UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
Endowed Faculty Report
From the Office of the Provost/Executive Vice President
Division of Academic Affairs
1 OCTOBER 2025

To the Joint Appropriations and Joint Education Interim Committees

The University of Wyoming (UW) has and continues to benefit greatly from the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment. The Excellence in Higher Education Endowment allows the university to establish state-funded endowed faculty positions to advance teaching and scholarship in the areas of distinction defined in the university's strategic plan. UW has also benefited from state appropriations targeted toward faculty positions in legislatively identified areas of priority, the School of Energy Resources positions and the Sustainable Business Practices positions. Furthermore, faculty positions supported (partially or fully) by private endowment gifts through the University of Wyoming Foundation enhance UW's teaching and research programs in areas of mutual interest to the institution and its donors. This report covers all such positions. Part A includes the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment (a continuation of legislative reports prepared annually); Part B encompasses other faculty positions identified in legislative appropriations; and Part C includes privately endowed faculty positions.

Part A. Excellence in Higher Education Endowment Report
[Pursuant to W.S. 21-16-1204]

1. Background

Created in 2006, the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment was funded at $105 million, the earnings from two-thirds of which, or $70 million, was designated to the University of Wyoming. Earnings on the state-managed endowment, which are distributed by the state treasurer to the university, allow the university to establish endowed faculty positions (known as Wyoming Excellence Chairs) and to acquire instructional and scholarly materials, classroom equipment, and other resources necessary to support the work of endowed chairs. Distributions to the university are based on a spending policy for FY2025 and was 5.00% of the five (5) year average market value of the corpus.

The statute imposes some constraints on the uses of the endowment earnings. Not less than 2/3 of the amounts shall be used to expand university instruction and research in disciplines related to economic and social challenges facing Wyoming. No fewer than four (4) Wyoming Excellence chairs must be in the College of Education. The remaining earnings shall be used for recruitment and retention of faculty members with established reputations in other areas of distinction as identified in the university academic plan, including business, arts and humanities, mathematics, cultural studies, healthcare, economics, and law.

To initiate the program while the endowment corpus was filling, and pursuant to Senate Enrolled Act 54 Section 1 (c) (ii), the Legislature appropriated $2.8 million in one-time funds, subsequently reduced to $1.8 million, to be distributed to the University of Wyoming and expended exclusively for the purposes specified in W.S. 21-16-1202 (b). The one-time appropriation allowed the university to begin filling positions in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Those initial positions were then funded permanently with earnings from the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment.

2. Summary, history, and accomplishments of authorized positions

Under W.S. 21-16-1204, the University of Wyoming must report annually on faculty positions partially or fully funded through the endowment program, including the name of each faculty member filling a Wyoming Excellence chair, their education and experience, their research and instructional activities, and the benefits of their research and instruction.

The inaugural appropriation became effective July 1, 2006. The provost developed a planning budget for the allocation of positions to be supported with these funds during the 2007-2008 biennium, while the $70M endowment account began to fill. Based on the planning budget, three (3) searches were authorized with the initial funds: two (2) in the College of Education (fulfilling one-half of the legislative mandate requiring four (4) positions in the College of Education) and one (1) in the College of Arts and Sciences Creative Writing MFA program (aligned with UW's area of distinction Cultural Assets, Arts, and Humanities).

During the second year of that biennium, as more information became available about anticipated payouts to the university from the state-managed endowment account, the provost's office authorized more searches, in two (2) phases. Seven (7) additional Wyoming Excellence endowed positions were authorized during fiscal year (FY) 2008, and five (5) more were authorized in July 2008 for a total of fifteen (15) authorized endowed faculty positions. Four (4) of these fifteen (15) positions were to be funded with earnings combined from both the state account and private endowment gifts to the university, allowing for a greater number of search authorizations and establishing a unique private-public partnership in endowing distinguished professorships.

The decision to authorize the fifteen (15) fully or partially funded positions was based on a budget for salary, benefits, and other position-related costs consistent with the projected payout estimates provided by the state treasurer's office prior to the financial market declines realized later in FY2009. Subsequent financial market events mandated the need to reevaluate the size of the budget and number of permanent positions that could be supported by endowment earnings. Given the need for exceptional prudence in filling permanent faculty positions, and consistent with representations to the Joint Appropriations Committee, the university placed some of the previously authorized searches on hold through FY2010. At the beginning of FY2011, following careful evaluation of the anticipated earnings stream and the accumulated reserves held in the university account, the provost authorized searches to fill the on-hold positions, including some for a bridging period only in order to ensure that permanent funding commitments would remain in line with the anticipated funding stream. Then, at the beginning of FY2013 based on having received a significantly larger payout during FY2012, as well as enhanced projected payout estimates from the state, and a substantial private gift, the provost was able to complete the originally planned position allocations, and grow the program with additional allocations to Nursing, Law, the Haub School, Native American & Indigenous Studies, and Global Studies.

In FY2024, twenty-two (22) and in FY2025 eighteen (18) positions were fully or partially funded by the Wyoming Excellence Endowment, and additional positions were supported with endowment funds. Although all positions are subject to available funding in any year, the ongoing annual expenses associated with the funded positions were in line with the state projections for annual earnings.

The authorized positions conform to the legislative mandate. The College of Education has four (4) positions, as prescribed by the legislation, all important to the future of K-12 education in the state: two (2) in literacy education, one (1) in science education, and one (1) in mathematics education. The strategy for the allocation of the other positions was to coordinate a set of positions in areas of distinction identified in the university's strategic

plan, and professions critical to the state such as business, law, and health professions. In addition, positions were selected for allocation based on the potential to address economic and social challenges in the state.

The allocation strategy is reflected in the following table, and the accomplishments of the currently filled positions and the benefits of their research or instruction to students, businesses, industries, or other Wyoming residents are described in detail below.

Allocation strategy	**Number of Permanent Positions**	**College/Academic Unit**	**Names**
Education	4	Education	Dr. Cynthia Brock, (elementary literacy education) Dr. Richard Kitchen (mathematics education) Dr. Leslie Rush (literacy education) Dr. Jeffrey Anderson (special education) *FY26*
Economic and Social Challenges facing Wyoming: Energy, Natural Resources, Wildlife Science, Earth Sciences, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering	10	Law/Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources Agriculture, Life Sciences and Natural Resources Engineering & Physical Sciences	Temple Stoellinger (law/energy) Dean John Koprowski (ecology, conservation, & management of biodiversity) Dr. Kevin Monteith (wildlife) Dr. Bledar Bisha (food microbiology) Dr. Cynthia Weinig (botany) Dr. David Pascual (brucellosis) Dr. Dario Grana (geology/geophysics) Dr. Bryan Shuman (geology/geophysics) Dr. Haibo Zhai (civil engineering) Dr. Mohammed Piri (petroleum engineering)
Other Disciplines important to the state and region and its history and culture: Business, Arts & Humanities, Mathematics, Cultural Studies, Economics, Law	5	Business/Economics Law Arts & Humanities	Dr. David Finnoff (economics) Dr. H. Jo Albers (economics) Dr. Jeffrey G. Covin (management) Dean Julie Hill (civil legal services/law) Dr. Scott Henkel (humanities)

FY 2025 Accomplishments of Wyoming Excellence Chairs

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The four (4) permanent positions that reside in the College of Education focus on literacy, science education, and mathematics education. The individuals who hold these positions are developing and leading nationally recognized programs in these fields and are expected to be magnets for attracting the best and brightest junior faculty and students into these critical areas of teaching need in Wyoming. These positions represent four (4) Wyoming Excellence chairs that are statutorily required to be in the College of Education.

Dr. Cynthia Brock, (Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, Focus: Literacy & English Learners, Michigan State University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Literacy Education

Dr. Cynthia Brock, (Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, Focus: Literacy & English Learners, Michigan State University) is a Wyoming Excellence Chair in Elementary Literacy Education. Across the past year, Dr. Brock worked with Dr. Kim Gustafson (Interim Executive Director of the Literacy Research Center and Clinic), Dr. Leslie Rush (Wyoming Excellence Chair in Adolescent Literacy Education), and Sara Pommarane (Literacy Research Center and Clinic Distinguished Teacher in Residence) to develop and/or maintain collaborative research/professional literacy learning partnerships in schools in the following Wyoming counties/schools: Big Horn #4, Teton #1, Fremont #s 6 and 38, Albany #1, Platte County #1, & Holy Name Catholic School in Sheridan. (The Literacy Research Center and Clinic team works with more Wyoming schools & districts, but the schools/districts listed above are the ones with which Dr. Brock was directly involved.)

Dr. Brock coordinated the Ph.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction with a literacy focus[1]. Working in conjunction with Dr. Ana Houseal, Drs. Brock and Houseal successfully implemented the eighth year of the College of Education Academic Writing Fellows Initiative. Dr. Brock also co-chaired one College of Education search committee (Literacy Research Center and Clinic Fisher Family Professor in Literacy Education). Dr. Brock hosted three international literacy scholars (i.e., Drs. Garth Stahl, Georgina Barton, and Jen Alford) in 2024 who collaboratively worked with UW College of Education literacy faculty and literacy graduate students.

In addition to providing service to the UW College of Education, Dr. Brock provides service to Wyoming. For example, Dr. Brock is a member of the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) English Language Arts Standards Revision Committee. In 2024, Dr. Brock presented to the Wyoming State Board of Education, she co-presented on literacy with Dean Shim and Literacy Research Center and Clinic colleagues to the Wyoming Joint Education Committee, and she co-presented (with Kim Lane from the WDE) in a WDE webinar. She collaborated with the Literacy Research Center and Clinic, the WDE, and Wyoming teachers and literacy coaches to co-develop and implement a statewide book club. Working collaboratively with Rob Black & Lori Pusateri-Lane (WDE), the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Business Councils, Kim Gustafson (UW), and Dr. Pauline Harris (the University of South Australia), Dr. Brock is leading the K-3 American Indian Education for All Disciplinary Literacy Initiative.

At the national/international level, Dr. Brock served as the Vice President (2023-2024) and President Elect (2024-2025) of the Literacy Research Association (LRA). LRA is the premier literacy research organization in the U.S. Working in conjunction with Drs. Leslie Rush and Fenice Boyd, Dr. Brock co-created two special sessions at

[1] Dr. Brock has coordinated this program since 2016.

LRA that featured Wyoming teachers, administrators, and WDE colleagues who shared the innovative literacy work they are doing in Wyoming. Dr. Brock was a featured speaker at the 2024 Nevada Department of Education Summer Literacy Institute. Dr. Brock completed five external reviews for colleagues in the field of literacy seeking promotion from assistant to associate or associate to full professor of literacy at the following institutions: University of Nevada, Las Vegas; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Texas Woman's University; University of Miami; and University of Washington, Bothell. Dr. Brock was an external reviewer for two international doctoral dissertations: one for a student at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and one for a student at the Universita Degla Studi Di Modena E Reggio Emilia in Italy. She also sponsored a UW literacy doctoral student to attend the 2024 Literacy Research Association (LRA) Conference. Finally, she co-presented with a doctoral student at the 2024 International Conference on Positioning Theory in Finland.

In 2024, Dr. Brock co-wrote a Spencer Large Grant with four colleagues (two in Australia, one in New Zealand, and one in the U.K.) She co-edited one international handbook on positioning theory (with Routledge). As well, she co-authored two handbook chapters, two Quartile 1 refereed journal articles, and she co-wrote five book chapters.

Dr. Richard Kitchen, (Ph.D. Curriculum & Instruction Mathematics Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Mathematics Education

Dr. Kitchen's research has focused on developing a problem-solving based instructional protocol that pre-tertiary teachers can use to support their mathematics instruction. The protocol, referred to as the Discursive Mathematics Protocol (DMP), is designed to help teachers simultaneously develop their students' mathematical reasoning and learning of the mathematics register. During the 2024-25 academic year, Dr. Kitchen published four refereed journal articles, including a sole authored article that appeared in the top tier *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*. He was also the co-author of a chapter with Dr. Signe Kastberg from Purdue University that appeared in the fifth volume of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Professional Book Series. The DMP was shared during a professional presentation in October at the Wyoming Innovations in Learning Conference in Casper with Wyoming teachers from across the state, many of whom implemented the DMP with their students in their classrooms. Dr. Kitchen also made an international professional presentation on the DMP at the Feedback and Assessment in Mathematics Education (FAME) conference in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

During 2024-25, Dr. Kitchen taught undergraduate courses for students in the teacher education program in the College of Education, including an elementary mathematics methods course. He also collaborated with the Los Alamos National Laboratory Math & Science Academy to offer professional learning workshops in mathematics for elementary and middle school teachers. In addition, Dr. Kitchen continued in his role as the coordinator of both the Ph.D. and Ed.D. degree programs in Mathematics Education at the University of Wyoming. During 2024-25, four students successfully completed a doctoral degree in mathematics education at UW. In Fall 2025, 20 students will be enrolled across the Ph.D. and Ed.D. degree programs in Mathematics Education. Five of these students live and work in Wyoming; three teach in mathematics departments at Wyoming community colleges and two are leaders in mathematics education in their respective school and/or school district. Currently, UW has among the largest doctoral programs in mathematics education in the nation.

Dr. Leslie Rush, (Ph.D. Reading Education, University of Georgia)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Literacy Education

During the 2024-2025 academic year, Wyoming Excellence Chair in Literacy Education, Dr. Rush continued to leverage her broad base of Wyoming connections, knowledge of adolescent literacy, and experience as an administrator to provide service and support for Wyoming educators, families, and communities.

Outreach/Engagement Work to Wyoming Schools and Education Agencies
A substantial portion of Dr. Rush's work is engaging in literacy support for Wyoming school districts and other agencies. During the 24-25 academic year, Dr. Rush provided the following professional development activities, designed to build Wyoming teacher and administrator expertise in literacy:

- Holy Name Catholic School (Sheridan). Dr. Rush partnered with Dr. Cynthia Brock to provide yearlong professional development in writing instruction to teachers at HNCS.
- Teton County School District 1 (Jackson). Dr. Rush served as a consultant with the district's literacy leadership team to support system-wide improvement of literacy outcomes for multilingual learners. This involved biweekly planning meetings and support at monthly meetings of the entire district team.
- Lander Valley High School (Lander). Dr. Rush served throughout the year as a consultant with the LVHS instructional support team, as they provide professional development to high school teachers in all content areas on disciplinary literacy instruction. This involved 3 trips to Lander and multiple Zoom planning meetings.
- Wheatland High School (Wheatland). Dr. Rush collaborated with the principal to develop and present professional development for the entire school faculty on disciplinary literacy. This project began late in the spring semester and is expected to continue into the 25-26 academic year.
- Laramie County School District #1 (Cheyenne). Dr. Rush provided support during the fall semester of 2024 to the English Curriculum Coordinator and a small group of English teachers who were seeking to revamp the English curriculum.

As an integral part of the service provided to Wyoming by the College of Education's Literacy Research Center and Clinic, Dr. Rush participated in literacy-focused district-wide data collection and analysis for needs assessments at Holy Name Catholic School (Sheridan) and Central High School (Cheyenne). In addition to the above ongoing work throughout the school year, Dr. Rush made several presentations with organizations and conferences within Wyoming, including an afternoon of professional development with Laramie High School's entire faculty and presentations at the Wyoming Department of Education's Embracing Literacy Conference.

In August 2024, Dr. Rush joined the Executive Director of the Literacy Research Center and Clinic in preparing for and making a presentation to the Wyoming Joint Education Committee about literacy instruction in Wyoming. In addition, Dr. Rush has partnered with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) in several ways. First, with WDE staff member Dr. Claudia Ladd, Dr. Rush established the Wyoming Secondary Literacy Community of Practice, a statewide group designed to provide support and education to teachers, administrators, and community members about research and practice in adolescent literacy. Second, Dr. Rush has served as a member of the WDE's English/Language Arts Standards Review Committee. Both of these projects extended through 24-25 and are expected to continue in the 25-26 academic year.

Leadership for Academic Programs Designed for Wyoming Educators

The School of Teacher Education provides several academic graduate programs that support ongoing learning and improvement for Wyoming classroom teachers. Dr. Rush serves as the Program Coordinator for the Literacy Graduate Certificate program. This program is designed for practicing classroom teachers and provides eligibility for teachers to add an endorsement in reading to their existing initial teaching license through the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board. Current enrollment in the Literacy Graduate Certificate program is 29, and Dr. Rush serves as the advisor for all students. Dr. Rush also serves as the Program Coordinator for the MA in Education/Literacy Education program. This distance program is designed for practicing classroom teachers; coursework overlaps with and builds on the knowledge base in the Literacy Graduate Certificate program. Current enrollment in this program is 21; Dr. Rush serves as advisor for 7 of these students.

Research, Scholarship, and Service

In the area of research, Dr. Rush continues to actively publish her scholarly work. Dr. Rush is serving as first editor on an edited book with Routledge, with colleagues Cynthia Brock and Todd Reynolds, titled *Innovative Approaches to Literacy in Rural Contexts*. The chapter authors for the edited book are all Wyoming educators and the anticipated audience is made up of educators in US rural schools. With Dr. Marshall George at Hunter College, Dr. Rush submitted a book proposal to NCTE titled *English Language Arts Teacher Education: A 60-Year Journey*, which will provide a historical account of an NCTE professional organization. This proposal is currently under review. Dr. Rush also published three refereed articles during the 24-25 academic year, in *Educational Policy, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *The Chronicle of Mentoring and Coaching.* Dr. Rush continues to actively present at national and local conferences, including the Wyoming Department of Education's Embracing Literacy Conference, the Literacy Research Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Dr. Rush also contributes to Wyoming educators through the Trustees Education Initiatives' Wyoming Teacher Mentor Corps, and the Consortium for Overseas Students Teaching. Within the College of Education, Dr. Rush served as Chair of the CoE Tenure and Promotion Committee, as a member of the search committee that successfully hired a new Fisher Family Fellow in Literacy Education, and as a mentor to two new faculty in literacy. Dr. Rush also serves on the leadership team for the annual COST meeting and the Educator Summit on Global Competency, both of which will be held in Laramie the week of May 19th, 2025.

Dr. Jeffrey Anderson, (Ph.D. Special Education, University of South Florida)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Special Education (effective 8/19/2025 for FY26).
(Note: Deceased September 2025. Search currently in progress.)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACING WYOMING: ENERGY, NATURAL RESOURCES, WILDLIFE, SCIENCE, EARTH SCIENCES, HEALTH SCIENCES, AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING

Dr. Bledar Bisha, (Ph.D. Food Science and Technology, Iowa State University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Animal Science

Dr. Bisha's research focus and interests are on post- and pre-harvest food safety microbiology, environmental microbiology, and public health. His work supports the aim to reduce the burden of foodborne illness, infectious disease, and antimicrobial resistance, using multifaceted approaches, including but not limited to improved

diagnostics and surveillance, enhanced processing technologies, and elimination/reduction of the sources of contamination.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Bisha managed approximately $14,558,914.00 in extramural funding from the USDA-APHIS and the CDC to support research efforts to study and control SARS-CoV-2 at the population level as well as other priority and zoonotic pathogens in wildlife. Dr. Bisha leads the SARS-CoV-2 wastewater surveillance effort at the University of Wyoming in close collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Public Health and helps provide real-time data to support public health measure statewide. These wastewater surveillance efforts were recently expanded to include monitoring of influenza, noroviruses, RSV, and measles. In 2024, he published eight peer-reviewed journal articles and presented eleven conference abstracts in national and international scientific meetings. In 2024-2025, Dr. Bisha continued to serve on the prestigious National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) which provides guidance and advice on food safety issues to the federal government.

Over the past academic year, he has mentored a large group of eight graduate and two undergraduate students, two laboratory technicians, three research scientists, and three graduate MCLS rotation students. He has lent his expertise at the national and international level by serving on three separate grant panels for USDA-NIFA, and continuing to serve as a higher education expert and advisor for universities internationally through the READ (Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora) program. Over the past year, Dr. Bisha has served as the primary instructor for Food Safety course in the department as well as other courses in his area of expertise. In early 2025, Dr. Bisha was presented with the AES Outstanding Research Award, which is reflective of the impact of his work within CALNSR.

Dr. Haibo Zhai, (Ph.D. Environmental Engineering, North Carolina State University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Civil Engineering and Roy L and Caryl L Cline Distinguished Chair in Engineering

Dr. Haibo Zhai is a Professor in the Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering and Construction Management at the University of Wyoming (UW). Dr. Zhai is also an Adjunct Professor in the School of Energy Resources and the School of Computing at UW and in the Department of Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University. In addition, Dr. Zhai is Director for the development of the Integrated Environmental Control Model (IECM), a power plant modeling tool developed for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (DOE/NETL). The IECM has been used in 40+ countries since it was housed at UW in 2022. Dr. Zhai has developed an interdisciplinary program of education and research in low-carbon energy and environmental sustainability at UW.

Dr. Zhai offers two interdisciplinary courses entitled CE4470/5470 Water for Energy and CE4480/5480 Carbon Capture & Storage for both undergraduate and graduate students. His research program addresses technical, economic and policy issues related to energy and the environment. His research interests mainly include low-carbon energy systems, carbon capture and storage (CCS), clean hydrogen, nuclear energy, bioenergy with CCS, and the energy-water nexus. In Fall 2024, his team released a new version of the IECM (Version 12). In the past academic year, Dr. Zhai's research program sponsored three postdoctoral research associates, two PhD students, one MS student, one undergraduate research assistant, and one part-time research staff member. His MS student successfully graduated in Spring 2025.

Dr. Zhai received two research grants and finished two significant research proposals as the lead PI, which have been under review with the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Energy for requesting the total funding of about 4.5 million dollars. Dr. Zhai published four research articles in high-impact journals, including *Nature Communications* and *Environmental Science & Technology,* and had three journal manuscripts under review with *Nature Communications*, *Environmental Science & Technology,* and *Carbon Capture Science & Technology*. Dr. Zhai and his team are now developing numerous journal manuscripts and expanding the IECM software by adding clean hydrogen as a brand-new module. Another updated version of the IECM will be released publicly in the next academic year. Regarding professional and public services, Dr. Zhai served as a member on the graduate student committee, the ABET committee, and a faculty search committee in his home department and on the UW Faculty Senate Committee's Research Advisory Subcommittee. Currently, he also serves as a junior faculty mentor in his home department. Invited by the Oak Ridge Associated Universities, he served as a reviewer for the Ralph E Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Awards in Spring 2025. Additionally, Dr. Zhai currently serves on the advisory board of *iScience*, an interdisciplinary journal of Cell Press.

Dr. David Pascual, (Ph.D. Microbiology, University of Mississippi)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Disease Ecology

Dr. Pascual brings his extensive background in brucellosis research and vaccine development to the University of Wyoming. He has more than 26 years of experience working with *Brucella* pathogens, and has developed mutants as potential live vaccine candidates for livestock. Brucellosis, which can cause abortion in livestock and contaminate milk products, has become problematic for states bordering the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). *Brucella* is able to spread and infect wild bison and elk herds, which now serve as a reservoir for *Brucella*. Given their ability to commingle, elk can pose a threat to livestock. To aid Wyoming livestock, Dr. Pascual is continuing his work with brucellosis vaccine studies to develop a suitable vaccine and an optimized vaccination regimen, which will provide improved protection against *Brucella*-induced abortion, since conventional livestock vaccines are only 70% efficacious. The basis for his work is the observation that his mutants are highly effective in experimental animals preventing *Brucella* colonization of the animals' tissues. These new mutants are found to be >1,000 times more efficacious than conventional livestock vaccines.

Dr. Pascual has made important strides in developing novel approaches to conventional vaccination methods. *Brucella* readily disseminates systemically regardless of the route of exposure, resulting in its sequestration into the liver and spleen to cause recurring bouts of infection or chronic disease. *Brucella* has numerous stealth capacities to evade the host's immune system to enable its persistence. However, we have found that our mutants lose many of their stealth properties, and now become recognizable by the host leading to stimulation of multiple arms of the immune system to clear the infectious *Brucella*. Recent progress has shown that antibody-producing lymphocytes are enhanced by our new mutants to provide a new cellular mechanism of defense. Current studies are determining the molecular mechanisms for such immunity. This work further supports our contention that arming the mucosa with immune lymphocytes will provide superior protection against wild-type, virulent *Brucella* infection.

Dr. Pascual leads a team of investigators in vaccine development supported by in excess of $1.1 million in research funds. He is internationally recognized for his work in mucosal immunology and infectious diseases. Two new graduate students have joined his team to further investigations into host mechanisms of protection against virulent *Brucella* infection. Dr. Pascual was invited to present research in brucellosis vaccine development at The 11th Global Network Forum on Infection and Immunity: Synergistic Innovation of

Microbiology, Mucosal Immunology, and Vaccinology, February 5-7, 2025, in Tokyo, Japan. He also presented his research results to the Department of Biological Sciences at Boise State University on March 27, 2025.

