

WSU NEWS

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS & EVENTS | MARCH 2026



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HELP MAKE HISTORY WITH WSU'S LARGEST-EVER FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Amplify Weber State: The Campaign for Weber State University has a \$200 million goal. During the campaign kickoff event in January, the university announced \$125,574,910 is already secured. That number continues to grow, currently totaling \$129,281,465.

“Since the beginning of this institution, our supporters have stepped up again and again in ways that transform our campuses, advance student access and opportunity, and better our community overall,” said Interim President **Leslie Durham**. “That shared success has brought us to this point, and now it’s time for an amazing next chapter.”

Fundraising campaigns typically start with a “quiet phase,” where WSU’s development team works with donors who champion the university’s vision. During this time, they’re building momentum and excitement, putting the campaign well on its way to meeting its goal.

Now, it’s time to turn up that energy.

Amplify is focused on taking what WSU already does well and building on it. That means putting money toward faculty support, scholarships, programs, equipment upgrades, facility improvements, and so much more that’ll benefit students.

\$125,574,910



How can you be part of the impact?

- **Find what matters most to you:** Think about what makes you proud to work at WSU. Consider learning more about [university-wide or academic college priorities](#). If something speaks to you, you can start or change a payroll deduction by emailing giving@weber.edu.
- **Show what's possible:** Philanthropy has major impacts on the university, like developing the new Occupational Therapy Assistant program, creating the Miller Advanced Research & Solutions Center, and so much more. When you see successes or opportunities made possible by private donations, consider posting it on social media or sharing the [campaign website](#) with others.
- **Spread the vision in every message:** Add an [Amplify email signature](#) to show your support, keep student opportunities top-of-mind, and champion a strong future for WSU.

THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

As the university nears the end of its current strategic plan, it's time to create a vision for the next defining chapter.

WSU has launched the discovery phase of the next strategic plan, which is a time for listening, researching, and collaborating. This phase is occurring hand in hand with the presidential search, paving the way for the university's next leader to create a vision.

Throughout the process, you can find information on the [strategic plan website](#). Other updates will come through announcements, email, town halls, and input sessions.

WEATHER DELAYS & CLOSURES: WHAT TO EXPECT

This winter, WSU added a new feature to the weber.edu homepage. The “Weather Status” button on the top menu clearly indicates if WSU is open, closed, or if classes/activities are delayed. This will remain on the website throughout the winter months.

Though there was a dry start to the season, here’s what to know if March brings snow:

1. WSU WILL COMMUNICATE ALL DELAYS AND CLOSURES VIA CODE PURPLE.

You’ll receive a text message and phone call. [Code Purple](#) notifications will clearly explain whether the delay/closure is for daytime or evening classes/activities, along with the time they are expected to resume.

2. WSU WILL COMMUNICATE BY APPROXIMATELY 6 A.M. AND 2 P.M.

For daytime classes/activities, the university will communicate around or shortly after 6 a.m. For evening classes/activities, a notification will be sent by 2 p.m.

3. WORRIED YOU MISSED SOMETHING? WSU WILL REASSURE YOU WHEN CAMPUSES ARE OPEN.

If it’s snowing and you’re still curious whether campus is open — or if you believe you missed a delay/closure notification via Code Purple — check the Weather Status on the header menu.

Remember, when there’s a delay or closure, it applies to all in-person classes, events, and activities at all campuses and centers. However, delays and closures do not apply to online classes — those should continue as scheduled. Check the updated [weather delays and closure](#) webpage for other helpful reminders.





RESEARCH TEAM FINDS DEICERS STAY IN LOCAL WATERWAYS

Caitlin Tems, an assistant professor of earth and environmental sciences, led a team of seven students on a project studying water quality in and around Ogden Valley in 2022 and 2023.

Tems and independent research students collected samples from the streams that flow into Pineview Reservoir, the reservoir itself, and the Ogden River, which flows next to State Route 39. After analyzing the samples, they found concentrations of sodium, magnesium, calcium, and potassium were significantly higher in the Ogden River in fall 2022 and spring 2023 when compared to Pineview Reservoir and the inflow streams.

