



#### SPRING SEES MORE STUDENTS STUDYING, STAYING AT WEBER STATE

Weber State University is seeing significant gains in enrollment, retention and completion. New data, measured during the third week of spring semester, shows how university-wide efforts to ensure student success are working.

#### ENROLLMENT: STUDENTS WANT TO STUDY AT WSU

"The numbers show more and more people want to study at Weber," said **Jessica Oyler**, vice president of Student Access & Success.

This spring, matriculated degree-seeking students at Weber State increased by 2.9% from last year, while overall student headcount increased 3.4%. Weber State also saw more students advancing their education after earning an associate's degree. In the academic year 2021–22, 63% of students graduating with a bachelor's degree previously completed an associate or certificate at WSU.

#### COMPLETION: STUDENTS ARE PERSEVERING

In just over a decade, Weber State's graduation rate skyrocketed from 31% to 44%. At this same time, strategic investments decreased the advisor-to-student ratio from 618:1 to 490:1. And, new this year, the university implemented mandatory advising for first-year students.

"We've also moved a metric we've never moved before," said Oyler, referring to WSU's eight-year credential completion. Breaking a trend of stagnation, 45.6% of students who started at WSU in the

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### **DIXON AWARDS**

Since 1970, the WSU Alumni Association has presented the H. Aldous Dixon Award to outstanding faculty and staff. The award is given in memory of former President Dixon who served as the school's chief administrator in 1919-20 and from 1937 to 1953.



SARA DANT
PROFESSOR AND CHAIR,
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dant is a distinguished educator and scholar whose contributions have left an indelible mark on Weber State University during her 23-year career. Watch the video.

A renowned historian specializing in the environmental history of the American West, Dant has authored two books, 12 scholarly articles and numerous book reviews. She's also a sought-after speaker who lectures across the country.

She has served as chair of the Department of History for the past seven years, bringing a strong focus on student success and making college accessible and inclusive. For her large History 1700 lecture courses, she adopted an open-access textbook that is available free online.

Outside the classroom, Dant has helped shape WSU's academic landscape by spearheading initiatives to enhance curriculum offerings, support faculty development and foster a vibrant scholarly community. Her service extends beyond departmental boundaries, encompassing leadership roles in campus-wide committees and professional organizations.

Beyond academia, Dant's commitment to environmental advocacy is evident in her role as an expert witness in legal proceedings to protect public access to Utah waterways. Her meticulous research and compelling testimony have played a pivotal role in shaping public policy.



ALAN L. FERRIN
SENIOR MANAGER, CREATIVE
ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

It would be difficult to find another Weber State staff member who "bleeds purple" more than Ferrin. The son of longtime professor Luan H. Ferrin, Alan spent his childhood exploring the education building and befriending his father's colleagues. He attended WSU and began working as an assistant video producer while he was a student. Watch the video.

Ferrin has been part of WSU's Creative Academic Technology Solutions since 1997. In 2014, he became manager of the CATS team, where he refers to his colleagues as "creative geniuses and good friends."

Ferrin's deep ties to WSU extend through his family: His wife, Mindy, is the daughter of legendary track and field coach Jim Blaisdell, and four of the couple's five sons have graduated from or are attending WSU. Along with family time, Ferrin enjoys painting, being outdoors and participating in religious and community service.

In 2006, Ferrin established COMM 3200, Live Event Production. Recognizing the importance of providing students with real-world experience, he collaborated with communication faculty to create a course that merges classroom learning with industry practice as students broadcast Wildcat Athletics events.

Other memorable professional accomplishments include being on the International Sports Broadcasting production crew for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. And in 2008, Ferrin was recognized with WSU's Presidential Outstanding Professional Staff Award.

# Taylor Swift-themed ENGLISH CLASS HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

Weber State University's Department of English launched a new "era" of elective courses focused on Taylor Swift Studies this spring with more than 30 undergraduate and graduate students signing up to study the awardwinning songstress.

Associate Professor **Emily January** is teaching the elective course, which filled up "almost immediately" once spring class registration opened, prompting the addition of a master's level course.

Teaching Taylor Swift is a growing trend in higher education institutions, and electives like "Taylor Swift Studies" are a good way to introduce students to topics or areas of study they might not otherwise explore, January said.

"I think a lot of what's happening in higher education is that we're having to not only connect to the students in class, but we need to entice them to enroll in the first place," January said. "If we're giving them this with something they're already familiar with, then we give them the power to learn and educate themselves about the deeper issues that surround those beloved topics."



Each week, January selects a different theme for class readings and discussions through Swift's lyrics: girlhood, politics and feminism, to name a few.

