



WSU NEWS

Weber State University News & Events

VOL. 27 | NO. 2 | NOVEMBER 2023

THIS ISSUE!

Q&A W/ LGBTQ+ CENTER	3
RISE AWARDS	4
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	5
WELCOME TO WEBER	10



WEBER STATE SURPASSES 30,000 STUDENTS, SETS RECORD FOR HISPANIC AND LATINO ENROLLMENT

Defying the national trend that has seen a decline in college enrollment, Weber State University boasts its largest-ever student body and welcomes a record number of Hispanic and Latino students.

Enrollment numbers were released Oct. 17 in an annual report from the Utah System of Higher Education, which tracks student headcounts for fall semester.

"I'm always eager to see these numbers each year because it gives us a picture of the students we're serving — and this year it's a big picture," said WSU President **Brad Mortensen**. "We're excited to exceed 30,000 students, but it's also a reminder of our responsibility to them, and it motivates us to explore ways we can better meet their needs moving forward."

WEBER'S LARGEST STUDENT BODY

The USHE report shows Weber State is now home to 30,536 students, which includes matriculated degree-seeking students and a steady increase of concurrent enrollment and early college students.

Mortensen said WSU achieved a record 10,494 admits in the past year thanks to a commitment to waive application fees during the month of October, which the university did again this year. That contributed to an 8.4% growth in first-time students, he said.

"We're bucking the national trend, and I think that has a lot to do with our return on investment," said WSU Provost **Ravi Krovi**, pointing to recent studies that highlight Weber State's affordability and ability to place students in "market-relevant" careers.

CONT. ON PAGE 2

NEW LEADER AT WEBER STATE SHARES 'BIG VISION' FOR DEFENSE, AEROSPACE

A new leader in Utah's defense and aerospace industry took the reins Nov. 6 as Weber State University named **Benjamin Garcia** the executive director of the Miller Advanced Research & Solutions Center.



Garcia comes to WSU with an extensive background in research and development of advanced composite materials used for aircraft, missiles and rockets — areas especially relevant to the MARS Center.

"Our focus is on advanced manufacturing of high-temperature composites," Garcia said of the center. "We're going to increase our engagement with industry by partnering with the Utah Advanced Materials & Manufacturing Initiative to meet the technical needs of this community and our nation."

Garcia spent the last eight years with Northrop Grumman, where he recently managed a team of scientists and engineers in high-temperature composites. Over the past decade, he has forged strong relationships with business and industry partners across the state and the U.S.

"The MARS Center has a pretty big vision, and it's a unique center for the nation," Garcia said. "It's the intersection of academia and industry."

Garcia said he plans to leverage his work and educational background at the

CONT. ON PAGE 10

Fall enrollment, continued from page 1

A 2022 study by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce revealed how Weber State ranks in the top 10% among 4,500 colleges nationally for the return on investment, from 10 to 40 years after graduation. Another study from Utah Foundation this year found that "Weber State University tops the list in Utah for students' 10-year net present value of their education."

"We're a destination school because we offer high-quality education that's focused on outcomes, both in and outside of the classroom," Krovi said. "We're invested in student success and pushing for a better life after graduation."

GROWING HISPANIC AND LATINO POPULATIONS

Students who identify as Hispanic or Latino now make up 13% of the full-time equivalent undergraduate student body — an all-time high for that demographic at WSU. The increase moves the university closer to its goal to become an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution, a designation given when 15% of students identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Yudi Lewis, executive director of HSI Initiatives, said she's encouraged by the numbers.

"We're intentionally streamlining services and resources to provide access to the Hispanic and Latino population in our region, and that's going to benefit every student and will have positive impacts on Utah's economic development," Lewis said. "Reaching that 15% will better reflect Utah's Hispanic and Latino population, which is also 15%."

BOOST IN FIRST-TIME NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Among new students 25 or older, Weber State saw a 20% jump, which Krovi sees as a testament to the university's ability to accommodate adult learners who are looking to upskill while balancing the needs of their careers and families.

