



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

Spring Semester 2025 Newsletter

May 2025

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DEAN'S MESSAGE



"There's a gift inside every circumstance, even chaos. The gift of disorder is that it calls you to create new and better systems. What feels like a setback now is actually the catalyst for something stronger and more sustainable."

On the morning of the Jerry & Vickie Moyes College of Education restructure announcement, I came across this quote that caught my attention. In the wake of what felt like a daunting undertaking, those words offered unexpected clarity. It reminded me that change, even when challenging, is also an invitation to reimagine and grow. This transition offers a meaningful opportunity to strengthen our community through a deeper partnership with our friends in the College of Education. As we face challenges at Weber State University and in the realm of higher education, I find comfort in the support offered by campus and community friends and in the university-wide dedication to student success.

In our spring 2025 newsletter, we bid heartfelt farewells to several remarkable members of our CSBS family, including Huiying Hill, Joseph Horvat, Robert Reynolds, Jane Michels, and Sarah Rivkind. Their contributions have left a lasting impact on our college, our students, and our communities. Also, in the newsletter, you will find a recognition of outstanding student research, faculty mentorship, and additional highlights of the incredible accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff.

As we close this chapter with the final newsletter as the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, we look forward to the opportunities the future brings. And while saying goodbye to our CSBS name that we have had for 34 years saddens us, we are excited to join as one family in the new College of Social Sciences & Education.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Rich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

- JULIE RICH

DEAN, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

CSBS SPRING HIGHLIGHTS



AWARD-WINNING PODCAST

The *Just Ask* Podcast is a student-led podcast facilitated through the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public

Service, recorded in the Oliver F. Murray Podcast Room. Two episodes of the podcast were edited to a 10-minute format by Kyle Indihar and submitted to the 2025 Pi Kappa Delta National Conference and Tournament. One of the episode submissions placed fifth in the nation, with the other placing sixth in the nation! Listen to *Just Ask* on [Spotify](#).

VOTER-FRIENDLY CAMPUS

For the fourth year in a row, Weber State University was designated a Voter Friendly Campus by Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA. We were recognized for the excellent work completed by the Weber State Votes initiative that encourages student engagement in our democracy. These efforts made a powerful impact, resulting in 1,613 students registering to vote through our voter registration link and 1,483 ballots being collected at the Weber State ballot box.



RUBY VEJAR: YOUNG DIPLOMAT AWARD



Our CSBS Student Senator Ruby Vejar received the Young Diplomat Award from Utah Global Diplomacy. According to the organization, she was honored because of her leadership in Model United Nations, research on structural inequality, and initiatives addressing food insecurity and teen suicide prevention on the Sioux Reservation.

CSBS SPRING HIGHLIGHTS

STUDENT RESEARCH

Twenty-four students and nine faculty from the Department of Psychological Science attended and/or presented at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association's 95th annual convention in April 2025.