Dr. Dario Grana, (Ph.D. Geophysics, Stanford University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair and School of Energy Resources Professor in Geology and Geophysics

Dr. Grana's research focuses on computational processing of geophysical data to support the exploration and development of energy and natural resources. His work in subsurface geophysical characterization aims to predict physical properties of rocks and fluids, enabling the identification, location, and quantification of underground resources, as well as understanding their abundance and spatial distribution. Dr. Grana's research group integrates geophysical data with advanced numerical methods to build computational models that facilitate resource discovery and monitor changes in subsurface physical properties over time. His group develops and applies cutting-edge data science algorithms to estimate rock and fluid behaviors in contexts such as oil and gas reservoirs, carbon dioxide storage, geothermal systems, and groundwater aquifers. Recent projects include a carbon sequestration and monitoring survey near Rock Springs, WY, and a groundwater assessment study in a mountain watershed near Laramie, WY.

Dr. Grana's work enhances model accuracy and reduces uncertainty in predictions, thus providing crucial input for informed decision making. In the 2024–25 academic year, Dr. Grana published 12 articles in peer-reviewed journals, presented at numerous universities and international conferences, and secured funding from private industry to advance research in energy exploration. Dr. Grana also contributes to teaching by offering three courses: Quantitative Methods in Geosciences at the undergraduate level, and Rock Physics and Inverse Theory at the graduate level. Through his teaching, he helps shape the next generation of geoscientists and engineers poised to lead in the energy and natural resources sectors.

Dr. John Koprowski, (Ph.D. Biology [Systematics and Ecology], University of Kansas)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Environment and Natural Resources

Dean Koprowski joined the University of Wyoming as a Wyoming Excellence Chair in October 2021, moving from the University of Arizona where he had spent 20 years ending as the Director of the School of Natural Resources & the Environment. He is a Certified Wildlife Biologist (The Wildlife Society) and is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, The Wildlife Society and the Linnean Society of London, and The Explorer's Club becoming the first person to be elected to Fellow status in these 4 organizations. He was presented The Wildlife Society's highest honor, the Aldo Leopold Memorial Medal and Award, for his lifetime of achievements in the conservation and management of wildlife. John was elected as President of the American Society of Mammalogists, a professional society of nearly 3,000 scientists, and is about to complete his first year in the position. His scholarship focuses on community-based conservation approaches to wildlife management that involve local people in creating sustainable solutions.

Besides Wyoming, he is currently working in Mongolia, South Africa, Mexico, Nepal, India and Malaysian Borneo. His commitment to provide training through such approaches to UW students continues with his mentorship of 7 graduate students and 2 undergraduates in his research laboratory. In 2024-25, Dean Koprowski published 18 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Dr. Koprowski joined with UW's Office of Global Engagement to initiate international partnerships that will provide numerous opportunities for our students in Tunisia and India. Dean Koprowski is honored to serve as a Wyoming Excellence Chair and continues to seek expanded impact through partnership and collaboration.

Dr. Kevin Monteith, (Ph.D. Biological Sciences, Idaho State University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Environment and Natural Resources

Monteith holds an appointment in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, with a joint appointment in the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and the Department of Zoology and Physiology. Monteith joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming in 2015, and was named a Wyoming Excellence chair in 2021. Monteith's research program is focused on addressing important, timely, and often vexing questions in natural resource management to offer sound insight into strategies for wildlife conservation while simultaneously striving to advance scientific thought. His research group, the Monteith Shop, works hand-in-hand with natural resource agencies to address questions that have direct links to land and population management, and maintain strong ties to non-profits and foundations within the state and beyond. Support in external funding was $1.1 million in 2024, and the Monteith Shop is grateful for the support of an additional donor in the establishment of an Endowed Excellence Fund. Monteith's collaborative research was featured in 15 scientific publications in 2024, ranging from top ecological journals to more applied outlets. Moreover, Monteith's program works hard to communicate findings not only to the scientific community, but also to stakeholders outside of the academic community who interface with wildlife policy. And in addition, they work hard to make science accessible to the public, participate in multiple K-12 classroom visits, and continue to develop educational pieces for K-12 classrooms.

The Wyoming Wildlife Fellowship Program, initiated in 2021, is a collaborative endeavor between the Monteith Shop in the Haub School and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. It is in its fourth successful year to provide immersive and experiential opportunities to undergrads in a natural resource field. The program provides fellows with direct links to field opportunities, seasonal jobs, dedicated instruction to bolster critical thinking and soft skills associated with communication, and is firmly establishing a reputation of producing high-end graduates that are prepared for a career and highly competitive in the job market. Two fellows graduated the program this year, one of which is to be recruited by the Monteith Shop for a MSc degree working on bighorn sheep in NW Wyoming. Monteith was recognized by UW's Inaugural Research and Innovation Excellence Awards during '24. Monteith is honored to serve as a Wyoming Excellence Chair, and blessed to continue to serve the state of Wyoming and her natural resources.

Dr. Mohammad Piri, (Ph.D. Petroleum Engineering, Imperial College London)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Petroleum Engineering; Thomas and Shelley Botts Endowed Chair in Unconventional Reservoirs in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Alchemy Sciences Petroleum Engineering Chair

In the 2024-2025 period, Prof. Piri and members of his research group disseminated their research results through thirty-four (34) papers published (or accepted for publication) in peer-reviewed journals, with at least twenty (20) more manuscripts that are either submitted or in preparation. Prof. Piri and his research team continued further development of the world-leading Center of Innovation for Flow through Porous Media (COIFPM) located at UW's High Bay Research Facility. In this period, he worked in close collaboration with Wyoming's oil and gas operators (Oxy, Devon, Continual Resources, and Ballard Petroleum) and The Dow Chemical Company to advance both phases (I & II) of The Wyoming Gas Injection Initiative (WGII) with a $100 million investment ($50 million from the state of Wyoming to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the oil and gas operators to become $100 million) in a research and field pilot testing program. The Initiative aims to implement multiple enhanced oil recovery projects in Wyoming. Under WGII, and using a carefully designed, multi-stage process, Prof. Piri announced the four (4) oil and gas operators whose applications had been selected to receive support under this

initiative (each with two phases, I & II). The program focuses on deploying advanced gas injection technologies, using recovered hydrocarbon gases or carbon dioxide, to revitalize Wyoming oil fields. It also includes laboratory-scale de-risking of the recovery schemes at COIFPM. This grant will fund projects over a 3-to-5-year period to enhance well productivity and recovery from existing fields/wells that are in significant decline. Prof. Piri also established a long-term, strategic partnership with a major corporate partner, Thermo Fisher Scientific (TFS), budgeted at $105 million in two phases over at least 10 years ($40 and $35 million from TFS for Phases 1 and 2, respectively, and $40 million from the state for Phase 1). This alliance aims to foster pioneering research and technological advancements in the energy and environment sectors, driving sustainable innovation in the state and globally. Its primary goal is to develop, adopt, and expand cutting-edge experimental and computational porous media technologies in support of strategic economic development initiatives. Prof. Piri also extended existing collaborations with Shell, Petrobras, and Hess at a total value of approximately $6.4 million. To date, Prof. Piri's external research funding exceeds $100 million.

His research group currently includes twenty-six (26) Ph.D. students, sixteen (16) post-doctoral research associates, and five (5) staff members. During the 2024-2025 period, Prof. Piri recruited thirteen (13) Ph.D. students and graduated five (5) Ph.D. and one (1) M.S. students. He taught a course on Hydrogen Geostorage in Fall 2024 where he leveraged his expertise in multiphase flow through porous media and pore-scale modeling of displacement processes. Prof. Piri's expertise and research findings have direct relevance to enhancing hydrocarbon recovery from Wyoming's reservoirs. Since joining UW in 2005, he has designed, installed, integrated, and commissioned three world-class research facilities that have put UW at the forefront of research in flow through porous media and contributed to attaining its R1 status: (1) Encana Three-Phase Flow and Computed Tomography Research Laboratory, (2) Hess Digital Rock Physics Laboratory, and (3) the COIFPM. Such facilities contribute to the hiring and retention of UW faculty and provide its students with exceptionally rich research and educational experiences that are seldom available elsewhere. Furthermore, Prof. Piri has been diligently working on the commercialization of technologies developed by his research group through two spin-off companies, Piri Technologies, LLC and Digital Pore Solution, LLC. With UW as an equity owner, these companies provide distinctive technical services in the broad area of flow through porous media. Through this effort, Prof. Piri has established an avenue for diversification of the economy in the state of Wyoming as well as creating job opportunities for UW graduates and others. Since Piri Technologies' inception in September 2017, it has achieved global relevance by developing several projects with large national and international corporations. It currently employs ten (10) full-time and one (1) part-time, highly talented professionals with advanced degrees. Nine (9) of these full-time employees are UW graduates.

Furthermore, in March 2022, and in close collaboration with UW, Prof. Piri founded the second company (Digital Pore Solutions, LLC) as a subsidiary of Piri Technologies, LLC to commercialize software-based intellectual properties conceived in his research group. The entity is focused on digitizing porous materials and computing their flow and transport properties. Prof. Piri successfully developed a series of agreements with UW to formalize the initiative. The new company is focused on the computational aspects of flow through porous media taking advantage of high-performance computing and data processing and visualization techniques, state-of-the-art multi-GPU systems, and other advanced methods and hardware. Prof. Piri is currently the President of Piri Technologies and Digital Pore Solutions. Since the start of its operations, Digital Pore Solutions has developed, in close collaboration with Piri Technologies, several projects that are focused on applications of Digital Rock Technology in real-world field development projects. It currently employs eight (8) highly talented professionals with advanced degrees.

Dr. Bryan Shuman, (Ph.D. Geological Sciences, Brown University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Geology and Geophysics

Dr. Shuman has taught in the Department of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Wyoming since 2007 and works with undergraduates, graduate students, and post-docs to study the geological record of past climate changes and their influence on water and ecosystems. Shuman has published over 130 peer-reviewed journal articles, including 4 new publications in 2024 and several accepted for publication in 2025. His past awards include a National Science Foundation CAREER award. Shuman is currently co-leading a $20 million grant from the National Science Foundation EPSCoR program, which focuses on anticipating risks to the state's water supplies. The project supports UW faculty and students in disciplines from atmospheric science to economics and enables them to work directly with Wyoming communities to anticipate and respond to ongoing changes and future risks. For example, Shuman coordinated a public workshop at the Teton County Library in September 2024 to answer questions from nearly 100 participants about the future of the Snake River and its watershed; he also helped to train guides who work in Grand Teton National Park to discuss related topics with park visitors. The project also involves an ongoing teacher-researcher exchange program, through which Shuman met with K-12 teachers from Rock Springs, Pinedale, Casper, and Jackson to help develop science curriculum materials and research activities; he also worked with teachers from across the country at the Teton Science School during their annual place-based educator conference.

Shuman's research includes placing recent temperature, drought, snowpack, and ecological trends in the long-term context of natural environmental variations recorded by geological evidence since the last ice age. For example, in 2024, one of Shuman's Ph.D. students leveraged clean labs and instrumentation in UW's Science Initiative Building to extract ancient DNA from lake sediments from the Wind River Range and other parts of the western U.S. to study how trout populations, and the aquatic organisms that they depend upon, have changed over past centuries. Her work revealed how much these valuable ecosystems and species have been impacted by pollution and other stresses; it was selected by the American Geophysical Union for special highlighting in their monthly bulletin after a presentation at their annual conference in December. Additionally, Shuman, his students, and postdoctoral researchers have been using novel geochemical approaches to examine the history of drought across Wyoming over the past >12,000 years. By using compounds preserved in lake sediments, the Shuman research group has been able to examine millennia of temperature and precipitation changes in the Snowy Range, the Beartooths, and the Tetons. These cutting-edge analyses allowed Shuman to successfully obtain new funding support for student research from the National Science Foundation and to develop new field research experiences for students based out of the UW-NPS Research Institute at the AMK Ranch.

Temple Stoellinger, (J.D. with honors, University of Wyoming College of Law)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Law & Haub School

Temple Stoellinger is the Associate Dean of the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, with a joint appointment in the College of Law. She also co-directs the Gina Guy Center for Land and Water Law, oversees the JD/MA dual-degree program, and serves as Adjunct Faculty with the School of Energy Resources. Over the last year, she taught *NEPA Law and Policy* and *Public Land Law*, and helped lead the launch of a fully online Master of Science in Environment, Natural Resources and Society, along with three online graduate certificates now pending review by the UW Board of Trustees. Designed for working professionals and rural residents, these programs expand the reach of the Haub School and support workforce development across Wyoming.

Her scholarship this past year focused on public lands, energy law, wildlife policy, NEPA, and state trust lands. Recent publications include articles on state trust land recreation access (*Environmental Law Reporter*), bison restoration (*Arizona Journal of Environmental Law & Policy*), and grizzly bear delisting (*Frontiers in Conservation Science*), as well as a lead article on diversifying state trust land revenue (*Utah Law Review*) and a legal analysis of NEPA reform (*Foundation Journal for Natural Resources and Energy Law*). She also contributed two essays to the ABA's *Natural Resources & Environment*.

In service and outreach, she led the transformation of the Gina Guy Center, securing a major operational grant and launching a student fellowship that supported seven law students. She is an elected Trustee of the Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law (FNREL), co-chairs the ABA SEER Biodiversity Committee, and serves on the editorial board for *Natural Resources & Environment*. In 2024, she also served as lead issue editor for the NR&E Indigenous Peoples edition and was named Public Lands and Indian Law Section Chair for the 2025 FNREL Annual Institute.

Dr. Cynthia Weinig, (Ph.D. Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, Indiana University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Botany

Dr. Weinig is a Professor in the Department of Botany and in the Program in Ecology. Her research focuses on plant evolutionary genetics, that is, the genetic underpinnings of plant performance in natural or agricultural settings. In the past year, Dr. Weinig's research funded by the WY Excellence Chair focused on the interaction between plants and microbes. This research was applied specifically to microbes that interact with crops grown in controlled environment agriculture (CEA) settings, seeking to characterize all entry points of microbes into these environments and manipulate microbes to improve both crop growth and nutritional quality. Related, in 2024, Dr. Weinig received a new $6M NSF award testing how microbes may promote growth of Brassica plants in CEA and how economic modeling may guide experiments in crop improvement. Dr. Weinig also received a WY ART (Accelerating Research Translation) award, and is collaborating with Dr. John Oakey in Engineering to produce growth substrates that stabilize beneficial microbes around plant roots. In 2024, Dr. Weinig concluded a $5.8M NSF award focused on modeling and predicting plant growth under stress.

By way of background: When growing in agricultural or natural field settings, plants interact with complex microbial communities. As many as ten billion microbial organisms are present in each gram of soil, meaning that soil in the immediate proximity of plant roots harbors abundant microbial life and is the site of continuous host plant-microbe interactions. Not only are microbes highly abundant in soil, but also their communities are exceptionally diverse, with a gram of soil including thousands to tens of thousands of microbial species. As a consequence of this taxonomic diversity and associated differences in their functions, microbes can have pronounced negative or positive effects on the growth of plants with which they interact. Her research seeks to identify both the plant traits that may attract beneficial microbes as well as the plant growth responses to the presence of microbes. Notably, her research aligns with the growing state investment in CEA.

Dr. Weinig's lab hosted several UG researchers in the past year as well as several graduate students and postdoctoral fellows as collaborators on her research. Further, plant-microbe research was used to illustrate multiple concepts in a large-enrollment undergraduate class, Genetics (LIFE 3050), that she teaches; direct applications such as these are known to enhance student engagement, learning outcomes, and retention. Dr. Weinig also teaches an upper-division course in Plant-Microbe Interactions. Lab members published multiple papers in the past year on plant-microbe interactions in top-tier subject area journals, and past students have entered jobs at Plenty, West Inc, and Biotech firms as well as the federal agencies and academia.

OTHER DISCIPLINES IMPORTANT TO THE STATE AND REGION AND ITS HISTORY AND CULTURE: BUSINESS, ARTS & HUMANITIES, MATHEMATICS, CULTURAL STUDIES, ECONOMICS, LAW

Dr. Heidi J. Albers, (Ph.D. Economics, University of California at Berkeley)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Economics

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Albers taught her core PhD course in Natural Resource Economics and her advanced undergraduate course in Environmental Economics. At the undergraduate level, her teaching benefits students by giving them strong decision analytic tools that empower them to make well-developed arguments for their positions, improve their decision-making, and help them achieve employment success through technical skill development. At the graduate level, Albers' course covers analytical, optimization, spatial analysis, and numerical methods for nonrenewable and renewable resource economic analysis; uses multiple writing assignments to foster communication, reasoning, and insight development; and includes opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to become high quality researchers on pressing resource issues. To further foster students' educational growth, Dr. Albers used her Excellence funding for graduate students and recent graduates for various experiences including fieldwork in India, summer work, conference presentation experience, and publishing, which provides students with important learning/networking, develops marketable skills, and deepens understanding of tools and issues. The funding enriches the students' educational programs by enabling them to explore topics and develop skills differently than classroom work and by providing experience with analytical tools that employers value. Through these experiences, students become stronger contributors to Wyoming's economy and resource management debates. In 2024-2025, Albers advised 2 PhD students and mentored many current and former students as they navigate their careers. She also served as a mentor to students and junior faculty on campus and worldwide, as through her work with women in economics through the Environment for Development Initiative's WinEED and the ASSA's CSWEP, her role at Lulea, her role as an AERE Scholars Mentor, and engagement with AERE's workshop on mentorship. Albers is also a member of UW's Africa Cohort, which acts to bring faculty and students from across campus together to build an on-campus network of Africa specialists for research, advising, and teaching and to develop community.

Dr. Albers maintains an internationally-respected research agenda based around determining biodiversity conservation and resource management strategies that integrate socio-economic, ecological, and institutional characteristics of the setting. Her current projects include analysis of pollinators and pest-control services, migratory species conservation policy, reserve siting with consideration of people's threats, and marine conservation and livelihoods. In 2024-25, she gave 6 research presentations, with 4 in international settings. Her contributions to the economics, policy, and interdisciplinary literatures through editorial roles (at the *Environmental and Resource Economics*, *Ambio: A Journal of the Human Environment*, *Conservation Biology,* and *Environment and Development Economics*) enable Albers to lead research in important directions and to raise the visibility of UW's research and programs. Dr. Albers had accepted or published 7 peer-reviewed or refereed papers, including several invited articles that reflect her senior status in the areas of spatial resource economics, REDD+, and protected area design for biodiversity conservation. In 2024-25, in addition to a short follow-up coastal conservation trip following a conference in Kenya, Albers conducted fieldwork in India to support a graduate student's research on the East Kolkata Wetlands, expand previous research on rural livelihoods and environmental conservation through green production certification, and visit potential research sites in the Sundarbans for continuation of mangrove research.

Julie Hill, (J.D. Brigham Young University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Law, Director of the Civil Legal Services Clinic

Dean Hill joined the University of Wyoming College of Law as a Wyoming Excellence Chair in June 2024. She was previously Vice Dean and the Alton C. and Cecile Cunningham Craig Professor of Law at the University of Alabama School of Law. As a nationally recognized expert in banking and commercial law, Dean Hill's scholarship focuses on the unwritten rules of banking regulation. Her current article, *Government Debanking*, will be published in the TEXAS A&M LAW REVIEW. The article examines why there are persistent claims that government regulators pressure banks to restrict banking access to lawful business. Dean Hill suggests regulatory reforms to preserve public confidence in bank regulators and the banking system.

This year, Dean Hill was a featured panelist discussing the legal frontier for cryptocurrency at the University of Wyoming's Blockchain Stampede. She was also featured in a roundtable discussion entitled *The Examination Crisis: Restoring Safety, Soundness and the Rule of Law in Banking* sponsored by the Constitutional Renewal Foundation in Washington, D.C. Dean Hill participated in the Wharton Financial Regulation Conference at the University of Pennsylvania. In September 2024, Dean Hill testified before the Wyoming Legislature's Select Committee on Blockchain, Financial Technology, and Digital Innovation Technology. Dean Hill believes that banking is something that impacts everyone. Accordingly, she frequently shares banking information in local and national news outlets including NPR, Reuters, the Associate Press, and American Banker.

Dean Hill is honored to serve as a Wyoming Excellence Chair and grateful for the support of her scholarly activities.

Dr. David Finoff, (Ph.D. Economics, University of Wyoming)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Economics

Dr. Finnoff returned to his alma mater 20 years ago, and in 2021 was honored to be named a Wyoming Excellence Chair and McMurry Fellow. During the Fall of 2024 Finnoff taught parts of 2 courses: a solo course of mathematical economics, and 1/3 of a team taught course (with Katie Barkley and Chandler Hubbard) on computational economics. Mathematical economics and computational economics are dual listed at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In mathematical economics, Finnoff pushed to further integrate numerical analyses throughout all parts of the course and worked to help the students gather a theoretical and computational comprehension in the techniques and tools. Computational economics is a team-taught class with the goal of providing our students a working basis of tools in computational data analysis. Finnoff's component of the class is a rigorous section on regional economic impact and policy analysis (using IMPLAN data and the GAMS software package) with the intent of building a computable general equilibrium model of the Wyoming economy and using it to analyze the impact of a policy (or phenomena) of the students' choice. In this, the students have recently focused their work on analyzing the impact of alternative statewide public finance schemes (such as moving towards a different tax base portfolio) and while the development of the material was intensive, the students appear to get a tremendous amount out of the course.

Finnoff taught a course for graduate students in Spring 2025, the core graduate class "Dynamic Optimization." The class introduces new tools (theory and computational) that graduate students might direct at their own research questions, where Finnoff worked to try to increase the relevance of the material to potential research areas for the students across natural resource economics, energy economics, health economics and economic growth. Finnoff also chaired or co-chaired the Ph.D. committees for several PhD students, advises numerous

recent graduates to help them with their research program and serves on the committees of several Ph.D. and MS candidates.

Finnoff's research program focused on developing public policies to improve social welfare, taking into account the coupling between human and natural systems. His research seeks to understand (1) how coupled human and natural systems co-evolve over time and space in the presence of uncertainty and market failure, and (2) how economics can use information about the coupling between human and natural systems to construct public policies in the face of uncertainty that can correct market failures and move society towards more sustainable outcomes. Finnoff's work as a Principle Investigator (with other COB colleagues) was successful in generating a proposal that was awarded a $1 million grant from the National Science Foundation (RAISE:IHBEM Understanding and predicting behavioral responses to infectious disease risks and control policies: implications for epidemiological models and policy design) and his work as a CO-PI helped win a $20million NSF-EPSCOR grant for UW (WY-ACT: Anticipating the climate-water transition and cascading challenges to socio-environmental systems in America's headwaters). Finnoff also was also part of another NSF team that was successful in winning another $1million NSF grant (Predicting Emergence in Multidisciplinary Pandemic Tipping-points (PREEMPT)). Finnoff also ended up with 4 refereed articles and 1 refereed book (an author as a member of a National Academy of Sciences Committee) for the year:

> Wood, A., C. Mason, and **D. Finnoff**. 2024. "The Development of OPEC: An Evolutionary Game Theory and Agent-Based Modeling Approach", accepted for publication, *SN Business and Economics.*
>
> Lee, K.D., **D. Finnoff** and P. Daszak. 2024. "Modeling socio-economic drivers in management of disease risk on degraded landscapes," *Environment and Resource Economics*, 87:2143–2162.2
>
> Kirkland, B., J. Hochard, W. Y. Siu and **D. Finnoff**. 2024. "Ecological entitlements and the wealth of wildlife" *Environment and Resource Economics*, 88: 1–42.
>
> Brockmann, S., **Finnoff, D. C.**, Mason, D. M., Rutherford, E. S., & Zhang, H. 2024. Consequences of ecological aggregation in general equilibrium analysis of perturbed ecosystems. *Ecological Economics*, 218, 108083.
>
> "State of Knowledge Regarding Transmission, Spread, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease in U.S. Captive and Free-Ranging Cervid Populations." National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2024. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/27449.

Prepared as a member of the Committee on the Review of Transmission and Geographic Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease in U.S. Cervid Populations; Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources; Board on Animal Health Sciences, Conservation, and Research; Division on Earth and Life Studies; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Dr. Finnoff has served on many department, college and university committees. This year, Finnoff served on COB College Tenure and Promotion Committee, a WYACT and Department of Economics search committee, a Department of Veterinary Sciences Riverbend Ranch Chair Committee, and a Department of Economics Comprehensive exam committee. Finnoff also has professional service commitments, having served as an Co-Editor (Environmental and Resource Economics) and Associate Editor (Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment) for prominent journals in the profession as well as serving as a regular review for numerous journals in and out of the economics discipline.