With Swift's next album, "The Tortured Poets Department," dropping April 19, the Friday before finals week, January said her students asked to meet one extra time during their finals to discuss — a first in her teaching career.

"It's been really gratifying to experience, to see how excited students are to engage in conversation," January said. She plans to teach "Taylor Swift Studies" again in fall 2024.

#### LINDQUIST AWARD



Long-time sociology professor **Carla Trentelman** earned the 2024 John A. Lindquist Award, presented by the Center for Community Engaged Learning, for inspiring her students through focused efforts on community engaged learning, undergraduate research and sustainability projects.

For nearly 20 years at Weber

State University, Trentelman's innovative teaching, research and service leadership have impacted the lives of students, faculty and staff, resulting in positive changes to the local community.

Trentelman's extensive body of work started as a student at Weber State College in 1979, where she served with a Volunteers in Service to America program, better known as VISTA. Following grad school, she returned to Weber State in 2005 as an adjunct professor, where she employed

community-based research pedagogy in a research methods class for the first time. When she moved to a tenure track, she began work with the Community Involvement Center, which later became CCEL.

She has since taught over 55 classes using community engaged learning and three courses using community-based research, working with numerous organizations and developing close relationships with Catholic Community Services, Weber Housing Authority and Ogden School District.

Trentelman has used her expertise to assist with challenges facing the Ogden School District, served as a faculty researcher for the Ogden United Promise Neighborhoods project at United Way of Northern Utah, chaired the post-secondary education committee of the Ogden Civic Action Network, and conducted research on water conservation at Weber State that resulted in the creation of the Water Conservation Coordinator position. Since 2015, she has served regularly in the food pantry of Catholic Community Services.

#### **DEBBI MURPHY**

An academic advisor in the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities, Murphy advises hundreds of current and prospective students each semester. Colleagues consider Murphy an expert on the college's complex and diverse curriculum, serving as a go-to resource. Murphy serves on the Lindquist College Success Team and Curriculum Committee, where she identifies and helps remove stumbling blocks for students. Faculty appreciate her efforts to keep Grad Maps current and accurate, and her willingness to share insights with the goal of fostering student success. She is also a steadfast advocate and mentor for the college's advising team.

#### **ASHLEY OWENS**

As the director of First Year and Family Programs, Owens puts students first, overseeing the training and development of the First Year Experience mentors and instructors. In addition to taking on New Student Orientation, she oversaw the inaugural Weber State Family Day in fall 2023. When Owens realized that some First Year Experience sections did not have peer mentors, she worked to provide them access to a panel of mentors. She is recognized as an outstanding leader who has created a team that cares about each other and their work, holding herself and her team to high standards to ensure students have the best experience as they transition into Weber State.

#### **AUBREY JENKINS LORD**

Jenkins Lord is an indispensable force contributing to Weber State's efficiency and success in her role as administrative associate in the Provost's Office. Managing new academic programs, she ensures clarity and accuracy in documents reviewed by leaders at the university, the Utah System of Higher Education and accrediting agencies. She manages budgets, including the allocation of grants, monetary awards and faculty expenditures. Renowned for her creativity, Jenkins Lord navigated complex situations on the Staff Advisory Council and played a pivotal role during COVID. As an adult learner herself, she has a student-centric mindset and understands barriers to student success.

#### **ANDREW STAPLEY**

As the course materials specialist in Stewart Library, Stapley oversees the textbook library, course reserve and electronic reserve collection. He is instrumental in developing many of the Open Educational Resources Initiatives on campus and administering the OER grant program. He co-created the "Affordability Roadshow," which presents expense-cutting options for faculty. Stapley improved access and organization of the library and streamlined checkout procedures, which enhanced access and tracking of materials. His WSU career has focused on access to information to promote student success and support faculty teaching.

#### **MICHAEL RICHTER**

For more than 30 years at Weber State, Richter has been an exemplary asset to the university through his good nature, leadership skills and hard work. He has served as bursar for the last 12 years, maintaining strong relationships with his colleagues. He was crucial in devising a way for staff to text students with pertinent information after learning students preferred that form of communication. Richter fosters a productive and positive work environment through cross-training and encouraging staff to share knowledge with others. During COVID, he provided feedback on the best way to allocate federal relief dollars to best support students and the university.



### WEBER STATE'S NEW ESPORTS LAB COMBINES ACADEMICS, EXTRACURRICULARS

Weber State University students and faculty can now study the physiological effects video games have on the human body in a new esports lab on campus.

