Join Comprehensive Campaign’s ‘Summit Push’

Beginning the Dream 125 comprehensive campaign was much like the annual hike up Mt. Ogden to plant the homecoming flag — a long way to climb.

Hopeful hikers who begin at the mountain’s Beus Trailhead face a 4,300-foot uphill march to the summit. Similarly ambitious, campaign organizers set a goal of $125 million. Now, a little more than one year after publicly announcing the goal, the summit is within sight: just 175 feet to go (or in fundraising terms, $5 million).

Development director Matt Spencer hopes that Weber State faculty, staff and students will provide the energy and enthusiasm to mount the final push.

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Presidential Winners

Four Weber State employees, nominated by their peers and chosen by committee, were presented with this year’s Presidential Outstanding Exempt and Non-Exempt Staff awards.

The employees each received $2,000 cash, a plaque, reserved parking for one year and performing arts tickets.

For nearly 20 years, police chief, Dane LeBlanc has been committed to the safety, protection and education of every student, staff, faculty and guest at Weber State.

LeBlanc oversaw the implementation of Code Purple. He has designed creative, multi-agency emergency drills to test all aspects of campus safety. Thanks to his vision and leadership, the campus has a new, high-tech Public Safety Building.

LeBlanc often wears a police uniform and always carries a gun, but still communicates a warm and approachable persona, offering fairness to suspects, compassion to victims, patience to unruly skateboarders and wisdom to administrators. He has instilled his philosophy of “education first, enforcement second.”

Genevieve Bates, office specialist for the Master of Arts in English program, is known as someone who has answers to any question.

Faculty members call her a “blessing” to students, and students regularly cite Bates as one of the program’s chief assets. In a recent survey, they wrote comments such as “Genevieve rocks” and “Genevieve is the best.”

Bates has a great appreciation for the needs of students after recently earning a Master of Education degree in curriculum and instruction.

A member of the WSU Graduate Council, she helped with a multyear initiative to move all graduate school applications online.

Karen Lindley is the supervisor of the Media Support Lab in the Department of Teacher Education, which involves helping students, staff and faculty with media needs. Under her 10-year leadership, the lab has become a place where students and faculty congregate to work and learn collaboratively.

Lindley manages the Mac Lab in the McKay Education Building and keeps the computers updated and operational. She recently accepted responsibility for the Department of Teacher Education website and Facebook page.

Colleagues describe her as unfailingly cheerful and kind and integral to the department’s efficient operation and success.

Rachel Ruiz worked for many years in Accounts Receivable and recently moved to the Office of Budget and Institutional Research. Her knowledge of campus, her willing attitude and her tremendous work ethic have allowed her to make a significant impact in a short time in her new position.

Ruiz’s creativity and innovation led to a redesign of institutional reporting. Because of this, data is now easily accessible online to everyone in and outside the institution.

Her work has created meaningful data that is consistent, useful, reliable and accurate, allowing the university to move closer to making data-driven decisions.
Weber State assistant professor Alice Mulder was selected to direct the Sustainability Practices and Research Center (SPARC). Mulder will lead SPARC in addition to her faculty position in the Department of Geography.

Mulder says the overarching aim of SPARC is to serve as a hub to facilitate connections across campus and with the community related to sustainability topics, projects and issues, and to foster sustainability education, practices and research both on and off campus.

“I’m excited because we hope the center will help build on the strengths we already have on campus in terms of sustainability initiatives as well as faculty and staff expertise,” Mulder said.

The center plans to identify sustainability needs in the business, nonprofit and government communities and will partner with the WSU Energy & Sustainability Office and Environmental Issues Committee to help address those needs.

SPARC activities will include workshops, lectures and multidisciplinary student projects, in addition to managing logistical support for the annual Intermountain Sustainability Summit.

A generous donation to establish the Marquardt Peace and Possibility Speaker Series Endowment is a perfect fit for WSU’s new LGBT Resource Center.

The center, located in Student Services Suite 154, celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting and reception Jan. 27.

Two weeks later, the Jane & Tami Marquardt Community Fund announced its contribution in order to bring high-profile LGBT leaders and advocates to the university to “enhance the welcoming and inclusion on campus.”

The center will offer training for students, faculty and community members to better understand the LGBT community and its unique challenges and terminology.

As a WSU undergraduate, center director Jayson Stokes advocated for LGBT awareness and safe-zone training on campus. He said the center and speaker series are the result of visionaries who saw possibilities and worked hard to achieve them.

“The center helps ensure that LGBT people are not just welcomed and included in our community but also are valued and contributors to all things that make Weber State a premier institution of higher education.”

Participants celebrate the LGBT Resource Center ribbon cutting: (from left to right) Jayson Stokes, Barry Gomberg, Jan Winniford, Adrienne Andrews, Charles Wight, Waldo.
Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

Psychology chair Eric Amsel and associate psychology professors Aaron Ashley and Todd Baird, along with physics professor Adam Johnston, published the article “Conceptual Change in Psychology Students’ Acceptance of the Scientific Foundation of the Discipline” in Psychology Teaching and Learning, 2014.

Isabel Asensio, associate professor of foreign language, was elected president of the Utah Foreign Language Association (UFLA) during the 100th Annual UFLA Conference hosted at WSU in February. Asensio has been a member of the executive board since 2009.

Assistant communication professor Nicola Corbin will present a paper at the Popular Communication Division of the International Communication Association Annual Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in May. Her paper is titled “Respectability Politics, Self-Help and Colorism in Essence Magazine.”


Zoology professor Robert Okazaki published the paper “Preliminary survey of a nemerteian crab egg predator, Carcinonemertes, on its host crab, Callinectes arcuatus (Decapoda, Portunidae) from Golfo de Nicoya, Pacific Costa Rica” in the international journal ZooKeys. Ingo Wehrtmann of Universidad de Costa Rica co-authored the publication. The research, presented at the Summer Meeting of The Crustacean Society, was the first report of a ribbon-worm predator on eggs of a commercially important crab in Costa Rica.


Communication professor Susan Hafen will present a co-authored paper with Peter Oehlikers of Salem State University at the International Environmental Communication Association in Boulder, Colorado, in June. Her paper is titled “Compassionate Conservation: Across the Cat-Bird Divide between Animal and Environmental Ethics.”

Political science associate professor Gary Johnson received a National Science Foundation iUTah grant for his professor-student collaboration project “Understanding Public Attitudes toward Water Shortages and Water Pricing in Utah.”


Associate communication professor Colleen Packer published the book chapter “Community Engaged Learning and Supplemental Instruction: An Exploratory Study of Intersecting Pedagogies” in the 2015 book “Service Learning Pedagogy: How Does it Measure Up?” The article was co-authored by sociology professor Brenda Kowalewski, director of the Center for Community Engaged Learning.

Assistant criminal justice professor Bradford Reynolds has been appointed as editor of the Journal of School Violence, a research journal focusing on all aspects of crime, victimization and the prevention of school violence.

Associate psychology professor Leigh Shaw co-authored the article “Early and Middle Adolescents’ Reasoning about Moral and Personal Concerns in Opposite-Sex Interactions” in Social Development, 2014.

English Professor Mikel Vause has published a new collection of poems based on two Himalayan Expeditions titled The Scent of Juniper: Poems of the Himalayas by Kelsay Books/Aldrich Press. He also had three poems, “Cold War,” “Just Outside Burley” and “A Song for Larr” published in the latest issue of the journal Clover: A Literary Rag.