Dr. Jeffrey G. Covin, (Ph.D. Organizational Studies & Strategic Planning, University of Pittsburgh)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in Business

During the 2024-2025 academic year Professor Covin contributed to the mission of the University of Wyoming in teaching, research, and service capacities. Regarding his teaching activities, Professor Covin taught a doctoral seminar entitled "Strategic Management Theory and Research." He also taught a master's-level course entitled "Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation." The former is a required course in the Management and Marketing Department's doctoral program and the latter is a required course within the Venture MBA program. Both courses were well received by Professor Covin's students, as indicated by his high scores on the "teacher effectiveness" course evaluation item. Regarding research, Professor Covin published six refereed journal articles on topics pertaining to entrepreneurship and strategic management. He also had papers accepted for presentation at several internationally recognized conferences including, for example, the *Academy of Management Meetings* and the *ACIEK* (Academy of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Knowledge) *Conference*.

Professor Covin was a recipient again this past year of the University of Wyoming, College of Business "Belt Buckle Award" for Outstanding Research. Within his domain of scholarship (the "Business and Management" arena), Professor Covin is rated by Research.com as a top 100 scholar in the United States and a top 200 scholar in the world (https://research.com/scientists-rankings/business-and-management?page=2). Regarding his service activities, Professor Covin is currently serving as the chair or a member of five dissertation committees. During the 2024-2025 academic year, he also served on a faculty recruiting committee and the College of Business Policy and Curriculum Committee. He engaged in extensive professional service activities, such as being a member of the Awards Commission for the *United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship* (*USASBE*) and an editorial board member for several of the top journals in his field of scholarship.

Dr. Scott Henkel, (Ph.D. English, Michigan State University)
Wyoming Excellence Chair in the Humanities

Dr. Scott Henkel (Ph.D., English, Michigan State University), Wyoming Excellence Chair in the Humanities and Director of the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research. Dr. Henkel carries out a research, teaching, and outreach program that spans the humanities disciplines at the University of Wyoming and in close partnership with state partners like Leadership Wyoming, the Center for a Vital Community at Sheridan College, and federal agencies such as the National Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Endowment for the Humanities. A faculty member in the Department of English at UW and an expert in the 19th century literatures of the Americas and the history of the Land-Grant University mission, Dr. Henkel's research activities focus on the quality of democracy, the history and future of work, and civic engagement. Henkel has published award-winning books, as well as articles and reviews, and guest editorials for the *Casper Star-Tribune* and the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*. A first-generation college graduate, and current mentor to first-generation students, Henkel has also served as president of the Working-Class Studies Association. Dr. Henkel facilitates public engagement at UW and throughout the state, serving on the Wyoming Humanities Council board of directors and the editorial board of the University of Wyoming Press.

Dr. Henkel is the PI for the Democracy Laboratory, a project of the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research. The Democracy Laboratory seeks to empower students, faculty, and the public using interdisciplinary methods to connect our communities and to strengthen the quality of our democracy. Inspired by the preamble to the constitution, "We, the people, in order to form a more perfect union," the Democracy Lab seeks to find ways to improve the quality of democracy at the local, state, and national levels. The Democracy Lab also draws

inspiration and support from the National Endowment for the Humanities' "A More Perfect Union" initiative; the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship and its report *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*; and from UW's Grand Challenges initiative. In the best spirit of the Land-Grant University mission, the Democracy Lab is an incubator where researchers, students, and the public can gather, discuss issues, discover and experiment with new ideas, and learn from one another. During 2024-25, the Democracy Lab accepted its third participants to its yearly cohort program. These participants met bi-weekly during the year for lab meetings, participated in public events, all leading to a public symposium to share their work, which was held at the Albany County Public Library on Saturday, April 19th, 2025. The culmination of the cohort experience is the publication of the participants' individual research projects in the journal *Experiments in Democracy*, which is hosted on the UW Libraries' Open Journal system.

Wyoming Excellence in Higher Education Endowment Fiscal Summary

The costs associated with each position include salaries commensurate with the market for top academics, employer paid benefits, ongoing budgets to support research and instructional activities, as well as one-time start-up expenses which are especially critical to recruiting distinguished scholars with large established laboratory research programs.

The balance in the Excellence in Higher Education Endowment expenditure account held at the university as of June 30, 2024, was over $4 million. Total expenditures for the 2025 fiscal year were currently budgeted at nearly $5 million. The planning budget was designed to maintain an adequate cash balance to cover on-going expenses for an acceptable period, in the event of diminished revenue.

The following table summarizes the uses and expenditures of the budgets for filled positions, and the total estimated cost of the program when all allocated positions are filled.

Balance July 1, 2024	$4,038,761
Tuition Scholarships	$ 13,126
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	$4,348,866
Services, Travel & Supplies	$ 499,239
Internal Allocations	$ 36,066
Total Expenses*	$4,897,297
Income (distribution from state and interest)	$4,635,615
Balance June 30, 2025	$3,777,079

*Expenses to date (June 30, 2025). Due to UW Year-End processes, full accounting for FY2025 is not complete.

Planning for FY2026

Planning for the FY2026 budget is based on anticipated annual projected income as per State Spending Policy for FY25 (WS 9-4-719). The table below includes the estimated annual budget for the permanently funded positions.

Estimated FY26 Spending Policy Amount for UW*	$4,333,333
Estimated Income FY26 90% per W.S. 21-16-1201(c)	$3,900,000
Salaries and Benefits (for Chairs and GAs)	$4,152,648
Services, Travel and Supplies	$ 375,400
Internal Allocations, Other Exp., Subcontracts	$ 70,000
Total Expenses	$4,598,048

** The FY 2026 Spending Policy Amount was not available prior to the due date of this report; therefore, an estimate based on the FY 2025 Spending Policy Amount was used.*

Part B. Legislatively identified faculty positions

1. School of Energy Resources (SER) faculty

The Wyoming Legislature established and appropriated initial funding for the School of Energy Resources (SER) in 2006. The plan for SER stipulated the hiring of up to twelve (12) distinguished faculty who were to be co-appointed in departments across campus. Professors in the SER are internationally recognized energy experts who are actively involved in both energy research and teaching. They work in a variety of disciplines and have formed productive collaborations across campus. The current SER professors include:

Dr. Po Chen, (Ph.D. Geological Sciences, University of Southern California)
SER Associate Professor of Geology and Geophysics

In the past year, Dr. Chen extended his AI research from seismology to rock physics. He and his students developed a new technology to apply deep neural networks to analyze well logs. This new technology opens up the possibilities of extracting chemical information from physical well log data and its development has received financial support from the SER under the Mowry project. Dr. Chen's research on full-3D waveform tomography resulted in a new international collaboration with the Egyptian National Seismic Network. His joint proposal with Dr. Ahmad Mansour, a senior seismologist at the Egyptian National Seismological Network Laboratory, was funded by the Fulbright Visiting Scholar program, which fully supports Dr. Mansour's visit to UW for 9 months. During his visit, Dr. Mansour will be working with Dr. Chen to apply full-3D waveform tomography to the Sinai Peninsular Region of Egypt, an earthquake-prone area where the 8 September 2024 M6.8 earthquake claimed over 2,300 casualties. Dr. Chen has been actively seeking opportunities to commercialize his full-3D waveform tomography technology. In the past year, his proposal titled "Full-3D waveform tomography and its engineering applications" was funded by the Wyoming ART Seed Translational Research Projects (STRPs) grants provided under the "Accelerating Research Translation" (ART) award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). In the past year, Dr. Chen taught 3 courses in computational geosciences, machine learning and capstone to both graduate and undergraduate students. He is currently advising one MS graduate student and one PhD candidate.

Dr. Timothy Considine, (Ph.D. Natural Resources Economics, Cornell University)
SER Professor of Economics and Finance

During academic year 2024-2025, Dr. Considine taught three undergraduate courses: two sections of Oil: History, Culture, and Power; and Energy Markets and Policy. He completed a study that appeared in a top-tier, peer-reviewed journal on the effect of temperature on energy demand and the role of adaptation. This research is

important for Wyoming's fossil fuel industries because the paper finds that adaptation reduces the need to enact stringent emission control policies. He also published a paper in the Cato Journal documenting the deeply flawed cost-benefit analysis of the federal electric vehicle mandate by the Biden EPA. President Trump recently overturned this mandate by executive order. He continues his work with the School of Energy Resources on the returns from improving oil recovery from the Mowry Shale in Wyoming. Finally, with external foundation support he is currently working on a study of how oil and gas drilling and production differs on federal lands compared to state and private lands and the impacts of set-back requirements and environmental regulation on oil and gas development.

Dr. Craig Douglas, (Ph.D. Computer Science, Yale University)
SER Professor of Mathematics

Dr. Douglas is an internationally recognized expert in computational sciences who leads a research group that creates sophisticated mathematical models of physical phenomena using networks of remote sensors and high-performance parallel computers. He had a long-term collaboration with AirLoom, LLC, a renewable energy company located in Laramie until the company reorganized in early 2025. Two of his current or former Ph.D. students have worked there, including one full-time, who is still there. He has published a research paper with AirLoom staff on optimization techniques relevant to wind energy design development. Dr. Douglas also has a project on dual porosity models relevant to both the fracking industry and aquifer modeling. An open source two and three-dimensional high-performance code has been released that runs efficiently on one to thousands of processors. Another project involves the Wyoming Department of Transportation to create a machine learning model for predicting when Interstate 80 should be closed and re-opened. It currently works well with historical data. We are working to create a better model using a live data stream. Federal dollars are spent in state and the results enhance UW's reputation through high visibility internationally. One of his projects has created the first 100 Gigabit/second computer network in Wyoming, which enhances Wyoming's ability to attract large data centers to the state. He has taught a first-year seminar course on Energy, the Environment, and Economics, that covers all aspects and forms of energy from the viewpoints of Wyoming and globally. Dr. Douglas is also an adjunct professor in the School of Computer, where he concentrates on providing new opportunities for Wyoming residents for careers in data sciences and machine learning.

Dr. Maohong Fan, (Ph.D. Iowa State University; Ph.D. Osaka University)
SER Professor of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering
Carrell Family Energy and Petroleum Professorship in the College of Engineering

His research has focused on carbon capture and utilization, coal-to-carbon materials, including carbon fibers and carbon quantum dots, carbide, critical material extraction, and purification. As a PI, Co-PI, or major senior personnel, he led multiple DOE and NSF projects in the last year in critical and energy material chain and environmental protection areas. His team has made good progress in separating critical materials from coal fly ashes and produced water. Moreover, he has been working with faculty members to make progress in CO_2 capture, sequestration, and utilization, which is important to Wyoming, which has abundant fossil fuel resources. His team's research results have been filed for patent application and/or submitted for publication. The projects he has been leading have involved faculty members from the Departments of Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics and Statistics, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at UW, and many team members in other universities and companies as well as national labs. He has 13 group members at the present time. He worked for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). The first report of the NASEM was published. He and his colleague are working on the 2nd

report. He led two chapters of the report. The report is significant to Wyoming because it is mainly related to CO_2, a major byproduct of the utilization of fossil resources, the critical driving power of Wyoming's economy.

Dr. Dario Grana, (Ph.D. Geophysics, Stanford University)
SER Professor of Geology and Geophysics and ***Wyoming Excellence Chair***
(See WY Excellence Endowment Report)

Dr. John Kaszuba, (Ph.D. Geochemistry, Colorado School of Mines)
SER Professor of Geology and Geophysics and ***John and Jane Wold Chair of Energy***

Professor Kaszuba has over 26 years of experience researching geochemical interactions between fluids and rocks. His research group of eight graduate students and one undergraduate student presently focus on unconventional oil and gas reservoirs, carbon storage, geologic hydrogen, and rare earth elements/critical minerals in Wyoming. His former students have successful careers in industry (e.g., Chesapeake Energy Corporation, Enerplus Corporation, ExxonMobil, Wyoming Whiskey) and government (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory). His research is funded by several extramural resources, including a Joint Industry Project with ConocoPhillips Company. He teaches courses in the Department of Geology and Geophysics and SER. He serves on numerous committees, including graduate student committees as well as SER and University committees, and is a member of the Wyoming State Geological Survey Advisory Board. Professor Kaszuba is the John and Jane Wold Centennial Chair in Energy and a Nielson Faculty Fellow.

Dr. Subhashis Mallick, (Ph.D. Geology and Geophysics, University of Hawaii)
SER Professor of Geology and Geophysics

Dr. Mallick specializes in the fields of full waveform seismic inversion, seismic modeling, and the use of artificial intelligence to solve seismic inverse problems. The full waveform inversion and anisotropic seismic modeling Software, developed by Dr. Mallick is being used by many companies in the oil and gas industry.

In FY2025 Dr. Mallick collaborated with Lumina Geophysical (a geophysical service company) and submitted a Phase-1 NSF SBIR grant proposal entitled "On a novel approach to seismic inversion". Additionally, he is also collaborating with Dr. Vladimir Alvarado of the Chemical Engineering Department in developing a DOE grant proposal on a theoretical feasibility study on the possibility of converting a potential carbon capture and storage (CCS) site from Wyoming into an Enhanced Geothermal Reservoir (EGR). The SBIR proposal is focused on commercializing the full waveform inversion Software for use by the energy industry. The DOE proposal focuses on the use of geothermal energy as a clean energy resource on a Wyoming-based subsurface reservoir. Consequently, they both are vital for the State of Wyoming. He published three papers in peer-reviewed journals and presented two papers at international conferences. Additionally, his textbook- "Computation, Optimization, and Machine Learning in Seismology", is scheduled for publication in August 2025.

As for teaching, Dr. Mallick taught two classes in FY2025, (1) Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and (2) Exploration Geoscience. The first class was primarily meant for graduate students and was taught in collaboration with the experts from the oil and gas industry. The students completed a real CCS project using seismic and well-log data from the Rock-Springs Uplift (RSU), Wyoming and will be presenting the results in the forthcoming SEG annual meeting in Houston TX. Via direct collaboration with the industry experts, this class gave an exposure to the students on how to complete a CCS project in practice and present results. The second class is for the senior undergraduate students and was jointly offered by the School of Energy Resources and the Department

of Geology and Geophysics and covers fundamental aspects of the art of geophysical exploration and their applications. Consequently, this class was vital for the students because it provided them with the opportunity to understand different geophysical exploration methods.

Dr. Randall Violett, (Ph.D. Agronomy, University of Wyoming)
SER Professor of Environment & Natural Resources

The Ranch Management and Agricultural Leadership program (RMAL) has used WIP funds to establish community college coordinators at three Wyoming Community Colleges. They have been instrumental in promoting the program on their campuses and encouraging students to attend the "Ranching in the West" seminar series. The past academic year has brought a great deal of excitement to the program. First the RMAL 4990 course has 42 students enrolled with all 15 of the RMAL majors. This course is the primary result of the WIP funding because it is the "Ranching in the West" seminar series that is hosted by community colleges. Besides the 42 students enrolled in the UW course an additional 37 students attended the seminars that were community college students. The other courses offered during spring semester were RMAL 4000 which was team taught by faculty members from Ag Econ and Animal Science. RMAL 4800 which was taught by an industry retired CEO (Doug Stark) and RMAL 4760 which was taught virtually by a Dr. Frieda Knobloch. This illustrates how the program is accomplishing a major goal of utilizing resources from across multiple disciplines and industry experts to teach and facilitate learning. The program currently has 15 majors and 22 prospective majors that have applied and have been accepted by the university. Of the 22 three are transfer students from Wyoming Community Colleges and it is projected that there will be 20 new majors this fall for a total of 35 RMAL majors in the program after one year. The new incoming freshmen are going to be able to live in a "Living, Learning Community"(LLC) in a resident hall. This will allow them to develop a cohort group that can learn and live together. This will allow the program to develop more out of the classroom opportunities such as ranch tours and conference attendance.

Tara Righetti, (J.D. Law, University of Colorado Boulder)
SER Professor of Law
Occidental Petroleum Corporation Chair in Energy and Environmental Policies

Tara Righetti is faculty in the College of Law, the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, and the School of Energy Resources. She holds the Occidental Petroleum Chair in Energy and Environmental Policies and co-directs the Nuclear Energy Research Center (NERC) at the School of Energy Resources.

Professor Righetti's teaching, research, and outreach activities continue to positively support efforts to advance energy driven economic development in the state of Wyoming. Professor Righetti teaches energy law classes in the College of Law and the School of Energy Resources. In the Fall of 2024 Professor Righetti offered two sections of oil and gas law at the undergraduate and graduate level. During the 2024-2025 academic year, she also served as an external member on one MA and one Ph.D. committee.

Professor Righetti's research relates to property and administrative law issues associated with energy development and decarbonization. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Professor Righetti published two book chapters, one on oil and gas methane emissions regulations and one on hydrogen. She also published two law review articles, co-authored with Madeleine Lewis, in the Oklahoma Law Review and the Boston University Law Review. Three other articles she contributed to were accepted for publication with the Oklahoma Oil, Gas, Natural Resources, and Energy Law Journal, the Columbia Journal of Environmental Law, and the Ohio State University Law Journal. Those articles will be forthcoming in summer and fall of 2025.

During the academic year Professor Righetti was invited to present her research to numerous academic, industry, and government groups including the University of Wisconsin Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics, the Institute for Energy Law, Texas A&M University Law School, Baker Hughes, The United States Association for Energy Economics, the National Energy Technologies Laboratory, and The Atlantic Council. Together with colleagues, Professor Righetti contributed to two grant proposals as a Principal Investigator or Collaborator to the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy, which are currently under review. Professor Righetti attended the Foundations of International Nuclear Law certification program at the Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and traveled to Scotland on behalf of the Center for Global Studies to develop collaborations related to energy production and CCUS.

Part C. Privately Endowed Faculty Positions

In the 2024-25 Academic Year, more than seventy (70) UW faculty positions are partially or fully supported by privately funded endowments established with gifts to the UW Foundation. In the 2024-25 Academic Year, endowed accounts supported twenty-two (22) faculty chair positions, with one (1) position vacant, and fifty-one (51) professorship positions, with seven (7) vacant during the year. Leadership support includes: two (2) Deanships with future named Deanships approved in the College of Business and the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences & Natural Resources. The single Archivist position is located at the American Heritage Center, and single Librarian position is located at Coe Library. A complete list of privately endowed chairs, professorships, and faculty fellowships is available from the UW Foundation. That list describes the history of endowment, the qualifications or purpose, the uses, and the current and past faculty recipients. Some of these endowed positions are not filled at the present time; others fund various faculty from year-to-year.

In all cases, the uses of the endowment earnings are specified in the gift agreements and are reflected in the focus of the teaching, research, and extension/outreach programs of the faculty member beneficiaries.

As discussed in Part A of this report, the funding for some privately endowed positions is bolstered by earnings from the state-funded Excellence in Higher Education Endowment. These public-private partnerships include:

> The *Thomas and Shelley Botts Endowed Chair in Unconventional Reservoirs in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences* and *Alchemy Sciences Petroleum Engineering Chair,* held by Dr. Mohammad Piri (College of Engineering and Physical Sciences).
>
> The *Eldon & Beverly Spicer Chair in Environmental and Natural Resources*, held by Professor Steve Smutko (Haub School and College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources).

The individuals who held endowed faculty positions for this reporting period are as follows:

College of Agriculture, Life Sciences & Natural Resources

Dr. Michael Dillon, (Ph.D. Biology, University of Washington)
L. Floyd Clarke Professorship in Zoology and Physiology

Dr. Dillon is a Professor in the Department of Zoology and Physiology and in the Program in Ecology and Evolution. His research centers around two core and related questions: How do environments determine whether

and where animals persist?, and How do animals respond to environmental challenges? Dr. Dillon published 3 peer-reviewed manuscripts in 2024 has 3 active NSF grants (contributing ~$3 million total to UW). He also directs the new WyldTech Center for Wildlife, Technology, and Computing which aims to leverage new technologies, big data, and computational advances to understand and conserve Wyoming's wildlife on working and changing landscapes. He was invited by the graduate students of the UW Madison Center for Ecology and the Environment to be the keynote speaker for their annual symposium, and gave invited symposium talks at the Society for Integrative Biology and Pacific Branch of the Entomological Society of America annual meetings in addition to 5 talks by his research group at international conferences.

He graduated 2 PhD students who moved on to postdoctoral positions at UC Davis and UNC Chapel Hill, directly mentored 2 more graduate students and the Teton postdoctoral scholar, served on graduate committees for an additional 9 students at UW (3 of whom graduated), and 3 students at other institutions (Alabama, Iowa State, UW Madison), and mentored 6 undergraduate researchers in the lab. He teaches Comparative Environmental Physiology (a core course for our wildlife biologists) and co-teaches a study abroad course, The Art and History of Medicine, providing a global experience for Pre-professional and Honors students. His graduate student leads the "Bee the Scientist" program which has engaged over 150 people at 11 senior centers across 6 counties in Wyoming in pollinator activities. The L. Floyd Clarke fund additionally supported 2 graduate students through research awards. Dr. Dillon is honored to serve as the L. Floyd Clarke Chair and looks forward to expanding its impact in the coming year.

Dr. Donna Harris, (Ph.D. Plant Breeding, Genetics, & Genomics, University of Georgia)
E.A. Whitney Professorship in Agriculture

The Harris lab currently focuses on several main areas related to plant selection and improvement. They are in the process of identifying germplasm and the underlying genomic loci that control traits shown to enhance yield stability under drought conditions. In one project funded by the USDA – Pulse Crop Health Initiative, they have completed a third year of field evaluations in 2024 for 100+ field pea accessions at two Wyoming locations (Powell and Sheridan) for yield stability and several phenological traits under adequate irrigation and deficit irrigation. They have also recently published (2024) their work from two greenhouse experiments conducted in Sheridan with a subset of these field pea lines. (Ph.D student, Grace Vinarao is working on this project). Additionally, in collaboration with a University of Georgia researcher (Dr. Zenglu Li), Dr. Harris has completed a third year of drought tolerance trials with soybean in 2024 and they are working to identify the genomic locations underlying slow canopy wilting and canopy temperature in soybean as well as developing a high-throughput UAV-based methodology to phenotype drought tolerance. They have also recently begun experiments to look at transcriptomic analysis to determine changes in gene expression under drought to uncover molecular pathways in response to water deficit. (PhD student Clement Nyam is working on this project).

Through funding from the Wyoming Bean Commission, Dr. Harris continues to breed for dry bean cultivars that are high yielding, upright, early maturing, and adapted to Wyoming. Dr. Jim Heitholt has been a collaborator on this breeding program. Lines in 2024 were tested at two locations, Sheridan and Powell. However, they lost their Sheridan location late in the season due to a hailstorm. Dr Harris has two pinto breeding lines that have yielded as high or higher than commercially grown cultivars over the past three years in both Sheridan & Powell. These lines have been entered into the Cooperative Dry Bean Nursery for further testing regionally in 2025. The lab also completed a second year of evaluating dry bean genotypes at Powell and Sheridan for canopy temperature (using a thermal drone) and yield with the purpose of determining whether canopy temperature can be used as a fast and reliable method of determining the potential yield of varieties prior to harvest. They have also developed

an F_5 population of a popping bean parent crossed to a black bean "non-popping" parent and are working to identify quantitative trait loci controlling this popping trait. (PhD student Price Akiina is involved in this project.)

The lab is also working on native plant improvement and alternative forage options for farmers and ranchers in Wyoming. In collaboration with Dr. Brian Mealor, and with funding support from the Bureau of Land Management, EOG Resources, and the University of Wyoming, School of Energy Resources, they are selecting and improving native plant materials for reclamation of disturbed rangelands and wildlife habitat improvement. A field trial was established in 2023 at Wyarno, WY and they were able to collect our first year of data on this trial in 2024. The Harris lab also is working on the process of analyzing the genetic diversity and population structure of prairie junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*) populations collected from several western and mid-western US states based on genotyping-by-sequencing. Prairie junegrass is a native, cool-season bunchgrass used in native seed mixtures for reclamation and restoration purposes. (Ph.D student Grace Vinarao and M.S. student Heidi Schuler are involved in this research). A similar process is being used to analyze genetic diversity and population structure in Wyoming big sagebrush. (PhD student Clement Nyam is working on this project). Additionally, postdoctoral scientist, Ilyas Ahmad, is working on another native grass, western wheatgrass to screen for tolerance to indaziflam herbicide through EMS-induced random mutations.

With Dr. Carrie Eberle, Dr. Brian Mealor, Tyler Jones, and Dr. Beth Fowers, Dr. Harris has evaluated the viability of using sunn hemp as an alternative forage option in northeastern Wyoming and Minnesota and the first publication of this work was published in 2024. Dr. Mealor and Dr. Harris are also collaborating with Barenbrug USA on an orchardgrass variety trial at the irrigated farm in Sheridan. Additionally, over three hundred alfalfa accessions from the USDA germplasm bank have been planted in Sheridan in 2023 in a replicated plot trial to screen for tolerance to the alfalfa weevil, a trait that producers in the region have requested. In the summer of 2024, these genotypes were screened using a no-choice, detached leaf feeding bioassay to evaluate the relative antibiosis in the different genotypes. Dr. Randa Jabbour is collaborating on this project. M.S. student Heidi Schuler is involved in this research.

