WSU Automotive: ‘The Most Useful Thing on YouTube’

Scan through the comments on Weber State University's automotive YouTube channel, and you’ll read hundreds of notes of praise and thanks, summed up by this one: “This channel is by far the most useful thing on YouTube...thank you.”

The automotive YouTube channel now has more than 57,000 subscribers and has surpassed 12 million views.

The unlikely video star, professor John Kelly, wanted to give students a better view of the complex processes he was teaching, so he started filming the lectures and posting them on YouTube.

“It’s just taken off like crazy. I can’t believe it. That wasn’t my intention,” Kelly said, laughing. “I have received messages from people all over the world, people who are using my training videos in their own automotive programs and people who are do-it-yourselfers who want to repair their vehicles.”

Faithful viewers have noted changes over the years. Kelly wears a mic for better audio. He uses two high-resolution cameras for better picture quality and angles. And, Kelly, who has muscular dystrophy, now delivers his lectures from a wheelchair.

“This has turned into my hobby. Being in a wheelchair for the past three years limits my hobbies,” Kelly said. “My co-workers, when they see me early and late and on Saturdays, say, ‘You sure spend a lot of time here.’ And I say, ‘Well, this is what I do for fun.’”

Automotive senior Parviz Nadri knows all about the value of those YouTube videos. He has watched many of them and was honored to help film a few.

“Professor Kelly's videos are awesome,” Nadri said. “They are the best videos you can find about automotive repair because we have all kinds of tools here, and his knowledge is amazing. He helped me a lot to learn, especially about transmissions, which are his specialty.”
It was a long road that led Nadri to Weber State. He and his family fled Iran during the regime change of 2008. They sought asylum in Malaysia. Nadri wanted to study automotive technology, but had little money and few opportunities. For six years, he saved for college, working 15-hour days to finance his dream of an advanced automotive degree. When he had enough savings, he searched Google for programs in the United States. Weber State popped up first on the list.

WSU’s Office of International Programs & Services provided the information and support necessary for Nadri to start classes in the spring of 2014. Once here, he seized every opportunity to enhance his experience. Nadri completed his degree in three years and remained on the dean’s list while taking virtually every automotive course offered.

“Department chair Scott Hadzik is my role model,” Nadri said. “He finished his bachelor’s degree in two and a half years, and I wanted to do the same, so I always took over 17 credit hours each semester, sometimes 20 or 22.”

Nadri also worked as an automotive shop assistant, participated in several undergraduate research projects and is the leader of a self-driving, remote-control car project.

“Parviz is one of the most motivated and enthusiastic students that I have ever had,” Hadzik said. “I have been at several automotive-related events where Parviz has volunteered and assisted in helping the community understand the value of WSU. He is a great ambassador of the university.”

Nadri said he cannot work hard enough to repay the help and support he’s received at the university. Here, everyone has an equal chance at opportunities.

“For me, Weber State University changed my life,” Nadri said. “From the moment I got into this country, everything changed for me. Here, I don’t have to be worried about what is going to happen tomorrow. I was really ready when I got here because I know here are the opportunities where I can achieve.”

Every student in the automotive program participates in a paid internship as part of the curriculum. Toyota selected Nadri for one of its coveted spots. He’ll head to Dallas in May following graduation. He hopes the internship turns into a permanent position.

The dream is very likely. Kelly is proud to report that WSU automotive students have no problem finding jobs after graduation. The placement is virtually 100 percent.

“Our job is to prepare students for employment in the automotive industry,” he said. “We have automotive alumni in various automotive positions from service technical to corporate management all across the country and in many parts of the world. Attracting great students, such as Nadri, is a huge priority for us. Having great students attracts great employers with great career opportunities.”

Known for her collaborative spirit, Palen has hosted many workshops for other astronomy educators. She co-led trips for educators to visit scientific sites to observatories, old uranium mines and the rim of the Grand Canyon. She hosts a Women in Physics dinner and seeks to support those who are underrepresented in science.

Working with other WSU faculty and community members, Palen helped obtain International Dark Sky Accreditation for Ogden Valley’s North Fork Park and served on WSU’s Environmental Issues Committee.

**MICHAEL STEVENS**

Students have credited Michael Stevens, chair of WSU’s Department of Business Administration, with broadening their understanding of what makes a good leader and changing their lives for the better.

Stevens has produced more than 90 publications, including peer-reviewed articles, monographs, books, book chapters and presentations. Fellow scholars have cited Stevens’ articles nearly 800 times. In addition, he has co-developed tools such as the Teamwork-KSA Test, and Global Competencies Inventory and Intercultural Effectiveness Scale. More than 100,000 individuals in 170 countries have used these assessments.

