **Steven Hendricks**, the WSU students gave a masterful performance for most of Utah's middle school, junior high, high school, and college band directors.

"The performance earned a standing ovation from perhaps the most discriminating audience any band from Weber State has ever performed for," Hendricks said. "This performance solidified our place as a true destination for students looking to pursue a degree in music or simply to continue playing their instrument in college."

The band received a plaque from the Utah Bandmasters Association honoring its achievement, and Hendricks received a citation of excellence.



Photo courtesy of Sam Bryson

**"This performance solidified our place as a true destination for students looking to pursue a degree in music or simply to continue playing their instrument in college."**

— **Steven Hendricks**  
Director of WSU Bands

## ORCHESTRA AND CHOIRS TRAVEL TO SPAIN

The WSU Symphony Orchestra and choirs traveled to southern Spain to perform two sold-out concerts and visit monuments in several cities in the spring. **Francisco de Galvez**, director of orchestral studies at WSU and a native of Málaga, Spain, led the study abroad concert tour. Assistant professor **Dalan Guthrie** directed the choir. WSU students and faculty interacted with local artists, teachers, and institutions, including the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Málaga and the Diputación de Málaga, the cultural government office that invited the group.

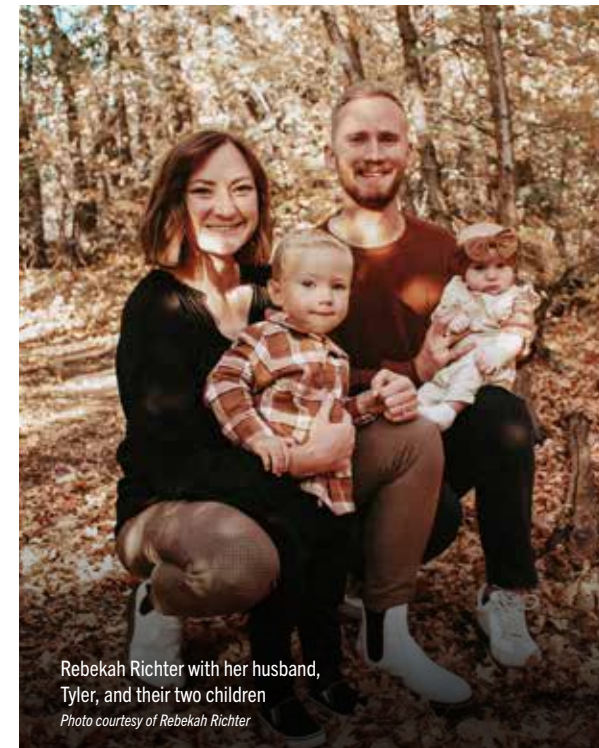


Photos courtesy of Yu-Jane Yang

**TOP RIGHT:** The WSU Symphonic Band performs for the Utah Bandmasters Association Conference in St. George, Utah.

**TOP LEFT:** WSU Director of Keyboard Studies Yu-Jane Yang, Director of Strings Studies Shi-Hwa Wang, and Spanish cellist Cesar Jimenez served as soloists performing Beethoven's Triple Concerto for Violin, Piano, Cello and Orchestra in two sold-out concert performances with the WSU Symphony Orchestra. The concerts also featured WSU choir performances.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Conservatorio Superior de Música de Málaga piano students and Professor Antonio Ortiz join WSU piano students and WSU Director of Keyboard Studies Yu-Jane Yang for a photo. Ortiz taught four of the WSU piano students while Yang taught three students from the Málaga conservatory in a joint piano master class.



Rebekah Richter with her husband, Tyler, and their two children  
Photo courtesy of Rebekah Richter

## 'There's a path for everyone' First student to utilize TechTransfer graduates from WSU

**Rebekah Richter** is the first student to graduate by taking advantage of TechTransfer, which allows anyone with a Utah technical college certificate to earn up to 21 elective credits toward any undergraduate certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree at Weber State. Richter initially came to WSU in 2020 but paused to focus on family. The cosmetology certificate she later earned at Ogden-Weber Technical College equated to 21 credits at WSU, allowing her to complete an associate degree in general studies — finishing what she started five years prior. She plans to return for a bachelor's degree.



## First class of physician assistants

Weber State's first cohort of physician assistants graduated in December 2024. The Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions launched the Master of Physician Assistant Studies in 2023 to fulfill the community's growing need for qualified medical providers. **Mariah Palter** joined the program after earning her undergraduate degree in microbiology.

While challenging, she said the master's program was an incredible experience. "I'm so glad I chose Weber and would not have wanted to go anywhere else," she said.

The first cohort of students in Weber State University's Department of Physician Assistant Medicine receive their white coats during the program's first White Coat Ceremony on Dec. 14, 2023.



## AND THE WINNERS ARE

- **David Guerrero and Chloe Kinnavongsa** won first place in the Music Video category for *The Necklace Song*.
- Recent digital media graduate **Dusty Bessire** won second place in the Short Narrative Film Screenwriting category for *Quiet, Arlo*.
- Film studies major and cross country standout **Peter Visser** received an Award of Excellence for his screenplay *No Father of Mine*.
- **Bessire, Zander Cooper, and Ashlynn Maughan** earned an Award of Excellence for their short film *Limelight*.

## MEDIA STUDENTS DISPLAY CREATIVITY AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

For Assistant Professor of Digital Media **Aaron Atkins**, the highlight of the Broadcast Educators Association and National Association of Broadcasters conference in Las Vegas last April wasn't presenting on his research or serving as a panelist. It was watching 14 WSU students experience the event.

"Our students perform at such a high level, and their creativity is fantastic," Atkins said. "I love to see them recognized for it."

During the four-day conference and trade show, several media production students received awards for their work and served as panelists at various sessions at the BEA Festival of Media

Arts. They also explored career options, networked with professionals in the field, and got an inside look at the latest trends in broadcast and media.

Atkins said they were "like kids at the candy store, seeing all the industry's shiny new toys." The conference also helped them appreciate the quality equipment they get to learn on at Weber State compared to students at other schools.

For recent film studies graduate **Chloe Kinnavongsa**, interacting with the state-of-the-art equipment she had only previously seen online felt like a dream. She also pushed herself out of her

comfort zone by speaking on a panel after a video she co-created with fellow film studies student **David Guerrero** won first place.

"This was such a moment of validation, the first time being recognized as a filmmaker," said Kinnavongsa. She loved "getting to network with other filmmakers, hear their stories, and share ideas. It reminded me that filmmaking is not just about the tools we use but also about the people we collaborate with. Listening to others' creative journeys was both inspiring and humbling."

Guerrero, who grew up in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, said he is "eternally grateful" for the second chance scholarship he received when he came back to school in 2023, and for the support of faculty like Atkins.

"Being at Weber State has been one of the biggest and most rewarding experiences I've had," Guerrero said. "I've been so lucky to have met the people I did at Weber State and all the support I've received."

"Our students perform at such a high level, and their creativity is fantastic. I love to see them recognized for it."

— **Aaron Atkins**  
Assistant Professor of  
Digital Media

First place winners in the music video category, David Guerrero (second from left) and Chloe Kinnavongsa (third from right), and second place short narrative film and Award of Excellence for a short film winner Dustin Bessire (second from right) celebrate with classmates at the BEA's Festival of Media Arts.

Photo courtesy of Studio 76

# Brilliant Faculty & Staff.

Weber State faculty and staff are known for their expertise, creativity, and, above all, dedication to students.

**‘Transformative’ leadership  
in higher education**

Former Vice Provost **Brenda Kowalewski** received the 2024 Barbara A. Holland Scholar-Administrator Award from the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, which honors a scholar-administrator whose leadership and intellectual voice illuminates the transformative power of urban and metropolitan higher education.

Until May 2025, Kowalewski served as vice provost of high impact educational experiences, faculty excellence, and international and graduate studies at WSU.

Kowalewski co-created the Office of Community Development and championed faculty development in inclusive pedagogy through the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning.

In 2016, she convened a coalition of seven institutions in Ogden to help revitalize East Central Ogden. That coalition, the Ogden Civic Action Network, strengthens local partnerships in health, education, built environment, economic stability, and social fabric.

Since WSU opened the Center for Community Engaged Learning in 2006, Kowalewski has garnered national attention for Weber’s commitment to connecting coursework with university-community engaged work. Under her leadership as founding director, the center became a national model for such collaborative efforts.

“The opportunity to engage in this work with a group of passionate colleagues from both campus and community has been one of the greatest honors of my life,” Kowalewski said.

