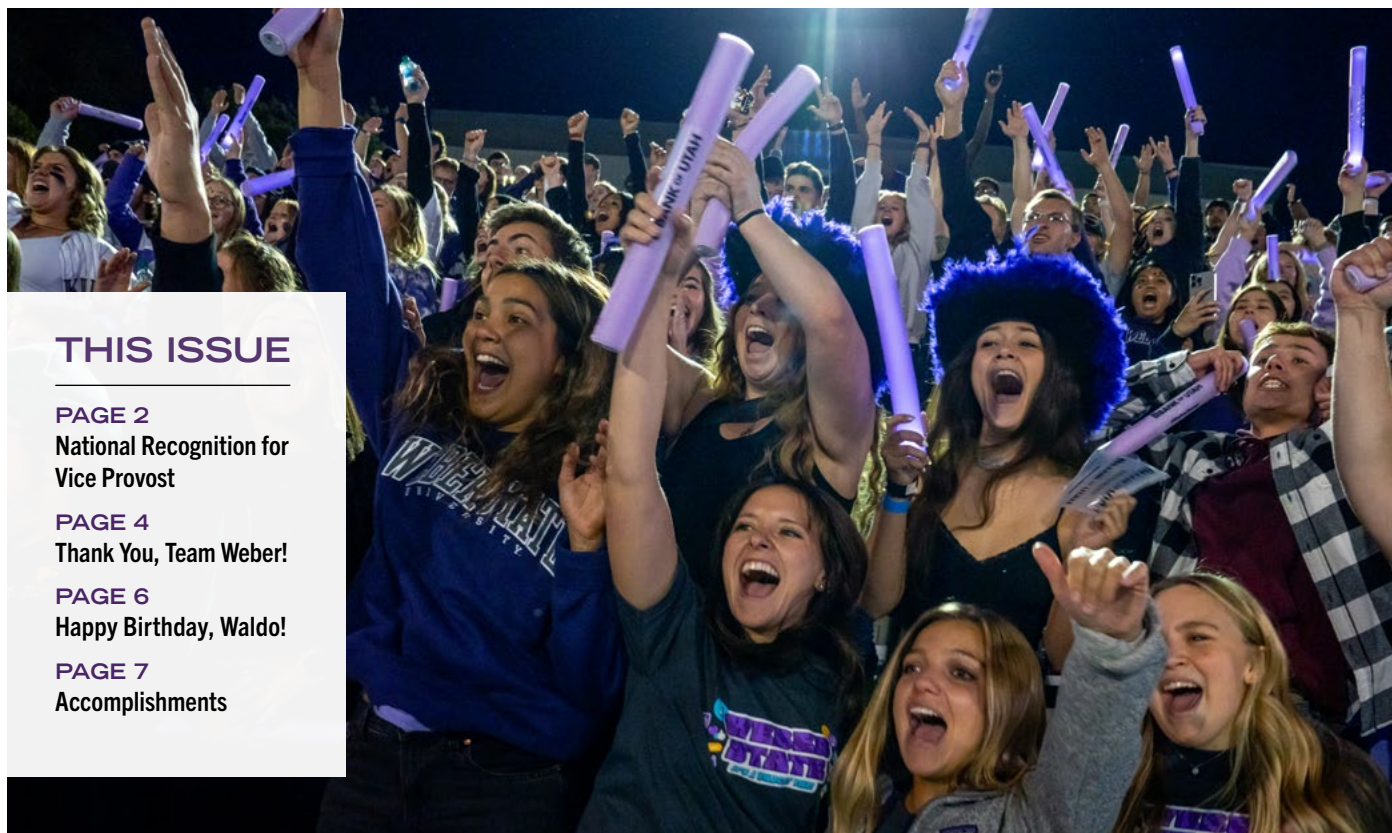


WSU NEWS

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS & EVENTS | NOVEMBER 2024



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Accomplishments

32,701

This fall, Weber State enrollment soared past 32,000, a goal set in 2021 as part of the university's five-year strategic plan.

"In a year with many potential headwinds for enrollment, including federal FAFSA delays and the implementation of mandatory advising for new students, serving the largest number of students in university history is a tremendous testament to the dedication and commitment of the student-focused staff and faculty at Weber State," said WSU President **Brad Mortensen**.

