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## The Utah Statesman, August 31, 2020

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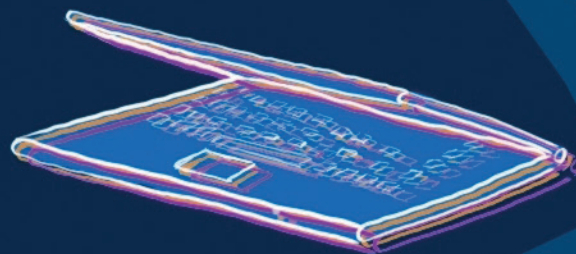
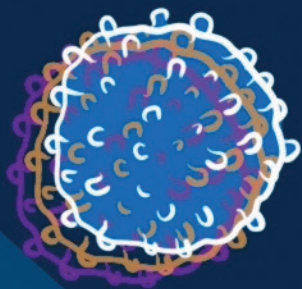
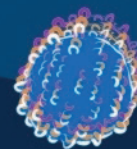
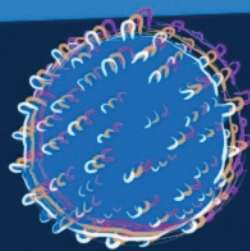
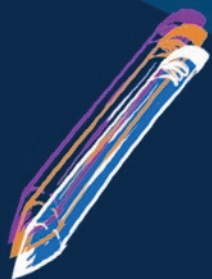
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# Meet Zoomer

## USU's first canine police officer





Nose to the ground, Zoomer runs through a maze of boxes, backpacks and suitcases. When he finds what he is searching for, a suitcase filled with smokeless powder, he looks to his human partner for affirmation. He is rewarded with his favorite toy, a tennis ball.

Zoomer, a 2-year-old black Labrador retriever, is joining Utah State University's police force as a tactical dog with a specialty in explosives detection, commonly referred to as a "bomb dog."

Zoomer is also the only dog in Cache Valley with a specialty in bomb detection.

"We wanted a dog that would be approachable and friendly," USU police Capt. Kent Harris said. "But we also wanted one with a good work ethic."

Scott Murray, a USU patrol officer and Zoomer's human partner, added that "little kids love dogs," so they wanted an animal that people of all ages could approach and feel comfortable seeing around the USU community.

While everyone is talking about him and taking pictures, Zoomer is focused on a tennis ball that Harris is holding. The ball was used in training as his reward system, and he expects to receive it after successfully alerting to a suspicious item.

"It's like having a newborn baby," Murray said. "He's a lot of work, but he's fun."

Murray has been with USU's police force since January. Before that he was a supervisor with the Logan City Police Department. According to Murray, having a bomb dog at USU offers "peace of mind."

"We now have the tool to be able to respond and take care of an incident expeditiously," he said. "A legitimate bomb threat is a huge thing. It requires evacuations and bomb technicians to have to come in. If we can pinpoint if there actually is a threat, everything is going to go a lot faster."

Although Zoomer is a canine officer, he will not be used for apprehension. This means, as Murray says, "he is not trained to bite."

Additionally, because Zoomer is the only bomb dog in Cache Valley, he will also be an

asset to surrounding agencies. On a daily basis, he will be patrolling with Murray, being a "visible deterrent on campus" and ready to investigate any suspicious items.

"The university decided to get a dog because we wanted to make sure the university is the safest we can make it," Harris said.

Harris added that plans to get another police dog for USU are "up in the air." He said they would like to get another dog, but that is something to look at with future budgeting.

"I want to throw a special thanks to the university administration for their support," Harris said. "Also, to Scott for taking on this task, it's going to be a lot of work. Not only at work, but at home as well."

Zoomer was purchased through a grant

from Pacific Coast K9 in Washington. The grant requires that he be available to other state police departments in the area. Harris said he believes the initial costs of acquiring and training Zoomer run between \$10,000 to \$16,000.

"Ultimately, we want people to know that, if you come on campus and try to do something, we have a deterrent here," Harris said. "We also want it to be known that, whenever someone chooses to come on campus, that they are safe."

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Scott Murray, USU patrol officer, poses with Zoomer, the new police dog.

PHOTO BY Austin Roundy



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# USU police recover \$25,000 in stolen equipment



PHOTO COURTESY OF USU Police Department

Thousands of dollars in stolen equipment. Some of it has yet to be claimed.

**By Karcin Harris**

SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A former Utah State University employee was caught by campus police after allegedly stealing about \$25,000 in computer equipment.

USU Police Capt. Kent Harris said while most of the equipment was recovered, some had already been sold or destroyed by 34-year-old Terry Trinkella, who worked in USU's facilities department.