Through a research agreement with the Whitetail Institute of North America, the lab is starting to work on breeding for forage field peas and ladino clover as a high-quality forage with higher seed yield. This year, Dr. Harris also added cowpea at the request of the Institute. They currently have F_4 generation plants of field pea breeding lines in the greenhouse and have made crosses between ladino clover and intermediate clover to evaluate seed yield. They have also made the first cross pollinations in the greenhouse this winter for the cowpea breeding program.

Another research project Dr Harris is focused on in the lab is the use of a combination of aero-ground penetrating radar (GPR) and a multispectral and thermal drone to predict the non-destructive yield of sugar beets. The aero-GPR consists of a large drone with a mounted GPR system that flies at low altitudes over the target area. This technology could significantly increase the ease of monitoring below-ground plant parts during the growing season in a non-destructive manner. Plant breeders and other plant scientists could use a device such as this in the seed industry to help predict the yield of crops harvested for their underground parts. In addition, the lab is also collecting other above-ground traits with the additional two drones to see what combination of traits best aid in yield prediction accuracy. Dr. Harris is collaborating with Dr. Dirk Hays at Texas A&M University on the analysis of the GPR data and they are in the process of finishing the analysis of our second year of field trials conducted in 2024 at Powell and Sheridan. PhD student Price Akiina is working on this project.

In the fall of 2024, the lab planted both a field pea and chickpea trial to screen germplasm from the USDA germplasm collection for winter hardiness. This work is being funded by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant. The field pea trial has 300 entries including commercial checks, and the chickpea trial has 32o entries including known susceptible check cultivars.

Lastly, for horticulture crops, M.S. graduate student Charles Grimes is looking at the diversity in wild strawberries collected from the Big Horn mountain range and is experimenting with cross pollinations between these strawberries and cultivated strawberries. The lab recently obtained a grant from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant to screen pepper germplasm from the USDA germplasm collection for drought and cold-resilient peppers that could be used in a pepper breeding program for breeding varieties adapted to Wyoming. Currently the lab is increasing seed of over 200 pepper accession in the greenhouse that will be used for screening purposes. (Postdoctoral scientist, Ilyas Ahmad is working on this project).

In 2024, Dr. Harris was able to bring in $455,881.82 in research grant dollars as principal investigator or co-principal investigator (4 grants at $316,331.82 as PI and 3 grants at $159,550 as Co-PI). With collaborators and a graduate student, Dr. Harris has also published 3 manuscripts and 1 book chapter.

Dr. Harris currently mentors one undergraduate student from Sheridan College and one undergraduate student from the University of Wyoming in their lab. Additionally, she has three PhD students, Clement Nyam, Price Akiina and Grace Vinarao and one M.S. student, Charles Grimes. She has an additional 2 PhD students (Dipanjoli Dola and Bhawna Bhawna) and one M.S. student (Heidi Schuler) that she co-advises with Drs. Jim Heitholt and Brian Mealor respectively.

In 2024, she taught LIFE 3050 Genetics, PLNT 4050/5050 Plant Biotechnology, PLNT 5820 Graduate Seminar, PLNT 4820 Plant Sciences Seminar, and co-taught PLNT 4470/5470 Lab.

Dr. Harris has had the opportunity to serve the University of Wyoming as a member of the Faculty Senate through spring semester of 2024, representing the Plant Sciences Department faculty as well as participating as a member of the Student Interaction Committee since the fall of 2020. She is also on the board of directors for the non-profit organization, rooted in Wyoming, and is a member of the Wyoming Native Seed Strategy Committee. She also is an associate editor on the editorial board of Crop and Product Physiology of the Frontiers in Plant Science Journal. Dr Harris serves as vice-chair of the USDA W6 – Regional Technical Advisory Committee. Earlier in 2024, she also served as a member on the Colorado State University STRATA panel entitled “Breaking down barriers for gene-edited crops” held in Ft. Collins, CO.

Dr. James K. Pru, (Ph.D. Molecular Reproductive Biology, University of Wyoming)
Curtis and Marian Rochelle Endowed Chair in Animal Science

Dr. Pru has extensive background in reproductive biology and disease, as well as in genetic approaches used to understand these processes in humans and diverse animal species. His research program seeks to understand the unique molecular dialogue that exists between the mother and embryo as pregnancy is first being established. He uses genetic approaches in animal models to elucidate signaling networks that coordinate maternal: embryo cross-talk. The significance of these studies is that the large majority of failed pregnancies in domestic livestock and other species occur during this time when the embryo first signals its presence to the mother. The overarching goal of these highly collaborative studies is to identify evolutionarily conserved pathways that coordinate successful pregnancy in diverse species. Dr. Pru also has a long-standing interest in the etiology and progression

of women's reproductive diseases such as endometrial and breast cancer, as well as in the development of therapeutic strategies to combat these diseases. Such diseases dramatically increase female morbidity and mortality while reducing reproductive capacity and the overall quality of life. Aligned with these efforts are additional studies that seek to comprehend mechanisms of aging, particularly in the ovary. Over the past few years, Dr. Pru's lab has procured over $2.5M in grant support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to study early pregnancy, non-classical progesterone signaling, endometrial/breast cancer, and for the application of gene editing technologies.

Dr. Pru has taught in the LIFE program at UW (*i.e.*, LIFE 3050, "Genetics"). He also offers a new graduate level course in Animal Science (ANSC 5300, "Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine"), as well as an undergraduate course (ANSC 3850, "Perspectives in Biotechnology") that will provide insights into modern technologies in large animal production systems and biomedical sciences. Dr. Pru serves on multiple international journal editorial boards, is a standing member of the Integrative and Clinical Endocrinology and Reproduction Study Section at the NIH, and provides service to UW on departmental, college and university committees. Dr. Pru continues to work closely with UW leadership to develop the Center for Reproductive and Regenerative Biology. With $10.5M in grant support being sought from the NIH, the Center seeks to expand molecular biology research excellence at UW. When established, this new Center will: 1) expand exposure to biomedical research at UW for Wyoming's undergraduate and graduate student populations; 2) grow existing research infrastructure through the development of research core labs and equipment purchases, and 3) recruit world-class faculty to facilitate the development of a novel area of research at UW. The basic and translational research conducted in Dr. Pru's lab has impactful application to both the agricultural and health care sectors within the state of Wyoming and beyond.

Vacant – ***Davis Excellence in Agriculture Professorship***
NEW

Dr. Sarah Kane, (Ph.D. Cell and Molecular Biology, Colorado State University)
Riverbend Ranch Endowed Chair in Wildlife-Livestock Health

Dr. Kane officially began her journey at the University of Wyoming in January 2025. The Kane laboratory research projects primarily focus on chronic wasting disease (CWD) in cervids, including deer, elk, and moose. According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's 2023 Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Report, the average statewide CWD prevalence was 19%, and one herd showed a staggering prevalence of 65%. Unfortunately, no vaccines or therapeutic interventions exist for this devastating disease. The Kane laboratory seeks to enhance diagnostics, develop new tools to combat CWD, and monitor the risk to human health. One major goal is to increase sensitivity of existing CWD detection technologies. Dr. Kane holds expertise in detecting pathogens from environmental samples and plans to extend these approaches to CWD. A second major goal will be to develop CWD-specific antibodies to test in therapeutic intervention studies. The third major goal is to understand when and where CWD prions are found within skeletal muscle. This last goal is of utmost public health importance; we must identify the stage of disease CWD prions are found in skeletal muscle to understand the risk for human consumption. The Kane laboratory renovations are near completion, and the Kane lab plans to 'break ground' in the modernized space starting summer of 2025.

To date, Dr. Kane recruited one PhD student to start in fall 2025, and undergraduate student recruitment will begin in summer 2025. Dr. Kane will teach her first course, LIFE 1010, in spring 2026. In addition to project planning, grant writing, and student recruitment, Dr. Kane has additionally served on two committees focused on

graduate student success. Specifically, she joined the Veterinary Sciences Graduate Student Committee as well as the GTA Allocation Committee. Collectively, in the short time Dr. Kane has been at UW, she initiated her research program development, began recruiting top talent to her laboratory, and continues to serve on committees dedicated to graduate student success.

Dr. Kelly Crane, (Ph.D**.** Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management, University of Wyoming)
Farm Credit Services of America College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources Deanship
New FY26

Dr. Amy Navratil, (Ph.D. Biomedical Science, Colorado State University)
Gardner Chair/Professorship in Physiology

As the Hank Gardner and Marilyn Fiske Associate Professor of Physiology and Department Head of Zoology and Physiology, Dr. Navratil not only leads in the classroom and laboratory, but also has the privilege of guiding a dynamic academic unit, the Department of Zoology and Physiology, that plays a central role in life science education and research across the University of Wyoming. The department provides essential instruction to thousands of undergraduate and graduate students across biology, neuroscience, and pre-health fields, and serves as a foundational pillar in preparing Wyoming's future healthcare providers, researchers, and educators. Under Dr. Navratil's leadership, the department continues to expand research collaborations, improve curriculum alignment with workforce needs, and ensure that its programs meet the highest standards of academic and scientific excellence.

In the classroom, Dr. Navratil is committed to delivering high-impact instruction to undergraduate and medical students. Each fall, she teaches half of *Integrative Physiology (ZOO4125)*, a large service course held in the active learning classroom of the Science Initiative Building. In the spring, she lead a section of *Human Systems Physiology (ZOO3115)* and taught *Mechanisms of Hormone Action (ZOO4736)*, an advanced endocrinology course exploring the molecular basis of hormone signaling and disease. Together, these courses serve over 400 students annually and help prepare them for competitive health professional programs.

Dr. Navratil also serves as the lead for the *Reproduction and Development* block in the WWAMI Medical Education Program, supporting Wyoming's mission to train physicians locally. It's especially rewarding to work with students dedicated to returning to Wyoming to serve rural and underserved communities.

Beyond teaching, Dr. Navratil mentors both graduate and undergraduate students in biomedical research through her lab, which investigates the molecular mechanisms that regulate ovulation and fertility. Her team currently includes two PhD students and three undergraduates. They recently completed an NIH IDeA INBRE "Women's Reproductive Health" supplement and published findings that enhance understanding of reproductive dysfunction in women. Dr. Navratil's research team also launched a new collaboration examining how reproductive hormones may contribute to Alzheimer's disease in menopausal women.

The impact of this work reaches well beyond the university. By training students who go on to work in healthcare, research, and education, Dr. Navratil is helping to build a more resilient and responsive health system for Wyoming. The department's graduates contribute to local hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, and many choose to remain in the state. Dr. Navratil's biomedical research efforts, meanwhile, offer opportunities for collaboration with healthcare providers and public health initiatives across Wyoming and the Mountain West.

In every dimension of this work, from teaching and mentoring to research, the support provided by the Endowment is making a real difference. It helps to expand access to education, strengthen scientific training, and contribute meaningfully to the health and well-being of Wyoming's citizens. Dr. Navratil is grateful for this support and excited to continue growing these efforts in the years ahead.

Dr. Corey Tarwater, (Ph.D. Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)
Robert B. Berry Distinguished Chair in Ecology

Dr. Tarwater is an Associate Professor in the Department of Zoology and Physiology and in the Program in Ecology and Evolution. She began her appointment as the Berry Distinguished Chair in Ecology in January 2023 and since she began this position, she started WYOBIRD (Wyoming Bird Initiative for Resilience and Diversity), trained undergraduate and graduate students, and conducted field research on species interactions and avian demography. In particular, Dr. Tarwater is in charge of the longest running study on avian demography in the Neotropics, which began in 1977. Dr. Tarwater's research program is focused on addressing how the loss of species, introduction of invasive species, and other environmental factors influence individuals, populations, and communities. Her research group works with natural resource managers to address questions linked to management, while also asking larger theoretical questions that result in her group publishing in top-tier journals such as Science, Nature Climate Change, Nature Communications, Global Change Biology, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Tarwater published 8 scientific papers, 5 of which included undergraduate and graduate students from UW and beyond. She began field research for a new Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program grant ($2 million) in September 2024, which examines how the loss of particular plant species alters seed dispersal of native and invasive plants in Hawaii. Her work in Hawaii was featured in the international news organization, BBC, this past year (https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20250403-the-new-hawaiian-freakosystem-emerging-on-oahu-accidentally-created-by-humans).

Dr. Tarwater has a current National Science Foundation grant, for which she is the Principal Investigator, which is looking at alterations in species interactions at army ant swarms. Dr. Tarwater started a new long-term collaboration with multiple international institutions, including the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), to evaluate how birds and bats are jointly responding to a changing environment. This new collaboration was featured by both UW (https://www.uwyo.edu/news/2025/04/uw-researchers-capture-birds-by-day-while-stri-catches-bats-by-night.html) and STRI (https://stri.si.edu/story/batbird-census). Dr. Tarwater is currently mentoring 4 graduate students, one postdoctoral researcher, and helping previous UW WRSP undergraduate students publish their independent projects. Dr. Tarwater is honored to serve as the Berry Distinguished Chair in Ecology and continues to seek expanded impact through the training of students and outreach with the public within Wyoming, while also addressing conservation needs in highly speciose regions of the world.

The Wyoming Bird Initiative for Resilience and Diversity (WYOBIRD) began in the summer of 2023 and has already had notable impacts on both University of Wyoming students and Wyoming communities. The mission of the Initiative is threefold: to further research objectives, support student success, and to connect with local communities through outreach events. In this past year, 12 paid undergraduate interns were involved in this program, six during the summer as part of the nest box study and six during the fall semester as part of the migration banding study. During the summer of 2024, we conducted public outreach events in Jackson, the Wind River Reservation, AMK Ranch, Science Cafes, and an event at Hutton National Wildlife Refuge. During the fall of 2024, we ran tables at UW's STEM day, which included over 1200 people from the public. We held our first

WYOBIRD Day in September 2024, which included inviting the public to our migration banding station, bird-themed crafts, and a public talk. Over 200 people from the public attended this event. WYOBIRD students, faculty, and staff continue to plan future outreach events and student opportunities for the coming year while upholding a standard of excellence in pursuing their research objectives across the Americas.

American Heritage Center

Dr. Mary Brown, (Ph.D. History, University of Missouri)
Clara R. Toppan Curator of the Toppan Rare Books Library

Dr. Brown's position is more archival in nature, and her primary responsibility is the oversight and growth of the Toppan Rare Books Library. One of the benefits of this is that she provides UW students with unique opportunities to gain experience in the archival and rare book field while also working on projects that will help them in their graduate school applications or future career endeavors. During this past year, Dr. Brown oversaw the graduate school practicum for an MLIS student from the University of Missouri (Dr. Brown's alma mater). This was a unique opportunity in that while the student was enrolled in Missouri, she also worked at UW and was able to bring in her knowledge of UW to projects she completed in Toppan. Dr. Brown and her colleagues also installed two rare book exhibits during the academic year with one titled "Camelot and Cowboys" and the second titled "Painted for Illustration". At the end of the spring semester, an undergraduate museum studies minor intern was selected to work during the summer on the upcoming exhibit for the 250th anniversary of the United States.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Brown contributed to the growth of the library with the addition of several new sub-collections. One of the collections contained the library of former UW professor, Adrian Bantjes. This collection was an exciting addition as it focused on the history of fly fishing which complement many of the existing collections related to fishing, hunting, and outdoor sports. Dr. Brown continued to host class visits throughout the academic year from multiple UW campus departments including History, Visual Arts, English, Art History, and Communication & Journalism.

During the 2025 spring semester, Dr. Brown taught "History of the 20th Century West" for the UW history department. The course had 20 students and provided Dr. Brown with the opportunity to engage with UW students outside the AHC. In particular, it was an opportunity to share the importance of teaching and engaging with primary sources to the students, many of whom were secondary education majors. In addition to the activities in Toppan, Dr. Brown has continued her research on the American Veterans Committee, a national organization of World War II veterans, and the work of the local college chapters across the country. Dr. Brown is also working on two other projects—one focused on early UW librarians and the community they built in Laramie and the second focused on the relationship during the early 20th century between the publishing industry, authors, and the artists who illustrated stories and books.

College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Shane Epping, (Ph.D. Journalism, University of Missouri)
Bobby Model Professorship in Photojournalism

One of Epping's major recognitions this past year was receipt of the prestigious UW Foundation Stewardship Award, in honor of faculty and staff who go above and beyond in nurturing connections that support the university, their colleagues and -- most importantly -- UW students. Epping was the single faculty recipient.

In terms of research and creative production in 2024-2025, Epping had a pictorial work, *Commuting: Highway of Death*, published in *Visual Communication Quarterly* (Volume 31, Issue 4), an international, peer-reviewed journal of theory, research, practical criticism, and creative work in all areas of visual communication. Relatedly, his paper entitled, *Visual Analysis of Living with Cancer as Seen Through a Lens of Poststructuralism,* was accepted for future publication into the same journal. In addition, he was asked by the editor of *VCQ* to co-create a photography essay that will be published in the next special issue about liminal spaces.

Unrelated research based upon a photographic documentary trip to Perú was presented by Epping at the *38th Annual Visual Communication Conference* in Saratoga, Wyoming, in June 2024.

In August 2024, Epping attended the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference in Philadelphia, PA, where he served as a panelist on a workshop session entitled, *Creativity and Responsibility in the Age of AI*, and as a discussant for a referred research paper session entitled, *The Influence of Emotion in Social Media Visuals.* In addition, as the Professional Freedom and Responsibility Chair for the Visual Communication Division, Epping organized the Annual Offsite Luncheon where he recruited *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* Managing Editor of Visuals, Denese Kenon, and the Design Director, Suzette Moyer, to speak. Relatedly, he organized the division's off-site social, too.

In the summer of 2025, Epping will be attending three international conferences and an advanced/master workshop in Maine, *Moving Forward in Photography,* with renowned teacher and photographer Sam Abell. Selection was limited to 10 attendees.

At the *International Communication Association* (ICA) Conference in Denver, Epping will be presenting two papers at two separate events: 1) *Frames of Transition: Visual Communication in Times of Social Change*, and 2) *Covering War, Terrorism and Scandals: Journalistic Norms at Critical Junctures.* The latter paper is a co-creation with a graduate student whose thesis Epping chaired; the paper examines political affiliation of journalists and the influence on their reporting from a Bangladesh perspective.

At the *39th Visual Communication Conference* (VisCom) in Estes Park, Colorado, Epping has again served a major role in the conference's development; funds from his professorship have been resourced to subsidize registration fees for all those in attendance. Whereas last year he directed the conference, this year he is co-organizing it with an associate professor at CU-Boulder. In addition to handling a significant share of logistics as they relate to hosting 40 scholars from across the United States and other countries, Epping will be presenting a project about re-tracing the work of photojournalism legend Robert Frank, who documented Wyoming in 1955. He also facilitated the acceptance of three UW graduate students to present their individual research papers at the conference.

In August 2025, Epping will serve on five panels at the *108th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) International Conference* in San Francisco: 1) How Technology is Reshaping the Bounds of Ethical and Practice-Based Norms, and How to Prepare for It (Panelist), 2) Commission and the Status of Women (Discussant), 3) Human Perception, AI, and Visual Credibility in the Digital Age (Moderating/Presiding), 4) Visualize Science Communication for Impactful Journalism (Discussant), 5) Move with Care – Documentation of Refugee, and Other Underrepresented Communities with Stronger Representational Awareness, and Respect (Panelist).

As the AEJMC Visual Communication Division's Contest Co-Chair, Epping managed the photography logistics for student entries in the Visual and Interactive Media contest, a blind-juried, peer-viewed international competition where winners were announced at the AEJMC Southeast Colloquium at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In a phenomenal showing where students competed against well-recognized universities with strong photography programs (e.g., Syracuse, University of South Carolina), UW earned a total of 5 awards in 3 different student categories: Photo Essay (Bronze and Honorable Mention), Singles (Silver), and Photo Illustration (Gold and Silver). In the faculty divisions, Epping earned a Gold, Silver, and two Bronze awards for his own photography.

In terms of creative production, Epping hosted a solo photo exhibition entitled *Made in Perú* at D'art Gallery in Denver in February 2025. Based upon a qualitative transformative framework, Epping raised about $2,400.00 for the women artisans he documented in the remote village of El Chino.

Several of his photos were accepted into multiple exhibitions in Wyoming and beyond: 1) *SouthWest Exhibition* at Decode Gallery in Tucson, Arizona (2% acceptance rate, 2) National Council on Aging (NCOA) Photography Award Contest—*This is 75* (6% acceptance rate to the Final Round), 3) *2024 Hit Me with Your Best Shot Bird Photography Competition and Exhibition* in Louisiana (10% acceptance rate), 4) *Up Close and Personal Exhibit* at The Lab on Santa Fe in Denver (43% acceptance rate), 5) *44th Annual Western Spirit Juried Art Show and Sale* (33% acceptance rate) in Cheyenne, 6) the *Third Annual Northwest College Community (Powell, WY) Photography Contest* (3 images), 7) *Interpretations Exhibit* at the Columbia Fine Art League Gallery in Missouri (35% acceptance rate), 8) *Travel Dreams Exhibit* (19% acceptance rate), 9) *Fluid Realities: Water in Art & Life* at Metro Art Studios in Bridgeport, Connecticut (11% acceptance rate) in August 2024, and 10) Epping's photo entitled, *Scottish Highland Cow*, was selected as one of only 14 framed photographs to travel across Wyoming. He also created a photography book that was chosen for display as part of the second annual public exhibition during the summer of 2024 for the Laramie County Public Library (LCLS); the reading program and exhibition theme were focused on "adventure," and entitled Ramble/Rove. He also earned a second-place award in the 2024 UW International Photo Contest (Faculty Division).

In terms of service and mentorship, Epping led a formal presentation entitled, *Photojournalism: Visual Story Telling*, at the 126th Annual Wyoming Press Association (WPA) Convention in January 2024 in Cheyenne. On campus, Epping led a 2-day professional development workshop focused on humanities methodologies in March 2025, partially funded by the Mellon Foundation.

Epping's teaching assistant, Forrest Cole, and one of this former students, Elsa Freise, won the 2024 Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowships. Recently, the latter photographer was asked to potentially present her work at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, as part of its major exhibition, *Buffalo Nation 250*, in 2026. In April 2025, Epping funded five students to attend a portrait workshop, *Explorer of Light: Laretta Houston*, in Casper, where they learned how to work with models, shape light, and create compelling compositions with guidance from an industry expert.

Epping chaired three master's level theses and professional projects. He was proud to mentor one of these students who gained acceptance to the School of Journalism's PhD degree program at the University of Missouri where Epping earned his doctoral degree.

Dr. Rachel Sailor, (Ph.D. American Art History, University of Iowa)
Clarence Seibold Professorship

Dr. Rachel Sailor was awarded the Seibold Professorship for the 2024–2025 academic year, during which she concentrated on advancing her expertise in digital humanities for both research and teaching. Her program of activities was intentionally designed to engage with the most innovative tools and techniques in the digital humanities. Through this work, Dr. Sailor not only acquired a new set of digital research skills but also built a global network of colleagues specializing in advanced digital methodologies. These experiences are transforming her approach to teaching, enabling her to offer students a dynamic and contemporary framework for understanding and conducting humanities research. Dr. Sailor's training has broader implications beyond the classroom. At the University of Wyoming, she is actively sharing her expertise with colleagues through both formal and informal channels.

As part of her professional development, Dr. Sailor attended the 2024 Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School, an intensive, internationally recognized training program. The summer school offered expert-led courses in areas such as applied data analysis, the "Text to Tech" pipeline, Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), and humanities data. This training expanded her methodological toolkit and has already begun to influence her students' learning. By introducing a wider range of digital approaches to analyzing and producing knowledge, she is equipping students with a more nuanced understanding of how research methods shape the questions scholars can ask and answer.

In 2025, Dr. Sailor further deepened her engagement with digital methodologies by attending the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) at the Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur les humanités numériques. DHSI emphasizes practical, community-based learning and provides hands-on training in digital tools and their ethical implications. Compared to Oxford, DHSI offered a more applied perspective, focusing on how digital methods function in real-world research and the communities they impact. This experience is informing Dr. Sailor's teaching by encouraging students to critically engage with the cultural and ethical dimensions of digital scholarship. Finally, Dr. Sailor participated in the 2025 Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) conference. CHCI is a global leader in fostering advanced interdisciplinary approaches to the most urgent questions in the humanities. Participation in this network further strengthens Dr. Sailor's ability to bring innovative, globally informed perspectives to her students and colleagues.

