

Provost Perspectives

A newsletter from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs



The University of Utah, like all higher education institutions, is navigating a season of change. Recent federal and state actions are impacting how we work and communicate, and I know it is difficult to keep up with the volume of information.

The senior leadership team is working together to continually assess the situation and develop institutional response, and the President is actively engaged in advocacy efforts both locally and nationally. Our webpage on [Federal Transition Guidance](#) is updated frequently with general information, and the Vice President of Research office is sharing regular updates on [federal funding](#) and [executive actions](#). I encourage you to visit these sites frequently.

In the Provost's Office, we're seeing our own wave of change, as we welcome new faces and familiar faces in new places while also saying goodbye to a colleague this week. I have high hopes for everyone involved in these new directions.

We [announced Friday](#) that [Wanda S. Pillow](#) accepted an offer to serve as the dean of both the College of Humanities and the School for Cultural and Social Transformation, effective immediately. Dr. Pillow had been serving as acting dean of the College of Humanities, bringing strong leadership and advocacy to that role. Her unique combination of experience with both Humanities and Transform makes her the perfect choice for this position, and I appreciate her willingness to take on these leadership roles.

Then, on March 15, former College of Science Dean Peter Trapa officially began serving as the [inaugural vice provost and senior dean](#) of the Colleges and Schools of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). In this role, he will provide strategic advancement and management of the College of Humanities, College of Science, College of Social and Behavioral Science and the School for Cultural & Social Transformation. This represents a major step forward for the U as we [reimagine support services](#) for those units, and I'm excited for Senior Dean Trapa to get started.

With his departure from his previous role, I [have appointed Pearl Sandick](#) to serve as interim dean of the College of Science. She also began working in this new role on March 15 and will continue to serve until a new dean is appointed. A professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Interim Dean Sandick has been associate dean for faculty and research in the college since 2022. I'm grateful for her willingness to step in and lead during this time of transition.

On Monday, we [welcomed Dr. Paul Kohn](#) to campus as our first senior vice provost for strategic enrollment and student success. He comes to the U from the Georgia Institute of Technology. In this new position, his areas of administrative responsibility include enrollment management, undergraduate studies, global engagement, University Connected Learning, the Utah Asia Campus and other regional campuses. He's already diving into the work, and I encourage you to welcome him to the U as you meet him.

We are also saying goodbye to one of our leaders, Dr. Steve Robinson. [Dr. Robinson is departing](#) from his role as vice provost for enrollment management, which was announced earlier this week. While we'll miss working with Dr. Robinson, I'm excited for his [new opportunity](#) at the University of Missouri and know he will do great things there.

I hope you'll join me in welcoming these leaders to their new roles and wishing Dr. Robinson all the best at Mizzou. I look forward to the vision and energy our new leaders will bring to their teams and to the U.

— Mitzi M. Montoya

Student Success

Remind Graduating Students to Complete Next Step Survey

[U Career Success](#) is encouraging all campus partners to remind graduating students to complete the voluntary [Next Step Survey](#) (FDS), which allows the U to gather first destination data that can help drive decision-making for majors and programs.

