Building for the Future

Weber State looks a little different this year as the university builds and renovates various areas of the Layton and Ogden campuses.

“We appreciate everyone’s patience as construction continues,” said Travis Hogge, campus planning and construction director. “As Weber State implements sustainable and energy-efficient construction standards in our buildings, it will benefit the campus community for years to come.”

As a fitting start to the first week of school, WSU Davis celebrated the ribbon cutting of the new Haven J. Barlow Parkway, which gives visitors easy entry to the east end of campus off State Route 193. Barlow, who turns 100 in January, participated in the event with an inaugural drive down the parkway in Weber State’s purple Tesla. The former Utah Senate President, was instrumental in securing funding to establish WSU Davis.

In Ogden, the Noorda Building for Engineering, Applied Science & Technology is quickly taking shape on the north side of campus. The final steel beam needed to complete the primary structure was installed July 12, signaling the end of the first stage of construction. The 135,000-square-foot building is slated for completion in 2022.

(Continued on page 2)
As part of the Noorda project, a geothermal field with 195 wells was constructed in the A2 parking lot. Since the 1960s, Weber State has heated and cooled its buildings with superheated steam or chilled water circulated through 1.5 miles of pipe in underground tunnels connected to every building. The university continues to use those pipes, but now part of the water’s path includes travel through underground wells. The benefit is that the water’s temperature is restored underground to an even 57 degrees, so it takes much less heating and cooling to make buildings comfortable. The wells will offset utility costs of the Noorda building and other areas of campus.

Construction for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) continues, with crews putting finishing touches around the Ada Lindquist Plaza. Over the summer, retaining walls, stairways and sidewalks were removed and replaced to accommodate a new busway. When the project is complete, Weber State will enjoy three BRT stations: one west of the Val A. Browning Center; one near Residence Halls; and one at the Dee Events Center, which will also serve as a Utah Transit Authority Bus Hub. The BRT line will become the campus shuttle, running all-electric buses between stops every six minutes. When the entire line is complete in 2023, BRT will connect the city with 13 stops from McKay-Dee Hospital to Weber State to the Intermodal Hub on 25th Street.

The completed projects will make the campus look and even sound better. The Val A. Browning Center took advantage of the lull caused by the pandemic to upgrade the sound systems in the Austad Auditorium and Allred Theater. The Allred Theater is also getting a new floor and orchestra-pit cover. Students and faculty will also enjoy the recently constructed recording studio to support a new minor in sound production and recording.

“When these projects are complete, the outcome will enhance the campus experience of all who visit Weber State,” Hogge said.

New Degrees for Greater Flexibility

Weber State students have a host of new degrees and certificates to choose from this fall thanks to the efforts of committed faculty and staff. The programs were created to meet industry demand in specialized fields. The new courses of study include:

- Master of Social Work
- Bachelor of Science in Energy Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in User Experience; emphasis areas in Stack Web Development, and Design
- Bachelor of Arts in Geography
- Associate of Applied Science in Outdoor Leadership
- Associate of Science in Sound Production/Recording
- Associate of Applied Science in Physical Science
- Five new certificates in business, engineering and cyber security

Weber State offers more than 225 degrees and programs, which support our dual mission to provide educational steps, so students have flexibility to earn certificates and advance from associate to bachelor’s to graduate degrees easily and efficiently.
New Dean Brings Experience, Vision

When members of WSU’s Board of Trustees approved the selection of Julie Rich as the new dean of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences (CSBS) in May, they were secure in the knowledge that she understood the position and was committed to the university.

Rich has a long and proud history at Weber State, beginning as an undergraduate student in geography and continuing through two decades of experience as a faculty member and administrator in the college. She served as associate dean for three years before assuming the role of interim dean in 2019.

Her leadership helped guide the college through some challenging and rewarding times. During the pandemic, she assembled “Team Awesome,” an outreach group that contacted all 2,100 CSBS students and faculty to see if they had the technology and support necessary to continue their educational journey.