Vacant, ***Clyde E. and Jerrin N. Stewart Family Professorship***
NEW FY26

Dr. Thomas Dougherty, (Ph.D., Brown University)
Milward Simpson Professorship in Political Science

During the fall semester of 2024, U.S. Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Dougherty served as a professor of practice in the School of Politics, Public Administration & International Studies (SPPAIS). He was a guest lecturer and content consultant in political science and international studies courses (generally three classes a week) at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He hosted and moderated weekly noontime sessions for undergraduate and graduate students with prominent practitioners in the U.S. and overseas on topics of political, national, and international relevance. He organized recruitment sessions for UW students interested in government and international careers and brought in high-level speakers for public lectures. He was a panelist at all of SPPAIS' 2024's Challenges to Democracy Lecture Series, speaking in Sheridan, Heart Mountain (Cody/Powell), Casper,

Laramie, and Cheyenne; he was also a guest speaker at the Casper Committee on Foreign Relations, for Bridge/Wyo, and at the Laramie Rotary. In support of the Wallop Civic Engagement Program, he lectured and recruited at high schools and community colleges in Cody, Sheridan, Casper, and Cheyenne. As a former Fulbright Scholar himself and the former executive director of one of the world's largest Fulbright commissions, he mentored more than twenty UW Fulbright applicants, both students and faculty. He was keynote speaker at the 2025 conference hosted by UW for international educators from colleges and universities in the Rocky Mountain region.

College of Business

Dr. Todd Cherry, (Ph.D. Economics, University of Wyoming)
John S. Bugas (Professorship or) Chair of Economics

During the 2024-25 academic year, Dr. Cherry engaged with students at all levels, including teaching an undergraduate senior capstone course and a graduate experimental methods course. As the current Director of Graduate Studies, he mentored MS and PhD students and served on multiple theses and dissertation committees. As Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Cherry continues to strengthen the MS and PhD programs, with the size and quality of the graduate programs reaching levels not seen in 20 years. Dr. Cherry continues to lead in mentoring and assisting graduate students in their academic and professional careers. Cherry's research addresses policy-relevant challenges, with a particular focus on energy and environmental resources. He continues to secure external funding to support graduate students and graduate programs. In the past year, Dr. Cherry secured an NSF award to study wildfire management, with a specific focus on the recent severe wildfires in Wyoming. Additionally. Cherry continues to contribute an NSF funded project to study the potential for behavioral insights to improve the performance of epidemiological models. During the past year, he published multiple journal articles in leading peer-reviewed journals, including a top journal in his field *Journal of Environmental Economics and Policy*. He continues to be ranked among the top economists in his field, and in the past year, he received the *College of Business Belt Buckle Award for Research Excellence*. Cherry is on the editorial team of three international journals, including Resource and Energy Economics and Strategic Behavior and the Environment. He is a faculty affiliate with the Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University-Bloomington and a Senior Research Fellow in the Climate Policy Program at the Center for International Climate Research in Oslo Norway.

Mike Burns, (M.S. Sport Business, Temple University)
Timothy M. Miles for Professional Selling Position

Mike Burns, Director of the Center for Professional Selling at the University of Wyoming, led a highly productive academic year marked by innovative instruction, national student success, and applied research serving both students and Wyoming's business community. His teaching centered on hands-on, experience-driven sales education in both B2B and sports sales environments. Burns coached and traveled with over a dozen student teams to national and regional sales competitions—including the National Collegiate Sports Sales Competition, International Collegiate Sales Competition, and Kansas, Arizona, Oregon State, and Great Northwoods Sales Competitions—where UW students consistently placed in the top tiers. These immersive experiences help students develop industry-ready sales skills, gain national visibility, and secure competitive job placements, with many graduates going on to careers in Wyoming and the Mountain West region.

Burns' research explores behavioral sales strategy and donor motivation in emerging areas such as Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) fundraising. By applying theories of identity-based motivation, warm-glow giving, and ritual participation, his work offers actionable insights for collegiate athletic departments and development teams

navigating the complexities of modern fundraising. His instruction and outreach also extend beyond campus—through workshops with the Wyoming Small Business Development Center and corporate-sponsored sales challenges and networking events—supporting local companies and building a more skilled, sales-savvy workforce across the state. By combining academic rigor, student mentorship, and statewide engagement, Burns strengthens the university's role in driving workforce development and innovation in Wyoming's economy.

Dr. Kenneth Zheng, (Ph.D. Management Science, University of Texas at Dallas)
The Clara Raab Toppan Distinguished Professorship in Accounting

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Kenneth Zheng pursued research that explored key topics in managerial and financial accounting, with a focus on how firms respond to economic and informational constraints. His work examined tax avoidance under rollover risk, cost behavior during sales declines, and the reliability of financial analysts' cash flow forecasts. Five peer-reviewed articles were accepted for publication in respected journals, including *Journal of Business Finance and Accounting*, *Asian Review of Accounting*, *International Journal of Managerial Finance*, *Accounting and Finance Research*, and *Advances in Management Accounting*. These studies contribute to a better understanding of financial decision-making and cost management—topics of practical relevance for any businesses and industries, including those in Wyoming.

In addition to his research, Dr. Zheng taught MBA-level courses, i.e., Accounting for MBAs. He had a reduced teaching load due to administrative responsibilities as the department chair. His teaching emphasized the application of accounting principles to real-world business decisions and integrated current research to enhance student learning. Beyond the classroom, he advised students, served on faculty recruiting and graduate admissions committees, and supported interdisciplinary education through participation in graduate committees across campus. Collectively, these instructional and service activities contributed to student development and supported the preparation of future professionals equipped to serve Wyoming's business community.

Dr. Mitchell Oler, (Ph.D. Accounting, University of Washington, CPA)
The Clara Raab Toppan Fellowship in Accounting

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Mitchell Oler served as an Associate Professor of Accounting. He continued his service as a Board Member of the Wyoming Society of CPAs, contributing to both the Networking Committee and the Accounting Pipeline Committee. His work on the Pipeline Committee has been especially impactful, helping to address the ongoing shortage of CPA professionals in the state of Wyoming. Dr. Oler also led the Professional Skills course, which connects accounting students with accomplished professionals to enhance their career readiness.

Dr. Oler's research during the year includes publishing in papers on the implications of firm performance after the new lease standard ASC 842 ("Firm Performance Under the Lease Standard ASC 842" with Nicole Choi and Casey Frome, *Accounting and Finance Research*, 2024, Vol 13, 1) and on deferred tax payments ("When Do Firms Pay Deferred Income Taxes?" with Derek Oler, *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, 2024, Vol 26(3) 96 – 109). His current projects include considering the cost to shareholders of firms with deficient corporate governance, the impact of taxes on share valuations, and the current quality and direction of accounting education. In 2024 Dr. Oler was the recipient of the College of Business Distinguished Teaching Award.

Dr. Mackenzie (Mac) M. Festa, (Ph.D. Accounting, West Virginia University)
The Clara Raab Toppan Fellowship in Accounting and Finance

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Festa made significant contributions to the University of Wyoming's research, teaching, and service missions as a Toppan Fellow in the Department of Accounting and Finance. Dr. Festa's research advanced both academic scholarship and practical understanding in key areas such as accountant retention, audit materiality, investor trust, accounting ethics, and financial decision-making. He published seven peer-reviewed articles in respected journals including *Accounting Horizons*, *Behavioral Research in Accounting*, *The CPA Journal*, and *Estate Planning*, and was recognized with the American Accounting Association's Public Interest Paper of the Year award for prior work. Dr. Festa's research not only informs academic discourse but also addresses pressing issues that directly impact Wyoming's accounting professionals, investors, and business leaders—such as whistleblowing in accounting, fraud related to COVID-19 relief programs, and the consequences of audit disclosure mandates.

In the classroom, Dr. Festa taught a range of courses from financial statement analysis to real estate finance and real estate investing. His instruction emphasized real-world applications and data-driven decision-making, often integrating industry-standard platforms like WRDS and examples directly relevant to Wyoming's economic landscape. By preparing students for careers in accounting, investment, and entrepreneurship, his courses support workforce development in sectors vital to Wyoming's long-term prosperity. In addition to teaching, he actively mentored students in research and career preparation, advised graduate program admissions, and supported campus recruitment efforts through initiatives like "Meet the Firms."

Dr. Festa also served numerous leadership and committee roles across the College of Business and the University at large, including chairing hiring committees, contributing to promotion and curriculum review processes, and leading outreach initiatives with professional organizations like the IRS Criminal Investigation Division. His broad-based service and scholarship illustrate a strong commitment to enhancing the academic environment and strengthening the connection between the University and the broader Wyoming community.

Dr. Trevor Sorensen, (Ph.D. Accounting, University of Alabama)
The Clara Raab Toppan Fellowship in Accounting and Finance

Dr. Sorensen became one of the initial Toppan Fellows in academic year 2024 after receiving tenure at the University of Wyoming. Dr. Sorensen's research is predominately focused on market and analyst reactions to major business activities, including goodwill impairment, restructuring, and special items. Seeing a need for research with a more immediate and practical application, Dr. Sorensen has also pursued research regarding the use of technology in accounting. With one of the leading papers related to robotic process automation in accounting, Dr. Sorensen's authorship team was awarded 1) the AICPA-sponsored 2023 Notable Contributions to Accounting Literature Award, 2) the 2023 AIS Section Notable Contributions to Accounting Literature Award, and 3) the 2020 *Accounting Horizons* Best Paper Award. Through his understanding of the future of accounting and with his experience as a tax professional and Certified Public Accounting, Dr. Sorensen has continued to develop the curriculum related to individual taxation to prepare students for their accounting careers. Further, Dr. Sorensen is always looking for opportunities to engage with accounting firms and other businesses throughout the state to build stronger ties to the university, help students and firms in the recruiting process, and gain new insights into the current accounting environment that can be incorporated into classroom discussions.

Dr. Mark Leach, (Ph.D. Marketing, Georgia State University)
Mendicino Chair in Sales and Salesmanship

Dr. Leach's research is in business-to-business marketing and sales. More specifically, his research focuses on understanding buyer and seller relationships, leveraging the sales function to manage relationships with profitable customers, and providing effective sales training. Mark has published articles in the *Journal of Business Research, Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* and other leading academic journals. Mark is a member of the editorial review board of the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, and the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*. Prior to joining the University of Wyoming in 2017, Dr. Leach was a member of the faculty at Loyola Marymount University and Purdue University. He has also been a behavioral research scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. During the 2023-2024 academic year, Dr. Leach has published research examining how salespeople manage ambiguity through bricolage behaviors in the *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*. Additionally, he continues to develop and refine curriculum and recruitment strategies for UW's academic programs in Professional Selling. Likewise, Dr. Leach continues to develop and expand the UW Center for Professional Selling. He has brought together a team of faculty, staff, and sales practitioners to effectively establish the Center as a hub for sales thought-leadership.

Dr. Charles Mason, (Ph.D. Economics, University of California, Berkeley)
H.A. (Dave) True Jr. Chair in Petroleum and Natural Gas Economics

During the past fiscal year, Dr. Mason taught one graduate class (Advanced Microeconomics II – Economics of Uncertainty and Game Theory; ECON 5120) and one undergraduate class (Energy Economics, ECON 4340). He directed one (2) doctoral student2, two (2) master's students, and participated in the graduate committees for several students. He had five papers published, an additional paper conditionally accepted for publication, and multiple other papers under review for potential publication, one of which was been invited to revise for resubmission. He gave a variety of presentations, both in the US and abroad. He continues to serve as the Editor-in-Chief for Economics of Energy and Environmental Policy, a key publication produced by the International Association of Energy Economists.

His research program is largely centered on studying oil and gas markets, including studies of oil and gas prices, motives to hold oil inventories, and the incentives for deployment of infrastructure, such as pipelines, and the implications of constrained infrastructure upon energy markets. These topics have clear relevance to the energy sector of the state, and policy relevance to the nation. Dr. Mason's research agenda also provides valuable input that allows regular updating of the undergraduate oil and gas class, which he teaches most years (and is scheduled to teach next spring), enhancing the educational value and relevance of the class. He has several projects underway, many of which directly relate to oil or natural gas markets; one of these is based on a recently awarded grant from the Sloan Foundation (shared with colleagues at the University of Texas – Austin) to study the economics of carbon capture, utilization and storage. He also was part of a team that received a grant from the National Science Foundation. Students in his undergraduate class obtain a deep understanding of the recent history of oil and gas markets, and how that informs current events. Students in his graduate class gained important skills that modern micro-economists use regularly in their professional work. His approach to this class encourages students to speak up, and he capped the class off with a round of presentations by the students. Material he discusses in that class is also amenable to public presentations, which provides visibility for the University and helps lay people better understand these markets.

Dr. Robert Godby, (Ph.D. Economics, McMaster University)
John A. Guthrie Distinguished Professor of Banking and Financial Services

Dr. Godby recently began his appointment as the Guthrie Family Chair in Banking and Financial Services in January 2025. The Guthrie chair has been vacant for a period of time, and the associated banking minor has been suspended pending definition of the minor to ensure resources are available to teach and maintain a sustainable minor given other programs offered in the College of Business. This appointment is understood to be a non-permanent approximately 2-year appointment with the specific task of achieving three goals in the coming two years. Dr. Godby has been asked to 1) redevelop and deploy a new curriculum in the Banking Minor in the College of Business, specifically, developing two classes necessary to teach the minor, and also defining the other necessary classes to complete the minor ensuring complementarity with other programs offered in the College. 2) To reestablish external relationships with the banking community in Wyoming and the region, creating opportunities for internships and student placement after graduation, while also ensuring the banking curriculum is consistent with the needs of the banking sector. 3) To develop a plan to search for and identify suitable permanent Guthrie Chair candidates with a formal background in banking or banking related activities, the ability to create and maintain external relationships with the banking community, while also having a background suitable to being a successful academic with an effective research program in the College of Business at the University of Wyoming.

Since his appointment Dr. Godby has focused on the first area of the charge described above. In the past semester he taught an extra course above his normal teaching load, offering an on-campus section of Fin 4520 (Financial Markets and Institutions). This class is directly related to the banking program and allowed finance students a necessary senior elective to complete their degrees when another faculty member was unexpectedly unavailable due to health issues. The cancellation of that class would have had two serious effects on the College's finance majors: several seniors would not have had enough senior elective credits to complete their degrees last semester, and it ensured Finance seniors were able to access industry-specific knowledge important to their potential careers in finance or other business-related fields. Dr. Godby has also been active in developing an updated curriculum for the Banking minor with a planned restart of the program in the fall of 2025, and offering the first newly developed, minor-specific class in Spring 2026.

Dr. Godby has also been active in research, publishing the paper "State Incentives: Impact on Wind Energy Costs and Policy Development," with Ben Cook, Morgan Holland and Tyler Kjorstad in the well regarded, peer-reviewed journal *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, where he acted as the lead author and investigator. This paper details how the financing of wind energy projects occurs and analyzes how state incentives affect the comparative cost and financing of renewable energy projects using a detailed financial model. The topic of the paper is directly related to banking and finance activities that occur in the state and region. The results of this paper describe how states can achieve better policy outcomes with respect maximizing state tax benefits while minimizing the competitive disadvantages (or maximizing competitive advantages) in attracting development to their own states over other states. Godby also maintains a very active state and university service role. He serves as a governor-appointed member of the state's Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG). He was also elected by UW Faculty Senate members to serve in academic year 2024-2025 as the Chair-Elect of the University of Wyoming Faculty Senate, taking on the Chair role in early May 2025. He will serve as the Chair of the Faculty Senate in 2025-2026, working with the University of Wyoming Administration and Board of Trustees to represent UW faculty in their shared governance role on campus.

Dr. Chase Thiel, (Ph.D. Industrial and Organizational Psychology, University of Oklahoma)
Rile Chair of Leadership & Entrepreneurship

Dr. Chase Thiel was named the Rile Chair of Leadership and earned the rank of Professor of Management in Academic Year (AY) 2025. Dr. Thiel continued in his role as Chair of the Department of Management and Marketing. As the Rile Chair of Leadership, Dr. Thiel led or assisted in several significant initiatives through the Center for Principle-Based Leadership and Ethics (PBLE), which he co-founded. Through his leadership, PBLE hosted its signature events, including the SparkTank competition—distributing nearly $165,000 to Albany County nonprofits—and the Leadership Academy. The latter is a signature co-curricular experience for elite UW students who travel as a cohort around the state to learn about economic development opportunities and develop systems leadership capabilities to help leverage those opportunities. PBLE also organized the Ethical Leadership Showcase, bringing seasoned business leaders to the University of Wyoming (UW), such as Liz Bohannon, to educate students on ethical leadership principles. Further extending PBLE's impact, Dr. Thiel collaborated with the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning to continue the Daniels Fund Faculty Fellows Program, which awarded grants to faculty across five UW colleges to integrate ethics education into their curricula.

Dr. Thiel remained deeply engaged in external outreach, delivering leadership and ethics workshops to organizations such as Leadership Laramie, the Southeast Wyoming Estate Planning Council, Wyoming Boys State, the Central Wyoming Society for Human Resource Management, and the Farm Bureau Legal and Claims Conference. He also presented internationally at the University of Belgrade and at conferences in Toronto and Copenhagen. In addition, he led executive training through the Cowboy Leadership Experience, covering topics like principle-based leadership, employee motivation, and team dynamics—programs directly benefiting Wyoming's workforce.

Students continued to benefit richly from PBLE's programs. During AY 2025, senior leadership students partnered with several Wyoming-based organizations to develop ethical culture plans. Dr. Thiel also taught the Advanced Business Decision-Making course (MGT 4030/5030), preparing elite UW students for both the Daniels Fund Business Ethics Case Competition and the International Business Ethics Case Competition. Under his mentorship, an undergraduate team placed second in one of the divisions of the International Business Ethics Case Competition.

In terms of research, Dr. Thiel sustained an internationally recognized scholarly profile. During AY 2025, he published or had accepted multiple articles in top journals, including the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Harvard Business Review*. His work on employee monitoring, an area that continues to draw significant media attention—including features in *Forbes*, *CNBC*, and *Psychology Today*—solidified his standing as a thought leader in business ethics. Dr. Thiel's contributions were once again recognized with the College of Business Senior Faculty Research Award, underscoring his ongoing impact in both scholarship and practice.

Kent Noble, (B.S., University of Wyoming)
Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Service Chair

Kent Noble serves as the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Service Chair at the University of Wyoming's College of Business, where he teaches principle-based leadership and ethics. His work equips students, executives, and community members with the tools to make values-driven decisions in business and in life. Since 2013, Kent has delivered hundreds of presentations across the country, focusing on ethical leadership, integrity, and personal branding.

Under his direction, the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Collegiate Program at UW has had a significant impact. In a Spring 2025 student survey, 97% of Principle-Based Ethics students agreed that "the instructor is among the best I have known." Also, that semester, 98% of his students earned their Ethical Leadership Certification from the NASBA Center for the Public Trust—a distinction achieved by less than 1% of college students nationally.

Kent also advises the University of Wyoming's chapters of the National Marrow Donor Program and the Student Center for the Public Trust (Ethics Club), which organizes **SparkTank**—a Shark Tank-style initiative that channels philanthropic support to local nonprofits. In the 2025 SparkTank, Ethics Club members partnered with Sales Seminar students, the UW Foundation, and donors to raise and distribute **$165,000** to organizations providing essential services such as food, shelter, safety, and clothing. Award recipients included:

- **Laramie Connections Center** – $42,500 (plus an additional $5,000 as the inaugural People's Choice Award winner)
- **Ark Regional Services** – $40,000
- **Climb Wyoming** – $38,750
- **Downtown Clinic** – $38,750

According to UW's Center for Business and Economic Analysis, the **$743,000 in SparkTank funds awarded since 2018** has generated a strong multiplier effect throughout the Albany County economy. When factoring in indirect business-to-business spending and induced household spending, the total economic impact includes:

- $3,221,281 in total economic output
- $1,416,955 in value added (contribution to local GDP)
- $1,114,598 in labor income
- 30 new jobs created

In 2024, Kent published *What Do You Stand For?* a book that offers a structured, principle-based approach to building a personal code of ethics. Drawing from his own experiences, leadership lessons, and time-tested exercises, the book helps readers articulate and live out their core values.

Kent's contributions have been recognized with multiple honors, including Mortar Board's Outstanding Service and Dedication Award, as well as the College of Business's Professor of the Year and Impact Awards. He was appointed to the Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics by Governor Matt Mead in 2018 and reappointed by Governor Mark Gordon in 2021. He also serves on a number of boards, including the John P. Ellbogen Foundation, the Better Business Bureau of Northern Colorado and Wyoming, and the NASBA Center for the Public Trust.

His most requested presentations—*What Do You Stand For?* and *What's Your Brand?*—have reached audiences ranging from classrooms to boardrooms. The latter is featured in a 13-minute TEDx talk. Recent speaking engagements include Trihydro, the Center for American Values, True Companies, the CSU Graduate Symposium, the UW Ranch Management and Agricultural Leadership Symposium, the Better Business Bureau Torch Awards, and numerous civic and leadership organizations across the region.

Kent is also deeply involved in two statewide recognitions that celebrate ethical leadership: the Bill Daniels Ethical Leadership Award and the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame**.**

Dr. Linda Price, (Ph.D. Business Administration, University of Texas at Austin)
W. Richard Scarlett III and Margaret W. Scarlett Chair of Business Administration

Linda L. Price is the Dick and Maggie Scarlett Chair of Business Administration and Professor of Marketing. She is globally acclaimed as a top educator, researcher, and doctoral student mentor in marketing and consumer behavior. Specifically, research published this year considers her within the top 10% most impactful global scholars in consumer research and ranks her in the top 15 in thought leadership. Professor Price has received numerous awards for lifetime scholarly and mentorship contributions, including being named a fellow and distinguished educator for the leading consumer and marketing associations. This year closer to home, Dr. Price was named an *Honoree in Research and Innovation* at University of Wyoming and given the *Distinguished Teaching Award* by the College of Business.

Because of Professor Price's ethos of institutional leadership and stewardship she serves on the advisory or editorial board for several top marketing journals and additionally serves on the board of several foundations, including the Foundation Board for the *American Marketing Association*, and the advisory board for *Better Marketing for a Better World*. In addition, she serves on numerous award committees and presents and participates as a mentor in many international PhD consortiums, workshops and international conferences, often as a plenary speaker. Dr. Price is currently managing editor for a special issue of *Journal of Service Research* and a volume of *Journal of the Association of Consumer Research*, to be published in Summer 2026 and Spring 2027. Her research on an ethos of repair appears in the current issue of a leading Financial Times Journal, and she has a forthcoming publication in the top journal in consumer research. In addition, she has other publications in leading journals for this year. As should be evident from this brief profile of activities, Dr. Price brings lots of visibility to University of Wyoming through her institutional service and scholarship.

As a distinguished alumnus of the College of Business, Dr Price is especially honored to give back to University of Wyoming through faculty teaching and service. Dr. Price serves as co-director of research in the college, with responsibility for assessing research funding requests, recommending research awards, and facilitating a stronger research culture. Dr. Price also serves as Director of the PhD program in the Department of Management and Marketing and on Graduate Council. This academic year she stewarded several departmental initiatives to improve the pedagogical and scholarly skills of PhD students. She has also helped PhD students submit and present research at several highly competitive top academic conferences and submit research to top journals. Dr. Price also serves on the College of Business Assurance of Learning Committee working to align our pedagogy and evaluation processes with our objectives to recruit, develop, grow and sustain our most prized resource—our students. Truly, our students are where stewardship matters most! As a first-generation college graduate from University of Wyoming, Professor Price loves offering support and guidance while teaching undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Business. She views this as a special opportunity to inspire curiosity, innovation, and critical thinking. Professor Price wants each of them to leave her classes with pride, and confidence in what a University of Wyoming degree can do for them.

As the Dick and Maggie Scarlett chair, during the 2024/2025 academic year Professor Price was able to support students' development as teachers and scholars in myriad ways, helping them attend and present their work at conferences, participate in doctoral symposiums and consortiums, and host distinguished marketing scholars, including some alumni at University of Wyoming. With the support of the Dick and Maggie Scarlett chair, Dr. Price was able to represent University of Wyoming with pride in prestigious and leadership forums. She was able to pursue ambitious research on ground-breaking topics and publish that research in highly impactful journals. Without the generous support of the Dick and Maggie Scarlett chair, none of this would be possible.

Dr. Jason Shogren, (Ph.D. Economics, University of Wyoming)
Stroock Chair of Natural Resource Conservation and Management

This past academic year, the Stroock Chair has been focused on five areas of research. First, Shogren continued to work on the integration of economics and biology to understand better how to manage migration in Wyoming. A paper published with a set of national and international co-authors in the *Review of Environmental Economic Policy* focused on how to design incentive systems to help migratory animals, on land and in the air, navigate the mix of public and private lands. Shogren and co-authors develop a framework to evaluate the efficacy of such mechanisms based on two salient ecological characteristics of migratory species: route plasticity and resilience. They describe how these characteristics reveal four challenges facing migration: free riding, holdouts, transaction costs, and transnational coordination. They use the framework to identify combinations of mechanisms that can support the needs of two migratory species: mule deer and monarchs.