— *Recipient of the 2024* —  
**BARBARA A. HOLLAND  
SCHOLAR-ADMINISTRATOR  
AWARD**  
*From the Coalition of  
Urban and Metropolitan  
Universities*



**NEW  
FACES  
ON CAMPUS**

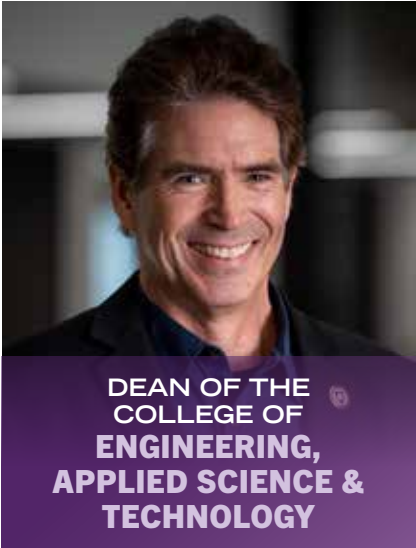
**WEBER STATE WELCOMED NEW  
LEADERS FOR A VARIETY OF  
AREAS THIS SUMMER FOLLOWING  
NATIONWIDE SEARCHES.**



**Mark Halverson**, who has held leadership roles at WSU in facilities management, campus planning, and information technology, was selected as the new vice president of Administrative Services in July. In his new role, Halverson oversees essential administrative functions, including information technology, financial services, facilities management, public safety, human resources, and athletics. “Administrative Services has some amazing people supporting our faculty and staff,” he said. “My wish is to continuously improve this support so they can continue to make Weber State great.”



**Jeremy Oller**, WSU’s new John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics dean, previously served as dean of the College of Business at the University of Central Oklahoma, where he led initiatives to strengthen academic quality, student engagement, and industry partnerships. Oller was drawn to WSU’s commitment to student success and high-quality staff and faculty. “The Goddard School is already doing a great job, so what I’m hoping to bring is excitement and the ability to keep the momentum going,” he said. “I see the Goddard School’s vision, and I know we can be known as a top regional school in the western United States.”



**Brian Rague** assumed the role of dean of the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology in July. Rague, who brings more than 21 years of experience guiding and promoting Weber State to the role, previously served as associate dean of EAST and chair of the Department of Computer Science. As dean, Rague oversees seven academic programs, nine college centers, 100 faculty members, 30 staff members, and about 3,200 student majors. “I’ve been fortunate enough to have interacted with quite a few folks across the university,” Rague said. “And everyone is invested in student success across the board, so I’m excited to leverage that existing camaraderie.”



**Ali Threet** started her role as Weber State’s dean of students last summer. During her 15 years of higher education leadership experience, including a recent role as assistant vice president and dean of students at Utah Tech University, she has been known for her commitment to a welcoming environment, collaboration, and student success. “My primary goal for students at WSU is to ensure that every student feels like they belong,” Threet said. “I love spending time with students, asking them questions, and getting to know their various circumstances and what’s happening in their lives. I love getting to know what makes them feel like they fit, where they’re excited, and where they’re struggling.”

**PROVOST &  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**Leslie Durham**, who previously served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Boise State University, has joined Weber State as provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs. Among her successes as dean, Durham launched four new academic programs and three new schools within her college. WSU’s student-focused mission brought her to Utah. “I see Weber State thriving despite the challenges due to its deep commitment to student success,” she said. “It’s a big deal moving to Utah from Boise State because I’ve been there for 24 years, so only a place as special as Weber State could convince me to pull up those deep roots.”



MICROBIOLOGY  
PROFESSOR SPEAKS AT  
**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF  
SCIENCES CONFERENCE**  
IN JAPAN

Weber State University microbiology professor **Katrina Twing** spoke about her research into the origins of life at a prestigious National Academy of Sciences conference in Japan in October 2024.

Twing was one of six Americans who presented at the 2024 Japanese-American-German Kavli Frontiers of Science conference in Kyoto, Japan. Twing was asked to talk about the origins of life — specifically her research into “life molecules” found in deep sea volcano vents.

Twing studies unique deep sea vents that are home to a special geochemical process that can release organic molecules starting from just water and rocks. These organic molecules (hydrogen and methane, among others) could have helped create and sustain life in an extreme environment without sunlight.

Studying the microbes found in extreme environments is important to understanding not only the origin of life on Earth but may also lead to finding life on other planets, Twing said.

“I think it’s human nature to ask where we come from. But we’re closer to being able to answer it than ever before,” she said. “I don’t know if we’re going to find a conclusive answer ... but I think that each little piece of this puzzle that we can kind of click into place can help us understand where we’ve been, maybe understand the world around us now a little bit better and understand the future.”

Twing was awarded the WSU Emerging Researcher Award in 2024. She also recently received a Utah NASA Space Grant to try to grow a bacterium relevant to the origin of life from the Great Salt Lake.



## College of Science professors earn top awards for 2024

**Heather Root**, associate professor of botany and plant ecology, was named the 2024 Hinckley Fellow for excellence in teaching, service, and research. Since 2014, Root has uplifted



WSU students through education and mentorship. Her ties to the U.S. Geological Survey Moab Office and Ogden Nature Center create opportunities for students to participate in research alongside professionals in the field. Root also has a national reputation as an expert in lichenology, with 44 peer-reviewed manuscripts that have been cited 826 times.

Professors **Bridget Hilbig** and **James Cohen** from the Department of Botany & Plant Ecology earned the Exemplary Interdisciplinary Collaboration Award for collaborative efforts to improve undergraduate STEM education through two highly successful projects: the BOTANY Scientists and PROGRESS Postdoctoral Fellow programs. Over the past two years, these projects have helped increase recruitment to STEM programs at WSU. Both projects received National Science Foundation grants, resulting in \$1.5 million in funds.

LEFT: Associate Professor of Botany and Plant Ecology Heather Root received the 2024 John S. Hinckley Fellow Award.

## Professor commits to student success, service learning

When students in the Department of Health, Physical Education & Recreation talk about how Weber State changed their lives for the better, many have professor **James Zagrodnik** in mind.

Along with his passionate and engaging teaching style, Zagrodnik is known as founder and director of Children's Adaptive Physical Education Society — better known as CAPES! — a skill development initiative for children with developmental disabilities in and around Ogden.

Through CAPES, Zagrodnik has created opportunities for WSU students to earn more than 22,000 service-learning hours in preparation for their careers as educators, while also uplifting the lives of local families.

Committed to student success and mentorship, Zagrodnik has positively shaped students' college experience through New Zealand Adventures, a study abroad program that immerses students in Māori culture and perspectives on health, physical activity, and environmental stewardship.

His groundbreaking research on the physiological effects of pickleball has opened new avenues in the field and provided undergraduate students with valuable hands-on experience.

Zagrodnik's advocacy for both faculty and students has strengthened programs and streamlined university operations. This year, along with sociology professor **Marjukka Ollilainen**, he was named Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor. He has also earned the Career Champion Award in 2024 and Crystal Crest Master Teacher Award in 2018.



## WEBER STATE PROFESSOR DEVELOPING AT-HOME CANCER DETECTION DEVICE

**Bharath Babu Nunna**, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, dreams of a world where early cancer detection helps save lives — before any doctor's appointment.

For the past decade, Nunna has worked on a device to do just that. "The objective of this research is to develop a self-evaluation tool, which is a standalone device that can help to detect cancer by the patient instantaneously," he said.

Nunna collaborates with researchers from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Hackensack University Medical Center, and Weill Cornell Medical College on the project. With funding from the National Science Foundation, the team is in the planning stages for FDA approval and clinical trials. They plan to complete trials and receive approval in the next three years and are working with reimbursement and regulatory strategists in hopes of making it sooner.

The device functions similarly to a glucometer (a device diabetes patients use to measure the concentration of glucose in the blood). The results are integrated into a smartphone

app, enabling the data to be tracked, correlated, and analyzed to generate timely alerts that prompt the patient to take the next steps in cancer screening and treatment.

Nunna's innovation has received multiple national honors, including the TechConnect National Innovation Award and the Defense Innovation Award. He also received an international Best Design Award for Healthcare Innovations and Point-of-Care Technologies from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and its Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society, presented at the National Institutes of Health.