The esports lab is part of the newly renovated Human Performance Lab in the Department of Exercise & Nutrition Sciences. The Human Performance Lab provides hands-on learning experiences for exercise and sports science students, giving them opportunities to conduct fitness testing and research using state-of-the-art equipment.

"The new esports lab helps us investigate the impact of gaming on different body processes. This is a new and exciting area of exercise science," said **Kristin Hadley**, dean of the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education.

With the rising interest in esports and popularity of gaming worldwide, gamers are an increasingly important population to study, said **Bryan Dowdell,** assistant professor of exercise and sport science.

"Video games are the most common entertainment media now," Dowdell said. "Gamers are an unstudied population and the vast chunk of the population do play video games."

The esports lab is Dowdell's brainchild, a place to combine academic study and extracurricular activities. For his dissertation, Dowdell studied the difference in cardiovascular stress response between people who identified as gamers and non-gamers, finding that gamers had significant increases in heart rate and blood pressure, especially during competitive events.

The lab has six computers that are primarily utilized by Weber State's esports junior varsity team for practice and during scrimmages, while Dowdell gathers data for research studies.

"Most universities have one lab exclusively for varsity players. We are lucky enough to have three, which is a huge step in the right direction for college esports in general," said **Tyler Oelling,** WSU's esports coordinator.

With the lab's opening this spring, Dowdell has started research focused on cognitive skills and multitasking abilities in gamer and non-gamer college students.

### BRADY PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS

The Brady Presidential Distinguished Professors honor was established in 2006 to recognize Weber State University faculty members who have demonstrated the highest quality teaching, scholarship, research and community service. A generous gift from Rodney and Carolyn "Mitzi" Brady made recognition funding possible.

The late Rodney Brady served as WSU president from 1978 to 1985.

#### **SARAH STEIMEL**



Steimel's contributions to her students, department, college and the university are exemplary. As a communication professor, her research and teaching interests are in organizational communication, diverse people in organizations, and research methods, with a major part of her research focusing on communication in nonprofit

organizations. Since starting at WSU in 2011, Steimel has racked up 17 publications in leading academic journals and books, and 44 presentations at academic conferences to include the National Communication Association. Her work is often singled out for excellence by her peers, having received "Top Paper" or "Top Four Paper" five times. She was a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Award in 2020 to conduct extensive research in online education. In this area, she has incorporated best practices into her own career, with research publishedin the International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Steimel draws glowing reviews from students in WSU's Master of Professional Communication program. She earned the Presidential Teaching Excellence Award in 2018 and has twice been a finalist for the Western States Communication Association Distinguished Teaching Award. She's known as a champion of student research, having chaired five thesis committees for graduate students and led 10 students in independent study or research projects.

Aside from all this, she also finds time to serve as reviewer for several journals and as elected school board chair for the DaVinci Academy charter school. At WSU, she has served as Director for the MPC Program, Director of Graduate Studies, and recently transitioned to Associate Dean of the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities. She has also run the Engaged Learning Series for the Center for Community Engaged Learning from 2013 to 2015. In all these roles, she has made profound impacts and has always prioritized student success.

#### **MELISSA NEVILLE**



During her 14 years at Weber State, NeVille has served as an accomplished visionary leader, having overseen both the Master of Science in Nursing program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, where her transformational leadership style helped develop programs that have earned national recognition and

experienced growth. Thanks to her leadership and outstanding faculty, the MSN program ranked in FORTUNE's Best Online Master's in Nursing Programs and received Princeton Review's 2022 Best Online Nursing School Master's Programs. NeVille also guided the accreditation process for both graduate programs in nursing with outstanding results, including full accreditation status of Weber State's first doctoral program.

Through her passion for creating evidence-based instructional design infrastructure, high-impact student education experiences, and clear pathways for student success, NeVille has contributed significantly to the school's course development, program development, and instructional enhancements in graduate nursing education and assessment. For these efforts, she received the Presidential Teaching Excellence Award. In all this, she has maintained her registered nurse and advanced practice registered nurse licensure and certification since 2001. She continues to serve as a pediatric nurse practitioner at a free clinic, engaging with her community and supporting underserved populations through her clinical and philanthropic work.

NeVille is accomplished with program and institutional assessment. As chair of the Appointment, Promotion, Academic Freedom and Tenure committee, she helped implement a university-wide end-of-course evaluation process and streamlined the tenure document, earning her the WSU Faculty Governance Award. Recently, she was appointed Chair of the Graduate Council and entrusted with the responsibility of spearheading the development and implementation of the university's Office of Graduate Studies initiative.