Second, Shogren expanded his work on integrating economics with epidemiology to address current and future long-term pandemics, e.g., COVID-19. A paper published with the UWyo economic team in *Nature's Scientific Reports* explored two distinct strategies for controlling an emerging epidemic - physical distancing and regular testing with self-isolation. We compared the performance of these strategies in an integrated epidemiological and economic model that includes a representation of transmission by "superspreading," in which a few infected people cause a large share of infections.

Third, working with the expert group from the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Shogren worked on the question of "response diversity" to address environmental challenges. In a paper published in *Nature Sustainability*, they consider the relationship between financial and ecological diversity. Financial advisers recommend a diverse portfolio to respond to market fluctuations across sectors. Similarly, nature has evolved a diverse portfolio of species to maintain ecosystem function amid environmental fluctuations. In urban planning, public health, transport and communications, food production, and other domains, however, this feature seems ignored. They argue that ample responses to our new reality in addressing sustainability must be actively designed and managed. They describe what response diversity is, how it is expressed and how it can be enhanced and lost.

Fourth, Shogren continues to focus on non-market institutions like the solemn oath to facilitate trade and the creation of economic value through voluntary exchange. In a paper published with his former UWyo PhD student João Vaz in *Economics Letters*, they consider how the oath has been used to improve behavior toward social objectives. Existing research suggests that the oath promotes pro-social behavior without affecting an underlying preference for cooperation. Vaz and Shogren examine whether an oath impacts behavior in the simultaneous and sequential versions of the prisoners' dilemma and explore whether that impact could be attributed to a change of preference for the cooperative outcome. They observe an overwhelming transfer of reported strategies by oath-takers moving second from selfish (always defect) to conditionally cooperative (cooperate against cooperation by first movers). The results lend support to the hypothesis that preferences depend on the oath-taking context. He also published a paper in the top ranked *Games and Economic Behavior* on how the oath affects trust and exchange in markets with differing levels of information.

Fifth, Shogren and an international set of co-authors from the Teton Group of Behavioral Environmental Economics (started by UWyo's Bugas Chair Todd Cherry) published a Policy Forum paper in the top ranked journal *Science* that focused on the need for a better use of experimental methods in the management of environmental policy. In this paper, the authors stress that while understanding cause and effect is central to the

design of effective environmental policies and programs, environmental scientists and practitioners typically rely on methods not designed to generate evidence about cause and effect. Using such methods can lead to ineffective or even counterproductive programs. To help strengthen inferences about cause and effect, they argue that environmental organizations should rely more on formal experimentation within their programs, which would leverage the power of science while maintaining a "learning by doing" approach. They highlight key obstacles to such experimentation and suggest opportunities to overcome them.

Finally, Shogren worked on the Creative Economy as the Presidential Fellow in the Creative Economy. Similar to environmental and resource challenges, the creative economy focuses on the interactions of market value and non-market values for tangible and intangible goods and services, like the arts and culture. Wyoming has great artists, venues, and museums that do a lot for our communities—joy and inspiration, cool vibes, cultural identity. The arts in Wyoming are like a big chain reaction. They make locals and tourists happy, they make the town look prosperous and exciting, they create jobs, and they help businesses make money. This creative economic activity is something we can measure and talk about—it is not just a good story, it is important for a town's success and our State's future. Arts are more than just food for the soul, they put food on the table. Wyoming has a lot of talent in the creative sector of our economy. The challenge has always been getting this talent out beyond the borders of the state to a bigger public. Shogren witnessed the border effect (e.g., small population, limited resources) which slows down many artists from expanding their reach beyond the State and nearby regions. For example, Shogren has participated in Wyoming Independent Music Initiative (WIMI) both as a musician and as a Wyoming Arts Council Board member. WIMI has had limited success because the ability to reach out is limited by financial constraints. Opening creative community doors requires a lot of knocking, more knocking than we typically have the resources to devote.

We are witnessing greater commitment to the creative economy here at UWyo, e.g., the new BA in the Music Industry Studies, Rural Arts Initiative from Laura Jane Musser Fund. Shogren has worked with Wyoming insiders first to get a good picture of our baseline, e.g., Wyoming Arts Alliance, fellow Board members and staff on the Wyoming Arts Council, WESTAF, UCross, Neltje Center for Excellence in Creativity and the Arts, and others. Once the WY baseline is established, Shogren has branched out to other States and communities to understand how and why they differ. The primary goals are threefold: (i) define a creative economy baseline: identify the critical opportunities and constraints that speed up and slow down the creative economy in Wyoming; (ii) How others differ from the baseline: examine how and to what degree other States and larger Cities invest in and promote their creative economy; and (iii) New opportunities: draft a preliminary strategy to help improve the creative economy in Wyoming to be reviewed by key players with and outside the State. A new creative economy report released this past month by Americans for the Arts found that in 2022 nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated $151.7 billion in economic activity. Working with the Wyoming Arts Alliance and the Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA, which Shogren helped create during his second time as department chair), they estimate that the Creative Economy contributes over $1.4 billion to the state GDP, 14,000+ jobs, and over $35 million in taxes to local and state coffers.

College of Education

Dr. Marisa Macy, (Ph.D. Special Education, University of Oregon)
John P. Ellbogen Foundation Professorship in Early Childhood Education

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Marisa Galliano Macy made significant contributions to the University of Wyoming's research, instruction, and service missions as the John P. Ellbogen Foundation Professor of Early

Childhood Education. Dr. Macy's research centered on authentic assessment practices, early childhood special education, and community-based partnerships that directly benefit Wyoming's children, families, and educators. Her scholarly output included multiple peer-reviewed journal articles, and an in-press book focused on linking quality practices in authentic assessment with early intervention outcomes. Through her research and community engagement efforts, Dr. Macy strengthened early childhood practices that support the state's rural and multilingual populations, contributing to stronger educational foundations for Wyoming's youngest residents.

Instructionally, Dr. Macy provided high-impact learning experiences for University of Wyoming students, integrating experiential learning methods, global education practices such as the Reggio Emilia approach, and authentic assessment strategies into her coursework. Dr. Macy produces an early childhood education podcast where she interviews leaders in the field which gives her UW students access to innovative ways to apply their learning. These experiences prepared future educators to work effectively in Wyoming communities. Dr. Macy's efforts to foster partnerships between the university, local businesses, and early childhood organizations have advanced workforce development initiatives, helping to address Wyoming's early childhood educator shortage and enhance the quality of services for families statewide.

Vacant, ***Fisher Fund for the Advancement of Literacy***

Dr. Alison Mercier, (Ph.D. Teaching and Teacher Education – Science Education, University of Northern Carolina at Greensboro)
Everett D. and Elizabeth M. Lantz Distinguished Professorship in Education

Dr. Alison Mercier is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Science Education at the University of Wyoming. Her scholarship focuses on teacher agency in science instruction, innovative and place-based science education, and the design of STEM learning environments that build on students' diverse ways of knowing. With a background in K–8 teaching, Dr. Mercier's work is grounded in supporting educators to navigate and transform school structures toward more inclusive and ambitious elementary science and engineering instruction. With support from the Mary Garland Eary Career Fellowship, Dr. Mercier launched and led several interconnected research and professional learning initiatives aimed at deepening the understanding of elementary teachers' agency for science teaching.

Over the past two years, Dr. Mercier worked directly with 31 elementary teachers across Wyoming and 11 teachers nationally to refine a framework that captures how teachers' sense of agency for science teaching is developed and expressed in classroom practice. This work included interviews, classroom observations, and co-constructed models of instructional change. She also collaborated with 13 rural Wyoming elementary teachers to develop the concept of *Rural Teaching Capital*, a framework integrating teacher agency and professional capital in rural contexts and partnered with five elementary educators to implement innovative place-based STEM projects. Dr. Mercier presented her findings at four national and international research conferences and published two peer-reviewed journal articles, one advancing a revised model of teacher agency for science instruction and one documenting the role of place-based education in expanding that agency. Her work contributes to national conversations around science teachers, innovative science education and provides tools for enhancing elementary science instruction in all, but especially rural schools.

Dr. Emil Eidin, (Ph.D. Science Teaching, Weizmann Institute of Science)
Everett D. and Elizabeth M. Lantz Distinguished Professorship in Education

During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Eidin published an article in a top-tier journal and is currently awaiting a decision on a second manuscript that was invited for resubmission following minor revisions. In addition, Dr. Eidin was invited to contribute a book chapter and is actively working on it. This year, they also presented their work at one of the most prestigious conferences in science education.

Dr. Eidin's research focuses on the practical aspects of science education, particularly on how a systems thinking lens can support teachers and students in making sense of scientific phenomena and in making informed decisions about complex socioscientific issues. Their work examines the role of computational systems modeling tools in this process and more recently explores how emerging AI technologies can be leveraged to enhance systems thinking in science education.

On the instructional side, Dr. Eidin had the opportunity to teach and mentor students at various stages of their academic journey. This included teaching senior undergraduate students preparing to become Wyoming's—and the nation's—next generation of science teachers, as well as advising Ph.D. and Ed.D. students in their research and educational innovations. They also led a summer course for in-service Wyoming teachers focused on Earth science and the application of systems thinking in classroom contexts.

Dr. Eidin's research and teaching have a tangible impact on science classrooms across Wyoming, as well as on the STEM undergraduate community at the university. By supporting both teachers and students in navigating the evolving landscape of science education, their work contributes to a deeper understanding of the environment and helps foster a new generation of scientifically literate citizens—locally, nationally, and globally.

Dr. Margaret Hudson, (Ed.D. Educational Leadership, University of Wyoming)
Everett D. and Elizabeth M. Lantz Distinguished Professorship in Education
Mary Garland Early Career Fellowship Recipient (2023-2025)

As a recipient of the 2023-2025 Mary Garland Early Career Fellowship, Dr. Hudson advanced leadership development in Wyoming through focused research on mentoring, school-university-state partnerships, and administrative internships, with special attention to gender and rural contexts. Her scholarship produced a book chapter and six peer-reviewed journal articles that directly inform leadership development in Wyoming's schools, while her fourteen national conference presentations, two state conference presentations, and two district professional learning presentations disseminated innovative approaches to education across the state as well as on the national stage. Additionally, four peer-reviewed articles and two editorial-reviewed practitioner publications are currently under review. Much of this scholarly work addresses Wyoming's unique educational challenges and leadership needs.

Dr. Hudson taught 11 classes over the past two years in the MA/Principal Certification program, advising all students in these programs (80+) while also coordinating principal and superintendent internships. Many of these students now serve in building and district leadership positions throughout Wyoming. Dr. Hudson also serves on multiple master's and doctoral committees, currently chairing seven doctoral committees and co-chairing one. Highlights from her extensive institutional, professional, and community service have included active participation in department and college committees, peer reviews for national journals/conferences, department program and curriculum alignment, membership on the Wyoming School-University Partnership Governing

Board, membership in state and national organizations, committee work for the Wyoming 307 Principal Leadership Academy, coordinating and facilitating the Wyoming Principal Mentor Program, chairing the annual American Foundation for Suicide Prevention UWYO Out of the Darkness Campus Walk, and membership on the Wyoming Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention State Board.

Dr. Hudson's work with the Wyoming Principal Mentor Program has facilitated mentor training for over 30 veteran administrators from fourteen districts to provide state-wide support for new and aspiring Wyoming educational leaders. After a successful pilot year, the program is being sustained as a key component of the newly developed Wyoming 307 Principal Leadership Academy (307PLA) and will continue with the third cohort group of principal mentors in 2025-2026. The 307PLA was established through collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), UW College of Education, Wyoming School University Partnership, State Principal Associations, Valuing and Supporting Teacher Cabinet, and sub-committee members. The 307PLA and WPMP aim to improve educational leadership development statewide and increase teacher/leader retention, ultimately enhancing educational quality for Wyoming's students and communities.

Dr. Jenna M. Shim, (Ph.D. Language and Literacy Education, University of Albany, State University of New York)
John P. "Jack" Ellbogen College of Education Deanship Fund

We appreciate the opportunity to highlight how the Ellbogen Deanship has advanced the mission of the College across the state. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any additional information or clarification.

Dr. Jenna Min Shim, John P. "Jack" Ellbogen Endowed Dean of the College of Education, has stewarded the Ellbogen Deanship with deep gratitude and a vision rooted in service, equity, and opportunity. In the 2024–25 academic year, this funding made it possible to advance the College's mission in tangible and lasting ways across the state. A cornerstone of this work has been the expansion of the Wyoming Rural Teacher Corps—a two-tiered, place-based program that prepares future educators to thrive in Wyoming's rural schools through hands-on experiences, mentorship, and statewide engagement. Through support for national conference participation, site visits, and peer learning, the program is cultivating a new generation of committed teachers who understand and love the communities they serve. Deanship support also helped grow the College's Career and Technical Education program, transforming it from near-zero enrollment to 31 students through a new distance bridge course and expanded scholarship support. At the early childhood level, the Wyoming Early Childhood Outreach Network (WYECON) continued to connect and uplift educators in every corner of the state—from school districts to Head Start to home-based care—furthering the College's reach and impact during a critical time for Wyoming's youngest learners.

The Ellbogen Dean's Innovation and Creativity Fund provided flexible, meaningful support to faculty and educators through a suite of awards that encouraged research, instructional improvement, and collaboration. These small-scale but high-impact grants allowed faculty to attend national conferences, test new course materials, and build research projects with real promise. The Deanship also supported the College's Academic Writing Fellows initiative and offered first-year faculty a soft landing—with one recipient calling the opportunity "a legacy for generations to come." Perhaps most exciting of all, Deanship funding helped launch an ambitious Special Education Research Initiative in partnership with the University of Kansas to develop an AI-powered multi-agent system designed to improve IEP development—an effort that could dramatically improve support for students with disabilities across Wyoming and beyond. In all these efforts, Dr. Shim remains deeply mindful of the trust embedded in the Ellbogen name. She approaches this role with humility, hope, and a fierce commitment

to ensuring that every child in Wyoming is served by educators who are prepared, supported, and proud to call this state home.

College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Dr. Lars Kotthoff, (Ph.D. Computer Science, University of St. Andrews)
Templeton Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Kotthoff taught the next generation of software engineers and computer science researchers how to develop and analyze algorithms, with a focus on providing transferable skills relevant to Wyoming businesses, such as using version control and automated integration testing. Of particular interest at the moment are Large Language Models and similar generative AI methods. Kotthoff provided additional instruction on the background of these techniques and how to use them through a guest lecture in the School of Computing and by inviting an external speaker to demonstrate the use of generative AI for programming tasks. Leveraging generative AI is particularly relevant to Wyoming, where a sparse population means that often not enough talent is available, and using AI to fill those gaps has the potential to directly benefit Wyoming businesses and industries through increased productivity. It is vital that our students are proficient in this new technology.

Kotthoff's research has started to explore using the same AI techniques for solving challenging problems in AI and Machine Learning itself, which will lower the adoption barrier for state-of-the-art AI in both research and industry. Advances will benefit interdisciplinary collaborations at the University of Wyoming and the burgeoning high-tech industry in Wyoming, in particular AI-related businesses. Further, Kotthoff is co-editing a special track of one of the flagship journals of the AI community, the Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research, raising the profile of research efforts at the University of Wyoming. Students at the University of Wyoming directly benefited from Kotthoff's activities through a trip he organized to the annual main AI conference in North America. A total of four students experienced AI research at the edge and had the opportunity to interact with prominent AI researchers from academia and industry in a variety of settings.

Dr. Ryan Webb, (Ph.D. Civil and Environmental Engineering, Colorado State University)
Loy and Edith Harris Assistant Professor

Dr. Ryan Webb's Mountain Hydrology Lab group has three main focus areas: 1) Improving our ability to measure mountain snowpacks with satellites to improve water resource management, 2) Improving hydrologic forecast models by further understanding the flowpaths that snowmelt takes from hillslopes to streams, and 3) Improving our understanding of impacts from wildfire and forest management techniques on water resources in the Rocky Mountains. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Webb's lab group conducted projects within these three areas of research funded by NASA, NSF, Bureau of Reclamation, and the USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center. These projects included graduate students that assist in conducting the work with one student successfully defending their master's thesis in the spring 2025 semester.

Dr. Webb's teaching during the 2024-2025 academic year included 3 courses: CE 3300 – Hydraulic Engineering, CE 4650/5650 – Hydrology Field Methods, and CE 5830 – Vadose Zone Hydrology. The Hydrology Field Methods course is a new innovative course that Dr. Webb developed to integrate teaching with his research. This course focused on field observations for hydrologic monitoring of a watershed during both fall and spring semesters. To accomplish this, the course was 3 credits over a full year (1 or 2 variable credits per semester) where the students chose which semester to take for 2 credits based on their schedules. This allowed students to

gain experience in making observations during all seasons of the hydrologic cycle from low flow in the fall to snowpack measurements mid-winter, etc. The course followed the format of a vertically integrated project (VIP) in which each group was responsible for specific components of instrumentation/monitoring. The VIP structure is designed for mentoring purposes: Dr. Webb mentored graduate students that mentored undergraduates and more experienced undergraduates mentored new undergraduates. Thus, the course was organized similar to a company with Dr. Webb as the owner. The groups came together as a larger team to assess observations and conduct data analyses. The company-like structure of the course prepares students to work within teams of people from different backgrounds and skills to work towards a common goal of monitoring a watershed in a manner similar to what may be found as a consultant. This course is a major educational component in Dr. Webb's recently awarded NSF CAREER grant that will expand on his educational and research sites around Laramie.

Dr. Jonathan Brant, (Ph.D., Environmental Engineering, University of Nevada, Reno)
Vincent O. Smith Professorship in Engineering

Dr. Brant's projects aim to reduce the energy consumption of desalination processes, making them more viable for rural communities, such as those in Wyoming, and the oil and gas industry as it grapples with managing produced waters. A second objective is the development of new materials for recovering critical minerals from various water sources. The benefits of Dr. Brant's work to Wyoming include the expansion of our ability to utilize the state's resources effectively, diversification of our water resources, and enhanced environmental protection. Diversifying our water resources is particularly needed, considering the ongoing drought in the Rocky Mountain Region. His research is currently focused on converting coal char from the Powder River and Green River basins into high-value products, such as graphene and quantum dots. Our goal is to provide new economic opportunities for Wyoming's coal resources.

During the 2024-25 academic year, Dr. Brant taught three courses: Introduction to Environmental Engineering (junior level), Design of Water Treatment Facilities (senior level), and two Undergraduate Research Classes. He supervised four postdoctoral scientists, advised three MS students in Environmental Engineering, and one staff member (master technician). He was the Principal Investigator on four active research grants related to technology development for treating oil and gas produced waters and extracting critical minerals, such as lithium and rare earth elements, from brines. Funding agencies for these projects included the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Dr. Brant has founded a spin-off company, MAGNESIS Corporation, which was awarded a three-year, $4 million grant to commercialize a new magnetic technology for manipulating molecular properties without the need for external energy or chemical inputs. Applications for this technology include enhancing hydrogen yield during electrolysis, converting carbon dioxide into higher-order molecules for fuel applications, and improving the energy efficiency of desalination processes. The MAGNESIS Corporation represents a concerted effort by Dr. Brant to add to and diversify Wyoming's burgeoning economy.

Dr. Daniel Dale, (Ph.D. Physics, Cornell University)
Harry C. Vaughan Professorship in Astronomy

Daniel Dale is Professor of Physics & Astronomy and began serving as Interim Dean for Engineering & Physical Sciences on 21 April 2025. Before that date he served as Associate Dean for Research and Innovation. As associate dean, in addition to overseeing internal grant competitions, he also met with faculty and staff across the college to explore ways to help support research infrastructure and innovation. His favorite work as associate dean was to meet with and mentor both 1st year faculty and department heads. In terms of teaching, Professor Dale taught a graduate course on astrophysics. The course covered all phenomena and material that lies between

the stars (the 'interstellar medium'). Students developed their public speaking skills via multiple oral presentations as well as honed their analytical skills with a series of rigorous homework assignments.

Professor Dale's research focuses on star-forming galaxies. He gathers astronomical data from NASA's *Hubble* and *James Webb Space Telescopes.* He aims to understand how galaxies convert gas clouds into stars and how the life cycles of those stars impact the formation of the next generation of stars. He published 24 refereed publications in the 2024 calendar year and oversaw a research group of six graduate students and 13 undergraduate students. He has averaged 13 refereed publications per year for the 24 years that he has been on the faculty at UW. In 2024 Professor Dale oversaw 7 extramural grants that brought $1.05M to UW. One of these federal grants involves Professor Dale directing a summer internship program for astronomy undergraduates. A critical aspect to Professor Dale's work is the career preparation that student interns receive as they carry out research in his group. Students learn marketable skills in computer programming, public speaking, and technical writing in addition to gaining teamwork and leadership experience. Professor Dale also served as the director of the *UW Harry C. Vaughan Planetarium*, as Director of *Astro Camp* for middle school students, and as head coach of the UW Women's hockey team (for the 16th consecutive year!). He also visited K-12 school districts to do hands-on experiments with school children. In 2024 he made all-day visits to the Lusk and Farson/Eden school districts. Professor Dale received the George Duke Humphrey Distinguished Faculty Award in 2024.

Dr. Anthony Denzer, (Ph.D. Architecture, University of California, Los Angeles)
Thomas and Shelley Botts Endowed Chair

Dr. Denzer has served as Department Head for Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management since 2015. The Department has 24 full-time faculty, 50 graduate students, and 380 undergraduate students, plus about 180 seats filled in online Land Surveying program. Undergraduate degrees in Architectural Engineering and Civil Engineering are accredited by ABET, while Construction Management is accredited by ACCE. Accreditation status is strong. Undergraduate students in all three majors pass their disciplinary exams at better rates than the national averages.

Under Dr. Denzer's leadership, the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management recorded the following accomplishments and activities in the 2024-25 academic year:

- Onboarding of three new faculty members
- Two faculty members promoted to full Professor
- Winner of CEPS "Future Focused Award" for promoting career-readiness
- Architectural Engineering program recognized for exemplary Zero Energy Design Curriculum by US Department of Energy
- Coal-derived materials: 8 new patent applications (22 total); new startup company (Carbonado Technology); Second place in Ellbogen 50K Entrepreneurship Competition
- New partnership with Cardiff University for Urban-scale energy modeling
- NSF CAREER Award for Ryan Webb
- AGC Bowen Prize Award for Construction Management program ($50K)
- Three new scholarship funds to UW Foundation

Finally, following the Los Angeles fires in January 2025, Dr. Denzer was interviewed in publications such as *Bloomberg News* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books.*

Dr. David Mukai, (Ph.D. Civil Engineering, University of Washington)
H.T. Person Professorship of Engineering

He served in this role during Spring and Fall 2024 before taking a sabbatical at the Institute of Science Tokyo in Spring 2025. He will return to the University of Wyoming and resume the H.T. Person Professorship in Fall 2025. During his tenure, Dr. Mukai significantly contributed to the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. In Spring 2024, he hired two new Engineering Science instructors, helping to establish a new Engineering Science Division, now comprising four instructors plus himself. This unit oversees the foundational Engineering Science (ES) courses critical to all engineering disciplines. In Fall 2024, the unit created bylaws and expectation documents that provide structure and consistency across ES course sections. Their work has already shown impact: two instructors received Promoting Intellectual Engagement (PIE) awards for their teaching efforts with freshmen. Dr. Mukai also continued supporting the week-long Saddle Up design challenge for incoming freshmen, where students design and build a car assessed for speed, egg protection in side impacts, aesthetics, and marketing.