The focus of the study came together as Tems and her students realized these were major components of the deicing materials placed on Utah's roadways in the winter.

They found that mild winters with little snowfall can lead to more contaminant buildup — not just from deicing materials, but other contaminants as well.

“If we do have these really big snow years, even if you're applying more deicing materials, it can flush the system,” Tems said. “The water quality is improving because you have so much water moving through the system.”

The research was published in the *Utah Academy of Science Journal* and Tems received the 2024 Faculty Sustainability Research Award from WSU for her work. It also received local TV and radio news coverage.

WEBER STATE DANCE TEAM IS A NATIONAL CHAMPION. AGAIN!

After their first appearance at the Universal Dance Association College Nationals — sometimes referred to as the “Superbowl of dance” — the Wildcats brought home gold in the Division 1 Hip Hop category.

They’ve also won back-to-back national titles the past two seasons at the National Dance Championships, a separate competition that hosts more than 1,000 teams from throughout the country.

Erica Williams Jordan, the dance team head coach, helped lead the 27-student team to the championship.

The team practices three to five times a week, sometimes for 12 hours a day. On top of that, they perform at games and other sporting events.



“The dance team shows a level of excellence in all areas of what they do,” Williams Jordan said. “They support other athletes and athletic programs, all while maintaining a high GPA. These competitions are our time to show what we can do.”

Williams Jordan said it was especially fulfilling to “make history” alongside WSU’s cheer team, who won first place in co-ed partner stunt finals during the competition.

WSU RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WSU has once again earned the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement. This designation is awarded to institutions with demonstrated commitment to deepening community partnerships, leveraging local assets, and addressing societal challenges.

“This is an important recognition of our collective commitment and efforts to meaningfully, authentically engage with the community,” said **Alexis Bucknam**, former Community Engagement executive director.

Every academic college within the university, along with Academic Affairs and Student Access & Success, maintains an active community engagement component.



Services span from entrepreneurial support through the Wildcat MicroFund to environmental education from the Sustainability Practices & Research Center.

This university-wide coordination connects people to resources, provides valuable learning experiences for students, and solidifies WSU’s role as a leader in providing opportunities for all.



STUDENTS SHARED 750+ PROJECTS DURING UTAH CONFERENCE ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Undergraduate students from across the state gathered at WSU to celebrate their achievements and show off their work during the 20th Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research, Feb. 27 in the Shepherd Union Building.

The conference is an annual event among Utah's higher education institutes, hosted at a different Utah college or university each year. For 20 years, it's provided a constructive environment for students to meet peers, learn from mentors, and hear from professionals in their field of interest.

"UCUR is an inspiring celebration of learning, growth, and accomplishment," said **Therese Cavlovic**, UCUR director. "There's nothing quite like the energy, the pride, and the buzz in the air as students come together to showcase their research and creative accomplishments."

Browse student presentations and read abstracts on the [UCUR website](#).

IMPORTANT BENEFIT CHANGES

Starting July 1, 2026, Weber State is moving dental and vision insurance administration to Ameritas.

If you're happy with your current coverage type, you don't need to do anything. You'll be automatically enrolled in the equivalent Ameritas plan. If you'd like to change your enrollment, you'll need to do so during open enrollment, taking place April 13 to May 8. Find more details on Human Resources' [benefits site](#).

THE PROCESS BEHIND THE NEW HOMEPAGE

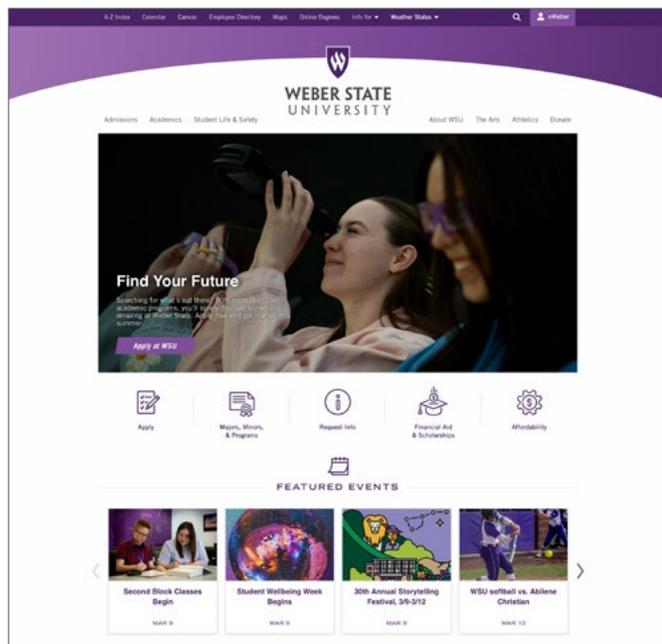
WSU's new homepage, which debuted on Dec. 7, 2025, was the result of a year of design work and testing.

