

# WILDCAT

WSU Alumni Magazine | FALL 2020

**FALLING WE  
ARE LIFTED.**

**RISING**

**WE LIFT  
EACH OTHER.**

As we face the unknown of the COVID-19 pandemic, art allows us to encourage and inspire. Create your uplifting chalk drawing on this cover, and share your creation with the world on social media, using #EverUpwardatWeber.

“People come in with heart attacks and walk out of the hospital a day later because of what we’re able to accomplish in the cath lab.

*We save lives.”*

## Training to Save Lives

As a non-traditional student starting a second career, Christopher Steelman learned to save lives through invasive cardiology. He developed his expertise over nearly two decades, working in more than a dozen catheterization labs and training radiologists across the globe, from South Carolina to South Korea to South Africa.

Now, he prepares Weber State graduate students to become heroes.

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Christopher Steelman MS, RT(R)(CI)(ARRT), RCIS, FACVP  
Assistant Professor, Invasive Cardiology Program Coordinator

## WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

News for Alumni & Friends

### WILDCAT

Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall 2020

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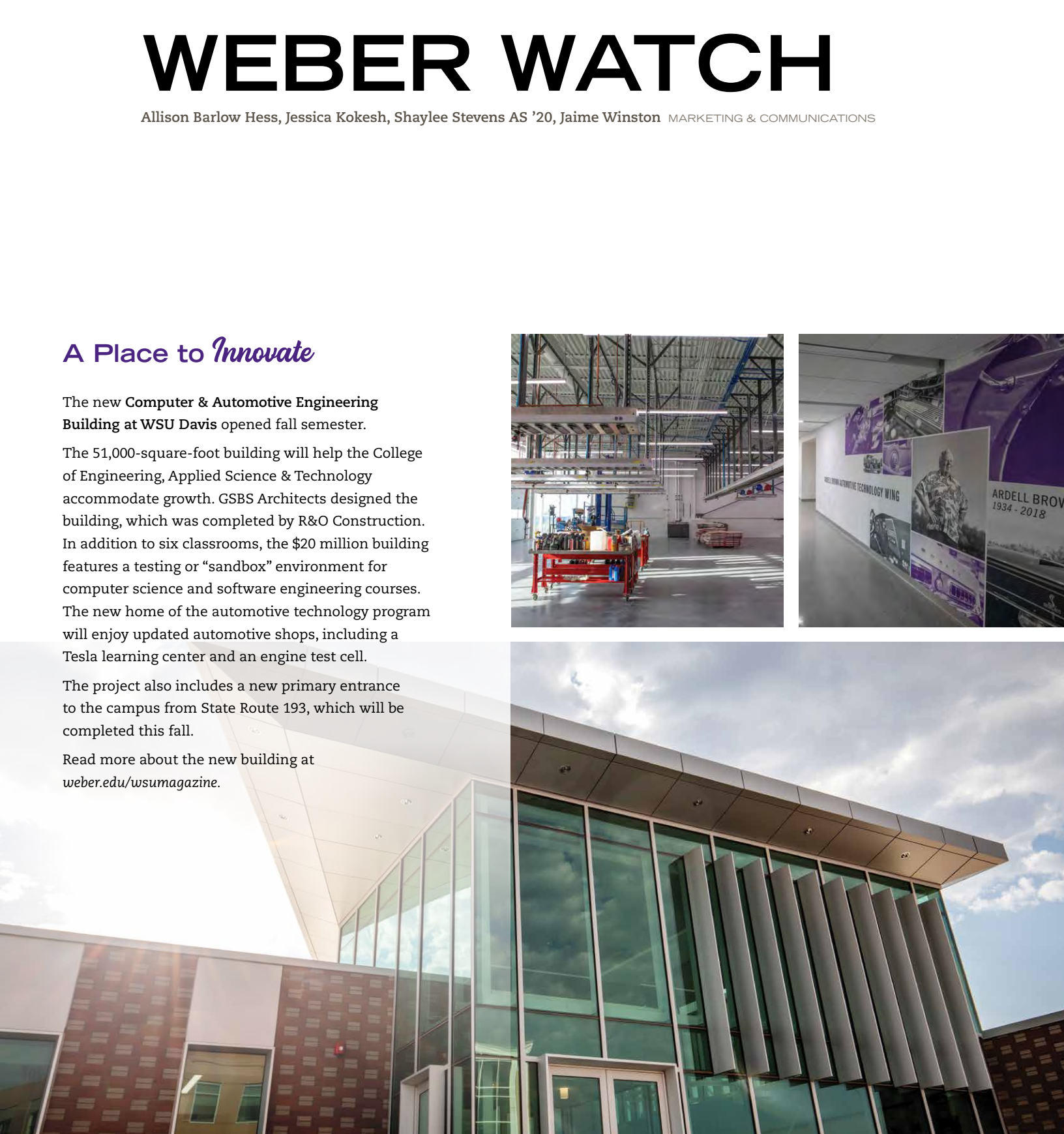
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Share your chalk artwork with us, using #EverUpwardAtWeber, and tag us.

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A Place to *Innovate*

The new Computer & Automotive Engineering Building at WSU Davis opened fall semester. The 51,000-square-foot building will help the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology accommodate growth. GSBS Architects designed the building, which was completed by R&O Construction. In addition to six classrooms, the \$20 million building features a testing or “sandbox” environment for computer science and software engineering courses. The new home of the automotive technology program will enjoy updated automotive shops, including a Tesla learning center and an engine test cell. The project also includes a new primary entrance to the campus from State Route 193, which will be completed this fall. Read more about the new building at [weber.edu/wsumagazine](http://weber.edu/wsumagazine).





## Giving Back *Opportunities*

During his time at Weber State, **Jose Alberto Perea BS '15** received the Oportunidad Scholarship, which prioritizes first-generation college students who graduated from Ogden, Weber or Davis high schools. The scholarship made a huge impact on his experience.

“Being a first-generation college student, it was a little difficult not really knowing the process and how everything worked,” he said. “When I was given the opportunity to apply for the Oportunidad Scholarship, it made the difference.”

Now, as Vice President of Secondary Marketing for Graystone Mortgage, a mortgage lender based out of Salt Lake City, Alberto has the means to make the difference for current Weber State students.

Alberto and his wife, Amanda, recently established the **Phyllis “Heart” Geurts Memorial Scholarship** for students in need. The \$2,500 annual scholarship mirrors the Oportunidad Scholarship, prioritizing first-generation and low-income students but emphasizing those who are active and volunteer in the community.



Phyllis “Heart” Geurts

The scholarship is named after Amanda’s late grandmother, who was given the nickname “Heart” by family and friends due to her giving and supportive nature.

The scholarship name was a surprise for Amanda.

“I sobbed,” she said. “It was very touching. It was hard to see her pass and see her go. It’s just a great way to remember her and share her memory.”

Alberto said he wants to give back what was given to him while he was a student and to pass along that same opportunity to future leaders.

“My time at Weber State was great,” he said. “It really shaped me up and allowed me to be in the position that I am.”

To develop a scholarship of your own or contribute to other Weber State scholarships, contact the Development Office at [wsudevelopment@weber.edu](mailto:wsudevelopment@weber.edu).

## *New Provost* Arrives to Guide in Crisis



When **Ravi Krovi** became Weber State’s new provost on March 1, 2020, he presented **President Brad Mortensen** with his 90-day plan, “which went out the window in the first week,” he said.

While the university’s urgent response to the COVID-19 pandemic changed his plans, Krovi said it also provided an intense crash course

on the university’s people and processes. The strengths that attracted him to Weber State were on constant display during the crisis, particularly when it came to student focus, collegiality, shared governance and fiscal stability.

With a Ph.D. in Management Information Systems & Decision Sciences from The University of Memphis, and nearly 20 years of teaching and leadership experience at the University of Akron, Krovi said a tumultuous greeting did not change his guiding principles.

“I like to be decisive,” he said. “I think this is one case where speed mattered. Weber State was one of the first to recognize the urgency. You have to be adaptive and flexible. That is part of my operating model. Get everyone engaged. You have to collaborate and communicate, which means engaging all the key stakeholders, faculty senate, administration and students in important decisions.”

As vice president for Academic Affairs, the provost is responsible for ensuring quality and excellence in the school’s curriculum. The provost oversees seven colleges, Stewart Library and Enrollment Services, and supports student success initiatives that keep students enrolled and progressing toward graduation.

Krovi knows the disruption of COVID-19 will continue to test the university’s educational mission of attracting and graduating students. He said it will require a unified, visionary effort.

“We have to have a clarity of vision, and that’s going to be very, very important,” Krovi said. “We cannot be everything to all people because the market is becoming very fragmented. We have to know who we are and what the community needs, and we have to anticipate and respond before others do.”

## Principles Guide *New Business Dean* During Pandemic



While serving as interim dean for the John B. Goddard School of Business and Economics, **Matthew Mouritsen** facilitated a strategic planning retreat for all Goddard faculty and staff to identify strategic initiatives based on their shared guiding principles and values.

In December, WSU announced Mouritsen

as dean of the college. Three months later, he put those principles to the test when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

“When we needed them most, our values and principles helped us steer through some of the most trying times any of us have faced,” Mouritsen said. “Compassion was our rule.”

During their retreat, Goddard faculty and staff set guidelines for creating a flex-paced, market-driven curriculum delivered in a student-centered environment. Knowing that they would provide a compassionate and personal touch to serving students made the transition to virtual teaching much easier, Mouritsen said.

Mouritsen has been with the university for nearly two decades.

As former director of the Master of Business Administration program, he established strong relationships with community partners and led strategic initiatives to discover innovative ways to meet student needs. Mouritsen also served as a faculty member and earned his Bachelor of Arts in accounting from Weber State.

As dean, Mouritsen plans to continue a forward-thinking, hands-on-learning approach to help students in the Goddard School build strong portfolios, while putting ethics and trust first. “We look forward as faculty and staff to building new bridges to, and from, the Goddard School,” he said.



## Small critters bring huge opportunity

Last spring, zoology major **Chyanne Smith BS '20** received a big honor to research a small animal (less than a foot in size).

The honor, acceptance to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP), will allow her to study the degu (*Octodon degus*), a rodent that lives in large groups, as part of her master's program in environmental science at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. While she initially planned to conduct her research in Santiago, Chile, this fall, her trip has been delayed until next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Specifically, we will investigate maternal effects on the water-balance physiology of degu pups," she said. "In other words, we are looking at the conditions a mother degu faces and how the conditions may be internally communicated to her young to better prepare the pups for survival."

Her research goes beyond one species though.

"Central Chile is currently in the throes of a megadrought that has been linked to climate change, and degu colonies are declining during the drought," said **John Mull**, Weber State zoology professor and mentor. "Chyanne's research will have implications for understanding how social animals respond to severe climate change."

The GRFP is the NSF's oldest graduate fellowship program that provides direct support to graduate students in various fields. Past fellows include numerous Nobel Prize winners.

Previously, Smith gained research experience in Mull's animal behavior course, and a summer in Mongolia studying small mammals in the Darhad Valley. She presented her findings from Mongolia at the 2020 Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research. At the 2019 conference, Smith presented her findings on the caching behavior of woodrats through maturity with zoology professor **Michele Skopec**.

"My core goal has always been to obtain a position that helps animals in some way," Smith said. "The Weber State University College of Science and the Department of Zoology have provided me all the opportunities I needed to be successful."