In Fall 2024, Dr. Mukai organized the H.T. Person Lecture, inviting Rita Meyer to present during Homecoming week. Her lecture, "Energy Transitions: Attitudes and Platitudes", offered valuable insight into Wyoming's nuclear power initiatives. He also supported ongoing ABET accreditation efforts by funding Mechanical Engineering's ABET champion to attend a symposium, with plans to support additional attendees in the future. Even during his Spring 2025 sabbatical, Dr. Mukai remained actively engaged: he managed funding requests from Registered Student Organizations via UWEFE fees, scheduled ES courses for summer and fall, and taught ES 2120 (Dynamics) online using a textbook vendor's digital platform. Additionally, he began planning a three-week study abroad course in Tokyo for Civil and Architectural Engineering students, winning a grant from the university's study abroad office to finalize arrangements during a Summer 2025 trip. In summary, Dr. Mukai's leadership in building the Engineering Science unit, enhancing first-year student experiences, and strengthening accreditation processes has had a wide-reaching and lasting impact on the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

Dr. Maohong Fan, (Ph.D. Iowa State University; Ph.D. Osaka University)
Carrell Family Energy and Petroleum Professorship in the College of Engineering
(see SER Professor of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering)

Dr. Lamia Goual, (Ph.D., Petroleum Engineering, Imperial College in London, UK)
A.J. Castagne Professorship in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Dr. Goual has held the position of A. J. Castagne Professor in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences since 2016. Her research focuses on multiscale investigations of flow assurance, wetting phenomena, rock physics, and flow through porous media with direct applications in hydrocarbon recovery, energy storage, geological sequestration of greenhouse gases, and aquifer remediation. In the past academic year, she has taught two graduate courses: Interfacial Phenomena and Carbon Engineering. She also mentored one M.S. and three Ph.D. students to completion and hired a new postdoctoral research associate. Dr. Goual continued to be a co-principal investigator and collaborator on three major research projects on gas and foam based enhanced oil recovery funded by the State of Wyoming, the Department of Energy, the Dow Chemical Company, and Hess Corporation. She is involved with Phase II of the Wyoming Gas Injection Initiative, which recently received $25M of State matching funds for laboratory studies and field pilot testing in Wyoming. Dr. Goual co-wrote one multi-institutional grant preapplication to the Department of Energy and participated in a multidisciplinary project

that led to a publication in the Journal of Environmental Science & Technology. She published six more peer-reviewed papers, one research patent application, and presented at an international conference. Dr. Goual continued serving as the Graduate Program Director of EPE and facilitated the development of graduate courses for the new Master of Engineering program in Energy and Petroleum Engineering. She co-managed the shared equipment in the EERB Hydrocarbon Laboratory for the benefit of graduate students across campus. She served on the graduate committee of eight PhD dissertations from the Center of Innovation for Flow through Porous Media. As the Associate Editor of Energy & Fuels journal, she attended the Editors meeting at the ACS Fall meeting and contributed to two special sections, including Women in Energy Research.

Dr. Jonathan Naughton, (Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering, Pennsylvania State University)
A.J. Castagne Professorship in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Jonathan Naughton's research focuses on the application of unsteady aerodynamics to the transportation and energy fields. Specific applications include better understanding the performance of wind turbine and helicopter blades as well as reducing drag on aircraft. Dr. Naughton and his students investigate these aerodynamic flows using experiments carried out in wind tunnels at the university as well as with partners such as NASA. Dr. NaughFton also teaches courses in fluid dynamics and aerodynamics, including a course on experimental fluid dynamics.

The impacts of Dr. Naughton's research and teaching are felt from the local to global levels. For example, the drag reduction work carried out at the University of Wyoming promises to impact the fuel required by commercial aircraft, reducing fuel consumption and emissions. Some of the work in this area is conducted by a spin-off company, Wyoming Instrumentation Development, located in Laramie. Dr. Naughton's work in energy includes working with the energy industry including addressing local benefits and impacts of energy development as well as aiding Wyoming companies (e.g. Airloom) develop their technologies. Students that work in Dr. Naughton's lab and take Dr. Naughton's classes go on to work in the aerospace and energy industries nationwide.

Dr. Dongliang Duan, (Ph.D. Electrical Engineering, Colorado State University)
G.J. Guthrie Nicholson Professorship in Electrical Engineering

Dr. Dongliang Duan is an associate professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. He was the leading PI for an NSF MRI grant, under which support a hybrid real-time digital simulation platform which could conduct real-time simulations of large power systems was acquired. The major goal for his Nicholson professorship was to further promote the usage of the platform for various interdisciplinary research on power system monitoring, optimization, and cyber security issues and strengthening our power engineering curriculum.

During the AY 2024-2025, a new MS student was enrolled in Dr. Duan's group to work on the Opal RT platform. Several case studies on IEEE standard test systems, including low-voltage distribution and high-voltage transmission systems, were conducted using the platform. The case studies were well documented and would be integrated into existing power engineering courses as lab modules in the near future. The platform was also set up to be used by our collaborators at University of North Dakota (UND). This further strengthens our collaborative efforts with UND in the research of power system resilience.

Dr. Mohammad Piri, (Ph.D. Petroleum Engineering, Imperial College London)
Thomas and Shelley Botts Endowed Chair in Unconventional Reservoirs in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
(See WY Excellence Endowment Report)

Dr. Mohammad Piri, (Ph.D. Petroleum Engineering, Imperial College London)
Alchemy Sciences Petroleum Engineering Chair
(See WY Excellence Endowment Report)

Dr. Minou Rabiei, (Ph.D. Applied Statistics-Reservoir Engineering, Curtin University of Technology, Perth)
Lynch Engineering Excellence Professorship

Dr. Minou Rabiei, an associate professor in the Department of Energy and Petroleum Engineering, also holds a joint appointment as Founding Adjunct Faculty in the School of Computing and serves as a faculty collaborator at the Center of Excellence in Subsurface Energy and Digital Innovation. Her research is rooted in a multidisciplinary approach that integrates digital technologies, such as machine learning and graph theory, with petroleum engineering principles to address sustainability and environmental challenges in subsurface energy systems. During the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Rabiei continued leading two innovative research projects exploring the application of knowledge graphs and graph neural networks in the energy sector. One project, funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, applies machine learning-based knowledge graphs to detect and predict failures in complex natural gas pipeline networks. The second project, supported by the School of Energy Resources, develops a spatiotemporal graph neural network model to forecast oil and gas production in the Mowry shale formation. Her work also contributes to the advancement of digital sustainability solutions in areas such as hydrogen and CO_2 storage and transportation. This year, she authored four peer-reviewed journal articles, six conference papers, and a book chapter titled Data Analytics, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence in Unconventional Resources.

Dr. Rabiei's research activities are closely interwoven with her instructional mission, creating a synergistic environment for applied learning and innovation. She teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in data mining and continues to lead the development of the newly established Master of Engineering program in Energy Data Analytics. In the 2024–2025 academic year, she designed and launched two fully online graduate-level courses—*Energy Data Analysis Using Python* and *Visual Analytics for the Energy Industry*—which equip students with practical skills to apply data science tools in real-world energy applications. Dr. Rabiei currently mentors five Ph.D. students and actively contributes to research collaborations across institutions. She partnered with faculty from two other universities to submit competitive grant proposals to the U.S. Department of Energy and the American Chemical Society, both of which are under review. Her outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and services were formally recognized when the University's Board of Trustees approved her promotion to Full Professor, effective Fall 2025.

Dr. Cameron Wright, (Ph.D. Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Texas at Austin)
Carrell Family College of Engineering and Physical Sciences Deanship, and Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dean Wright has over 42 years of experience in electrical and computer engineering and served in various leadership positions in research and development units of the Department of Defense during his 30-year military career prior to joining the faculty of the University of Wyoming in January of 2003. His previous academic

appointment prior to UW was as Professor and Deputy Department Head of the Electrical Engineering Department at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has held a Professional Engineer license for 35 years and is the author or co-author of over 260 publications including a best-selling textbook on real-time digital signal processing. He has served as an expert witness in federal court for technology-related intellectual property cases. Dr. Wright served as Dean since 2019, and in August of 2022 was appointed as the inaugural Carrell Family Dean of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. On April 1, 2025, Dr. Wright's appointment as Dean was terminated.

In the 2024-2025 Academic Year, Dean Wright led the final stages of the reorganization of the college as it transformed from the College of Engineering and Applied Science to the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. This reorganization involved bringing four new departments into the college (Mathematics & Statistics, Chemistry, Physics & Astronomy, and Geology & Geophysics), as well as a merger of the former Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering with the Department of Computer Science to form the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. The new college is comprised of 10 academic departments, along with the School of Computing, the Wyoming Geographic Information Science Center (WyGISC), and the Susan McCormack Student Success Center. As a result of the reorganization, the number of faculty and staff members in the college is approximately double the previous number, and the college is now the second largest college by enrollment at UW. Dean Wright also led efforts to engage the college with a wide variety of companies in Wyoming; helped recruit multiple out-of-state companies to locate a new presence in Wyoming; continued to encourage and advocate for commercial spinoffs/startups from the college, such as Piri Tech, Resono, Wyonics, CellDrop, Cowboy Clean Fuels, and Uplink Robotics; and worked closely with UW Foundation to secure over five million dollars of total philanthropic fundraising in the past year.

Dr. Francois Jacobs, (Ph.D. Education Human Resources Studies in Construction Management, Colorado State University)
Roy L and Caryl L Cline Distinguished Professor in Engineering

Dr. Jacobs has been steering the Construction Management (CM) program in the College of Engineering since 2019. The CM program continues to experience significant milestones through continues student growth at a 199 strong, ongoing industry support and a 100% placement of construction management students upon graduation. More about the CM program can be viewed here; https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/construction-management/index.html#, with specific reference to the program's "ACCE" accreditation accomplishments, student activities, and reference to the Senior Capstone class who have scored for a third year in the a row 7.3 % above the national average on the American Institute of Constructors "AIC" certification exam across 10 topical content areas.

The CM program launched the following two funding platforms in 2024, with ongoing success. The first funding platform "***Evening with Industry***" https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/evening_with_industry.html provides CM students with an opportunity to connect with construction companies in a social setting the evening before the fall and spring job fairs. The second funding platform ***"Industry Partner Program***" https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/construction-management/industry-partners-program.html , provides construction companies with an opportunity to support the CM program through a sponsorship tier level at either $3 000 (Bronze), $5 000 (Silver) or $10,000 (Gold) per year. The program has raised $ 81,277 of industry support for CM program initiatives during the 2024/25 academic year.

The CM program launched the "Summer Internships" https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/construction-management/construction_management_internships.html website in 2024 and continues to connect CM students with construction companies across the US. Dr. Jacobs, further continues to steer the "***Construction High School Training***" program across Wyoming https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/construction-high-school-training/index.html with a total of 65 high school students who were enrolled in this year's training co-hort. Dr. Jacobs also steers the **"Construction Workforce Training"** program https://www.uwyo.edu/civil/construction-training/index.html that has been an active workforce training platform across the state since 2020.

"Cline Funding" greatly contributed to the development and implementation of a "***Career and Technical Education***" (CTE) website and database for distribution across all high schools and Community Colleges in Wyoming, to help promote CTE as a valuable career path, including construction and related trades. The hyperlink https://dev33.wygisc.org/wycte/ navigate users to the website and database, which is managed and housed in the College of Engineering.

Dr. Jacobs currently serves as a Board of Director on the Southeast Wyoming Builders Association (SEWBA) board https://cheyennehomebuilders.com/contact-us/ . Dr. Jacobs was also elected as Board Member to serve on the AGC of America Education and Research Foundation in 2025 https://www.agc.org/learn/agc-education-and-research-foundation .

Dr. Haibo Zhai, (Ph.D. Environmental Engineering, North Carolina State University)
Roy L and Caryl L Cline Distinguished Chair in Engineering
(See WY Excellence Endowment Report)

Dr. Vladmir Alvarado, (Ph.D. Chemical Engineering, University of Minnesota)
Gene Humphrey Professorship

Professor Alvarado dedicated activities in the international arena, as committed in the original proposal to request this professorship. As indicated, one of the objectives of this professorship focused on decarbonization efforts. After a week-long visit to the University of Bologna in February 2024, in part funded by the Office of Global Engagement at UW (through a competitive internal process), plans for a one-semester sabbatical leave were developed. The sabbatical period covered the September – December 2024, funded by the Humphrey Professorship funds. Three main activities were developed at the University of Bologna:

1. A pre-proposal, titled "Integrative Surface-Subsurface Reduced Models for CO2 Budget Calculation", was developed in Bologna, Italy. Five collaborating institutionB participated in developing the proposal to the CETPartnership (Clean Energy Transition Partnership, https://www.cetpartnership.eu/calls/joint-call-2024): (1) Los Alamos National Lab (by rules of the call, only US Federal Labs can participate, so University of Wyoming was a sub-contractor of the LANL); (2) Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, UniBo (Italy); (3) MG Sustainable Engineering AB, MG (Sweden); (4) Universitatea din Petrosani, UPET (Romania); (5) Associação do Instituto Superior Ténico para a investigação e desenvolvimento, IST-ID (Portugal). The objective of the proposal was the development of a tool, intended as a multiscale and rapid web and GIS-based decision support system (DSS) able to predict with an acceptable accuracy degree the long-term behavior of four main subsystems impacting subsurface carbon storage. Profs. Alvarado (UW) and Pellegrini (UniBo) were the technical leads of the proposal, while Dr. Tipton (LANL) was the Principal Investigator (Prof. Alvarado contacted colleagues a LANL to find a Statisticians through his network at national labs). The 10-page preproposal concept was well

received, but not encouraged to a full submission based on the lack of an industrial partner. A new call has been announced in 2025 and we are considering revamping the preproposal to complete a new submission. A comprehensive joint review article on carbon storage, connected to the proposal, is in process for submission to a peer-reviewed journal in the summer 2025. Profs. Pellegrini and Alvarado are the main authors of this manuscript.

2. As a commitment of the Humphrey Professorship, an MOU was to be developed between UW and UniBo. Prof. Alvarado coordinated with UW's Office of Global Engagement and the University of Bologna International Office. After a meeting, UniBo agreed to share their MOU model. UW has reviewed it and agreed with the its terms. Both institutions anticipate signing this MOU during the summer this year. The MOU contemplates student and researcher exchanges. The first of this will be a visiting graduate student from UniBo, who will spend one semester in Prof. Alvarado's research facilities, while one of Prof. Alvarado's graduate students will conduct a research visit to one of the partner's research laboratories at UniBo this summer.

3. Another commitment of the Professorship was conference attendance. Participation at the Ecomondo Exhibition 2024 (Rimini, ER, Italy) and the IEA SHC Task 72 (Graz, Austria) were conducted. Profs. Alvarado and Pellegrini took advantage of the trip to visit a unique subsurface hydrogen storage pilot project (Rubensdorf, Austria). The Underground Sun Storage engineer provided detailed information that is available to us at UW. The visit to the facility served to understand a potential integrated model for cases in the US, particularly in Wyoming.

Dr. Kam Ng, (Ph.D. Civil Engineering, Iowa State University)
Hoy Engineering Fellowship

Dr. Kam Ng is a professor in the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management at the University of Wyoming (UW). Dr. Ng is also an adjunct professor in the School of Energy Resources (SER). Ng's research focuses on transportation geotechnics, energy geotechnics and innovative construction materials. He has established a national reputation in developing design and construction recommendations for driven pile foundations in intermediate geomaterials. He was selected as the State of Practice Speaker by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the keynote speaker by the ASCE Nebraska Section to present this significant research outcomes on transportation geotechnics. Dr. Ng has been developing the Energy Geotechnics research program at the UW by acquiring advanced high temperature and high pressure (HTHP) polyaxial equipment from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and upgrading the conventional HTHP triaxial equipment from the Department of Energy (DOE). The energy geotechnics program has attracted multiple research fundings from the DOE and SER on CO_2 sequestration, hydrogen storage and Mowry Shale. Dr. Ng was named the Hoy Engineering Fellow in Spring 2024 with his research focusing on innovative construction materials from coal-derived materials and CO_2 utilization. Building upon his research accomplishments on coal-derived materials, the Hoy Engineering Fellowship will elevate the UW as the leader in advancing uses of coal for non-energy or non-fuel applications. Dr. Ng's research team has filed more than 17 provisional patents on coal-derived materials. Dr. Ng has received research fundings on innovative construction materials from DOE, EPA, SER, and WYDOT. Dr. Ng has published more than 90 journal papers, 52 conference proceedings, and 27 technical reports. Dr. Ng has received more than 13 million research funding since joining the UW in 2012. He has supervised one postdoc, 7 Ph.D. and 20 MS students. He is currently supervising one

postdoc, 3 Ph.D., and 7 MS students. He has developed and taught courses on soil mechanics, foundation engineering, rock mechanics, slope engineering, and design studio for undergraduate students.

Dr. Vamegh Rasouli (Ph.D. Rock Mechanics, Imperial College London)
Le Norman Endowed Leadership Chair in Petroleum Engineering

The use of the LeNorman endowed fund continued this year to support graduate students and faculty in the Energy and Petroleum Engineering department. The department established a new research lab of "multidisciplinary Advanced Stimulation Labs" in the Science Initiative Building, in collaboration with the School of Energy Resources (SER). The Endowed fund will be used to support the faculty and students who will be working in this lab starting from summer 2025. This is one-of-a-kind research labs worldwide that integrates different disciplines to promote the energy and oil and gas industry through primary recovery methods.

Dr. Rasouli's great thanks go to Mr. David LeNorman for his kind support of UW students and faculty.

James Ward (M.S. Computer Science, University of Wyoming)
General Samual Phillips Professorship for Instructional Excellence

Mr. Ward is a faculty member of the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department, since 2001. He is the General Samuel Phillips Professorship for Instructional Excellence. He focuses on undergraduate teaching and research with the nUWtech lab. He went to the Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE TS) which is organized by the ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE) and is the organization's flagship conference. An update of mobile equipment is also being carried out in the lab.

The nUWtech Lab provides undergraduate research opportunities to engineering students by housing equipment such VR headset, robots, and mobile devices such as android phones. The students can use the equipment in the lab that would be far too expensive for them to purchase on their own. For academic year 2024 to 2025. This equipment also is used to support many electrical engineering and computer science courses such the mobile programing, advanced mobile programming, virtual reality, and augmented reality courses. As well as our senior design I and II course with twelve groups, several used the lab directly, plus the honors capstone projects. It is also used for an independent study course for multiple students that wish to do research on topics of their own design. This has been a boon to our students, as they have a place to work on topics and interests that excite them to both get jobs after their undergraduate degree or to get them interested in continuing to a masters or PHD.

Interdisciplinary

Vacant, ***Liliane and Christian Haub Professorship***

Dr. Kelly Dunning, (Ph.D. Natural Resources Planning and Policy, MIT)
Timberline Associate Professor of Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Dr. Kelly Dunning has impacted wildlife management and policymaking in Wyoming through her Timberline Chair endowment at the University of Wyoming, aligning her extensive research with the university's land-grant mission to serve the state's communities and natural resources. Her position in the Haub School of Natural Resources and Environment enabled her to found the Wildlife and Wilderness Recreation Lab focusing on the human dimensions of wildlife policy and management in Wyoming. In partnership with the Wyoming Game and

Fish Department, where she uses how endowment to provide technical capacity building, she is conducting pivotal studies on hunter motivations for pronghorn, hunter preferences for mule deer and waterfowl management, angler surveys across multiple regions, and hunter input on big game season settings. She also investigated scientific information sources used by Game Commissions in the Intermountain West, enhancing evidence-based wildlife policies. These efforts equip Wyoming's wildlife managers with critical data to sustain healthy ecosystems, supporting the state's economy, tourism, and cultural heritage. In 2024, Dr. Dunning published seven peer-reviewed papers, presented her findings to Congress and federal task forces, and is currently supervising four graduate students, fostering the next generation of conservation scholars. Her teaching includes the Capstone Course for the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management (ORTM) degree and Conservation Planning for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, further embedding practical, science-driven solutions in Wyoming's resource management. Dr. Dunning runs a veterans' mentorship organization called Green to Green, which helps veterans step into a conservation career. This program pairs them with service members from their branch in careers that they hope to obtain, to make the transition successfully. Through her multifaceted contributions, Dr. Dunning exemplifies the University of Wyoming's commitment to addressing Wyoming's unique challenges and promoting sustainable stewardship of its natural resources.

Dr. John Koprowski, (Ph.D. Biology (Systematics and Ecology), University of Kansas)
International Wildlife Conservation Chair
(See WY Excellence Endowment Report)

Dr. Joe Holbrook, (Ph.D. Wildlife Science, University of Idaho)
Wyoming Biodiversity Professorship

Holbrook holds an appointment in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, with a joint appointment in the Department of Zoology and Physiology. Holbrook joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming in 2018. Holbrook's research program has two major aims: (1) advance scientific thought in the field of animal ecology, and (2) provide solutions for on-the-ground agencies tasked with managing and stewarding our wildlife populations and their habitat. His research group, the Holbrook Team, works with partners across the state of Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, and beyond to co-develop questions that have direct links to on-the-ground decision making, with the goal of ultimately serving species conservation for future generations. A great example of this was the work to uncover essential insights regarding swift fox ecology to aid management in Wyoming, where swift fox is a species of conservation concern. Holbrook and his team secured just above $1 million in financial support in 2024. Holbrook's collaborative research generated 8 peer-reviewed manuscripts in 2024, which provide the backbone to inform policy-related decisions for natural resource agencies. As part of these research efforts, Holbrook mentors 5 graduate students and 2 undergraduate researchers. Dr. Holbrook is honored to serve as the Jackson Fork Ranch Biodiversity Professor and continues to work with partners to provide insight and solutions that ultimately serve wildlife conservation for our future generations.

Dr. Drew Bennett, (Ph.D. Geography, Oregon State University)
Whitney MacMillan Program in Private Lands Management in the West

Dr. Bennett leads the MacMillan Private Lands Stewardship Program which includes 8 members including research scientists, a post-doctoral research fellow, graduate students, and undergraduates working on a range of outreach, engagement, and research projects relevant to the stewardship of private lands in Wyoming and the West.

During the 2024-25 academic year, Dr. Bennett authored or co-authored two peer-reviewed journal articles and a book chapter. He also authored or co-authored three research reports. As a recipient of a prestigious U.S. Fulbright Scholarship, Dr. Bennett served as a visiting scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Canberra, Australia during the Spring 2025 semester. During his time in Australia, he collaborated with a research team studying strategies to ensure local benefits of nature-based investments. Dr. Bennett's international research collaboration through the Fulbright program continues to raise the University of Wyoming's global reputation.

Through his outreach program, Dr. Bennett helped organize a two-day workshop on the application of virtual livestock fencing technology to support ranchers and achieve wildlife conservation benefits. This workshop brought together livestock producers, virtual fencing companies, and conservation professionals to explore innovative collaborations to apply this emerging technology in innovative ways to support wildlife and ecological health. Additionally, Dr. Bennett organized a webinar on local and state policies to achieve landscape connectivity, which was attended by over 150 wildlife, transportation, and natural resource professionals. Dr. Bennett also worked with the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust to offer a paid internship for a University of Wyoming student to gain practical experience in the agricultural land conservation field. These collective efforts support the stewardship of private lands in Wyoming and the West while fostering collaboration between diverse stakeholders to address complex land management challenges.

Vacant, ***Eldon & Beverly Spicer Chair in Environmental and Natural Resources***

Dr. Jacob Hochard, (Ph.D. Economics, University of Wyoming)
Knobloch Chair/Professorship in Conservation Economics

The Knobloch Program in Conservation Economics continued to support conservation economics teaching, research, and outreach at the Haub School, and we are profoundly grateful for your generosity. In FY25, endowment income supported the degree completion of two M.S. students in Environment, Natural Resources & Society and one continuing PhD student in Economics. The research program led to a new federal award funded by the National Science Foundation focused on perceptions of wildfire management activities, as well as two noteworthy, published articles in *Nature Sustainability* and *Environmental & Resource Economics*. Support also covered travel that allowed our team to brief The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Global Science team and help mold their approach to biodiversity crediting globally. Presentations were also given to the Asian Development Bank on the use of novel financial instruments to promote coastal ecosystem services, as well as an academic talk at the Southern Economic Association, focusing on Wyoming's ungulate populations as a managed source of natural wealth. Most visibly, the fund supported venue costs and participant lodging for the inaugural *Wyoming Resource Policy Forum*, a four-session workshop hosted jointly by the Ucross Foundation that convened 100+ leaders from industry, government, and academia to discuss and build pragmatic solutions on rare earth mining, natural capital accounting, satellite enabled water markets, and AI ready energy infrastructure. Thank you for supporting our students and faculty to continue turning cutting edge research into real world impact.

School of Energy Resources

Dr. Caleb Hill, (Ph.D. Chemistry, University of Alabama)
J.E. Warren Chair of Energy and the Environment and SER Nielson Faculty Fellow

Dr. Hill teaches in the Department of Chemistry at UW and is an internationally recognized scholar working in the fields of electrochemistry and separations. His group's work aims to generate new fundamental insights into energy conversion and storage, sensing, and chemical separations relevant to critical materials recovery and nuclear fuel cycles. Dr. Hill also serves as co-Director of the Nuclear Energy Research Center (NERC) within the School of Energy Resources, which works to develop new nuclear-focused research programs at UW to support the state's growing nuclear industry. In addition to his academic roles at UW, Dr. Hill is Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder of Wyonics LLC, a Laramie-based scientific startup whose mission is to develop sustainable technologies to address economic and environmental challenges within Wyoming. Dr. Hill's work has been recognized through numerous honors and awards, including a prestigious CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation.