"It's that idea of lifelong learning," Krovi said. "We have students coming back to get their education in smaller chunks, through stackable pathways that work on their timeline."

According to WSU's Office of Institutional Research, more students are choosing a mix of in-person and online classes, especially post-pandemic. Weber offers a growing number of certificates and degrees that can be completed online.

RECORD DEGREES AWARDED

Weber State awarded a record-high 6,775 degrees and certificates during the 2022–23 academic year. Most of those graduates come from the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions, which help to make Weber State the foremost provider of health professionals to the state of Utah.

WSU is also a strong academic partner for Utah's aerospace and defense industries thanks in part to the College of Engineering, Applied Science and Technology, which produces the second-highest number of graduates at WSU and provides an increasing number of employees to Hill Air Force Base.

FACULTY, STAFF ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE HIEE IMPLEMENTATION

Weber State University is providing students with transformative experiences in and outside of the classroom. These opportunities, coined as high-impact educational experiences, include internships, leadership positions, community engagement, undergraduate research and more.

"We need to be setting our students up for success," said Jenny Frame, coordinator of Wildcat Advantage and HIEE implementation. "HIEEs are one way to do that, so why not embed them in the coursework so students can really take advantage of those experiences?"

The university prioritizes HIEEs in its [strategic plan](#) to improve student success and retention.

Wildcat Advantage focuses on working with students, and also assists faculty and staff to incorporate HIEEs

into their various programs. Frame said she hopes departments across WSU will implement HIEEs within their curriculum so students can easily participate.

"HIEEs are a huge indicator of success," said Tiana Witkamp, Wildcat Advantage and HIEE initiatives specialist. "Participants in these programs are more successful as students, and they are better prepared to enter the workforce."

Frame said Weber State is already exceeding its goal for 50% of bachelor's degree graduates to complete at least two HIEEs. Currently, 72% are meeting the standard.

Faculty and staff interested in learning more about designating their course or program with a HIEE can contact Frame at jennyframe@weber.edu.

Q&A WITH THE NEW LGBTQ+ CENTER PROGRAM COORDINATOR



This summer, **Jessica Fisher** was named the new program coordinator of Weber State University's LGBTQ+ Center. Fisher grew up in rural north Georgia and received an associate's degree in communication at Georgia Highlands College, where she fell in love with community colleges and building spaces for the LGBTQ+ community. She went

on to attend Kennesaw State University, working as an undergraduate student assistant for their LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

"Working at that center and being part of the community changed my life," Fisher said. "I really hope to be a part of that for students, staff and faculty here at Weber State."

WHAT DREW YOU TO WEBER STATE?

When I decided I wanted to go on the job market and was looking to work in LGBTQ+ student affairs broadly, I knew that it would be a lot more difficult if my search was geographically bound. So I applied all over the country. Honestly, I didn't know anything about Weber State when I applied. But I lucked out, because the open enrollment, community-based model here at Weber is aligned with my values.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS IN THIS NEW ROLE?

I have a lot of goals as program coordinator. They all revolve around a singular goal, which is to create opportunities for both visibility and allyship that best serves students.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THIS ROLE?

Being able to work with students! Whether it's planning programs or meeting with them about concerns or issues they have, being able to help them in any way that I can as they navigate higher education and life in general means the world to me.

WHAT'S ONE THING PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LGBTQ+ CENTER?

Students: Follow us on on [Instagram](#) to stay connected as we put on events and share resources on campus and in the community.

Faculty and staff: I'd love to connect if we haven't already. How can we collaborate? [Email me!](#)



McKay Education BUILDING TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO RENOVATED LEARNING SPACE

Construction is progressing on Weber State University's McKay Education Building, which is undergoing a complete renovation to modernize and upgrade its teaching and learning spaces.

Originally built in 1972, the McKay Education Building is now being stripped to its frame and foundation. The rebuild will provide updated classrooms, new study spaces, increased natural light and roof-mounted solar panels.