## Tracking Bird Populations

Next time you hear birds chirping, take some time to appreciate the moment. According to a study in the journal "Science," birds, chirping or otherwise, have become more rare, with populations dropping over 25% during the past 50 years.

Since fall 2019, Weber State student researchers have been conducting field research to see if bird populations near the Ogden campus have experienced a similar decline.

**John Cavitt**, professor of zoology, started the research with students by setting up a bird banding station in the foothills east of Stewart Stadium. Using a technique called mark recapture, Cavitt and students captured birds in nets, before placing small numbered bands on their legs and releasing them, hoping to determine populations by the number recaptured over time. The researchers assessed the birds' physiological condition, looking for signs of illness. Data will be compared to bird population research by former WSU ornithologist **Carl Marti** to determine if populations are dropping.

**Laura Odland Judd BS '20**, a research participant, said she wasn't interested in ornithology before taking Cavitt's ornithology class and conducting research with him on shore birds last summer. Now, her experience benefits her in her role as a veterinarian technician.

"Although I haven't helped yet with an exotic pet, learning how to handle birds during banding will aid me when handling a client's pet bird," she said. "My research experience also has helped boost my employment resume and application for veterinarian school."

Cavitt plans to continue the research to gain more data before publishing results. Along with **College of Science Dean Andrea Easter-Pilcher**, he also hopes to lead students on a trip to conduct related research at Lake Baikal in Russia's Siberia region. Originally scheduled for May, the trip was postponed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"We already have compared our current research to research done by Marti in 1977 and have seen a decline in abundance of bird species," Odland Judd said. "I think this will be a fun project to follow and hopefully bring more attention to bird populations and abundance."

Visit [weber.edu/wsumagazine](http://weber.edu/wsumagazine) for footage of students engaged in avian research.

## MIS Graduates Receive 100% Acceptance to Carnegie Mellon

Success is great, but perfect is something else, and perfect describes the rate of Weber State University applicants who were recently accepted to Carnegie Mellon University's graduate program for information security and information management.

Five WSU graduates started CMU's master's program this fall, and nine participated in the Summer Security Intensive Information Technology Lab to get a look at the rigors of the master's program and complete three cybersecurity courses. After finishing the summer program, students typically join the master's program.

**CMU has an average acceptance rate of less than 20 percent. The rate of WSU students accepted speaks to the strength of the university's management information systems program.**

**Randy Boyle**, cybersecurity expert and management information systems professor, collaborated with industry leaders to develop the program, which incorporates advanced applied skills to every class to meet industry demand. Students not only learn the applications and systems, but they practice them hundreds of times in real-life scenarios.

Over the past 15 years, the frequency and size of data breaches has increased exponentially, and the subsequent demand for well-trained cybersecurity professionals has gone up.

"The recent COVID-19 lockdown has forced companies to put nearly everything online, which has exacerbated the problem," Boyle explained. "Businesses must provide remote access to everyone, and hackers know it."

In 2018, Weber State was selected as a CMU National Education Partner, allowing admitted WSU students to receive scholarships equal to at least 30 percent of tuition per semester with additional scholarships based on the strength of their applications.

In the past four years, 20 Weber State students have been admitted to the CMU graduate programs and 22 to the summer program.



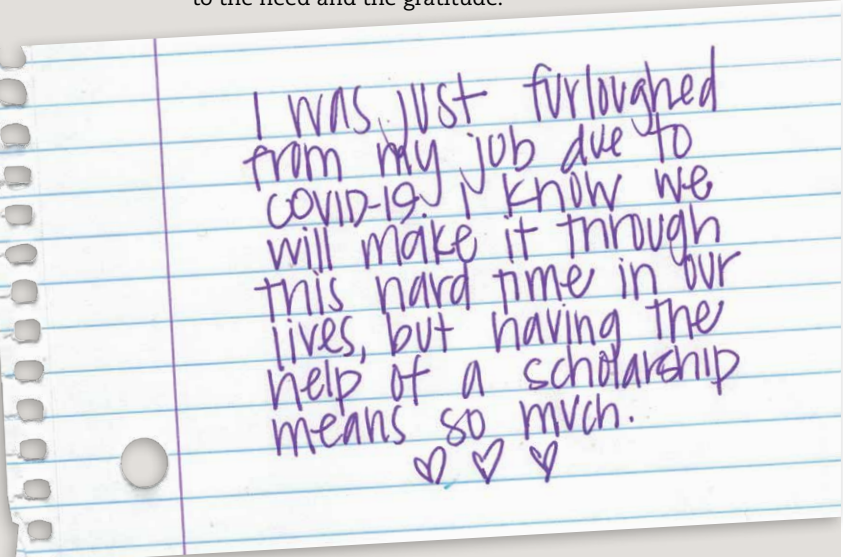


# 'CATapult Scholarship 'Powerful Motivation'

When **President Mortensen** announced the 'CATapult scholarship at his inauguration, he had no way of knowing the increased need students would soon experience as lives were upended with a global pandemic.

'CATapult is intended to provide an energetic, upward burst of momentum for students who are nearing graduation but without the means to continue.

Recipients' heartfelt thank you letters to donors attest to the need and the gratitude.



Within the first few months of its creation, 237 students have received a total of \$256,037, mostly for the summer semester 2020.

"Thank you so much for your kindness, and generosity," a grateful student wrote. "I had no idea how I was going to pay for my last semester of school! You are truly a blessing! I would not be able to finish my degree without you! Because of your generosity, I can now make a difference in young troubled youth's lives."

The university hopes to raise \$10 million dollars to create a lasting, meaningful endowment to inspire future Wildcats in their education pursuit.

"I've been 82% finished with my degree for almost two years," a recipient reflected. "I took a short break, which turned into a moderate break, which then nearly became an indefinite break. I lost momentum. Your donation is powerful motivation."

# Supporting Early Childhood Professionals

**Susan Winterton**, early childhood education major, said Weber State has taught her what to expect at each stage of a child's development, how to handle difficult behavior issues and a little about herself and her own family — knowledge she puts to use daily as she runs her family daycare center. Those ready-to-use skills also came with most tuition and fees covered.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Utah Scholarship covers 80% of a recipient's tuition and fees, while their workplace covers an additional 10%.

"It took the financial burden off, so I could focus on schoolwork," said Winterton, who hopes to become a trainer at WSU's Care About Childcare program or a childcare licenser after graduating.

Employers in the program also commit to pay three hours of released time per 16-week semester for students to complete schoolwork, and T.E.A.C.H. reimburses employers for \$4.50 per hour paid. Additionally, employers commit to providing students with raises or bonuses following each completed educational contract. In return, employers elevate their status with trained childcare professionals.

"I would highly recommend early childhood educators to take advantage of this opportunity," said **Nancy Rodriguez**, WSU scholarship recipient and assistant director at Little Seed Evolution Child Care Center. "It has challenged and helped me improve in the way we teach and train our teachers and children."

Administered through the Utah Association for the Education of Young Children (UAEYC), T.E.A.C.H. first offered scholarships at WSU in fall 2018. Over the summer, five of Utah's 35 T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients attended WSU.

**Teri Henke**, associate professor of child and family studies, said she hopes WSU's new online Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood will attract others to the program, particularly students who represent diverse backgrounds of children in local childcare programs.

In Utah, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are currently open to childcare center directors and teachers, as well as family childcare providers desiring to earn an associate's degree in early childhood. Find more information at [weber.edu/chfam](http://weber.edu/chfam).



"I have certainly learned a great deal from the program. It has helped to round out areas that I didn't even understand I had a gap in."

— **Darcy Siebenaller, eMHA Student**

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# Weber Arts

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## THEATRE

### CRUSHING THE CURVE: A DIGITAL THEATRE EXPERIMENT

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#### SEPT. 10 | *Working*

A panel discussion with professionals from a range of unusual theatrical careers

#### OCT. 01 | *Fever*

A student-driven showcase of scenes and songs

#### OCT. 15 | *Behind The Curtain*

A behind-the-scenes look at WSU's production of *Pippin*, featuring singing, dancing and interviews with the cast, crew and designers

#### NOV. 05 | *Choices*

An experiment in digital theatre

#### NOV. 19 | *Illumination*

A reading of new plays written specifically for virtual theatre by Weber State students

#### DEC. 03 | *A New World*

A musical showcase exploring life and the world we live in through the art of song. Experience all the highs and lows, joys and sorrows, and messy in-betweens life has to offer from the comfort of your own screen.

## MUSIC

### LIVE FROM 136

**A** virtual weekly concert series showcasing student and faculty performances and presentations.

#### SEP. 12

*Bach in Solitude, Beethoven @ 250*  
Bonneville Chamber Music Festival

#### OCT. 20 & 22

*Excerpts from H.M.S. Pinafore*  
by the Opera Ensemble

#### OCT. 27

*Jazz Ensemble Concert*  
by the Department of Performing Arts Music Area

#### NOV. 07

*A Beethoven Celebration*  
Symphony Orchestra Fall Concert

#### NOV. 13

*Symphonic Band Fall Concert*

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CHLOÉ VALDARY  
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OCTOBER 13, 2020

FOR TIMES, LOCATIONS,  
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WEBER STATE  
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# THROWING *OUT* FEAR



As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every aspect of our lives, Weber State alumni attacked the spread head on, staff and faculty took action to protect our community, and students showed what it means to be a Wildcat.



## LIFE IS RISKY, AND SOMETIMES, IT TAKES GRIT TO PULL THROUGH.

When Colter Blanchard and five of his friends left for a ski trip last spring, they thought that risk was relatively low.

The Steamboat Springs forecast called for light snow, dusting the resort town's slopes with its signature light, fluffy "champagne" powder. While two COVID-19 cases would soon be reported in the surrounding county, Blanchard and his friends didn't see news of any when they left home. With Weber State classes temporarily canceled, giving faculty time to move spring semester courses from in-person to online formats, the mid-March trip seemed perfectly timed — and it nearly was.

"We had a great trip, super fun," said Blanchard, a mechanical engineering major and WSU track and field athlete.

Amid skiing, dining on pizza and laughing with friends in the picturesque town, the virus wasn't at the top of Blanchard's mind. After the trip, though, one of his ski buddies had bad news.

"He went to a routine checkup, and he told the doctor 'I feel pretty fatigued, my chest is kind of tight,'" Blanchard recalled. "So, he got tested by chance, and his results came back positive."

**Blanchard was the first Weber State student to report having the virus.**

Blanchard realized his own exhaustion wasn't just travel fatigue and was tested for COVID-19 on March 19, four days after returning to Utah.

He became the first Weber State student to report having the virus. Young and healthy, he was able to fight the virus better than some.

"I had a slight, very mild cough for about 12 hours. I had a very low-grade fever, but, overall, I would've classified it as a mild cold or mild flu, because I never felt seriously ill," he said. "I did not want to spread it to any of my family or friends or loved ones, like my grandparents."

He quarantined in his bedroom at his parents' home in Farmington.

After three days of treating symptoms with NyQuil and a lot of water, he started feeling better. But the virus wasn't the tough part.

"It was difficult for me to finish out my classes, not because I had the virus, rather because I missed the learning environment that a classroom provides," said Blanchard, who took 13 credit hours.