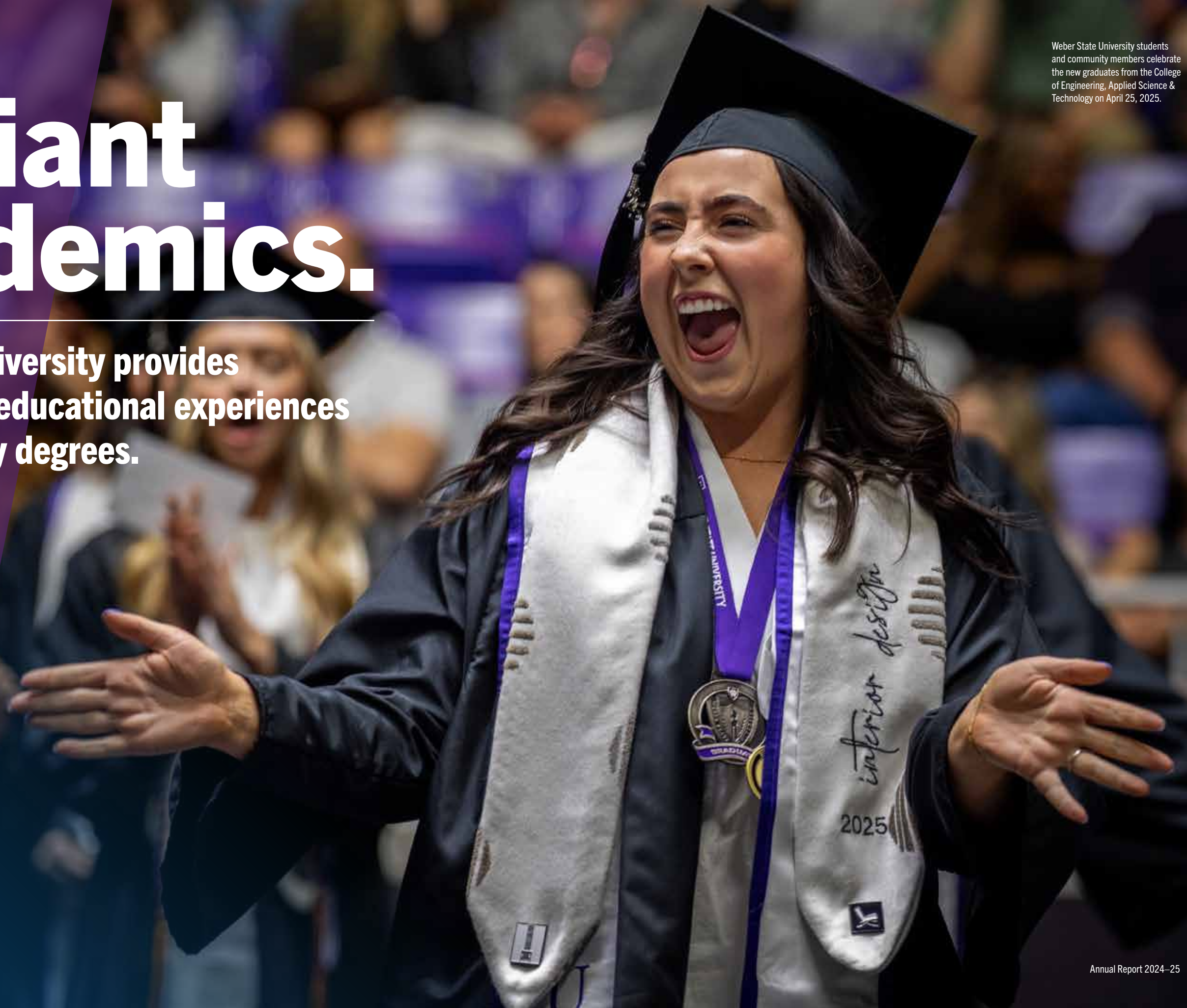
Mechanical engineering major **Shanti Bahik**, who has supported Nunna in his cancer screening research, said the experience has taught her more than textbooks ever could.

"I've learned how research really works — from forming a hypothesis and testing ideas to refining solutions that have real impact," she said. "This experience has helped me grow not just as a student but as an aspiring engineer committed to making a difference."

# Brilliant Academics.

**Weber State University provides  
transformative educational experiences  
and high-quality degrees.**

Weber State University students  
and community members celebrate  
the new graduates from the College  
of Engineering, Applied Science &  
Technology on April 25, 2025.



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL

## YIELDS IN-DEMAND SKILLS

Students in Weber State's anthropology program attend archaeological field school each year to develop skills in artifact classification, mapping, surface survey methods, excavation techniques, and more.

In June 2024, students worked on one of the oldest sites in field school history: the Colby Mammoth site in Wyoming. This approximately 12,800-year-old mammoth butchery site was discovered and excavated in the 1970s.

The site contains the remains of at least seven mammoths concentrated into two big piles. Anthropologists theorize the piles were caches where hunters stored the mammoths' meat.

Under the direction of former WSU assistant professor **Madeline Mackie** and University of Wyoming assistant

professor **Briana Doering**, students used ground-penetrating radar and augers to reanalyze the site and look for additional archaeological deposits.

**Brennan Brown**, who was a student in the field school, says the experience has helped him in his career. Brown graduated from WSU in spring 2025 with degrees in anthropology and psychology. He now works as an archaeologist at an architectural engineering firm.

"One of the tasks I was given ... was to do maps, and I was like, 'Cool, I learned this at the Colby Mammoth site,'" Brown said. "I had the basic skills because of field school to accomplish something, because not every place is going to be available to train you."

Students from the Department of Sociology & Anthropology hone their excavation and research skills at the Colby Mammoth site near Worland, Wyoming.

## DANCE PROGRAM FINDS ITS SPOTLIGHT, COLLABS WITH LOCAL COMPANIES

Weber State's Dance Program enjoyed another fruitful year in 2024–25, celebrating several milestones that mirror artistic innovation and community engagement.

*COINCIDENCES*, an original work by WSU Assistant Professor of Dance **Joseph "jo" Blake**, evolved through four dynamic iterations: *coincidences, when we meet up* premiered with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company in 2022, and *coincidences, when we meet, again* premiered at WSU featuring dance students that same year. A third iteration, *COINCIDENCES*, premiered at Dumke Arts Plaza with WSU performers in October 2023 and featured an ongoing installation until April 2024. WSU dancers premiered the latest edition of *COINCIDENCES* as part of a Ririe-Woodbury production in Salt Lake City in January 2025.

In April, WSU's Orchestis Dance Theatre put on three performances of *Finer Points*, a lively evening of

contemporary dance and visual artistry. The program also collaborated with Repertory Dance Theatre choreographer **Nicholas Cedense**, who worked with students and faculty to create RDT and Orchestis Dance Theatre performances.

Additionally, students were selected to present at the American College Dance Association conference (ACDA) High Desert Regional Conference at the University of Wyoming, highlighting students' growing creative voices. Ten students, including choreographers **Kelli Kerner**, **Gabby Miller**, and **Elli Thornley**, represented Weber State.

"Dance is a global language," Blake said. "Our curriculum reflects that by offering students exposure to a broad range of dance forms, histories, and cultural lineages from all over the world."

Orchestis Dance Theatre's  
*Sketches in Motion*  
Photo by Jessica Evans



Weber State student Clementine Rane demonstrates netting and tagging birds at an event for university donors in Island Park, Idaho.

# WSU SECURES LAND FOR SITE OF FUTURE YELLOWSTONE FIELD STATION

Yellowstone National Park and its surrounding ecosystem has the largest concentration of wildlife in the lower 48 states, dark skies, and more than 10,000 thermal features. Soon, the area will also be home to WSU’s first field station.

Thanks to donor support — including a \$1 million combined gift from Mary Hall, George Hall, and Mary Ann Miller last year — the field station is closer to fruition. WSU purchased 47 acres in Island Park, Idaho, for the station. The property is located just outside of Yellowstone and is near Henrys Lake State Park. It’s a four-hour drive from the Ogden campus, giving students convenient access to a world-renowned environment. Once constructed, the field station will feature dormitories, research areas, and space inside and outside to gather and connect with classmates. **Clementine Rane**, an environmental science major, said field research changed her life. She discovered a

breeding population of boreal owls, which were not previously known to exist in Utah. “I now know what I want to study and what I want to do because of my time in the field,” Rane said. With a WSU field station, more students from disciplines across the university will have hands-on learning opportunities like those that shaped Rane’s trajectory.

**47 ACRES** | **LAND OWNED BY WSU IN ISLAND PARK, IDAHO**

# Meeting a need for mental and behavioral healthcare

Weber State launched its psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner emphasis in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program in January 2025. The program focuses on training students for the PMHNP certification exam so they can be licensed as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), who focus on mental and behavioral health. Sixteen students make up the program’s first cohort, and they’re expected to graduate in April 2027.

Data from the Health Resources and Services Administration and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows a large and growing need for APRNs now and in the future.



# TEACHING FROM EXPERIENCE

MBA STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM NEW EXECUTIVE-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

32+ YEARS

TREWET'S EXPERIENCE AT BOEING

11 STUDENTS

FIRST COHORT OF EXECUTIVE-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM



In summer 2024, students earning a Master of Business Administration took part in Weber State's first Executive-in-Residence program, addressing a university goal of incorporating high-impact educational experiences.

**Craig Trewet**, a retired Boeing executive and current WSU National Advisory Council Chair, mentored an initial cohort of 11 students.

"By engaging a professional mentor with significant career experiences, you can learn about people, situations, or programs in an environment conducive to learning and reflection," Trewet said.

After an initial one-on-one meeting with each mentee, Trewet tailors five personalized sessions to meet students' needs. That can range from preparing for job interviews to completing class assignments to navigating a challenging workplace dynamic.

"You can never have enough people in your court to advocate when you are not in the room," said Trewet, a WSU alum who self-identifies as a "readiness accelerator."

After the program's initial success, Trewet supported a second cohort of 10 students in spring 2025. The MBA program also added a second executive-in-residence, Brigadier General (retired) **Max Stützer**.

Recent MBA graduate **Alex Leonardi**, part of the spring 2025 cohort, valued the mentoring as he prepared for his current role in economic development with Davis County, following a decade spent as an athletic trainer.