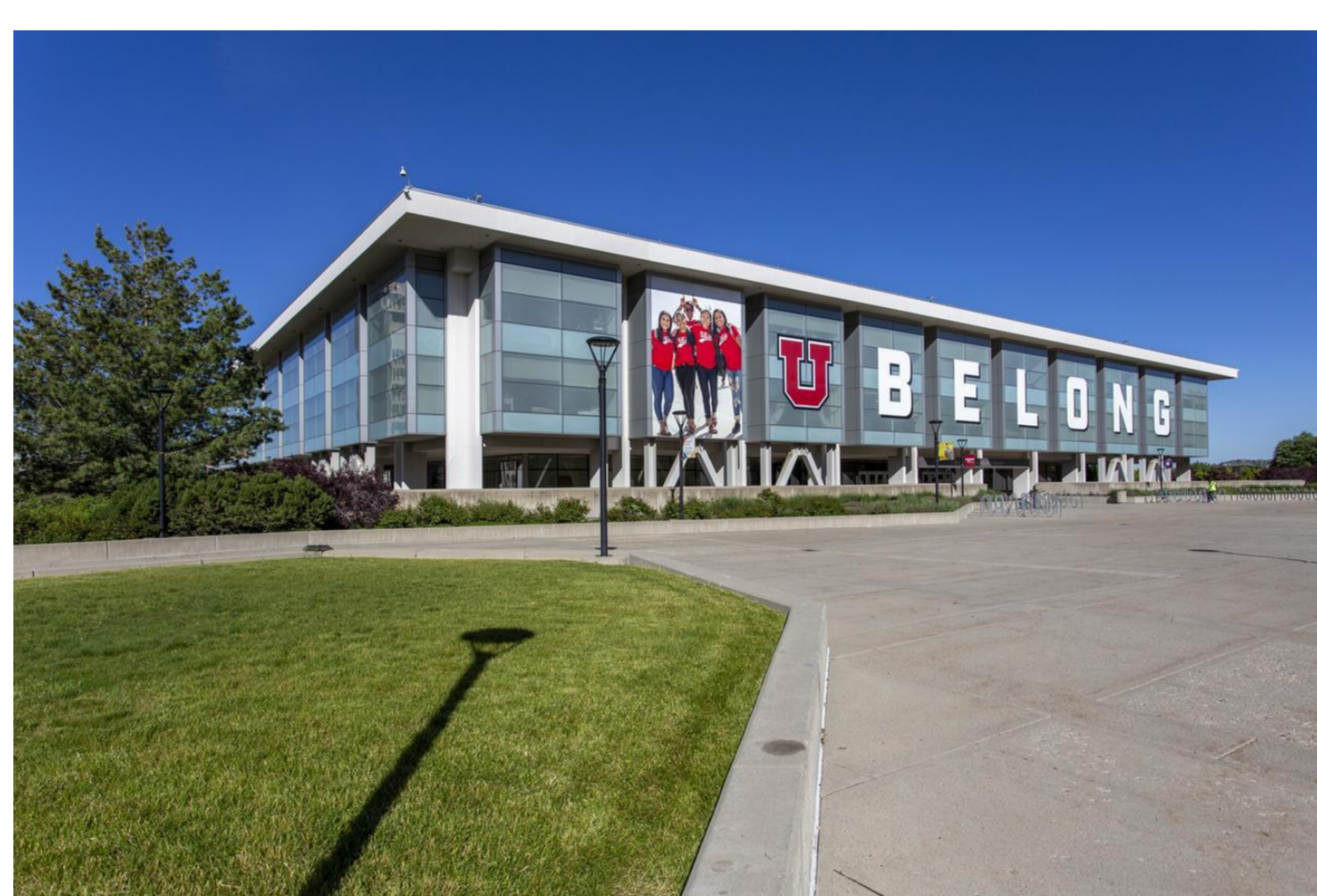
A message sent last week by U Career Success noted that students can complete the survey even if they haven't accepted an employment offer. The survey records future plans including grad school, volunteerism, military service, gig work, entrepreneurship and others.

Next Step Survey marketing materials [from this Box folder](#) are available for use on graduation webpages and student-facing social media accounts.

Every additional inclusion allows U Career Success to provide better information about where students are landing after graduation. Reports of all data are available upon request.

Thank you for sharing this information and encouraging graduating students to complete the survey.

[Read more](#)



Research Excellence

New Elsevier Agreement Expands Options for Open Access Publishing

As part of the U's efforts to prioritize open research, the [University Libraries](#) has partnered with the [Office of the Vice President for Research](#) to facilitate open-access publishing through a licensing agreement with Elsevier. The agreement allows corresponding authors at the U to publish open-access articles free of charge.

Under the agreement with Elsevier, authors can publish open access in more than 1,800 core hybrid journals. The agreement does not cover publishing in fully open access or gold journals.

The U can publish up to 310 articles annually (based on corresponding authors). If the cap is exceeded, authors can publish closed at no cost or pay an article processing charge (APC) to publish open access. Articles accepted for publication starting immediately are eligible.

Major open access agreements with Elsevier, Wiley, Oxford University Press and other publishers provide the ability to open nearly 40% of the U's journal article research output. Without these agreements, the U would pay more than \$2 million in APCs annually to fund open access publishing.

[Read more](#)

Professional Wellbeing Discovery Workshop Scheduled for April 3

Amid shared challenges, it's time to create a space to focus on what matters most: our people.

On April 3, campus leaders will gather for a Professional Wellbeing Discovery Workshop. Hosted by the Provost's Wellbeing and Resilience Initiative, the day will be dedicated to exploring how the U can better support wellbeing during these demanding times. This session is a space for leaders to step back from the noise, engage in meaningful conversation and gain new perspectives that will help them navigate uncertainty with greater clarity.

Drawing from the resilience literature, the conversation will begin with recognition. The [recognize](#) phase encompasses hearing from community members and defining problems, but extends beyond these to actively identify system vulnerabilities, disruption patterns and latent opportunities within apparent constraints. This awareness-building stage is essential as it establishes the foundational insight by mapping the ecosystem of issues, challenges and resources.