Like Blanchard, Weber State students have battled hardships throughout the pandemic. Many lost jobs, many faced anxiety over family and friends, and some were unable to visit family.

Students pulled through amid adversity.

When doubt came, and darkness loomed, they threw off fear.

"This is something that we can control in our immediate circles," Blanchard said. "We need to take it seriously, but I don't think we need to be stopped in our tracks with fear."

## Lessons from Anne Frank

Tela Faeamani BA '19 hadn't been in her classroom for long when all public schools went online.

After earning her English teaching degree, she began teaching seventh and eighth grade English at Mueller Park Junior High School in Bountiful in January 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to make a quick pivot after getting started to move all six of her classes online.

Since she had her course content backed up online already, Faeamani said going online was the easy part. Losing one-on-one interactions with students was another story.

"That's probably the hardest part of it for me, as a teacher, and for my students," Faeamani said. "When I check in with them and see how they're doing, or ask them to write something and tell me some of the things that they're missing, not being at school, that's probably the number one thing. They miss that face-to-face learning." Along with learning in an actual classroom, students told her they miss their peers.

For many of her eighth graders, though, their isolation gave them a foundation to connect to their studies, specifically a stage adaptation of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Students drew connections between the quarantine and the isolation the Frank family and those with them experienced in the secret annex. "I've been able to have them personalize that story to what they're going through," Faeamani said.

While isolated, her students still saw her through Zoom sessions and weekly video lessons, while she gave them an option to complete their homework via video so she could see them.

Faeamani has five of her own children, four who completed schooling online last spring. She has also lost family due to the COVID-19 virus. She's well aware of the toll adjusting to remote learning and the deadly pandemic has had on families.

"The best advice I can give other teachers, and even parents and kids, is to be patient with yourselves. It's an adjustment for everybody that's involved," she said. "In the end, it's going to be okay."







## WSU in the Community

When frontline medical workers needed help, Waldo was quick to jump into action. His willing response kicked off Weber State's participation in "Sew Your True Colors," a statewide campaign to make and distribute 5 million face coverings.

Waldo's work was representative of the many ways the Wildcat family offered a helping hand — or paw — to the community.

Knowing the critical need to provide timely support, WSU's Online & Continuing Education program administrator and team of interns updated the [guideemogden.org](http://guideemogden.org) website, created during the government shutdown of 2018–2019,

to direct individuals to community resources, including the Chamber of Commerce, Catholic Community Services and the United Way.

Adjunct economics professor **Jennifer Gnagey** provided an expert resource when she quickly produced and uploaded two how-to videos for the thousands of Utahns filing unemployment claims. Her class of labor economics students also volunteered to help individuals through the process.

In collaboration with Student Affairs Technology and most of the colleges across campus, Stewart Library loaned 92 laptops, 27 chrome books and 20 Wi-Fi hotspots so students could continue their spring and summer coursework. Grateful

recipients expressed relief for the technology that enabled them to stay in school and keep learning.

Faculty members in the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology cannibalized labs of high-end computers and loaned them out for manufacturing, mechanical engineering and interior design students to run specialized design software.

The 3D lab director in the John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics, **Jeff Clements**, coordinated a campus-wide collaboration to print face shields. Clements, along with assistant professor of teacher education **Ryan Cain**, and two student volunteers, staggered their shifts and worked night and day. They used 3D printers across campus to print 300 face shields, which were donated to the Weber Morgan Health Department for distribution around the county.

Because students and faculty were working from home and clinical and lab rotations were canceled, the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions was able to share its extra supplies. The college donated 15 ventilators, 1,000 masks, 200 fluid-resistant gowns, as well as hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer, head covers, boxes of gloves and eye goggles to McKay-Dee Hospital, Midtown Community Health and the Ogden Clinic.

Weber State Athletics helped host a drive-through food drive in the Dee Events Center parking lot that collected 9,000 pounds of food for Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah and the Salvation Army. For those who did not qualify, generous donors also supplemented CARES Act funding to help students who incurred expenses due to campus disruption during spring semester in amounts between \$100 and \$500.

Visit [weber.edu/wsumagazine](http://weber.edu/wsumagazine) for more stories of alumni helping others during the pandemic, along with a timeline showing how WSU responded to COVID-19.

## A DAY'S WORK

When **Karen Valdez** worked her last shift as a resident assistant at University Village in late April, it felt different.

"As an RA, the biggest thing we do is community building, so really interacting with our residents and creating activities where they can come together," said Valdez, who spent two years as an RA before graduating with a bachelor's degree in communication. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, creating community in the halls came second to keeping the residents safe.

RAs limited interactions with residents, and shared spaces were closed due to the pandemic. Valdez said the once-lively, energetic residence hall felt like a "ghost town" as more and more students left to go home during the second block of spring semester.

She remembers her surprise seeing so many students pack up the day WSU announced that courses would go online.

"Wow, this is crazy, people are actually packing up and leaving already, and the semester is far from over," she recalled thinking. "It was in that moment I knew the rest of the semester was going to be completely different and just be ready to expect anything."

Though she knew the changes were necessary, she missed the one-on-one time she had with residents, helping them realize they belong at Weber State University, that they make the school great.

During finals weeks, Valdez found ways to encourage the few remaining students through gestures like dropping off puzzles and crosswords, or writing notes of positivity. "I like to think that those little actions helped my residents feel better, feel more at home," she said.

Outside the residence halls, Valdez's internship with the Real Salt Lake soccer team was on hold, and she had to find new ways to be

useful in an on-campus internship where she once wrote press releases on campus events.

As a graduate, Valdez wishes she could have said goodbye to peers and thank you to professors in-person before her final classes went online.

Amid the pandemic and rising tensions throughout the world, Valdez found sparks of inspiration in fellow Wildcats.

"My friend Dawn made a poll on Instagram about how students are still planning on celebrating graduation even though commencement was postponed, and she made this infographic that she shared with all the ways people submitted," Valdez said. "Those positive little reinforcements really made this pandemic a lot more manageable."







## LOOKING INWARD

Whether they know him by name or not, Weber State gym-goers could always expect a warm greeting from exercise and sport science major, **Najite Achebo**.

Like Valdez, his on-campus job was impacted by COVID-19.

Achebo, a Campus Recreation employee, greeted guests at the Wildcat Center gym last spring semester. “They call it ‘access,’” he said. “I just make sure everyone who’s coming in has their card and the proper clearance to get in.”

Of course, the job means more to him than just checking Wildcards.

“I met a ton of friends that I have become close with, just meeting them at the gym and talking to them as they come in, and getting to know them more and more,” he said in May, as many gyms closed. “That’s one aspect of the position I really enjoy and miss.”

Aside from having to leave the job, Achebo also had to adjust to spring semester classes going online.

Aside from having to leave the job, Achebo also had to adjust to spring semester classes going online. Both shifts were a challenge.

“I definitely value regularity and routine like everyone else, but that huge abrupt shift to my schedule was pretty jarring,” he said. “I really struggled with staying on top of my school work and being self-reliant — getting everything done you could get done.”

While some classes didn’t translate as well to an online format, Achebo credits professors such as **John Sohl** for making the transition easier. “We did daily Zoom calls,” Achebo said. “He was on top of everything, and made the adjustment pretty well.”

Rather than give in to the fact that he no longer had a regular routine to follow, Achebo had to adjust the way he thought about the situation.

“I’m realizing ‘Wow, I have all this free time.’ I really ought to use it for something useful and good,” he recalled. “I really want to spend this summer with all this time that I have trying to better myself, and that’s been the motivation to go run, or go hike, or journal and meditate, to do stuff that I wanted to do with all this time I never had.”

One recent hike he won’t forget was in Logan Canyon.

“I’ve never been up there before,” he said last May. “It’s really beautiful, especially this time of year, super green.”

Achebo said his roommates and another position at a physical therapy clinic kept him grounded as life slowed down through social distancing. He also had a chance to look inward.

“A lot of people, especially with our society, are always in a go mode and always looking toward the next thing and what we can do to be productive and keep busy,” he said. “With this huge disruption, it’s like ‘Whoa, I don’t have to do that right now necessarily.’ I’ve been trying to use that time to be more introspective and think about who I am and who I want to be, what I want to do with my life.”

The Wildcat Center reopened its gym during the summer. Achebo plans to work the front desk this fall, with a smile for guests.

## A SOURCE OF STRENGTH

When asked how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted her life, **Denise Call** says the easier question to answer would be how it hasn’t.

“It’s affected every aspect of my life,” Call said.

She started her communication degree 28 years ago, and continued school after having children, but had to put education on hold when her husband was accepted to a dental school across the country, during several family moves to new homes, and when she and her husband decided to again have children.

She returned to school just over a year ago as a mother of seven.

Three of her children are Weber State graduates, and two are current students. During the latter half of spring semester 2020, Call began sharing desk space with her seventh and sixth grader to complete homework, as WSU classes and public schools went online.

More than once, she admits, she drove to Weber State’s Ogden campus to use the Wi-Fi and study from her car. “Once I learned that trick, that made a big difference in helping me get my tasks done,” she said.

While spring semester was a challenge, Call said instructors were compassionate and empathetic to students’ circumstances.

Getting a grip on her emotions was another matter.

“I have to really stay on top of my emotions so I don’t let them get carried away,” she said last spring. “There’s not a single hour of a single day that goes by that you’re not considering the pandemic and how it affects your life in one way or another.”

While her family’s health concerned her, she found herself worrying most about whether her two youngest children were missing key elements of their education while away from

school, and if her husband’s dental business would weather the pandemic.

Additional stress came from keeping her children on a routine schedule, including schooling and sports, and helping her daughter plan a wedding in May. “The social distancing issue was the most impactful for me when I realized we were not having the same kind of wedding reception we’ve done for all our other kids,” she said. “Every aspect about this wedding is different.”

Even the wedding shower was different, held over Zoom.

To manage it all, she said she had to be flexible and accept that things had changed. Making it through everything the pandemic has thrown at her, Call is a Weber State University success story in the making.

And she’s now preparing for her next challenge. “I secretly, deep down inside, think I might pursue a master’s degree in communication at Weber,” she said. “I love the professors, I love the program, it’s close by, I’m really kind of addicted to education right now.”

Those closest to her were a source of strength. Recently, they helped her celebrate her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with a “virtual party.” “My husband texted all of our friends and family, and he got video clips of them wishing me a happy birthday and put it together in a little video,” she said. “I gathered with my kids and did cake and ice cream, and we got to watch the video of all of our friends saying happy birthday.”

Falling we are lifted. Rising we lift each other.

Denise Call, mom to seven, continuing school herself, sharing desk space with her 6th & 7th graders, planning a wedding, and keeping a grip on her emotions through it all





## New York City Nurse

Whitney Hilton AS '13 has always loved New York City. She was in sixth grade during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and has since associated the city with American pride and unity.



After earning her associate's degree in nursing at Weber State, Whitney went on to earn her bachelor's degree online to become a registered nurse. She wanted to offer her nursing skills to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City, which was hit hard by the virus, but she wasn't sure how to get off work for long enough.

When she heard that her employer, Intermountain Healthcare, was sending a team to New York City in April to assist healthcare workers responding to the virus, she knew she had to go.

Hilton found out on a Saturday that she had been accepted on the team, and was flying to New York by the next Tuesday for two weeks on the front lines of pandemic response.