"The EIR was like a self-investment tool. We had access to a very successful professional that wanted to sit down and talk about me and help me find success," Leonardi said. "There aren't too many times in life, especially as we get older, that talking about yourself to others is welcomed — other than therapy."

Trewet helped Leonardi map out possible career paths and introduced him to professional connections in the economic development field.

"This really helped me define career goals that are in line with my personal and professional priorities," Leonardi said.

Craig Trewet, left, served as the Master of Business Administration's first Executive-in-Residence to mentor MBA students, including Alex Leonardi, right.

**"Shifting from success to significance, I am honored to give back to the university that so well prepared me for my career and share time, treasure, and talent, including a few messy scars, with these wonderful Wildcats."**

— **Craig Trewet**  
Executive-in-Residence



## WEBER STATE'S MODEL UNITED NATIONS RECEIVES MULTIPLE HONORS

Three Weber State teams won best delegation awards in a competition of nearly 80 teams at the Model United Nations of the Far West Conference in April.

The conference takes place annually in Burlingame, California, near the birthplace of the United Nations organization. WSU's teams represented Myanmar, India, and Belize.

Judges assessed the teams on submitted paperwork and whether they accurately represented their country's positions and made them clear.

"It's really fun and interesting and requires a lot of diplomacy and negotiation," said **Stephanie Wolfe**, professor of political science and WSU Model United Nations advisor.

**Macy McCormack**, representing India, was one of five students selected to give an opening plenary statement. McCormack, who previously served as a student representative on the conference's board of directors, was appointed to manage social media for the executive director's office. **Miriam Greene** is now a student representative for the board of directors.

WSU's **Vlada Smoot**, representing India, was named special rapporteur for the conference's Commission on the Status of Women. Her committee's joint policy statement was honored as the best in the simulation.

The Far West Conference capped off a big year for WSU's Model United Nations.

In March, several Model United Nations students joined a WSU-sponsored trip to the actual United Nations in New York.

From Nov. 22 to Dec. 1, 2024, they traveled to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, for the National Model United Nations Galapagos Conference. WSU teams representing Bangladesh and India won honorable mention awards. Student **Raissa Rohbock** was awarded for outstanding work on the environmental assembly paperwork. In the Galapagos, WSU students also volunteered in a beach and street clean-up.

"I consider myself lucky to be able to work with such a group of students," Wolfe said. "Watching them perform, watching them negotiate, watching them win awards and get these leadership positions, honestly, it's why I do it."

Recently, Utah Global Diplomacy presented Wolfe with the Citizen Diplomacy Award, and her student, **Ruby Vejar**, with the Utah Youth in Global Diplomacy award. The awards were presented at the Utah State Capitol on Feb. 26, 2025.

WSU students show their awards at the Model United Nations of the Far West Conference in April 2025. From left to right: Raissa Rohbock, Nick Ferre (advisor), Frida Gonzalez, Ruby Vejar, Ambri Huffaker, Vlada Smoot, Yoselyn Martinez, Aaron Egli, Mireya Aguilar, Miriam Greene, Rae Conriquez, Macy McCormack, Stephanie Wolfe (advisor); not pictured: Frances Hudson, Melissa del Castillo

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Wolfe

# STUDENTS STUDY OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP & EDUCATION IN COSTA RICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, & PUERTO RICO

Weber State hosts study abroad trips in every college, which lead to intercultural experiences, lifelong friendships, and unique insights into subject areas that can only be gained from firsthand experience.

For example, the Outdoor & Community Recreation Education program partnered with the nonprofit Outward Bound to bring eight students to Costa Rica for 10 days of outdoor leadership development during the spring 2025 semester.

Students trekked through wild spaces, learned skills from locals, and rafted on the Río Sarapiquí.

OCRE Program Director **Jon Griffith**, who led the group with **Lindsey Sweatland**, education recruitment and marketing manager, said students learned to break down complicated tasks into manageable steps. “They applied this not only to jungle hiking but also to broader challenges like becoming better outdoor leaders or completing their college education,” he said.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Students Faith Bryce and Annie Weiland talk with Outward Bound guide Mauren Granados as they look out over the Río Savegre valley.

Photo by Lindsey Sweatland

The Department of Teacher Education brought students to explore the culture, history, and educational aspects of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico during the summer 2025 semester.

Seven students joined the two-week trip, where they also visited and learned about a Hispanic-Serving Institution in Miami, Florida. While abroad, they visited many schools, cultural centers, and museums, learning skills, history, and educational practices from locals.

“Something I have learned in multiple study abroad experiences is that, no matter where you live, educators are committed to their students and their profession,” said **Natalie Williams**, professor of special education who led the trip with **Katarina Anderson**, assistant professor of technology education. “The opportunity to provide a front-row seat to education around the globe for our pre-service teachers is truly unparalleled and can only be understood by seeing it in action, which study abroad provides.”

Read about the WSU Symphony Orchestra and choirs tour in Spain on page 10. All of WSU’s study abroad experiences are found at [weber.edu/studyabroad](http://weber.edu/studyabroad).

**“The opportunity to provide a front-row seat to education around the globe for our pre-service teachers is truly unparalleled and can only be understood by seeing it in action, which study abroad provides.”**

— **Natalie Williams**  
Professor of Special Education

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: 1. While on a trip to study education in Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, participants took a bicycle tour of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. 2. Education students visited Centro Educativo Los Caños, a school in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, to learn about local education practices. 3. Students also visited Escuela Doctor Rafael Pujals, a middle school in Ponce, Puerto Rico. 4. Experiencing the local culture, trip participants took a bomba dance lesson in Piñones, Puerto Rico.

Photos courtesy of Natalie Williams



# TEACHING A NEW GENERATION OF ENERGY ENGINEERS

**Matt Millburn** joined Weber State’s energy engineering major with a fascination for how societies use energy and what it could mean for the future.

“I’d been thinking about what would provide the most stable job over the next 20 years, and energy is a huge national priority,” he said.

According to the Utah Office of Economic Development, Utah is headed toward an energy deficit due to increased demand and decreasing supply, and more power is needed. The state will require a new generation of skilled energy engineers to meet growing needs. Recognizing this, the Utah State Legislature has supported the energy sector with policies and funding that encourage innovation, workforce development, and clean energy adoption.

Weber State is responding to this call. It is the first institution in Utah to offer an energy engineering degree, tailored to produce graduates who can help solve real-world energy challenges across the state.

“Utah’s energy landscape is undergoing a significant transformation,” said WSU energy engineering professor **An Ho**, citing a U.S. Department of Energy report that shows energy engineering jobs will grow 6.4% annually. “We want to make sure our students are ready to lead that transformation.”

Blending mechanical and electrical engineering concepts, the program explores the most effective ways to produce, utilize, and conserve energy, as well as energy production, traditional and advanced technologies.

Ho also directs the Weber Industrial Training and Assessment Center. In 2024, the center received a three-year, \$550,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. The center gives students hands-on experience through no-cost energy assessments for small and medium-sized manufacturers across Utah — directly supporting the state’s energy goals.

**ABOVE:** Matt Millburn and other students from the Energy Engineering Program and the Weber Industrial Training and Assessment Center conduct an energy assessment in the Kimball Visual Arts Center.



## ENERGIZED DISCOURSE

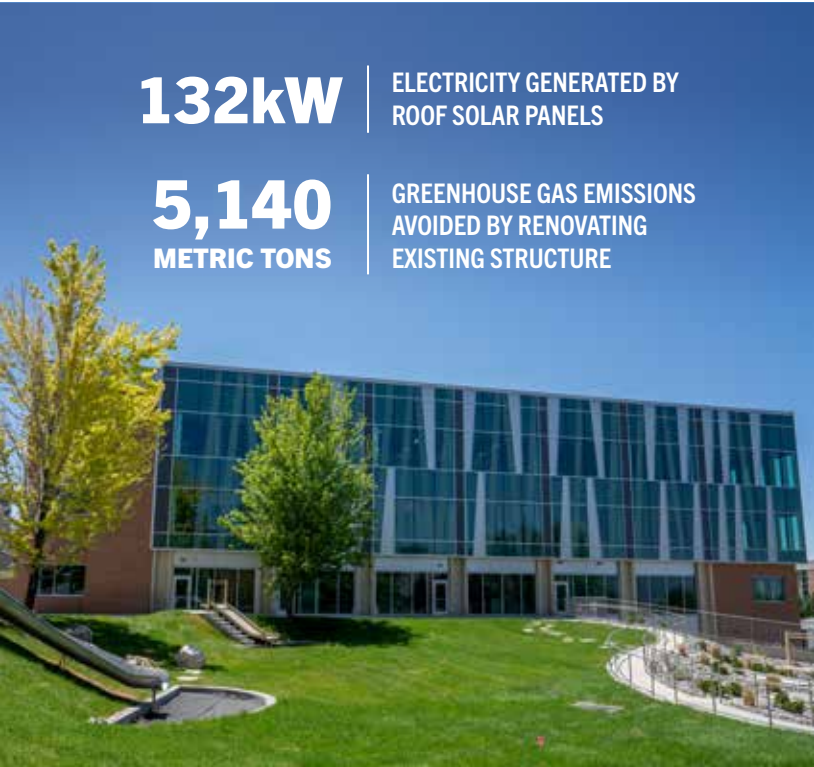
Weber State’s Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service welcomed experts on Utah’s energy sector to discuss nuclear energy last March. Walker Center Director **Leah Murray** facilitated the panel, which included Brian Bean, senior policy advisor to the Utah Senate; Chris Hayter, COO of Hi Tech Solutions; Tim Kowalchik, emerging technology strategist for the Utah Office of Energy Development; and state senator and former WSU president **Ann Millner**.

