

Dear Weber State Family,

Below are highlights from our town hall on Monday, December 5. The slides and full recording can be found on our [website](#).

Enrollment

This fall, our first-year retention rate reached 60%. This marks the attainment of our strategic plan goal and represents a 12.6% retention rate increase over the last 10 years. These gains in our retention rates are attributed to the efforts of each of you. While our retention has increased, over that same 10-year time period, our degree-seeking student population has decreased by 15%. Our returning, transfer, and new student populations have declined. As the demographic cliff of declining high school graduates approaches, we will need to focus our institutional efforts on our returning students and individuals with some college, but no-degree.

The decline in our degree-seeking student population means that we will likely have a budget cut going into the 2023-24 fiscal year. The amount of the budget cut will be determined in the spring and will be mitigated by individuals who are participating in the voluntary separation incentive program (VSIP) and by spring enrollment numbers if enrollment numbers stay steady.

Looking ahead to fall 2023, the number of students who have been admitted is up by 38%. Outreach to these students will be important in the coming months as we continue to refine our enrollment efforts across campus.

Legislative Updates

Our legislative session will take place Jan. 17- March 3. Tax collections expect to have surpluses this year, which is a positive sign for potential funding that may be available. Performance funding determines the bulk of the increases available to higher education institutions, and we feel positive about our enrollment and completion numbers. Our hope is to set aside about \$1.2 million in our allotment, if fully funded, for compensation.

The governor has proposed a tuition and fee freeze for the coming academic year. Generally, 25% of any compensation package increase comes from tuition, with 75% coming from state tax funds. The tuition revenue is usually generated through a tuition increase. Areas funded by student fees will also be impacted by the freeze. When enrollment is down, we collect fewer student fees. A fee freeze would mean that we can not offset revenue increases with a fee increase and need to make plans for cutting budgets in areas funded by student fees. The impact of these proposals is still to be determined, and we will share updates as we learn more.

Organizational Alignment

Over the last few months, with the transition of our Vice President for Student Affairs, we have had the opportunity to review our alignment with the strategic plan and how we can streamline our programs and services to ensure student success. With these changes, we are moving some of our access-related areas to report to our Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and are moving to a cultural center model to support educational programs, awareness, and foster belonging for students on campus. We also are aligning our custodial and facilities

management services across the institution. In addition to these changes, we also are exploring the health services we provide across our campuses and the possibility of outsourcing those resources. Our objective is not to cut back services for students, but instead, our hope is to review options to best support students in receiving similar or better services, while also exploring ways to do so economically.

Construction Updates

The renovation of the Engineering Tech Building is wrapping up and should be completed early in the spring semester. In addition to this project, we are moving forward with the remodel of the McKay Education Building. While construction costs have increased since this project was initially funded by the legislature, we are planning for construction to commence in May 2023.

Over the winter break, we will close Birch Avenue as an access point to campus and will add parking in that space next summer. We also will start demolition of the bleachers on the east side of the football stadium as these bleachers were originally constructed in the 1950s. During this time, we also will replace the stadium's track and field.

Upcoming Events

As a reminder, please sign up for one of our mandatory [AA/EO trainings](#). This training must be completed every two years. This also is a good time to review our institutional [reporting requirements](#).

Graduations are my favorite time of the year, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our convocations next week (Dec. 16). There will be streaming options for each of the events that will be posted on our [commencement website](#) for friends and family who are unable to attend the events. Please take time for yourselves and your families over the winter holidays and break, and thank you for all you do to contribute to student success at Weber State.

Wishing us all health, happiness, and fortitude.

Best,
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