Because she has past critical care experience, she was placed in an intensive care unit at Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

The most rewarding part was getting to challenge herself by using her nursing skills under pressure, Whitney said. The hardest part was watching COVID-19 patients pass away alone.

"As nurses, you know you're going to see death," she said. "But no one really prepared me for the amount of death I was going to see."

As she provided care, Hilton said she tried to look at patients from a family perspective.

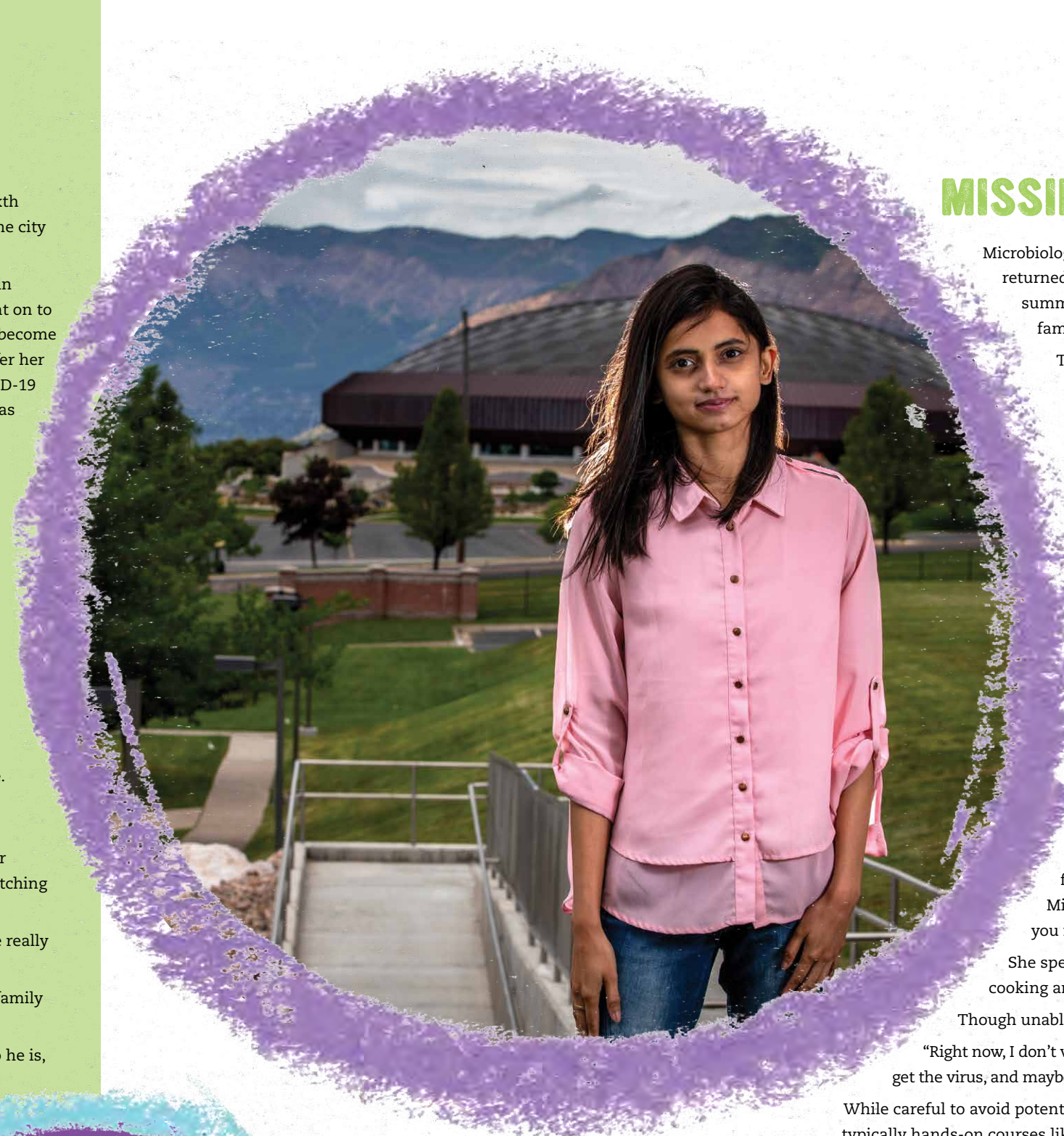
"I'm going to hold [the patient's] hand, even though I don't know who he is, because he has family who hopes that's happening," she said.

"If my dad was passing away, I would want someone to be there."

After returning home from her two weeks in New York, Hilton said she doesn't see herself as a hero — after all, she got to come home after only two weeks.

"The people of New York really are the heroes," she said. "They are the ones with no end in sight. They are the ones who should be honored for what they're doing."

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## MISSING HOME

Microbiology major **Niharika Mishra** returned home after the first block of summer semester to spend time with family last year.

This past summer, she stayed in University Village on Weber State's Ogden campus. She still saw family, this time on FaceTime.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, commercial passenger flights from the United States to India were suspended. Many international students, like Mishra, were unable to return home after spring semester.

"Out of India, it's kind of hard," she said. "The summers are a good time interval for all of us to spend some time with our family. It kind of refreshes us for the next semester."

Missing home in New Delhi, Mishra made the most of her time in the residence halls with her suitemates, Connie and her service dog, Bear.

"I feel blessed to have them," Mishra said. "Otherwise, it would have been so bad just staying inside alone and just studying."

And she wasn't the only one in her family stranded.

Her brother was at school in Philadelphia when India went into lockdown, and her father was restricted from returning home from an out-of-town business trip in India. "We all are spread out," Mishra said. "I FaceTime them everyday, because I feel like it makes you feel like you're at home, although you're not so close."

She spent her time in quarantine on homework, playing with Bear, cooking and trying to learn new skills online.

Though unable to travel, she understood the reasoning.

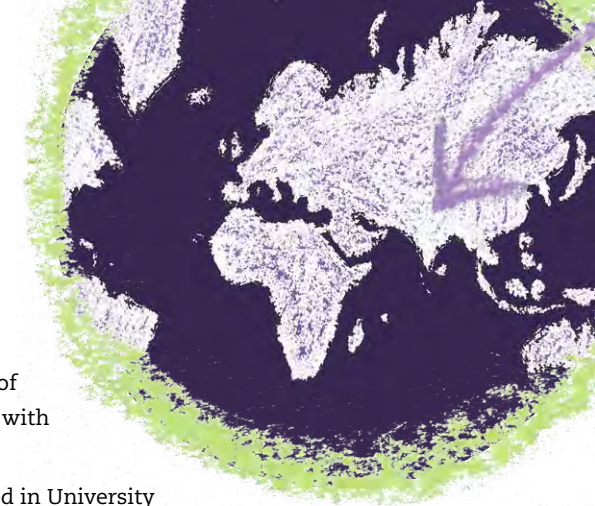
"Right now, I don't want to go home," Mishra said last May. "Maybe, in my travel, I might get the virus, and maybe I turn out to be asymptomatic and spread it to other people."

While careful to avoid potentially spreading the virus, Mishra showed her fortitude as her typically hands-on courses like zoology and chemistry were moved online. Meanwhile, she and other Weber State residents in Wildcat Village were asked to relocate to University Village and her usual summer job, as a microbial technician, was unavailable.

Through it all, she found positive moments. "I enjoy that moment when you talk to five or six of your friends on Facetime, and they all share their experiences: what they're cooking, if they're trying a new recipe, if they're trying a new skill or if they're doing something new," she said.

Eventually, she plans to earn her Ph.D. to become a research scientist.

Today, she exemplifies the resilience of a Wildcat.







## Extra Precautions

Luis Martinez BS '20 works as a paramedic at Gold Cross Ambulance in Salt Lake City. A normal day would consist of transporting patients, often from hospital to hospital, and, typically, to higher levels of care. While he and his fellow paramedics have always made sure the ambulances were sterilized after each use, the COVID-19 pandemic took everything to another level.

Over the spring and summer, when he gets onto a shift, complete decontamination of the back of the ambulance is one of the first actions required, along with his typical med checkout, truck checkout and other normal preparations for the day. Even though the last crew to work in the ambulance decontaminated it after its last use, they can't take any chances.

"The biggest thing is not knowing if the patient has it or not," Martinez said. "So that's always our biggest concern."

Extra precautions are also taken while transporting patients. Specialized N95 masks and face shields are worn on every single call. After transporting a confirmed COVID-19 case, the decontamination processes are even more stringent. Along with the normal decontamination procedures, a fogging machine is used to distribute antibacterial cleaner throughout the back of the ambulance so no surface is missed. Then Martinez has to shower, switch uniforms and get back to the job.

While it does take more time out of each day, it's worth it because that's how they're keeping patients safe, Martinez said.

While he does occasionally worry about the potential of spreading the disease to others, Martinez said he takes comfort in the precautions being taken, and he's thankful for the fact that he doesn't have to worry about where his next paycheck is coming from.

## A SILVER LINING

Colter Blanchard, a runner in the mile, cross-country and 3,000 metres steeplechase, finished first in reported COVID-19 cases at Weber State.

Today, however, he says he feels "100 percent."

While sick, he successfully avoided transmitting the virus. He said those whom he came in contact with tested negative.

And, perhaps, his experience with the virus can now help others.

"I've been able to donate blood for research for better testing and vaccines," Blanchard said. "I've also been tested for antibodies to get certain tests approved by the FDA."

Through it all, he came to a realization: Connections strengthen us.

"It is really unfortunate, all of the effects it's having on the economy and peoples' ways of life," he said. "But since recovering, I spend a lot of time on a road bike, I spend a lot of time on the trails, and I'm noticing there's a lot more people cultivating old talents or passions."

"Whether it's a good thing or bad thing, people are spending more time in their homes with their families."

"I think there's, for sure, a silver lining."

Through  
it all, he came  
to a realization:  
**CONNECTIONS**  
STRENGTHEN  
US.

## High Profile Events Become High-wire Act

Brandon Stoddard, director of the Hall Global Entrepreneurship Center, was pleased to complete his preparations for the 2020 Outdoor Weber entrepreneurship competition a day ahead of schedule. The annual contest gives college students around the world a chance to pitch their recreation ideas for a chance to win \$30,000.

He didn't realize the real challenge was ahead.

When WSU suspended in-person operations March 12, event organizers everywhere had to improvise, developing plans for a virtual 5K, yoga at your desk, and converting a poetry and gardening event into an online platform. Among the unexpected results of holding online events, many of Weber State's nontraditional students, whose schedules often prevent them from attending on-campus events, were able to participate.

Across campus, **Bonnie Christiansen**, academic sustainability coordinator of the Sustainability Practices and Research Center (SPARC), and the Intermountain Sustainability Summit organizers had spent the week prior to the WSU announcement brainstorming a white board full of ideas on how to move from an in-person to a virtual event.

"The decision to pivot to an online event was hard, but it was much easier to deconstruct/modify the summit than to plan it," Christiansen said. Suddenly an event featuring 25 sessions and 68 speakers sharing sustainability best practices, needed to be pared back — eventually to three sessions including the two keynote presentations.

Rather than offering participants a discounted rate for online access, registration fees were refunded and the virtual summit was offered free to anyone who wanted to attend. Instead of hosting attendees from five states and the Navajo Nation, the online presentations attracted people from 20 Utah cities, 21 states and,

surprisingly, more than a dozen countries. Workshop presenter **John Cook**, who shared the event with his social media followers, is credited for garnering the international audience.