For his scholarly efforts, WSU’s Goddard School of Business & Economics named Stevens both Smith Fellow and Buehler Fellow. He was the 2015 winner of the Outstanding Author Contribution of the Emerald Literati Network Award for Excellence and the 2014 winner of the Outstanding Leadership Award for Scholarly Rigor and Critical Thinking.

At WSU, he has collaborated with the Women’s Studies Executive Committee to aid women in navigating challenges in business. He also offers his “Leadership Through People Skills” course free to WSU faculty and staff.

In the community, Stevens has served with the Sunstone Education Foundation, Howard Park Early Childhood Center and EnTeam Institute, a nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to building communication through cooperative activities.
Dixon Awards

Associate provost for academic programs and assessment Eric Amsel and political science professor T. Ramakrishna (T.R.) Reddy were co-recipients of the Weber State University Alumni Association's 2017 H. Aldous Dixon Award. Since 1970, the WSU Alumni Association has presented the Dixon Award to outstanding faculty and staff who have distinguished themselves professionally and taken extra measures to meet student needs.

ERIC AMSEL

Eric Amsel is completing his first year as associate provost, but his impact at Weber State began in 1996 when he began teaching psychology. From the start, he took pride in mentoring and collaborating with students on research into human cognition and development.

Amsel served as department chair for 10 years and actively participated in Faculty Senate. In 2005, he and other members of the Holocaust Commemoration Committee were honored with a WSU Collaboration Award. Amsel, a 2007 Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor, was named Utah's 2006 Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Following a nationwide search in 2016, Amsel was selected as a WSU associate provost. Currently, he oversees and reviews all academic programs at Weber State to identify program strengths and weaknesses, and recommend changes.

Amsel earned a master's degree from Harvard University and a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

T. RAMAKRISHNA (T.R.) REDDY

During a teaching career that has spanned 52 years, T. Ramakrishna (T.R.) Reddy, will have shared his unique perspective on American democracy and international politics with an estimated 30,000 students.

Born in India, with a Ph.D. from University of Kentucky, Reddy joined the Weber State faculty in 1966. He chaired the Department of Political Science & Philosophy for more than a decade.

During his leadership of the WSU Faculty Senate, Reddy helped introduce plus-minus grading criteria. He advocated successfully for employee investment options that greatly enhanced the retirement plans of those who participated.

Reddy was instrumental in establishing the Dello G. Dayton Award to recognize outstanding teaching. Reddy, himself, was named Outstanding Social Sciences Faculty Member of 1980-81. He was a longtime faculty adviser for WSU’s Model United Nations program and was the university’s Peace Corps liaison officer.

Following his retirement at the end of spring semester 2018, Reddy plans to establish an endowment to support student research and writing.

Lindquist Award

When Weber State University associate professor of computer science Richard Fry began involving his students in service — locally and internationally — it transformed his teaching and the lives of individuals from Ogden to Thailand.

For his exemplary accomplishments, Fry was selected as this year’s Lindquist recipient, given in honor of John A. Lindquist, a long time philanthropist and Weber State advocate.

After a successful military career, Fry began teaching in the College of Engineering Applied Science & Technology at Weber State in 2001. Eight years later, he was introduced to the Center for Community Engaged Learning.

“It was then I discovered my hidden passion for service,” Fry said. “Since 2009, my students and I have designed and developed several open-sourced software engineering projects, currently impacting citizens in our local community every day.”

In addition, Fry has led more than 100 students on service-learning, study-abroad trips to Ghana and Thailand. During the past two academic years, Fry has mentored 26 computer science students who have been working with a nonprofit organization and primary schools in Phuket, Thailand, to teach underprivileged and orphaned Thai students English communication skills through custom-built Android apps.

WELCOME to WSU

Ty Christensen, Facilities Management
Nathan Dougal, Infrastructure Services
 Haihan Guo, Application Development
 Miranda Kispert, Stewart Library
 Derrick Luken, Athletics Admin and Support
 Michael Moore, Medical Laboratory Sciences
 Todd Oberndorfer, Visual Arts
 Jeffrey Page, Physics

Alfred Pupunu, Athletics Admin and Support
Jonathan Selden, Student Health Center
Marissa Smith, Office of Access & Outreach
Ian Snell, Accounting Services
Brett Solum, Application Development
Susan Young, Sociology

On the Move/Promoted

Benjamin Barraza, Application Development

Seth Gilmore, Facilities Management
Kelly Hillhouse, Development
Ashley Hilton, Marketing & Communications
William Jenkins, Infrastructure Services
Colby Peterson, Development
Brandon Stoddard, Business Administration
Margarita Vara, Student Success Center

Retired

LuAnn McDermott, Registrar’s Office
Dan Bedford helped present “Through the minefield: teaching climate change in a misinformation-rich environment” at the fall meeting of the American Geophysical Union.

