Bill Nye: Matter of Fact

As the media reported following his visit, “Bill Nye wows crowd at Weber State University.” Nye participated in a 90-minute conversation with physics professor Stacy Palen in front of 5,000-plus cheering fans.

Nye was originally scheduled to present in the Val A. Browning Center, but when tickets sold out within 90 minutes, organizers worked quickly to relocate to the Dee Events Center.

Nye’s appearance culminated this year’s Engaged Learning Series (ELS) around the theme “Matter of Fact?” The university-wide series of events hosted by the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) encourages discussion, debate, dialogue, learning and action about an issue of public concern.

The focus on facts dovetails with Nye’s mission: “To help foster a scientifically literate society, to help people everywhere understand and appreciate the science that makes our world work.”

Engaged Learning Series Chair Teresa Martinez describes Nye as an iconic figure who connects with multiple generations. “He’s relatable, entertaining but most importantly, talks about facts through science,” Martinez said. “Speakers like Bill Nye share perspectives that all may not agree on but provide opportunities to share ideas in a respectful and inclusive environment.”

This year, departments, organizations and individuals sponsored events that highlighted different aspects of fact, including fact-checking a political debate, hosting journalist Ronan Farrow and sponsoring banned-book week.

Next year’s ELS theme, “In my shoes,” will highlight storytelling from a first-person perspective. The committee will begin in May to plan events. Suggestions and participation are welcome by contacting CCEL.

Bill Nye: Science Rules!
to operate the charter school in the building. Several private donors have also contributed toward the $58 million project.

**Davis Computer and Automotive Engineering Building**

Weber State will break ground in spring 2019 on the Davis Computer and Automotive Engineering Building at WSU Davis in Layton. The building will be used for automotive, computer and software engineering courses to meet high-demand degrees in northern Utah.

The $20 million project also will include a new primary entrance to campus from State Route 193, which will relieve pressure on the existing entry and allow faster access.

“State-of-the-art facilities will offer innovative and collaborative learning spaces to students in computer science, computer engineering and automotive technology, where we see high demand from industry,” said David Ferro, EAST dean. “Weber State leads state institutions in growth of engineering and computer science graduates, and these buildings will help match that growth.”
John A. Lindquist Award

Visual art and design professor **Kathleen “K” Stevenson** uses arts for social awareness, advocacy and change.

For her exemplary accomplishments, Stevenson was selected as this year’s Lindquist recipient, given in honor of John A. Lindquist, a long-time philanthropist and Weber State advocate.

Stevenson earned her Master of Fine Arts in printmaking from the University of Notre Dame and joined the Weber State faculty in 2001. In 2014, she was appointed director of printmaking.

For the past several years, Stevenson has focused on community building through art. Her engagement and community work include the launch of the WSU Beverley Taylor Sorensen Arts Integration Endowment, which is an arts-integrated instructional program for Utah’s public elementary students.

Stevenson also developed the interdisciplinary “ArtsBridge” curriculum that provides undergraduate students with an internship and academic credit for designing and implementing a comprehensive, needs-based, integrated arts project with community organizations or area schools.

Stevenson’s own prints, sculptures and installation art works have been exhibited regionally, nationally and internationally, most recently at IMPACT 10, the International Printmaking Triennial Conference, in Santander, Spain. Her sculpture installation series “Embedded Memory” is scheduled to be exhibited this winter, at O1ARTS’ new art complex, XIBIT, which is slated to open in The Monarch (455 25th St.) this fall.

Faculty & Staff Accomplishments
louderandprouder #weberstate

**Rainie Ingram**, College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology senior academic advisor, presented “Using breath, thoughts, and movement to combat advisor burnout” at the Global Community for Academic Advising Region 9 & 10 Conference in Hawaii.

Emeriti visual art and design professor **Jim Jacobs** was one of two artists awarded a $10,000 fellowship from the Utah Division of Arts & Museums to acknowledge artistic excellence and encourage continued development.

**Adjunct instructor of English Kristen Morey Kitamura** was named Utah Teacher of the Year by the Utah Council of Teachers of English.

The National New Play Network New Play Exchange named theatre associate professor **Jennifer Kokai** as a featured playwright in Utah for her work *Girl of Glass*.

