



WSU NEWS

Weber State University News & Events

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WEBER STATE HONORS GRADUATES AT 159TH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Weber State University recognized 2,332 graduates at the fall commencement ceremonies Dec. 16, 2022.

The ceremonies honored graduates from the summer and fall semesters of 2022, with the most popular majors being nursing, computer science, professional sales, criminal justice and diagnostic medical sonography.

"I'm always so inspired when I see students reaching out their hand to receive that diploma," said WSU president **Brad Mortensen**. "For our graduates, it's years of hard work and transformation culminating in that moment."

NEW VETERAN SERVICES DIRECTOR PRIORITIZES MILITARY, FAMILIES

Robert Wolfley served in the Air Force for 22 years. Now he's serving fellow veterans at Weber State University as the new director of Veteran Services.

"It's sometimes challenging to navigate life after the military, but we're here to help," Wolfley said. "We want veterans to find their place at Weber State."

Wolfley began his active duty career as a security forces airman before transitioning to the military's education and training career field. He served across the globe, from England to Germany and a deployment to Saudi Arabia, before retiring from Hill Air Force Base in 2016.

He holds a bachelor's degree in communication studies and master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, which focuses on helping people with disabilities succeed in all realms of life.

"I knew it would be challenging, but this job is a good fit," Wolfley said. "Having served in the military, I've faced some of the same challenges and jumped through some of the same hoops as our veteran students."

Wolfley has also worked for the Utah Department of Workforce Services, where he connected veterans to job opportunities across northern Utah.

His primary goal at Weber is to ensure veterans and their families receive educational benefits provided through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, such as the G.I. Bill.

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Weber State's SPIRIT OF GIVING

Throughout December 2022, Weber State University partnered with organizations throughout the community to bring holiday cheer to those in need.

WSU students, faculty and staff supported Community Christmas, a nonprofit organization that provides gifts to more than 2,000 children in Weber, Davis and Box Elder counties. For several years, the organization has teamed up with the WSU Student Association's Community Engagement Team and WSU's Center for Community Engaged Learning, or CCEL.

"It's such a great cause and a good opportunity for WSU to get involved," said **Teresa Martinez**, CCEL interim co-director. "It's always fulfilling to see how efforts on campus can benefit families right here in their own community."

Community Christmas Giving Trees were placed on the WSU Ogden and WSU Davis campuses. Participants chose tags hanging on the trees and purchased the suggested items listed on the tag, then volunteers sorted and organized gifts for families.

"Participating in Community Christmas helps unite our students with the community," said McLayne Arnold, student lead for Community Christmas. "We get to choose a tag and buy a gift, but we are also able to go and meet the families and children that receive these gifts. Projects such as this become lifelong service opportunities that everyone can participate in annually."



Along with Community Christmas, WSU's "Queering the Archives" and Special Collections department in the Stewart Library held a food and winter clothing drive. Food was donated to the Weber Cares pantry and gently used coats, hats and gloves were donated to Northern Utah AIDS Coalition.

MENTAL TO UPHOLD SKY-HIGH STANDARDS AS NEW HEAD COACH



Weber State football will have a new face calling the shots on the sidelines next fall.

Mickey Mental was named Weber State's 12th head coach following a national search for the position. Mental previously served as the Wildcats' offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach during the 2022 season.

Mental replaces head coach Jay Hill, who announced his departure after nine years at Weber State, leading the Wildcats to four Big Sky Conference Championships, six FCS playoff appearances and eight-straight winning seasons.

"I appreciate the opportunity to carry on a great legacy that Coach Hill and the rest of the staff have built here," Mental said. "It's a great opportunity to lead a great program with people I respect."

Prior to arriving at Weber State, Mental was head coach at Notre Dame College, where he had a 16-2 record.

In his first season at WSU, the Wildcat offense ranked in the top 25 in the nation in scoring offense, rushing offense, first downs and third down conversion percentage. Seven players earned All-Big Sky Conference honors.

"The standard hasn't changed," Mental said. "It's our job to meet that standard and raise it every year. A lot of big things are coming in 2023. I can't wait to get to work with these young men."

In addition to head coaching duties, Mental will continue to serve as offensive coordinator.

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#LouderandProuder

Robert Ball, associate professor of computer science, and **Brian Rague**, associate dean of the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology, published *The Beginner's Guide to Data Science*, 1st ed., a practitioner's guide for data science that can also be used as a textbook for students.