Harris said Trinkella is being charged with four counts of burglary and five counts of theft.

The stolen equipment included monitors, hard drives, keyboards, memory, laptops and cables. The equipment was taken from multiple buildings on campus as well as South Farm and Caine Dairy, two of USU's research facilities.

Harris said the department was made aware of the thefts two months ago, but the thefts could have occurred beforehand and gone unnoticed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We've recovered property that hasn't even been reported yet," Harris said. "We're waiting for people to come back, fire up their computers in classrooms and notice their missing equipment. Then we can start putting pieces

back in their locations."

Harris expressed his gratitude to the security staff, USU's Information Technology department, and to Detective Erik Christensen.

"He was putting things together," Harris said. "Without his hard work and follow up, we wouldn't have been able to recover a lot of this property."

Detective Christensen called the series of thefts a "perfect storm."

"It's this confluence of events that occurred that allowed this to go on," Christensen said. "It was a USU employee who could hide in plain sight, and we had this pandemic where everyone's been at home, so there were fewer people to notice things going missing."

Christensen said at first the reports of missing items resembled thefts that occur every spring.

"At the end of every school year, we get a few thefts from seniors," he said, "where people will say, 'I'm leaving for good so I'm going to take this.' We thought this may be what the thefts were."

The thief was first noticed on surveillance video from the research farms. According to Christensen, the director at the farms saw a USU facilities vehicle on the property and thought it was strange.

"We kept an eye on that vehicle, got a few leads and tracked him down," Christensen said. "Some members of our department noticed the thief walking by with a stolen computer under his arm. We tracked him on the cameras and saw him get in the same white facilities vehicle."

After getting search warrants, the officers were able to recover the stolen equipment.

Some of the officers are certified in computer forensics, Christensen said, so they were able to quickly see that the equipment was USU property instead of needing to send everything to a lab and wait for results.

"We brought the thief in for questioning and he admitted to the thefts," Christensen said. "He was very cooperative with us and made a list of where he'd been. Our total value of recovered equipment was \$25,000."

According to Christensen, it was lucky that he didn't move much of it. With many budget cuts due to the pandemic, the university would have had to pay to replace everything.

Christensen, who has been with the USU Police Department for five years, chuckled at the praise from Harris. Christensen said he was just doing his job and doesn't need the credit.

"Honestly, we would not have broken the case without help," he said. "We have a small department so we had to pull people from patrol and security guards. The credit goes to the security guards. All I did was write the reports and talk to the suspect. Everyone else really pushed it and I couldn't have done it without them."

Harris said the police department, along with the university, is disappointed in the former employee's actions.

"His actions are going to affect not only the staff, but also the students in their learning behavior. With the pandemic, it's going to limit their ability to learn because these parts have been stolen or destroyed. Now computers won't work well on the first day of class," he said.

He added Trinkella does not represent "the university's wonderful staff" as a whole.

Harris said the public safety department wants students to take action when it comes to crime on campus.

"If you see something, say something," he said. "If something doesn't seem right in an area, we want people to call us. We would rather respond to something that may not seem like a big issue as opposed to waiting and having it turn into a bigger issue."