Weber State also saw a nearly 5% increase in matriculated degree-seeking students, which is the biggest jump in the last 14 years. WSU saw all-time highs in engineering and health professions enrollment as the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology serves over 3,300 students and the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions serves over 4,800. The John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics also saw a 7% enrollment increase.

"The sheer number of students enrolled in these programs shows how eager people are to get into the jobs that Utah needs most," said WSU Provost **Ravi Krovi**. "An important priority at our university is aligning quality academic programs to workforce needs and ensuring students have the skills and knowledge to thrive in their chosen careers."

Up 16% from last year, Weber State saw an additional all-time high of 3,796 first-time students — a population targeted in WSU's strategic plan.

"Weber State is committed to expanding access to higher education by meeting students where they are," said **Jessica Oyler**, vice president for Student Access & Success. "Our growth in first-time student enrollment is a promising sign that our efforts are working."

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR VICE PROVOST

The vice provost of high impact educational experiences, faculty excellence, international and graduate studies at WSU, **Brenda Kowalewski**, was awarded the 2024 Barbara A. Holland Scholar-Administrator Award by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities.

Kowalewski championed efforts to reimagine faculty development in inclusive pedagogy through the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. She co-created the Office of Community Development to support WSU's anchor mission. In 2016, she convened a coalition of seven anchor institutions in Ogden to revitalize East Central Ogden. That coalition grew into the Ogden Civic Action Network, which facilitates partnerships in health, education, built environment, economic stability and social fabric to improve the welfare of the communities in that area.

The vice provost has also garnered national attention for Weber State's commitment to connect course work with university-community engaged work since opening the Center for Community Engaged Learning in 2006.



"The opportunity to engage in this work with a group of passionate colleagues from both campus and community has been one of the greatest honors of my life," Kowalewski said. "And now, to have that collective work recognized with an award that bears the name of one of the greatest collaborators and pioneers in the community engagement field is one of the most humbling experiences of my career."

YOU'RE IN! 10,000+ STUDENTS GET ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

Weber State University has teamed up with Davis Technical College and Ogden-Weber Technical College to form the [Northern Wasatch Collegiate Coalition](#), which aims to make higher education more accessible and affordable than ever.

A key feature of the coalition is Direct Admissions, which makes getting into all three schools automatic for over 10,000 high school seniors in Davis, Morgan and Weber counties.

With this initiative, students won't need to go through the application process, which has historically been a barrier to attending college. Beginning in October, the schools sent joint acceptance letters that included financial aid and scholarship info, along with offers of partial and full tuition coverage in some cases.

"Getting into college is the first step, and we're making that easier than ever," said **Brad Mortensen**, WSU president. "With this initiative, we're letting students know that they're in — college isn't a possibility, it's a reality."



Mortensen said he hopes the new initiative will also make it easier for students in the technical colleges to transition to WSU. Those who complete certificates at either of the two tech colleges will now earn up to 21 elective credits that can be applied toward any degree at WSU through the new TechTransfer program.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE SWEEPS FALL AWARDS SEASON

Faculty from the College of Science were honored with the John S. Hinckley Fellow Award and the Interdisciplinary Collaboration Award during a ceremony at the Ogden campus Oct. 22.

JOHN S. HINCKLEY FELLOW AWARD

Heather Root, associate professor of botany and plant ecology, was selected as the 2024 Hinckley Fellow for excellence in teaching, service and research. [Watch the video.](#)

Root has taught at Weber State since 2014 and has developed a curriculum for 16 courses that incorporate sustainability, course-based research experiences and community engaged learning. Her connections with the U.S. Geological Survey Moab Office and Ogden Nature Center helped students participate in real-world research.

She served on the Faculty Senate Environmental Initiatives Committee, has mentored 18 students in individualized research and is currently the Faculty Fellow for the Sustainability Practices and Research Center. She also served on two advisory committees for Ogden City, the Urban Tree Advisory Board and the Ogden Natural Resource and Sustainability Committee.

Root has earned a regional and national reputation with 44 peer-reviewed manuscripts, which have been cited 826 times. Her research focuses on how lichen conservation contributes to ecosystem functions. She collaborates and



co-authors papers with scientists from other universities and organizations such as the USGS, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Her research has received multiple recognitions including WSU Sustainability Awards, College of Science Endowed Scholar and funding from federal agencies.

