



WSU NEWS

Weber State University News & Events

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Reviewers Commend Weber State as **great,** **Great, GREAT...and** **One More GREAT**

Weber State University is celebrating the outstanding preliminary accreditation report from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), following an extensive review of the university.

The university received commendations in four specific areas:

- Weber State's culture of caring and fostering meaningful connections for students and their success
- Data-driven interventions to help students succeed, especially interventions to help the most at-risk students
- Weber State's approach and commitment to general education assessment and improvement
- Weber State's diligence and commitment to helping pre-college students pursue their goals.

Weber State undergoes an official accreditation review every seven years; this is the second time the university has been commended for its efforts with no recommendations for areas of improvement.

"The review team's preliminary report is a great testament to Weber State's exemplary focus on our students and their success," said WSU President **Brad Mortensen**.

"The phenomenal achievement of this university, to have two consecutive NWCCU

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STEWART BELL TOWER TURNS 50

Ever since its unveiling, Stewart Bell Tower has stood proudly as an icon at the heart of WSU's Ogden campus.

Dedicated on Dec. 14, 1971, the Bell Tower was Weber State's first structure to honor donors: **Donnell B. Stewart**, who served as student body president during the 1925–26 academic year and his wife, **Elizabeth Dee Shaw Stewart**, who attended high school at Weber Normal College and stayed when the school became a junior college in 1922. She eventually held various positions at the college.

Well-known Ogden architect **John L. Piers**, a Weber College alum, designed the 100-foot-tall tower, which included four large bronze bells and an electronic carillon that replicate the full range of bell sounds. The carillon and keyboard are now played from the Shepherd Union.

In 2008, the Bell Tower and the surrounding plaza received an extensive upgrade. Two cascading water features were added. The concrete and brick plaza was replaced with approximately 15,000 square feet of natural landscaping including grass, shrubs, trees and boulders. As part of the project, more than 140 trees and 5,300 plants were installed on the plaza.

Now, 50 years later, the Bell Tower continues to mark time and memories at Weber State.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

#LouderandProuder

Criminal Justice faculty **Mark Denniston**, **Bruce Bayley**, **Molly Sween** and **David Lynch**, professor emeritus, published the book *Seven Deadly Sins: Constitutional Rights and the Criminal Justice System, Second Edition* with Carolina Academic Press.

Teacher education assistant professor **Dustin Grote**, in partnership with colleagues from Virginia Tech and University of Texas at Austin, received a National Science Foundation grant of \$399,350 for their work “Collaborative Research: Non-academic career paths of Master’s and PhD engineers”; he was also lead author on the article “STEM doctoral students’ skill development: does funding mechanism matter?” in the *International Journal of STEM Education*.

Nutrition professor **Rod Hansen** co-authored “The influence of vigorous aerobic exercise on serum brain-derived neurotrophic factor and estradiol in young, healthy women as a function of the menstrual cycle,” in the *Journal of American College Health*.

John Mukum Mbaku, Distinguished Professor of Economics, published “Protecting Human Rights in African Countries: International Law, Domestic Constitutional Interpretation, The Responsibility to Protect, and Presidential Immunities” in the *South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business*, and “Counter-Terrorism Laws and Human Rights

in African Countries” in the *Washington University Global Studies Law Review*.

Medical laboratory sciences assistant professor **Scott Moore** published “Accelerated Recovery After Renal Cell Carcinoma and Partial Nephrectomy With Lifestyle Modifications” in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*. He also co-presented “Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy for Concussion Treatment” at the American Medical Society of Sports Medicine, and he received a \$120,000 grant from the American College of Lifestyle Medicine for the trial “Stress Activity, Lifestyle and Diet in Ogden (SALDO),” reversing Type 2 diabetes with lifestyle modifications in Ogden.

Microbiology faculty **Craig Oberg**, **Michele Culumber** and **Matt Domek** and student co-authors **Kate Sorensen** and **Serrina Young’s** article “Gluconate metabolism and gas production by *Paucilactobacillus wasatchensis* WDC04,” was selected as Editor’s Choice and highlighted on the web page and cover of the July 2021 issue of the *Journal of Dairy Science*.

Psychological sciences assistant professor and director of neuroscience, **Aminda O’Hare**, presented “Teaching Mindfulness Practices in the Classroom Through the Lens of Neuroscience” for the inaugural international Neuroscience Teaching Conference.