## Shaping the future of teaching

This fall, students earning degrees in child and family studies and teacher education, along with Graduate Studies in Education students, will enter the next generation of learning as the newly renovated David O. McKay Education Building opens. Following a two-year, \$38.1 million renovation, the facility features abundant natural light, revitalized classroom space with active-learning layouts, and a digital media production lab.

Home to both the WSU Charter School and Melba S. Lehner Children’s School, the north and east sides of the building showcase extensive playground areas that serve as an outdoor classroom space.

A grand opening celebration for the building is scheduled for Oct. 10.



**132kW** | ELECTRICITY GENERATED BY ROOF SOLAR PANELS

**5,140 METRIC TONS** | GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AVOIDED BY RENOVATING EXISTING STRUCTURE



## Emergency healthcare is golden

Weber State’s Department of Emergency Healthcare is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2025. What began as the first paramedic training program in the Intermountain West has grown to graduate more than 60 students a year, while boasting close to a 100% first-time pass rate for the national paramedic assessment. That’s significantly higher than the national average.

**1,500+** | NUMBER OF GRADUATES SINCE 1975

Students practice responding to emergency situations during class in the Department of Emergency Healthcare.



# Brilliant Community Engagement.

Weber State creates partnerships in the community to solve problems, build dialogue, and provide opportunities.

Weber State University's College of Science hosts Science in the Parks at Lorin Farr Park in Ogden, Utah.

Local youth learned all things mountain biking at Weber State's Mountain Bike Camp at the ENVE headquarters last June.

# GOING FOR A SPIN

WEBER STATE FACULTY ENCOURAGE LOCAL YOUTH TO PURSUE THEIR OWN PATH — ON THEIR BIKES.

The Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education, National Interscholastic Cycling Association, Utah High School Cycling League, and bicycle manufacturer ENVE partnered to host the inaugural mountain bike camp in mid-June.

Over two days, the camp offered middle school and high school students the opportunity to learn all facets of cycling. A different group of students each day had a chance to

learn about bicycle maintenance, sports performance and leadership, wilderness first aid, nutrition, and exercise, as well as tour the ENVE headquarters in Ogden.

Outdoor recreation is a \$9.5 billion industry in Utah, and mountain biking is the state's fastest-growing high school sport. "Mountain biking is the one high school sport where no one gets cut," said **Eddie Hill**, associate professor of Outdoor and

Community Recreation. "Everyone races and rides."

During the camp, faculty and students researched the role of mountain biking on youth and resiliency.

Hill said they hope to learn from this year's camp, with an eye toward including more students in 2026. NICA hopes the camp may serve as a model for a national version.

## College of Science honored for supporting Utah teachers

WSU's College of Science received the 2024 Friends of Utah Science Teaching Association (UtSTA) award for its support of the group's work to improve science education in Utah.

The award goes to an organization or individual that "has gone above and beyond in support of the science teachers of Utah and UtSTA," said **Dawn Monson**, executive director.

UtSTA members include K-12 teachers, professors, and members of the science industry. They provide information, support, events, and more for Utah science teachers and their students. WSU's College of Science collaborates with UtSTA to provide professional learning and coursework for teachers, and hosts an annual awards dinner that includes tours of Tracy Hall Science Center.



UtSTA President Angela Stewart (right) presents former College of Science Dean Andrea Easter-Pilcher with the 2024 Friends of UtSTA award.

*Photos courtesy of UtSTA*

# LINDQUIST COLLEGE HOSTS BIG NAMES TO ENGAGE WITH STUDENTS

**Browning Presents! and the Hurst Artist-in-Residence programs brought artists and storytellers to WSU during the 2024–25 academic year.**

Browning Presents!, hosted by the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities, supports performances and educational residencies in a range of disciplines. In the past year, the program welcomed award-winning novelist Silvia Moreno-Garcia; author and musician Simon Tam; and writer, comedian, and director Julio Torres.

Film studies assistant professor **Ben Kruger-Robbins** facilitated an on-stage interview with Torres and said he offered valuable insights about working uncompromisingly within the margins of Hollywood.

“I was deeply heartened to listen in on the uninhibited and joyful conversations during which Torres advised aspiring mediamakers at WSU to immerse themselves in collaborative communities, privilege playful experimentation over industrial productivity, and engage personally affecting artforms in all of their visceral and spiritual — if also conflicted and messy — beauty,” Kruger-Robbins said.

The college established the Hurst Artist-in-Residence program in 1998 with an endowment from Dean W. and Carol W. Hurst. The program enables world-renowned artists and scholars to visit Weber State and interact with students, faculty, and staff. This year, the program hosted British musician, sound artist, audio producer, and field artist Alice Boyd.

As part of her residency, Boyd took poems by Utah writers and incorporated her own field recordings of the soundscape of Utah.

“Music and sound can be so visceral,” she said. “Sound is made of waves, and it can quite literally change us physically. Sound is so embedded in us; we react to a baby crying or to someone singing, or to a really horrible noise that makes us feel uncomfortable. I think for many of us, sound influences us in ways that we are not even always conscious of.”

Part of this article includes information from an interview in *Weber: The Contemporary West*. Read the full interview at [weber.edu/weberjournal](https://weber.edu/weberjournal).



Photo courtesy of Silvia Moreno-Garcia



Photo courtesy of Simon Tam

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** Browning Presents! hosted an evening with author Silvia Moreno-Garcia on Oct. 2, 2024. Author and musician Simon Tam discussed “Showing What’s Possible in Arts and Activism” for the series on Oct. 14. Browning Presents! welcomed writer, comedian, and director Julio Torres on April 1, 2025.



Musician, sound artist, and audio producer Alice Boyd served as Hurst Artist-in-Residence for the 2024–25 academic year.

Photo by Michelle Sanders



## WSU offers on-site courses, graduate degrees at Hill Air Force Base

Weber State and Hill Air Force Base are expanding education opportunities for military personnel, their families, and civilian employees by offering classes on the base.

Last year, WSU became the first public university in the state to participate in an airbase education program.

“Weber State is dedicated to supporting Hill Air Force Base and the Air Force,” said WSU President **Brad Mortensen**. “Not just because it’s good for our economy and creates good opportunities for our students, but because it’s good for our national defense and our freedom.”

On-site offerings focus on high-demand programs for enlisted and civilian employees, like a Master of Business Administration.

There’s also a non-credit course in project management, which helps students prepare for a project management certification exam. More programs are planned for the future.

WSU has a dedicated office on the base, where current and prospective students can learn about tuition assistance programs, earning undergraduate credit for military training and experience, student support opportunities, and peer mentorship.

Weber State and Hill Air Force Base representatives attended a signing ceremony at Weber State University Davis to expand education opportunities for military personnel, their families, and civilian employees on the base.



## WSU scores with RSL

Weber State is the exclusive educational partner of Major League Soccer’s Real Salt Lake franchise and the National Women’s Soccer League’s Utah Royals FC. In addition to increased visibility at the teams’ America First Field in Sandy, Utah, Weber State hosted a booth to engage with fans ahead of several home games this season.

Miriam Oteo, a graduate of the Building Puentes program and an entrepreneur who works with families to form healthy relationships and break generational barriers

# GROWING UTAH'S ECONOMY THROUGH BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Weber State's Building Puentes program saw an astounding enrollment boom during its first year.

The only program of its kind in the state, Building Puentes launched in 2024 with classes taught in Spanish to prepare bilingual professionals for high-demand careers in Utah.

Building Puentes went from four students enrolled in the entrepreneurship certificate program in fall 2024 to more than 100 students in spring 2025.

Community Education Center Director **Yesenia Quintana** said the entrepreneurship courses have helped students launch or expand businesses in areas such as elderly care services, eco-friendly home cleaning, parenting and family support, photography, and mental health services, among others.