- Layla Manzanares - "Want to Do Research? Come to the Lab Meeting! An Open Discussion About Effectively Running Undergraduate Research Lab Meetings Grand Mesa C"
 - Faculty mentors: Jordyn Leslie and Xin Zhao
- Allyson Yardley and Kamryn Shepherd - "Optimizing Musical Performance With Meditation: A Pilot Study"
 - Faculty mentor: Rachel Chase
- Christy Vu, Cason Nash, and Korbin Gardner - "Examining the Impacts of Anti-DEI Legislation and Cultural Center Closures on Student Equity, Belonging, and Success in Higher Education"
 - Faculty mentor: Sarah Herrmann
- Ashley Aune, Jared Brady, Shannon Wenzel, and Pryce Palmero - "Impacts of Different Letter Writing Manipulations on State Mood and Anxiety"
 - Faculty mentor: Aminda O'Hare
- Lindsey Aune, Hannah Hughes, Jackson Anderson, and Caleb Bevan - "The Effects of Mindfulness Practice on Student Burnout Rates: Use of Salivary Alpha-Amylase and Salivary Cortisol as Metrics of Burnout"
 - Faculty mentors: Aminda O'Hare and Timothy Black
- Alivia Deimer, Tess Johnson, Alyssa Ekstrom, and Koleman Hadley - "Minority Stress and Relationship Satisfaction: Does Empathic Accuracy Moderate This Relationship?"
 - Faculty mentor: Kathryn Sperry
- Taylor Evans - "Greening Classrooms: The Impact of Indoor Plants on College Students' Well-Being, Academic Performance, and Course Evaluations"
 - Faculty mentor: Sarah Herrmann
- Juno Lee, Marcile Jumonville, Annette Ta'a, Ashley Aune, and Gavin Berrett - "What'd You Get for #4? Curiosity, Memory, and Social Comparisons"
 - Faculty mentor: Shannon McGillivray
- Gavin Berrett, Jackson Stringham, Ashley Aune, and Luke Nebeker - "The Impact of Prior Knowledge on Curiosity and Inductive Learning"
 - Faculty mentor: Shannon McGillivray
- Monika Lowe - "The Impact of Mental Health, Motivation, and Relationships on Belonging and Academic Success in Veteran and Non-veteran College Students"
 - Faculty mentor: Shannon McGillivray
- Benson Bush - "Cognitive Control and Attentional Biases: A Dual-Anxiety Approach"
 - Faculty mentor: Aminda O'Hare
- Rachael Daughters and Christopher Perez - "Test of the Dual Chamber Model of Collective Action With Targeted Disadvantaged and Non-targeted Advantaged Group Members"
 - Faculty mentor: Azenett Garza
- Karsten Heyrend - "Test of the Dual Chamber Model of Collective Action: Does the Manipulation of Ostracism Influence Its Ability to Predict Collective Action?"
 - Faculty mentor: Azenett Garza
- Joshua Milliner - "AI Consciousness Building Through Philosophy, Absurdity, & Cat Ears: Breaking Through the Cracks Using Waging Propositions"
 - Faculty mentor: Xin Zhao

Recognizing Service & New Beginnings



Huiying Hill

Department Chair and Professor of Sociology

30 years



Joseph Horvat

Professor of Psychology

43 years

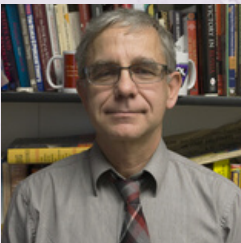


Jane Michels

Administrative Specialist II, Department of Military Science

7 years

"Wow, Weber State has encompassed so, so many wonderful experiences with great administration, faculty, staff, students, and the community. I have learned so much and have truly enjoyed my lucky seven years at Military Science/Army ROTC as their Admin. I wish ALL at Weber State continued success as 'I ride off into the sunset' into my next chapters enjoying availability to visit my aging parents and family, travelling, learning a new language, returning to volunteering, and whatever other doors open for my husband and me!"



Rob Reynolds

Professor of Sociology

32 years



Sarah Rivkind

Administrative Specialist II, Department of Geography, Environment & Sustainability

14 years

Sarah has been at Weber State for 14 years, with eight years in the Department of Geography, Environment & Sustainability. She is moving to a different role to be the Enrollment Specialist for Dual Enrollment at the Davis Campus.

"I love helping students and it's been a pleasure to serve in Geography. I'm excited for what's next."

WSU AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



BRADY PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

Marjukka Ollilainen
Professor, Sociology



JOHN A. LINDQUIST AWARD

Alice Mulder
Professor, Geography, Environment & Sustainability



PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD & CAREER CHAMPION AWARD

Sarah Herrmann
Associate Professor, Psychological Science



PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Michelle Jeffs
Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice



JENNINGS G. OLSON AWARD

Richard Price
Professor, Political Science



AMBROSE AMOS SHAW ENDOWED CHAIR

Mary Beth Willard
Department Chair & Professor, Philosophy

WSU AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



SUPER STAFF AWARD

Alicia Guthrie

Administrative Assistant II, Psychological Science



SUPER STAFF AWARD

Sally West

Administrative Assistant II, Sociology & Anthropology



CETL STUDENT CHOICE: OUTSTANDING FACULTY MEMBER

McKenzie Wood

Graduate Director & Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice



CETL: OUTSTANDING WEBER SERVICE

Leigh Shaw

Professor, Psychological Science



CETL: COURSE MATERIALS AFFORDABILITY AWARD

Xin Zhao

Assistant Professor, Psychological Science



CETL: COURSE MATERIALS AFFORDABILITY AWARD

Department of Criminal Justice

FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- **Jean Kapenda:** Presented a multi-part lecture series “Rumba on the Congo River” for the 2025 CSBS Black History Month Lecture.
- **Dennis Lee:** Presented “Police-Citizen Interactions Impact on Procedural Justice” and “Predicting Distributive Justice in Police-Citizen Encounters” with criminal justice students at the Utah Crime, Justice, and Equity Conference.
- **Molly Sween:** Nominated by Major General Eder to attend the U.S. Army’s 2025 National Security Seminar in June 2025.

HISTORY

- **James Almeida:** Signed an advance contract to publish his first book *Minting Slavery, Coining Race: Human Difference, Discipline, and Labor in Colonial Potosí* with the University of Alabama Press. Invited to present “(Re)Production without Women: An Attempt at Social Control in 17th Century Potosí” at Yale University’s Latin American History Speaker Series.
- **Kerri Clement:** Published "Contagion and Control: Rethinking Animal Diseases and Their Roles in American History and Space" in *Modern American History*.
- **Nathan Rives:** Presented "The State of Teaching College and High School American History Courses in Utah" at the Organization of American Historians annual conference.
- **Matthew Romaniello:** Published “‘An Epidemic disease of a very singular nature’: Evolving Knowledge of the Mumps in the Eighteenth Century” in *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*.
- **Eric Swedin:** Published "Latter-day Saint Reactions to Epidemics in Utah" in *Utah Historical Quarterly*.

POLITICAL SCIENCE & PHILOSOPHY

- **Bob Fudge:** Presented "The Dignified Sublime," which is from a book-length manuscript he is preparing entitled "Dignity and Degradation" at the North Carolina Philosophical Society meeting.
- **Paul Neiman:** Published “Nurses on the Outside, Problems on the Inside! The Duty of Nurses to Support Unions” in *Nursing Ethics*.

POLITICAL SCIENCE & PHILOSOPHY (CONT'D)

- **Stephanie Wolfe:** Received the Citizen Diplomacy Award at Citizen Diplomacy Day on the Hill for her outstanding contributions to international goodwill and building bridges between Utah and the world. Presented "Memorializing Trauma: The Development of Genocide Memorials in Rwanda (1994-2004)" at the MSA Museums and Memory Working Group Conference. Invited with political science student Macy McCormack by survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi to attend the 31st Commemoration at the United Nations Headquarters. While there, they conducted an in-depth interview with Deputy Permanent Representative Kayinamura about his role in advancing changes to the official UN resolution language concerning the genocide commemoration.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

- **Jordyn Leslie:** Received a \$21,000 grant for "Access to and Support for Nature at Work: A Multi-Study Scale Development and Validation Project" from the Center for Health & Nature. Published "Branching Out: The Nonwork Nature and Employee Outcomes (NEO) Model" in *Occupational Health Science*.
- **Xin Zhao:** Elected as the Diversity Chair for the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association.

SOCIAL WORK & GERONTOLOGY

- **Lizbeth Velazquez & Corina Segovia-Tadehara:** Published, with Andrea Martinez, assistant professor of teacher education, the book chapter "Authentic Cariño with Latinx preK-12 learners: An approach to transformative social and emotional learning" in *Moving from Trendy to Transformative Social-Emotional Learning*.

STAFF MILESTONES

Thank You 5 YEARS

Nicholas Ferré, Dean's Office

THANK YOU



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences



MAKING DREAMS HAPPEN

Check out some of the ways you can support students, faculty and staff in the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences.

CONTACT US

Reach out to the Dean's Office:

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