The renovation will also focus on creating more space for collaboration, including a digital media production lab and a makerspace called the Fabrication Lab. These rooms will provide tools for creating lesson plans and class materials.

The Melba S. Lehner Children's School, housed in the McKay Education Building, will receive a redesign to improve accessibility and student safety. New designated secure access for the Children's School will increase security for both kids and their families.

"The newly renovated McKay Education Building will provide a setting for innovative educational practices," said **Kristin Hadley**, dean of the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education. "This building will enable our students to be prepared for their careers as effective professionals."

Construction is expected to be finished by December 2024.

RISE AWARDS

Honored for their meaningful contributions to Weber State University and the community, three faculty members were awarded Research, Innovation Success & Entrepreneurship Awards during the 2023 RISE ceremony in September. Each received a \$1,500 award and recognition for research that highlighted climate change research, conservation biology of threatened plants, and arts education.

“It’s important that we have a way to recognize individuals who have been exceptional in research fields,” said **James Taylor**, executive director of the Office of Sponsored Projects and Technology Commercialization, which sponsors the awards.

A committee of deans, faculty and previous winners selects each year’s recipients. The 2023 awardees are geography professor **Dan Bedford**, botany assistant professor **James Cohen**, and Arts Learning Collaborative director **Tamara Goldbogen**.

OUTSTANDING RESEARCHER AWARD



DAN BEDFORD

Bedford established a national reputation in human-induced climate change research. His response and insights to keynote climate scientist Kevin Anderson were featured in the acclaimed journal *Professional Geographer*. He secured a front cover feature in the *Environment Journal* and has earned accolades from the American Geophysical Union for his innovative approach in utilizing misinformation as a teaching tool. His paper “Agnotology as a teaching tool” received attention on RealClimate.org, and his research has been cited over 400 times on Google Scholar. He represents Weber State for innovative Urban Transitions and Aridregion Hydro-sustainability and was pivotal in addressing Utah’s water management challenges. His ongoing research delves into the dynamics of Urban Heat Islands, highlighting their significance and potential mitigation strategies.

EMERGING RESEARCHER AWARD



JAMES COHEN

Cohen’s lab at WSU delves deep into plant systematics, Boraginaceae, Lithospermum, angiosperm heterostyly evolution and conservation biology of threatened plants. Throughout his career, he has contributed to 41 publications and focuses on co-publishing with undergraduate students. He is an associate or subject editor for prominent botanical journals and heads the Mary Carver Hall Herbarium at WSU. He is also recognized for his contributions as the Ambros Amos Shaw Endowed Chair for 2022–23. At WSU, Cohen has guided 13 students, secured funding and collaborated internationally. He’s currently associated with National Science Foundation grants totaling over \$1.5 million. His pursuit of student-involved research aligns with WSU’s strategic plan of fostering future readiness among botany majors.

PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT AWARD



TAMARA GOLDBOGEN

WSU’s Arts Learning Collaborative, established in 2013 by the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities and the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education, has advanced arts education in Utah. It serves as an advocacy, research, partnership and professional development hub. The programs enhance arts education from elementary to higher education and support community arts programs. Notable initiatives include the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program, which received \$22 million in legislative funding and reached 20,000 students in 2023. Additionally, WSU BTS Arts Internship and ARTSBRIDGE programs provide WSU students with valuable experience and integrated arts projects for community schools. The collaboration commits to various community outreach initiatives that promote arts education, equity and access.

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

James Almeida, assistant professor of history, presented “Labor Reforms During the Construction of Potosí’s Second Royal Mint” in Spanish at the 250th Anniversary of the Potosí Mint Conference Cycle in the National Mint Museum in Potosí, Bolivia.

David Aguilar-Alvarez, associate professor of exercise and nutrition sciences, co-wrote and published three papers in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*: “Increased Intake of Alpha-linolenic Acid Is Associated with Higher Exam Scores”; “Tapering Before NCAA Division I Cross-Country Competition Reduces Plasma HDL-C But Has No Effect on Structural HDL Apolipoproteins”; and “Sodium to Potassium Ratio Is Associated with Increased Blood Pressure in Males but Not in Females.” He also had three groups of students present at The Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo, the flagship conference for dietetic professionals.