In 2024, Dr. Hill served as Principal Investigator (PI) on more than $2M in external grants and contracts to UW from sources such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. These funds support the work of 8 graduate students and 3 undergraduate students in Dr. Hill's lab at UW. In his role as co-Director of NERC, Dr. Hill oversaw the development and launch of new undergraduate and graduate certificate programs in Nuclear Energy Science, the recruitment of two new tenure-track faculty members at UW with nuclear-focused research programs, the construction of a new nuclear science core facility on UW's campus, and the initiation of new research by his group at UW in molten salt systems for nuclear applications. Dr. Hill's Laramie-based startup, Wyonics, continued work on Department of Energy-funded projects in nuclear forensics, rare earth element separations, and the development of functional carbon nanomaterials from coal feedstocks. Wyonics is actively pursuing the commercialization of several technologies stemming from this work, including particle micromanipulation systems for forensic applications and new methods for rare earth element separations from abundant domestic feedstocks.

Dr. John Kaszuba, (Ph.D. Geochemistry, Colorado School of Mines)
John and Jane Wold Centennial Chair of Energy
(See SER Professor of Geology and Geophysics)

Dr. Soheil Saraji, (Ph.D. Petroleum Engineering, University of Wyoming)
Subsurface Energy and Digital Innovation Center

As Director of the Subsurface Energy and Digital Innovation (SEDI) Center at the University of Wyoming, Dr. Soheil Saraji has led impactful research and instructional initiatives aligned with Wyoming's energy and sustainability goals. During the 2024–25 academic year, his research focused on the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning for sweet spot identification in the Mowry Shale Formation and the development of decentralized blockchain-IoT frameworks for real-time methane sensing in oil and gas operations. These projects, conducted through SEDI, support responsible resource development, enhance environmental monitoring, and provide Wyoming's energy industry with innovative tools for data-driven decision-making. Dr. Saraji's work has garnered interest from industry partners and offered hands-on experience to graduate and undergraduate students, contributing to a digitally skilled energy workforce in the state. In addition to mentoring students and postdoctoral researchers, he taught core undergraduate and graduate courses, including "Fundamentals of Enhanced Oil Recovery" and a newly developed course, "Blockchain in Energy," which

bridges petroleum engineering with emerging digital technologies. Dr. Saraji also shared these innovations with regional stakeholders through an invited presentation at the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) Casper Chapter in Fall 2024, further extending the impact of his work across Wyoming's energy community.

Dr. Bryan Leonard, (Ph.D. Economics, University of California Santa Barbara)
SER Environment & Natural Resources

Dr. Bryan Leonard completed his first year at the University of Wyoming as the SER Chair and Associate Professor in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources and the School of Energy Resources.

Dr. Leonard taught a course on federal public land law for the Professional Land Management major in SER and a course on Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Policy in the Haub School. Dr. Leonard advised one PhD student in Economics and joined the PhD committees of two additional students in Economics. He hired and supervised four undergraduate RAs across several departments including the Haub School, SER, and Political Science as well as an additional graduate research assistant in the Economics Department. He also partnered with the Foundation for Teaching Economics to develop and deliver curriculum for high school students and teachers focused on environmental economics and energy economics.

Dr. Leonard's scholarship focuses on the impact of property rights and political institutions on natural resource use in Wyoming and the Western United States, with emphasis on the historical foundations of contemporary issues in water and energy resources. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Dr. Leonard published articles in Nature Energy, The American Political Science Review, Land Economics, and the Utah Law Review on issues including property rights and energy resources on Native American Reservations, the economic impacts of the federal land checkerboard, and the management of state trust lands. In addition, he had papers accepted for publication in The Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics and The Environmental Law Reporter. He also had a book manuscript about the economic significance of the Homestead Act accepted for publication with Cambridge University Press. Dr. Leonard secured $180,000 in research funding through an NSF Rapid grant to study public perceptions of wildfire policy. He submitted proposals that are still pending for over $1 million in research funding from USDA and the Sloan Foundation on projects related to water and energy resource optimization and participated in a proposal to the NSF for a $30 million Science and Technology Center. Dr. Leonard gave invited research talks at CU Boulder, Colorado School of Mines, UC Santa Barbara, the University of Southern California, and Stanford University.

Dr. Leonard also made substantial contributions to the University and the state through his engagement in academic service and applied research projects. He served on the search committee that successfully hired a new Spicer Chair of Collaborative Practice in the Haub School. He also worked with the Center for Energy Regulation and Policy Analysis in SER to support the state in analyzing the BLM's Rock Springs Resource Management Plan and assisted with an ongoing contract with the Department of Energy to examine federal leasing of pore space for carbon capture and storage. He served on a panel at the Wyoming Energy Future Conference hosted by SER in August, participated in the Teton Group's Fall meeting, and supported the Ruckleshaus Institute in the Haub School by participating in a workshop on the BLM's public lands rule, speaking at the Emerging Issues Forum, and helping to review pitches for the next issue of Western Confluence. He also helped plan a workshop on using markets to address key water scarcity issues as part of an emerging partnership between the Ucross Foundation and the Haub School involving thought-leaders from academia, industry, and policymakers.

Dr. Tara Righetti, (J.D. Law, University of Colorado Boulder)
Occidental Petroleum Corporation Chair in Energy and Environmental Policies
(See SER Professor of Law)

Dr. Saman Aryana, (Ph.D. Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford University)
Occidental Petroleum Corporation Chair in Energy and Environmental Technologies

Dr. Saman Aryana is a Professor and the Occidental Chair in Energy and Environmental Technologies, as well as the Head of the Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering (ChBE) at the University of Wyoming (UW). In his role as Department Head, Dr. Aryana has led a comprehensive transformation of the department. His efforts have included faculty recruitment and growth, strategic visioning, modernization of departmental governance, and the advancement of cross-disciplinary collaborations that have strengthened both the research and educational missions of the department. Since assuming leadership, he has overseen a doubling of the faculty, expanded graduate and research programs, and secured substantial philanthropic and industry support.

Currently, Dr. Aryana is on sabbatical, serving as a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Senior Fellow at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia. His Fulbright project integrates global perspectives on energy transition and advances subsurface energy storage research using quantitative and qualitative approaches. His work also fosters long-term international collaborations and supports the development of student exchange opportunities. During this sabbatical, he has delivered invited talks at the University of Sydney, UNSW, the University of Adelaide, the Australian National University, and the University of Western Australia. In collaboration with the Office of Global Engagement at UW and the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Adelaide (UA), Dr. Aryana has initiated the development of a student exchange program between UW and UA. Directors of the undergraduate Chemical Engineering programs at both institutions are currently working to align curricula and develop a proposal for institutional review. Dr. Aryana also visited two major research facilities operated by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO): the Australian Synchrotron in Melbourne and the OPAL research reactor in Sydney. In collaboration with ANSTO researchers and UNSW faculty, he is preparing a proposal to utilize the neutron source at OPAL for preliminary studies of confined thixotropic suspensions relevant to subsurface energy storage applications. In a separate effort with two faculty members at UNSW, Dr. Aryana co-developed a pre-proposal to the Australian Coal Industry's Research Program (ACARP) to investigate the use of surface-active agents for reducing fugitive emissions and improving underground mine safety.

Previously, Dr. Aryana served as a Lead Scientist in the U.S. Department of Energy's Frontier Research Center—Center for Mechanistic Control of Unconventional Formations (CMC-UF). His research integrates experimental, theoretical, and computational approaches to advance the understanding of fluid behavior in extreme geological environments, such as shales and tight rocks that are critical for subsurface fluid storage. A significant portion of his research portfolio is conducted in collaboration with UW's School of Energy Resources (SER). His work includes studies on the Mowry Shale's response to reservoir stimulation and contributions to the SER Hydrogen Energy Research Center. His team explores Wyoming's resources—such as energy, transportation infrastructure, water, and subsurface pore space—for scalable hydrogen production and long-term energy storage. His group actively disseminates its research through peer-reviewed journals and international conferences. Between 2024 and May 2025, these efforts resulted in 12 journal publications, two provisional patent applications, 11 invited talks at international venues, and six conference presentations.

Dr. Aryana has also served the broader scientific community in leadership roles, including co-convening and co-chairing the following sessions:

- *American Geophysical Union (AGU)* Session on "Removing Technical Obstacles to Large-Scale Deployment of Geological Storage Systems" (Washington, D.C., 2024)
- *Joint Meeting of the 16th International Symposium on Wettability and Porous Media & the 4th InterPore Australian Chapter Meeting* (Sydney, 2025)
- *Session on the Physics of Multiphase Flow in Diverse Porous Media*, 16th International Conference on Porous Media & Annual Meeting (InterPore, 2024)

He also served on:

- The Technical Committee of the 2024 and 2025 Annual Symposia of the Society of Core Analysts
- The Steering Committee of the 2025 International Wettability Symposium
- Chaired an invited talk by Dr. X. Yang (Beijing Normal University) at InterPore 2024
- Co-chaired the Novel EOR/IOR Symposium at the 2024 SPE Improved Oil Recovery Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he also served on the Technical Committee.

Dr. Aryana's commitment to internationalization has led to visits to PUC-Rio (Brazil) and Yachay Tech (Ecuador), where he helped develop research collaborations and explore joint graduate programs. These efforts have resulted in:

- A collaborative project with a PUC-Rio research group
- Hosting a visiting PhD scholar at UW funded by Brazil
- Recruiting a PhD student from Ecuador

In addition to his administrative and research roles, Dr. Aryana continues to serve as the faculty advisor to the UW Student Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), reflecting his commitment to mentorship and excellence.

University Libraries/Honors College

Janice Grover-Roosa, (M.L.S. Library Science, Emporia State University; MA, University of Wyoming)
Carol J. McMurry Endowed Librarian for Academic Excellence

The Carol J. McMurry Distinguished Librarian for Academic Excellence, advances student success and academic innovation at the University of Wyoming through research, instruction, and mentorship.

In 2024, Grover co-developed *ChatGPT for Assessment: A Compassion Audit Framework for First-Year Students*, a project that explores how generative AI can support whole-person care in library services. This work was first presented at the Association of Research Libraries' 2024 Assessment Conference and later adapted for a contributed paper session at the 2025 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Conference, one of the most competitive in the field. The research team plans to submit their findings for publication.

Grover also received the 2025 Outstanding Capstone Mentor Award from the University of Wyoming Honors College, an honor based on student nominations that recognizes exemplary mentorship of undergraduate research.

Through her scholarship and student-centered teaching, Grover continues to enrich academic experience at UW and advance the university's mission of excellence in education.

College of Health Sciences

Dr. Doug Petersen, (Ph.D. Disability Disciplines with an emphasis in Speech-Language Pathology, Utah State University)
Maggie and Dick Scarlet Chair in Speech-Language Pathology

Dr. Douglas Petersen has completed his third year as the Maggie & Dick Scarlett Chair in Speech-Language Pathology. During the 2024–2025 academic year, he has continued to expand the reach and impact of his work on the early identification and intervention for language and literacy difficulty. His research, teaching, and service have directly benefited students, educators, and communities across the state of Wyoming, as well as nationally and internationally.

Dr. Petersen has led several groundbreaking studies that validate innovative assessment tools capable of accurately identifying children with developmental language disorder (DLD), dyslexia, and other language-based learning difficulties. These tools, many of which are available at no cost to educators, are currently used in every U.S. state and over 30 countries, with significant uptake among speech-language pathologists and school systems in Wyoming. His work enables earlier, more accurate diagnoses and facilitates better-aligned instruction.

Complementing his assessment work, Dr. Petersen has conducted applied intervention research demonstrating the efficacy of structured, language-focused instruction in improving reading comprehension and writing outcomes for students. This research has informed professional development and curriculum implementation across Wyoming schools, where districts partner with his research team to implement and scale best practices.

A major focus of his current work is the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for language in general education classrooms. His MTSS research has garnered national attention for its focus on equity, scalability, and the integration of language into academic instruction. These efforts hold particular relevance for Wyoming school systems seeking to improve academic achievement through inclusive, evidence-based practices.

Dr. Petersen's work exemplifies the goals of the Maggie & Dick Scarlett Chair in Speech-Language Pathology by generating research of national significance while maintaining a strong, sustained commitment to Wyoming's students, educators, and communities.

College of Law

Jacquelyn Bridgeman, (J.D. Law, University of Chicago)
Kepler Distinguished Professorship of Law.

Jacquelyn Bridgeman is the Kepler Distinguished Professorship of Law. In FY 2025, Professor Bridgeman continued her focus on high impact and community-based projects. She continued her work as a member of the consultative groups for Copyright law and Constitutional torts as part of the American Law Institute, working with leading lawyers, judges, and academics throughout the country to improve the law and the legal system. Through December, Professor Bridgeman continued serving as the magistrate judge for the Albany County

Integrated Juvenile Treatment Program (IJTP), working with part of the team that secured a large federal grant, one of only a handful awarded throughout the country. She also worked on the continued development of two pilot programs for the IJTP that are the only programs of their kind in the country. These unique programs are designed to better meet unmet needs of Albany County youth and their families and serve as models for similar courts around the country, particularly those operating in rural spaces.

Professor Bridgeman, along with four co-authors, published the book *College Success for Students of Color: A Culturally Empowered, Assets-Based Approach.* An accessible guide to help students from marginalized communities succeed in higher education, published by Teachers College Press of Columbia University, the book received strong reviews from some of the leading scholars in the field. Additionally, Professor Bridgeman received a University of Wyoming Presidential Scholarly Award for Tenured Faculty for this book and other work. Professor Bridgeman also continued working on her next book, focusing on issues of equality. She hopes to have the book proposal for that work-in-progress ready for submission in fall of 2025. Finally, Professor Bridgeman taught courses on Race, Gender, and the Law, Social Justice and the Law, Employment Law and Sports & Entertainment law throughout the 2024-2025 academic year and was selected as a finalist for the UW College of Law Outstanding Faculty Member award for the third year in a row.

Stephen M. Feldman, (J.S.M. Law, Stanford University, J.D. Law, Oregon State University)
Jerry W. Housel/Carl F. Arnold Distinguished Professor of Law

Professor Feldman has been the Jerry W. Housel/Carl F. Arnold Distinguished Professor of Law and Adjunct Professor of Political Science since 2002. His recent publications include the following: Who Belongs: White Christian Nationalism and the Roberts Court (New York University Press, forthcoming); Free Speech, Social Justice, and Brandenburg, in "Fight Like Hell": Free Speech and Incitement in the Twenty-First Century 65 (Eric T. Kasper & JoAnne Sweeney eds., State University of New York Press, 2025); The Roberts Court and the Meaning of 1937: Individual Rights, Democracy, and Minority Rule, 16 Ala. C.R. & C.L. L. Rev. 1 (2024-2025); and Who Belongs? "We the People" in the Twenty-First Century, 52 Fordham Urban L.J. 1 (2024); Searching for Truth that Speaks to Power: Free Speech and Equality on Campus, 73 Am. U. L. Rev. 807 (2024), reprinted in The First Amendment Law Handbook (Rodney A. Smolla ed., Thomson Reuters, forthcoming); Saving the Supreme Court? Constitutional Rights and the Inevitability of Politics (With a Discussion of Antisemitism), 61 Houston L. Rev. 953 (2024). As he does regularly, Professor Feldman taught Constitutional Law I, Constitutional Law II, and Jurisprudence. His research and writing projects emphasize national concerns and are of national interest. As such, they benefit the University of Wyoming, the state of Wyoming, and Wyoming residents. His articles and essays consistently rank in SSRN's Top Ten Percent Total New Downloads List as well as SSRN's Top Ten Percent Total All-Time Downloads List. His readership report from the Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship shows over 12,000 downloads. He is the faculty adviser for the American Constitution Society Wyoming student Chapter.

Jason Robison, (J.D. Law, University of Oregon, S.J.D. Law, Harvard University)
Carl M. Williams Professor of Law & Social Responsibility

Dr. Robison is a Professor at the College of Law, the Co-Director of the Gina Guy Center for Land & Water Law, and an Adjunct Professor at the Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources. Dr. Robison's teaching, research, and service focus on the field of energy, environmental, and natural resources (EENR) law, with a particular emphasis on the intersection of transboundary water law and federal Indian law in western North America.

Highlights of Dr. Robison's work during the 2024-2025 academic year include:

- Teaching several EENR courses to law students and non-law graduate students, including (1) a Water Law & Policy course offering a survey of key laws, policies, and organizations associated with water management in the United States; (2) an Advanced Water Law & Policy seminar addressing tribal water rights and tribal governments' engagement in water management, including on the Wind River Indian Reservation; and (3) an International Environmental Law seminar providing a global perspective on cutting-edge issues in the EENR field and international laws (treaties, etc.) addressing these issues.

- Teaching law students a Federal Courts course examining (1) the relationships between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government (*i.e.*, separation of powers), and (2) the relationships between the federal and state governments, particularly their respective judiciaries (*i.e.*, federalism).

- Publishing an updated edition of Dr. Robison's long-running water law treatise, *Law of Water Rights & Resources* (Thompson Reuters, 2024). In addition, publishing two extensive law review articles addressing the intersection mentioned above between transboundary water law and federal Indian law in western North America: (1) *Equity Along the Yellowstone*, 96 Colo. L. Rev. 599 (2025), and (2) *Relational River*: Arizona v. Navajo Nation *& the Colorado*, 72 UCLA L. Rev. ___ (2025).

- Conducting research for the first-ever regional study of the status of tribal governments and tribal water rights under existing interstate water compacts—tentatively titled, *Water Co-Sovereignty: Tribal Nations & Western Compacts* (forthcoming 2026).

- Completing service focused on the Wind River Indian Reservation, including (1) organizing a Wind River Water Forum in Fort Washakie examining, from historical and future perspectives, important water-infrastructure and water-rights priorities on the reservation; and (2) serving on the Northern Arapaho Endowment Scholarship Committee.

- Also completing service with two regional organizations focused on water management issues within the Colorado River Basin: (1) the Colorado River Research Group, and (2) the Water & Tribes Initiative in the Colorado River Basin.

James Delany (J.D. Law, Gonzaga School of Law)
Carl M. Williams Centennial Distinguished Professor

During the academic year 2024-25, Professor Delaney taught four courses at the College of Law. He taught Trusts & Estates, Business Entities Taxation, Federal Income Taxation, and Estate & Gift Taxation. Based on Prof. Delaney's teaching efforts, the College of Law's Class of 2025 voted Prof. Delaney as one of three outstanding Professors for the 2024-2025 academic year. As an outstanding faculty member, Prof. Delaney performed as a "hooder" during the graduation ceremony in May 2025. Hooders have the distinct honor of fitting the doctoral hood on each graduate as they cross the stage during the graduation ceremony. Further, based on his outstanding teaching, scholarship, and other service to the College of Law, in the fall of 2022, Dean Alexander honored Professor Delaney by awarding him the Carl M. Williams Centennial Distinguished Professorship. He served in this capacity throughout the 2024-2025 academic year.

With respect to scholarship, Prof. Delaney authors two books that he continues to update. He authors *Federal Income Tax*, Carolina Press Q&A Series. Second edition released for publication in the fall of 2018. He also authors *Federal Estate & Gift Tax*, Carolina Press Q&A Series 2009/2012/2019. The Third Edition was released for publication in the fall of 2019. Prof. Delaney co-authors this second book with Dean & Prof. Elaine Hightower-Gagliardi, University of Montana School of Law. These two books are both extensively used by Wyoming law students in their legal studies. They are also used regionally and by many law students across the nation. In the spring semester of 2024 Prof. Delaney began working on and co-authoring a journal article entitled *Recent Developments in Federal Income Taxation: The Year 2024*. This manuscript has been submitted accepted for publication in the 2025 summer volume of the Tax Lawyer. It was co-authored with Prof. Bruce A. McGovern, V.P., Associate Dean of Academic Administration, and professor of law at the South Texas College of Law, Houston and Prof. Cassady V. Brewer, Professor of law at Georgia State University College of Law.

Vacant, ***William T. Schwartz Professor of Law***

Melissa Alexander, (J.D. Law, University of Virginia)
Carl M. Williams Professor of Law & Ethics

Professor Alexander serves as the Carl M. Williams Professor of Law and Ethics. She is a nationally recognized health law and ethics scholar dedicated to serving the State of Wyoming. This year, she developed and taught a new graduate course in Public Health Law. By training new lawyers in public health principles, she worked to address the shortage of public health experts in Wyoming and nationwide. Professor Alexander also taught Health Law, Civil Procedure II, and Intellectual Property. She was previously a partner at a law firm with over 700 attorneys and utilizes her decades of experience to bring a practice-oriented approach to teaching, service, and scholarship. Professor Alexander is the recipient of a law-school-wide teaching award.

Professor Alexander has also published extensively on health law and policy. Her recent publications include a prestigious book and a solicited law review article. Questions & Answers: Health Law (Carolina Aca. Press 2024) is a comprehensive health law resource designed to enhance student success and aid institutional excellence. This co-authored book has twenty-five chapters on topics as diverse as antitrust, public health, tax, reproduction, and EMTALA laws. Professor Alexander's most recent law review article is *Moral Equality and Neutral Principles: Abortion Pill "Reversal" Lessons on the Limits of State Intervention in Health Care Decision Making*, ___ Okla. L. Rev. ___ (forthcoming 2025). This article argues from a philosophical and public policy perspective for less state regulation of individual health care decisions involving moral disagreement and scientific uncertainty. Professor Alexander presented the article at a national conference and a law review symposium. She is now researching and writing a new article examining a recent circuit split on Title X, suggesting the proper statutory interpretation as well as a mode of realizing the statute's goals through new social media, telehealth, and delivery mechanisms. She has been selected to present her emerging work at the American Society of Law, Medicine, and Ethics' Health Law Professors Conference in Boston.

Professor Alexander has also served the state in several unique ways this year. In addition to ongoing work on Ivinson Memorial Hospital's Ethics Committee, she has been actively involved in assisting the state bar. Professor Alexander presented *Help and Hallucinations: Getting Started with Generative AI* at the Wyoming State Bar annual convention in Cheyenne on September 12, 2024. In December, she delivered an online continuing legal education course on summary judgment on behalf of the Wyoming Trial Lawyers' Association. This Spring, she published an article in the Wyoming Lawyer magazine on incorporating generative artificial intelligence into law practice, helping Wyoming lawyers utilize large language models more effectively and ethically.

Dr. Darrell Jackson, (Ph.D. Educational Foundations, University of Colorado)
Winston S. Howard Distinguished Professor of Law

For Dr. Darrell D. Jackson, the Winston Howard Distinguished Professor of Law, the 2024-2025 academic year began with Dr. Jackson expanding on the national and international recognition achieved alongside Dr. Nicole Crawford (ABD), the Director & Chief Curator of the University of Wyoming Art Museum. The recognition of the Stealing Culture Project (The Project) continues to position UW as a leader in the field of international cultural repatriation. The Project continues to present and lecture in far too many locations to list in this short piece, but, as an example, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Crawford had only briefly returned from presenting at the International Council of Museums – University Museums and Collections International Committee in Dresden, Germany, when we were invited to speak at the Social Justice Institute Think Tank Conference at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. This momentum continued into 2025 as Dr. Jackson and Dr. Crawford presented before the Association of American Law Schools, the largest law school conference in the country. Separately, in December 2024, I co-authored an article published in the University of Pittsburgh Law Review that has also drawn national attention.

Vacant, ***E. George Rudolph Distinguished Visiting Chair***

Dona Playton, (J.D. Law, University of Wyoming)
Greg Dyekman Endowed Clinical Professor

As the Dyekman Professor of Law and Director of the Family & Child Legal Advocacy Clinic, Professor Dona Playton advances experiential legal education and statewide access to justice initiatives. Through her leadership, law students receive hands-on training under a special court rule allowing supervised legal practice, directly serving more than 100 low-income individuals annually across Wyoming in matters such as guardianship, adoption, custody, and child support. In addition to directing the clinic, Professor Playton teaches Family Law and Dispute Resolution, integrating practical experience with doctrinal instruction. In March, she co-led a 40-hour mediation training in partnership with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's dispute resolution program. Her research and teaching directly benefit Wyoming's legal system by expanding the availability of legal services in rural areas, promoting collaborative problem-solving over adversarial processes, and contributing to a stronger legal workforce equipped to support Wyoming families and businesses through life transitions that often affect housing stability, employment, and overall well-being.

Professor Playton's research and scholarship focus on advancing ethical, trauma-informed legal interventions that promote child-centered outcomes and developing effective legal strategies to stabilize families and reduce the societal costs of unresolved legal issues. She is currently updating a White Paper she authored for the Wyoming Access to Justice Commission on improving access and outcomes in domestic relations cases and recently published an article in the *Wyoming Lawyer* advocating for comprehensive relief in domestic violence protection orders. She currently represents Wyoming lawyers and judges as the Wyoming State Bar Delegate in the ABA House of Delegates and was recently elected to a three-year term on the ABA Board of Governors. Professor Playton also serves on the boards of Climb Wyoming and the Wyoming Access to Justice Commission, further advancing legal and social support for Wyoming families. Professor Playton's work prepares law students to meet real-world needs and lead in a changing legal landscape, supports the economic self-sufficiency of Wyoming families, and strengthens the state's legal infrastructure to benefit residents, employers, and communities statewide.