**Alice Mulder**, director of the SPARC, said that while hosting a virtual summit offered a greater reach, and alleviated travel issues which in turn reduced carbon emissions, she's not ready to abandon the networking and connections that occur at an in-person conference.

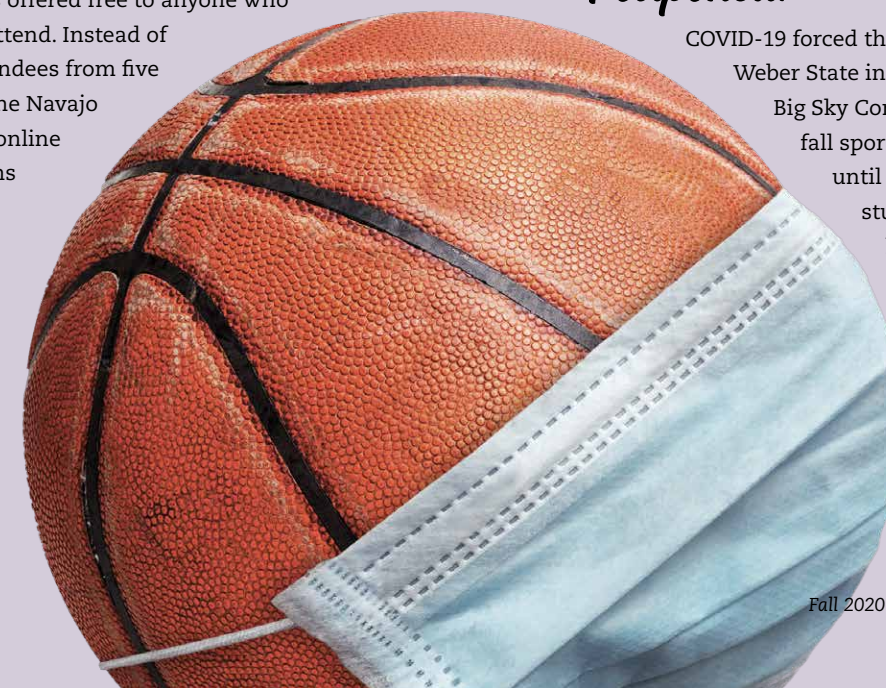
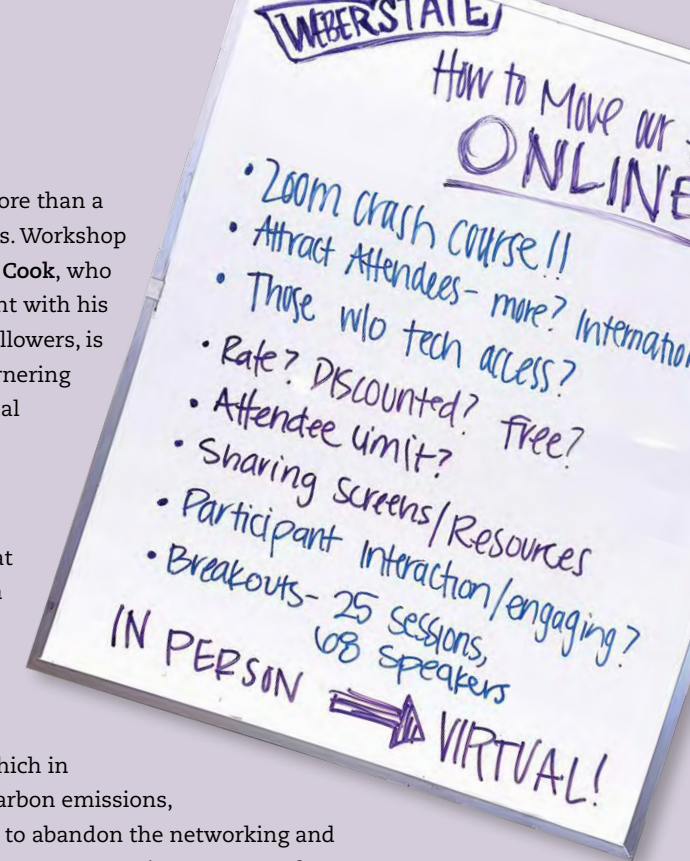
Stoddard had less time to pivot. The decision to go virtual was made on the Friday before his event started the following Wednesday. A crash course on Zoom was essential to allow 10 teams of students, along with 53 mentors and seven judges to engage remotely.

Aside from some technological hiccups the first day, Stoddard joked that the worst thing to happen was announcing the winning teams out of order.

"This situation really mimicked life and what it's like to run a business," said Stoddard. "You just never know what's going to happen, but you need to learn to move quickly and solve problems fast if you hope to survive."

## Postponed!

COVID-19 forced the cancellation of all sports at Weber State in spring 2020. In August, the Big Sky Conference announced that the fall sports season would be postponed until spring 2021. Our Wildcat student athletes and coaches have shown grit and tenacity, as well as a great deal of patience, as they continue to practice in hopes of returning to the fields and courts soon.





## Front-line Radiologist

Libby Parr BS '19 says that, in many ways, her job feels the same as it always has.

Originally graduating from Weber State with an associate's in radiology in 2001, she's closing in on 20 years in the field as a radiologic technologist. She loves the versatility of a normal day-to-day. Her job would normally take her all over the hospital on any given day, performing x-rays anywhere from the ER to surgery and beyond.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, a lot has changed.

COVID-19 requires chest x-rays along with the swab test, and more x-rays daily to follow symptoms and make sure the lungs are improving once someone has been diagnosed with the virus.

"A lot of times, people don't realize how front-line radiology really is," Parr said.

Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, where Parr works, has three COVID-19 units: one in the ER for those displaying COVID-19-like symptoms, one for COVID-19-positive patients who have been admitted, and one for COVID-19 patients who require intensive care.

Parr and the other radiologic technologists do four-hour shifts in these units — which may not sound long until you realize that even taking a sip of water requires taking off all the protective equipment, making functions like bathroom breaks nearly impossible.

By the time she gets off a four-hour stint in a COVID-19 isolation unit, her throat is dry from the air circulating inside her personal protective equipment, her lips are chapped and her eyes are dry.

Parr says through it all, morale with her coworkers has stayed high. People bring in donuts for each other, and family members drop off snacks for everyone.

"I see how tired my coworkers are," she said. "It makes me grateful they're getting gratitude and praise for what they do."

## A PREPARED RESPONSE

As Weber State's Public Safety Director, Dane LeBlanc has spent years preparing for worst-case scenarios, and last March, one happened.

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced WSU, along with other universities across the nation, to move to online classes, he was thankful for the plan Weber State already had in place.

"I have learned from days in the military, you will respond to the level of training you have been involved with," LeBlanc said.

When LeBlanc first started hearing word of COVID-19 spreading outside of China in late January and early February, he pulled out the university's pandemic response plan for an update.

The pandemic response plan had been put together after swine flu, a novel influenza, had swept the globe in 2009, and updated again during the Ebola outbreak that started in 2014. LeBlanc coordinates the WSU effort with Mike Davies, WSU's police captain and emergency manager.

"Every time something happens, we get lessons learned from those things so we can adjust our approach and planning," Davies said. "It's been a constant, ongoing process over the last 10 years or more."

Having that plan, as well as the support from university officials to execute annual emergency exercises, prepares those who need to be communicating when a crisis actually hits. Over the years, these emergency exercises included multiple agencies from local jurisdictions such as police, fire, paramedics, hospitals, health departments and more coming together so they know how to work together during a real emergency.

"I think it's amazing how we've come together as a community, as a state, and pressed forward," Davies said. "These are the times that will test us. It's amazing to see the collaborative effort that everyone is making to mitigate this."

LeBlanc said he's proud of the preparation and collaboration that allowed for Weber State to respond effectively to one of the largest emergencies to ever face the university.

"People thought I was exercising them to death, but it's paid off, and I can be proud of that," LeBlanc said.

But shutting down the campus was the easy part. Figuring out when, if and how to bring services back to "normal" is far more difficult. Weber State, though it has written its own recovery plan, will continue to follow state, Utah System of Higher Education and local health department guidelines.

Balancing public safety with reopening requires detailed plans on issues like wearing face masks, social distancing, and when to reopen each specific service the campus offers.

"If we move too fast and have to back it all up, we need to be prepared for that," LeBlanc said. "It's possible that there could be a sudden outbreak or resurgence of the virus."

While the economic impact of the shutdown has been large, LeBlanc said moving back to normal activities too fast could cost lives.

"I think we need to be smart and methodical about it," LeBlanc said.





# 'CATS IN QUARANTINE

## “Zoom” in on Our 2020–21 Alumni Association Leaders

*WSU Alumni Association President*

**CLINT COSTLEY BA '98** .....  
(Major: technical sales)

If you could shelter in place with one celebrity (living or dead) for 24 hours, whom would you choose? Abraham Lincoln because in the face of nearly insurmountable odds, he became one of the greatest leaders.

How did staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic affect you, and what did you learn about yourself? Fortunately, I was able to continue to work in the office. That said, I struggled (and continue to struggle) with not being able to engage with people. Virtual meetings and experiences cannot replace face-to-face interaction.

What's the most unusual thing you did while sheltering at home? Started finishing my basement.

Have you developed new interests or skills that will be part of your “new normal?” I began writing a daily blog to our employees and found that I enjoyed writing more than I ever have in the past.

Do you prefer books or movies? Books. Literature is pandemic proof!

What do you most hope to accomplish during your term of WSUAA leadership? To bolster membership and continue the organization's amazing legacy!



WSU Emeriti Alumni Council President

CHRISTOPHER C. RIVERA BS '71  
(Major: sociology)

If you could shelter in place with one celebrity (living or dead) for 24 hours, whom would you choose? Don Diego de Vargas, the conquistador who led Spanish colonists back into what is now Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1692. Two of the soldiers on the second entrance into New Mexico are ancestors from my mother's side of the family.

How did staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic affect you, and what did you learn about yourself? I'm basically a homebody, so staying put was fairly easy. My days were filled with gardening, yard maintenance and reading.

What's the most unusual thing you did while sheltering at home? My wife and I decided to remodel our kitchen. From April through June, we basically lived in our basement.

Have you developed new interests or skills that will be part of your "new normal?" No new skills, but the quarantine did give me an opportunity to better utilize my talents and time.

Do you prefer books or movies? I'm a reader and partial to nonfiction military history.

What do you most hope to accomplish during your term of WSUAA leadership? Our council is all about service. I believe the council will find new, safe ways to serve our university and community during this pandemic.

WSU Young Alumni Council President

CASH KNIGHT BS '14  
(Major: criminal justice); MPC '16; MBA '19

If you could shelter in place with one celebrity (living or dead) for 24 hours, whom would you choose? Kevin Hart. I think we would just laugh the entire time and I wouldn't be so unhappy about having to shelter in place.

How did staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic affect you, and what did you learn about yourself? While social distancing outdoors on the Weber River, my fiancé, Michelle, and I gained a greater appreciation for northern Utah's amazing scenery. We also learned to work through the mental health concerns that arise from feeling cooped up and anxious about the future.

What's the most unusual thing you did while sheltering at home? My fiancé and I played pranks on each other.

Have you developed new interests or skills that will be part of your "new normal?" Michelle and I grew closer with the small circle of people that were safe to be around. We also experimented with our Instant Pot and air fryer!