She championed the creation of the new Master of Social Work, which accepted its first class of students this fall. She also led the “exhilarating and satisfying” process of renovating Lindquist Hall, including relocating all the people and courses for two years.

“Each day when I walk into Lindquist Hall or drive by our building when traveling along Harrison, I have a deep sense of pride in that accomplishment,” she said.

Rich holds a Ph.D. from the University of Oxford in geography with an emphasis on paleoclimatology, the study of ancient climates. Her research and writing have focused on arid environments and environmental change.

She believes learning to make positive change in the world is what makes a CSBS education so valuable and makes her so proud to serve as dean.

“In our college, we are helping build a world that is more sustainable, with less racism and more equity; a world that cares about climate change and taking care of the planet; a world that has less poverty and suicide; a world where politicians can govern and accomplish the will of the people; a world where there is less violence,” she said. “Social scientists are problem solvers who care about the world.”

Strategic Plan, continued from page 1

Meeting students where they are continues to be one of Weber State’s most important philosophies, Mortensen said.

“If all we do is try to focus and meet students where they are and help them succeed in whatever their next step is, then we’ll meet every goal in our strategic plan,” he said. “It all boils down to how we treat our students as individuals.”

The plan was the result of a year of work from about 800 faculty, staff, students and other key stakeholders, and was approved by the WSU Board of Trustees in March. The full plan can be viewed on the website.
Archives Exhibit Celebrates Women of Weber

Beginning with an exhibit that featured Yu-Jane Yang, WSU Presidential Distinguished Professor, Director of Keyboard Studies and Director of the Piano Preparatory Program, the Women of Weber project resumed in August.

“Women of Weber” focuses on extraordinary women whose service, accomplishments, careers and philanthropy have enriched lives and educational experiences at the university. Each month throughout the academic year, one woman’s photos and stories will be on display outside Archives on the first floor of the Stewart Library.

The project was an outgrowth of a collaboration with Weber State Archives, Special Collections and the Museums at Union Station called “Beyond Suffrage: A Century of Northern Utah Women Making History.” The project was a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote. Although the pandemic put a hold on the celebration, it did not dampen enthusiasm to share the stories of outstanding women who have changed lives and blazed trails.

The September exhibit features Weber State’s first female student body president, Lori Memmott Brown.

Welcome to the Fall Semester 2021.

I want to start by thanking you for everything you managed and accomplished this past year. A lot of this was because of the incredible resilience of our faculty and staff. We are, as a result, better prepared and ready to move forward this fall, despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic.

The beginning of fall is a wonderful time on campus. It has been more than a year since we have enjoyed this level of energy and excitement. Everything we have heard from our students sounds as if they are cautious but eager to be back. It is also inevitable that many of our students will soon experience academic and personal challenges. Some will cope better than others. Institutionally, however, due to a variety of reasons, many of our students are falling through the cracks.

We have to own our persistence problem and think of creative ways to address it. It starts with reexamining our processes and policies to ensure there are no systemic equity gaps. It continues with how we set up students for success on campus. It becomes even more impactful when we can identify and address student issues before they become problems.

This fall, student persistence will be a big focus of Academic Affairs. Our academic deans are embarking on a plan to implement cross-functional, agile, student-success teams in their colleges. These teams will be charged with developing early response, locally customized, data-informed and gap-closing retention responses in their respective colleges. I am looking forward to working with them.

Meeting our students where they are is the bedrock of our strategic plan and the reason we are all here at Weber State. A great example of success is a note from a student in Lorraine Gale’s summer placement class for math. Lorraine is WSU’s Concurrent Enrollment mathematics coordinator.

“I just wanted to thank you for all your help last week!! I have been studying my brains out. My original (ALEKS) score was a 16. I took the proctored test today and got 41! I am so excited! I have one more test that I can do, and I’m hoping to get a 46 and place into 1030. Thank you again for all your help and making that class possible. It definitely made it for me.”