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#### BRADY PRESIDENTIAL

### DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS



#### **COLIN INGLEFIELD**

As chair of the physics and astronomy department, Inglefield exemplifies excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. Over the years, he has taken on a diverse and challenging teaching load, often going beyond the standard curriculum — from giving "bed of nails" demonstrations to leading book discussions. He also provides one-on-one mentorship to pre-med students and future engineers.

As a scholar, Inglefield develops solid state and materials research projects that involve Weber State students. As a materials scientist, he collaborates with faculty across the university to provide interdisciplinary microscopy projects for students. Inglefield has contributed to 26 publications, six of which included undergraduates. He also coordinates and presents at events like the Physics Open House, which draws hundreds of visitors each year. He has been involved in the American Physical Society and Society of Physics Students, and has hosted a meeting of the Four Corners section of the APS at WSU. His research and expertise have influenced curriculum in physics departments across Utah's higher education system.

Throughout his many years as department chair, Inglefield has helped students and colleagues achieve their greatest potential. He genuinely supports the work of others and uses his role to carve out opportunities for faculty and staff to pursue the best work they can do. He has fostered a culture of support and success, evidenced by countless physics students who moved on to graduate studies and satisfying careers under his mentorship, as well as a department that has earned the university's top awards.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED ON WSU SOCIAL MEDIA!



Participating in Weber State University's social media communities is a great way to engage with students, co-workers and the community. You don't need to film a full-length TikTok or write a thousandword LinkedIn post to join the fun. Sometimes simpler is better! Here are a few tips:

#### LIKE, SHARE, COMMENT

Social media is all about engagement. Weber State has many accounts you can engage with — from athletics to your college/department to alumni. Comments and shares are the most "valuable" forms of engagement, but if you don't have time, a simple "like" shows your interest and increases WSU's online visibility among your friends and family.

#### **POST YOUR POV**

Snap a great photo of Stewart Bell Tower on your way to work? Attend a sporting or arts event on campus? Wore your best #WeberWearFriday gear? Post about it! We love to share snapshots from everyone on campus, especially in WSU's Instagram Stories. It's the best way to show off Weber State to the community, and give prospective students an authentic taste of campus life.

#### **SHARE THE WINS**

It's easy to be negative on social media, but positivity is more rewarding. We love seeing wins from our faculty, staff and students, and spreading that love with a wider audience. Don't be afraid to brag about your accomplishments or shout out a colleague for their great work. Use the #BrilliantAtWeber hashtag to share your best and brightest moments.

Don't know where to begin on social media? You can start by following Weber State on these platforms: LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Threads.

#### FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Aaron Atkins,** assistant professor of digital media, coauthored "'Too Infernally Scientific': John Wesley Powell and News Framing of Climate Policy in the Nineteenth-Century Press" in Taylor and Francis Online.

**Darcy Carter** and **Miland Palmer**, professors in health administrative services, co-authored "Performance Improvement" in the textbook Health information management technology: An applied approach.

**Robert Fudge,** philosophy professor, presented "Dignity and Degradation" at the joint meeting of the North and South Carolina Philosophical Societies.

**Janelle Gardiner,** respiratory therapy instructor, was reappointed as vice president of Internal Affairs for the American College of Respiratory Therapy Education.

**Youn Soo Kim Goldstein,** assistant professor of localization and translation, published "The Enemy as Monster, the Monster as Neighbor: Anticommunist Propaganda in South Korea and Kwon Chong-saeng's Korean War Trilogy" in Monsters and Monstrosity in Media: Reflections on Vulnerability.

**Sarah Grunnah,** assistant professor of theatre, was selected as a fellow in the Borderlands Shakespeare Colectiva's Early Career Cohort to direct and produce a bilingual scene from *The Winter's Tale*.

**Amber Hansen,** developmental math instructor, earned the Weber State 2024 Student Choice: Outstanding Faculty Award.

**Teri Henke,** associate professor of child and family studies, earned the Friend of Children Award from the Utah Association for the Education of Young Children at the Utah Early Childhood Conference.

**Valerie Herzog,** athletic training chair, presented "Acute and Residual Effects of IASTM and Percussion Massager on Hamstring Range of Motion and Patient Satisfaction" at the International Olympic Committee's Injury and Illness Prevention Conference.

**Bridget Hilbig,** botany and plant ecology chair, earned the 2024 Weber State Ambrose Shaw Endowed Chair Award.

**Huiying Hill,** sociology and anthropology chair, presented "From 'Model Minority' to Convenient Targets" at the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Conference.