This will set the stage for broader, subsequent campus-wide conversations and projects around professional wellbeing that are anticipated over the next year.

The initiative's [website](#) will include reporting on the results of the workshop before the end of this academic year.

Celebrating U

Paul Cassell Cited in U.S. Supreme Court Opinion

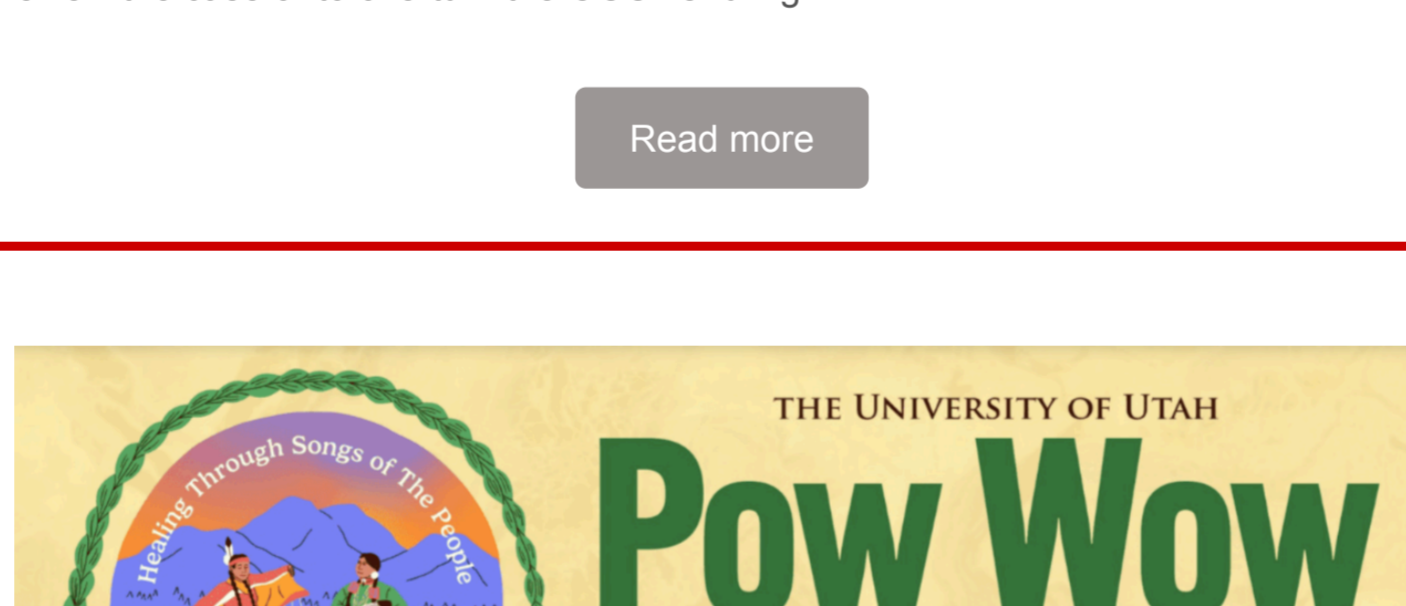
In a dissenting opinion in the case *Richard Glossip v. State of Oklahoma*, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas extensively cited an *amicus* brief authored by [Paul Cassell](#), the Ronald N. Boyce Presidential Professor of Criminal Law and a University of Utah Distinguished Professor of Law.

In a 5-3 ruling, the court majority overruled the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals' (OCCA) conviction of Richard Glossip for his role in a 1997 murder, according to a post on the S.J. Quinney College of Law website. Glossip maintained that evidence had not been considered properly during his trial, and that he was innocent. The majority found that the trial prosecution had violated its constitutional obligation to correct false testimony.

Cassell represented the family members of the murder victim, Barry Van Treese, in [an amicus brief](#) submitted to the court. The family argued that evidence in Glossip's trial had in fact been considered properly, that his trial was therefore conducted fairly and that his conviction should stand.

In [his dissenting opinion](#), Justice Thomas agreed with Cassell's brief, arguing that trial evidence had been treated appropriately, and that the Supreme Court did not have authority to review the case or to overturn the OCCA's ruling.

[Read more](#)



University of Utah Pow Wow Set for March 22

The University of Utah Pow Wow will bring "Healing Through the Songs of the People" to the Jon M. Huntsman Center this Saturday, March 22.

The pow wow, which is free and open to the public, is a gathering that brings together tribal members from across the Intermountain West to celebrate and uphold the cultural and spiritual traditions of their communities. This event is made possible through a partnership between Student Affairs, the Center for Native Excellence & Tribal Engagement and the University of Utah's Inter-Tribal Student Association.