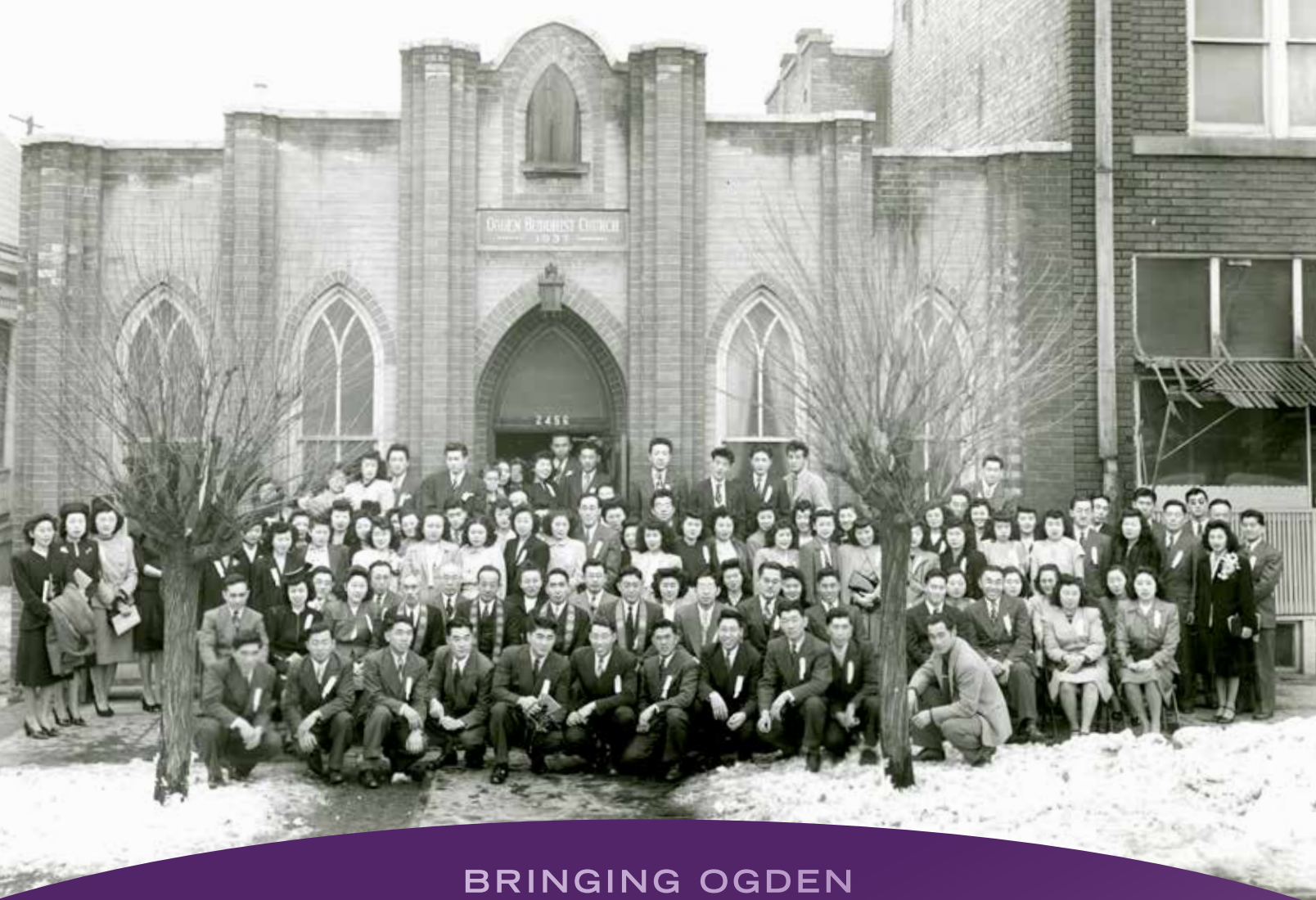
With help from a \$2.5 million grant from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity and private donations, WSU is growing Building Puentes over a five-year development phase with an ultimate goal to offer associate and bachelor's degrees.

Building Puentes has since expanded course offerings in both Spanish and English to include certificates in early childhood education and computer science. **Pam Allcott**, multilingual programs director, was hired to lead the program in April 2025.

University leadership called the program "groundbreaking" in its approach to meeting state needs. As Utah's Spanish-speaking population continues to grow, WSU will use workforce data to determine additional certificates and degrees to be offered in a bilingual format.

\$2.5  
MILLION

GRANT FROM THE  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY



## BRINGING OGDEN RELIGIOUS GROUPS INTO THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Ogden at its Core, a joint project between WSU Special Collections & University Archives and the Museums at Union Station, aims to update the historical record to include people from all backgrounds who have called Ogden home.

“As we did an inventory of collections at both institutions, we found that we were lacking stories, photographs, and history on Ogden’s ethnic and religious communities,” said **Sarah Langsdon**, curator and co-head of Special Collections & University Archives.

Since 2023, WSU staff, students, and Union Station employees have collected documents and photographs from the Ogden Buddhist Church and the predominantly African-American New Zion’s Baptist Church and Embry African Methodist Episcopal Church. They are now scanning materials to put them online and conducting oral history interviews with community members. “Church congregation members have also been sharing their personal family photos and history with us,” Langsdon said.

The museum and university have spoken with representatives of the Jewish community at Congregation Brith Sholem,



Second Baptist Church, and the Islamic Center of Kuwait to expand the project.

A grant from the Alan E. and Jeanne N. Hall Endowment for Community Outreach supports the project.

TOP: Congregants of the Ogden Buddhist Church on Lincoln Avenue, 1950s

BOTTOM: The Embry AME Church choir in Ogden, 1970s

*Photos courtesy of WSU Special Collections and University Archives*

## Award-winning campaign proves brilliant

Weber State’s Be Brilliant marketing campaign received the 2025 Judges Choice Award in print for best integrated campaign from the University & College Designers Association. In bestowing the award, judges raved about: “the visual impact, the sophisticated yet straight-forward use of copy, and the clever use of the existing logo design. The brilliance and vibrancy of the graphic draws the eye directly to the focal point, and pairs well with the bold tagline.”



## REACH Weber receives grant for diabetes education and research

Weber State’s type 1 diabetes educational programming received a \$129,000 grant from the Intermountain Foundation during the fall 2024 semester.

In April 2023, associate professor **Eddie Hill** launched REACH Weber, Utah’s only year-round community recreation program for youth with type 1 diabetes and their families. REACH stands for Recreate, Educate, Advocate, and Climb Higher.

The grant will fund REACH Weber programming for the next three years, including educational camps for youth and their families. It will also fund research on the mental health of parents whose children have this incurable condition impacting blood glucose levels.

According to American Diabetes Association data from 2021, 2 million Americans had type 1 diabetes, including about 304,000 children and adolescents. In 2017–2018, the ADA reported over 18,000 annual cases of children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in the U.S.

Hill said with the chronic disease affecting so many, he hopes people across the country use REACH Weber’s research to improve quality of life. “This will be evidence-based, and then we want to scale it so other programs can launch their own REACH program,” Hill said.



TOP: From left to right: Sara Mejeur and Barry Bues, representing the Intermountain Foundation, present WSU associate professor Eddie Hill and Cass Morgan, former interim dean of the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education, with a grant for the REACH Weber program. BOTTOM: Youth with type 1 diabetes enjoy a game at REACH Weber, a community recreation program for youth and their families.

# SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES STRIKE GOLD

Weber State's commitment to sustainability reached new milestones in 2024–25, from launching innovative projects to earning prestigious sustainability rankings.

The university earned a gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System, a self-reporting system from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education that helps institutions track sustainability progress. Earning the rating put Weber State a year ahead of its goal to earn gold by 2025.

Construction projects focused on sustainability. The newly renovated David O. McKay Education Building includes electrification of HVAC, LED lighting, energy-efficient glass and roofing, a solar array, and efficient kitchen equipment. Updates to the Dee Events Center include a dedicated ground-source field for energy. Additionally, a battery at the campus substation designed to provide backup power to campus for at least two hours, help stabilize services to the local grid, and allow WSU to build more with solar energy, is planned to go into operation in late October.

WSU installed 1,626 solar panels over a new covered parking structure, and solar power is being used to light the new permanent Flaming W on the hillside near campus.

WSU's newly built irrigation system monitors water usage in real time and can shut down electronically during an emergency. **Drew Hodge**, water conservation and stormwater coordinator, said it will also allow WSU to improve its irrigation water quality and implement new conservation measures more efficiently.

Four faculty members received WSU Sustainability Teaching, Application, and Research Grants to launch sustainability projects. One project partners **Ash Soltani Stone**, associate professor of film studies, and **John Mull**, professor of zoology, to promote sustainability awareness and action through short documentaries, interactive media, and student-led research. Their project aims to highlight local sustainability efforts, environmental challenges, and solutions.

In the teaching space, 11 classes from four colleges were approved for the SUS designation, proving they cover sustainability within their disciplines. Twenty-two departments offered 296 SUS sections, with 7,261 students enrolled. The number of departments offering at least one SUS-approved course was 32, making up 65 percent of WSU departments.

Read our Facts & Figures (page 4) for more sustainability statistics and recent awards.