National data underscores the significant impact of first-year math placement on graduation. Lorraine’s class might well be the turning point for that student. I am sure many of you have received similar feedback from students. Hall of Fame basketball coach John Wooden once said, “It is the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.”

This fall, I hope we all focus on the little things that impact our students. Collectively we can make a big impact as a result.

Thank you.
Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

WSU NEWS
Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

#LouderandProuder

Affairs and Services Practitioners Around the World” at the NASPA International Symposium.

Wei Qiu, child and family studies chair, co-authored “Parental stress and home activities for young children during the stay-at-home quarantine time in China,” in the journal Early Education and Development.

Brian Rague, computer science professor and Jessica Greenberg, associate professor of performing arts, co-presented their paper “Computational Thinking and the Humanities” at the 13th annual International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (EDULEARN 21).


Matt Romaniello, associate professor of history, presented “In general the climate is not prejudicial to health: Observing Russia at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” at Climate and Society in Eurasia: Past, Present, and Future, hosted at the University of Illinois. He was also awarded a 2021 Virtual Summer Research Laboratory Associateship by the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center at the University of Illinois, a Title VI-funded program.

Tracey Smith presented “After COVID, Where Are We Now as a Region?” at the Intermountain Regional Testing Association Conference.

Assistant professor of film studies Ash Soltani Stone’s film, Rez Metal, received numerous awards and official selections at film festivals, including Best Documentary Award from the Big Apple International Film Festival, a nomination for Best Documentary Audience Award at the Cine Las Americas, and Jury Award at Riverside International Film Festival.


Michael Thompson, University Archives processor earned the Digital Archives Specialist certification through the Society of American Archivists.

Automotive technology administrative assistant Jennifer Vesper and two teammates won an episode of “The Big Bake” competition on Food Network Canada, the program will air in the U.S in the spring. Team Sweet & Salty claimed a $10,000 prize for their carnival cake creation.

Health promotion program director Linnette Wong published “Strategies for Enhancing Student Interaction in an Online Health Promotion Course” in the College Student Journal.

Medical laboratory sciences program director Janice Thomas presented her paper “Predictors of Success on the MLT and MLS Board of Certification Exam” at Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference, which was also published in the Clinical Laboratory Science journal.
Welcome to WSU

Jessica Bickley, College of Science
Timothy Black, Psychology
Lynda Blanch, Nursing
Eric Bottelberge, Nursing
Aneisa Breinholt, Regional Partnerships
Josh Brooks, Campus Recreation
Bill Cook, Office of Community Development
Andrew Crookston, Provost’s Office
Nicole Defenbaugh, Communication
Alex Dosier, Digital Learning & Professional Education
Bryan Dowdell, Exercise & Nutrition Sciences
Nicholas Downs, Athletics Admin & Support
Cydney Eden, Student Health Center
Brianna Ellison, Human Resources
Eric Fenrich, History
Amber Fowler, Nursing
Sara Gailey, Teacher Education
Jennifer Garner, Student Affairs Office
Zachary Golden, Provost’s Office
Courtnee Goodwin, Provost’s Office
Hadlee Green, Facilities Management
Dustin Grote, Teacher Education
Claudia Gutierrez Lemus, Student Success Center
Seana Hall, Digital Learning & Professional Education
Dailynn Hunt, Facilities Management
Michelle Jeffs, Criminal Justice
Jenna Kane, Career Services
Justin Kani, Stewart Library
Leigh Komperda, College of Science
John Kroon, Physics
Leah LaGrone, History
Stacie Leavitt, Developmental Math
Justin Lee, Social Work
Nathaniel Levine, Athletics Admin & Support
Madeline Mackie, Sociology
Richard Martin, Health Administrative Services
Hector Mejia, University Police
Abby Monroe, Alumni Relations
Justin Morgan, Facilities Management
Michele Morrill, Nursing
Samuel Morrison, Student Success Center
Joshua Muir, Facilities Management
Thi Nguyen, Visual Arts
Faith Nowlin, Stewart Library
Avery Oakes, Facilities Management
Tonisha Paddock, Wildcat Stores
Demetrius Pagonis, Chemistry and Biochemistry
Margaret Painter, Visual Arts
Ambree Penrod, Radiologic Sciences
Porter Plili, Facilities Management
Paul Rimmash, Criminal Justice
Tiffani Royer, Wildcat Stores
Anssi Saari, Exercise & Nutrition Sciences
Camy Sabin, Communication
Tracy Schiermeyer, Human Resources
James Schultz, Communication
Andrea Schwartz, Foreign Language
Freddie Sepulveda, Nursing
Deann Shepherd, Communication
Sheldon Slaughter, Automotive Technology
Jamie Stein, Exercise & Nutrition Sciences
Brandon Stevenson, Automotive Technology
Holly Suisse, Digital Learning & Professional Education
Marilyn Taft, Teacher Education
Jeffery Ward, Health Physical Education & Recreation
Mitchell Weaver, Infrastructure Services
Stephanie Wheatley, Nursing
Matthew Widhalm, Infrastructure Services
Sarah Winder, Admissions Office
Kali Winn, Academic Support Centers & Programs
Justin Womack, Performing Arts
Matthew Zacher, Marketing & Communications
Orval Zamora, Facilities Management

