

## Provost Perspectives

A newsletter from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs



Final exams are complete, students are on holiday break, and another semester has ended. Thank you all for supporting each other and guiding students through an excellent year!

As we prepare for 2025, we face a time of unique challenges, but also great opportunities. Higher education is under intense scrutiny nationwide. Several Utah government officials have expressed concern about the academic programs, student outcomes, expenditures, and efficiency of the state's public universities. We are being asked to deepen our impact while operating with constrained resources. How we accomplish that task will be a topic for discussion during the upcoming legislative session, and actions taken there will impact the U and the entire Utah System of Higher Education.

The good news is that we have taken proactive steps to prepare for these challenges. We've engaged in an exercise to determine how to handle potential budget cuts or reallocations. We're exploring opportunities to improve our efficiency, including a project to potentially [share some administrative services](#) among four of our academic units. We've streamlined our general education offerings, and we are working to improve student outcomes through our [Navigate U initiative](#). This is by no means an exhaustive list of all you have done and are doing, but it shows our commitment to prepare for whatever the future holds.

Clearly, we have significant work ahead of us in the new year, but I am confident that we can do what is necessary to advocate for the value of higher education while exhibiting fiscal accountability and acting as responsible stewards of the resources we receive. At the same time, we will continue to champion the values we hold dear: student success and access, academic freedom, excellence in teaching and research, respect for all and contributing positively to society.

As we work together to achieve these goals, we will create a U that is primed to grow and excel for decades to come. I look forward to working with you in these efforts in 2025 and beyond, and I wish you a joyous holiday season and wonderful new year!



### Bob Carter Named New Senior Vice President for Health Sciences

After an extensive national search, President Taylor Randall has announced Bob S. Carter, MD, PhD, as the university's new senior vice president for health sciences and CEO of University of Utah Health. He will begin in mid-February 2025.

Carter will manage both the academic and research enterprises at U of U Health, with its nearly \$500 million research portfolio across five schools and colleges and a health sciences library. Carter also will oversee a \$6.3 billion academic health system comprised of nearly 27,000 faculty and staff, and 6,400 students. He will be charged with fully integrating the clinical enterprise of 3,700 expert faculty and 17 high-quality hospitals and community health centers.

Carter currently serves as the William and Elizabeth Sweet Endowed Professor in Neuroscience at Harvard Medical School and Neurosurgeon-In-Chief at Mass General Brigham, Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital. With more than 18 years of experience as a researcher and professor of neurosurgery at Harvard Medical School, and another 7 years at the University of California, San Diego, where he served as chair of the faculty of the School of Medicine, Carter brings with him deep knowledge of medical research and education.

Carter replaces Mike Good, who announced his transition earlier this year, after leading the academic health system during a time of unprecedented growth and expansion.

[Read more](#)



### Ivory Awards for Advancing Student Success Program Launches

The new Ivory Awards for Advancing Student Success program launched with a presentation and reception on Dec. 16.

The program, which is generously funded by the Ivory Foundation, aims to inspire and recognize staff who go above and beyond in their efforts to support and engage students, amplifying their impact.

This inaugural year serves as a pilot to introduce and refine the initiative, which will provide awards to Academic Advisors, Student Success Coaches and Career Coaches across campus. Participants will work toward specific benchmarks, tailored by college and job role, that will lead to monetary awards and experiential rewards in recognition of their dedication and contributions.

### Campus Recreation Services Popularity Continues to Grow

[Campus Recreation Services](#) continues to experience record-breaking facility usage at the [George S. Eccles Student Life Center](#). In the first week of Fall 2024, 25,801 UCard and member swipes were recorded. Over the first five weeks of the semester, this number climbed to 102,479 swipes.

UCard swipes measure facility usage, tracking the number of times individuals access the Student Life Center's services. In FY24, Campus Recreation Services recorded 687,117 UCard swipes—a 6% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Opened nearly a decade ago, the Student Life Center offers a wide range of resources, including exercise equipment, group fitness classes, sport clubs, intramural sports, rock climbing, pools, gyms and more. These services, managed by Campus Recreation Services, not only support physical health but also enhance mental well-being and foster social connections—contributing to students' academic and personal success.

## Celebrating U

### U Department of Communication Hits Global Top 30 of Shanghai Rankings

In November 2024, ShanghaiRanking Consultancy's [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) (ARWU), a global university ranking initiative based on academic analytics, found the Department of Communication to be the highest ranked program at the University of Utah. These rankings were based on factors such as number and impact of scientific publications, editorial positions on prominent journals and prestigious awards.

The Department of Communication, which experienced 12% growth in entering class enrollment in 2024, [was ranked in the top 20 domestically](#) and [top 30 globally](#). Communication has placed highly in the list since ARWU started ranking individual academic units in 2017.

The global rankings track 55 academic disciplines across the Natural Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences and Social Sciences. This November, Communication was the highest ranked of the 14 units at the University of Utah that made the top 100.

[Read more](#)

### Division of Games Featured in CNBC's 'Cities of Success'

The U's [Division of Games](#) is featured in a recent article that is part of CNBC's "Cities of Success" series, which looks at cities that have transformed into business hubs.

The article says Utah's video game industry has become a powerhouse, growing more than 230% in the past decade, and notes that the U's video game program is one of the primary reasons for that growth.

"The university boasts a legacy that includes industry luminaries Doug Bowser, president of Nintendo of America, and Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari and creator of the iconic game "Pong," the article says. "Alumni of the school have gone on to create games generating more than \$2 billion in lifetime revenue, according to the university."