This project was a collaborative effort between Marketing & Communications and Information Technology. The redesign spans the entire website's header, footer, and grey navigation menu.

“Our goal was to create an intuitive, visually engaging experience for anyone visiting weber.edu,” said **Anna Burleson**, web content manager. “We wanted prospective students to be intrigued, current students to be proud, and our amazing faculty and staff to have easy access to the resources they use every day.”

The previous homepage existed without major changes for more than a decade. Its new design keeps the same functionality while updating the look and feel throughout the entire website.

As one of the university's most crucial and far-reaching communication tools, this project required extensive research and user-testing with current students, prospective students, and employees.



NEW WASTE AEROSOL DISPOSAL PROGRAM

WSU's Environmental Health & Safety has implemented a waste aerosol disposal program across campus, placing collection bins in the following areas:



- 3rd floor storage closet of the Elizabeth Dee Shaw Stewart Sky Suites
- Scene Shop (Room 142), Val A. Browning Center
- Room 125, Noorda Building
- Shops 203 and 239, Engineering Technology
- Downstairs main storage area of Campus Services (near waste fluorescent lights)
- Carpentry, Facilities Maintenance
- Vehicle Repair, Facilities Maintenance
- Shop 123, Computer & Automotive Engineering (Davis Campus)
- Shop 125A, Davis Campus Building 2
- Shop 165, Kimball Visual Arts Building

Once discarded, the contents of the aerosol cans are properly disposed of and recycled. This keeps WSU safe, compliant to state regulations, and environmentally responsible.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

If you have ideas or feedback on this product, now's the time to share! Please fill out [this survey](#) by April 10 — it should take about 5 minutes to complete. Your feedback helps us highlight stories and updates that matter most to you.

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Sheila Anderson, early childhood education associate professor, was one of four nationwide experts to serve on a panel about navigating higher education accreditation at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Henry Azubuike, mathematics assistant professor, co-authored and presented “Good Permutations and Latin Squares” at the American Mathematical Society/ Mathematical Association of America Joint Mathematics meetings in Washington, D.C.

Dan Bedford, geography professor, presented “Spatial patterns of exposure to extreme heat in Ogden, Utah” at the American Geophysical Union Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Kellie Bornhoft, art assistant professor, is a featured artist in the exhibition called “Returning to Wonder,” on display now through May 3 in Park City’s Kimball Art Center.

Ryan Cain, teacher education associate professor and department chair, was one of 38 education leaders selected for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ Department Chair Leadership Institute, a semester-long program focused on tools, skills, and growth necessary for successful leaders.

Victor Shane Clampitt, radiological sciences associate professor, presented “From Cramming to Confidence: Smarter Ways to Take Tests” at the Association of Collegiate Educators in Radiologic Technology Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Chere Clawson, medical laboratory sciences assistant professor, presented “Fostering digital fluency in hematology education through reflective practice” at the Teaching for Learning Conference in Denver, Colorado.

James Cohen, botany and plant ecology associate professor and department chair, published “Phylogenomics of Lithospermum (Boraginaceae) based on genome skimming” in *Brittonia*.

Gina Cook, early childhood education associate professor, co-authored “Positive experience, passive engagement: Parents’ descriptions of their involvement in early intervention services” in the *Journal of Early Intervention*.

Rebekah Cumpsty, English associate professor, co-edited “The Cambridge Companion to World-Gothic Literature” published by *Cambridge University Press*.