**Zoology professor Ron Meyers**, along with graduate **Amanda Walker**, published “The anatomy and histochemistry of flight hindlimb posture in birds. II. The flexed hindlimb posture of perching birds” in the 2019 edition of *Journal of Anatomy*.


**Sherrie West**, Melba S. Lehner Children’s School mentor teacher, was recognized as Utah’s Early Childhood Teacher of the Year for 2019 at the 44th Annual Utah Early Childhood Conference hosted by the Utah Association for the Education of Young Children.
Every two years, deans at Weber State come up for review by their faculty, staff, administrative peers and others with expertise in the deans’ areas. Deans provide a summary of their activities to these reviewers, which are then posted on the provost’s website. The information reveals the dean’s involvement in strategic plan initiatives; majors, minors, certificates and development of degrees; fundraising and grant proposal successes; accreditation reviews; program reviews; building improvements; community engagement and outreach programs; recruiting and retaining students, staff and faculty; graduation numbers; organization and reorganization plans; speakers’ series, conferences, advisory boards; departmental initiatives; and so on.

Buried below these data are the actual operations of a dean’s day. To get new majors and minors, increased donations, enhanced curricular offerings, improved recruiting, etc., a dean spends lots of time and energy in negotiating, cajoling, pushing ahead and then retreating backward, explaining, meeting with groups who have different ideas about given proposals, clarifying, talking and, importantly, listening. Faculty, staff and students come to the dean with ideas for spending college funds, with requests for space, equipment, travel, new curriculum and, more generally, with their dreams for making WSU the very best university it can be.

On June 30, 2019, three long-serving deans will leave those roles: Jack Rasmussen, College of Education (serving since 2002); Jeff Steagall, Goddard School of Business & Economics (2011); and Frank Harrold, Moyes College of Social & Behavioral Sciences (2011). I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with each of these deans; their commitment, passion and insights have elevated operations in Academic Affairs and brought many, many improvements to their colleges. Each has engaged in supporting new programs, new majors; remodeling, renovating or constructing new facilities; building donor relationships that led to a successful capital campaign; engaging their colleges in creating/enhancing cultures conducive to student success. Please join me in thanking them for their service and wishing them a happy return to research and teaching.

The Utah State Board of Regents approved the first doctoral program at Weber State University, a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), which will be offered in two emphasis areas: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Leadership.

Contingent on receiving approval from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the DNP expects to begin admitting 35 students fall 2019. “This is an amazing time for Weber State’s Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing,” said Susan Thornock, chair. “The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is the culmination of years of hard work and dedication by past and present faculty and staff. This degree is just another example of how WSU serves our community.”

Weber State will now provide education for every level of nurse, from the practical nurse to the registered nurse all the way to the doctoral-prepared nurse.

On April 20, 2018, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) “made the commitment to move all entry-level nurse practitioner education to the DNP degree by 2025.” This commitment was made in response to NONPF and other professional nursing organizations that have advocated raising the standards required for entry into the nurse practitioner profession.

Students at Weber State will earn a clinical doctorate degree, not a research doctorate, which is consistent with a regional university’s role to serve workforce needs.

According to the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the median income for a nurse practitioner is $98,260, and job openings average 110 per year.
Since 1970, the WSU Alumni Association has presented the H. Aldous Dixon Award to outstanding faculty and staff. The award is given in memory of former President Dixon who served as the school’s chief administrator in 1919-20 and from 1937 to 1953.

Steven Nabor came to Weber State in 1977 as an overwhelmed, first-generation high school graduate. On his first day, he called a professor Dr. Staff because the course catalog listed classes with unassigned instructors as being taught by “staff.” It’s a mistake that still haunts Nabor, who eventually graduated cum laude in accounting, and shortly after, launched what would become an illustrious 35-year professional career at Weber State.

Nabor was hired as a staff auditor, but his formidable knowledge of finance and innovative approach to problem solving prompted a stream of promotions. At each new level of responsibility, from director of Internal Audit to controller to senior associate vice president for Financial Services to chief financial officer, Nabor was determined to cultivate a financial environment where teaching and learning could flourish.

Throughout his career, Nabor looked beyond existing policies to bring about changes that benefitted students. He introduced an every-other-week payroll schedule for student workers. He spearheaded an installment option for students struggling with tuition payments. During government shutdowns, Nabor helped deploy strategies to ease the burden placed on thousands of financial aid recipients.