Mikelle Barberi-Weil, assistant professor of professional sales, co-presented “Generosity and the Power of Suggestion: Increasing Social Capital for Women and Girls by Leveraging Social Intelligence” at the Pepperdine GSEP Research Symposium. She also published her dissertation in ProQuest, “Exploring Prosocial Theories for Teaching Civility in Baccalaureate Level Business Communication.”

Kim Caldwell, assistant professor of dental hygiene, was named president-elect of The Utah Dental Hygienists’ Association.

Shelly Costley, associate professor of dental hygiene, was named Educator of the Year by the Utah Dental Hygienists Association.

Tracy Covey, chemistry and biochemistry associate professor, was recognized with the 2023 College of Science Endowed Scholar Award.

Rebekah Cumptsy, associate professor of English, published “Gothic and the Global South” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Globalgothic* and “Race and Post-colonialism” in *Contemporary Literature and the Body: A Critical Introduction*.

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa screened “The Rights of Nature: A Global Movement,” written and produced by **Hal Crimmel**, English professor; Issac Goeckeritz, filmmaker and WSU graduate; and María Valeria Berros, Argentine law professor. The screening was part of the Inaugural Sustainability Film Series presented by UH Mānoa, Honolulu Museum of Art. The film sold out the Doris Duke Theater, Hawaii’s largest independent arthouse theater.

Derek DeBruin, recreation manager in the Department of Health, Physical Education & Recreation, presented “The Petzl Grigri in the Belay Competency Drop Test” at the International Technical Rescue Symposium.

Nicole Flink, assistant professor of professional sales, co-wrote “Why are you selling your business? Understanding signaling effects of seller rationale at time of entrepreneurial exit,” published in *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*.

Carie Frantz, earth and environmental sciences professor and environmental science program director, collaboratively published with seven WSU students the article “Desiccation of ecosystem-critical microbialites in the shrinking Great Salt Lake, Utah (USA)” in *PLOS WATER*.

Communication instructor **Mark Galaviz** helped lead the Forensics Speech Team to a first-place win at the Steve Hunt Classic hosted by Lewis and Clark College, where WSU students triumphed over long-standing champions Boise State University and almost 40 other colleges and universities.

Amanda Gonzalez, assistant professor of dental hygiene, was elected treasurer of the Utah Dental Hygienists’ Association.

Dustin Grote, assistant professor of teacher education, co-wrote “Lost in translation: Information asymmetry as a barrier to accrual of transfer student capital,” published in *Community College Review*, and co-wrote “Comparing self-report instruments and scenario-based assessments of systems thinking competence” for the *Journal of Science Education and Technology*.

Sarah Herrmann, associate professor of psychological science, received the Gene Sessions Excellence in Teaching Award.

Joshua Jensen, assistant professor of computer science, and **Robert Ball**, associate professor of computer science, published three papers at HCI International that they co-authored with graduate students.

Sachini Kodi, assistant professor of exercise and sport science, co-wrote “Effects of virtual heights, dual-tasking, and training on static postural stability,” published in *Applied Ergonomics*, and “Postural Control Behavior in a Virtual Moving Room Paradigm” for *Biomechanics*.

Ben Kruger-Robbins, assistant professor of film studies, published a chapter in the edited anthology *Camp TV of the 1960s: Reassessing the Vast Wasteland*.

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FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT.)

Leah LaGrone, assistant professor of history, received the Jennings G. Olson Award.

Alex Lawrence, associate professor of professional sales, served as keynote speaker on ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence at conferences in New York City, Nashville and Park City.

Nursing professor **London Draper Lowe** received approval from the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a SkillBridge partner program, which will help retiring advanced practice nurses with graduate degrees cross over into the world of academia.