Carie Frantz, earth and environmental sciences associate professor, was lead researcher and author of “Microbial Ecology of Rotten Sea Ice: Implications for Arctic Carbon Cycling with Global Warming” in the journal *Microorganisms*.

Joanna Gautney, anthropology associate professor; **Christina Aguilar**, health physical education recreation instructor; **Julian Chan**, mathematics professor; and **David Aguilar-Alvarez**, exercise and nutrition sciences department chair and associate professor, co-authored and published “Sex-Specific Dietary Predictors of Blood Glucose Identified Through Decision Tree Modeling in Adults” in *Nutrients*.

María del Mar González-González, art history assistant professor, and **Cully Long**, theatre assistant professor, received an \$8,000 grant from Ogden City Arts to support their “Keepsake Theatre” project, which transforms a vintage cigarette machine into an immersive piece of art made by a variety of local artists.

Qi Jin, nutrition assistant professor, presented “The Application of Simulation Modalities in Teaching Medical Nutrition Therapy” at the Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Layton, Utah.

Julie Jung, zoology assistant professor, published “*Diplolaimelloides woaabi* sp. n. (Nematoda: Monhysteridae): A Novel Species of Free-Living Nematode from the Great Salt Lake, Utah” in the *National Library of Medicine*. She also published “The histone code at a crossroads: history, context, and new approaches” in *Trends in Genetics*, presented “New nematode species just dropped” at the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation Canyons Camp event in Millcreek, Utah, and received WSU’s Research, Scholarship and Professional Growth Committee’s Hemingway New Faculty Grant for nematode sampling and surveying in Yellowstone National Park.

Justin Kani, business and economics librarian and associate professor, was nominated for the Ilene F. Rockman Instruction Publication of the Year Award for co-authoring the article “Enhancing information literacy through generative AI in the library classroom.”

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT.)



Miranda Kispert, science librarian; **Nicole Beatty**, arts and humanities librarian; **Andrew Stapley**, Open Education Resources coordinator; **Holly Bowden**, technical services manager; **Rachel Middleton**, UI/UX developer; and **McKell Richardson**, graphic designer, co-authored “Visual Signage and Academic Library Wayfinding” in *LIBER Quarterly: The Journal of Association of European Research Libraries*.

London D. Lowe, nursing professor, and **Suzan K. Heugly**, nursing assistant professor, co-wrote “The Cost of Suffering: Providing Workplace Support for Individuals with Chronic Pain” in *Workplace Health & Safety*.

Jonathon Marshall, zoology professor, co-presented “A Case Study of Undergraduate Research in Utah: Belonging in a Shifting Landscape” at the Association for Undergraduate Education at Research Universities 2026 conference in Washington, D.C.

James McAllister, communication assistant professor, was selected to screen his film “Bee Money: Mormon Gangster Rapper” at the Zions Indie Film Fest in Orem, Utah.

Kristin Millard, Academic Support director, published and co-authored “International distance education student persistence and the community of inquiry” in the *American Journal of Distance Education*.

Joseph Mulligan, Spanish translation and interpretation assistant professor, received a Bernardo Mendel Visiting Research Fellowship from Lilly Library at Indiana University Bloomington for his project “Mapping the Migration of the Peruvian Colonial Archive.”

Gail Niklason, institutional effectiveness and accreditation executive director, co-presented “Accelerating Bachelor’s Degree Completion: A Multi-Institutional Model for Accelerated Credit Pathways” at the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Conference in Seattle, Washington.

Aminda O’Hare, neuroscience associate professor and program director, helped the Neuroscience Club and Nu Rho Psi receive the Brain Awareness Grant from the International Brain Research Organization and the Dana Foundation.

Gennie Parkman, zoology assistant professor, published and co-authored “Unraveling the Enigma of Melanoma Brain Metastasis: New Molecular Insights and Therapeutic Directions” in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*. She also published and co-authored “Identification and characterization of BRAF V600E & TP53 interactions in melanoma” in *Cell Reports*.

Nathan Rives, history assistant professor, presented “Anti-Catholicism and ecumenism in early 19th-century bible societies in Britain, Germany, and the U.S.” at the American Society of Church History conference in Chicago, Illinois.