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# Podcast review: S-Town

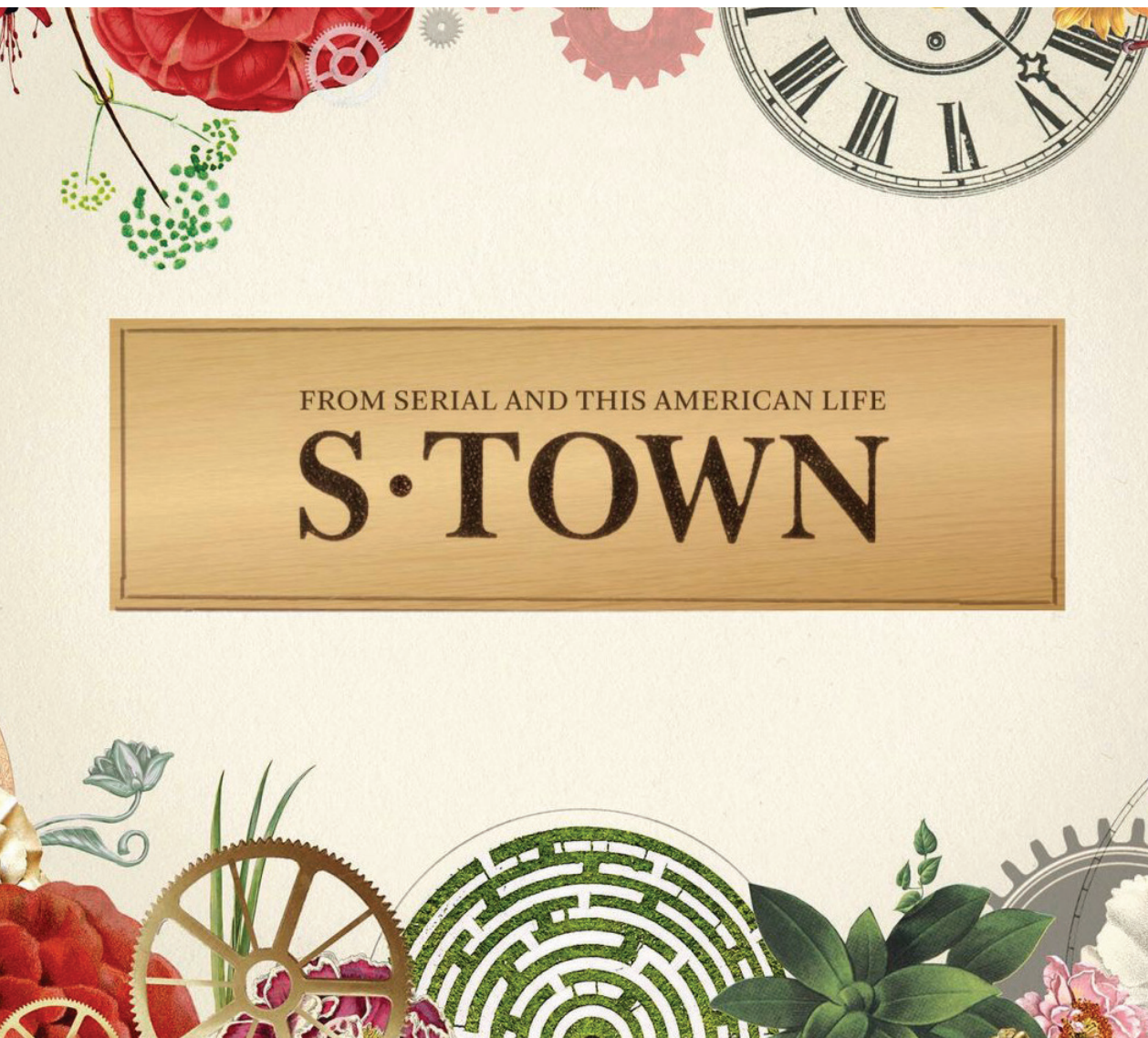


PHOTO COURTESY OF **This American Life**

By **Emily White**  
STUDENT LIFE **STAFF WRITER**

I'm not the type of person who watches criminal minds or listens to murder mystery podcasts, but when a friend made me listen to the first episode of a podcast called "S-Town," I knew I had to finish it.

You know something is worthwhile when it's a page-turner. Whether it be a book, a movie, a tv series or a podcast, page-turners are few and far between. While "S-town" wasn't a perfect podcast, it was interesting and had me listening to it nonstop.

The first thing I adored about "S-town" was its unpredictability. The turns this

podcast takes are very impressive and unmatched by most podcasts. Why? Because it's a real-life journalist investigating a real-life town in Alabama. When I started it, I thought "S-Town" was a murder mystery podcast, but if I would classify it as a mystery podcast now. When you listen to it, you'll understand the distinction is critical.

Just second to the podcast's incredible realistic unpredictable nature is the use of raw audio footage. Brian Reed serves as the host of the podcast and is the journalist investigating a possible murder in a small town, so all of the phone calls, emails and interview footage came straight from Reed's investigation. There's

something truly powerful about listening to real, honest audio footage from real people in the midst of a mysterious investigation.

I couldn't possibly get away with writing an honest review of "S-town" without mentioning John, who is the entire reason Brian Reed came to Alabama to investigate a possible murder. John is a frustrated man and a complicated one too. His character is a big reason why I couldn't stop listening to the podcast. People like John are powerful.