Campus Recreation director **Teri Bladen** was interviewed for *Campus Rec* magazine's industry podcast.

Jeremy Bryson, associate professor of geography, wrote a paper with undergraduate geography student Jeff Montague titled "Smoke Season: Exploring the Geographies of Transient Wildfire Smoke on the Wasatch Front" for *The Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters*. The paper won the journal's Outstanding Paper in the Social Sciences award for 2022.

Chemistry department chair and professor **Brandon Burnett** published a student-led project, "Fast, complete coordination of nutritional-based metal chelates through liquid-assisted grinding" in the *Journal of Undergraduate Chemistry Research*.

Microbiology professor **Daniel Clark** and recent WSU microbiology graduates collaboratively published "The Effect of Treatment-Associated Mutations on HIV Replication and Transmission Cycles," which covers how HIV mutates to escape drugs and vaccines.

Sara Dant, history professor, was interviewed by KUER radio discussing the history and construction of the Glen Canyon Dam, which feeds into Lake Powell. It aired nationally on NPR's *All Things Considered*.

Jeff Davis, professor of accounting, co-authored an article with his twin brother, attorney Halston Davis, in the *Journal of Accountancy* titled "Elder Financial Abuse: A Cautionary Tale."

Derek DeBruin, health and physical education recreation manager, led the rescue of a dog stranded on an icy cliff on Christmas morning 2022. The rescue made national news and was featured on CNN.

The **Dumke College of Health Professions** held a Career and Technical Education Day in December 2022, welcoming over 500 high school students from Morgan, Davis, Weber and Ogden School Districts, who spent the day learning about WSU and various programs within the college.

Dean of the College of Science and zoology professor **Andrea Easter-Pilcher** collaboratively published "Status and distribution of the Antillean Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus antillarum*) on the island of Grenada" in the *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*.

Ryan Frazier, geospatial technology education professor, presented a two-minute lightning talk titled "Post Soviet Rural Agricultural Brownfields in the Czech Republic" at the Geo for Good Summit. The talk was part of a session on networking and using satellite imagery.

Sara Gailey, assistant professor of teacher education, was selected to participate in the inaugural "Inquiry Initiative" sponsored by the Association of Teacher Educators. She was one of just 80 educators in the United States chosen to participate in the first-of-its-kind collaborative exploration of teacher education practices and research, focused on opportunity gaps in education.

Dustin Grote, assistant professor of teacher education, co-authored "Engineering community college transfer pathways through pre-transfer programs" in *Expanding community college opportunities: Access, transfer, and completion. New Directions for Community Colleges*.

Valerie Herzog, chair of the athletic training department, presented "Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Students: Preparing Professionals for Clinical Care in a Multi-cultural Health Care System" at the Virtual Athletic Training Educators' Conference.

Christopher Hoagstrom, zoology professor, collaboratively published two articles: "Comparative biogeography of North American turtle faunas: Neogene regionalization" and "Biotic regionalization of freshwater fishes in Northern Middle America highlights high beta diversity created by prominent biogeographic barriers" in *Frontiers of Biogeography*.

Lisa Hopkins, instructor of accounting and certified public accountant, concluded her term as treasurer and board member of the Trails Foundation of Northern Utah. During the past four years, Lisa has contributed 1,290 professional service hours to this local nonprofit organization.

Alicia Ingersoll, assistant professor of supply chain management, was a contributor to the *Utah Business* article "Utah Companies Are Trying to Pull Out of China."

Sachini Kodi, assistant professor of exercise and sport science, co-authored and published "Occupational Footwear Design Influences Biomechanics and Physiology of Human Postural Control and Fall Risk" in *Applied Sciences*.

Justin Lee, assistant professor of social work, presented a paper at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education titled "From Clinical Practice Experience to Research Question: What Former Mormon Clients Need When Leaving?"

London Lowe, nursing professor, was recently twice published in the *Journal for Workplace Health & Safety*.

Campus Recreation assistant director **Rebecca Mabile** was recognized for work being done by the Utah Drowning Prevention Coalition at the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 7 change of watch ceremony.

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FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT.)

#LouderandProuder

Assistant professor of anthropology **Madeline Mackie** had her research featured in an *Archaeology Magazine* article titled “High Plains Mammoth Hunters.”

Cade Mansfield, associate professor of psychological science, published “Challenges of the Experimental Paradigm in Narrative Identity Research” in the *Journal of Research in Personality*.