Do you prefer books or movies? A movie is over in 2.5 hours; a book keeps you engaged for days and always has a deeper impact on your thoughts and feelings.

What do you most hope to accomplish during your term of WSUAA leadership?

I want to grow our council and find quantifiable ways to bring value to our recent grads through engagement and service opportunities.

WSU Student Alumni Association President

BRIANNA NORDGREN  
(Major: professional sales & entrepreneurship)

If you could shelter in place with one celebrity (living or dead) for 24 hours, whom would you choose? Jim Carrey. He's my favorite actor and his great sense of humor would make the experience enjoyable.

How did the experience of staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic affect you, and what did you learn about yourself? Quarantine was kind of a blessing in disguise. I used that time to recover from an illness and focus more on my family. I also learned that happiness is a mindset; you can't rely on others to make you happy.

What's the most unusual thing you did while sheltering at home? I tried doing yoga on my bed. (It was much more difficult than I had anticipated!)

Have you developed new interests or skills that will be an integral part of your "new normal?" I now take 10 to 15 minutes each day to self-reflect and set goals; it helps me de-stress, refocus and motivate myself.

Do you prefer books or movies? I love watching movies with friends and family and sharing opinions and experiences, whereas books are kind of a solo activity.

What do you most hope to accomplish during your term of WSUAA leadership? I want to motivate students to become more involved on campus whether it be by joining a club, attending neat events, meeting new people or trying new programs. I also hope to offer a helping hand to students and community members during these trying times.

End Meeting for All



CLASS NOTES

ALUMNI UPDATES

'50s

Brent Van Kampen AS '58 graduated from Weber when it was a two-year school. As a private student of piano, Brent volunteered his time weekly as a pianist in music appreciation classes. He served in the Eastern States Mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brent was awarded a music scholarship to the University of Utah, where he met and married his wife, Patty Rae Hansen. Brent graduated in 1965 with his bachelor's degree in music education. He began teaching private piano lessons and has continued teaching throughout his life. Brent taught band for 12 years in public schools, serving for 10 years at Murray High School as band director. He took the Murray High

School band to the Calgary Stampede in Canada, one of the largest rodeos in the world. The school took second place out of all those competing from the U.S. He later started Van Kampen Crusader Marine and sold boats all over the country for 12 years. Brent also enjoyed working for two years as a car salesman for the Larry H. Miller Group. After working with Summerhays as a piano salesman for 10 years, he retired, but continues to teach piano to his grandchildren. Brent and Patty Rae have three children, 17 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. They live in Cottonwood Heights, Utah.

Mary Ellen Ipson Hazen AS '59 is a retired labor and delivery nurse with Greene Memorial Hospital in Xenia, Ohio. She has been

married to Vernon Hazen, who attended Weber State and spent over 21 years as a U.S. Air Force officer, for over 50 years. Together, with their children, they lived throughout the United States and Europe on various military assignments. In 1970, Mary Ellen was awarded "Military Wife of the Year," representing the Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. While stationed in Italy, she served on wives club boards in various positions, and in the PTA presidency. Mary Ellen has served in various roles in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She and Vernon have six children, 19 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. They live in Beavercreek, Ohio.

'60s

Douglas Marker BA '67 received a master's degree in physics from the University of Virginia. He has worked for the U.S. Navy in a civilian position at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, Virginia for 50 years. Since 2002, Douglas has served as the technology manager for the Navy Program Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS). In 2019, the Small Business Technology Council presented Douglas with the prestigious "Champion of Small Business Technology Commercialization Award." This award recognizes outstanding Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contributions made by government officials. While he served as technology manager for the Program



Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems, the small businesses he managed in the SBIR program have transitioned over \$1 billion in technology to the fleet and the private sector. His wife, **Kathleen Reeve Marker AS '62**, received a Bachelor of Arts in business management from Brigham Young University, and worked for the IRS. Douglas and Kathleen live in Fredericksburg, Virginia. They have eight children and 27 grandchildren.

**A Alden "Al" Talbot BS '67** received his master's degree in business from Utah State University in 1969, and Ph.D. in business education at the University of Iowa in 1976. He taught at the University

of Wyoming for one year, the University Lab School in Iowa while working on his Ph.D., and Cal State University at Los Angeles for three years. He later taught business education at Weber State, where he remained 38 years before retiring. For 25 years, he served as the chapter advisor for WSU's Future Business Leaders of America Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL) organization. He also served terms on the organization's National Board of Directors and earned FBLA-PBL "Advisor of the Year" for Utah numerous times. For his dedicated service, Al was the first Utahn elected to the FBLA-PBL Wall of Fame. He is married to Charlene Winegar Talbot. They have three children, who all attended

Weber State, and nine grandchildren. After retiring, Al and Charlene served a full-time, live-at-home mission in the Utah Ogden Mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Al currently serves on the WSU Emeriti Alumni Council.

## '70s

**A Debra "Debbie" DeBoer Wright AS '76, BS '79** owns Grizzly Graphics LLC, a full-service graphics print shop. For over 20 years, her business has provided graphic and logo design services, and printing services, such as banners, signs, decals and vehicle graphics. She and her husband, Kenny Wright, are Weber State basketball

season ticket holders. They have three sons and one daughter, who are all WSU graduates. They also have nine grandchildren. Debbie and Kenny live in Eden, Utah.

**Richard C. Scott BS '78** is the current director of sales for Ogden Blue, which has been serving the community for over 65 years in the business of blueprinting, large graphics, business and general retail printing. Ogden Blue is currently supporting the community with PPE face shields, barriers and safety products for essential employees to use while they work. Richard has previously been involved in leadership roles for the Ogden Weber Chamber and in religious service, and he currently

volunteers for the Boy Scouts of America. He and his wife, Tricia, live in Ogden.

**Robb Alexander BS '78** is executive director of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Utah. He is known as "the voice of the Wildcats," and has announced at numerous WSU athletics events such as football, volleyball and men's and women's basketball. He's announced nearly every women's home basketball and tournament game since 1976. He also worked for nearly 30 years as a WSU Development Director. He spent time in both the Goddard School of Business & Economics and the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions and helped secure millions of dollars for various WSU disciplines during his career. Robb is married to Camille Blau, a WSU graduate. They have two sons who are also WSU graduates.

Retired **Col. Joseph B. Michels BS '76** served for nearly 30 years in the U.S. Air Force. Joseph holds a master's degree in systems management from the University of Southern California. He received his Ph.D. in industrial engineering from Texas A&M University and completed a post-doctorate in public policy analysis from the University of Oklahoma. For nine years, Joseph served as the dean of the College of Business at Montana State

University-Billings. He is now managing principal of Solomon Bruce Consulting LLC in Fort Worth, Texas. In his work, he provides consultation regarding business operations, supply chain management, executive coaching and government contract procurement strategies. He has also done legal expert witness work. He is a member of the Fort Worth Downtown Rotary club.

## '80s

**Rob Higginson BS '80** currently serves on the WSU Alumni Association Board of Directors and is a lifelong resident of Weber County. Rob previously owned H & W Industrial Sales from 1980-1994 and, for the past 23 years, has worked in the elevator industry. After working for Lerch Bates, Thyssen Krupp, and KONE Elevator, Rob became an independent elevator consultant and started Higginson Consulting Services. Most recently, Rob and his wife, Pam, opened a Crumbl Cookies bakery in Lubbock, Texas. They have three children and live in West Haven.

**Karen Ducharme Snoy AS '81, BS '82** enjoyed a 30-year career as an elementary teacher in the Davis School District. She taught kindergarten and second grade, and served as a reading specialist and reading coach for the district.



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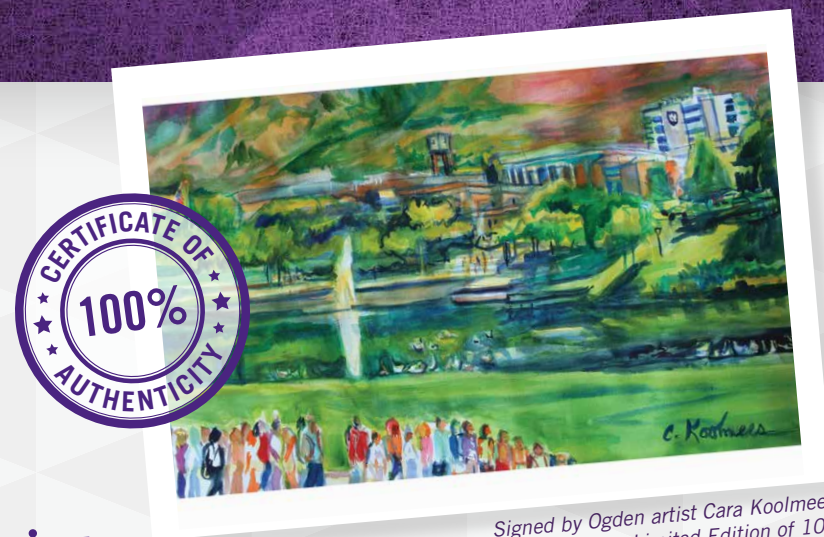
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# WSU Traditions Keeper



13 Wear Purple on Friday



22 Read The Signpost

44 Create & Share Your Wildcat Tradition

The WSU Traditions Keeper program links students — past, present and future — through shared involvement in Wildcat traditions and activities. All members of the WSU family are invited to become official WSU Traditions Keepers. Out of the 50 Traditions, only 10 are limited during COVID-19.

[alumni.weber.edu/traditionskeeper](https://alumni.weber.edu/traditionskeeper)

Since her retirement, Karen still tests for the resource and gifted programs for Davis School District. She and her husband, Ken, live in Layton. They have four children, two of whom graduated from Weber State.

**Shawn Dorr BS '84** is the president of 2 Guys' Deco Flooring America. For 30 years, this retail flooring and decorating business has provided carpet, tile, hardwood, laminate and luxury vinyl flooring. They also provide all types of cabinets, lights, counter tops, stone and paint for every home and lifestyle. Shawn and his wife, Sonya, live in Gillette, Wyo.

**Gary Petersen AS '87, BS '90** is a partner at Adams & Petersen, CPAs LLC. He has worked for 31 years in public accounting. His work focuses on entity selection, taxation, high-net-worth individuals and estate planning. He also has specific expertise in construction and almost every other industry. He has served on many community boards and on the West Point City Council for 19 years. He and his wife, Carolyn, live in West Point, Utah. They have four children and five grandchildren.

**Lynell Craner BIS '89** is the regional sales and marketing manager for Sam's Club, where she has worked for 18 years. She has served on the WSU Alumni Association Board of Directors since 2017. Her husband, **Adam Craner**

**AS '91, AS '97, BS '98**, is a family nurse practitioner for MountainStar Primary Care. Adam received his master's degree in nursing at the University of Utah in 2001. They have four children and live in Kaysville, Utah.

**Len Putnam AS '89, IC '91** has served as a registered nurse for Intermountain Healthcare for 29 years. She currently works as an experience of care consultant for Intermountain. In previous years, Len worked at McKay-Dee Hospital, Intermountain Layton Hospital and Intermountain Homecare and Hospice. Len and her husband, Scott Putnam, are WSU supporters, and Len currently serves on the WSU Alumni Association Board of Directors. They have two children.