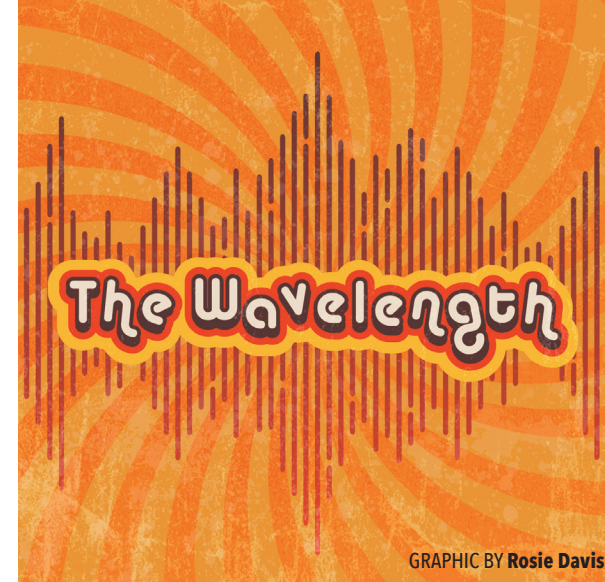
I would like to note "S-town" included some graphic details of violence and sexual activity I did not enjoy. Not including those descriptions would have led to a

less honest portrayal of events, but I don't think everything included in the podcast was necessary. Still, if you do listen to this podcast be prepared for crude and offensive language from audio footage and violent and sexually explicit descriptions.

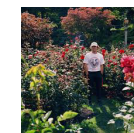
In the end— and explicit nature aside— I enjoyed "S-town." It revealed several truths of humanity I hadn't considered before and will be thinking about for the rest of my life. Brian Reed did an excellent job in his investigation and in creating a powerfully moving podcast.

"S-town" is available to listen to on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Happy listening!

—*emily.white@usu.edu*



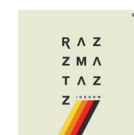
Caution – The Killers



Put Your Records On – Ritt Momney



Smile – Katy Perry



Leave Me Alone – IDKHow





# Hunger Games to Les Miserables: What

## Why certain adaptations

By **Dara Lusk**  
STUDENT LIFE **STAFF WRITER**

From ancient myths to Shakespeare, stories are among humanity's oldest art forms. Archetypal characters and motifs and audience's desire for entertainment, escape and meaning remain the same while styles change. Today, the most popular storytelling forms are arguably movies and TV series. It is only logical to find many take inspiration from the very art form they dethroned: books.

The world's most famous literature has been converted to numerous films over the years, though they don't always transfer as well as readers may hope. For every beautiful adaptation, there's at least one horrendous one, if not more. The question then arises what makes a good adaptation and whether there are some stories better expressed in writing than on screen.

The 2005 Joe Wright directed film starring Keira Knightly is typically what non-English majors envision when Jane Austen's most popular novel, "Pride and Prejudice" is brought up at family parties. Oscar, Golden Globe and BAFTA-nominated, the film is revered by not only avid fans but critics and literature strangers alike. Staying almost religiously true to the novel with much of the dialogue directly if not loosely quoted, Austen's iconic scenes cordially burst to life. There's

genuinely nothing to be cynical over. New York Times film critic Stephen Holden complained Knightly was too beautiful to play young heroine Elizabeth Bennet, who's written to be only tolerable and not nearly handsome enough to initially tempt the leading man. But even this complaint can be overlooked by Knightly's spot-on portrayal of the character whose outspoken wit is well ahead of her time.

This organic accuracy can be attributed to the fact that "Pride and Prejudice" is a simple book. Characters do not face any overarching philosophical questions or moral dilemmas beyond overcoming personal pride and cheeky prejudice. There is not much for the film to unravel, giving it a smooth transition to the screen.

More complex novels are more complex to bring justice to, as seen by another Joe Wright directed, Keira Knightly led film. The fan and critical reception for their 2012 "Anna Karenina" was contrary to the praise "Pride and Prejudice" received.

A timeless cautionary tale exploring life, love and happiness, Leo Tolstoy's acclaimed novel has everything modern audiences are looking for: scandalous sex, shocking betrayal, lavish lifestyles and mental unhingement.

Leading as Anna, Keira Knightly refused to shy away from the character's graceful, if not erratic, behavior to present a dynamic performance any actress would be proud of. What should have been a career highlight is left in the dust, however, because neither Knightly, her A-list co-stars,

the uniquely beautiful cinematography, vibrant score or award-winning costuming are enough to save this period drama. It concludes leaving the audience as dissatisfied as its protagonist.

The downfall of "Anna Karenina" is failing to capture the novel's core brilliance. The dense book follows a range of characters beyond the titular leading lady. Only through these foils can the severity of Anna's rash actions be understood.

It's no surprise when films cut plot pieces to better adjust a story to screen, but by attempting to oversimplify Tolstoy's work, the story comes across as half told. The film is the equivalent of examining the individual dots of color in George Seurat's "A Sunday on La Grande Jatte" without once stepping back to admire the style's revolutionary blending technique.

"Anna Karenina" showcases the downside of time constraint in film. The novel teeters on 800 pages in most translations, giving readers plenty of time to live alongside characters and understand intricate details of their lives. The film is just over two hours — not nearly enough time to accomplish the attention the story requires.