EXEMPLARY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AWARD

Professors **Bridget Hilbig** and **James Cohen** from the Department of Botany & Plant Ecology joined forces to improve undergraduate science, technology, engineering and mathematics education at Weber State through two key projects that have helped increase recruitment to STEM programs at WSU and have been recognized by two National Science Foundation grants, resulting in \$1.5 million in funds.

The Braiding Opportunities in Teaching, Advocacy, and Networking for Young Scientists program focuses on increasing recruitment, retention and career readiness in botanists, which resulted in a 30.5% increase in full-time equivalent students in botany and a 30.7% increase in botany majors since spring 2023.

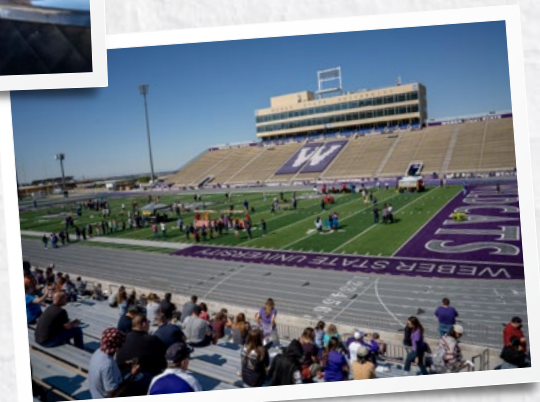
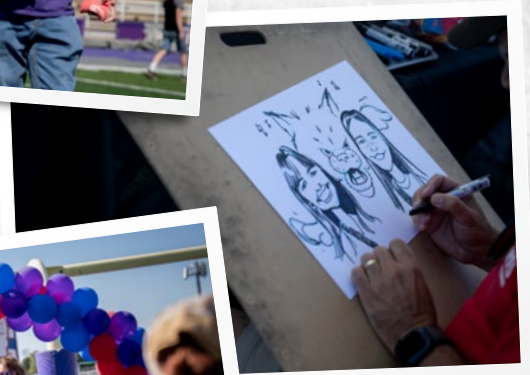
The Postdoctoral Research Opportunities for Greater Retention, Engagement, Scholarship and Success in STEM Education program is a collaboration between the College of



Science and the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education to improve postdoctoral training over a two-year tenure using a teacher-scholar model. Each postdoctoral scholar receives mentorship and specialized materials, along with funds to develop research projects with undergraduate students.

THANK YOU, TEAM WEBER!

Hosted by the President's Office and Human Resources, in collaboration with departments across the university, Weber State held Employee Appreciation Day on Sept. 13 at Stewart Stadium, filled with food, games and some much-needed fun in the sun.



WSU RAMPS UP MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Over the past four years, Weber State has partnered with Jed Campus to improve mental health across the university. Jed Campus is a program offered through the Jed Foundation that works directly with colleges to support mental health and address factors that contribute to suicide.

“The well-being of our students should be everyone’s concern,” said **Rochelle Bronson**, Student Health & Wellness program administrator. Bronson said it is especially important for faculty to know what to do for students who express mental health struggles. WSU’s partnership with Jed Campus helps professors better navigate these situations, she said.

Since implementing a customized plan for Weber State, 85% of the team’s objectives are complete or well underway. Outcomes include increased mental health training,



expanded days and hours of healthcare services, and additional support for faculty. WSU has also refined its postvention and safety intervention guides.

These efforts were recently recognized by the Princeton Review, which added Weber State to its 2025 Mental Health Services Honor Roll List.

EARNING GOLD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Weber State’s commitment to sustainability has reached a new milestone, earning the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System’s gold rating.

STARS is a self-reporting system from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education that helps institutions track their progress across five areas: academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership.

Since making a commitment in 2007 to transition away from fossil fuels and become carbon neutral, WSU has shifted over 40% of its buildings to all-electric heat-pump-based heating ventilation and air conditioning systems, transitioned over 13% of the fleet to electric vehicles, and installed several ground source and solar renewable energy systems. These changes, along with others, have cut WSU’s total greenhouse gas emissions by 40%.

Jennifer Bodine, WSU’s energy and sustainability manager, said the university has saved over \$27 million in utility costs by transitioning to more efficient and carbon-free systems.