Justin Rhees, medical laboratory sciences assistant professor, and **Sue Harley**, botany professor and department chair, co-authored “An interdisciplinary enrichment laboratory on lectin production,” in the journal *Clinical Laboratory Science*. **Justin Rhees** co-authored Chapter 14 “Extracorporeal Defects: Immune and Nonimmune Hemolytic Anemias,” in the text *Clinical Hematology and Fundamentals of Hemostasis*, 6th Edition.

Deborah Uman, Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities dean, received a \$160,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a K–12 summer institute titled “Transforming Shakespeare’s Tragedies: Adaptation, Education and Diversity,” which will bring 28 high school English teachers to Weber State to study *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

Teacher education faculty **Shernavaz Vakil**, **Melina Alexander** and **Shirley Dawson** were awarded \$99,000 from the Utah State Board of Education Personnel Preparation for a Special Education Teacher Expedited Pathway for Utah Professional (STEP UP) licensure program.

Accounting assistant professor **Weiwei Wang** published “Individual investors’ responses to mutual fund fire sales and sell-side analysts’ price-correcting revisions” in the *International Journal of Managerial Finance*.

Review, continued from page 1

accreditation reviews with 100% commendations and no recommendations is the result of the hard work of our faculty, staff and students.”

The president praised the work of Associate Provost **Eric Amsel** and Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness **Gail Niklason**, as well as the entire WSU accreditation committee.

“It has been really fun to watch this story come together over the past year as we talked with people from all over campus and learned more about their areas, their successes and their challenges,” Niklason said. “Those individual stories that made up much of the report speak so well to the collective vision of and support for Weber State.”

The NWCCU review included a virtual site visit, Oct. 18-20 at the end of which preliminary findings were announced to the campus community. The reviewers will share a more detailed report Nov. 1, 2021. The final report will be submitted to the NWCCU in mid-January.

“I think the accreditation process affirms the improvement work we’ve been striving to make over the past seven years,” Amsel said. “While it is an affirmation of our efforts, it is also a reminder that we must continue to improve to serve our students and help them achieve their educational goals.”

Two Grants Bring Opportunities for Growth

A new \$500,000 grant from Ally Financial Inc. will help Weber State in its commitment to become an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (EHSI).

In the 2021 strategic plan, *Weber State Amplified*, a 5-year plan for growth, the university committed to increasing the percentage of students who identify as Hispanic or Latinx descent to 15% by 2025.

“For Utah to maintain its status as a leader in economic growth and vibrancy, demographic trends suggest that gaps in educational access, completion and workforce preparedness between students of color and white students must be eliminated,” said President **Brad Mortensen**.

Reaching EHSI status is a step to becoming designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, which requires a 25% Hispanic/Latinx enrollment. The HSI designation will show that WSU is a welcoming place for all students of color.

Weber State will use the grant money to establish an HSI Initiatives Office that will report to the Office of the President and will have an executive director to evaluate existing university efforts, identifying gaps and coordinating resources for underserved students.

The effort will include increasing diversity of faculty and staff and broadening curriculum to be more inclusive and aligned with Hispanic/Latinx culture and history. The university will work to eliminate barriers in policies and processes that inhibit attendance and will expand its outreach to students and families in public schools.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Weber State University was the only institution in Utah to receive a Build to Scale Venture Challenge grant from the United States Economic Development Administration. The \$750,000 grant will help support a building where community members can innovate, build and produce aerospace and outdoor products in northern Utah.

“This grant will be a big step in the growth of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said **Guy Letendre**, WSU’s Economic Development director. “Having a location for entrepreneurs, private industry and the Air Force to create and evaluate prototypes will hopefully accelerate new ideas and businesses.”

The program will be housed in the former Utah Science, Technology and Research building on the west side of Hill Air Force Base, currently known as the Northern Utah Accelerator. The centralized location will connect stakeholders in private industry and entrepreneurs with mentoring, education and support services. The money will buy machining and testing equipment to build prototypes and conduct usability testing.





Ravi Krovi

Academics and student success are the core competencies underlying the central mission of Weber State University. Our focus on quality programs and instruction, retention and completion has helped graduate students who then address the workforce needs of local employers. In addition to being the economic engine of the

greater Ogden community, Weber State is also having a broader impact on the regional northern Utah economy.

An interconnected set of companies, government entities, institutions, suppliers and providers are called clusters and often fuel regional economies. For example, France's wine cluster consists of companies specializing in irrigation technology, grape harvesting, winemaking, growers, wineries and corking facilities. Other examples of successful economic clusters include auto equipment in Detroit and furniture in North Carolina. Northern Utah's economic cluster includes industries such as defense and aerospace, advanced manufacturing and outdoor products. Recently, Weber State University has initiated collaborations with three regional partners.