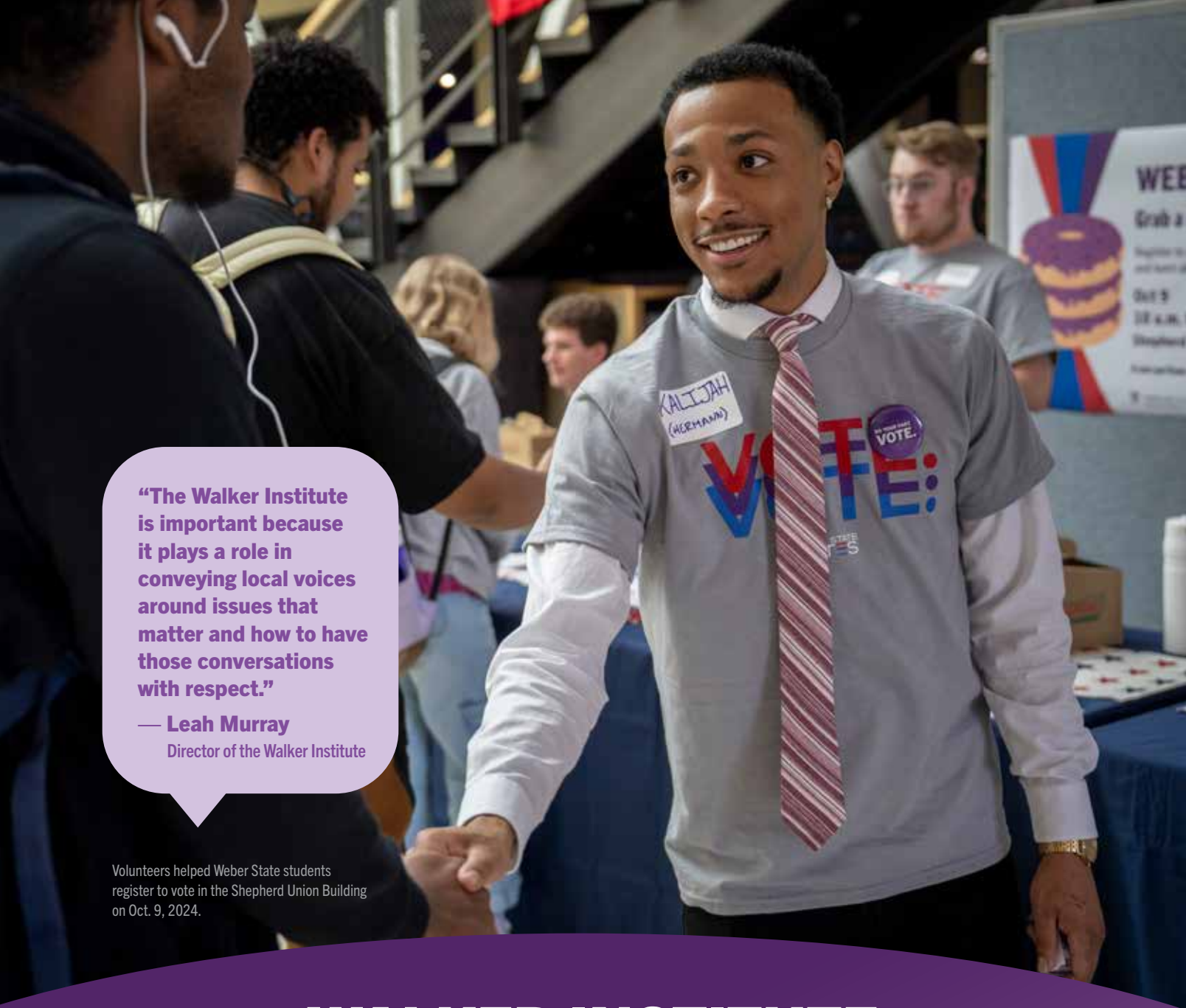
Crews install solar panels over Weber State's public pay lot on Oct. 28, 2024. The covering over the parking lot includes more than 1,600 solar panels.



## SUSTAINABILITY CAREERS START AT WEBER STATE

**Justin Owen**, interim director of plant operations, and **Drew Hodge**, water conservation and stormwater coordinator, have led sustainable building projects across campus. Both are graduates of WSU's geography program. **Analeah Vaughn**,

sustainability engagement coordinator, works with faculty and staff to create a more sustainable campus and graduated from WSU's geology program. All three are helping WSU reach its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040.



**“The Walker Institute is important because it plays a role in conveying local voices around issues that matter and how to have those conversations with respect.”**

— **Leah Murray**  
Director of the Walker Institute

Volunteers helped Weber State students register to vote in the Shepherd Union Building on Oct. 9, 2024.

## WALKER INSTITUTE GOES ALL IN ON VOTER REGISTRATION

The Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service received the 2024 Highly Established Action Plan and Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting awards from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

“The Walker Institute is important because it plays a role in conveying local voices around issues that matter and how to have those conversations with respect,” said **Leah Murray**, director of the Walker Institute.

The institute worked with ALL IN to launch a digital voter registration tool that was accessible through eWeber,

Canvas, and QR codes. The initiative achieved a 32.4% conversion rate, with 1,612 students registered to vote through the tool. Voters submitted 1,482 ballots to the campus ballot box.

Murray presented with Civic Nation in November at the National Student Summit to discuss digital registration and how to embed it in campus culture.

The AASCU’s American Democracy Project awarded Murray the 2025 Barbara Burch Award for demonstrating extraordinary commitment to civic engagement and learning.

## Neuroscience students share their brain power with thousands in the Wasatch Front



Since spring 2024, WSU neuroscience students have connected with more than 2,000 community members through educational outreach events, making brain science fun and accessible.

Students have visited local schools and community functions, offering brain-related activities like blind taste-testing, dissecting sheep brains, and creating neurons from pipe cleaners.

Every year during Brain Awareness Week — a nearly decade-long tradition now led by the Neuroscience Club — WSU students log hundreds of volunteer hours as they engage with high school and elementary students.

“The students in the neuroscience program never cease to amaze me with their generosity of time and enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge with others,” said **Aminda O’Hare**, neuroscience program director.

WSU’s chapter of the Nu Rho Psi honors society, which many Neuroscience Club members are part of, was named the 2024 chapter of the year for these efforts.

“As an educator, it’s a joy to see students take ownership of their field of study and use it to benefit others,” O’Hare said.

Clockwise from top: Associate Professor Aminda O’Hare, neuroscience student Salisha Isles, neuroscience graduate Benson Bush, and neuroscience graduate Colby Larsen work with electroencephalography (EEG) in O’Hare’s Cognitive and Affective Psychophysiology and Experimental Science Lab.

*Photo by Benson Bush*

## WSU teams with Davis School District for in-depth teacher prep program



Students in the Teacher Academy School program work in a classroom with youth at Sunburst Elementary School.

*Photo courtesy of Marilyn Taft*

A partnership with Davis School District is giving WSU students an immersive opportunity to learn about becoming successful educators.

The Teacher Academy School program enables students studying teacher education to learn and practice at a local school.

Sunburst Elementary in Layton, Utah, offers an on-site classroom where WSU professors teach methods courses and students can discuss teaching practices they observe in the elementary’s classes. The school also provides WSU professors and students with the opportunity to share lessons with elementary students.

“It opens students’ eyes to the reality of day-to-day classroom experiences and provides opportunities for them to observe the varied approaches of skilled teachers,” said **Marilyn Taft**, teacher education assistant professor.

Taft said students have shared that the experience makes teaching “real,” empowering them to apply their coursework in meaningful ways and feel like professional educators.

Every semester, Sunburst hosts about 20 WSU students, giving them a chance to learn from current teachers who are skilled at mentoring future educators.

Students in the Department of Automotive Technology work on electric vehicle batteries.



AUTOMOTIVE PROGRAM  
**DRIVES INNOVATION**  
IN SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Weber State’s Department of Automotive Technology earned the Trailblazer Award from Utah Clean Cities & Communities in October 2024. The honor showcases the department’s leadership in clean transportation and electric vehicle training. From Toyotas to Teslas, WSU

boasts 17 high-voltage training vehicles that attract students from all over the country and abroad. According to [Jessica Slater](#), department chair, WSU is the only member of the National Association of Automotive Universities to offer a Bachelor of Science focused on

electric vehicles. Additional offerings include an Associate of Applied Science and two certificates of proficiency focused on electric vehicles. Separate from its academic degrees, the department hosts bootcamps online and in person throughout the year to train attendees in EV service, diagnostics, and repair. Global experts, including Anthony Bonanno of the Australian Motor Traders Association, have traveled to campus for these bootcamps, which Utah Clean Cities Executive Director Tammie Bostick called “groundbreaking” and “best in the nation.”

**AUTOMOTIVE  
YOUTUBE**



**John Kelly**, professor of automotive technology, runs a successful WSU Automotive YouTube channel with over 180 videos and nearly half a million subscribers. Videos are related to material he teaches each semester and center on technical content.

# Brilliant Athletics.

Celebrate the achievements of  
Weber State's student-athletes.

Weber State plays McNeese  
State University at Stewart  
Stadium on Sept. 28, 2024.

TOP: Weber State's large coed and small coed cheer teams claimed both national and grand national championships. BOTTOM: The Wildcat Dance team won the Grand National title in Jazz and the Division I National title in Hip Hop. Photos by Nick Prak



## SPIRIT SQUAD LEAVES FLORIDA WITH FOUR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Weber State's cheer and dance teams won a combined four national championships for the second straight year at April's NCA/NDA National Championships in Florida.