Nabor also assisted in the design, financing and installation of Flaming W Rock, an iconic campus landmark.

No one can accuse the newly appointed interim dean of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Julie Rich, of being locked in an “ivory tower of academia.”

Rich, a geography professor and Weber State alumna who graduated cum laude in 1981, earned a master’s degree from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. from St. John’s College, a constituent college of England’s University of Oxford.

Her collaborative teaching has garnered prestigious honors, including the Crystal Crest Master Teacher, Hemingway Faculty Excellence and John A. Lindquist awards. Rich consistently earns near-perfect student-evaluation scores. Her research and presentations are internationally acclaimed; her expert opinions on everything from climate change to sustainable construction to green mapping are sought after at home and abroad.

Rich’s crusade to enrich a student’s “Weber State experience” through service learning underscores her longtime association with the university. The Global Community Engaged Learning program, which Rich started, has benefitted more than 200 students, alumni and faculty, and countless indigenous people in Rwanda, Mozambique, Thailand, Peru, Uganda, and soon Fiji.

Rich promotes undergraduate research. Many of her students assist her fieldwork, conduct lab experiments and present their findings at conferences. Rich helped supervise the recent renovation of the Social Science building, now named Lindquist Hall.
Dr. Shi-Hwa Wang

Shi-Hwa Wang is the director of strings studies and professor of violin/viola at Weber State University.

In demand as a violin teacher, he actively recruits high-caliber students who have routinely won concerto, solo and chamber music competitions. Wang has had seven national finalists in the Music Teachers National Association national competition, 21 first-place state strings competition winners in Utah and 30 WSU Concerto Night competition winners. Several of his violin students have received full scholarships to attend prestigious graduate programs, such as the Eastman School of Music.

Also active as a leader in ensembles, Wang has served as the concertmaster of the Taipei Symphony Orchestra, Ballet West and Utah Chamber Orchestra, Ann Arbor Symphony, Classical Music Festival Orchestra in Austria, Southfield Symphony Orchestra and Illinois Opera. He is the founder of the Kismartin String Quartet, Browning String Trio/Quartet, Wasatch Piano Trio, and the Formosan Violin-Piano Duo. He has performed with world-renowned musicians and produced three solo recordings.

Wang has been on the faculty of the American String Workshop in Ann Arbor, Michigan, International Music Workshops in Norway and Austria, Sewanee Music Festival in Tennessee, InterHarmony International Music Festival in Italy and Germany, and many state string workshops and conferences. Wang was a visiting violin professor at the Haydn Konservatorium in Austria in 2009.

He was a featured violin master teacher multiple times at the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) National Conference and has given master classes in many states in the U.S., Singapore, China, Taiwan, Canada, Austria, Germany, Italy and Hungary. Wang was the Utah American String Teachers Association state president for four years. He received the Utah ASTA Educator of the Year and the Outstanding Teaching awards.

Dr. Leah Murray

According to Washington Monthly’s College Rankings, Weber State University is one of the nation’s best schools at encouraging students to vote. For Leah Murray, civic engagement is a passion, which she has shared with her students, the university and the community.

Murray earned her Ph.D. in political science at the University at Albany. In 2002, she joined WSU’s Department of Political Science & Philosophy. The College of Social & Behavioral Sciences selected her as an endowed professor in 2017.

Committed to deepening political participation on campus, Murray helped launch and coordinate the American Democracy Project (ADP) in 2004. Under her direction, student volunteers bring national, state and local experts to discuss issues of community concern. She has also served as ADP National Steering Committee chair. Murray directs WSU’s Constitution Week events and is part of a collaboration that conducts election-day polling and voter registration outreach. During the 2016 election, she helped organize a “Rock the Vote” concert in conjunction with the Ogden City Twilight Series. More than 700 people attended and were encouraged to register and to vote.

Murray helped collaborate and create WSU’s Civitas program — a specific designation for civically engaged scholars. Students who demonstrate distinction in four areas of civic engagement earn the phrase “non sibi, sed civitas” (not for self, for community) on their transcripts, an idea she has presented at several regional and national conferences.

Her scholarship includes two books: American National Government and Politics and Popular Culture. She has also authored seven book chapters. A highly sought-after presenter and commentator, Murray has made appearances on local television and radio and shared her passion and understanding of democracy with many community groups.