John Mukum Mbaku, professor of economics, published “The Cameroon Economy: Historical Overview,” the lead chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of The Economy of Cameroon*. He also published “Presidential term limits will be hard to scrap in Kenya – here’s what it would take” in *The Conversation*.

Scott Moore, medical laboratory sciences professor, was recognized as a Fellow of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine – an honor given to less than 50 people in the United States.

Katarina Pantic, assistant professor of teacher education, collaboratively published “Social interactions and practices that positively influenced women’s retention in their computer science major” in the *Computer Science Education* journal. She also published “Designing professional development for sustainable educational technology usage: Lessons learnt from Utah K-12 teachers” in the *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education* alongside **Ryan Cain**, assistant professor of teacher education.

Associate professor of teacher education **Clay Rasmussen** and **Shirley Dawson**, alongside teacher education professor **Melina Alexander**, published “Expanding Expectations: Faculty Perceptions on Student Retention” in the *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*.

Brad Reyns, graduate director and professor of criminal justice, published “Does change in binge drinking reduce risk of repeat sexual assault victimization? Evidence from three cohorts of freshman undergraduate women” in *Crime and Delinquency*.

Campus Recreation fitness coordinator **Jonathan Rivera** was selected as a WSU Staff Advisory Council “Wildcat Legends” prize winner for his contributions to the Men of Color student organization and Circle of Elders.

A paper titled “Optimal cryptocurrency allocation over the life cycle” by **Valentin Rudys**, assistant professor of economics, was accepted for publication in *Applied Economics*.

Janicke Stramer-Smith, assistant professor of political science, hosted an interview series with a U.S. representative and two European political leaders on inter-parliamentary efforts to hone weapons of economic warfare against Putin.

Katrina Twing, microbiology professor, was the lead author on “Microbial ecology of a shallow alkaline hydrothermal vent: Strýtan Hydrothermal Field, Eyjafördur, northern Iceland” published in a special issue of *Frontiers in Microbiology*, highlighting *Rising Stars in Hydrothermal Vents and Cold Seeps* and including WSU microbiology students Zachary Kane and Alexa Sanders. Twing also collaboratively published “Metabolic strategies shared by basement residents of the Lost City Hydrothermal Field” in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*.

Adolph Yonkee, earth and environmental sciences professor, was a co-author of four presentations at the 2022 Geological Society of America National Meeting: “Using Regional Kinematic Datasets to Better Understand Tectonic Systems: An Example from the North American Laramide Foreland”; “Integrating Structural, Paleomagnetic, and Geochronologic Datasets to Better Understand Tectonic Systems: An Example from the North American Sevier Fold-Thrust Belt”; “Age, Protoliths, and Petrotectonic History of the Farmington Canyon Complex: Paleoproterozoic evolution of Western North America”; and “The Importance of Local Provenance Variation in Foreland Basin Systems: Sevier Fold – Thrust Belt, Eastern Wasatch Range of North Eastern Utah.” He was also interviewed by KUTV 2 regarding the Box Elder County earthquake in November 2022.



New Veterans Services Director, continued from page 1

“We now serve not only veterans, but also spouses and dependents – everyone who uses VA educational benefits,” Wolfley said. Roughly 550 Weber State students used their VA benefits during 2022’s fall semester.

When it comes to goals for his new role, Wolfley wants to eliminate some of the worries veterans have when starting college. Aside from facilitating education benefits, he also wants to provide clearer guidance on what courses are covered by the VA, and ensure academic advisors are aware of the intricacies surrounding veteran benefits.

WSU HONORS TOP FACULTY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAMPUS, COMMUNITY

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCED THE RECIPIENTS OF TWO PRESTIGIOUS FACULTY AWARDS: THE JOHN S. HINCKLEY FELLOW AWARD AND EXEMPLARY COLLABORATION AWARD.

JOHN S. HINCKLEY FELLOW AWARD



Art professor **Matthew Choberka** was selected as the 2022 Hinckley fellow for excellence in teaching, scholarship and community engagement.

[Watch the video.](#)

Choberka has inspired art students at Weber State since 2005.

He serves as director of the Matthew S. Browning Center for Design, a collaborative space focused on urban arts design and planning, and

co-teaches a study abroad program in Venice, Italy, for art and art history students. Previously, he served as chair of WSU's Department of Visual Art and Design.