Engineering technology professor Fred Chiou was selected by the Department of Energy’s Visiting Faculty Program to research the RE Microgrid DLR and GridGame project at the Idaho National Laboratory. The GridGame platform is designed to engage participants in problem-solving challenges associated with power grids. Chiou’s research will focus on the modeling of distributed renewable energy, including solar, wind and hydro.

History professor Sara Dant led a graduate seminar lecture about her book “Losing Eden” at the University of Arizona in March.

James Hansen, associate professor of accounting and taxation, and David Malone, professor and chair of the School of Accounting & Taxation, presented at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield, U.K., during Europe Week. Hansen presented “The Effect of Regulatory and Standard Setting Changes on the Informational Value of the Audit Report Date” and taught a session on audit quality and mandatory auditor rotation. Malone presented “Cost Management Tools for Environmental Sustainability: A Research Agenda” and taught a workshop on developing a research project in accounting.

Mike Henderson, Campus Recreation Outdoor Program assistant coordinator, was accepted as a Level 1 American Institute of Avalanche Research and Education Course Leader, making him one of 184 course leaders in the nation and one of only 10 in the state of Utah.

Sociology professor Huiying Wei Hill presented the paper “Asian American Voter’s Pivot: From Republican to Democrat” at the Annual Conference of Pacific Sociology Association.

Two communication faculty members discussed research, teaching and advising at the Central States Communication Association conference in Minneapolis. Assistant communication professor Hailey Gillen-Hoke presented the paper “But first, let me take a selfie: The Big Five, interpersonal communication motives and selfies.” Sarah Steimel participated on three panels: “Best practices and ideas for creating new courses and assignments in organizational communication,” “Create excellence in academic advising: best practices for communication faculty advisors” and “Creating further opportunities for scholarship through data-driven case studies.”


Alexander Lancaster, assistant communication professor, presented two papers at the 2017 Eastern Communication Association convention in Boston: “Organizational elements of religious institutions” and “Spotlight on law enforcement: The organizational culture of a university police department.”


Heidi Munk, Office of IT Business Services, will have a photograph published in FTP Magazine in May. Her model was WSU student Susan Mitchell.

Weber State University was selected as a “Voter Friendly Campus” for doing excellent work to empower students to get involved with democracy. The initiative was led by the Center for Community Engagement Democratic Engagement Team, political science professor Leah Murray and leadership programs coordinator Sheldon Cheshire.

Professor of economics Cliff Nowell published his manuscript, “The Influence of Motivational Orientation on the Satisfaction of University Students,” in the journal Teaching in Higher Education.

Marjukka Ollilainen, sociology professor, co-presented “Feminist Praxis at the Top: How Do Feminist Administrators Enact Feminism?” at the Sociologists for Women in Society Winter Meeting. She has also been selected as the editor of Network News, the newsletter of the international professional organization Sociologists for Women in Society.

Brett Perozzi, Student Affairs associate vice president, has been named a 2017 Pillar of the Profession by NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, the leading association for student affairs professionals.

Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor of business administration and supply chain management Shane J. Schvaneveldt was keynote speaker for the Symposium of the Japan Society for Vocational Education and Training held in Tokyo. He spoke on “Quality Management for Achieving Competitive: Perspectives of USA and Japan.”

Mark Stevenson, anthropology assistant professor, presented the paper “Strategic Temporality and the Moral Geography of Climate Change Activism” at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology.

Sociology associate professor Carla Trentelman published “The Case for Personal Interaction: Drop-Off/Pick-up Methodology for Survey Research,” co-authored with former students Naielly Ruiz and Kyle Peterson, in the Journal of Rural Social Sciences. She was also a co-author on “Effectiveness of the Drop-Off/Pick-Up Survey Methodology in Different Neighborhood Types,” published in the same issue. Trentelman and student Karen Roberson co-presented “Need a Ladder for These Fruit: Water and Campus Sustainability” at the International Symposium on Society and Resource Management.

Geography professor Daniel Bedford co-authored the presentation.

Daniel Turner, Campus Recreation Assistant Director and Outdoor Program Coordinator, acquired Certified Rock Guide status, meeting the highest international standards for Rock Climbing Guides through the American Mountain Guides Association.

Assistant criminal justice professor Monica Williams published two articles, “Contextualizing Community Crime Control: Race, Geography, and Configurations of Control in Four Communities,” in Criminology, and “Constructing Hysteria: Legal Signs as Producers of Siting Conflicts over Sexually Violent Predator Placements,” in Law & Social Inquiry.

English professor James Young and English Teaching Program director Margaret Rostkowski have received a $15,000 grant from the National Writing Project to conduct two summer workshops in 2017 and 2018 for area school teachers to encourage writing in all disciplines in public schools.