## '90s

**Brandice Bringham BS '94** is a librarian and teaching assistant for Wasatch Peak Academy. She married Mike Bringham in 1995. They have three children and two grandchildren. When Brandice was raising her children, she worked in various roles, including owning and operating her own online business and serving as a marketing director for a motorcycle company. She also enjoyed working as a labor and delivery technician for four years. Brandice serves as a member of the WSU

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Alumni Association Board of Directors.

**Jason Grider BS '97, M.Ed '14** is a colonel in the United States Army Reserve. He serves as the state emergency preparedness officer for Utah, as well as the scholarship and enrollment officer for the University of Utah Army ROTC Program. He and his wife, Summer Grider, have one son. They live in Sandy.

**Matt Dixon BA '98** is the city manager for South Ogden City. He received a Master of Public Administration degree from Brigham Young University in 2004. Matt has spent 23 years working for local government. He is a member of the Utah City/County Management Association, where he has served as treasurer, vice president and president. Matt serves as a board member for Cottages of Hope and continues to look for opportunities to serve his church and his community. He currently serves on the WSU Alumni Association Board of Directors.

**Melena Fenn AA '99, BA '01** leads a product management team at NICE inContact. When she's not crafting a product vision and strategy, she volunteers as a coach with American Youth Soccer Association and Junior Jazz. She spends her evenings taxiing her kids between practices and games. She is married to **William David**

**Fenn BS '16**. They have one daughter and two sons.

**Gary Hill BA '99** is the city manager for Bountiful City. He previously worked for Park City Municipal for eight years, and as city manager of West Point, Utah, for five years. Gary is a current board member and past president of the Utah City Managers Association. He serves as an officer for the Utah League of Cities and Towns board of directors. He married **Amber Elggren AS '98** in 1998.

They have seven children, and their eldest currently attends WSU. Gary is currently serving on the WSU Alumni Association Board of Directors.

**Chris Parker BS '99** received his Juris Doctor degree from Brigham Young University in 2002. He was appointed by Governor Gary R. Herbert as the executive director of the Utah Department of Commerce, after nine years as director of the Utah Division of Public Utilities. Chris also served as an attorney for the Utah Legislature and law clerk for Justice Michael J. Wilkins at the Utah Supreme Court.

## '00s

**Christie Fewkes AS '00, BS '19** is the customer service manager for Rentmeister Total Home Service, a family-owned and operated heating, air conditioning and plumbing company that serves Davis County and

surrounding areas. For the past 13 years, Christie has volunteered as a troop leader with Girl Scouts of Utah.

**Dan Smith BS '00** graduated summa cum laude in computer science at Weber State, following his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Utah in 1991. He has worked as a software engineer for L3Harris Corporation for over 20 years. He and his wife, Lisa-Marie, have two children. They live in Cocoa, Florida.

**Cassi Meyerhoffer AS '00, BA '02** is an associate professor of sociology at Southern Connecticut State University. She received her master's degree and doctorate in sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2006 and 2012. Cassi is the editor of *Race: Identity, Ideology, and Inequality* (2020), and has three published articles in academic journals. Cassi also published a chapter in *Encyclopedia of Diversity and Social Justice* (2014). Previously, she was a lecturer at University of Buffalo, Niagara University and Weber State University. Cassi was married in 2012, and she and her partner have two children.

**Nicole Carpenter '02** is an author, speaker and the communications and operations manager for the Women's Leadership Institute, a nonprofit working to elevate Utah women in business and politics. She is the author of *52 Weeks*





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to *Fortify Your Family* (2015), and founder of MOMentity, a motivational support blog for moms. Nicole also serves on the board of directors for Reading Horizons of Kaysville, Utah, an educational company dedicated to making reading accessible for everyone.

**A Douglas Clawson BS '06** is the owner of North Star Counseling Services in Ogden, providing mental and behavioral health services to

the community. With over 15 years of experience, he and his team of trained mental health clinicians counsel individuals, couples and families using psychotherapy, talk therapy and mindfulness techniques, including telehealth therapy. He lives in North Ogden.

**Hailey Higgins BS '08** is a reporter and multimedia journalist for FOX 13 News. She is a two-time Emmy- and Edward R. Murrow Award-

winning journalist for local reporting and breaking news. Hailey began her career as a reporter in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and later moved to Sioux Falls, S.D., where she worked as a weekend anchor and producer. Hailey has also worked for ABC4 Utah in St. George and Salt Lake City.

**Brandon Hone BS '08, MBA '16** is the vice president of operations for Hone Propane, Inc. His company specializes in home heating solutions, with tanks and propane for all applications, including small tanks for BBQ grills and trailers. He received a master's degree in history from Utah State University in 2010. He also earned a business certificate in international supply chain management from Louvain School of Management in Brussels, Belgium in 2014.

**Kim Ealy AS '08, MBA '16, MPC '18** is a professional employment and internship advisor for Weber State in the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology. She has more than 15 years of experience assisting both private and professional clients to develop effective job-search strategies. Previously, Kim received her bachelor's degree in organizational behavior from National University in California. Her career path has allowed her to teach and present on the west and east coasts, in Japan, and, presently, in Utah.

**Daniel P. "Dan" Schwab BA '09** is a Vertical Lift Global Sales campaign team leader for The Boeing Company. He leads marketing, strategy and sales efforts with military customers in Latin America, Kuwait, Jordan, UAE, Norway and Bahrain for the AH-64 Apache, AH-6 Little Bird, CH-47 Chinook and V-22 Osprey estimated at \$5 billion. After graduating from Weber State, Dan was selected for Boeing's premier leadership rotational program, the Business Career Foundation Program. While part of that program, he worked in various functions, including 787 procurement financial analysis, Boeing Capital Corporation accounting, 777 financial planning and analysis, revenue management and cash operations, and the fabrication division as a rotational manager before transitioning to attack helicopters global sales. Dan is a member of the Association of the United States Army, Army Aviation Association of America and the Vertical Flight Society.

## '10s

**David Broadbent BS '05, MAcc '08, MBA '15** is the practice administrator for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons of Utah. David previously worked for nearly 15 years at the Management & Training Corporation, including eight as director of administration. He volunteered as the

controller for Our Schools Now and Education First. He also worked as the controller for the Spencer Cox campaign for governor. He has served for a collective 30 years in various civic action, education and fundraising volunteer roles. David lives in Pleasant View, Utah, with his wife, **Jodi Broadbent BS '03**, and their four kids.

**Alissa Burden BA '17** is the owner of Grounds for Coffee Creekside Cafe in Marriott-Slaterville, Utah. Founded in 2019, the business offers a wide variety of hot and iced drinks, savory and sweet food options, and catering. As a Weber State student, she served as a local barista

at Grounds for Coffee before starting her own business. She volunteered for two years at the Ogden Treehouse Museum and has served on the Ogden Arts Festival Committee.

**Kimberly Hernandez Snoy AS '16, BA '16** is a graphic designer for Get Air Sports, an international company with trampoline parks in the United States, Canada, Belgium and Japan. She also works as a freelance graphic design artist on Etsy. She and her husband, Isaac Hernandez, are expecting their first child in fall 2020.

**Michael Maynor BS '16** is a Residential and Hospitality

Services facilities supervisor at Michigan State University. For nearly 20 years prior, Michael worked as a supervisor in the custodial management department in the Davis School District and at Weber State University. He served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Bogota, Colombia. He lives in Holt, Michigan.

**Brian Stearmer BS '16** and his wife, Leandra Stearmer, have spent 20 years serving as a military family in the Utah Army National Guard. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office published U.S. Patent 10,560,916 B2 in Feb. 2020, which

is an improved wireless communication mobility management process. Brian is the sole inventor. Brian and Leandra have three children.

**Tammy Duran-Martin AS '17** is the proud independent owner and operator of the licensed Avon retail store in Ogden. She has been in business for over 13 years. Her store provides the full range of Avon products, including bath and body, skincare, fragrance and makeup. She has earned multiple awards for sales increase, volume and recruiting. Tammy and her husband, Beazer, have one son, who also graduated from Weber State.



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# ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

BY LEAH MURRAY

Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Philosophy



HOW  
LUCKY  
WE  
ARE  
TO BE  
ALIVE  
[RIGHT]  
NOW]

CENSUS  
2020

Historically, this election is happening in a time of unrest, and from unrest comes change.

To quote a wonderful musical (*Hamilton*) about a fabulous founding father, “How lucky we are to be alive right now.”

Politically, this is one of the most important years in the American election cycle.

First, this is a census year, which we use to determine representation. Every person in Utah is counted, as has every person in the United States since 1790, and we learn how many we are and who we are. If you have not been counted, or if you aren’t sure, please visit [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov), because Wildcats count!

Second, in this election we will choose the people who will then make decisions based on that census. Our state legislators will decide how geographic districts are drawn for the U.S. House of Representatives and for the State Legislature. This election will choose the choosers. We will live with those decisions for the next decade. To vote, you need to register. If you are not sure if you are registered, please visit [vote.utah.gov](https://vote.utah.gov), because Wildcats vote!

Third, this is a presidential election year, which is the most exciting American election we have. The entire nation will see the same two names at the top of the ballot in the only national collective political moment we have. The president is the most powerful position in our government and is possibly the most powerful leader in the world. What that person says and does will have monumental repercussions. We will live with that choice for the next four years. We will live with the ramifications of the decisions that person makes for a lifetime. If you are unsure who to vote for, do some research, learn from events such as those at WSU’s Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service, because Wildcats make informed decisions.

These are stressful times, but these are the times that make us. We will be amazing as a result of these times. You do not want to miss being a part of this. You do not want to miss having your voice heard as we make decisions about what our country will be for the next few decades. This will be a time that the AP history exams will cover for years to come as this year will live on in our nation’s collective memory. We will all remember where we were when the schools closed. And, in a hundred years, scholars will study how we voted and what happened as a result.

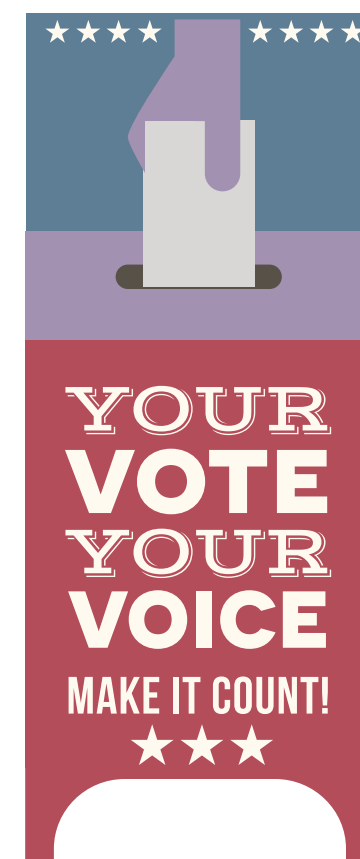
You want to be a part of this.