"Matt is a superstar scholar and his talent has been widely recognized," said WSU provost **Ravi Krovi**. "Many of his students have gone on to attend the best graduate programs in the nation."

Choberka's art has been showcased nationally and internationally, including two solo exhibits in Beaux-Arts des Ameriques in Montreal, Canada. Three of his recent paintings were featured in issue 150 of the New American Paintings journal.

"Weber State is the kind of place where ambitions, and even daydreams, are rewarded," Choberka said. "Whether I served as department chair or had the privilege of taking students to Venice, Italy, I've been able to keep up my research and find that balance between my studio practice and teaching."

Off campus, Choberka was instrumental in planning and implementing the Dumke Arts Plaza, a public space in downtown Ogden dedicated to art exhibits and performances.

EXEMPLARY COLLABORATION AWARD

Kristin Rabosky, associate professor of physics, and **Elizabeth Balgord**, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences, led a three-year project spanning across physical science programs to receive Weber State's Exemplary Collaboration Award.

The team's project involves faculty and students collecting and analyzing zircon-bearing rock samples using electron microscopy and mineral separation techniques. The results will be used to piece together the geologic history of northern Utah.

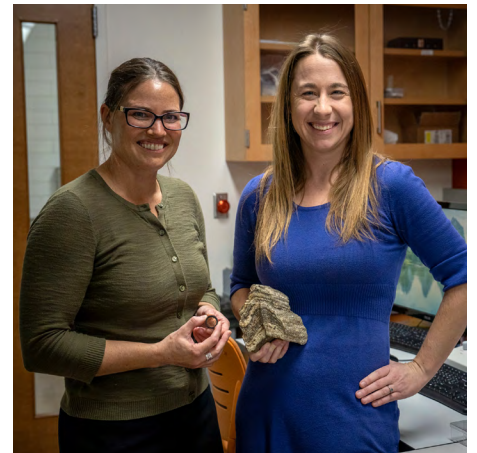
Although the work takes place in shared labs at WSU's Tracy Hall Science Center, the findings could benefit organizations across Utah and the surrounding states.

"Students have taken part in every part of this process," Balgord said.

Undergraduate students in earth and environmental sciences collected, processed and ran samples to determine the age of the rocks, while physics students developed protocols for imaging the grains and processing those images, gathering information on the composition of various zones within the zircons.

"It's been an eye-opening experience to see students in the sciences talking to each other in a way that you don't normally see at the undergraduate level," Rabosky said. "It's been fun to see our students grow through this project, and we're excited to see where this takes us over the next few years."

The project has resulted in the submission of a significant National Science Foundation grant proposal that would secure new equipment and allow the team to expand collaboration with regional institutions and other organizations across the nation.



Weber State uses 3D PRINTING FOR AEROSPACE SUPPORT, RESEARCH

Weber State University is using 3D printing to advance its research on composite materials that support northern Utah's aerospace and defense ecosystem.

The university's Miller Advanced Research and Solutions Center recently upgraded and installed the Impossible Objects Composite-Based Additive Manufacturing system, or CBAM-2. The machine prints composite materials that can then be used to design parts for a range of high-tech applications.

Located near Hill Air Force Base, Utah, the MARS Center brings together Weber State students and faculty with industry experts who can apply innovative solutions to real-world problems, especially in the realm of national defense.

"Composite materials are of high interest to the military, and the ability to 3D-print those parts on demand with CBAM gives us an advantage to participate in more projects and recruit the best talent," said **David Ferro**, dean of WSU's College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology.

Ferro said 3D printing will be a valuable tool in aerospace research among academic, defense and commercial partners.

"We've used this technology to print parts for legacy aircraft, aging jets that need replacement parts or tools that aren't in production anymore," said **Devin Young**, grant writing and research specialist at WSU, who works at the MARS Center. "CBAM makes parts that are lighter and stronger than some of the other methods out there, and it does it faster."



Young said a recent example of 3D-printed parts includes a strap that keeps first-aid kits secure inside aircraft currently flown by the U.S. Air Force.

"We've found a range of uses for this technology, from large aerospace companies to small local businesses," he said.

