

# College Town Annual Progress Report

August 25, 2015

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## Weber State University and Ogden City



### *College Town Vision:*

*Our community is known as a unique and vibrant place where Ogden City and Weber State University mutually pursue economic, educational, recreational, social, and cultural initiatives. This effort creates pride and tradition that binds college and town together.*

# College Town Annual Progress Report

This report identifies the progress of many College Town Initiative partnerships and programs over the past year. This also highlights new opportunities to move forward with this momentous collaboration.

## Table of Contents

### Overall Signs of Progress

Presidential Citation.....	pg.3
College Town Advisory Committee.....	pg.3
International Town and Gown Association.....	pg.4
Community Partnerships.....	pp.4-5
Recognitions by Ogden City.....	pg.5

### Recreational, Social and Cultural

Athletics.....	pp.5-6
Diversity Connections.....	pp. 6-7
Webertown.....	pg. 7
Wildcat Choice Awards.....	pg. 7
County-wide Recreation Master Plan.....	pg. 7

### Educational

American Democracy Project.....	pg.8
Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service.....	pg. 9
Debate Team.....	pg. 9
Weber Speaks.....	pg.9
Presentations about College Town.....	pg.10

**Economic**

Student Discounts Program..... pg.10  
WSU Local Business Packages..... pp. 10-11  
Banners on Harrison Boulevard..... pg.11  
Air Quality.....pg.11  
Summer Events of 2014.....pg.11-12

**Additional Information**

Contacts and web link..... pg.12

# Overall Signs of Progress

## Presidential Citation

On Nov. 4, 2014, WSU presented Ogden City with a joint presidential citation that recognizes the unwavering community support that city leaders, business owners, nonprofits and residents have provided to the university.



## College Town Advisory Committee

A College Town Advisory Committee has been organized that consists of community stakeholders from 11 groups:

- Art, Culture and Entertainment
- Diversity
- Education
- Financial
- General
- Health
- Merchants
- Military/Aerospace
- Recreation
- Religion
- Service



The first meeting was held on May 19, 2015. Stakeholder groups discussed opportunities for involvement in the College Town Initiative, ways to further the initiative and opportunities to better engage each group. The information gathered from this event is being evaluated to determine next steps.

The intention is to hold an annual meeting that includes all of the stakeholder groups and for each individual group to hold subsequent meetings throughout the year on an as-needed basis.

## International Town & Gown Association (ITGA)

WSU and Ogden City were the recipients of the 2015 Larry Abernathy Award. This distinguished award recognizes outstanding city and university partnerships. A \$1,000 prize was part of the award. University and city officials chose to donate this money to the Dream Weber scholarship program.



ITGA President David Lossing said that no one else is taking their college town partnership to this level.

In completing the ITGA certification program, Shane Farver, WSU chief of staff for the President's Office, has developed a series of metrics based on the focus areas of the College Town vision:

- Educational
- Recreational
- Social and cultural
- Economic

The content of this research project was presented at the 2015 ITGA conference.

## Community Partnerships

On Feb. 18, 2015, Ogden City and WSU hosted a Community Partnerships Celebration dinner to recognize the WSU Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) and many local organizations for their outstanding community partnerships. Ten longstanding partners received Bedrock Awards made of granite.

This event also recognized WSU for being recertified in 2015 with the esteemed Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. WSU has partnered with local organizations for more than 125 years to provide quality programs and educational opportunities.

This acknowledges WSU's longstanding commitment to the greater Ogden community and its dedication to teaching students through community-engaged learning.



CCEL has played a vital role in uplifting communities across the Wasatch Front. Because of CCEL’s invaluable local contributions, a “Keys to Our Communities Award” was also presented at the Community Partnerships Celebration.

Centerville, Layton, Marriott-Slaterville, North Ogden, Ogden, South Ogden, Washington Terrace and Morgan County have all adopted a “Keys to Our Communities” resolution to generously welcome the university into their communities. Efforts are also underway for additional cities and counties to join.

Since CCEL’s inception, over 44,000 students have contributed more than 942,000 combined hours of community engagement with an estimated monetary equivalent of \$17 million.