The Bachelor's in **Manufacturing Systems Engineering program** received accreditation by the Engineering Accrediting Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

Zoology professor **Jonathan Marshall** published "New localities and lineages of the Atlas dwarf lizard *Atlantolacerta andreanskyi* identified using mitochondrial DNA markers" in *Herpetozoa*; "Allometric analysis of sexual dimorphism and morphological variation in two chromosome races of the *Sceloporus grammicus* complex (Squamata: Phrynosomatidae) from Mexico" in *Vertebrate Zoology*; "Variation in body size and reproductive characteristics among chromosomal races of the *Sceloporus grammicus* complex of Mexico" in the *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*; and "Systematic sexism: gender-neutral rule changes are needed" in *Bionomia*.

Medical Laboratory Sciences faculty **Matthew Nicholaou** and **Justin Rhees** co-wrote "Variations in low titer group O whole blood practices in the United States," published in the *International Journal of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology*.

Kim Parkinson, assistant professor of radiologic sciences, recently completed her health sciences doctorate from A.T. Still University.

Nicolás Pérez-Consuegra, earth and environmental sciences professor, co-authored "On the crumpling and repaving of the North American continent," published in the *GeoScience World's Geological Society of America Bulletin* and collaboratively published the article "Erosion rate maps highlight spatio-temporal patterns of uplift and quantify sediment export of the Northern Andes" for *ScienceDirect*.

Elaine Schnabel, assistant professor of communication, published "Deific Figures and Human Bodies: Creating Hierarchies of Difference through the Incarnation of Moral Authority" in *Management Communication Quarterly*.

Leigh Shaw, professor of psychological science, and **Cade Mansfield**, assistant professor of psychological science, presented a paper in a symposium on narrative meaning making in adolescence during the 13th Biennial Conference of the Society for the Study of Human Development in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Yasmen Simonian, Dean of the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions, was honored for her contributions to STEM during Utah Day of the Girl, an annual event where local professionals recognize the impact and potential of women and girls in Utah while supporting Girl Scouts.

Athletic training instructor **Hannah Stedge** and **Valerie Herzog**, athletic training professor, co-wrote "Athletic Training Students' Perceived Self-Confidence Performing Rectal Thermometry Following Simulated Encounters: A Mixed Methods Study," published in the *Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*. Stedge recently completed a Ph.D. in health sciences from Rocky Mountain University, as well as a graduate certificate in health professions education.

Carla Trentelman, professor of sociology, was part of the panel presentation "Teaching Society and Natural Resources in a Convergent World" at the 2023 International Association for Society and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, Maine.

The Utah Award American Chemical Society committee awarded chemistry and biochemistry professor **Ed Walker** the 2023 Chemistry Professional Utah Award.

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox and First Lady Abby Cox honored **Yu-Jane Yang**, performing arts professor and director of keyboard studies, as one of two artists of the year at the Governor's Mansion Artist Awards.

Adolph Yonkee, earth and environmental science professor, received the 2023 Utah Geological Association Lehi Hintze Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Geology of Utah.

WSU RECOGNIZES FACULTY MAKING STRIDES IN HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY

Weber State University honored top faculty with the John S. Hinckley Fellow Award and the Exemplary Interdisciplinary Collaboration Award on Oct. 31.

JOHN S. HINCKLEY FELLOW AWARD



Matthew Nicholaou, professor and chair of medical laboratory sciences, was named the 2023 Hinckley Fellow for excellence in teaching, scholarship and community engagement.

[Watch the video.](#)

Nicholaou emerged as a leader during the COVID-19 pandemic. His expertise in clinical diagnostics, microbiology and infectious diseases allowed him

to assist with the university's testing, identification and vaccination efforts throughout the public health crisis.

During his remarks, Nicholaou said he was honored to be named among many past recipients he has looked up to during his 12 years at WSU: "I truly appreciate this recognition, and at the same time, it's just who we are, that's just how we work, jumping into action when

we're needed," Nicholaou said of his college's response to COVID-19.

He also noted collaboration and connections are "the most important part about Weber." He regularly assists students in conducting and presenting research, which has led to many top honors at WSU's research symposiums.