**Abdulnaser Kaadan,** international visiting professor of history, presented "The Achievements of Some Muslim Physicians During the Medieval Ages" at the 28th International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization World Professional Lecture.

**Madeline Mackie,** assistant professor of anthropology, co-authored "Use of hare bone for the manufacture of a Clovis bead" in Scientific Reports.

**Frances McConaughy,** dental hygiene chair, and **Amanda Gonzalez,** assistant professor of dental hygiene, presented
"The Prevalence of Diabetes and Periodontal Risk:
Improving Clinical Care for Chronic Disease Management"
at the American Dental Education Association conference.

**Marjukka Ollilainen,** sociology professor, co-authored "Solitary as Resistance: Feminist Administrators in U.S. Academia" in *Social Currents*.

**Nicholás Pérez-Consuegra,** assistant professor of earth and environmental sciences, earned the 2024 Weber State Presidential Innovative Teaching Grant.

**Bill Robertson,** associate professor of emergency healthcare, co-authored "Artificial Intelligence and Venous Thromboembolism: Talking to the Experts" in Emerging Tools, Techniques, and Artificial Intelligence in Hematology.

**Sunni Wilkinson,** English instructor, earned the Donald Justice Poetry Prize for her poetry manuscript, "Rodeo," which will be published in April 2025.

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academic year 2015–16 earned a degree or certificate — an increase of 3.3% from the prior academic year. Although small on paper, Oyler said that increase is a considerable feat, especially given Weber State's large student population, which topped 30,000 last fall.

Efforts to support students and boost completion rates included a comprehensive texting communication plan to remind students of deadlines and "personalized intervention" to directly reach out to students who may be falling behind.

#### VALUE:

#### STUDENTS SEE HOW HIGHER EDUCATION PAYS OFF

Nearly 80% of 2022 graduates from WSU received degrees or certificates in high-yield fields, which are identified by the Utah Department of Workforce Services as areas that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs.

Plus, WSU continually earns praise for its return on investment. A 2022 study by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce ranked WSU in the top 10% among 4,500 colleges nationally. And a 2023 study from the Utah Foundation found that "Weber State University tops the list in Utah for students' 10-year net present value of their education."

## Weber State recognizes TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Twelve Weber State University professors received the 2024 Presidential Teaching Excellence Award in January. The award is based on nominations from students, faculty and staff. Watch the video.

"Weber State is known for our focus on teaching, getting to know our students and rooting for their success," said WSU President **Brad Mortensen.** "These professors really exemplify that."

This year, the award was presented to the following faculty:

- Nazneen Ahmad, economics
- Tariq Arif, mechanical engineering
- Justin Burr, health sciences
- Ryan Cain, teacher education
- Nicola Corbin, communication
- London Draper Lowe, nursing
- Valerie Gooder, nursing
- Bridget Hilbig, botany and plant ecology
- Aubrey Jones, world languages and cultures
- · Shannon McGillivray, psychological science
- Jean Norman, communication
- · Matt Thue, business administration and marketing



These winners join a distinguished list of more than 60 recipients since the awards launched in 2018. Thanks to support from generous donors to WSU, winners receive a \$5,000 award, either as a cash stipend or to enhance their teaching through professional development, curriculum development, research or acquiring equipment and technology for their classrooms.

#### **WELCOME TO WEBER STATE**

Nicole Ames

Economics

Michelle Braeden

Online & Continuing Education

**Amanda Brandt** 

Online & Continuing Education

Denise Call

Online & Continuing Education

**Reginald Carlisle** 

Online & Continuing Education

**Micah Cloward** 

Athletics Admin & Support

**Lewis Conrad** 

Strategic Regional Partnerships

James Cowser

Athletics & Admin Support

Kade Crittenden

**University Advancement** 

Kenidee Crittenden

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Stefanie Gonzalez

Radiologic Sciences

Laura Hill

Center for Community Engaged Learning

**Brian Hood** 

**Administrative Services** 

Victoria Joy

Strategic Regional Partnerships

**David Leavitt** 

Academic Technology Services

**Haley Madsen** 

Online & Continuing Education

Jennifer Madsen

Student Pathways and Success

**Drake Mendelson** 

Online & Continuing Education

Mekell Moss

Athletics Admin & Support

Joseph Nava

Dumke College of Health Professions

**Laurel Shiner** 

Nursing

Ian Smith

Online & Continuing Education

**Kaylene Whicker** 

College of EAST

**Devin Young** 

College of EAST

Mindi Zaugg

Athletics Admin & Support

Kris Ware

**Facilities Management** 



#### **CONTACT US**