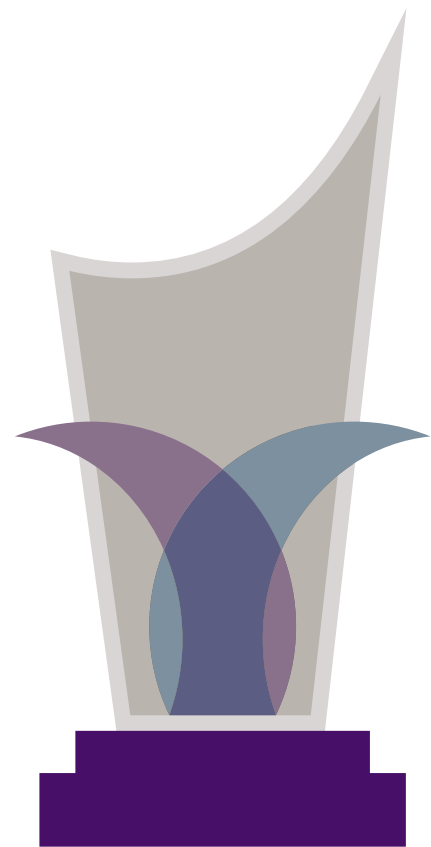
L Lifetime Member of the Alumni Association  
A Annual Member of the Alumni Association



BE  
COUNTED  
CENSUS 2020







# 50<sup>th</sup> Annual H. Aldous DIXON AWARDS

## Adrienne Gillespie Andrews

Assistant Vice President for Diversity,  
Chief Diversity Officer



Born and raised in northern Utah, Adrienne Gillespie Andrews is a social activist by nature and nurture.

Her grandfather, James H. Gillespie, was president of the Ogden chapter of the NAACP at the height of the civil rights movement, and her parents taught her to take care of others in addition to taking care of herself.

As a result, she was a fearless advocate for social justice at an early age. “If anyone was friendless or lonely, I’d take them under my wing,” she said. Today, these values are reflected in her work at Weber State. Andrews creates a learning environment at WSU that makes students feel safe, respected and free to pursue any career regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstance. As a crucial member of the president’s executive team, Andrews interacts with faculty,

administrators and external stakeholders to implement approaches to inclusivity in relation to the university’s values of access, learning and community. In addition, she helps organize and oversee events that celebrate diversity and brings in keynote speakers, summits and workshops that explore diversity, equity and inclusion from a variety of perspectives. At facilitating difficult discussions about sensitive issues on campus, she is proactive and adept.

Andrews began working part-time at WSU in 2005. She quickly advanced to a full-time role as the special student population counselor at WSU Davis. She has also taught political science and women’s and gender studies courses, but her transformative work in building campus community, connection and inclusion at Weber State began in earnest in 2013, when she became the special assistant to the president for diversity. In 2014, she led the charge to create the LGBT Resource Center at WSU, and was awarded the Crystal Crest Friend of



Students Award for her efforts. A year later, Andrews was selected as Weber State’s first chief diversity officer. In 2018, she added the title of assistant vice president for diversity to her already impressive résumé.

Andrews earned two bachelor’s degrees from the University of Utah. She received two master’s degrees — one in women’s studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and one in political science at Rutgers University. She returned to the U of U for a post-graduate certificate in conflict resolution and mediation, and is now working on a doctoral degree.

She also serves on the Utah Governor’s Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commission, the Ogden Diversity Commission and the McKay-Dee and Layton Hospital governing boards. In 2017, she received the ATHENA Leadership Award from the Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce.

## Edward B. Walker BA '76

Professor, Director of Chemical  
Technology Center



After 39 years, Ed Walker still gets excited about every lecture and lab he teaches. “I enjoy my one-on-one time with my students — helping them study, conduct experiments and prepare for rewarding careers in science,” he said.

Internet postings from former students indicate their feelings for him are mutual.

“Dr. Walker is awesome,” one student wrote recently. “He’s

positive and funny; he tries his best to make biochemistry fun and interesting. Make sure that you study hard for his tests, though, because it is biochemistry, after all.”

Walker challenges students to develop cognitive thinking skills by combining traditional academic activities with industry-standard analytical methods.

Graduating from Weber in 1976, Walker went on to earn his Ph.D. in chemistry from Texas Tech University and was a post-doctoral scholar in biochemical pharmacology at Stanford University. The Ogden native returned to Weber State in the summer of 1981.

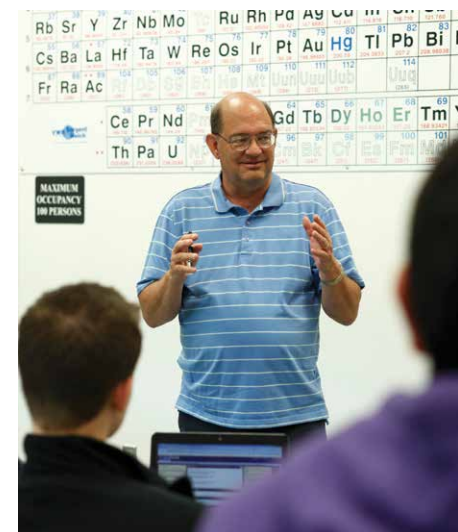
“My primary motivation for returning to my alma mater was to join my professors who were so influential in my career, and to teach science where I knew teaching was important,” he explained.

Soon after his arrival, he helped design and implement the chemical technician associate’s degree program. He still coordinates this effort, successfully obtaining an average of \$25,000 a year in federal funding. In 1990, he founded the Center of Excellence for Chemical Technology. Over the past three decades, the center has partnered with more than 100 Utah companies to enhance the quality of applied science teaching and research at Weber, and to stimulate the state’s economic growth. Students who have worked on center-sponsored projects have presented their research at scientific meetings, published their findings in peer-reviewed journals, and obtained numerous patents. Dozens of WSU science graduates are still in Utah, working as doctors, lab managers and executives at large companies. Some have founded their own businesses, while others are professors at Weber State and elsewhere.

Not only does Walker strive to keep pace with the latest developments in chemistry, he frequently also sets that pace. His publications, discoveries and participation in national and international scientific organizations have brought prestige to Weber State. Assisted by student research teams in the 1990s, for example, Walker identified the active ingredients in cranberries that help prevent bladder infections. He is now recognized as a world leader in bacterial anti-adherence mechanisms, organometallic chelation and the compositional analysis of fruit juices.

In recognition of his extensive achievements in research and community service, Walker received the Governor’s Medal for Science and Technology. He is also a Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor and a Crystal Crest Master Teacher.

*Named in memory of the former Weber president, the H. Aldous Dixon Awards have been presented annually since 1970 to honor faculty and staff who have demonstrated careers of excellence and have gone above and beyond the call of duty to support students. Dixon served as president of Weber College from 1919 to 1920 and again from 1937 to 1953.*





## Wildcat Inbox

Our Spring 2020 article *Lasting Impressions* covered WSU students' environmental fieldwork in Utah around the globe, along with the legendary trips former geology professor Walter Buss took with students to explore geologic sites across the Southwestern United States and Mexico.

We received the following letter regarding the story from one of our alumni.

I was so pleased to see Walter Buss and his classes mentioned in your article in the spring 2020 issue. I have a connection with the "College on Wheels" trips. Two of my great-aunts, Madeline Watkins and Merrill Watkins, went on both trips [in 1946 and 1947]. Madeline kept a daily journal of everything they did, and Merrill took the photos. I don't think they divided the writing/photography jobs on purpose — one just liked writing and one liked taking pictures.

I had inherited the journal in Madeline's papers when she passed

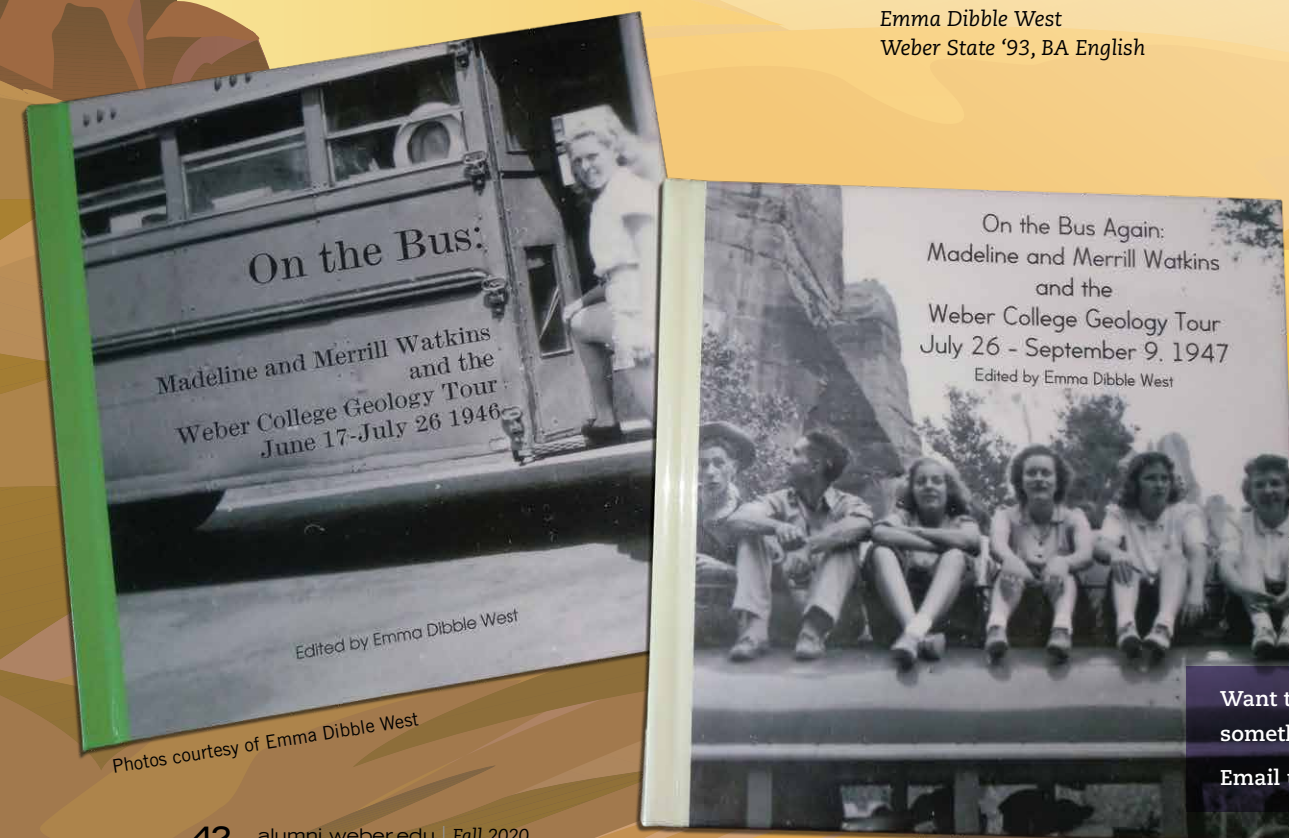
away, but it wasn't until I went to visit Great-aunt Merrill and asked her to show me her photo album that I realized she had the photo collection that complemented Madeline's journal. I knew I had found a treasure.

With both the written and visual parts of the story finally together, I compiled them into two volumes, one for each trip. Madeline's dates and notes were thorough, and Merrill had carefully written names, dates and locations on the backs of the photos, so it was easy to place them together with accuracy. The result is family history magic, and also a real tribute to the experiences Professor Buss provided those students.

My great-aunts and my grandma (their sister) spoke of Professor Buss fondly throughout their lives. From the photos and descriptions from Madeline and Merrill, it is easy to see that both trips were unforgettable.

Anyway, thanks for highlighting such a great bit of WSU history!

Sincerely,  
Emma Dibble West  
Weber State '93, BA English



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