Nicholaou has served as the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions representative to WSU's undergraduate research department, a faculty senate member and a Dumke College executive committee member. He was named Dumke Endowed Chair two years ago.

Currently, Nicholaou is collaborating on a COVID-19 study, "Booster Epidemiological Evaluation of Health, Illness and Vaccine Efficacy," with University of Utah professor Sarang Yoon and the Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health.

EXEMPLARY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AWARD

Professors from WSU's Automotive Technology Program and School of Computing have collaborated over the past three years to create the Autonomous Vehicle Systems Program, offering a post-baccalaureate certification aligned with demands of the AV industry. Self-driving research vehicle

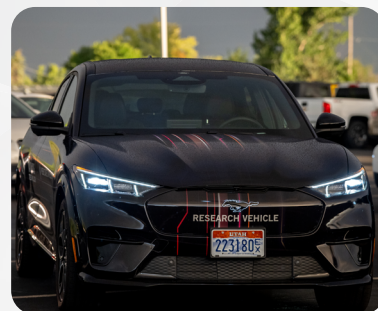
WSU awarded three professors who were instrumental in launching the program with the 2023 Exemplary Interdisciplinary Collaboration Award: **Scott Hadzik**, professor of automotive technology; **Brandon Stevenson**, associate professor of automotive technology; and **Meher Shaikh**, assistant professor in the School of Computing.

Responding to the emergence of AV technology over the years, the professors secured nearly \$1 million in state funding to launch the certification program.

The professors worked closely with industry partners like Amazon, Firefly Automatix and Autonomous Solutions, Inc. to create the AVS training curriculum.

Through these partnerships, the AVS program aims to grow students' expertise in both computer science and automotive technology, and get them plugged into jobs and internships. The program also provides access to equipment that supports autonomous vehicles, robot operating systems and AV sensor technology.

"Weber State is growing exponentially, and the collaboration that we have with automotive technology and computer science is really a collaboration that needs to continue to provide new opportunities for our students moving forward," Stevenson said. "We're really looking forward to how this industry grows."



HOMECOMING '23



WEBER STATE LAUNCHES CAMPUS CLIMATE TEAM

Weber State University has launched its Campus Climate Team to respond to incidents that affect a sense of inclusivity and belonging on campus.

The CCT was assembled to reaffirm and support Weber State's commitment to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and welcoming campus for everyone. Team members have knowledge of the issues, audiences, programs, resources and communication tools at WSU.

Over the past several months, members of the university have been diligent in reporting incidents that make them feel unsafe, uncomfortable or unwelcome. The CCT aims to coordinate a streamlined response to these reports, gathering data and tracking incident status, along with providing resources and support.

University members are encouraged to visit, use and share the [CCT website](#), which serves as a centralized place to report and track incidents related to campus climate.



WSU AWARDED \$1.2M FROM NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FOR POSTDOC RESEARCH

Weber State University has been awarded \$1.24 million from the National Science Foundation, the largest NSF grant received by the university to date.

The NSF grant will bring four independent postdoctoral researchers to WSU for two years to collaborate with professors and students in the STEM fields.

Postdoctoral researchers are individuals who have completed their Ph.D.s and are engaged in mentored research, scholarship and teaching. It serves as a time for researchers to build the skills necessary for their desired career.

“Weber State is contributing a lot to the STEM workforce, so this is an opportunity to bring in postdocs who are on the cutting edge of their research and who want to share that with undergraduate students,” said **Bridget Hilbig**, associate professor of botany and plant ecology, and one of four WSU faculty who helped secure the grant.

Other WSU faculty from the College of Science and the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education who are part of the grant include **Jim Cohen**, assistant professor of botany and plant ecology; **Kristin Rabosky**, associate professor of physics and astronomy; and **Megan Hamilton**, assistant professor of teacher education.

Hilbig said this is a unique opportunity to mentor postdocs in the “teacher-scholar” model that aims to balance research and teaching.