WSU also offers over 100 courses that include or focus on sustainability, along with engagement opportunities that allow students and the public to help create more sustainable communities.

“Weber is equipping students with the understanding and skills needed to address the interconnected challenges we face, whether that’s related to clean energy, air, water, healthy communities or healthy economies,” said **Alice Mulder**, director of the Sustainability Practices and Research Center.

THRIVE SYMPOSIUM SHOWCASES TEACHING AND TEACHERS

Weber State University celebrated teaching, scholarship and service at the Thrive Symposium last month, a two-day conference where faculty present their work on teaching and research. Presenters are selected by the Center of Excellence in Learning & Teaching.

This year, faculty discussed topics on usage of artificial intelligence in academia, penpalling in the classroom, engaging activities for class content, and more.

“Faculty members enjoy learning new strategies to help them build engagement, connection and learning in their

classrooms,” said **Nicola Corbin**, communication professor and director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. “We get to come together to improve our teaching to help Weber State.”

The symposium also hosted an awards banquet recognizing faculty who excel in learning, teaching and serving.

“The work of the teacher is ongoing, it never ends,” Corbin said. “We are constantly adapting to new students, new technologies and changing our disciplines and we need to continually learn how to keep doing that.”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WALDO!

Waldo the Wildcat, Weber State’s beloved mascot, is celebrating 60 years since his first known appearance in a 1964 *Signpost* student newspaper ad, according to WSU Special Collections & University Archives. An official costumed Waldo, meant to promote school spirit at athletic events, was introduced four years later at a basketball game in Montana. While the Waldo costume has changed throughout the decades, his popularity among the WSU community remains consistent. Here’s to 60 more!



WEBER STATE BOLSTERS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

It’s been a busy fall semester for Weber State’s Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service, which aims to educate students and the community on an array of civic issues.

Leah Murray, political science professor and director of the Walker Institute, said it’s important to have an “engaged citizen populace,” and the institute helps do that by bringing in respected speakers, including experts on subjects like ballot information, voter preparation and the U.S. Constitution.

Recently, the Walker Institute has hosted musician and author Simon Tam, journalist and editor Jay Nordlinger and *Washington Post* columnist George Will. They also hosted two “Meet the Candidate Night” events for political hopefuls in Weber and Davis counties, and co-hosted a televised U.S. senate debate alongside the Utah Debate Commission.



Voter registration is also a big part of their work, Murray said. This year, the Walker Institute helped register over 1,600 new voters through the Weber State Votes campaign.

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Elizabeth Baggord, associate professor of geosciences, earned the 2024 Dr. Spencer L. Seager Distinguished Teaching Award for outstanding undergraduate teaching in the College of Science.

Daniel Beford, geography professor, presented “Spatial Patterns of Exposure to Extreme Heat in Ogden, Utah” at the inaugural National Conference of the National Sustainability Society.

H. Laine Berghout, College of Science associate dean, was selected as the 2024 Academy Fellow of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Mark Bigler, professor of social work, presented “Integrating harm reduction into the preparation of substance use treatment providers and policy makers” at the Utah Fall Conference on Substance Use.

Dustin Birch, mechanical engineering professor, and his research team had their research on hybrid rocket systems presented by WSU senior Steven Dipani at the University Consortium for Applied Hypersonics Forum.

Kim Caldwell, assistant professor of dental hygiene, was named President of the Utah Dental Hygienists’ Association and also received the Outstanding Leadership Award from UDHA.

Shane Clappitt, associate professor of radiologic sciences, presented “Feedback on Revised Recommendations for Clinical Education” at the Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions conference.

Jeff Clements, associate professor of management information systems, received an award from the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters for the best business paper for 2024 for his entry “Is Personal Compulsive Social Media Use Affecting the Happiness of Employees?”

Eric Ewert, professor and chair of the Department of Geography, Environment & Sustainability, presented “Utah’s ‘Mighty 5’ National Park Campaign Had Some Mighty Big Consequences” at the 2024 AAG Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Regional Division Annual Meeting.

Ryan Frazier, assistant professor of geospatial science and technology, presented at the Northern American Cartographic Information Society annual meeting.

An Ho, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, published “Flexible Operation of Nuclear Hybrid Energy Systems for Load Following and Water Desalination” in *Renewable Energy Focus*.