Luckily, there is an antidote to time constraints: television series and miniseries.

Thanks to the award-winning Broadway musical, "Les Miserables" is a family name with a familiar plot, even if not many people are brave enough to conquer Victor Hugo's over 1,000-page novel.

In 2019, BBC and PBS Masterpiece aired

a six-episode miniseries of "Les Miserables." Staying true to the text, the series' top-notch cast, provocative directing and engaging script make it — by far — the superior adaptation. It allows audiences to personally experience characters' highs and lows to understand why the title translates to "the miserable people." This over six-hour portrayal reaches depths previous two-and-half-hour portrayals could not.

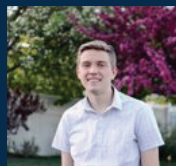
Perhaps if "Anna Karenina" was given a longer runtime, it could have likewise been as superior as "Les Miserables."

Though split between three films, the theatrical versions of Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" film trilogy equals nearly nine hours. These are far from the first adaptations of Tolkien's work but have reigned as the most popular, accurate and beloved adaptations by fans and critics alike. "The Hobbit" film trilogy, on the other hand, did not receive as warm of a reception. "The Lord of the Rings" books equal just over 1,000 pages all together while the "The Hobbit" is a short solo novel — not nearly enough material for three, two-and-a-half-hour films. The story was weak by the time the second film opened. Lack of adequate plot caused the film to derail from the book, enraging fans.

Adaptations' runtime should justifiably fit not only the source material's length but plot density.

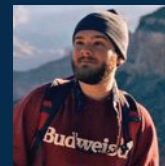
The 21st century has seen a rise in young adult novels, and with them comes major motion pictures.

**TWEETS**  
of the  
**WEEK**



@tmonson23

looking for music on youtube isn't supposed to distract you for...  
\*checks watch\*...three hours, is it?



@ItsLumberzack

"you have a funny twitter" thanks man i haven't been happy since 2007



# makes a good book-to-film adaptation?

## stand out from others



GRAPHIC BY Rosie Davis

"The Hunger Games" books gained a loyal following after their release, and the films were not far behind. With numerous Golden Globe and BAFTA nominations and wins, critics and fans agree the cinematic series is among the most celebrat-

ed film franchises based on books. The movies were able to stay true to the books while bringing the world of Panem and its various characters to life. The acting, directing and scripts enhanced the story in ways fans could have only dreamed.

On the contrary, the "Percy Jackson" films were unable to capture the fire of the "The Hunger Games" and were simply inaccurate. Characterization and plot were far from the original source material, not to mention its pathetic CGI and the lack


of chemistry among actors. It's hard to find any "Percy Jackson" fans who tolerate the films.

Many adults lose interest in or time for reading after high school. Books read as young adults are among their last and are often the most impactful. People want films to help relive books' magic, while plot inaccuracies and incorrect characterizations accomplish the opposite. Perhaps this is why fairy tale reimaginings such as "Snow White and the Huntsman" and "Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters" have been unsuccessful.

Books allow audiences to immerse themselves in art in ways no other form can. Though the same can be said for films, books bring a different level of intimacy between writer and reader that allows both to learn about themselves and the world around them.

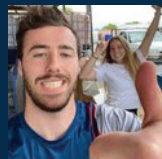
It is difficult to say what makes a good book to film adaptation when each book is as different as its reader and there are numerous moving pieces that go into creating a movie. But, it can be said a film's key focus should be on finding the individuality of the original source material in terms of characterization, depth, plot and tone to enhance them in ways only achieved on screen.

—dara.lusk@outlook.com

 @dara\_marie\_

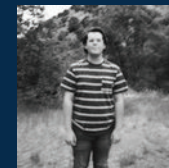
@avocadoanxiety

My generation really be like "I'm fine" and then play 'Dog Days Are Over' by @florencemachine just to feel something.



@Michael\_Cherry2

Y'all smile under your mask for a pic or???



@GageCarling

i hate this pandemic, if i wanted to waste my early 20s i would have gone to BYU





# "Kobe was our Jordan"

PHOTO BY Robert Gauthier/Los Angeles Times/TNS

By Jason Walker  
SENIOR SPORTS WRITER

On an otherwise ordinary Sunday in January, Utah State basketball guard, Marco Anthony, was on his way to Herm's, anticipating enjoying a quiet brunch at a local delicacy, when a friend texted him a simple message. Check Twitter. Upon following this vague, though specific, advice, Anthony immediately saw the news his buddy was so wound up about — a nine-word tweet, posted by TMZ, that sent the entire social media site and basketball world into a fiery frenzy on a cold Sunday morning. "BREAKING: Kobe Bryant Has Died In A Helicopter Crash." Anthony's teammate, Alphonso Anderson, also saw the tweet within minutes of it being unleashed onto the world. The initial reaction from both was identical. "I thought it was fake." "They [TMZ] put out false news all the time," Anderson said, "so I was more hoping it was fake than anything."