Catalyst Campus for Technology & Innovation (CCTI) is a not-for-profit entity focused on facilitating the defense and aerospace ecosystem through training, supporting and mentoring small businesses to effectively compete for military contracts. CCTI currently has two successful campuses in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and at the University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland. Weber State is developing a partnership with CCTI to provide internships for existing students, research opportunities for faculty members and job opportunities for our graduates. There are also plans to have a collaboration with CCTI and Ogden City to build a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) for secure and classified projects. With the SCIF, Weber State will be the first university in the state to provide a unique access for faculty and staff to participate in research projects.

The Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (RMCOEH) is one of 18 designated National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Educational Research Centers (ERC) dedicated to preparing the talent pipeline to respond to the occupational health challenges in our regional workforce. In March 2021, the Utah legislature passed Senate Bill 172 that allowed for the joint operation of the center by the University of Utah and Weber State University. Because of this partnership, Weber State will add academic and continuing education programming to address occupational safety and health workforce needs in key sectors like manufacturing, healthcare and transportation. Through funding from the ERC grant and state and corporate partners such as Workers Compensation Fund, the center will also bring together occupational health and safety experts and educators.

The Utah Advanced Materials & Manufacturing Initiative (UAMMI) is a federal and state funded initiative that brings together public, private, community, industry and education partners to assure growth and sustainability of Utah's advanced materials and manufacturing industry. Recently, Weber State received a federal grant to increase regional competitiveness. The program will connect stakeholders in private industry and entrepreneurs with mentoring and services at the former Utah Science Technology and Research (USTAR) building near Hill Air Force Base.

Northern Utah's economic prosperity is linked intrinsically to the success of Weber State University. The above three initiatives are great examples of collaborations that will benefit our institution and even more reason why we need to be invested in our community anchor mission. Developing these partnerships is not easy. We have taken a leadership role in this area thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Deans and other individuals including **Guy Letendre**, Economic Development Director, **Steve Nabor**, Chief Financial Officer, and **James Taylor**, Office of Sponsored Projects Director. The long-term impact of these partnerships will eventually be felt through increased brand visibility and exciting new programs and opportunities for our students and faculty.

Wildcats Support Local High Schools

Two area high schools made capital improvements for their fall semester thanks to \$2,000 grants from Weber State University.

Ogden and Layton High School both received the grants in exchange for publicly recognizing WSU with banners hung in high-traffic areas of school, giveaway items for their college advising offices, and facilitating future academic collaborations.

“Our high-school sponsorships help increase awareness about Weber State and all that we have to offer prospective students,” said **John Kowalewski**, WSU Marketing & Communications executive director. “At the same time, we are helping our feeder high schools with capital improvement projects that benefit their students.”

WSU celebrated with ribbon cuttings at both schools at the end of September and early October, where President Brad Mortensen and Waldo both made appearances and spoke with school administrators and students.

At Layton High School, funds were used to renovate an old computer lab and turn it into a new career center. According to the grant request letter, the goal of the career center is to “provide a modern space where students and families can learn more about post-secondary opportunities, complete scholarship applications and begin their enrollment into higher education.”

Ogden High used the funds to purchase equipment for a new video production lab and launch a weekly “Tiger TV” student announcements segment.

Previous grant donations also resulted in a community resource center for youths with limited resources at home or facing homelessness at Clearfield High School, and new water bottles and drinking fountains at Weber High School.

Kowalewski called the resulting partnerships with high schools a “win-win” for Weber State.

“Hopefully, it will inspire current Warriors, Falcons, Tigers and Lancers to want to become Wildcats,” he said.

Weber State plans to pursue sponsorships with the 18 feeder high schools and some of the smaller schools over the next three years.



COLLABORATING ON ACCESSIBILITY

Access is one of Weber State's core themes, and faculty and staff from the Stewart Library, Disability Services and WSU Online have collaborated to help faculty make their online course content more accessible for students.