“There are about 66,000 postdocs nationwide and they usually end up at big research institutions,” Hilbig said. “We pursued this grant because currently there are few opportunities like this for STEM postdocs and we’re interested in improving the postdoctoral experience for people who want to land at a teaching institution like Weber State.”

Hilbig said the goal is to create a cohort who can be mentored and equipped with “the tools to be successful teachers.” On top of conducting research, the postdocs will also teach classes beginning in fall 2024.

Exactly what they will research within STEM has yet to be determined but Weber State students will be involved, Hilbig said.

“For the fellows, this is an opportunity for mentorship and training to ensure students are getting the best teaching they can possibly get,” she said. “For our students, it’s giving them more involvement in undergraduate research.”

WSU will begin a search for the postdocs in January 2024, and Hilbig wants to recruit a diverse group of STEM professionals who are eager to collaborate with both faculty and students. They will be housed within the College of Science or the College of Education.

New leader, continued from page 1

MARS Center “to take things from the lab and research to actual real-world production.”

The California native earned a bachelor’s degree in materials engineering at California Polytechnic State University and a Ph.D. in materials science and engineering at Cornell University.

He hopes to see more pilot scale production demonstrations happening at the MARS Center, eventually transitioning to a full production line at industry partners.

“We want to push new technologies,” Garcia said. “Utah needs this type of expertise, so it’s a great opportunity not only for the industry to take part in this, but also for our students. They’re already doing unique testing on materials at extremely high temperatures potentially greater than 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit and speeds faster than Tom Cruise in the movie ‘Maverick.’”

Garcia said he wants to recruit more “topnotch talent” to keep the MARS mission growing, and to be a resource for small businesses both in Utah and across the U.S.

WELCOME TO WEBER STATE

Anthony Archuleta
Child & Family Studies

Shaylene Baruffi
Online & Continuing Education

Kobe Bassett
Facilities Management

James Beus
Facilities Management

Alicia Guthrie
Psychological Science

Joseph Johnson
Facilities Management

Yonathan Juarezgovoni
University Police

Kristin Millard
Learning and Student Support

Jill Montgomery
Student Success Center

Destiny Mora
Online & Continuing Education

Felicia Morgan
Payroll

Pecko Neveselov
Facilities Management

Bailey O’Leary
Honors Program

Sara Phlypo
Exercise & Nutrition Sciences

Andrew Pritchett
Student Success Analytics

Ueni Purcell
Development

Jadon Record
Online & Continuing Education

Kelsea Roybal
Physician Assistant Medicine

Scott Singleton
Facilities Management

AnnaBel Stanger
Facilities Management

Olivia Taylor
Services Students with Disabilities

Erica Umutoiniwase
College of Education

Justin Valdez
Athletic Training

Isaac Ware
Facilities Management

Linda Wilson-Hill
Learning and Student Support

RETIRED

Mickey Cole
Psychological Science

Karin Hurst
Marketing & Communications

Notable Moments

NEW ACUE COURSES OPENING FOR SPRING

Visit the **Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning** to register for courses in Effective College Instruction through the Association of College and University Educators. During spring semester 2024, faculty can earn microcredentials in Promoting Active Learning taught Jan. 22 through April 14, or Fostering a Culture of Belonging taught Jan. 22 through March 24. For more information, email nicolacorbin@weber.edu.

WEBER STATE’S ‘THE COLLEGE TOUR’ EPISODE

Streaming now on Amazon Prime Video, Weber State’s 30-minute episode of *The College Tour* focuses on 10 students and alum. You can also view the entire episode on WSU’s [YouTube channel](#).

INTERIM VP FOR EDI ANNOUNCED

Laís Martinez, current Assistant Commissioner for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer with the Utah System of Higher Education, will support Weber State’s EDI efforts until a new permanent vice president can be hired. With more than a decade of experience at the institutional and system levels, she has worked closely with chief diversity officers to design state-level strategies to close attainment disparities and develop the USHE Equity Lens Framework. Read more about her professional experience [here](#).



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