Christopher Hoagstrom, professor of zoology, published and co-authored “Historical Biogeography of North American Killfishes (Cyprinodontiformes) Recapitulates Geographical History in the Gulf of México Watershed” in the *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*.

Abdulnaser Kaadan, visiting international professor, presented “An Evaluation Study of the Glossary of Century” at the 5th Joint International Conference – Manuscripts of the 7th Hijri Century.

Andrew Keinsley, associate professor of economics, received notice that his paper “Measuring the Monetary Services of US Treasury Securities” was accepted in the journal *Economic Modelling*.

Brandon Koford and **Therese Cavlovic** from the economics department received notice that their paper “Anticipated Regret: An Experimental Test of Information Avoidance,” co-authored with Weber State alumnus and economics advisory board member Lucas Rentschler at Utah State University, was accepted for publication at the *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*.

Sarah Langsdon and **Lorrie Rands** from the Stewart Library and Kyle Jackson, WSU student, received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Utah Historical Society for the “Queering the Archives” oral history and exhibit project.

Jordyn Leslie, assistant professor of psychology, co-authored “Branching Out: The Nonwork Nature and Employee Outcomes (NEO) Model” in *Occupational Health Science*.

Yudi Lewis, executive director of Hispanic-Serving Institution Initiatives, co-presented “Valiente: Building Strength and Authenticity” at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Women’s Symposium.

Ronald Meyers, zoology chair, and Kyle Spainhower, Weber State zoology alumnus, published and co-authored “Anatomy and Immunohistochemistry of Woodpecker Tail Muscles” in the *Journal of Morphology*.

Atmadeep Mukherjee, business administration and marketing department, published “Can I Choose My Offer? How choice of a promotional offer impacts consumer evaluations and decisions” in the *Journal of Retailing*.

Aminda O’Hare, neuroscience program director and associate professor of psychology, was elected Secretary of the National Chapter of Nu Rho Psi, the honors society for neuroscience.

Brian Rague, associate dean of the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology, **Jessica Slater**, chair of the Department of Automotive Technology, and **Caid Kroeger**, automotive technology instructor, received national coverage on PBS as part of the series “Rethinking College.”

Sandeep Kumar Rangaraju, associate professor of economics, presented “Time varying effects of Oil News Shocks” at Midwest Econometrics Group at the University of Kentucky.

Gavin Roberts, associate professor and chair of the economics department, wrote “The Economic Impacts of Right of First Refusal Legislation” for the Pelican Institute for Public Policy.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT.)

Shane Schvaneveldt, supply chain management professor, received the 2024 Teaching Innovation Award from the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals Academic Research Symposium for his submission “A Lean 5S Experiential Learning Game for Logistics and Supply Chain Management.”

Assistant Professor **Hannah Stedje** and Professor **Valerie Herzog** from the Department of Athletic Training collaborated with others on “Athletic training students’ experiences and perceptions of exertional heat stroke simulated encounters: A qualitative analysis” in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Allied Health Sciences*.

JoAnn Tolman, assistant professor of nursing, published “Mentoring New Members in Professional Nursing Organizations for Membership Retention” in the *Journal of Comprehensive Nursing Research and Care*.

Sam Zeveloff, zoology professor emeritus, published and co-authored “The Evolutionary and Ecological Convergence of the Raccoon Dog: A Perfect Storm of Invasive Species in Europe” in *Wildlife Letters*.

QUOTABLES

[Weber State provides] a point to come together, share our best selves, create an opportunity to learn something new.”

Physics professor **ADAM JOHNSTON** on the “Physics & Friends” open house, which welcomes hundreds of community members to campus each year

KARIN HURST, retired member of Marketing & Communications, on the legacy of Waldo the Wildcat

He’s lovable, he’s spunky, he’s kind of irreverent, he’s sassy, and I think he became more than a mascot; he became a symbol of Weber State.

Being able to recognize different points of view... is an essential skill we teach in the arts and humanities.

English professor **Hal Crimmel** on how the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities prepares students for the workforce

This month reminds us that even though we have different upbringings, we are bound together as Americans and a community here at Weber State.

MÓNICA RODRIGUEZ, student engagement program manager, on WSU’s full calendar of events surrounding Hispanic Heritage Month.

CONTACT US

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