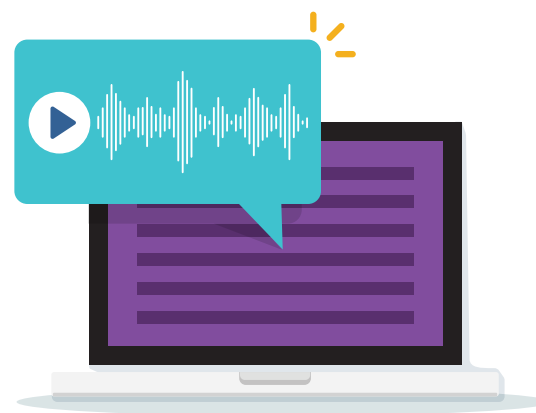
As part of a pilot project, using a software program called Ally, faculty can get feedback on instructional material, including articles, videos and PowerPoint presentations. If the material poses challenges, such as words over a graphic that make it impossible for a text-to-speech reader to pick up, then Ally will flag the problem. Once the difficulty is identified, WSU Online Director **RC Callahan** and **Nathan Boettcher**, support supervisor, have established a remediation team that can work with the instructor to find a solution.

Angela McLean, Disability Services director, and her team provided guidance on the accessibility measures needed in course content. They also provided CARES Act funding for the closed captioning of course videos. Through their liaison work within the university, Stewart Library faculty **Jason Francis**, **Shaun Adamson** and **Diana Meiser** worked with WSU Online to consult with faculty on issues of design, copyright and course content.

"It is rewarding to see such a strong partnership with committed and talented people contributing so much of their time and expertise to ensure that all students have equal access to course information on day one of the course," Francis said of the collaboration.

Several departments in the colleges of health professions, education and science have already participated in the pilot, and departments in the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology are coming on board.

This cross-disciplinary project led to the co-authored publication of a peer-reviewed article, "Developing new online course accessibility services for faculty through collaboration between librarians and campus departments: A case study," in the September issue of *Medical References Services Quarterly*.



Welcome to WSU

Bharath Babu Nunna,
Mechanical Engineering

Maria Bahena, *Digital Learning & Professional Education*

Catherine Clark, *John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics*

Calley Clementine, *Office of Community Development*

Danielle Collier, *Development*

Ryan Copeland, *Admissions Office*

Camela Corcoran, *Wildcat Stores*

Emily Darby, *Radiologic Sciences*

Nicholas Dean, *Dumke College of Health Professions*

Robert Emenger, *Provost's Office*

Sheilagh Fox,
Psychological Services

Daniel Fry, *Athletics Admin & Support*

Megan Gadd, *English*

April Jons, *Dental Hygiene*

Madeline Mazza,
Facilities Management

Kierah McKinnie,
Radiologic Sciences

Alyssa Mock, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

McKena Montgomery,
Automotive Technology

MaryJan Munger, *Office of Community Development*

Jack Niklason, *Provost's Office*

Elizabeth Orgeron, *Development*

Jared Porter, *Performing Arts*

Cory Read, *Infrastructure Services*

Erinne Roundy, *College of Arts & Humanities*

Aimee Ruhnke, *Admissions Office*

Sydni Sadlier,
Facilities Management

Narumi Salas,
International Programs

Suzanne Sandoval, *Mathematics*

Jaeger Schuelke, *Academic Support Centers - Programs*

Mauri Smith, *Performing Arts*

Shaylee Stevens, *Marketing & Communications*

June Thomas, *Mathematics*

Aniedi Thompson, *Bursar*

George Valdez,
Psychological Services

Galen Wagstaff, *Human Resources*

Timothy Wilson, *Development*

Jeffrey Williams, *Dumke College of Health Professions*

On the Move/ Promoted

Sarah Bateman, *Digital Learning & Professional Education*

Kenton Cummins, *Dumke College of Health Professions*

Kirsti Fox, *Academic Support Centers - Programs*

Dana Gibson, *Provost's Office*

Bart Hancock, *Facilities Management*

Crysta Herman, *Radiologic Sciences*

Dallynn Hunt,
Facilities Management

Bridget Jensen, *Financial Aid Office*

Cynthia Lynn, *Education Access & Outreach*

Hollie McKeeth, *Provost's Office*

Shela Merrill, *Stewart Library*

Rachel Middleton, *Student Affairs Strategic Initiatives*

MaryElla Mitchell, *Provost's Office*

Scott Peterson, *Academic Technology Services*

Yesenia Quintana, *Center for Community Engaged Learning*

Tanya Scott, *College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology*

Sara Seefried, *Career Services*

Pamela Silberman, *Health Sciences*

Sandy Smith, *Alumni Relations*

Chaz Steimel, *Budget Office*

Randi Weston,
Application Development

Jeffrey Whitehead,
Facilities Management



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