

Provost Perspectives

A newsletter from the **Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs**



Thanks to insight shared by our deans and academic leaders at our planning retreat over the summer, the university has launched a Wellbeing and Resilience (W+R) Initiative. The initiative will be led by Associate Provost Keith Diaz Moore with a senior advisory team of Dean Philip Osteen (Social Work), Dean Monisha Pasupathi (Honors) and Dean Kelly Tappenden (Health). Dr. Amy Locke (Chief Wellness Officer) and Dr. Sherrá Watkins (Associate Vice President for Health and Wellness) are serving as expert advisors.

The W+R initiative is charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive wellbeing and resilience initiative that supports faculty, staff and students across all levels of the university. Our goal is to promote a thriving campus culture characterized by care, well-being and academic success.

I am pleased to announce three new Faculty Fellows who will support the W+R initiative: Dr. Vana Raman (Pediatrics), Dr. Angela Smith (Gender Studies & English) and Dr. Michelle Vo (Psychiatry). They will each lead a core project of the initiative beginning in January. These faculty fellows will serve as members of the W+R Taskforce that will launch by the end of this semester to guide this work across Academic Affairs.

I look forward to the outcomes of this effort.



Innovations in Course Fill Rates Improve Student Success

The University of Utah is making significant strides in improving student success outcomes through the Navigate U Activate Project, **Innovating in Course Fill Rates and Monitoring Thresholds**.

By leveraging historical data, predictive analytics and flexible scheduling practices, the university aims to optimize course offerings, ensuring students can progress toward graduation in a timely manner. Essential steps include departments checking the Office of the Registrar **Course Leaf Section Scheduler** (CLSS) daily and proactively engaging with department heads to address critical course needs.

For the academic year 2024-25, the university is testing and acting upon these thresholds, with robust activity on waitlists during the Fall 2024 semester and full implementation anticipated for Spring 2025. This initiative underscores the commitment to enhancing the student experience and meeting educational needs effectively.

[Read more](#)

Provost Montoya Presents to APLU

During this week's Association of Public & Land-grant Universities annual meeting in Orlando, Florida, Provost Montoya presented on the ways institutions can use data to help deans guide decisions in dynamic, distributed environments.

Colleges and departments vary in their research intensity, resources and networks. But no matter where they sit within the broader structure, they all contribute to the greater good of the university in ways that extend beyond financial metrics. We need to recognize these contributions, view them through multiple lenses of analysis and make sure we're identifying and building on existing strengths.

Provost Montoya highlighted the **One-U Responsible AI initiative** as an example of strength-building and broad engagement around critical contemporary issues at the U. This is also where initiatives like cluster hiring come into play—by bringing together faculty from different disciplines, the U can spark new connections that enhance research and teaching missions.

Looking ahead, Provost Montoya said the U will continue to make data-driven decisions about how to advance excellence-sharing across the institution. That means not only sharing resources and best practices among departments, but also having open, clear lines of communication across the university.

Plans to Enhance Service Delivery

During the 2024-25 academic year, the College of Humanities, College of Science, College of Social and Behavioral Science, and School for Cultural and Social Transformation are participating in a project to improve how they deliver critical support services to faculty, staff and students.

Earlier this fall, a series of listening sessions and a survey gathered direct input from faculty and staff on what is working well, areas needing support and key priorities for a shared services model. [Read more about the project and next steps.](#)

Webinar will Cover Finance and Budgeting Process

An introductory webinar on the U's finances and budgeting process is scheduled for 1-2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14. During this webinar, participants will learn about different funding sources, how the dollars are spent across the full institution and how our broader state economy and context shape our financial picture. Presenters will also discuss the budgeting process in different areas and leave time for questions at the end.

Please register with [this link](#).



Presentation to Focus on Digitized Archives and AI

If archives provide first-hand evidence of the past, how is this evidence changing when it's studied in digital environments, with digital tools? This will be the topic of a discussion-based seminar, "Digitized Archives and AI: Changes to Teaching and Research Methods," presented by the Marriott Library from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Nov. 19, in the Tanner Humanities Center, Jewel Box (in the Carolyn Irish Tanner Humanities Building).

First, Dr. Laura Blomvall from AM [Adam Matthew] will share case studies of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers who have made original discoveries in archives through research methods that utilize AI programs like Handwritten Text Recognition. Then, she will share examples of university instructors who have turned to primary sources, both in digitized archives and in special collections, to create teaching and learning environments that resist the use of generative AI in student assignments.

The presentation will include group discussion with the aim of exchanging experiences and ideas on the impact of AI and digital methods in research and teaching in the humanities across different disciplines.

The Marriott Library recently subscribed to the [Adam Matthew database](#), which contains millions of pages of digitized primary source content from Special Collections around the world. This database is free and open to all students, staff and faculty.

Provost's Office Adds Special Assistant to the AVP for Budget and Finance, Communications Director

Chalimar Swain and Greg Kratz are the two newest additions to the Provost's office.

Effective Nov. 16, Swain will become Special Assistant to the Associate Vice President for Budget and Finance in Academic Affairs. Swain spent the past three years as Special Assistant to Steve Robinson, Vice Provost, Enrollment Management. She has served in several other roles in her 14 years at the U. In her new position, Swain will lead several initiatives, including the Gray Decision Intelligence rollout and implementation; AEP rollout; budget model refinement, rollout and implementation; and graduate tuition rate tables evaluation and revision.

Kratz started Oct. 29 as the new Director of Communications in the Provost's office. He worked most recently for Ancestry, where he was Director of Publications and Internal Communication for the AncestryProGenealogists division. Prior to Ancestry, Kratz was the Managing Editor of Decision Support Products for ARUP Laboratories and earlier worked in many reporting and editing roles at the Deseret ARUP.

We welcome Chalimar and Greg and look forward to working with them.

Office for Faculty Plans HB261 Listening Session

Based on feedback from faculty, the Office for Faculty is hosting a forum to provide a space to discuss HB261 and its impact on campus life.

The listening session is scheduled for 2-3:15 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 19. The Zoom link is <https://utah.zoom.us/j/99229142394>, with a Meeting ID of 992 2914 2394 and passcode of 229410.