On the Move/Promoted

Cassandra Backman, Center for Community Engaged Learning
Pamela Berg, Radiologic Sciences
Corinne Bigler, College of Science
Lana Bingham, English
Anna Cich, Geosciences
Heather Cimino, Student Involvement & Leadership
Jessica Colver, Digital Learning & Professional Education
Sharon Dansie, IT Business Services
Nicole Flink, Professional Sales
Katharine French-Fuller, Center for Community Engaged Learning
Kaori Gale, Affirmative Action
Lorraine Gale, Provost’s Office
Jesus Garcia, Provost’s Office
Amanda Geiman, Office of the Registrar
Kayla Griffin, Student Involvement & Leadership
Savanna Grotz, Student Affairs
Jacob Hansen, Facilities Management
Paige Heaton, Financial Aid Office
Tracy Hicks, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Bridget Jensen, Financial Aid Office
Deborah Larson, Science Education Center
Charles Lynch, Facilities Management
Heidi Nelson, Bursar and Collection Services
Sara Pomeroy, Stewart Library
Erik Rushton, Stewart Library
Carly Selden, Dean of Students
Michael Stenquist, Financial Aid Office
Jeshua Van Sickle, Admissions Office
Jennifer Vesper, Automotive Technology
Christine Vilches, Stewart Library
Jill Walker, Alumni Relations
Jonathan Warren, Information Technology
Hayley Zaug, Facilities Management
Irina Zavala, Education Access & Outreach

Retired

Brooke Arkush, Sociology
Loyal Baker, Developmental Math
Karen Bateman, Alumni Relations
Michael Cena, Teacher Education
Jennifer Claesgens, College of Science
Larry Clarkson, Visual Arts
Giana Curtis, International Programs
Karen Fenn, Davis Campus
Richard Ford, Geosciences
Aiko Flowers, Nursing
Susan Hafen, Communication
Edward Hahn, Library
Frank Harrold, Sociology
Holly Hirst, Human Resources
David Imig, Developmental Math
Deborah Judd, Nursing
Kathryn MacKay, History
John Mayhew, Teacher Education
Julanne McCulley, Manufacturing & Systems Engineering
Galynn Mook, Digital Learning & Professional Education
Craig Oreshnick, Counseling & Psychological Services
Billie Ramey, Financial Aid Office
Peggy Saunders, Teacher Education
Betty Sawyer, Education Access & Outreach
Gene Sessions, History
Patricia Shaw, Health Administrative Services
Valerie Stegeman, Budget Office
Toni Thompson, Accounting Services
Susan Thornock, Nursing
Michael Vaughn, Provost’s Office
Kimberly Webb, English