## Recognitions by Ogden City

The Ogden City Council and Mayor Mike Caldwell have formally recognized the following WSU accomplishments and initiatives during the past year:

- Keys to Our Communities
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
- Homeless Youth Awareness Month
- Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Browning Center
- WSU Debate Team
- WSU Cross Country Coach Jim Blaisdell
- WSU Women’s Softball Team
- WSU Spirit Squad and Waldo (mascot)
- WSU Distance Runner Mike Hardy
- Homecoming royalty proclamations



## Recreational, Social, Cultural

### Athletics

The WSU Athletics Department and Ogden City partnered to submit a bid to host the Big Sky Men’s Basketball Tournament from 2016-2019. Although another community was awarded the bid, this partnership helped identify collaborative resources available to host other similar athletic events in the future.



Ogden City employees were also offered complimentary tickets to attend the WSU v. Brigham Young University (BYU) Men's Basketball game at the Dee Events Center.



## Diversity Connections Initiative

A collaborative group has been formed with representatives from WSU and Ogden City to discover how best to connect with the many cultures/groups within our community.

Participating community leaders representing 16 specific diverse groups include (in alphabetical order):

- Ability
- African American and Black
- African American Ministerial Alliance
- Asian
- College Students
- Economic Diversity
- Faith Based
- Hispanic – English speaking
- Hispanic – Spanish speaking
- LGBTQ+
- Military
- Native
- NAACP
- Pacific Islander
- Seniors
- Women



Leaders from each of these groups participated in discussions. Adrienne Gillespie-Andrews, WSU chief diversity officer, and Bill Cook, Ogden City Council executive director, served as facilitators. As a result, participants are building a foundation of trust, creating an inclusive vision and forming an understanding of how best to communicate with each group. All group leaders will eventually agree upon, sign and adopt the vision.



City and university officials are attending and participating in various diversity events that are being held both on and off campus. This is helping to further connect with the groups.

In addition, an initiative is also being developed to identify the individual needs of each group. Specific goals and actions will be defined and incorporated into the College Town Initiative work plan.

## Webertown

Webertown took place for the third consecutive year. This is an annual student-organized event that takes place at the Ogden Amphitheater downtown. The community is invited to join students in attending a free concert that features local bands and artists. This is then followed by a dance party for students.

## Wildcat Choice Awards

In 2014, the Weber State University Student Association created the “Wildcat Choice Award,” to thank businesses who are supportive of Weber State within their own walls.



These awards are designed to surprise business owners. Typically a city representative schedules a decoy meeting with the owner, and then student body officers and leaders, the Cheer Squad, Waldo, President Charles White, Mayor Mike Caldwell and City Council Members converge at their front door. The owner receives a plaque and Weber State swag. Four businesses were recognized during the past year.

## County-wide Recreation Master Plan

The city is partnering with WSU, Weber County, Ogden School District and other cities within Weber County to develop a county-wide Recreation Master Plan. A request for proposals has been distributed, responses have been received and the partners are seeking consensus on the approach to move forward.



# Educational

## American Democracy Project

The American Democracy Project is a multi-campus initiative focused on public higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy. WSU provides a series of presentations and gatherings on campus to help students learn more about democracy.

*Talk of The Town Meetings* – Each semester the City Council holds a meeting on campus to discuss local issues that impact students. These meetings allow for student feedback and interaction with elected officials. The city works closely with students to determine the topics for these meetings. The two meeting topics of discussion during the last school year were vote-by-mail and diversity.



*Deliberative Democracy Day* – Each year, WSU hosts Deliberative Democracy Day to promote decision-making through deliberation on important political issues. The topic for 2014 was income inequality. Students spent the day learning about the topic and formulated questions for a panel of experts. Tom Christopoulos, Ogden City community and economic development director, participated on this panel.

*Powered by Pizza* – Lisa Stout, Ogden City comptroller, and Janene Eller-Smith, City Council deputy director, provided overviews on general and local taxes during the Powered by Pizza event held on April 15, 2015.

## Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service

The city coordinated with the Walker Institute and WSU Continuing Education to host a Citizens Academy. This course allowed area residents to learn more about government and how to become better engaged at the city level. This four-part series included presentations by elected and appointed city officials and others who have expertise regarding the election process.



This course has prompted increased citizen engagement, and two student participants are running for City Council in the 2015 election. Citizens Academy will be updated and provided to the Ogden community on an annual basis. This course is also being considered by other nearby communities.