To believe otherwise would be unthinkable. Could Bryant, a man only 41 years old, just four years removed from one of the most storied NBA careers of all time and only months away from what would surely be a shoe-in Hall of Fame induction, really be dead? But time would only corroborate the initial report. Though TMZ's reputation brought on an initial wave of doubt, that skepticism hit a cold hard wall: reality. Bryant had indeed died in a helicopter crash along with his daughter "Gigi" Gianna and seven more unfortunate souls. "It was really heartbreaking. He was one guy I really looked up to," said Anderson at the time. "Growing up (Kobe) was one of my idols so that really hurt." Mere hours after the news broke NBA Twitter, the Utah State men's basketball team gathered for a Sunday afternoon practice, but the mood was nothing close to the usual for an energetic group of young men. "As soon as I walk in the locker room doors, you can just kind of feel a different mood, a different vibe," team manager Ryan Corbett said. "You could tell everyone's faces are kind of down. They had turned the TVs off because they didn't want to be reminded of that right before our practice." When the Aggies lined up on the practice court. Every member of the team who owned



PHOTO BY AP Photo/Susan Sterner, file

a pair of Kobe Bryant shoes were sporting said footwear. And with the world still trying to wrap their head around the loss of a basketball colossus, the Aggies ran through drills, business as usual, but with the added weight of Bryant's passing creating a barrier that had to be pushed through. Just as much as Bryant's death held them down, his legacy helped guide these the men through this downtrodden practice session — a legacy that can be described in two words: the "Mamba Mentality." Among many other things, the Mamba Mentality represents the notion of never giving up, never letting adversity get you down permanently. It's the part of Kobe's legacy that even the most violent death could never mar, nor take away. "The Mamba Mentality is real," Anthony said. "You might be a little hurt, you might be a little banged up but what would Kobe do? He would just go out and still give it 110 percent." "You never see Kobe relax, you know, that Mamba Mentality," Anderson said. "The hard work and the grit that he shows, it just makes you want to do better." USU head coach Craig Smith, a Lakers fan growing up, said that for whether someone loved or hated Bryant as a person, "at the end of the day everybody respects him as a basketball player," much of that respect coming directly from his famous mindset. "The biggest takeaway though is his passion for the game," Smith said. "How much he loved the game. How hard he worked on his craft. You just weren't going to outwork that guy. Now maybe there were a few guys that worked as hard, but you certainly weren't going to outwork him." While Smith and the rest of the coaching staff had ascended to adulthood by the time Bryant entered the NBA scene straight out of Lower Merion High School in Pennsylvania,



PHOTO BY AP Photo/Alex Brandon

all of the players had barely outgrown diapers. But both players and staff were able to witness his immortal feats, catching and remembering forever their favorite moments from the starlit career, starting with his three-peat in the early 2000s, just when many of the younger players were just picking up their first basketballs. Then when the future Aggie forward grew older, the Kobe moments just kept coming. From the All-Star appearances — 18 in total where he also earned four All-Star Game MVPs (the trophy for which now bears his name) — and his back-to-back championships in 2008-09 and 2009-10. Bryant's spectacular and unique style of play that led to these immortal feats inspired an up-and-coming generation of basketball players. Even now, players like Anthony, who plays the same position as the late legend, pours over his game footage. "I look at Kobe film all the time," Anthony said. "His footwork, the ways he could score. He can make something out of nothing. The way that he led his team and everything like that. Just watching that film over and over has made me so much better than I was when I first started." Many in older generations of basketball disciples cling to legends of the 70s, 80s and 90s. For instance, Smith clings to Magic Johnson as his favorite player of all time. Others cling to Michael Jordan, the widely held "greatest of all time"; a player who changed basketball as we know it and the most recognizable name in the sports history. But the generation of basketball fans and players of which Anthony, Anderson and the rest of the current Aggie roster are a part of have someone else. As Anthony put it: "Kobe was our Jordan."

—jasonswalker94  
@thejwalk67

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# Will USU Athletics be able to survive the pandemic?

## A conversation with John Hartwell about the current financial state of USU Athletics

By Jacob Nielson  
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

On Aug 10, the Mountain West conference suspended its fall sports season, citing “ongoing challenges with the effective mitigation and management of the COVID-19 virus.”