WELCOME TO WSU

Robert Allred
Accounting Services

Michael Anderson
Facilities Management

Annie Atwater
Child & Family Studies

Kelly Bartlett
Facilities Management

Nathan Bennion
Marketing & Communications

Anna Brown
Nontraditional Student Center

Jaime Brown
Medical Laboratory Sciences

Charles Durbin
Business Administration

Rochelle Fernandez
Zoology

Debra Fitzgerald
Administrative Services

April Gruber
Development

Clayton Halford
Physician Assistant Medicine

Eddie Hill
Health, Physical Education & Recreation

Samantha Hill
Exercise & Nutrition Sciences

Megan Jacobson
Child & Family Studies

Marley Keith
Browning Center

Alyssa Keyes
Student Success Center

Jennifer Kilcrease
IT Business Services

Bailey Larsen
Nursing

Abigail Mack
Sociology

Dakota Martinez
Dumke College of Health Professions

Miranda McPherson
English

Cassidy Miller
Alumni Relations

Alexandria Monroe
Sociology

Arthur Morrill
Visual Arts

Roger Paulman
Respiratory Therapy

Andrew Peery
Wildcat Stores

Jacqueline Perez
Concurrent Enrollment

Luis Perez Bermudez
Enterprise Applications

Krystal Smith
Honors Program

Charles Tokar
IT Business Services

Sonia Velasco
Student Affairs

Jodi Close Waddoups
Nursing

Jessica Webster
Academic Technology Services

Mitchell Whitfield
Marketing & Communications

Teresa Williams
Facilities Management

Patrick Zwick
School of Computing

Retired

Rodney Hansen
Exercise & Nutrition Sciences

William Lorowitz
Microbiology

Q&A WITH TAMMY NGUYEN, A NEW ADDITION TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



With a passion for working with diverse student populations, **Tammy Nguyen** has stepped into a new role as Weber State's executive director of access and inclusion.

Part of this evolving role includes overseeing newly established cultural centers — the Black Cultural Center, Native American Cultural Center, Pan-Asian Cultural Center and

Pacific Islander Cultural Center — along with the GEAR UP and Upward Bound programs.

She comes to WSU with a Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy, along with years of experience in higher education, most recently as director of academic advising and student success at Utah Valley University.

WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE ON THE HORIZON AT WSU?

With the creation of the EDI division, along with the new cultural centers, I'm hoping to see higher enrollment, retention and graduation rates for students of color. Additionally, the cultural centers will be a space where anyone can come to learn about each affinity group and participate in different events. I'm optimistic that cultural awareness on campus will continue to grow and we become a more inclusive place for everyone.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN EQUITY ISSUES IN HIGHER ED?

I wanted to eliminate the barriers I experienced when I was looking into college. During my transition from community college to four-year college, I had a falling out with my family, experienced homelessness and was unable to find funding for college. When speaking to administrators at the university, I saw my options were limited to getting married, having a child, joining the military or hiring a lawyer to help declare independence from my parents. These weren't viable options for me, and I felt isolated and alone. I want to make sure today's students don't face these same issues, and do my part to help make college accessible to everyone.

WHAT DREW YOU TO WEBER STATE?

Weber State is an open-enrollment university and has equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of its strategic plan, which aligns with my belief that everyone should have a chance to attend college. Whatever your experiences, background or identity, you can find a place at Weber State.

WHAT'S ONE THING EVERYONE CAN DO TO BE EQUITY-MINDED?

Equity, diversity and inclusion starts with each one of us. It's important to take the time to self-reflect and continue growing — to view things through new and different lenses. It's essential to keep learning, asking questions and being involved in conversations surrounding EDI.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR NEW ROLE?

When this position became available, I knew I had to apply. I love working with students and having the opportunity to make a positive impact through my work. I also love the connections and collaboration across campus. I couldn't do my job alone, and I feel like I'm part of a big family at Weber State. I can't think of a better place I'd rather be.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Among the cultural centers listed in this article, WSU is also home to the Hispanic Cultural Center and Dreamer Services, led by coordinators who report to Yudi Lewis, executive director of Hispanic-Serving Initiatives.



REMINDERS

FOCUS ON WELLNESS

You can start the year off right by 1) using your released wellness time and 2) participating in Weber State's wellness rewards program.

Benefits-eligible staff can participate in three hours of released wellness time per week for various activities. Participating in the wellness rewards program can also earn you up to \$200 by the end of the year.

For more information, visit weber.edu/employeeewellness

BECOME A GREEN TEAM!

Help reduce the university's greenhouse emissions and environmental impact by encouraging your department to become a Green Team.

Find out more about this rewarding program by contacting the Green Department Program at greenteam@weber.edu or visiting [their website](#).



CONTACT US

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