## Debate Team

Over the last two semesters, WSU's nationally recognized debate team has researched and debated topics that the City Council is discussing. Students completed research, and then both sides of an issue were debated during a City Council work session meeting. The two topics debated during the last year were predatory towing and vacation rentals. City topics will continue to be debated each semester.



Omar Guevara, WSU Debate Team coach, also provided training to the City Council, presenting, “What every elected official needs to know about persuasion.”

## Weber Speaks

The Weber Speaks program is designed to provide students with experience in public speaking and communication. Each semester, up to six students are invited to make a short persuasive speech at a City Council meeting.

WSU Department of Communications instructors Mark Merkley and Kim Smith are coordinating this program. The selected topics are relative to Ogden City discussions and considerations. The information presented provides valuable insights on topics that are pertinent to the city.

The city has also been involved with the WSU Speech Showcase, an event where students have the opportunity to present award-winning speeches that they have given during the past year. City Council executive director Bill Cook participated as a speech judge during the event.



## Presentations about College Town

A number of presentations over the past year have showcased some of the best practices that have been developed and implemented as a result of the College Town Initiative.

College Town representatives gave presentations to the following organizations, with many more planned for the upcoming year:

- Utah Campus Compact
- 2015 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting
- International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement
- Utah City Managers' Association-Northern Utah group
- Utah League of Cities and Towns
- International Town and Gown Association (ITGA)

## Economic

### Student Discounts Program

The student discounts program is an option for area businesses to support the College Town Initiative. Students can access information about area businesses that offer continual student discounts. Participating businesses have been provided with a window decal and are listed on a website and Facebook page. There are currently 22 participating businesses.

### WSU Local Business Packages

WSU and Ogden City representatives have worked closely to put together WSU merchandise packages that local businesses can display. These packages will be offered to 150 businesses free of charge and will be available for pickup with a free beverage at Weber State Downtown. A letter from President Wight and Mayor Caldwell was sent inviting area businesses to participate. The packages will be provided through College Town funds and WSU Athletics.



The intent is to have business spaces decorated in anticipation for Homecoming week, Sept. 11-19, 2015. Participating businesses will also be able to tweet photos of their decorations, receive two tickets to the Homecoming football game and be entered to win WSU athletic jerseys framed for display. The packages serve as an alternative to the student discounts program, which some businesses have indicated isn't a financially viable way for them to support the College Town Initiative.

## Banners on Harrison Boulevard

The city and university are now working to install light-pole banners that will extend along Harrison Boulevard to campus. There are also plans to coordinate efforts to replace a city entryway sign on Harrison Boulevard and incorporate a WSU component.

## Air Quality

In February 2015, Ogden City hosted its fourth annual "Idle-Free Week." Weber State University, Weber-Morgan Health Department and Ogden School District partnered with the city to spread the word about this awareness campaign.

This effort is intended to help the community to understand the benefits that come from reducing vehicle idling, unnecessary driving and other actions that contribute to air pollution. This collaboration is intended to continue indefinitely.

## Summer Events of 2014

The opening of the renovated LDS Temple, Tour of Utah, Xterra, Ogden Pioneer Days, Homecoming, Harvest Moon Festival and other summer events drew more than 500,000 visitors into the Ogden community in 2014.

WSU worked closely with Ogden City, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Weber County to prepare for these events. WSU provided a shuttle for visitors to move throughout the downtown area.



The university also worked with the Ogden's Community and Economic Development Department to identify and fill empty business fronts with WSU window clings and banners. This added vibrancy to downtown buildings and showcased the university as an important part of the city.

Various individuals from the university were involved in the city's 100 Days of Service, a cleanup initiative to prepare for visitors. University staff also volunteered as downtown ambassadors to help welcome and direct visitors in the downtown.

## Additional Information

Bill Cook  
Executive Director  
Ogden City Council  
[billcook@ogdencity.com](mailto:billcook@ogdencity.com)  
(801) 629-8734

Brad Mortensen  
Vice President University Advancement  
Weber State University  
[bmortensen@weber.edu](mailto:bmortensen@weber.edu)  
(801) 626-6002

Web link: <http://goo.gl/1GoxTM>