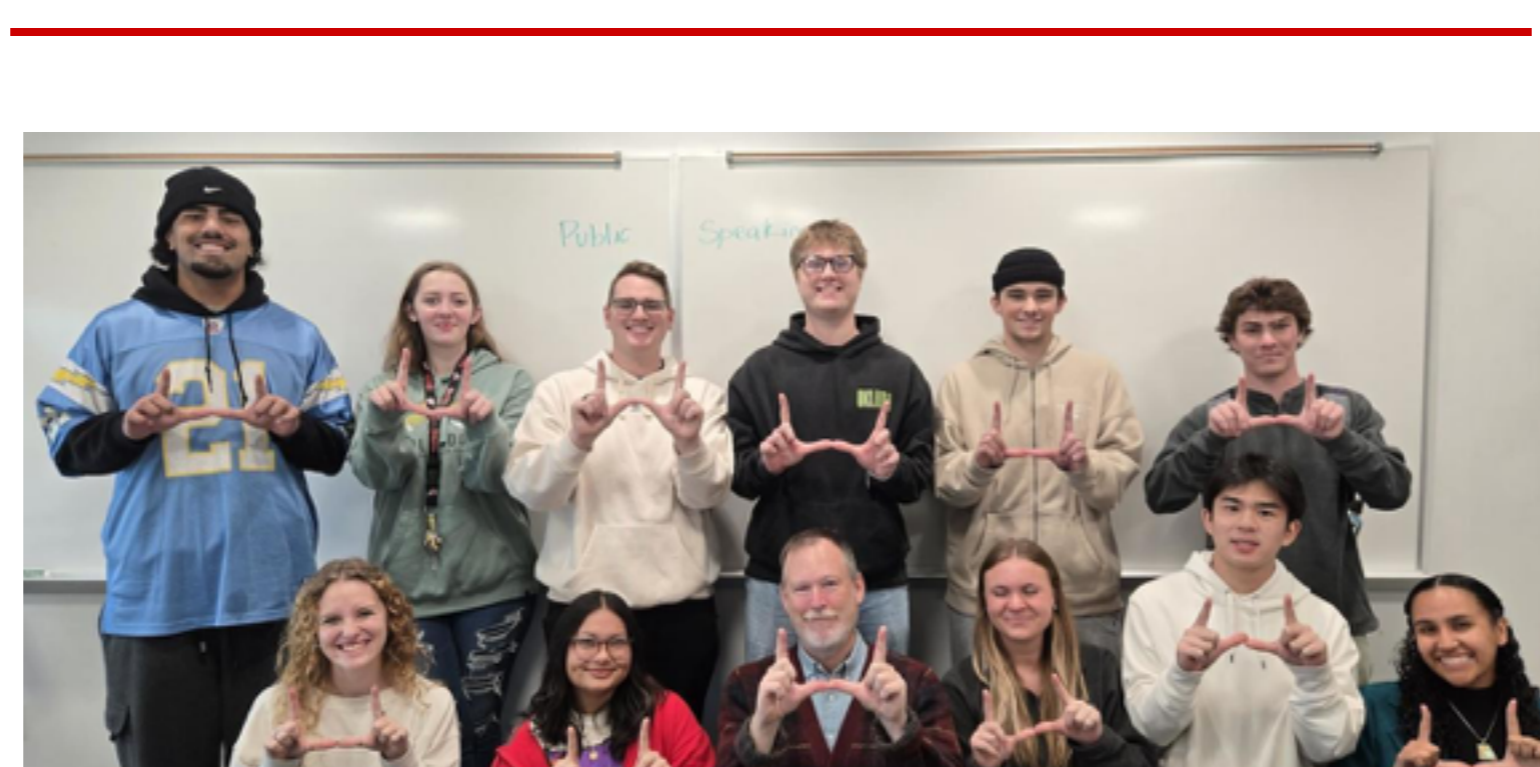
[Read more](#)

### Colleges Invited to Participate in Sustainability Graduation Pledge

The Sustainability Office invites all colleges to participate in the U's Green Cord Sustainability Graduation Pledge.

The pledge and associated green cords were first developed through a student [Sustainable Campus Initiative](#) fund grant, and since 2023 over 1,200 graduates have taken the pledge. The pledge, in conjunction with the Graduation Pledge Alliance, asks individuals to consider the impacts their job and lifestyle have on society and the environment, and it encourages them to improve both through individual and collective actions. Those who commit to the Sustainability Pledge may pick up a green cord to wear at commencement and convocation to symbolize their commitment.

Contact [sustainability@utah.edu](mailto:sustainability@utah.edu) to participate.



### U's Academic Librarians Reach Out to Help Faculty, Students

The old-school image of a librarian as a stiff-minded, strict enforcer of the "quiet library" rule does not reflect the reality of the academic librarians at today's Marriott Library.

A good example is librarian Dale Larsen. Dale has worked at the J. Willard Marriott Library for more than two decades. He has seen plenty of changes in those 20 years and is excited about where things are today, as librarians actively engage with students where they are and when they need help.

"Instead of sitting behind a desk and waiting for students to come to you, we're going out to classrooms where the students are. We're working with professors to teach specific content that will be helpful to the students," Dale says.

[Read more in this post](#) on the library blog.

### Share Your Ideas for Provost Perspectives

If you have an upcoming event or informational item you'd like to publicize in Provost Perspectives, please send it to Greg Kratz at [greg.kratz@utah.edu](mailto:greg.kratz@utah.edu).