T.H. Steele, mathematics professor, co-authored and published “Countably many competing holes in open dynamical systems” in the *European Journal of Mathematics*.

Hannah Stedge, rehabilitation sciences program director, and **Matthew Donahue**, athletic training associate professor, were awarded WSU’s Research, Scholarship and Professional Growth Committee Presidential Teaching Innovation grant to support implementing simulations in the Master of Science in Athletic Training curriculum.

Sherri Vasas, respiratory therapy assistant professor and program director, presented “Beyond Grades: Advocating for Mental Health Monitoring in Healthcare Education” at the 10th annual Teaching for Learning Conference in Denver, Colorado.

Dawn Monique Williams, theatre instructor, directed the world premiere of Lavina Jadhvani’s *ADO*, a play based on William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, at Indy Shakes in Indianapolis, Indiana.

WELCOME TO WEBER

FOR THE FIRST TIME OR IN A NEW ROLE

Jonathan Adams
Radiologic Sciences

Christopher Allen
Facilities Management

Carson Anderson
Dual Enrollment and
Outreach

Isaac Asiata
Athletics Admin and
Support

Kelli Ayala
Assistant VP for Access

Kadee Bachmann
Library

Lindsay Baird
CSSE Education

Candace Bielik
Health Sciences

Elsie Brush
Zoology

Sebastian Burkhardtmeier
Student Affairs
Maintenance

Camille Bybee
College of Health
Professions

Jace Campbell
Athletics Admin and
Support

Salvador Ceja-Monroy
College of Arts and
Humanities

Luke Christy
Student Affairs
Maintenance

Mayara Cizina
College of Science

Kasey Cole
Sociology

Gage Creger
College of Eng Appld Sci
and Tech

Isaiah DeMarco
University Housing

Aidan Empey
Academic Technology
Services

Brendan Evans
Dept Athletic Trng & Occup
Therapy

Gavin Fowler
Athletics Admin and
Support

Eliza Frodsham
Facilities Management

Kamden Garrett
Athletics Admin and
Support

Kathy Harris
Online and Continuing
Education

Juanita Hoffman
Facilities Management

Isiah Jackson
Athletics Admin and
Support

Tanner Jacobson
Athletics Admin and
Support

Aubrey Johnson
Nursing

Eric Kjar
Athletics Admin and
Support

Lillian Lappi
Facilities Management

Dustin Long
Athletics Admin and
Support

Sarah Lopez
Construction and Building
Sciences

McKinlee Mathews
College of Health
Professions

Makenna Montierth
Automotive Technology

Christopher Owen
Parking

Brandon Pembelton
Facilities Management

Laura Bianca Porras
Nursing

Julia Rice
College of Eng Appld Sci
and Tech

Damir Sabanovic
Athletics Admin and
Support

Richard Schumacher
DCHP Education

Natalee Solano
Assistant VP for Access

Kayla Stamey
College of Eng Appld Sci
and Tech

Tandalaya Stitt
History

Falekaono Tafisi
Athletics Admin and
Support

Olivia Tucker
Administrative Services

Brian Tuttle
Visual Arts

Haley Van Vlack
LIBR Learning & Student
Support

Ongohaangana Vea
Athletics Admin and
Support

Adriana Veeder
Payroll

Laura Wilde
Health Admin Service

Chance Willard
Facilities Management

Brighton Williams
CSSE Education

RETIRED
HERE'S TO YOU!

Morteza Emami
Online and Continuing
Education

James Hutchins
Health Sciences

E. Johnson
Facilities Management

Miguel Lopez-Sanchez
Facilities Management

Ronald Smith
Accounting Services

QUOTABLES

Over the last decade, residents, youth, and local businesses have shown us that lasting change is only possible through co-creation.

— **Meggie Troili**
OgdenCAN director

I know without a doubt that what the community puts into Amplify Weber State will be returned exponentially in benefits for our students, our region, our state, and beyond.

— **Steve Starks**
Amplify Weber State campaign chair

Community is essential right now.

— **Maryan Shale**
Student engagement program manager for the Student Success Center

CREDITS

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