Not only did this announcement burn a hole in the hearts of Aggie sports fans, but it also burned a hole in the pockets of the Utah State athletic department.

“We think our net loss is going to be about 3.2 million dollars,” said Utah State athletic director John Hartwell. “In all, we got about 8.9 million dollars in revenue that we believe we’re going to lose... we’re going to be able to save in some expenses to the tune of about 5.7 million.”

The majority of the lost revenue comes due to the cancelation of football, where ticket sales and television revenue, among other things, make it the most profitable Utah State sport. But no play also means no travel and game-day expenses for the five varsity fall sports, saving the university some money.

For an athletic department that does not make much more than it spends, 3.2 million dollars is admittedly “a significant amount of lost revenue,” Hartwell said.

For reference, in the 2017-18 fiscal year, the athletic program earned a total of \$34,933,622 dollars and had \$34,914,928 of expenses for a net gain of just \$18,694. So a loss of 3.2 million dollars would put the department in a deficit of roughly, well, 3.2 million dollars.

The 2017-18 numbers do not exactly reciprocate what the department’s operat-

ing budget would have been in a ‘normal’ 20-21 fiscal year, as there has been an increase in donors, ticket sales, and tv revenue in recent years, but it gives us a decent idea.

According to a report published by ESPN in May, Group of 5 schools — of which Utah State is a part of — could be hit the hardest without the resumption of football. Among the 56 public schools in the Group of 5, 62.5% get their largest share of funding from government and/or university support, 34% from student fees and 3.6% from donor contributions. Utah State in 2017-18 received the largest share of its athletics revenue from institutional support, \$12,255,952 of \$34,933,622 total.

So how will the athletic department supplement this loss of money?

According to Hartwell, the first step of action is to try to gain more financial support from alumni.

“We launched our Aggie strong campaign which is a new fundraising effort with an increased focus on basically on helping us bridge that gap quite frankly,” he said.

The department is looking to get 2,020 donors involved in this new fundraising program before the end of the year. To this point, 500 people have signed up, just two weeks after the campaign launched, which Hartwell has deemed a success.

Another potential way to make up some of the lost revenue is by playing a spring football season.

“If we could do that it would help us to be able to recoup some of our television revenue which is a significant amount and then some ticket revenue, maybe not the full amount, depending on what we would be able to seat in the stadium,” Hartwell said.

Utah State football head coach Gary Andersen did not seem as optimistic that a spring season could be a possibility.

In a recent conference call with the media, Andersen was reported as saying that a spring season was “not feasible” and potentially detrimental to the players’ health.

“I’m always going to be in it for kids. I’m never going to stop saying that,” Andersen said. “That is not a possibility for our young men to play 20-plus football games in a year if I have anything to do with this decision.”

If the spring season did come to fruition, it would likely be just seven or eight games. Anything longer, and it would not give the student-athletes a chance to recover, and then recondition for a season that following fall, according to Hartwell.

Despite these efforts to get more donations and to have spring football season, the concern is that it may not be enough, and the program will still be stuck with a large deficit. That could put the university in a situation where they would potentially have to cut some sports or furlough employees, similar to what has happened at Boise State, Akron, and several other schools.

Hartwell is determined to prevent this from happening.

“Our overarching value since this whole thing started back in early March was the three main goals that we’re trying to protect. We’re trying to make sure that we protect sports, that we protect scholarships, and that we protect jobs.”

Hartwell credits his department’s “lean and mean” approach of doing things for keeping the program in a position where they don’t have to resort to eliminating the sports, scholarships, or jobs.

When the spring season was canceled back in March, the athletic department decided that “the only expenditures that we’re going to have are necessary expeditors.” Hartwell said. “Our coaches and staff did a great job in that and actually for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, we actually ended in a positive, which you know was quite a feat, knowing that we lost a million-plus dollars in NCAA tournament revenue.”

Hartwell said that that frugality will continue into this new fiscal year.

“We continue to maintain that focus,” he said. “Again, we got an uphill climb facing potential revenue shortfall. But we’re working at it.”