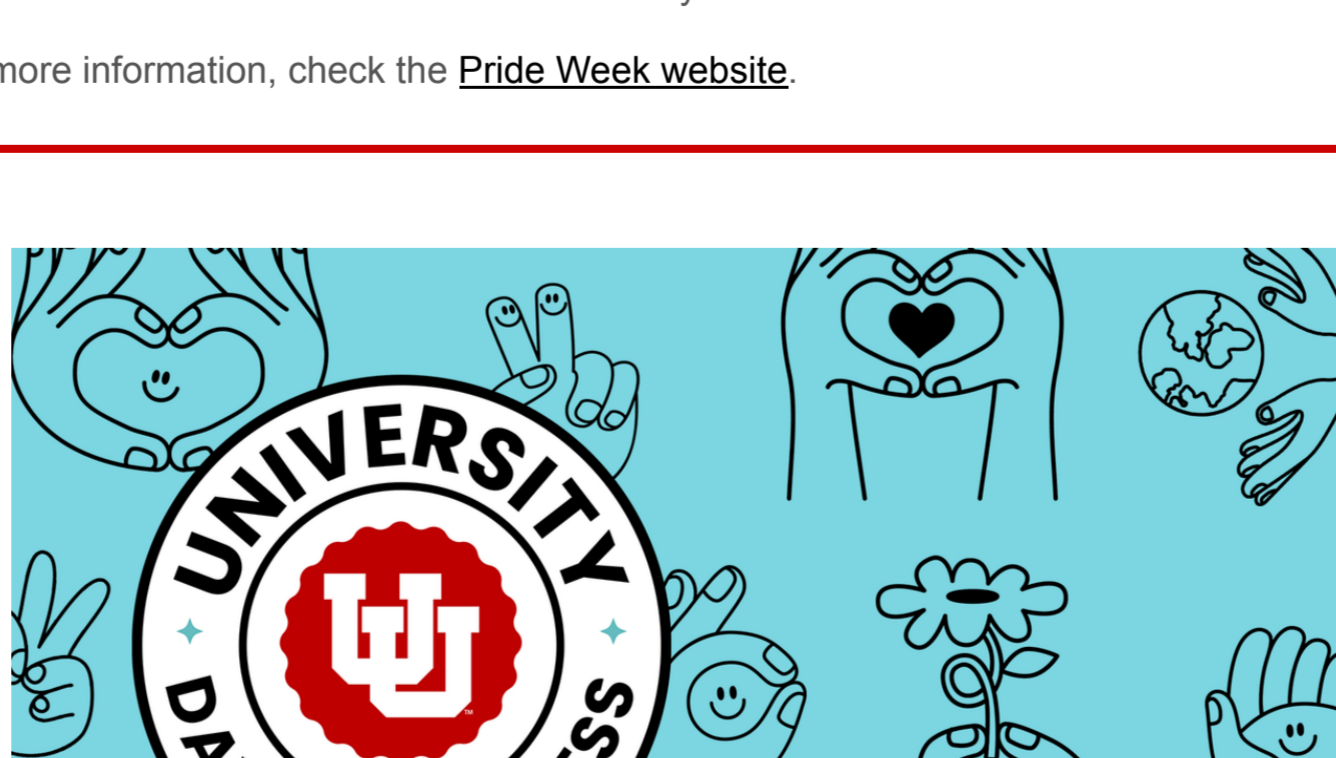
This year's theme, "Healing Through the Songs of the People," honors the [power of the songs and the drum groups](#) that unite us. For more information, go to the [website for the pow wow](#).

Pride Week Events Planned for March 24-29

This year's Pride Week celebration is scheduled for March 24-29. All are welcome to attend a variety of both educational and celebratory events hosted across campus that center on LGBTQ+ community and culture.

The theme this year, "Slitched in Solidarity," aims to capture the strength and interconnectedness of the LGBTQ+ community and its allies.

For more information, check the [Pride Week website](#).



Annual University Day of Kindness Brings Giveaways, Other Events to Campus April 2

While kindness is a good idea every day, an avalanche of acts of kindness will sweep the University of Utah campus on April 2.

A wide variety of activities are scheduled for the U's annual [Day of Kindness](#). From giveaways of doughnuts and dirty sodas to free headshots and swag, it's a day that's sure to put a smile on your face. If you're in the neighborhood of the Park Building, watch for representatives of the Provost's Office handing out stress relievers.

Enjoy the celebration and remember to be kind to yourself and others!

[Read more](#)

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.

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