WSU's Large Coed cheer team won its eighth straight national title with a score of 97.8542 and then won its third straight Grand National title — beating the top teams in each division — the next day with a score of 97.6333, ahead of Texas Tech's 97.55.

The Small Coed team won the national championship with a score of 96.1542, then followed up with a score of 97.0833 to secure the Grand National title. **Hailey Smith** and **Josh Hill**

repeated as champions in the Coed Partner Stunt division.

It's the ninth national championship and fourth Grand National title for cheer team head coach **Summer Willis**.

The dance team scored a 98 to win the Division I Jazz championship, then won a Grand National title in Jazz with a score of 97.6571.

WSU then scored 92.3429 to repeat as Division I Hip Hop champions, the fifth such title for Hip Hop and third in the last five years. It's the fifth national title and second Grand National for dance coach **Erica Jordan**.

**9 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**FOR CHEER COACH**

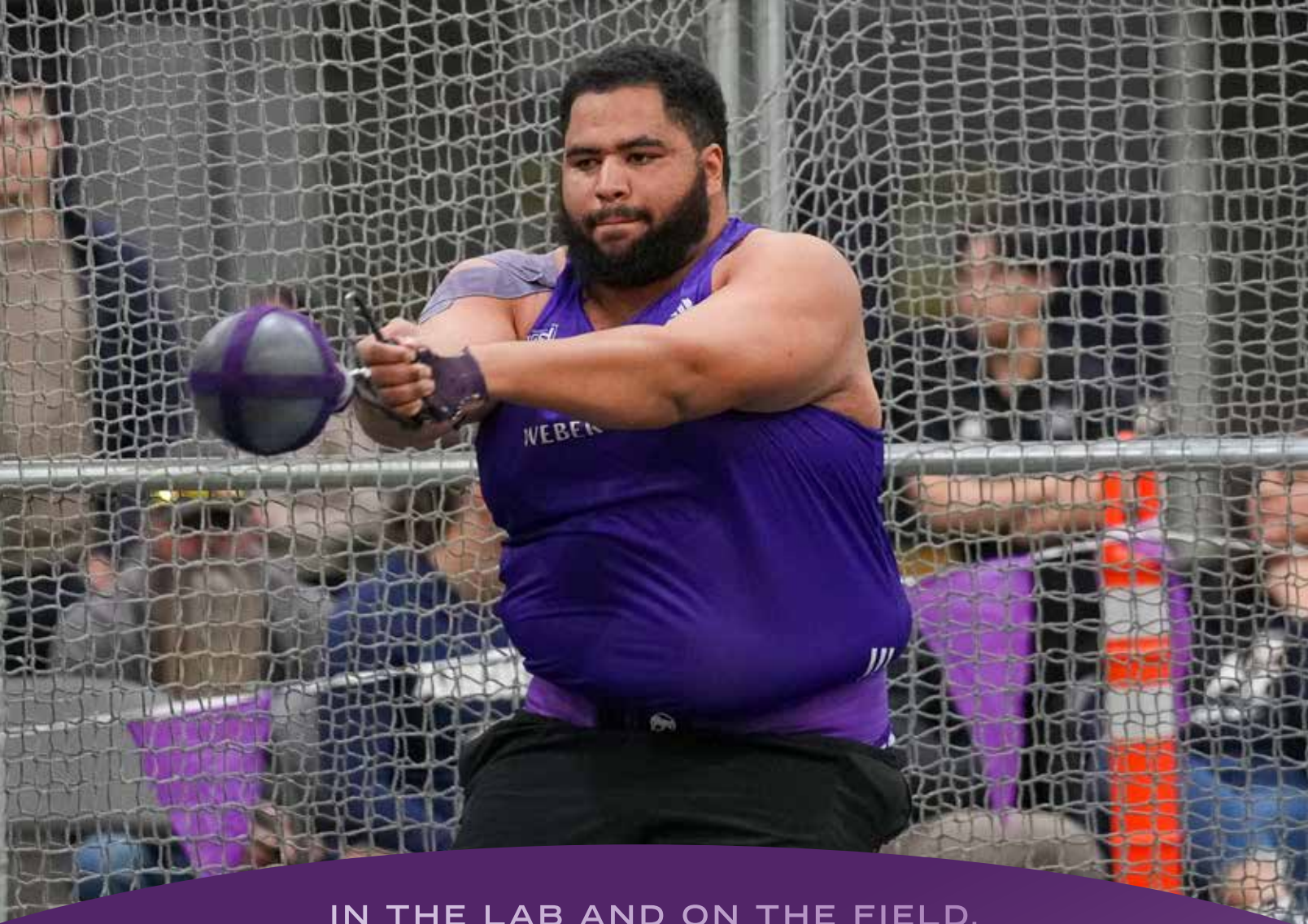
*Summer Willis*

**5 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**FOR DANCE COACH**

*Erica Jordan*





## IN THE LAB AND ON THE FIELD, STUDENT-ATHLETE FINDS HIS BRILLIANCE

Weber State gave former student-athlete **Ryan Johnson** a wide range of opportunities, from studying the human nervous system to throwing a discus nearly 143 feet.

After enrolling at WSU in 2021, Johnson joined WSU's track and field team and competed in the 55-meter, shot put, discus, hammer throw, and weight throw. As a captain, he led the team in numerous meets, including the 2025 Big Sky Indoor Championships.

Johnson came to WSU with a scholarship and played oboe in the Symphonic Band. He switched majors a few times before becoming enamored with how humans can adapt, change, and retain information. "It's one of the coolest things there is to learn in science," he said.

He graduated in spring 2025 with a degree in psychological science and a neuroscience minor.

As a student, Johnson researched whether mindfulness or physical exercise benefited students in their classes more.

He has also worked with Neuroscience Program Director **Aminda O'Hare** in the lab to study attentional biases to negative information and cognitive processing in individuals with anxious apprehension and anxious arousal.

Johnson said one of his favorite things about WSU was the approachable faculty, including O'Hare, who helped him plan for the future. "She's my favorite professor I've ever had," he said.

As he graduated, he proudly followed in his wife Amanda's footsteps. She played on Weber State's softball team and earned her bachelor's degree in health administration in 2023. She is now a registered nurse and is earning her bachelor's degree in nursing.

Track and field team captain Ryan Johnson found success in athletics and in the neuroscience lab.

## Women's basketball ties record for improvement

The Weber State women's basketball team found better fortunes in 2024–25, finishing with a 13-16 overall record and a 10-8 mark in the Big Sky Conference. The Wildcats tied for third place in the conference standings and improved upon their 2023–24 conference record (4-14) by six games, tied for the best year-over-year improvement in school history.

Sophomore forward **Taylor Smith** was named to the Big Sky All-Conference First Team, and senior guard **Kendra Parra** was named to the All-Conference Second Team.



## Softball celebrates Big Sky Title, NCAA Regionals win

The Weber State softball team had a strong finish to the 2025 season, winning the Big Sky Tournament and advancing to NCAA Regionals in Eugene, Oregon, where they earned their second-ever win in the NCAA Tournament.

"Each member of our roster, from players to coaches, were committed to getting better every day," said first-year head coach **Kristin Delahoussaye**. "We went through our ups and

downs, but we found ways to improve and learn lessons from both our adversities and our successes."

Senior **Olivia Birkinshaw** was the Big Sky Tournament MVP, and four Wildcats were named to the All-Tournament Team. WSU has won the softball tournament title five times since it began in 2013. Three players were also named first team All-Big Sky for the season, including Co-Freshman of the Year, **Sadie Kirk**.

# NBA STAR DAMIAN LILLARD

## NAMED GM OF MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Weber State graduate and NBA star **Damian Lillard** recently became general manager of the men's basketball program. In this role, he will be a key advisor and mentor to the team.

"Success doesn't come overnight, especially in today's ever-changing basketball landscape," Lillard said. "College athletics is constantly evolving, and building a strong program requires time, trust, and commitment. I believe in what this program represents and the culture that continues to grow at Weber State. The support of our community is vital to the program's success, and I am committed to playing a greater role in that effort. This opportunity allows me to be even more involved in shaping the future of Weber State basketball."

Lillard played at Weber State from 2009–2012, leading the Wildcats to two Big Sky Championships. He was an All-American in 2012 and was a two-time Big Sky MVP. After being selected by the Portland Trail Blazers in the 2012 NBA Draft, Lillard was named 2013 NBA Rookie of the Year. He is a nine-time NBA All-Star, an eight-time All-NBA selection, and a member of the NBA's 75th Anniversary Team. His number 1 jersey was retired at WSU in 2017, and he is in the WSU Athletics Hall of Fame and the Big Sky Conference Hall of Fame.

**"I believe in what this program represents and the culture that continues to grow at Weber State. The support of our community is vital to the program's success, and I am committed to playing a greater role in that effort."**

**— Damian Lillard**





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