 @jacobnielson12





# RESOURCES

## Academic Success Programs

435-797-2586

[usu.edu/asp/](http://usu.edu/asp/)  
University Inn 101

## Disability Resource Center

435-797-2444

[usu.edu/drc/](http://usu.edu/drc/)  
University Inn 101

## Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information Office

435-797-7273 (Crisis Hotline)

[usu.edu/saavi/](http://usu.edu/saavi/)  
TSC 311

## Office of Equity

435-797-1266

[usu.edu/equity/](http://usu.edu/equity/)  
Old Main 161

## Career Services

435-797-7777

[career-services.usu.edu](http://career-services.usu.edu)  
University Inn 102

## Aggie Math Learning Center

435-797-2809

[math.usu.edu/amlc](http://math.usu.edu/amlc)  
Animal Science 108

## Counseling and Psychological Services

435-797-1012

[aggiewellness.usu.edu/logan/mental-wellness](http://aggiewellness.usu.edu/logan/mental-wellness)  
TSC 306

## Aggie Blue Bikes

435-797-8139

[abb.usu.edu](http://abb.usu.edu)  
Between the Fieldhouse and Military Science on Aggie Blvd.

## Student Health Center

435-797-1660

[health.usu.edu](http://health.usu.edu)  
North of Maverik Stadium

## Inclusion Center

435-797-1728

[usu.edu/inclusion/](http://usu.edu/inclusion/)  
TSC 315

## Aggie Shuttle

435-797-3414

[aggiebus.com](http://aggiebus.com)  
Throughout Campus

## Financial Aid Office

435-797-0173

[usu.edu/financialaid](http://usu.edu/financialaid)  
TSC 106

## Campus Recreation

435-797-0453

[usu.edu/campusrec](http://usu.edu/campusrec)  
ARC

## SNAC Food Pantry

[snac.usu.edu](http://snac.usu.edu)  
TSC 332

## Campus Store

1-800-662-3950

[usucampusstore.com](http://usucampusstore.com)  
TSC 1st floor

## USU IT

435-797-4357

[it.usu.edu](http://it.usu.edu)  
JQL Building

**USU COVID-19  
Information**  
[usu.edu/covid-19](http://usu.edu/covid-19)





# **Professors, students and the virtual classroom**



It's clear that things are not going back to normal anytime soon and, with the fall semester swooping in on university students everywhere, it's important to note those changes and adjust accordingly.

Utah State University has made several changes because of the outbreak of COVID-19, including virtual classes and blended learning. Of course, these changes are not new to students who experienced a hurried virtual learning experience in March after universities shut down everywhere. However, this time professors and teachers have had an entire summer dedicated to preparing for online courses and syllabus changes.

In other words, students need to be prepared for their online courses to be real classes with real expectations and real deadlines.

The only concern is that a virtual education is very different from physical education.

According to Will, a columnist for Education First and teacher (both virtual and in-classroom), the difference between online learning and classroom learning is a big one. He writes that "[l]ive learning increases engagement by adding a human element. It is especially beneficial for learners who are not so self-sufficient or who are used to the traditional 'teacher and class' model of education."

He continues to explain that online learning requires a better understanding of technology and an increased preparedness in both students and professors. But professors have to craft an online learning experience that is as engaging and educational as virtual learning can be, whereas students simply have to push through procrastination and lack of motivation.

Robyn Brown of Miami University agrees. She states that in online education, "[s]tudents depend even more on the facilitation, assignment clarification and feedback provided by their instructor." While there is already a bond of trust between students and their professors, the shift to online



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PHOTO BY Nathan Dumlao

classrooms and virtual learning demands even more trust because of the tremendous responsibility that lies on the professor.

Virtual courses need to have clear assignment descriptions, deadlines and virtual class times. Even in the physical classroom, professors may say things that need clarification. Assignments may not be completely understood, deadlines unclear and expectations vague. Virtual teaching will demand stronger communication skills from teachers as well as heightened listening skills from students. Lacking that personal touch will be a challenge for our educators and our students, but in the end, virtual learning calls for improved communication skills that we all need anyway. Ultimately, communication skills are imperative for virtual students' success and that responsibility falls on the professor.

Although our professors do have a heightened responsibility to their students in online classrooms, it is imperative that stu-

dents remember their responsibilities, too.

In March, when the pandemic first impacted schools everywhere, many students who usually aim for A's and B's settled for a passing grade. Because of that timing, some professors let students off the hook and some didn't. Finals were cancelled or moved online, and other changes to course schedules were made. However, this is a new semester. Students have to prepare and be ready to engage in online learning to get their money's worth.

Still, if students are going to learn like they did in the physical classroom, they are going to need clear direction.

As Brown explains, "the students (and faculty) each determine when they will engage and participate in their online courses," and it will not be easy. Without proper engagement and student involvement, virtual courses will fail professors every time. Students should feel an obligation to virtually attend class, answer questions and par-

ticipate in discussions, just as they would in a physical classroom. Professors need to communicate those expectations to their students on the first day of virtual classes.

Online learning is tough, but if professors adapt to the new expectations and responsibilities that come with virtual learning, so will students.

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